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The girl effect
Solving the world's problems,
one step at a time

Mrs Carey's Concert
A belief in the power of music

First year out
Five top tips from Peter Miles



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INSIDE Teaching

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALASIAN TEACHER REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

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COVER: MLC School Chamber Orchestra with Director of Music Karen Carey. Still from *Mrs Carey's Concert*, showing now in selected cinemas. Images courtesy of Music Films. www.mrsclareysconcert.com

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Editorial

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in April agreed to a national approach to the accreditation of initial teacher education programs developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The agreement means all initial teacher education programs will be assessed against AITSL's national professional standards at the graduate teacher level. Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) Chairperson Susan Halliday said ATRA supports and welcomes the decision. 'Over the years, ATRA has strongly advocated for a national accreditation system of teacher education programs, and member states and territories have contributed their comprehensive knowledge and experience in the development of the new system,' she said, adding that, 'Much work remains to be done before the new system can be implemented nationally.'

State of the nation

May saw National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across the nation. According to Bruce McDougall in Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* in May, 'some high schools' are using the results for enrolment purposes. The report did not identify any schools. According to Commonwealth Minister for School Education Peter Garrett, any allegation of schools using NAPLAN data to determine enrolment should be referred to the relevant state education department for investigation.

Expect the My University website developed by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to be less controversial than the My School website of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. DEEWR says My University will be ready for user testing in July, to go live by the end of the year. According to DEEWR, the interactive, searchable website will address course information, campus facilities, student/staff ratios, student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, information about fees and student services, and the quality of teaching. Much of this information is already published by DEEWR, but not in an online form that allows comparisons between institutions, although

the teaching quality indicator is new. It's believed this will draw on information about staff qualifications, professional development, teacher induction programs and peer review.

Don't expect offshore international students from India to be using the My University website when it goes live, though. Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) figures show that Indian student visa holders dropped from 83,889 to 53,747. Offshore schools sector visas were down by 19 per cent, onshore visas by 29 per cent.

Still on immigration, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) *2011 Immigration Detention at Villawood* report released in May called on DIAC and the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration to make full use of community detention for asylum seekers who are children. According to DIAC's *Immigration Detention Statistics Summary*, as at 6 May, 1,038 children were in immigration residential housing, transit accommodation or various forms of community detention. DIAC, in its response to the AHRC report, observed, 'There will be a continued need to accommodate (children) and their families in low- to medium-security facilities and alternative places of detention whilst community-based accommodation is being sourced.'



Congratulations to the winners of ACER book vouchers each valued at \$200:

Maria Formica, Teacher Librarian at Currans Hill Public School in Sydney
Mary Geddie, ICT Coordinator at Our Lady of the River in Berri, South Australia
Anne Solomon, Literacy Leader at Holy Name Primary School in Melbourne
Shari Worgan, Teacher at Ingham State High School in Queensland and
Jo McLean, Head of Campus and at Seabrook Christian School in Tasmania.

Congratulations to Anne Solomon, the winner of our photography prize (see page 6).

June *Inside Teaching* is shining the spotlight on your school!

Simply answer the question below for your chance to win one of seven ACER vouchers each valued at \$200.

There is one winner in every state and the Northern Territory!

Question: According to Emily Brew in 'The girl effect' (pages 8 to 15), an extra year of primary school boosts a girl's eventual wages by 10 to 20 per cent. True or false?

To enter, simply click here to answer the question.

We thank you for making *Inside Teaching* your professional journal.

Terms and conditions: 1. The entrant must answer a question on page 5 of *Inside Teaching* (electronic publication). The answer is found within the body of the article featured on pages 8 to 15. 2. The competition opens 14 June 2011, 9am EST. 3. The competition closes 1 August 2011, 5pm EST and the draw will occur on 14 August 2011 at approximately 5pm EST. A re-draw will occur 15 November 2011 (if required). 4. The entrant fills in a form (click through to the entry). 5. One entry per person and only correct answers to the competition question will be considered. 6. One winner for each of the seven \$200 vouchers will be drawn from each state and the Northern Territory and from those winners a further winner for the special prize will be drawn. 7. Each winner will be notified by email and the winners' names will be published in the next edition of *Inside Teaching* (August edition 2011). 8. A voucher entitles each winner to choose \$200 worth of ACER books and resources from ACER bookshops or may be used towards the purchase price of a more expensive product. ACER will contact the winner and organise the prize choosing and dispatch. 9. Each winner will receive his or her voucher within one month after the draw. 10. Postage: \$200 worth of product redeemed by voucher will be sent to the school (or nominated address) free of charge. Should the school choose to purchase additional products, normal postage fees will apply. 11. The winners will be drawn at 19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell Victoria 3124. 12. The winners will be notified via email. 13. The winners will be published at <http://www.acer.edu.au/forms/inside-teachingcompetition>. 14. If required, a redraw will take place on the 15 November 2011 at 19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell Victoria 3124. 15. Entrants' personal information may be used for future communications activities including the compilation of a mailing list by ACER only. Entrants' details will not be passed on or sold to a third party. 16. ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) ABN 190043981555.



Wonderful

Why good learning is full of wonder

MARIA SMITH explains how providing time and space for young minds to explore and reflect can develop children's oral language skills.

When I discovered our Literacy Coordinator, Anne Solomon, had won the April *Inside Teaching* readers' competition and would receive a \$200 book voucher from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the special prize of a professional photoshoot and an article about our school, Holy Name Primary School in East Preston in Melbourne's north, I became

excited about the opportunity to showcase the Years 1 and 2 oral language development sessions we hold in our new Interactive Learning Centre.

Our new Interactive Learning Centre operates on the understanding that learning in today's world involves teaching students not only what to learn but *how* to learn. Language and thinking are inextricably linked

– thinking involves language and language involves thought. Proficiency in both of these areas is fundamental to children's learning and development in all academic spheres.

Wondering exercises assist children to formulate questions based on curiosity and to engage with each other dialogically so as to better understand their own and others' wonderings. Some students already possess the necessary oral language to be able to express their wonderings, but educational research has noted that some

children come to school with poor oral language development as a result of a multimedia infusion that floods children with images and texts that don't involve oral communication. Reading comprehension, in particular, is affected if a child has poor oral language skills.

Constructed in 2010 with funding from the Commonwealth government's Building the Education Revolution program, our \$1.8 million Interactive Learning Centre comprises a large open space, library, computer lab, student kitchen and a soundproof room used for multimedia presentations. It's an engaging and adaptable space that enhances the social nature of learning by encouraging both formal and informal communities, as is recommended by the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs' 2008 *Learning in an Online World: Learning spaces framework*.

For oral language development sessions, the Interactive Learning Centre is set up with around a dozen work stations, each containing a unique and thought-provoking activity or resource that inspires children to investigate and challenge their thinking and learning while developing their oral language skills. The approach draws on the teachings of educational expert Professor John Munro from the University of Melbourne, who

explains that oral language is developed through play.

There's a real need to set time for students to play and explore their own wonderings. Indeed, as ACER's Elizabeth Kleinhenz and Lawrence Ingvarson point out in *Standards for Teaching*, international early childhood education research recognises that effective teachers use content knowledge confidently to support and extend children's learning in interactive and play-based situations.

Our students are given an 'I wonder...' statement that relates to the work station resources, and they're then invited to take their wondering wherever they decide to explore. Some of the 'I wonder...' statements used in the oral language sessions include, 'I wonder how magnets work' and 'I wonder what we need to run a restaurant.'

Cooperative learning skills are also relied on as children move through different groupings, and listen and speak while exploring their sense of wonder. Music marks the end of 'play' and time is allowed for reflection. Some students are then invited to share their reflections with the whole class. Life is so busy now that children are rarely allowed time to stop and reflect, even though reflecting is what sustains learning.

Wondering does for the brain what exercise does for muscles and, with practice and

encouragement, we hope to enable all students to reach their cognitive potential. Children's innate curiosity draws them toward questioning, finding out about and making sense of the world in which they live. Thought and oral communication are the central vehicles for learning.

Maria Smith is Deputy Principal and Religious Education Coordinator at Holy Name Primary School, Melbourne.

Pictured, students from Holy Name Primary School. Photo by Guy Lavoipierre.

Enter the June Inside Teaching readers' competition on page 5.

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Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs. (2008). Learning in an Online World: Learning spaces framework. Melbourne: Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs.

Munro, J. (2011) Teaching Oral Language. Melbourne: ACER Press.



The girl effect

*Did you know that we could solve huge world problems like hunger, HIV/AIDS, poverty, illiteracy and war just by educating adolescent girls? **EMILY BREW** explains how.*

The world is a mess. Poverty. AIDS. Hunger. War. So what else is new? What if there was an unexpected solution? It's not the internet. It's not science. It's not the government. It's not money. It's – dramatic pause – a girl.

When a girl turns 12 and lives in poverty, her future is out of her control. She faces the reality of being married by the age of 14, pregnant by the time she's 15. And if she survives childbirth, she might have to sell her body to support her family, which puts her at risk for contracting

and spreading HIV. Not the life you imagined for a 12-year-old, right?

The good news is that there's a solution. Let's rewind to her at 12: she stays in school, where she's safe, and she uses her education to earn a living.

She can now get a loan to buy a cow, and use the profits from the milk to help her family. She becomes a business owner who brings clean water to the village, which makes the men respect her good sense and invite her to the village council, where she

convinces everyone that all girls are valuable. Soon, more girls have a chance, and the village is thriving.

These girls can avoid HIV; they can marry and have children when they're ready; and their children can be healthy too. Now imagine this continuing for generation after generation. Healthier babies. Peace. Lower rates of HIV. Food. Education. Commerce. Sanitation. Stability. Which means the economy of the entire country improves and the whole world is better off. Multiply that by 600 million girls in the developing world and you've just changed the course of history.

It's called the girl effect.

Why girls?

Investing in a girl has the highest untapped return in development. It's as simple as that.

Start with a girl, and boys win too, because a girl will reinvest 90 per cent of what she earns in her family and community, compared to 40 per cent reinvestment by a boy.

An extra year of primary school boosts a girl's eventual wages by 10 to 20 per cent. An extra year of secondary school boosts eventual wages by 15 to 25 per cent. When a girl in the developing world receives seven or more years of education, she marries four years later and has 2.2 fewer children.

A girl receiving education and reinvesting her income and knowledge in her family and her community will also have a ripple effect. Research in developing countries has shown a consistent relationship between better infant and child health, and higher levels of schooling among mothers. When she's healthy, her community's health will improve as maternal mortality and child malnutrition drop, and HIV rates decline. She will drive agricultural production. As an educated mother, an active citizen, an ambitious entrepreneur or prepared employee, she will break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

A girl is an unrealised economic force, accelerating growth and progress in every sector, and a powerful change agent capable of raising the standard of living in the developing world.

The girl effect is about boys too, because when a girl benefits, everyone benefits: her brothers, sisters, future children and grandchildren. Boys and men have a critical role in unleashing the ripple effect of girls, as they often control the environment for girls and have a strong influence over what happens.

Boys and men must be part of the solution: breaking the cycle of poverty and building a sustainable global economy cannot happen if 50 per cent of the world's population is left behind.

How it works

A girl is more likely to be uneducated than a boy. Seventy per cent of the world's out-of-school youth are girls; 96 million girls in developing countries are illiterate.

A family in poverty loves their daughter just as any family does, but an old equation rules: educating a boy will bring returns, but not so a girl. A girl is valued in her family in the household 'micro-economy' as the caretaker of the young, old and sick, as the carrier of wood and water. But because she earns no income, a daughter is married off as soon as possible, removed from the family balance sheet.

Families see little incentive in investing in a girl, because she'll just take that investment with her when she marries. This is particularly so in countries where child marriage is prevalent, where up to 75 per cent of girls are married before they are 18.

Thanks to targeted support of adolescent girls, however, this picture is changing. In Bangladesh, in India, in Africa, there are places where girls are starting small businesses. The first thing they do with their income? Put themselves back in school.

What's left over goes to their siblings' education, and often their family's expenses. Suddenly a girl is viewed as a good investment, as someone who can

IN BANGLADESH, IN INDIA, IN AFRICA, THERE ARE PLACES WHERE GIRLS ARE STARTING SMALL BUSINESSES. THE FIRST THING THEY DO WITH THEIR INCOME? PUT THEMSELVES BACK IN SCHOOL.

generate prosperity for herself and her family. With that shift, other dominoes fall. Broader attitudes about girls change. Families become healthier, and wealthier. The girl effect unfolds.

Today, the world is starting to see that the cost of excluding a girl doesn't just affect her. It affects everyone.

The ranks of girl champions around the world are growing, including the Nike Foundation, the NoVo Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, the Coalition for Adolescent Girls, the International Women's Development Agency, the International Center for Research on Women, the Population Council, CARE, the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood, the Center for Global Development, Plan International and the Global Business Coalition, among others.

Progress has been made and solutions identified, yet more must be done.

What you can do

Invest in a girl and she will do the rest.

- Give what you can. Today, less than two cents of every international aid dollar is directed to adolescent girls. Visit globalgiving.com/girleffect to donate to one of the many organisations working to unleash the girl effect

- Educate yourself. Learn about organisations and girls unleashing the girl effect; follow what's happening on the global agenda; read everything you can.
- Share. Check out our three-minute video clip, which was named one of TED's 'ads worth spreading' this year – it's at www.girleffect.org – and share it with others. The more who know, the better.
- Join. Follow the girl effect on Facebook and Twitter; start dialogue; participate in the discussion; voice your opinion.

Emily Brew is the Brand Creative Director of the Nike Foundation. The Nike Foundation created the Girl Effect with critical financial and intellectual contributions by the NoVo Foundation and Nike Inc. and in collaboration with key partners such as the United Nations Foundation and the Coalition for Adolescent Girls.

Pictured, page 8, Anita, courtesy of Going to School. See page 12.

LINKS

www.girleffect.org

www.nikefoundation.org

www.novofoundation.org

www.unfoundation.org/global-issues/women-and-population/investing-adolescent-girls.html

www.iwda.org.au

www.coalitionforadolescentgirls.org

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Business unusual

At age five, Anita peeked over a wall and saw a line of schoolkids standing outside their classroom. She went home and pestered her parents to let her join them as one of the few girl students.

Five years later, she asked them for secondary school fees, but the family couldn't afford them. At age 10, she started her first business, tutoring other kids to pay her own tuition.

Five years after that, her father became ill, placing the family in debt. So Anita put herself into a new school for a better-paying job: beekeeping. She was a 15-year-old girl in a room full of men in their 40s where she learned how to be her village's first female beekeeper.

Somewhere along the way, she also learned how to fake a hunger strike that delayed the marriage her parents had arranged for her.

Today, at 20, she is paying her college tuition. She's formed a women's farmers club. She's hired her brother. She's trained 20 girls in beekeeping, and beekeepers look very different in her village now.

Her story's been broadcast across India, reaching millions more girls.

It's a gutsy story of overcoming hardship, but Anita's hardship was just this: she's a girl.

There are 600 million more adolescent girls in the developing world. Less than two cents of every international aid dollar is directed to them. Do all of them have to be an Anita to succeed?

The big picture

- The school drop-out rate for girls aged six to 16 is more than 57 per cent in India.
- 86 per cent of India's 84.6 million girls aged 15 to 24 are jobless.
- Excluding girls comes at great cost: early school dropout costs the Indian economy \$10 billion in potential income over a lifetime.
- If adolescent girls were employed at the same rate as males their age, India could add \$53.2 billion to its gross domestic product (GDP), all else equal.

The Going to School project in India shows girls a world of possibilities beyond early marriage and early childbearing. Part of the project is the Be! an Entrepreneur Fund, which inspires girls to create businesses that solve the social, economic and environmental problems they face in their daily lives.

LINKS

http://goingtoschool.com/our_story.html

The Going to School project in India shows girls a world of possibilities beyond early marriage and early childbearing.

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Changing attitudes

In the corner of her family hut, Sharifa, 16, has a small table, and on the table is a mirror, a jewellery box and some make-up – what you'd expect among a teenage girl's purchases.

Her more surprising acquisition is sitting in the hut's courtyard: a sanitary water closet.

Sharifa is among the nearly 50,000 girls who have received training in life skills, income generation and microloans from the world's largest non-government organisation, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC).

Sharifa's small business of selling eggs and vegetables is

allowing her to stay in school, buy herself some nice things and support her family's needs.

Baser, her father, has been impressed. Girls with money, he noticed, are good for families, and good for villages. So when he had a field to lease, he purposely leased it to his neighbour's adolescent daughter.

Sharifa's is the first generation of girls in her village to have such opportunity — and Baser's is the first generation of fathers to see their daughters in a brand new light.

Attitudes and traditions are complex and deeply held. For

girls in the developing world, they've led to behaviours that leave girls unsupported and vulnerable, which locks in a cycle of poverty for families and communities. But social norms are not immutable, and neither are the systems they foster.

When you meet Sharifa and Baser, you're seeing change unfold, and a system that's re-engineering itself.

The big picture

- In Bangladesh, 67 per cent of the country's 11.7 million girls aged 15 to 24 are jobless.
- Without school or job training, marriage is often the next

step: more than one-half of Bangladeshi girls are married by age 18.

- If adolescent girls were employed at the same rate as males their age, Bangladesh could add \$2.75 billion to its GDP, all else equal.
- Beyond GDP, there is an equally important ripple effect on families. When women and girls earn income, they reinvest 90 per cent of it into their families, as compared to only 30 to 40 per cent by males.

BRAC provides rural girls with access to customised microfinance programs that include access to safe spaces, small loans, life skills and livelihood training. The programs have so far helped 40,000 adolescent girls gain the confidence, skills and capital to run their own businesses and manage their own resources. These entrepreneurs are delaying marriage, paying their own school fees and often covering the cost of their siblings' tuition. One of BRAC's aims is to demonstrate the value of adolescent girls as economic actors instead of as child-brides.

Pictured, Sharifa and Baser. Brent Stirton/Getty Images

LINKS

www.brac.net

The boy effect on *the girl effect*

Last year, a group of Year 10 students at Sydney Boys High School started a movement for gender equality.

As part of their High Resolves Community Action Project, the boys ran an awareness-raising campaign with High Resolves for United Nations (UN) Women Australia.

UN Women Australia challenged the group to deliver the campaign to at least one boys-only high school and one girls-only high school, and also to provide recommendations on how best the organisation could engage with young people.

Under the mentorship of executives from Deloitte Australia, the boys created a presentation and two-minute video, encouraging viewers to turn things around for girls and women.

The group then gave presentations about gender equality and showed the film to their peers at Sydney Boys High School, Sydney Girls High School and Sydney Technical High School.

The boys speak frankly about their previous misconceptions about gender inequality in a short video they made about the project, which already has more than 6,000 views on YouTube

from across the globe. The video highlights the role boys and men have to play in changing attitudes and redressing inequality, and particularly shows the effectiveness of adolescent men discussing the issue within their own age group.

The big picture

- Women own two per cent of property worldwide.
- One in 40 women can expect to reach senior management, compared to one in eight men.
- Women hold 70 per cent of teaching positions in Australia, but only 37 per cent of management positions in the same sector.

High Resolves is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to motivate high school students to view themselves as purposeful global citizens and to acquire the skills they will need to lead their communities, and the world, to a brighter future.

LINKS

www.highresolves.org

For the Sydney Boys High School gender equality project's two-minute 'Turn Things Around' video and interviews with the boys, see http://highresolves.org/SBHS_GenEq.html

CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE ...IT'S STILL THE R-WORD

*We all want to realise the universal promise of an education to enable all students to become good citizens. The way to do that, says **JEANNIE HERBERT**, is to say no to racism in our education systems and yes to diversity – and build meaningful, respectful relationships with every one of our students.*

In reflecting on the re-emergence of multiculturalism in this country, in my column in the previous edition of *Inside Teaching*, I wanted to provide an Aboriginal insight into the way in which this policy has previously been used to encourage somewhat inane celebrations of difference. I wanted teachers to understand the importance of developing a deep appreciation of the diversity they encounter within the groups of students with whom they engage on a daily basis.

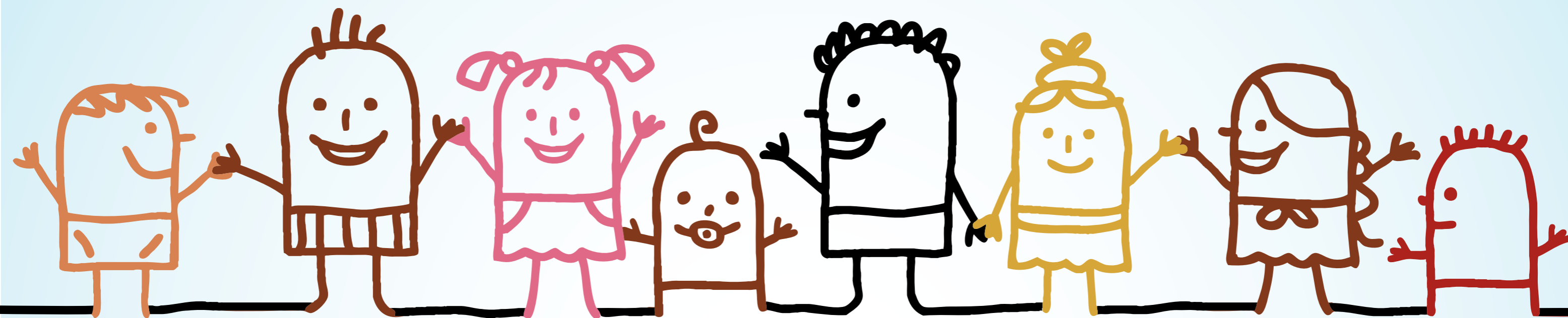
My own research in this area tells me that, regardless of the level of education, student numbers or school location, quality education is achieved by teachers who desire, and develop the capacity, to build meaningful, respectful relationships with every one of their students.

Regular readers of this column will know that my aim has been to highlight the significance of identity in enabling learners to effectively engage within the learning process, but I think we need to give deeper consideration to an issue that continually emerges in studies I've undertaken concerning Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in education: racism. In addition to my own experience, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff I've interviewed over the years have admitted that racism is alive and well in our education institutions. When pushed, most say it's evident in people's body language. To paraphrase Marcia Langton, 'We hear it in your voices and we see it in your eyes.'

Why is racism such a critical issue for educators to address?

A growing body of educational research evidence clearly demonstrates that:

- some school staff, including teachers, have a limited awareness of or commitment to equity principles and some students as a result are subjected to discriminatory treatment by other students or staff within our educational institutions
- racism is the major cause of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students feeling devalued and excluded within their learning environments
- Australian learning institutions consistently favour Western cultural traditions that ensure the maintenance of Western cultural values and beliefs, and



WE, AS EDUCATORS, HAVE A MAJOR ROLE, ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE WITHIN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, TO DELIVER EDUCATION THAT IS EMPOWERING, AND THAT CREATES AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

- many Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students have low self-esteem and sense of their own worth, particularly in situations where they are subjected to discriminatory behaviours from other students or teachers.

As an Aboriginal educator, I've raised this issue over many years to little avail. But maybe it's an issue whose time has come, given some recent actions, such as:

- the increasingly biased and negative portrayals of Australia's first peoples in the media since the Commonwealth government intervention in the Northern Territory back in 2007 under John Howard, subsequently maintained by the Commonwealth governments of Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard
- the recent Federal Court hearing of a complaint of racial vilification brought by nine complainants against the journalist Andrew Bolt, author of a series of articles published in Melbourne's *Herald Sun*, and
- the insulting Twitter entry by Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law and Indigenous Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney, that, as a result of a subsequent media focus, caused considerable angst to Bess Price, the Warlpiri woman who was the subject of the insult, thereby returning the spotlight to the issue of who speaks for whom.

Some may argue these are merely about testing the limits of our rights to free speech in Australian society or about a struggle around Indigenous leadership in terms of who has the right to speak for or about whom, but I'd argue they're about more than that. They're a symptom of the things that are not happening in our education systems to do with inclusiveness. The good news is that they deliver clear signals that the time is ripe for education to deliver on its implied universal promise – of providing an education to enable all students to become good citizens of the society in which they live.

Research reveals that historical and continuing discrimination, even exclusion, has ensured the education promise has never been delivered to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Even worse, however, the research suggests that many of our educators lack an understanding of what is going on – or, perhaps more correctly, in the context of what education promises to deliver, what is not going on.

We, as educators, have a major role, arguably the most important role within contemporary society, to deliver education that is empowering, and that creates an inclusive society.

Our politicians like to boast about the egalitarianism that, they like to say, is quintessential to what

it means to be Australian. The truth is that it should be, and it's up to us, as educators, to make it the underlying philosophy of our engagement with our students and their communities. To be up for the challenge, though, many of us will have to change our mindset to a can-do approach. The key question, though, is how will we do it?

Schools need to find ways to open themselves up to public

scrutiny, especially the scrutiny of the diverse communities that contribute to the student body. Drawing on the very powerful evidence that has come out of the Empowerment Research Program administered by the University of Queensland and James Cook University in far north Queensland communities over the past decade, it seems a workable model may already exist. School/community collaborations working to develop

strategies and programs to do with social and emotional wellbeing could provide the catalyst that would make a difference not only to students' but also to teachers' lives, through a 'growing together' process that enables a real sharing of knowledge that, over time, can provide the framework of mutual respect so critical in creating an inclusive learning environment.

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**WE KNOW THAT PEOPLE,
ESPECIALLY TEACHERS,
ARE THE KEY TO
SUCCESS IN INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION.**

This is not a pie-in-the-sky suggestion. All of the students I've interviewed over the past two decades have emphasised the importance of having good teachers who are interested in them as people, who value them for what they bring to the learning situation and who make them feel they belong. Such teachers create learning places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students where:

- the social and emotional wellbeing of students is paramount
- all stakeholders, regardless of their racial, cultural or social differences, are able to come together in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill
- diversity is highly regarded and seen as contributing balance to the learning community, and
- learning is valued for its relevance within an inclusive curriculum.

It's in such learning environments that collaborative practices thrive. Embedding attitudes of respect and reciprocity within the collaboration enables healing for the diversity of families that make up the modern Australian school. This healing is the vital first step in building stronger, more effective communities both within and beyond the learning institution.

Major research in Indigenous education over the past decade clearly shows the success of the strategies implemented through the 1990 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. Add the ongoing commitment of successive governments to implementing policies and resourcing systems and schools, and it would seem obvious that there's no justification for the failure of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to acquire successful educational outcomes. There has to be another cause.

We know that people, especially teachers, are the key to success in Indigenous education. We also know that it's their willingness to engage with the diversity of this nation's first peoples that determines the outcomes achieved. The research evidence indicates that acknowledging the very real presence of racism in our education systems is the critical link we must make in order to build the educational democracy this nation needs in order to deliver the human rights of freedom and equality to all of its citizens.

Together we can do this, we can overcome the challenge of the R-word. Let's do it.

Professor Jeannie Herbert holds the Chair of Indigenous Studies at Charles Sturt University.

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*It's important that we have quality teachers in all our schools, but what is a quality teacher? For a start, they know themselves, and for a finish, they know their students. **FRANK PEARCE** explains.*

We've all heard plenty in recent years about the importance of quality teachers, mainly due to the research of John Hattie, now the head of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education. According to Hattie, 'The national testing movements have been introduced to ensure teachers teach the right stuff, concentrate on the right set of processes (those to pass pencil-and-paper tests), and then use the best set of teaching activities to maximise this narrow form of achievement (that is, lots of worksheets of mock multiple choice exams). Instead, we should be asking where the major source of variance in student's achievement lies, and concentrate on enhancing these sources of variance to truly make the difference.'

The major single source of variation in a student's achievement, Hattie has been explaining since 2003, is the teacher, accounting for about 30 per cent of the variation.

Ask what a quality teacher looks like, though, and you'll get a million different responses. Hattie himself distinguishes between experienced and expert teachers. Essentially, expert teachers:

- identify essential representations of their subject
- guide learning through classroom interactions

- monitor learning and provide feedback
- attend to affective attributes, and
- influence student outcomes.

In my view there's one other thing all quality teachers have in common, though, and that's their quality as people.

We're all familiar with airline cabin crew giving us safety instructions before a flight on how to use an oxygen mask. The first thing they explain is you need to put your mask on before you put masks on children. In other words, take care of your own wellbeing first so you're equipped to take care of the wellbeing of others. As adults and particularly as teachers, we need to learn to be happy in our own skin before we can teach children to be happy in theirs. And that's important because happy and engaged kids learn far better than stressed and disengaged ones.

Kids who are happy in class and like their teacher as a person don't tend to be a behaviour management problem. There will always be times when a child has to be pulled into line, but we don't need to shame them when we're doing it.

Children appreciate explanations just as much as we do. 'Because I say so' is just not good enough. When we do have a behaviour management problem, explain to them calmly but firmly why

their behaviour is inappropriate or dangerous to themselves or others. It's usually best not to do this in front of others unless it's a situation of immediate danger; I'm sure you don't like to be screamed at by your boss in front of others.

In my role as State Coordinator Aboriginal Education for the New South Wales Catholic Education Commission, I've found that the first characteristic typical of the most successful Aboriginal students are that they're happy at school. The second, by the way, is that their teachers have ensured that teaching and learning is relevant to them.

'You can't have a partnership without a relationship, and you can't have a relationship without a conversation. Everything starts here.' Those are words from Working Together – What Works: The work program improving outcomes for Indigenous students, produced as a resource for school staff by the What Works team.

In saying that you need to have conversations in order to cultivate relationships and you need to cultivate relationships in order to build partnerships doesn't mean you have to make every student like you, but it does mean you should get to know them and they should get to know you. In a perfect world, I'd have primary school teachers spend as much of the first two weeks of each school year as they can just getting to know

their students before they get down to business.

It's really useful to share a little of your story with the kids. Tell them about your family, especially the funny members of your family. Tell them about some of the small mistakes you've made and what you learned from them. During this two weeks, don't talk about school if you can avoid it. Then in a roundabout way get each student to tell you about their family, what they do for fun, what sports they like and so on.

Because secondary school teachers in most cases only have students for one period a day, they may find this approach challenging because of time constraints, but they still need to spend time building a relationship with their students. The good news is that you can do this in the classroom, but it can happen outside the classroom as well.

Every child has a trigger that motivates them to want to learn a particular thing. In any concept there's a facet that will be of interest to a particular student. If you don't have a relationship with a student, you won't know what that trigger or facet is.

I've often heard it said that the best approach with secondary school students is to go in hard with discipline and back off over time. I don't agree with this approach as it was one of the reasons I left school at 14. As a

father, grandfather and uncle, but equally as a horse and dog lover, I know that kindness, understanding and love get you further than if you use a big stick.

Schools and in particular classrooms need to be a safe environment where kids want to be. A good classroom feels like an extension of their family; for Aboriginal students, a good teacher is someone who has become their unofficial Aunty or Uncle.

Everything I've mentioned here applies to all children, but it applies especially to those small cultural groups and students with special needs who are but a dot in huge school populations and, yes, it applies to Aboriginal children.

I've lived 63 years as an Aboriginal person in a society that's very unfriendly to Aboriginal people, particularly in all levels of the education system.

I know what it's like to go to school without shoes or decent clothes. I know what it's like to go to sleep in class because you were kept awake all night with people arguing. I know what it's like to spend all day at school with nothing in your tummy. I know what it's like to be the only Aboriginal kid in a school where the kids and even some staff refer to you abusively. I know what it's like to have teachers patting you on the back and saying for an Aborigine you're

doing pretty good. I know what it's like to listen to the whispered conversations about you and your family. And even in adulthood I know what it's like to hear people saying that my degrees and qualifications are not as good as those of non-Aboriginal people.

I also, however, know what it's like, as a father of three, grandfather of nine, Uncle to 100, unofficial Uncle to 1,000 and a colleague to many, to stand up for quality teachers who stand up for everyone they teach.

I want to be one. I want you to be one, too.

Frank Pearce is State Coordinator Aboriginal Education for the New South Wales Catholic Education Commission.

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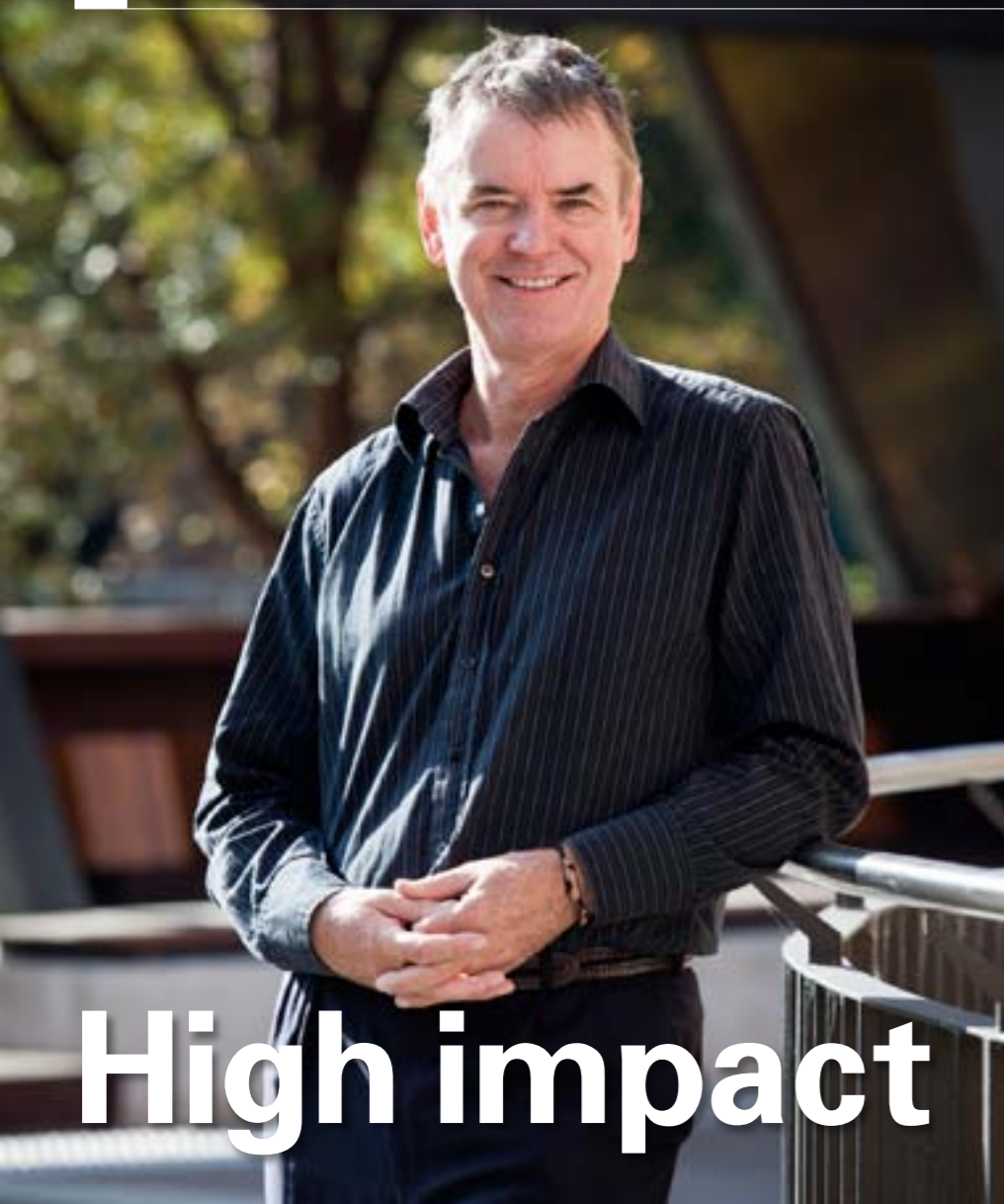
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High impact

STEVE HOLDEN talks with John Hattie about his research into teaching and his own best teachers, and discovers what high-impact teachers look like.

John Hattie, the new director of the research institute of the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education, is the man frequently quoted for his research findings showing that what makes the greatest within-school difference in a student's achievement is their teacher.

These are findings you often read or hear about in the Australian media and even in political discourse and policy. That's a major achievement for an

educational researcher, but has he achieved what he wanted in getting that message out there?

The task, Hattie says, is to keep the central importance of teachers at the forefront. 'As an optimist,' he says, 'I like to work with those teachers who consistently make the impact – and we need a profession that works with all teachers to get everyone into this group.'

'I've worked for the past 10 years in New Zealand building

a reporting system that helps teachers get "in front" of the issues – unlike in Australia where assessment is still what happens at "the end." What are needed,' he says, 'are valid interpretations about "where to next."'

Much of Hattie's research focuses on the difference between experienced and expert teachers. The good news, he says, is that the characteristics of expert teachers *can* be identified and cultivated. 'We can make a major difference to improving teaching,' he says, 'providing we concentrate on how we have a successful impact on students. We have too much discussion about how to teach, how to assess, when we need more discussion about how to know the nature and size of our effect on students. We need to consider how, as a profession, teachers can learn about this, otherwise they'll learn little from experience except how to make their teaching more automatic, smooth and easy, which is the very source of failure for so many students.'

Asked whether he had any expert teachers who taught him, Hattie points out he asks that same straw poll question when he runs seminars with teachers. Usually, he says, four per cent say they were taught by someone they recognise as an expert teacher. For himself, Hattie identifies three high-impact teachers.

'Really high-impact teachers passionately care that you know their subject. It was not so much that they cared for us, as some were quite strict; it was that they wanted us to share their love of their subject.'

'Miss Fisher was my Year 1 teacher and, wow, did she make coming to school fun by constantly finding challenges for us.'

'Mr Tomlinson certainly was another high-impact teacher for me. He cared that we all shared his love of mathematics in Year 11 and worked so hard to turn this subject into a source of success and satisfaction.'

'Mr McNeill must have rolled his eyes at my early attempts to become a teacher in teachers' college, but he persisted to show me how to succeed.'

So how did Hattie rate himself as an early-career teacher? 'Sometime into my first year' – Hattie began teaching at Macandrew Intermediate School in Dunedin, New Zealand, in 1972 – 'I started to worry whether I was doing enough, whether the kids were learning with the gains that were expected.'

'I had the best group of 35 kids that could be imagined. They challenged me, I challenged back, we had some fun, and I only hope there was some learning along the way. I rated myself high as a teacher but still worried about whether I had any impact on the kids' learning.'

'I enjoyed the year at Macandrew so much that I knew I could take the risk of trying to do a PhD – if it didn't work I could come back to a great profession.'

Teachers early in their career learn plenty from their colleagues, says Hattie, but also from students. 'One student struggled at maths and that made me learn a lot about how to make a difference; some were gifted in some areas, including three who were very knowledgeable in geology; and I brought in my student mates to work with them and learned the fun of sharing the teaching and learning with others.'

There are many people who can have a high impact on young people, Hattie points out. 'I still coach cricket and see how so many adults can use their knowledge and expertise. We need to think more about how other adults can be part of the "coproduction" of teaching.'

It's important, says Hattie, to excel at something sufficiently to know how to set personal bests and then aim to exceed them. 'I've had spurts of fun with crosswords, tennis, cricket. Right now, it's Scrabble. I like to set targets and then succeed, and then set higher targets. It can become obsessive, but hey, obsessing about having fun and enjoying a passion is not so bad. It's also taught me the importance of helping all students see the intention of a

lesson, what success looks like at the end of this lesson, and then how to engage in achieving a personal best.'

The identification of high-impact teaching and achieving personal bests come together in Hattie's new role as the director of the research institute of the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education.

'I see the quality at the top within the Melbourne Graduate School of Education; I see the ambition of stunning people to transform teacher education; and I see the impact of their research. This was part of the attraction for me of coming to Melbourne. I hope to play a part in ensuring the continuation of this mission, creating spaces and opportunities for the next generation of expertise, and finding ways for this creative and talented generation to maximise their impact with schools across Australia and the world.'

That suggests Hattie knows what success looks like and how best to achieve it.

John Hattie's latest book is Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement, published by Routledge. Visible Learning For Teachers And Students: How to maximise school achievement will be published by Routledge in 2012.



10 things I've learned as a teacher

MARTIN JORGENSEN has learned plenty as a teacher, but also from his previous careers, that guides his everyday practice as a teacher, but especially his use of technology with students.

We never really change careers; everything we've done in our past informs our future. My past careers in content management, design and professional writing have helped to define my practice as a teacher.

When invited to write this, it occurred to me how strongly my past careers have influenced the 10 things that follow – things that guide me as a teacher and guide my use of technology with students.

There's a vast array of resources online, so much information, and so many ways to contribute to it, that it can be overwhelming. Technology in the classroom

doesn't have to be complex however, nor should it complicate our efforts to reach the outcomes we're striving for with our students.

Encouraging core skills that allow students to better engage with communities online, create and critique content, and identify the right tools can make a significant difference.

1 COMMUNITY
The media often presents the internet as a place of scandal, danger and misinformation, and of course this is true, just as it's true that the internet is, more significantly, a place built by people, for people. It's a place

built on connectedness and community.

By becoming involved in online communities, students are empowered to see value in their participation. They expand their sense of what community means, and establish stronger ties in their own neighbourhoods.

By contributing to the development of a community online, students are given a sense of ownership and responsibility. They are also given a significant appreciation for the notion of the permanency and reliability of information online.

Helping students become part of a collective online also encourages empathy. When you encourage empathy in students in their dealings online, they move from being merely observers to valued participants in that community.

2 SHARING
To be part of a successful community online, to participate in it and learn from it, requires sharing of knowledge, opinions and experiences. There are numerous proverbs that tell us that what we give is returned to us tenfold. The more we contribute, the more that is returned when we need support ourselves.

It's not enough simply to encourage this belief in our students; we need to model this principle. For this reason, all resources I develop for my

students I share freely online. I involve myself in online teaching communities and in return receive unparalleled support from them when I need it most.

3 DISCUSSION
Young adults spend much of their socialisation time online with the same peers they socialise with offline. Students still spend time offline flirting, joking, sharing games and opinions, but now some of this formative behaviour takes place online as well. Time my generation spent talking on the phone at home or chatting in corridors or scribbling notes in class is now also spent in chat rooms and shared social media spaces like Facebook.

Often maligned for a seeming lack of depth, the social interactions of teens online exchanging the minutiae of their day is important. Just as important is the ability to move beyond it and understand how to work with and appeal to a broader audience online. Students need to know how to pose critical questions to a community of any size outside the comfort of their familiar social groups online.

4 READING
Recent studies have shown us that time spent online may not reduce the opportunity for reading offline. In fact for some student demographics, more time spent online could equate to reading

for recreation offline. According to a recent survey in the United States by Scholastic, students are very interested in ebooks, but still cherish books in print.

How we share our love of reading and our exploration of narrative is also shifting. Young adults are able to more easily contact and even converse with an author, they can review and discuss the novels they read with vast groups of interested readers, and more easily exchange suggestions for new titles.

There are a significant number of reading and writing groups online, and introducing students to them can help encourage a love of reading. In addition, there are numerous new ways of using technology to engage reluctant readers.

5 CONTEXT AND PRIVACY
Students can struggle with the shifting context of what they share online, and the scale at which it can be shared with others. A photo or a comment intended for an individual can quickly be misrepresented before a vast audience.

This is an area in which students are particularly vulnerable, with so many of them using social media products like Facebook, with its ambiguous privacy settings. Students need support to help them understand the notion of context with different audiences. This is also crucial

to their understanding the responses they receive.

I don't like Facebook, and don't hold an account, preferring other social media services like Twitter instead that are better suited to my sharing with others working in education. I did, however, register a Facebook account for a while to explore its potential, and to better understand what the pitfalls might be. I explored the privacy settings, and where misunderstandings or vulnerabilities for young adults may lie.

6 PERSISTENCE
Content is persistent online. It hangs around long after we've forgotten it. The images we upload and the opinions we state may remain for a lifetime. This can concern students – or their parents – worried by the notion that imagined careers may be adversely affected, or relationships irreversibly damaged.

It's important to remember that the employers of tomorrow are the students of today. They too will have had childhoods strongly influenced by social media, and will consider others of their generation within that context.

This is not to encourage or excuse misdemeanours online, but to allow students perspective, and hopefully minimise the paranoia that may lead to a lack of involvement or a sense of alienation on the internet.

7 DESIGN

There are so many tools to try online, so many resources to consider, that finding the right one for students can be confusing. Uncovering the resource that will allow students to achieve the right outcomes is crucial.

Some offer a veritable swiss army knife of options. More features, however, may equate to more distraction from the task at hand. In my experience, tools online that do one thing and do it well, with a simple but straightforward design, are often more desirable.

In particular I look for white space, a design uncluttered by promotional material or peripheral images. White space suggests a resource's core content is particularly valued.

8 NAVIGATION AND CLUTTER

Resources with a clear and logical navigation, consistent throughout the site, are valuable in the classroom. Students are less likely to become distracted, drifting from their purpose during a lesson. Too many links and too many competing options crammed into the navigation only serve to confuse, and signal a lack of forethought in the overall resource design.

9 PROMOTION

Numerous usability studies have shown that young adults

have far less success than older adults in differentiating between promotional material and genuine content online.

Increasingly, promotional material is becoming more integrated into the genuine content we seek online. Marketing campaigns are more sophisticated. Transmedia strategies that target us with a promotional message from multiple points rather than having one simple tag line are now common.

Giving students an understanding of how media influences them online, and how to discern real content from promotional material is crucial.

It's also important to focus on the fact that media companies are now more at the mercy of their audience than ever before. Young adults are in an empowered position, and need to recognise that they are in the driver's seat, able to use their influence and be heard.

10 AVOIDANCE AND FAILURE

A learning object that is neglected or used poorly can devalue it in the eyes of the learner. Interactive whiteboards that catch dust in the classroom or laptops that are used for only the most basic tasks will encourage the notion that they're not valuable tools for learning. Students need to witness us seeking out answers

with these tools, and we need to involve them in our exploration.

Technology is fickle, however, and always expecting that it can be relied upon will lead to disaster! It's important that students see there are alternatives. Having a good non-tech alternative is important, and sometimes pen and paper can be the best tools for the job.

Martin Jorgensen is a teacher and educational consultant, with additional qualifications in professional writing and editing, and corporate experience in usability, design, content management and technical writing. He builds free online literacy tools that are used by thousands of teachers, home school networks and students all over the world each week to explore narrative in and out of the classroom, and regularly presents professional development sessions for the Teacher Learning Network.

LINKS

www.tln.org.au

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TEACHING

It isn't rocket science

*It would be nice if human behaviour was as predictable as the laws of physics governing rocket science. The fact is it's not, but it's still possible to identify a formula for the effective behaviour management of students, says **PETER MILES**.*

Teaching isn't rocket science. I bet you've heard that at least once before, and maybe it's raised your hackles, but far from being a derogatory statement, it pretty effectively sums up why teaching is so difficult. Rocket science is bound by the unchanging laws of physics – the rocket scientist utilises a series of specific formulas applicable in explicit conditions, factoring in the known dependent and independent variables to determine a predictable outcome.

Teaching, on the other hand, operates entirely within the realms of human behaviour, which is anything but predictable.

A factor that causes occasional disaster in the field of rocket science, human error, is the daily burden of the classroom teacher. It's the reason why the behaviour management of students is such an important element of the teaching profession.

In my experience, the best practical definition of behaviour and the closest behaviour equivalent of a rocket science formula comes from William Glasser. 'Behaviour is one's best attempt, at any given time, given the skills one currently has, to meet one's needs.' Its strength as a practical formula is that it identifies four distinct areas of

focus for reflection and change on the part of the teacher.

'Behaviour is one's best attempt'

This implies that behaviour requires effort, through conscious thought and action. Generally speaking, if you as a teacher can engage a student's thoughts and actions in the curriculum, then the student's efforts are productive and conducive to teaching and learning. Failure to engage the student leads to other less-productive activities. The disengaged student becomes a spectator in the classroom and the spectator will, by nature,

interact with other spectators, critically analyse the situation and voice their opinion in various ways from encouraging to disparaging, or even exit altogether.

For effective classroom management, concepts such as classroom momentum, lesson flow and rhythm, as used in Steiner schools, come into play. Students must be directed on-task quickly and kept busy once there. Effective teachers minimise the time lost in transitions – from playground to classroom, from classroom entry to first activity instruction, from first instruction to student independent work, and from activity to activity. They have resources pre-organised for activities and in sufficient number to minimise waiting time. And they recognise the need for task variety.

To engage students today, we teachers need to be 'edutainers.' To 'edutain' our students, we can use the principles of what I call 'Playstation pedagogy,' replicating many of the qualities of computer games to hold the attention of our students. Such qualities include focus on hands-on and visual learning, minimised instruction time, frequent feedback and rewards, changes in pace and task, use of music and colour, opportunities for competitive and collaborative goal achievement and the provision of a reset function, whereby the participant can 'survive' their mistakes and have another

chance to master the task. As Glasser defined it, 'teaching is the process of helping students discover that learning can improve the quality of their lives,' but with the current generation the words 'at this very moment' need to be added at the end.

'Behaviour is one's best attempt at any given time'

This implies that behaviour is dynamic and contextual, and that behaviour management is very much about the unique conditions of the 'here and now.' Effective classroom managers are always aware of what is happening within the educational setting, what Jacob Kounin in the 1970s termed 'Withitness.'

'Withitness' is achieved through active supervision, via a high level of teacher mobility, regular scanning of the setting and use of peripheral vision when not mobile. Obvious teacher presence equates to interest, attention, security and, where necessary, external motivation to behave.

For repeated issues arising within the classroom setting, the effective classroom manager examines the systemic context and assesses where the changes may need to occur, starting least intrusively with the most easily changed aspects of the classroom – the physical elements of the environment.

Is the classroom well-organised and comfortable? Lighting,

temperature, lay-out and accessibility of resources, desk set-up and seating plans are considered. The curriculum is then addressed because, like the physical environment, it is more easily modified than the people who teach or learn it. Is the curriculum being presented in an engaging and relevant format? Does the student or the class understand the task or have the prerequisite skills to do it? Can content be individualised or modified to suit individual circumstances? Finally, the social relationships of the classroom are examined. Are teacher expectations clear and consistently enforced? Is supervision adequate? Is the teacher over-managing or under-managing specific behaviours? Do peers around the 'problem student' need to be skilled in assisting that student to behave?

'Behaviour is one's best attempt, at any given time, given the skills one currently has'

This implies that all behaviour is skill-based. As I see it, the essential skills of social behaviour fall under four headings: safety; respect; effort, in the sense of engagement or participation; and self-responsibility in the sense of self-discipline.

A newborn child has none of these skills, and learns them, with parents and siblings as the first teachers. There are no

professional standards attached to parenthood, or 'siblinghood,' so the quality and content of initial social skills teaching is highly variable. It's also the case that, within specific social settings, the general skills of safety, respect, effort and self-responsibility are manifested in different forms. Many school-specific practices like, say, putting your hand up to speak, don't translate to other social settings encountered in life. A student's behaviour in the classroom and school will therefore be dependent not only on their level of skill development but also on whether the skills they do have are relevant to the particular setting and on whether they're able to recognise the differences between social settings and the resultant need to adjust behaviour accordingly.

It's our responsibility as teachers to teach the students within our care the specific social skills required within our setting. Because the end of the lesson or school day temporarily but regularly ends the students' contact with that setting, we must always be prepared to revisit and reteach those specific skills. We also need to be aware that the rate of skill development and skill mastery differs with individuals. Some students need more time, teacher input and external support than do others to progress to competency.

Behaviour is one's best attempt, at any given time, given the skills one currently has, to meet one's needs

This implies that all behaviour is needs-driven. Glasser summarised these needs as survival, love and belonging, personal power, fun and enjoyment, and freedom.

Initially, the dominant needs for a young child starting school will be survival in terms of security and protection, and love and belonging, and the key source of needs-fulfilment in these areas will be the teacher. Complying with the teacher guarantees these needs are met, so compliance by the young child is generally forthcoming.

By high school, however, the need for love and belonging is satisfied primarily by peers, which is why it can be so difficult to communicate with some teenagers, and the need for freedom, to be in control of one's life, becomes dominant.

Teachers driven by a strong need for love and belonging find it difficult when students reject them (and won't give them attention) in favour of peer attention. Teachers with a strong need for personal power experience conflict when encountering students who reject their subject, on the basis that it doesn't meet their need for fun and enjoyment – 'This subject is boring' – or reject the teacher's authority because they want to

control their own lives – 'You can't make me.'

The effective classroom teacher enters the school with their own basic needs already met externally. They then ensure that many of the basic student needs are addressed within the context of the classroom or lesson. The classroom is a safe and comfortable physical environment. Systems are in place to allow students to meet basic biological needs (toileting, drinks, sick bay) and to access essential educational resources. Rules, promoted and enforced, encourage positive classroom relationships and, within the curriculum, there are structured educational opportunities for students to interact with each other. Student strengths are recognised, acknowledged and highlighted where appropriate. Curriculum activities are enjoyable and there is opportunity for 'downtime' where students can relax. Students are also given opportunities within the day or lesson to select curriculum or free-time activities, or work towards personal goals.

'Behaviour is one's best attempt, at any given time, given the skills one currently has, to meet one's needs.' As a behavioural formula, Glasser's definition provides us with a clear but general direction for intervention and correction in the field of behaviour management.

Unlike the rocket scientist, we can't program this formula into an inertial navigation computer to accurately plot the passage and outcome of every lesson;

but armed with an understanding of our own and our students' behaviour we can venture forth into the dynamic setting of the classroom and playground with a frame of reference for what has or may come to pass. It's one small step for man, but one giant leap for effective classroom management.

Peter Miles is a Behaviour Management Support Teacher with the Department of Education and Training in Queensland. He has 14 years of experience

in this role, and is the author of Don't Just Stand There, Yell Something! published by McGraw-Hill, the e-book If You Can't Beat Them, Teach Them and the Better Behaviour Better Learning Professional Development Suite for the Department of Education and Training Queensland. ■

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For more on the Better Behaviour Better Learning Professional Development Suite, visit <http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/teachers/pd.html>

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Mrs Carey's Concert



A recent documentary focuses on the music program at Sydney's MLC School. **REBECCA LEECH** talks to the school's music director **KAREN CAREY** about the film.

As a musician, conductor and music educator for more than 30 years, MLC School Director of Music Karen Carey is accustomed to performing for an audience – but it took another kind of confidence altogether to allow documentary filmmakers into her classrooms for 18 months.

Mrs Carey's Concert, a film by Bob Connolly and Sophie Raymond, follows Carey, her team of music teachers and her students as they prepare for the school's biennial concert at the Sydney Opera House.

The repertoire for the music students is a series of challenging classical pieces – Bruch, Brahms, Ravel – and the standard of performance expected is daunting. 'No pressure,' Carey extorts, but, 'be brilliant!'

Perhaps more ambitious, however, is expecting the compulsory participation of all students in the choir. The

music staff must teach all 1,200 students to sing the grand chorus from Verdi's opera *Aida*. By heart. In Italian.

MLC School is an independent girls' school in the Sydney suburb of Burwood. Putting on a concert at the Opera House for the entire student body, paid for by the parents, poses challenges that many schools would wish they were lucky enough to face. The teachers at MLC School are aware of the school's privileged position; their frustration is palpable at some points as they urge the initially indifferent student body to appreciate the opportunity that performing at the Opera House represents.

While the film perhaps unintentionally highlights the inequalities of our education system, it's interesting for its portrayal of the complexities of teaching gifted students, and its spotlight on several characters helps to move the focus away

from the big picture down to more relatable issues of the real personalities and problems of individual students.

Key among these are Emily Sun and Iris Shi.

Emily, a talented violinist studying at MLC School on a full music scholarship, has been chosen to perform a solo piece in the concert. Emily began playing the violin at a very young age, introduced to the instrument by her father Daniel, a composer, violinist and conductor, who died in a car accident when Emily was five. Staff mention at-risk behaviours and difficult peer dynamics, acknowledging some of the difficulties Emily is facing off-camera, but more telling is her to-camera venting as she struggles to develop the confidence, maturity and leadership needed to excel in her solo.

Iris, an articulate and rebellious Year 10 student, is opposed to the compulsory participation in the concert. She doesn't want to be involved, and resists, disrupts and argues with teachers every step of the way.

The eponymous Mrs Carey is determined, intense and sometimes severe, but clearly driven by a belief in what her students can achieve.

Carey and her staff are united by their passion for music and education, while their students range from talented, inspired and confident to stressed, fractious

and bratty. The cameras filmed all of it: every 7.30 am Chamber Orchestra rehearsal, as well as individual and group lessons and practice sessions, for 18 months.

As Australian Chamber Orchestra Artistic Director Richard Tognetti puts it, 'This isn't just a film about the lofty ambitions of an elite private girls' school. It's about shifting demographics; "cool" versus brave, the meaning within music through the eyes of teenagers, and most profoundly it's about the power of "classical" music to move people way outside of their comfort zone.'

Here, we talk to Karen Carey about the power of music, the challenges of pushing students to perform at their best, and what being the subject of a documentary meant for the school.

RL: You've been a music educator for 30 years, Director of Music at MLC School for 22 years, and the film documents your 10th Sydney Opera House concert. In the film, you note that 'Just when (the students) really start to get it, they leave school, we lose them and we have to start all over again with the next lot.' How do you find the motivation to keep starting over?

KC: It's about a belief in what we're doing, a belief in the power of what music offers kids. It's a huge emotional investment to get children to realise their full potential, but that's the challenge

of teaching. It does take a long time, and it's a gradual process, to help children to develop that real belief in what they're doing, the confidence to perform at that level – but that process also helps us, as teachers, to develop courage and expertise and passion for what we're doing.

In teaching, in any discipline, you're always reinventing what you're doing. It happens in any orchestra as well: key players move out and you reinvent with the new lot. When students move on each year, we focus on the new students coming up. That's part of what teaching's about.

I think the energy also comes from having a huge collaborative team here. We're always working together on strategies to develop and maximise kids' potential, so it's not just me on my own.

RL: You mention in the film the importance of 'stretching' your students. How do you do that? And how do you balance stretching with supporting their needs, and maybe acknowledging that some perhaps can't handle the demands of practice and performance?

KC: It's about scaffolding, mapping out the journey. We start preparing for the Opera House concert 18 months out. We think about what we want in the concert repertoire, but we don't start by teaching those pieces: we do lots of pieces to help scaffold the technical difficulties of what

we're eventually aiming for. We don't set a whole piece that's beyond the students – we set a piece that has parts that they can do and certain points where it is going to be a challenge. And we can stretch them that little bit further. So we're playing a lot of pieces at the same time as we're building up the Opera House repertoire, and gradually stepping up the level of difficulty.

We look at a child's technical ability, emotional maturity and

capacity to focus, how committed a child is and what we could do to make a child more committed, and put everything in place to allow them to achieve.

RL: What can you do to make a student more committed?

KC: If a student is having success, they will end up being more committed. We have to set it up so that a child does succeed. The school runs festivals and little concerts where all the kids are given a chance

to perform. At first we would set a student a piece that they can play well, comfortably. The more they play individually, the more confidence they gain. Then we'd set something else that's a little bit harder.

As well as giving every child lots of solo opportunities, we encourage them to be good ensemble members, so that they are marrying those two ideas about themselves. It's important for them to see the link between

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themselves as individual players and as ensemble members, parts of a team.

RL: The film focuses on two individuals, Emily Sun and Iris Shi. Emily expresses her frustration, to camera, at having to articulate her emotions, and seems to take it to mean a lack of confidence from the music staff in her playing. She even says that 'Mrs Carey never thought I was that fantastic.' How does it make you feel to see that?

KC: At first when I saw that, I took a deep breath. I wasn't cranky or upset that she felt that way, I just felt sorry that she did, because my motives were entirely the opposite. I was confident in my assessment of her, and confident in myself. I always saw her, from the time she came in at Year 7, as someone with enormous potential. The journey for me was to help her realise it, emotionally and technically. She was the soloist of an orchestra, and a children's orchestra at that, and I wanted to make sure that she could articulate to the orchestra what this music was about, for her. There are a lot of gifted students who go out and get recordings and they just copy another artist's interpretation of a piece. I wanted Emily to know that she was a lot better than that; she was a person who was capable of making judgements for herself and going into herself to

find her own way to play a piece. And it happened, eventually. The orchestra was really interested in what she thought about it, and really wanted her to succeed. And even after we did that performance in the Opera House, Emily's emotional connection with that piece went on another journey, and she did that performance for her high school certificate.

(Emily Sun is currently studying on a full scholarship at the Sydney Conservatorium but will go to London later this year to take up a full scholarship at the Royal College of Music.)

RL: You can see some of Emily's journey in the film. Towards the end, she says that the music department shaped her for the better, and acknowledges that she brought her problems to your doorstep, but you persevered with her. Did that make you feel validated?

KC: Yes, it did. We have lots of students, particularly gifted students, who go through this extraordinary journey, and go on to do magnificent things. They're not all wonderful angels; they do teenage things like everybody else does. They've got to discover themselves, and it's part of our job to keep them on the right track until they do.

RL: Not all students are angels – and that brings us to Iris Shi. Iris is difficult throughout the process, but the film implies that

she performed respectably on the night, and even that she was moved by the concert. Is that an accurate portrayal?

KC: Iris was a girl who rebelled about every aspect of school life, not just music. She was an intelligent girl and I was hoping that she might see the light. If she had chosen to, she was quite capable of sitting there with her mouth shut and doing nothing – but she didn't do that. I think she did sing in the end, and she did it of her own choice. I think she became caught up in the moment. I'm glad she did, and I secretly like to think she is too.

RL: What has been the impact on the school of being involved in the film?

KC: The school is seeing the film as a wonderful tool for transforming learning.

A lot of teachers find dealing with gifted children very difficult. It is hard to work out what they need, what they can do, and how to fulfil them. One of the advantages of this film is that a lot of the staff across the school are seeing Emily's journey, and it's helped the whole community of MLC to really understand what some of these girls need to grow. The film has highlighted that gifted students do need special consideration. Gifted musicians do need special nurturing.

I also get emails from ex-students who've seen the film,

students who were involved and emotionally caught up in the concert when they were here, and the film brought back memories and made them glad they had done it.

Lots of old girls come back as parents and enrol their girls in the school. Some weren't really hooked on the music

program when they were here as students, but they want their kids to be hooked on it and realise what an opportunity it is. For some kids the concert is a major part of their life; for some it's just one part of the curriculum: but in the end, when they leave school, they can always tell you what they did for

the Opera House, which I think speaks volumes.

Mrs Carey's Concert is showing now in selected cinemas.

Images courtesy of Music Films.

LINKS

www.mrsclareysconcert.com



20 questions*

with Andy Griffiths

Andy Griffiths talks with DAVID RISH about writing for kids, his experience as a teacher, writing textbooks, Indigenous literacy and much, much more.

What's the best thing you've ever found in an op shop or garage sale?

What immediately comes to mind is the 1920s Underwood typewriter I bought at the school fete in Grade 4. It cost 40 cents. Dad made it work again. It's where an early fascination with writing began.

What would give you more pleasure, being bum-drummed in welcome by the population of Pascoe Vale Primary School, your alma mater, or being offered a knighthood for services to children's literature?

I've never heard of this bum-drumming but I'd go for it, even if a bit nervously. My focus is on kids. If I please adults it's a secondary outcome.

What were you like as a student?

I was probably around the middle of the class: good generally and not out of control as people think, based on my fiction, which is wish

fulfilment. I was good at English, but not at maths or much else. I cruised through without much distinction. Teachers have commented that I was good at writing. It happened from early on. I used to make cards and cartoons, and at school I'd write song parodies to entertain my friends in the back row. In class I wrote what teachers would want to read. I had a couple of voices, even then, one for teachers and one for me.

Can you tell me about a teacher who inspired you?

I had a great English teacher, Mr Bechervaise. He was good because he had written and published some poetry. He made short films, directed the school play and edited the magazine. He actively modelled involvement and this had a profound effect. What he did rather than what he said went deep. He encouraged me. 'Griff,' he said, 'you can write better stuff than most kids spilling blood on paper but you never bother finishing stuff.' He encouraged me by identifying my talent. Oh, and he also introduced me to *The Catcher in the Rye*.

What was your best asset as a teacher?

Probably my enthusiasm for creative writing. It was infectious. I'd have my students writing all sorts of different stories and formats because I was actively writing and sharing it with them.

Would you ever follow John Marsden's lead and set up your

own school, and who would you get in to inspire your students?

God, no! As much as I admire what John's done in following his passion for education, my passion is for entertainment and humour. I'd rather perfect my craft. I'd get in anyone who was enthusiastic about what they did – a pest control expert or someone from the arts, people from lots of different fields. We've all got talents. I like people who are excited and don't just grind through. People should find what they love, not what will make them money or prestige.

If you had remained a teacher for 30 years do you think you could have maintained a generosity towards your students?

Yeah, I do because it's kind of natural with me. I like kids. I like to share my enthusiasm for reading and writing. For laughter. For taking imaginations on a walk. I was a natural teacher, but the writing urge was stronger. I could create writing that was fun and exciting, and that realisation made me back away from that teacher role. I still teach, but not in the classroom. I really admire long-term teachers who still have passion and talent and are still shining. I'd never have wanted to become jaded.

What thing about you are your parents most proud of?

I think they're proud of my writing. While they don't necessarily get all of the humour, they're very proud of the effect on

kids and their parents who give them feedback.

What's the best present you were given as a child?

I always remember my purple dragster. That bike had a big effect on me. It gave me the freedom to ride around the streets and to go down to the creek, away from parental supervision.

Who would it be cooler to be, Andy Griffiths, Nick Cave or Jonathan Brown from the Brisbane Lions?

God, I don't know how to answer that. I'm a lifelong fan of Nick Cave, and the Lions. I saw Nick Cave in The Birthday Party when the band was at the height of its powers and that was life changing. What I got from Nick Cave was to be myself and to put my own voice out there, to follow my own vision to the end of the line and not pull back.

Do you prefer to wash or dry the dishes?

Probably dry them, out of the dishwasher. Jill, my wife and editor, does most of the cooking and I do the cleaning out at the end of it.

What's the most romantic thing you've ever done?

I'm probably the wrong person to ask. Valentine's Day mystifies me. Why would you express your love on only one day? I do it every day, not necessarily grand gestures but I'm always looking for ways to revitalise the relationship. Lisa is the girl I was in love with in Grade



4 but I was too shy and when I had the opportunity to tell her, I said I didn't, which upset her and caused tears, but I couldn't possibly have told her the truth back then. This has become a continuous plot device in the Just books. The real Lisa recognises herself in the books. She's a casual relief teacher and she enjoys telling her students she's in them.

Your mother was a midwife; do you think there's a parallel between bringing babies and books into the world?

(LAUGHS) I suppose I've never drawn that analogy. A book is an entity and you put all the life and vibrancy into it and then watch it go off and have its own life, like your kids.

What was more exciting, getting the first copy of your first book, or seeing Jasmine, your first child, for the very first time?

That's a really cruel question. Nothing beats the thrill of seeing a book you've had going for 10 years finally sitting on a bookshop shelf. Seeing Jasmine was pretty exciting, but I didn't have to put as much into her arrival.

How many marks out of 10 would your daughters score you?

I reckon I'd score pretty high, although they're impervious to the charms of my fiction. They think I'm pretty good in terms of other parents, because of the freedom they're given. I think I'd get an 8 or 9 out of 10.

Did you read to them?

Yes, to both of them extensively. Jasmine who's 18 now, loved Dr Seuss books. We'd read and chant them, have active participation. Sarah preferred non-fiction, books about animals and kids in different countries. I spent many hours with encyclopaedias and deep sea books at that age too.

Your father was an industrial chemist; did you ever consider following the scientific route?

I had no great aptitude, but that reminds me of your earlier question about a gift. My parents once gave me a chemistry set with hydrochloric acid and other nasties and I'd combine things and make explosions. I didn't consciously dislike science; rather creativity called more loudly. Dad, anyway, would have preferred to farm. I'd have loved to have his woodworking abilities. Practicalities utterly mystify me. A story I can fix. I got the skills with words, word-working skills rather than woodworking. It was the same in sport. I could run but was no good with balls. I exercise to this day passionately. I wrote a book *Fast Food and No Play Make Jack a Fat Boy*. It looks at the importance of diet and exercise, and how they affect the brain and mood positively. Part of my creative routine is to participate. I create, then I spend an hour swimming or riding or running. It keeps creativity alive. I love exercise along with watching movies and reading books that excite me. To keep creatively

fresh you have to feed yourself with stuff you love. I still reread the horror comics I loved as a 10-year old, it helps me stay in touch with childhood enthusiasm. My wife would tell you that I'm an enthusiast. I just go for a month or more on a particular musician or writer or whatever. That is what defines childhood, because you're not jaded, you haven't seen it all yet. Keep that wonder open and you'll be well.

What's the best question one of your young readers has asked?

I was talking to a group of Preps and during question time one of them asked if I was married. When I said, 'Yes,' he asked if I kissed my wife. My answer, 'Yes,' brought the house down. I stopped doing Preps after that. Roald Dahl said that he didn't envy writers for adults because the correspondence he got from children was so heartfelt and joyful. I love hearing from my fans.

What drives your impulse to be funny?

Our family has always shared an idiotic, silly strain of humour. As a family we loved being silly and I just took it for granted. Laughter gives us the freedom to rise above the limits of everyday logic.

Can you relate a gag from your stand-up days?

I did nonsense gags. I would perform at poetry readings where people would be gloomy whereas I tried to be life-affirming. I did one about a spire on a particular

church in Melbourne that was sharp and dangerous for skydivers and it was very difficult to get the impaled bodies off, which upset the worshippers. I spend a couple of months every year doing book tours and that's a lot like stand-up. I try to be enthusiastic and joyful, and not just go out there trying to sell.

If you could have your funeral while still alive, who would you get to play?

I'm always playing music and it changes month by month. I'd like something inappropriate.

Is death something you think about?

Oh, yeah, from an early age. It obsessed me. Comedy is an antidote for dealing with it. No matter how successful you are, you can't escape death. Comic characters rarely win, but I admire the way they just keep on going. It's the way of humanity. How do you make life meaningful? Well, I help people find laughter and joy along the way. It isn't pessimistic to think about death, it's essential. You have to do what matters now because you could go tomorrow or today. We tend to put it out of our heads instead of embracing it. I'd love to see it confronted in schools. A lot of the deaths in the Just books and choose-your-own-adventures are quite deliberate.

Can you teach someone to think creatively?

I think you can. Edward de Bono has shown you can, and Professor Guy Claxton, who John Cleese

praises. The creative thought is a habit of mind. See possibilities rather than the obvious. Go for the unpredictable. Get from A to B via Z. Consider various possibilities before committing to one. Next July I'm republishing a version of my early textbooks, called *Just Writing*. It's a guide for teachers with a lot of practical strategies.

Can I get you to talk to me about the Indigenous Literacy Project (ILP) for which you're Ambassador?

One of the ambassadors. I've been involved for a number of years. All kids in Australia should have equal opportunity to learn to read and write. Only one in five kids in remote Indigenous communities learns to read to Grade 3 standard. One of the reasons for this is that there are no resources, no current books in the communities. ILP is a coalition of authors, publishers and booksellers who've banded together to get books to the communities. Doing this has undeniable health outcomes and makes it easier for them to engage with the wider world if they want to. Mothers are given 12 board books to familiarise themselves and their kids with. Often the first time these kids see a book is at school. At a grassroots level I go into a community two or three times a year. I run workshops and we make picture books. We're collecting 13 of the most successful of these and they're being published in September as *The Naked Boy and the Crocodile*.

Is there a way for schools to get involved?

One of the main fundraisers is running a book swap where kids bring along a book and for a gold coin donation they can swap. It's simple but exciting. September is Indigenous Literacy Day. As well as the swap, if people buy a book from a bookshop, they will donate a percentage to Indigenous Literacy Day.

Is improving Indigenous education the most pressing problem we face as a country?

Yeah, as well as the need to get testing into perspective. Testing doesn't measure anything. The quickest way to shut off creativity in kids is to threaten to test them. It's a worrying trend.

What can all your fans expect next?

In September, Terry Denton and I are doing an illustrated novel, *The 13-Storey Treehouse*. Andy and Terry live in a treehouse which has, amongst other things, a bowling alley.

Thank you, Andy Griffiths.

David Rish is an award-winning writer for children and a regular contributor to Inside Teaching.

** Okay, okay, if you counted the questions you'd know there are more than 20.*

Image by Gregory Myer.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO UNIVERSITY?

*Increasing numbers of students are using a Certificate IV as a pathway to university entrance, but **KEITH MCNAUGHT'S** research suggests this pathway may have some significant limitations.*

For a wide range of reasons, students are increasingly using a Certificate IV from a vocational education and training provider to meet minimum entry requirements for their university course.

In some cases, secondary schools are overtly encouraging this as a suitable pathway to university

study. In doing so, students generally complete 'lower-level' upper-secondary courses in their final years, then move towards completing a Certificate III or a Certificate IV during Year 12 or immediately afterwards.

Many schools have established relationships with training organisations, where students

are released from regular school attendance on an ongoing day-per-week basis to complete such courses. In some cases, this is excellent career counselling advice for students, as they would be unlikely to achieve success in 'higher-level' courses and such courses would not provide the necessary pathway preparation for these students' aspirations. Sadly, though, in some cases, schools may deliberately be steering students away from subjects in which the students' performance could detrimentally impact on the schools' overall performance in ranking charts and newspaper reporting.

Most Certificate IV courses are not primarily designed to be a university entrance program. Rather, they are designed to be a program of specific vocational preparation for a student to move into employment or further training. The benefit of these courses, however, is that they often build valuable prior knowledge that enables a student to move towards university studies. For example, a student wishing to study Exercise and Sport Science may find a Certificate IV in Personal Training to be valuable.

Many Certificate IV courses, however, are light on extended reading and writing tasks as part of the teaching, learning and assessment utilised, and this is where problems can arise for students if they wish to move

to undergraduate study. For students who may have come to a Certificate IV course through a 'lower-level' English course, and perhaps less success in such a subject in junior secondary years, this appears to be an issue for their transition to further studies.

It's worth looking at the success these students are experiencing from Certificate IV backgrounds as they move towards university studies.

In an analysis of the students who entered the Fremantle campus of the University of Notre Dame Australia in 2010, using a Certificate IV to meet minimum entry requirements, the results show that this pathway has some significant limitations. Of the students who entered in 2010, 26 per cent have either withdrawn or been 'terminated' in their university course based on their academic performance. A further 12 per cent are making poor academic progress; these students are failing units, and experiencing real difficulty with the academic literacy demands of undergraduate study.

Meanwhile, 17 per cent are making satisfactory progress. This means that they have failed at least one unit of course work during their first year but at the same time are doing reasonably well across a number of other units.

Mind you, 45 per cent of the students who entered in 2010

with a Certificate IV background are making solid academic progress and have not failed any units within their first year of studies. This is a commendable outcome and shows that for some students, Certificate IV can indeed be a suitable pathway for university success. The reality that 55 per cent of students may be struggling to achieve the necessary standard is, however, a cause of concern.

In response to the analysis of Certificate IV entrants over 2008, 2009 and 2010, the University of Notre Dame Australia from first semester, 2011, has implemented a conditional course entry requirement for Certificate IV pathway entrants, to support their progress.

Students complete a week-long orientation program prior to course commencement, focused on essay writing and critical reading skills, to enhance their skills, prior to completing their 13-week first-semester discipline-specific literacy unit. The university is now tracking the first intake of students to have completed this program to ascertain if it assists in their undergraduate success.

There are many other pathways to university for students who do not follow the standard route of obtaining their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, used by institutions to rank and select school leavers for admission to tertiary courses. It may be

that for at least some students, bridging and enabling courses achieve better outcomes. It may well be that completing a Certificate IV, followed by a university bridging course, is another option.

While it might appear to take longer to follow a Certificate IV with a bridging course, for students who fail units, or drop-out, this time may be a good investment, as many bridging courses are fee-free. The combination of a Certificate IV and a bridging course may provide the discipline and academic literacy necessary for such students to be very successful within their undergraduate studies.

Failure at university is an expensive and personally deflating experience, and underprepared entrants will experience difficulties, and are far more likely to fail. When secondary schools counsel Year 10 students, it's imperative that they do not sell a Certificate IV pathway as an easy option, either for themselves or their students, for university entrance. As this research shows, meeting university entrance requirements, and being successful at university study, are markedly different.

Associate Professor Keith McNaught is Director of the Academic Enabling and Support Centre at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle.

News

IN BRIEF

The Budget

Money for teacher bonus payments, students with disabilities, school chaplains and more autonomous schools? It must be Budget time. STEVE HOLDEN reports.

Commonwealth Treasurer Wayne Swan's fourth Budget, delivered in May, promises pay bonuses for teachers. The Budget included \$425 million over the next four years for 'around' 25,000 teachers. The program aims to offer the top 10 per cent of teachers bonus payments of up to 10 per cent of their salary as a one-off bonus based on their performance.

The program delivers on Prime Minister Julia Gillard's election commitment in August last year to give one in 10 teachers a bonus – up to \$8,100 for those with most experience and around \$5,400 for early career teachers. The first bonuses will be based on performance in the 2013 school year to be paid in early 2014.

It's understood the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) will develop 'a nationally consistent, transparent and equitable performance management system' to manage the bonus scheme.

'All teachers will be required to participate in the performance management framework and,

for the first time, every teacher in the country will be potentially eligible for a bonus payment if they are a top performer,' the PM explained last year.

That, according to the PM, means the performance management framework will be mandatory, which would mean AITSL will be assessing at least 250,000 teachers. Exactly how AITSL will apply the performance management framework remains unclear. While AITSL's national professional standards are mandatory for graduate and proficient teachers, they're currently voluntary for highly accomplished and lead teachers.

The performance management assessment is expected to include data from lesson observations, student performance results, feedback from parents, and the qualifications and professional development activity of teachers.

The Budget includes an 'ambitious' reform of vocational education and training, with \$1.75 billion over five years from 2012-13 on offer to the states and territories through national partnerships.

There's an additional \$200 million over three years to 2013-14 for students with disabilities in all government and non-government schools.

There's also \$222 million to extend and expand the National School Chaplaincy program over three years to 2014-15 and \$481 million over six years to 2017-18 for programs to increase local school autonomy in terms of school budgets and staffing.

Funding of the Digital Education Revolution (DER) was reduced by \$132.5 million over four years to \$20 million per year, with savings expected to be redirected to establishing a digital strategy for teachers. The Commonwealth government expects it will still be able to fund its DER program to ensure a one-to-one ratio of computers to students in Years 9 to 12 by the end of this year.

According to Budget papers, the Commonwealth government will postpone the rollout of trades training centres, saving \$102.8 million over the next four years, and will axe the \$80 million Vocational Education Broadband Network.

The Treasurer expects the underlying Budget deficit for 2011-12 to be \$22 billion, and projects \$22 billion in savings over four years.

Go and make disciples

School chaplains came to the attention of the popular media in May after a recorded speech by Access Ministries Chief Executive Officer Evonne Paddison found its way to Victoria's Minister for Education Martin Dixon and Commonwealth Minister for Schools Peter Garrett. Speaking at the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion national conference in Melbourne in 2008, Paddison said, 'Our federal and state governments allow us to take the Christian faith into schools and share it. We need to go and make disciples.' Jewel Topsfield in Melbourne's *Age* newspaper wrote 'The remarks appear to breach guidelines governing school religious programs, which ban trying to convert students to any one religion.' According to Victoria's *Education and Training Reform Act (2006)*, 'Special religious instruction may be given in a government school' but 'not (to) promote any particular religious practice, denomination or sect.' The guidelines of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations National School Chaplaincy Program stipulate that 'a chaplain should not take advantage of his or her privileged position to proselytise for that denomination or religious belief.'

National approach to initial teacher education

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in April endorsed the new national approach to the accreditation of initial teacher education programs developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). MCEECDYA endorsed AITSL's *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* on 15 April 2011.

Blackboard for sale?

United States-based virtual learning environment provider Blackboard in April announced it had hired Barclays Capital 'in response to receiving unsolicited, nonbinding proposals to acquire the company' to help it decide whether to sell. With buyers knocking at the door, it's thought Blackboard has also explored a possible injection of new capital and technology from undisclosed parties, but Blackboard has refused to confirm any details. Blackboard's shares rose by more than 25 per cent to a high of USD48.80 after the April announcement. The interest comes as educational publishers scramble to add digital tools and services to their content at the same time that expectations of growth in the sector attract the attention of media groups.

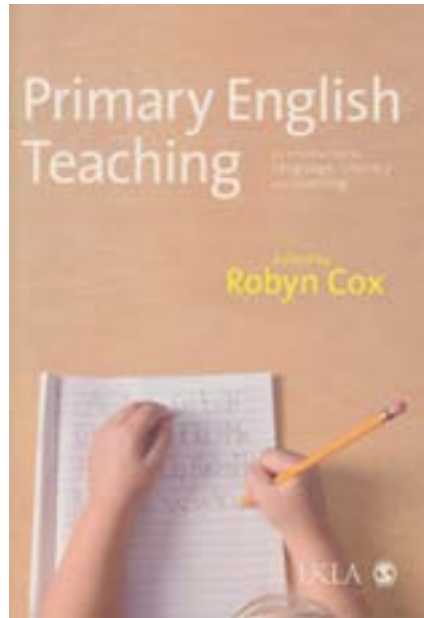
School for PNG's dump kids

St Peters Literacy School, on the northern fringes of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, is helping to get children out of the urban waste dumps and into the classroom. Established by Peter and Matilda Laiam – themselves former residents of Baruni waste dump – and funded by ChildFund Australia, the school offers free literacy and numeracy programs for 120 children from the city's rubbish dump settlements who can't afford a place in the public school system.

Distance ed partnership

The corporate educational publishing and online giant Pearson in May announced a partnership with distance education pioneer the University of New England (UNE) to adapt courses for the online environment to reach students around the country who have not previously had access to rich media distance education. According to Pearson, it's the first collaboration of this nature and magnitude outside North America. UNE will accredit all courses offered through the partnership and retain control over content, while UNE academic staff will continue to teach all online courses.

Reviews



Primary English Teaching: An introduction to language, literacy and learning

Edited by Robyn Cox
Published by Sage
ISBN 9 781 849 201 964
RRP \$39.95
Reviewed by Steve Holden

Much discussion of literacy learning in the early and primary years centres on psycholinguistic approaches to reading in terms of contextual clues to do with graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues, or on what Professor Andrew Lambirth from Greenwich University, London, calls a cognitive-psychological approach that emphasises phonological awareness, decoding, word recognition and comprehension.

It would be easy to imagine a teacher who subscribes to the first approach might typically

invite lots of reading aloud, frequent opportunity for reading and writing, and lots of 'real' books in the classroom; while a teacher who subscribes to the second approach might typically take a staged reading approach with readers rather than 'real' books and an emphasis on decoding through word identification. When it comes to literacy learning, apparently, binaries matter, not that the two views just described align neatly with the whole-language and phonics approaches on which the battle lines of the reading wars are usually drawn.

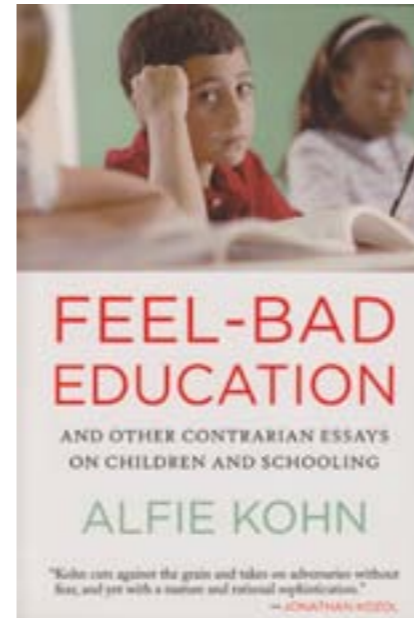
Go into many early and primary years classrooms, though, and you'll find teachers and students whose practices range across those battle lines, using a blend of authentic texts and comprehension activities, phonic decoding skills and games of hangman, using and creating a variety of texts in print and other media.

The surprise is that such blending remains apparently persistent, despite the pressure on early and primary years teachers generated by national literacy assessment. As Lambirth observes, a cognitive-psychological approach that breaks literacy into developmental stages and emphasises phonological awareness, decoding, word recognition and comprehension, promises to create competent readers more efficiently and

faster, which is a big deal if students' 'literacy scores' matter.

No less a big deal, and frequently marginalised in literacy debate, is the teaching of handwriting. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English* insists merely that 'handwriting... should be taught across all years of schooling,' or, not much more usefully, 'the production of legible, correctly formed letters by hand.' As Jane Medwell, from the University of Worcester's Institute of Education, points out, it's important to choose a style and teach and model it consistently.

Editor Dr Robyn Cox, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Australian Catholic University, has gathered together contributions that address literacy theory and research with practical reference. Although her focus is on English teaching in English schools, primarily addressing those in initial teacher education and graduate teachers, there's still something here for experienced Australian teachers. Cox and her contributors lean, I think, towards the psycholinguistic approach, while recognising, in the words of Chris Robertson, Professor and Head of the University of Worcester's Institute of Education, that teaching literacy is an 'intricate weaving...with children.'



Feel-bad Education and Other Contrarian Essays on Children and Schooling

By Alfie Kohn
Published by Beacon Press
ISBN 9 780 807 001 400
RRP \$19.95
Reviewed by Steve Holden

American author, proponent of progressive education and self-styled contrarian Alfie Kohn's *Feel-bad Education and Other Contrarian Essays on Children and Schooling* is at first reading a likeable book that makes the case, to use William Butler Yeats's well-worn phrase, that, 'Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.' The only problem with the 19 essays collected here, mostly first published in the United States in education journals and magazines like *Education Week*, *Educational Leadership* and *Phi Delta Kappan*, is that Kohn

overplays the view that education is the filling of a pail.

His target is the prescriptive approach to schooling driven by top-down government mandates that privilege accountability measured through standardised testing where success depends on students who can be prepped to regurgitate content before they forget it.

Sure, schooling in the US has been and is being pushed on some kind of no-child-left-behind race-to-the-top, but the feel-bad education Kohn attacks feels like a straw man.

The eminently readable 'How to create nonreaders: Reflections on motivation, learning and sharing power,' for example, suggests seven ways to kill student motivation: quantify their reading assignments; make them write reports; isolate them; focus on skills; offer them incentives; prepare them for tests; and restrict their choices. Who, I wonder, would actually reduce their teaching to such an approach? On incentives, by the way, Kohn writes that, 'Scores of studies have confirmed that rewards' – his examples include A's and praise – 'tend to lead people to lose interest in whatever they had to do to snag them.' Psychological research suggests the effects of praise and reward are much more complex.

There's also some sleight of hand. In 'Debunking the case for national standards,' for example,

Kohn claims, 'Talented teachers have abandoned the profession after having been turned into glorified test-prep technicians.' The trick here is that readers will typically see themselves as those talented teachers, whose abandoning of the profession would be a huge loss, leaving the assumption that educators are glorified test-prep technicians, well, untested.

For some reason 'The truth about homework,' from the 6 September 2006 edition of *Education Week*, doesn't get a guernsey. Maybe that's because Kohn argued that extra time on task through homework is a waste because the only skills that can be automatised are behavioural, like improving your tennis swing, not cognitive. There's plenty in the *Handbook of Reading Research* to correct that.

It's a shame that this book has such weaknesses, since Kohn is fun to read, and there's no index. Considering that Kohn is pretty much a magpie, grabbing shiny ideas from here and there, why would there be?

Steve Holden is Editor in Chief – Magazines at ACER Press.

REFERENCES

Kamil, M.L., Pearson, P.D., Birr-Moje, E. & Afflerbach, P.P. (2011). *Handbook of Reading Research*. New York: Routledge.

Diary

3-7 JULY

[Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia combined national conference: Mathematics: Traditions and \(new\) practices](#)

This combined conference of The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia brings together teachers and researchers for an extensive professional program of nearly five full days featuring a range of sessions from plenary keynote addresses to workshops and small group discussions.

phone 08 8363 0288.

place Alice Springs Convention Centre

contact Melinda Pearson

phone 08 8363 0288

email admin@aamt.edu.au

website www.aamt.edu.au/conferences/aamt-merga-conference

3-10 JULY

[NAIDOC Week](#)

Join the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee to celebrate NAIDOC week and promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our culture.

website www.naidoc.org.au

8-10 JULY

[Australian Literacy Educators Association National Conference: Multiliterate, Multicultural, Multifaceted... Melbourne](#)

The Multiliterate, Multicultural, Multifaceted... Melbourne conference will support educators to meet the literacy challenges and opportunities of a networked, multilingual and culturally diverse literacy landscape.

place Hilton on the Park, Melbourne

contact National Curriculum Services

phone 03 9417 3555

email info@ncsonline.com.au

website www.alea2011.com

10-13 JULY

[CONASTA 60: Science at the top](#)

CONASTA is the annual conference of the Australian Science Teachers Association. CONASTA 60, hosted by the Science Teachers Association of the Northern Territory, offers a lab tech program, primary program, workshops and excursions as well as an optional post-conference three-day tour to Kakadu or two-day tour to Katherine and Litchfield.

place Darwin High School

contact Josie West

phone 02 6282 9377

email conasta@asta.edu.au

website www.conasta.edu.au

11 JULY-16 SEPTEMBER

[Green Lane Diary](#)

Years 3 to 7 students are invited to put their learning into action in Term 3 through a free, national curriculum-linked education program designed by Green Cross Australia and environmental educators, teaching the stresses our planet faces and empowering children to enact changes at home, at school and in the community. Students receive a diary and keep a scrapbook during Term 3 of their actions and projects that are making a difference.

email info@greencrossaustralia.org

website www.greenlanediary.org

1-2 OR 4-5 AUGUST

[Differentiation Institute: Successful Teaching in a Differentiated Classroom](#)

Successful Teaching in a Differentiated Classroom aims to help you design curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of every student. Learn how to implement a number of practical differentiation strategies both in planning and teaching

place Brisbane 1-2 August, and Melbourne 4-5 August

website www.hbpls.com.au

5 AUGUST

[Jeans for Genes Day](#)

Donate a gold coin on Jeans for Genes Day and support the Children's Medical Research Institute to unravel the mysteries of childhood diseases.

contact Nickie Flambouras

phone 1800 GENIES (436 437)

website www.jeansforgenes.org.au

5-6 AUGUST

[The Education Show, Melbourne](#)

The Education Show provides primary and secondary teachers, school leaders and administrators with access to the latest education resources, products and services as well as a professional development program with 60 presentations on curriculum initiatives, teaching and learning programs, learning technologies, professional issues and school improvement.

place Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne

contact Tina Tolich

phone 03 9596 8881

email team@resourcesforcourses.com.au

website www.educationshow.com.au

7-9 AUGUST

[ACER Research Conference: Indigenous Education – pathways to success](#)

place Darwin

website www.acer.edu.au/conference

11-13 AUGUST

[IWBNet 8th National Interactive Teaching and Learning Conference](#)

This conference provides collegial professional development to support teachers to improve their teaching with interactive whiteboards and other digital technology

place Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School, Melbourne

phone 1800 760 108

website www.iwb.net.au/conferences/itl/default.htm

13-21 AUGUST

[National Science Week: React to chemistry](#)

Applications for school grants to support the running of a National Science Week event close on 27 May in Queensland and Tasmania, and 3 June everywhere else except Victoria on 17 June.

website www.scienceweek.gov.au

website www.asta.edu.au

14-16 AUGUST

[ELH and SchoolTech Conference](#)

The ELH and SchoolTech Conference aims to challenge, inspire and motivate principals, heads of curriculum, teachers and professional development coordinators. Explore high-level technology strategy, and planning and management issues, and learn how to use the latest technologies and software applications in full-day intensive workshops, and leave with practical resources to enhance your classroom activities.

place Mantra Erskine Beach Resort, Lorne, Victoria

phone 1300 36 1988

email conferences@computelec.com.au

website www.computelec.com.au/elh2011

10-11 SEPT

[Queensland Education Resources Expo](#)

The Queensland Education Resources Expo (QUEDREX) is Queensland's premier industry event for education professionals, showcasing the latest resources to all educators. Education professionals from all levels and institutions can

discover, test and purchase resources and find innovative ideas, products and services to enhance their workplace and career. The event features interactive workshops and an extensive seminar program focusing on key education issues and is a great opportunity for professional development! QUEDREX also addresses some

of the professional standards required for registration renewal under the Queensland College of Teachers Continuing Professional Development Framework.

Register online for free tickets.

place Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

phone 07 5535 2022

email interchange@onthenet.com.au

website www.quedrex.com.au

23 SEPTEMBER

[NATA Young Scientists of the Year Award competition](#)

Primary school students from 7 to 12 years of age are invited to enter the National Association of Testing Authorities fifth annual NATA Young Scientists of the Year Award competition, and have the chance to win \$3,000 for their school and \$500 for the winning student group. Submit a science project based on the theme of this year's competition, 'Chemistry in our lives.' Entry is free. Entries must be submitted by Friday, 23 September.

website www.nata.com.au



Homework

WENDY HARMER has an objection: this homework malarkey is getting right out of hand.

This week my son's Year 8 science teacher sent home an assignment which required the observation of the behaviour of microbes – in this instance, yeast.

So the boy had to bake bread.

HELLO?

Even I can't bake bread! (And I've been on *Masterchef*. ON THE TELLY!!!) My mother can't bake bread. Nor can any woman I've ever met. So why, oh why, would you ask a 13-year-old boy to have a go?

In my kitchen?

Only this morning he implored me to make his instant pot noodles.

Honestly, haven't you people heard of Google?

Now I'm sitting here, barricaded in my office to avoid the crime scene in the kitchen. I've strung up fluoro 'Do Not Cross' tape, rescued my young daughter and scarpered.

I could tell the assignment wasn't sent home by the maths teacher – the quantities for the recipe were all in Imperial

measure. I actually had to get on the internet and use a conversion table to be sure of the temperature of the oven.

I could also tell that it wasn't a woman who had set the task, because a woman could not be that cruel. A woman would at least have some understanding of the effort involved in scraping hardened bread dough off cedar blinds.

Which is exactly what my husband is trying to do right now. He's in there behind the closed door armed with Spray 'n' Wipe and a pot scourer, muttering murderous oaths.

'Crap!' he calls. 'It's like *CSI Miami* in here!

'Every drawer's open. All the bench tops are covered in gunge. You can follow the footprints across the floor through the sugar. The kid's left more clues than OJ Simpson!'

Not so much a bloody glove as a floury oven mitt.

Meanwhile, the smiling perpetrator has left his ghostly trail across the lounge room carpet and into my office, as he munches on a half-baked bread roll and wants to create a graph, table or pie chart on his findings.

Although he's not quite sure what they might be because he's lost the bit of paper which contained the whole point of the exercise.

I'm no scientist, but even I know that it's almost impossible to

make a graph when the only parameter we have is one tray of half-baked, half-eaten bread rolls.

If the hypothesis was, 'How long will it take before the whole thing ends in tears?' we have a finding. Five hours.

Look, I'm all in favour of a bit of a collage, even a diorama of the solar system or getting an egg inside a milk bottle as a science homework task, but this stuff is too hard for us.

What's next? A scale model of the Large Hadron Collider?

Oh wait! We already did that. Well close, anyway.

Let's relive the saga of the innocently-named 'balloon popping machine' from Year 7 science.

In that outing I recall we had a choice of energy sources – gravitational, kinetic, elastic, chemical or heat. In the end we ticked off all five just trying to load the damned thing in the car.

It was a marvellous confabulation of drawing pins, water spouts, toothpick wheels, bits of bamboo and human spit – all painstakingly constructed by Dad over three days.

It worked, as far as is recorded, just the once.

And that was under ideal conditions. (Meaning that we all pretended it worked for the sake of the man of the house, but it never did. Let's be honest. Not really.)

I'm starting to wonder if there is some method to the madness in the science homework being sent our way. Everyone knows that scientists are always pushing for more research and development dollars from the Commonwealth government.

I reckon the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation is outsourcing its research through my high school kid to our place.

Maybe they're hoping we'll perfect cold fusion in the bathroom or have a breakthrough on the properties of dark matter by shining a torch under my son's bed.

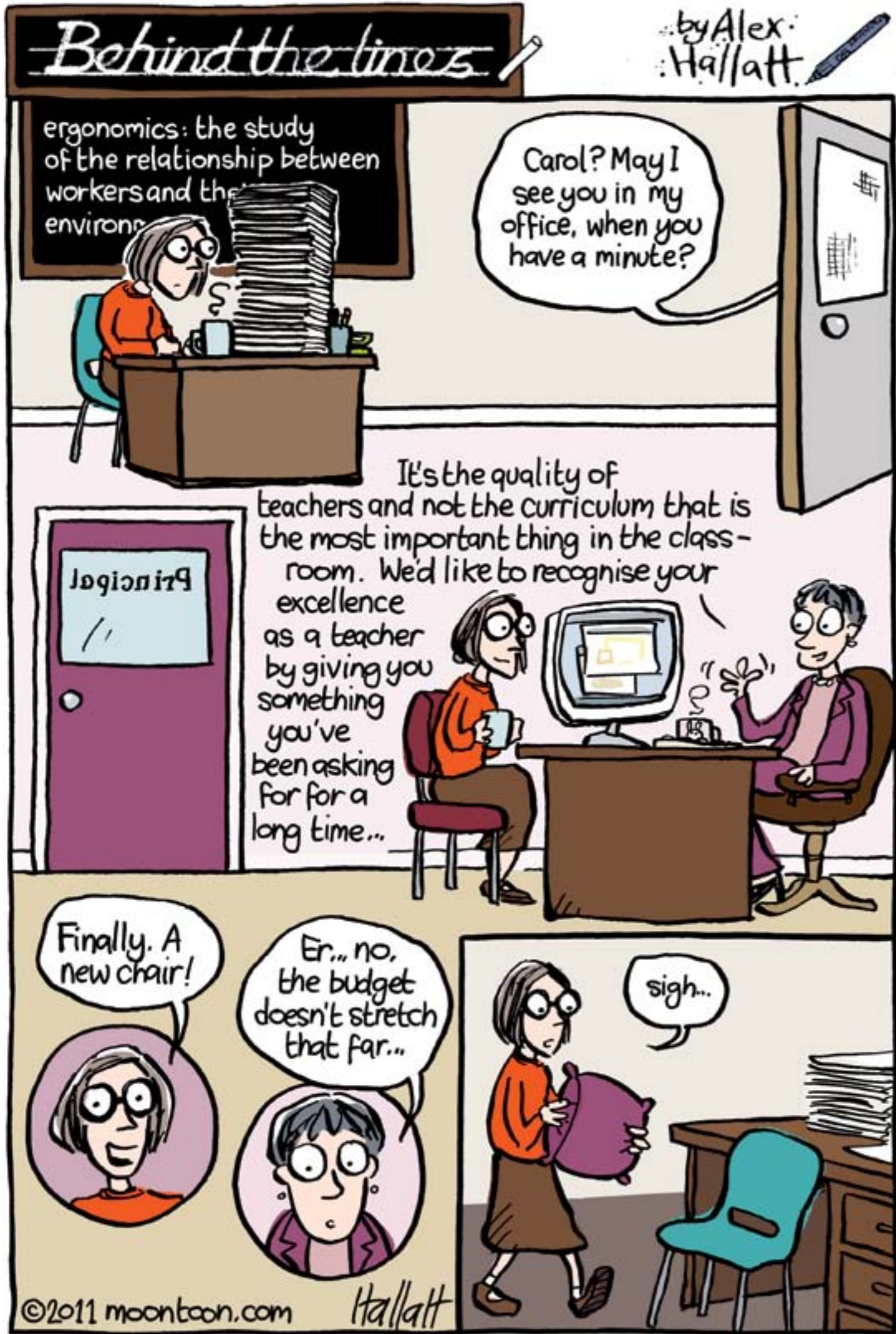
Actually, this outsourcing would be a good tactic, because these bread rolls could be used in the control of feral animals. A pile of them along the Queensland border just might halt the southern march of cane toads.

I'm dreading my daughter starting high school. She's quite the little artist and I can just imagine when she comes home wanting to make an art installation involving computer generated 3-D holograms, flame throwers and lasers.

Please, have mercy! The annual Easter bonnet parade pushed our family's capabilities to the limit. Although when it comes to cutting out bits of paper and using glue sticks, we're experts.

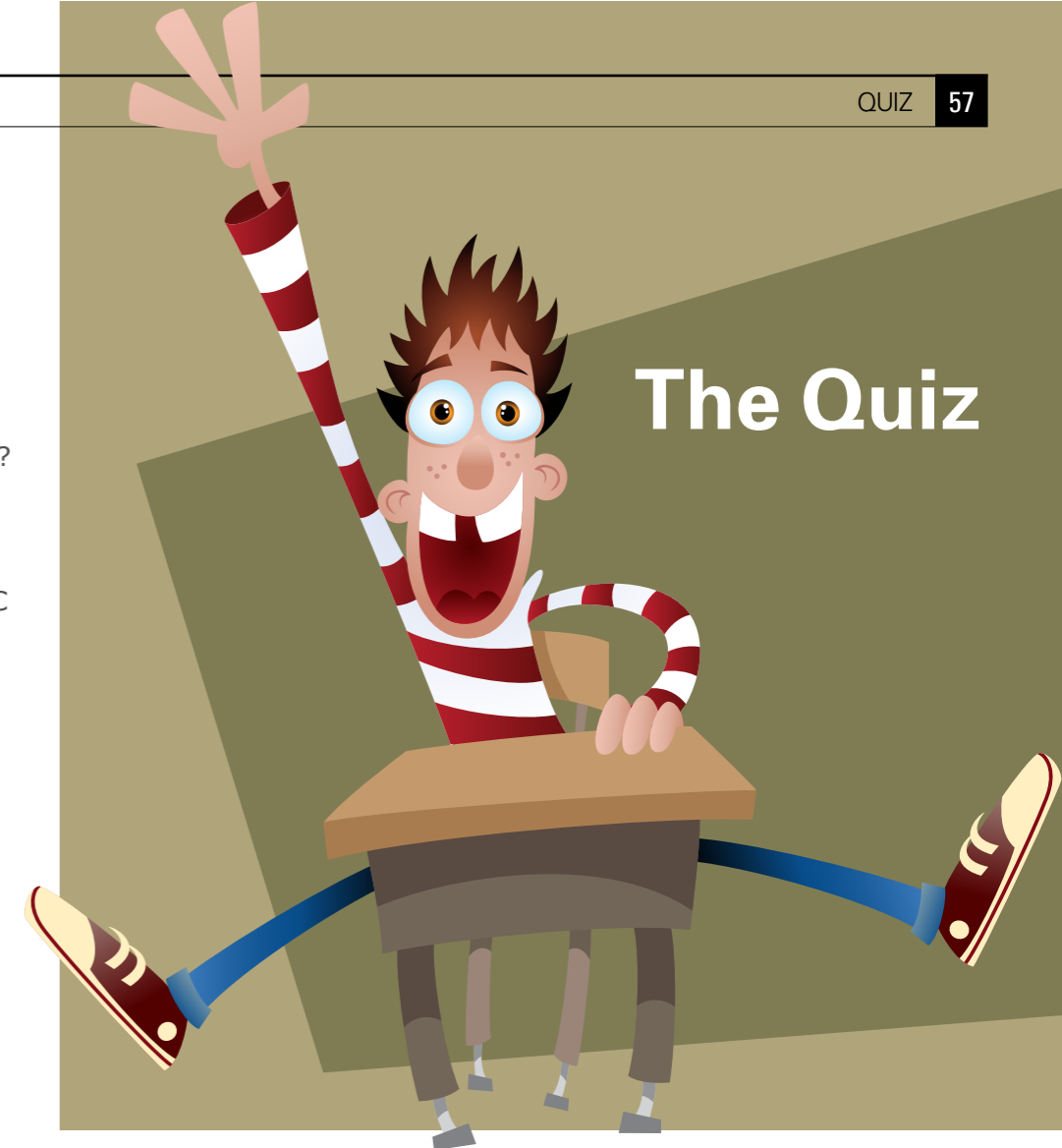
I'M NO SCIENTIST, BUT EVEN I KNOW THAT IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE A GRAPH WHEN THE ONLY PARAMETER WE HAVE IS ONE TRAY OF HALF-BAKED, HALF-EATEN BREAD ROLLS.

Wendy Harmer is one of Australia's best known humorists and authors, and a regular columnist for Inside Teaching.



by Alex Hallatt

The Quiz



- 1 What does NAIDOC stand for?
- 2 When will NAIDOC Week be celebrated in 2011?
- 3 What is the theme of NAIDOC Week this year?
- 4 Who won the 2010 NAIDOC Person of the Year Award?
- 5 When was the committee formed?
- 6 When did the committee first ask that National Aborigines and Islanders Day be made a national public holiday to recognise Australia's cultural history?
- 7 In the recent Commonwealth government budget, how much money was allocated to education, employment and health services for Indigenous Australians?
- 8 To give principals more control over budgets and employment by 2018?
- 9 To reward great teachers, to 2015?
- 10 To reward schools that improve attendance and numeracy and literacy results, from 2012 to 2017?
- 11 To assist schools to support students with disabilities, to 2014?
- 12 To expand the school chaplaincy program, to 2014?
- 13 How much did the Victorian state government commit in its budget to fund chaplains?

- 14 Which organisation is contracted to provide chaplains to 280 participating Victorian schools, and provides volunteers to teach Christian religious education classes to 70 per cent of Victorian government schools?
- 15 'In Australia, we have a God-given open door to children and young people with the Gospel, our federal and state governments allow us to take the Christian faith into our schools and share it. We need to go and make disciples.' Who said this?
- 16 What is the name of the Toowoomba man who mounted a High Court challenge to have the Commonwealth government's funding of the national school chaplaincy program ruled unconstitutional?
- 17 When will the High Court rule?
- 18 Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test in May. Name the three other tests that make up the National Assessment Program.

ANSWERS

1. NAIDOC originally stood for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee, but the observance now takes place over a week; 2. 3-10 July; 3. Change: the next step is ours; 4. Dennis Eggington, the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia; 5. 1957; 6. 1984; 7. \$526.6 million; 8. \$480 million; 9. \$425 million; 10. \$388 million; 11. \$200 million; 12. \$222 million; 13. \$500,000 per year over four years; 14. Access Ministries; 15. Access Ministries' CEO Evonne Paddison; 16. Ron Williams; 17. August. 18. Science Literacy, Civics and Citizenship, and Information and Communication Technology Literacy.