

SchoolNews

The essential industry guide

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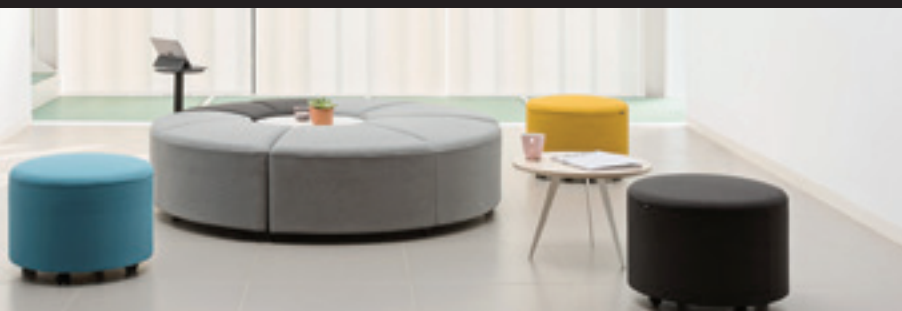
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Making up their minds

New research is finding that mental illness and poor sleep habits - often not mutually exclusive - create deficits in executive function. Why is this important to note?

"Executive function skills are critical for both school and personal success, but have been traditionally under-addressed in academic settings," according to psychologist Harriet Greenstone in her essay, 'Executive Function in the Classroom: Neurological Implications for Classroom Intervention'.

According to research undertaken at Harvard University's Centre on the Developing Child (HUCDC), executive function refers to the brain's aptitude for memory, focus and discipline. Developing sound executive function skills enables children to make balanced decisions, cope better with stress and manage their time.

There are a variety of factors that can impair executive



Rosie Clarke,
Editor, *SchoolNews*
editor@school-news.com.au

function, including adversity in young childhood, extreme stress and mental health issues like depression and anxiety. However, executive function can be improved and developed over time.

HUCDC calls for teachers to be trained in developing executive function skills. "Teachers are often the first to recognise serious problems with a child's ability to control impulses, focus attention, stay organised,

and follow instructions. The consequences of mislabelling these problems as 'bad behaviour' can lead to a highly disrupted classroom, preventable expulsions, or the inappropriate use of psychotropic medications."

It's a controversial subject with many hats in the ring: everyone has been impacted by mental health in some way. Australia certainly has one of the biggest hats in the ring, with suicide the leading cause of death among young people. The most recent OECD results told us that suicide rates among 15-24-year-old Australians increased from 10.3 per 100,000 people in 2007 to 12.7 in 2016.

The wider problems that face young people are difficult to mitigate on a day-to-day basis in a school environment. However, teaching children how to cope with smaller stressors can give them tools to overcome the big stressors. HUCDC advocates that no-one is born with executive function skills, they are

developed over time by building connections between the prefrontal cortex and other areas of the brain.

Teaching young people how to respond to their environment "with intention, not impulse" is how we can help them improve their executive function skills and with practice, those skills strengthen.

Dr Greenstone believes that to improve executive function and coping skills, education pedagogy should not just focus on what students learn in the classroom, but how they learn in the classroom as well, "cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally".

Perhaps this is why we are starting to see mindfulness come to the forefront of the education conversation: educators and academics are getting serious about making minds stronger, so that students develop the executive function they need to decision-make and cope better. ■



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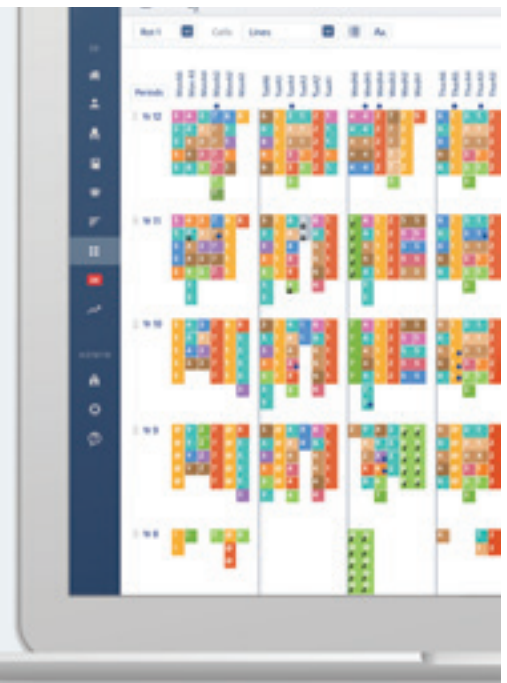
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What's going on?

Tidbits from the Twittersverse

 **Adam Voigt**
@adam_voigt

Looking forward to watching a principled Australian campaign without the weak, populist flip-flopping. Wishing you every success (including the ultimate one!) @JaneCaro

 **Alice Keeler**
@alicekeeler

I challenge you on this, ask students to make a presentation with NO WORDS! YOU are your presentation. Your slides are a visual for your AUDIENCE not a crutch for your presentation.

 **Shashi**
@skrish2017

Stunning. If ever a student asks you why stop motion animation is important please show them this. Such discipline and training can help develop grit. Self confidence. Lifelong skills. One of the purest art forms indeed.

 **Amie Albrecht**
@nomad_penguin

It bothers me that most students aren't taught to write mathematics, and I mean more than the syntax of symbols. The idea that the words surrounding the symbols are not important is almost mind blowing.

 **peter j goss**
@peter_goss

Queensland's rise to top education performer could provide a model for the country - ABC News. Adaptive improvement means looking at what other states are doing as well as what is working best in each state.

 **Catia Malaquias**
@CatiaMalaquias

Interestingly QLD also has the leading inclusive edu policy in the country + lowest rates (albeit still way too high) of gatekeeping students w disability - lots of work needed but a jurisdiction working towards a more equitable, universally accessible and inclusive edu system.

 **All Means All**
@allmeansallaus

How does a special school win an #inclusive education award?! Your own policy provides clear guidance on what is and isn't inclusive education as per the @UN definition - did the judges read it? Segregation isn't inclusion

Most-read news items this quarter:

(Make sure you're subscribed to our weekly newsletter: www.school-news.com.au.)

24 banned teachers pose "unacceptable risk" to students

The Queensland College of Teachers dropped a slew of stats detailing teacher suspensions and revoked licenses recording since January, linked to serious allegations.

Sexual relationships with students, inappropriate sleepovers and sexting were listed as some of the disturbing behaviours for which the QCT launched proceedings. According to reports, five of the 24 banned or suspended teachers were female.

Science teacher receives 4-year ban for grooming teenage girl

A decision delivered in June saw a 37-year-old biology teacher banned from teaching for four years after the tribunal heard he engaged in conduct described as "very disturbing on a number of levels". Referred to only as DGM, the teacher "engaged in conduct clearly designed to 'groom'" one 17-year-old student "for the purposes of his own sexual gratification"; collecting her from parties without her parents' knowledge; giving the student \$250 in cash; conducting private tutoring sessions with no-one else present, and engaging in an ongoing sexual relationship with her from November 2015 until mid-2016.

According to the Tribunal decision, a 15-year-old student said the teacher rubbed their back during a boat excursion that made her feel uncomfortable. She also said the teacher made inappropriate gestures and said "lick me, I'm salty". This student's father complained to the school and she was removed from his class.

Principal with "serious boundary violations" receives 4.5-year ban

A school principal referred to only as CSK was alleged by QCT to have acted inappropriately

with a group of year 7 students, taking them on outings without written permission, allowing unlicensed minors to drive his car, organising sleepovers with children at his home as reward for gardening, taking children on weekend activities without written permission, requesting and allowing children to work at his home for reward.

It was said at the Tribunal that this principal also threatened "legal action, dismissal or transfer against any staff member who raised allegations against him.

QCT director John Ryan told the ABC: "Of the serious criminal offences committed against children by teachers, a majority are committed against children who are not their students."

"Useless", "unusable", "should be discarded": NAPLAN uproar following new report

The Australian Education Union's Victorian branch has called on federal education minister Dan Tehan to undertake a comprehensive review of NAPLAN after an independent report highlighted corrupt 2018 test data.

"This investigation finds NAPLAN data from this year's online tests is unusable. This bungle represents a massive failure of both administration and leadership by the Federal Liberal Government," said Justin Mullaly, deputy president of AEU Victoria.

"This independent review conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston College, *Problems in the Design and Administration of the 2018 NAPLAN*, found 'incomparable' data in this year's NAPLAN online trial meaning the results are useless and should be discarded.

"A very disturbing aspect to this debacle is that the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) failed to identify and act on critical errors. If the body charged with administering NAPLAN tests has overlooked such gross inaccuracies, parents will obviously question whether they can be confident that ACARA is discharging its duties competently. ►

◀ “A child’s classroom teacher is always best placed to assess their educational progress – that’s why we need student centred assessment processes developed by teachers and other education professionals who have a proper understanding of the full range of factors which impact on student learning,” said Mr Mullaly.

QLD education minister Grace Grace said the Australian Catholic University (ACU) had been appointed to carry out the second stage of the state’s NAPLAN evaluation.

“I encourage all interested stakeholders including teachers, principals and students in Years 3 to 10, to tell us their views on the NAPLAN tests,” Ms Grace said.

“After ten years of these tests, and in the absence of any commitment for a review from the federal government, I initiated our own state-based review. I am looking forward to the findings of the Queensland evaluation and I intend to present them to my interstate and federal counterparts at an Education Council meeting before the end of the year.”

NSW school breaks silence surrounding sexual abuse

Sydney’s Glenwood High School produced a compelling and powerful video this quarter to help break the silence surrounding child sexual assault as part of Bravehearts’ annual, national *White Balloon Day* campaign.

Thirty students produced the three-minute video *White Balloon Day*, featuring animated white balloons and Bravehearts’ poignant messages to help increase vital awareness of child sexual assault - a crime that affects more than 58,000 Australian children every year.



When the Glenwood High School Welfare Officer invited students and teachers to submit ideas to increase awareness of the importance of child protection for *White Balloon Day*, she said she could never have imagined the result: “They know that all children and young people have the right to feel safe.”

Noelene Callaghan, head teacher at CBMS, identified the opportunity for Year 9 students to research and develop a special project that would significantly help to increase awareness of the issue across their school community.

“Although at first, some of

the students were a little apprehensive about the subject matter, the creative concept of using online video featuring animated white balloons, student presenters and Bravehearts’ compelling messages to increase awareness of this important issue, became an exciting and yet challenging project for the students,” said Ms Callaghan.

“Together we researched *White Balloon Day* messages, wrote and developed the script and creative concepts, and when it came time to call for auditions for the 25 presenter roles, the response

was overwhelming,” she said.

“Using a green screen, each student presenter had been given the opportunity to select the message they wanted to present while five students worked hard behind the scenes during filming and in post-production including producing the animated balloons and working in the editing suites.

“Throughout every step of the process; from research and development, to production through to completion; the students’ enthusiasm grew because they know that all children and young people have the right to feel safe,” Ms Callaghan said.

One year 9 student said: “I love this class. Yes, at some points it’s challenging but a lot of the time it’s worth it. Our whole class puts in so much effort and we are always proud with what comes out. A lot of the time we don’t finish something in class because it’s too big to complete in just an hour so but our wonderful teacher Ms Callaghan, lets us come in at lunch and recess times to help us and let us get it done.”

In less than 12 months following the introduction of the CBMS program at Glenwood High School, the creative and technical talents earned the school the *T4L Award* by the NSW Department of Education for *Most Innovative Use of Technology*.

Hetty Johnston AM, Founder and Executive Chair of Bravehearts said: “With 1 in 5 children sexually harmed in some way before their 18th Birthday, the significance of what the Glenwood High School students have achieved cannot be overstated.”

Schools can register online to take part in next year’s *White Balloon Day* as well as *National Child Protection Week*. ▶



Images: Glenwood High School and Braveheart



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South Melbourne Primary School, Photo: Victorian School Building Authority and Hayball Architects

◀ Brisbane boom bringing vertical schools to QLD

But are they arriving quick enough? Reports of state school overcrowding in the sunny state capital are on the rise.

In an interview with ABC, QLD Greens MP Michael Berkman advocated for a new state school to be built in his inner-western electorate of Maiwar. Indooroopilly State School is overflowing with 1100 students and a 26 percent increase in enrolments since 2014.

Berkman said: "It's just a constant message coming back from the community, and a handful of those schools in particular are just bursting at the seams." The rapid oversupply of high-rise apartments in Brisbane is one of the main reasons behind the enrollment boom.

Known as the largest public high school in the country, Brisbane State High School enrolments have increased by 40% scaling almost 3200 students. The government has signalled plans to build several new state schools



South Melbourne Primary School, Photo: Victorian School Building Authority and Hayball Architects

in Brisbane to offset the massive enrolment figures.

Following in Sydney's footsteps, Brisbane will house two vertical schools in its inner-city region. Slated for 2020, the first will be located in Fortitude Valley and the second in South Brisbane.

The Fortitude Valley high rise school will be called Inner City North State Secondary College, and education minister Grace Grace announced the foundation principal will be Sharon Barker, the former principal of Highfields State Secondary College in

Toowoomba. Ms Grace said the school will be a masterpiece once complete in 2020.

"Not only will Inner City North State Secondary College look impressive, it will be a future-focused school, supported by excellence in teaching through a partnership with QUT. We are delivering a state-wide infrastructure investment program valued at more than \$923 million in 2018-19," Ms Grace said.

The population growth issue is not limited to Brisbane; back in March, Department of Education data revealed that eight percent of QLD primary school classrooms and four percent of QLD high school classrooms were overcrowded. A rake of Sydney schools have had to find ways to manage the influx of new enrolments as well.

Chatswood Public School in Sydney's North Shore made headlines when its head of P&C, Brett Backhouse, told the SMH: "We don't have anywhere to put them. We're the biggest school on the north shore [and] we have less than seven square metres of playground space per child."

The school building reached capacity at 800 students but enrolls more than 1200.

Vertical schools have largely been well-received in other Aussie capitals, with their focus on maximising space and creating innovative, flexible learning environments. Australia's first purpose-built vertical public primary school popped up this year in South Melbourne as the "guinea pig" for a high-rise education.

Principal Noel Creece told *School News*: "There was no way the kids could have a large sprawling space in the middle of the city on such a small footprint so we had to build up instead of out."

In the sparkling high-rise school, outdoor space is limited but kids can play in the forecourt on the ground floor or stage a few matches on the indoor basketball/netball court on the ground floor or outdoor basketball/netball court on level two.

In Brisbane, it's been 50 years since a new school was built and outdoor space in an



South Melbourne Primary School, Photo: Victorian School Building Authority

overflowing campus is the first to go, Queensland Teachers Union president Kevin Bates told ABC: "The issue in inner-city schools is that often the only space that's available to build new buildings is the oval or the green space. And when we

are in an environment such as Queensland where the outdoors is a perfectly useable space and indeed one that allows for students to work off that energy, it's a real shame to think that we would be sacrificing that space just to have enough

room for students to learn in."

Dutton Park is another inner city Brisbane area pinpointed for state school development, expected to open in 2021 as part of a partnership with the University of Queensland. ■

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How to enjoy failure



and why it's
important
in school

By Rosie Clarke, *Editor*

Later in this issue, you can read Sir Ken Robinson's thoughts on revolution in education. Having freedom to fail is a big theme.

Sir Ken is quite positive about it; in fact, positively enthused by the idea that teachers (just like students) should be allowed to fail and feel empowered by failure.

In, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, he writes: "If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original." There's a bravery in putting yourself out there, he suggests, knowing that you might be off the mark and being open to accept valid criticism.

We all fail, but so few people share their failures

We've all heard the rags to riches narrative: J.K. Rowling was rejected by 12 publishing houses before *Harry Potter*

It's easy to glorify failure when you are now successful but that doesn't motivate people with a crippling fear of failure



became a whirlwind success. Oprah was fired as a news reporter before she became the unofficial Queen of media. Steve Jobs was kicked out of his own company long before the iPhone came along. But the problem with this narrative is hindsight.

Of course it is easy to see the benefit of failure when you are now successful. That doesn't necessarily motivate those for whom the fear of failure is crippling. Wouldn't a more valuable insight be how to deal with failure when it happens, without the promise

of later success? How to perceive it as something positive. How to enjoy it.

Fear of failure pervades school

Taking a sick day to avoid an exam or sports event that could lead to failure; failing to hand in homework rather than have it graded; turning down work experience to avoid embarrassment; every day there might be 10 things that trigger a student's fear of failure.

Trying sometimes doesn't seem worth failing, and that's

a mammoth paradigm to shift.

As a remedy, perhaps we need to hear more stories about failure - without the happy ending.

Yes, J.K. Rowling was rejected by 12 publishers before *Harry Potter* became a whirlwind success but I wonder how many other manuscripts have disintegrated in a drawer because their author was too scared of rejection to hit send. How many books *haven't even been written* because their writers are paralysed by fear of critique?

Maybe hearing from people who've hit send, not become the next J.K. Rowling, and happily lived to tell the tale, will help ease that fear?

What it feels like to enjoy failure

In trying to come up with an example of my own experienced failure, to walk the talk (so to speak), I remembered my high school English teachers' encouragement... they propelled me to aim

incredibly high, fall incredibly far and maintain self-confidence. For me, applying to Cambridge University was a lesson in *failing well* that I hope today's students can experience for themselves.

So, I will now share my brutal, fair and extremely useful rejection feedback.

Once upon a time... I was an eager grade 12 student and zealous literary nerd I challenged Cambridge to hold me in its prestigious, academic bosom and carry me through hallowed halls to greatness, like a knight in shiny collegiate armour.

Cambridge said: "Nah."

Academic rejection speaks directly to your ego. It's a stone thrown at you from the tree of knowledge.

Then again, a brutal paragraph of negative feedback might just give you a new perspective, trigger a new idea, push you in a new direction or simply give you a new experience (as it did for me). Even if that experience amounts to nothing more than your first encounter with harsh criticism.

I accept this criticism. It felt brutal at the time in spite of its courteous wording.

One of the interview questions was: 'If I was a publisher and one of my authors had written something, then rewritten it – which version should I publish and why?'

How would you have answered that? It's a great question.

The interviewers asked me to read things aloud and discuss the meaning. I'd present an argument and they'd ask me to provide examples that would oppose my original statement. It was challenging, engaging and exciting. I asked questions about pieces of theory I'd read.

At times, I was rigid in my thinking. At times, I wanted to prove I was right rather than contemplate being wrong. At times, I was unresponsive

and confused. I remember a moment of panic when I didn't recognise a poem: my mind devolved into white noise and before I had time to read the first verse they asked what I thought.

Criticism is something we rarely want in lieu of praise. Even if it's valid criticism. Even when it's the criticism that provides momentum.

I learned that it was more motivating to be your own prestige, than to chase it

After sending in my initial application to study English Literature at Cambridge, the response from most people was, 'but it's so competitive!', 'isn't it really hard to get in?', 'don't you have to be, like, really smart?', or my personal favourite, 'it's impossible to get in though, so what's the point in applying?'. I can still hear the voices that made these comments, eight years later. Why were they so widespread?

Perhaps it's the fog of prestige that makes people delirious. They gasp and go all gooey and sometimes their faces wash with envy if they think you might get there first. But what comments like these make you reflect on, after you've been rejected, is whether the people making them were correct. You think, was I not competitive enough? Not smart enough? Was I deluded not to realise this was out of my reach? Finally, you think, what was the point in applying?

Well, it turns out there was a huge point (and it wasn't part of any hindsight-based success story). In the process of creating my application, I had to write a personal statement, I had to communicate with my teachers and family about what I wanted to study and how I needed to structure my assessment to achieve that goal.

My teachers encouraged me to apply to multiple places and focus on making the most out of each step in the application process rather than pin all my hopes on getting in. I used my personal statement as an opportunity to propose research. I used the interview as an opportunity to learn more about the industry I was interested in. ►

Dear Rosie

Thank you for your request for feedback on our decision not to offer you a place to study English Literature. I fully understand that our decision will be a disappointment, and that you are entitled to ask for an explanation.

Cambridge applications are extremely competitive and I hope it will be possible to keep that point well in mind when considering this feedback. Every year we are sorry to find ourselves unable to offer places to excellent candidates. This year particularly we had an exceptional number of very strong applicants.

Your academic record and predicted grades were very strong, particularly as your teachers rated your performance as strongest in the subjects which are most relevant. Your personal statement clearly communicated your enthusiasm for the subject, but there was relatively little evidence of additional reading. Your submitted essays were thought to be impressive in its ambition and grappled with some very interesting concepts, but were rather confused and illogical in the approach taken, and many ideas were lacking in nuance. Our interviewers were impressed with your enthusiasm and clear interest in literature. Your answers were articulate, particularly when discussing literary study on a conceptual level. However, you struggled with the poetry readings and failed to engage critically with the material. When given new information or presented with new arguments, you sometimes failed to make appropriate adjustments to your own views, instead continuing to assert that your initial impressions were correct; you were rather rigid in your thinking and were often neither responsive nor reflective.

I hope this information is helpful and will reassure you that we do not take these decisions lightly. We are required to consider all applicants together as a gathered field. I would like to thank you for expressing interest in Cambridge, and to wish you every success with applications to other institutions and with your future studies and career.

Yours sincerely

REJECTED

◀ **Preparing to fail well actually made me a better student.**

I knew I'd have to send two examples of my work as part of my Cambridge application, so I made sure that I wrote at least two complex assignments in grade twelve that were in a relevant subject to my proposed degree and completed to a standard I thought was high enough for Cambridge professors to appreciate.

Thankfully, my school gave me the opportunity to delve into complex theory and literary analysis.

Gratefully, my English teachers had more than a little faith in my ability and supported my ambition.

I worked harder because I had long-term academic goals. I was motivated to scale the high heavenly gates of a prestigious university, so I created work to help me scale those prestigious gates. I was persistent: I revised more drafts and asked more questions about assessment criteria.

My assignments suddenly felt more important to me and more relevant to my life. I felt



as though I had to put in ten times more effort. When, after all this effort, I didn't get into Cambridge, I realised that I didn't mind. I'd still done all that work and it still felt worthwhile.

I was still just as motivated and my essays were just as good as before. I hadn't lost anything. In fact, I'd gained a whole lotta work ethic. Chasing prestige can

have a motivating influence, as it did for me back in high school.

But once I turned that prestige inwards, focussed on reaching a level of productivity I could be proud of rather than 'the high heavenly gates of a prestigious university', I realised that was much more motivating.

Rejection letters are proof of progress.

Oprah Winfrey has spoken prolifically about failure when asked about success. In the Harvard Gazette, she insisted: "There is no such thing as failure. Failure is just life trying to move us in another direction."

So I repeat what my favourite teachers used to say to me: apply, try your very best, get rejected if you must, and keep going. ■

Trying sometimes
doesn't seem worth
failing, and that's a
mammoth paradigm to shift



Unlearning how to teach will teach students how to learn

I have been a teacher for 27 years, a principal for eight, and in that time there's been enormous change in the world we are sending children out into, beyond school.

My feeling that things need to be done differently intensified over the years into an urgent need for change. We have to shift a 20th century system that was designed to produce factory workers and is no longer appropriate for our young people. That is why I raised my hand immediately to be on the steering committee for Lindfield's original design and education model.

At the end of last year, I successfully applied for the principal position at the school and so my long journey of wanting to see things done differently has finally brought me to the once in a lifetime opportunity I now have... To build a brand-new school from scratch.

To say that I'm excited would be a massive understatement.

Architectural design, led by learning

The architects working on the school have been designing its learning spaces to suit the educational model. This is, I think, quite transformational in an era of government stock-standard schools, where most of us are familiar with walking inside and seeing the exact same style as the school we went to when we were teenagers.

This will not be the case with Lindfield. It's not how we design schools anymore. With Lindfield Learning Village, we've designed open learning spaces that have a lot more flexibility and opportunity for us to do things differently; it's not the familiar industrial model, with 30 seats facing front. That



Stephanie McConnell,
Principal, Lindfield Learning Village

model positioned the *teacher* in control of the learning but we can change that simply by not having a 'front'. Removing the teacher as the fountain of all knowledge suggests something different about what learning means and that empowers students *and teachers* as learners in those environments.

This is very much what we've been working on.

Our education ethos and working model

Lindfield Learning Village has an education model that is grounded in the work of Professor Stephen Heppell, who has established many schools across Europe and South America prioritising both a 'stage not age' pedagogy



and 'schools within schools' approach. With 'stage not age', students progress based on their level of ability rather than because the calendar year ticks over.

The 'schools within schools' model means breaking down a large school environment, because a school with capacity to enrol more than 2000 students can become overwhelming from a wellbeing perspective. Breaking down the school population into neighbourhoods, which we're calling 'homebases', will help capture that essence of wellbeing.

The ultimate goal for students

I think the holy grail of individualised learning is handing over control to the students. Now, I'm not saying that the teachers should be hands-off, or just let the students 'work it out' themselves. In fact, it's the opposite: it's far more complicated and there are much more detailed structures and foundations behind this approach than an approach where a teacher simply delivers a lesson to 30 kids. ►





◀ The learning agency continuum

This is what I'm calling our individualised approach to student education. Progress is twofold: vertical mapping and horizontal agency.

In the horizontal component of the structure, students have control over the amount of teacher input they want. Some things, like maths for example, need teacher directive, or a sequential learning component where teacher input is important. But, beyond that, students can have teacher intervention as a point of need. The next step, in my thinking, is a section I'm calling 'voice and choice', where there's some structured activities that help give students guidance, such as mini project ideas, but students can pick and choose combinations of things they want to do to meet the outcomes that they're working towards.



That's actually the point: students know the outcomes that they're working towards.

Then the next step on the *continuum* is the project level, where different subject areas and skills are used in fluid conjunction to complete projects.

As a whole, the learning agency continuum is about moving from dependent to independent but it's a continuum; so being teacher-directed is not a bad place to be, it's just where a student feels they need to be in their learning to reach particular outcomes.

With the vertical mapping element of the structure, students are able to use the language to identify their goals and achievements. I have seen very young children do this in *Cleaveston Primary School, Auckland*. They are able to say, for example: "I

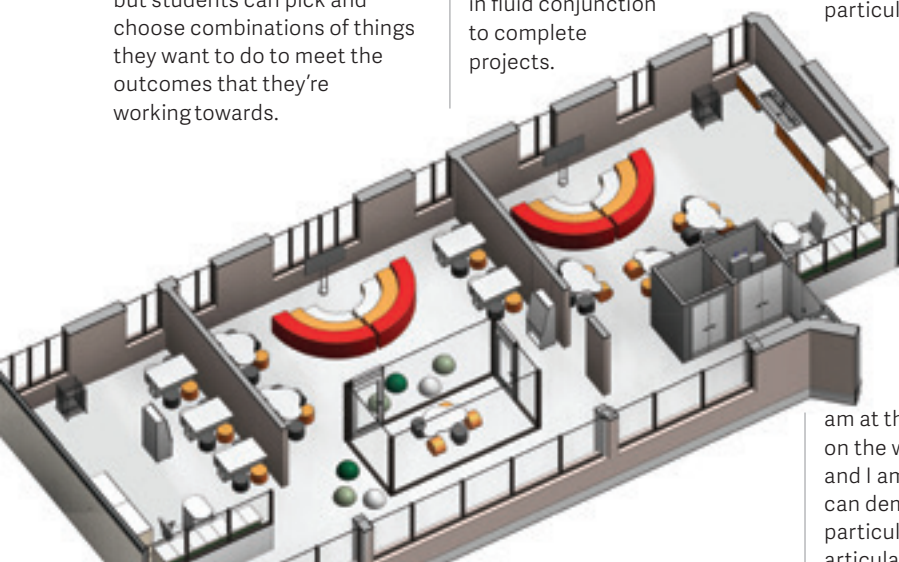
am at this point in my learning on the writing continuum and I am here because I can demonstrate these particular skills as they are articulated in the curriculum.

The way I have demonstrated these skills is with this body of evidence."

Then they are able to demonstrate in multiple ways how they have met their skill requirements and are competent at that level.

The next thing they are able to articulate is: "I am working towards the next level, which requires me to be competent at these particular skills, which I am working on in these particular projects in this way, and during this extra-curricular activity in that way."

Once a student feels that they are ready to be tested at competency level for a particular skill, the teacher will be able to assess them at that level. So students continue to move along and that's how the vertical component of the continuum works.





So, say you're working on a project: you might be at year 8 level in writing and year 6 level in maths and year 10 level in science, depending on what your abilities, passions and gifts are on the learning pathway, but you can bring whatever level of expertise or learning need you have to the project and you will advance further along your learning continuum.

So we envisage the learning matrix or mapping I've just described as the vertical pathway, and that learning agency continuum is the horizontal where they get to choose the degree of teacher involvement in that process.

Students travelling along the *learning agency continuum* are put in control.

Empowering teachers to take risks

When I was a student, I didn't really like sitting down and writing things from the board when I couldn't see that it was relevant to the real world. I also liked taking initiative in my learning and I think that's what this model asks of all learners; when I talk about learners, I'm not just talking about students because teachers are learners as well.

I think teachers need to learn again how to be learners in some ways. It's about taking risks in our own learning and sometimes when we take risks it means we get it wrong but

The best way to move away from a static model of teaching and learning is *unlearning* what we think teaching means



So, it's going to be that constant challenge of, 'why do we actually require kids to put their hands up to answer a question?' because again that's got implications of who's in a position of authority over learning when there's all sorts of alternatives, such as the Socratic circle.

There are other opportunities to empower students in an environment where we probably need to challenge our thinking on things we take for granted every day. ■

that's actually an important mindset change that needs to happen: Failure is learning.

My approach to professional learning will be to support teachers as researchers of their own practice.

They'll be constantly monitoring the impact of the teaching and learning that they are engaging in so that there's ongoing evaluation and adjustment

as we need it to be in a very agile learning environment.

I think the best way to move away from a static model of teaching and learning is unlearning what we think teaching means.



What makes a teacher great & data cannot recreate

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

In conversation with education innovator Sir Ken Robinson, School News deliberated over misconceptions about great teaching.

"It's assumed, I think, that to be a good teacher essentially all you need is to have a good degree in whatever it is you're being paid to teach," Sir Ken noted. "It's simply not true, it was never true."

What does it mean to be a skilful teacher?

For students: "A great teacher obviously knows their material but the real skill is engaging them in the material, getting them excited and curious and firing up their imaginations. That's a whole other set of skills."

The place for pedagogy

"If you doubt there's a separation between subject knowledge and pedagogy, then all you have to do is pop into most universities and you'll see a clear division. A lot of people there are brilliantly talented and knowledgeable about their own discipline but may not have any particular feel for engaging other people in it."

Making judgement calls

"Great teachers are like great doctors or lawyers, they have a whole repertoire of skills, techniques, approaches and a lot of experience but the real skill is knowing what to apply here or there and how to adapt to fit to the people in front of you."

Lessons from a sommelier

"It's skilful in the sense that it's a process that requires judgement and connoisseurship. If you go into a restaurant and a sommelier comes over to advise you on the wine, you don't want them to tell you everything about every bottle of wine they've ever encountered; you want them to



use their judgement and figure out what's relevant here and there. "That's what great teachers do. It's a profession that requires artistry, skill and judgement and yes, along the way you also need to be able to gather relevant information, be objective and gather together relevant data."

Sir Ken's problem with data

"The problem is, I think, that education's becoming far too data driven and the teacher's judgements are being set too often to one side. It's like in a medical examination you can have wonderful data being generated and the patient dying on the table."

"What you need is a way of making sense of the data so you can apply it to the situation you're confronted with, here and there." Data can't replicate human judgement; it can't factor in personal experience or a teacher's history." When it comes

to great teaching: "It's always a mixture of all of skill, judgement, knowledge and information."

Dear principals, adopt an 'ask forgiveness not permission model'

"There's an awful lot that principals can do by looking at the balance of education and getting teachers to collaborate across disciplines," Sir Ken urged.

"Culture is really about permission; what's okay and what isn't. I visit schools and see fantastic schools where wonderful things are going on despite the prevailing political climate that's happening, because the leadership at the school has given people permission to try things differently, be prepared to make mistakes, and try projects out on a basis of trial and error, which is how innovation works."

"Leadership is not about commanding control, it's about

climate control. If you set different boundaries in schools and give people permission to try new things, they will. Obviously you have to evaluate them and see if they work well against the wider things you're trying to achieve but there's a huge amount of creative talent among parents, teachers and students that we're not tapping into and that's what this shift is all about."

"Great leaders in schools and, in fact, great teachers know that there's a huge amount to gain from encouraging people to participate in the decisions that affect their own lives and to tap into that broader pool of genius that's in every community."

Does this mean schools and principals adopt an 'ask forgiveness not permission' model so they can move faster and just try things out? "Absolutely."

Education as rebellion

On this point, Sir Ken is very clear: "Schools don't have to be the way we think they are." They've simply developed in an institutionalised way and remained the same out of habit.

On the 'education revolution', he stresses: "It's very important not to try and replace one orthodoxy with another. You have to have a theory of change in all this, and part of it is to try and persuade the policymakers who often are setting the tone from above, that a lot of the measures that they are so fond of – standardised testing and posing more conformity – are actually counter-productive."

"That's part of the discourse, to influence the political conversation but at the same time, change always happens from the ground up. It happens in real places with real people."

"A lot of what goes on in schools isn't mandated, it's just habit. If we start to reimagine how schools work, then we tend to see bigger improvements than otherwise in the quality of teaching and learning." ■



Hear Sir Ken live at EduTECH 2019 on 6-7 June at the ICC Sydney. Register now with promo code 'SN10' for 10% discount off. Seats are limited. Register online: www.edutech.net.au

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Safeguarding students from summer cyberbullying

Summer holidays are kicking off around Australia, which means students will have more free time to play and have fun in the sun.

But school holidays can be a difficult time for some kids. Changes to routine and being away from their usual school supports can cause them to feel stressed, down or lonely. Holidays can be a particularly vulnerable time for students whose families are struggling with grief, loss, poverty or family violence.

School holidays also mean more time spent online.

Social media helps kids stay connected with their peers during the break and when used mindfully, it can help to combat isolation. It allows them to share holiday photos with their friends and maintain important bonds over the break. A 2017 Australian Psychological Society survey found that 50 percent of adolescents reported feeling connected to others when using their phones, and 44 percent said they find it easier to interact with people online than face-to-face.

But social media can have a negative impact on self-esteem, with almost two-out-of-three teens feeling pressure to look good on social media, and nearly half feeling bad about themselves when their friends don't like or share their posts, according to Journal of Abnormal Psychology findings.

Peer group issues can escalate more quickly in the online space. When kids are on holidays, there may be less opportunity to resolve situations face-to-face, and small problems can become a big deal. This may lead to rumination, which can have a negative impact on mental health. And when school goes back, teachers can find themselves dealing with peer



Dr Ameika Johnson
Clinical Psychologist,
Brainstorm Productions

group issues that have been brewing over the holidays.

Importantly, the risk of cyberbullying may increase during the holiday period. Kids may have more interactions with their peers online, potentially with less supervision. According

Holidays can be a particularly vulnerable time for students whose families are struggling with grief, loss, poverty or family violence



to Australian Primary Principals Association president Dennis Yarrington, students often engage in more cyberbullying during holidays, as they don't have to face the consequences of their behaviour at school the next day.

Online disinhibition effects and

perceived anonymity may be amplified; students may be more likely to do things online that they would not do face-to-face. For example, we know that young people who perceive themselves to be more anonymous online are more likely to cyberbully others.



Performance art helps with cyber struggles

Theatre in education is a great starting point for these conversations during the school term. School theatre companies like Brainstorm Productions provide cyber safety education that engages students and provides

practical strategies for safe and ethical technology use.

In the high school performance *Cyberia*, for example, two siblings are dealing with stressful events at home. Over the school holidays, Ruby shares information on social media that divides her friendship group, and eventually leads to cyberbullying and her

personal information going viral. Tim struggles with social isolation, immersing himself in online gaming, interacting with strangers, and finding himself involved in an online scam. Tim and Ruby learn how to reach out to others, look after their mental health, make amends, and deal with the consequences of their actions when they return to school. ●

Targets of cyberbullying may also be more vulnerable during the break, with less support from teachers and peers. Cyberbullying can make it hard for kids to return to school after the holidays, and they may feel anxious or withdrawn in the lead-up to the new school term.

Parental support is crucial during the holiday period. However, teachers can also play an important role in preparing students for the break, and helping ease the transition to the new school term.

5 tips to help students maintain balance and stay safe

1. Stay connected

Social media is one of the main ways kids stay connected to friends over the holidays. However, it's important that they also plan face-to-face interactions with friends and connect with the broader community, such as through sports, clubs, volunteering, and religious or cultural groups. Creative activities like holiday drama, music or art workshops can be a great way to meet new people.

Staying connected with family is key to ensuring students feel supported during the holidays. Not all families can go away for the holidays; some families may be separated, and many parents still need to work. However, caregivers can help kids feel connected by planning some simple family activities, like sharing a meal or kicking a football around the backyard.

If kids are struggling with loneliness and isolation, organisations like Headspace and ReachOut.com provide good online resources and support.

2. Maintain healthy activities

Encourage students to stay active during the holidays to manage mood and physical health. If they're feeling withdrawn, sad or anxious, even small activities like walking the dog can make a big difference. Encourage them to find activities they enjoy, especially those that have a social element like team sports or going to the beach with friends.

Talk to them about the potential benefits of limiting screen time over the holidays for their physical and mental health. It can also be hard for kids to maintain good eating habits without the structure of school. A balanced diet of vegetables, fruit, whole grains and lots of water will help them with sleep, and improve energy levels, concentration and emotional wellbeing.

3. Create a routine

Encourage kids to maintain a routine during the holidays, including going to sleep and waking at the same time, eating three meals a day, and planning their days in advance. Taking on responsibilities at home can provide structure and boost motivation. Planning a project for the holidays, such as redecorating their bedroom or building a veggie garden, can help to keep them engaged. They might just need a boost from their parents to get started!

4. Talk about cyber safety

According to Childnet International, the holidays are a good time for kids to have positive conversations with their parents about technology use. Parents can look at their favourite sites and apps with them, discuss any concerns they have about their online interactions, and

look at how they're managing privacy and security settings on each platform. Families should decide together what is safe and appropriate to share online (for both kids and adults!) They might make a family agreement that includes positive statements about how each family member will use technology, and make a plan for staying safe online.

Encourage kids to talk about cyberbullying - what it looks like and how to manage it if it occurs. head of direct clinical services at Headspace, Vikki Ryall, says the school holidays provide a good opportunity for parents to address issues like cyberbullying, which might have gone under the radar during the school term.

Resources such as the Office of the eSafety Commissioner also provide practical information about what to do if a student is experiencing cyberbullying or online abuse.

5. Have a back-to-school plan

Some students might feel really distressed about the prospect of going back to school, particularly if cyberbullying or friendship problems have occurred during the holidays.

Parents and teachers can help ease the transition by talking to kids about how they feel about going back to school.

They can support them by listening to how they're feeling, responding with empathy, and working with them to come to a solution. Remember that not all problems need to be fixed, and just knowing they've been heard can make a big difference.

Students can create an action plan for their first week. This may involve calling a friend they trust to meet them at the gate on the first day, or making contact with a classroom teacher or wellbeing staff member who can support them in the first week. With open communication, balance and bit of planning, teachers and parents can help students enjoy the break, stay safe online and feel confident to start the new school term.

Happy holidays! ★

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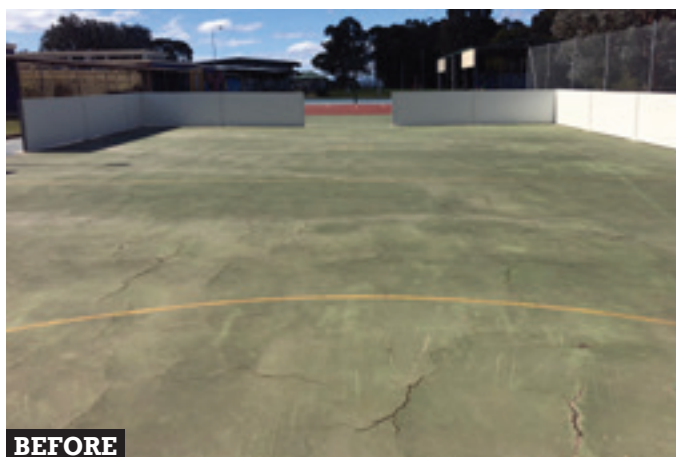
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Dr Ameika Johnson is a registered clinical psychologist who has worked with clients across the lifespan in research and clinical settings. She currently works with Australia's largest theatre in education company, Brainstorm Productions, helping them to develop and continuously improve their wellbeing, bullying and cyber safety programs for primary and high school students.



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'Finish strong' should be your mantra

The final term of the school year is a crazy, busy time in schools.

End-of-year events, final assessments, end-of-year reporting, class allocations, timetabling, budgets and planning for the next year swamp us at a time when our energies are low and many of us feel we are running on empty.

It is important to **finish strong**, just like we started the year!

While our reserves may be running low, it is vital to remain focused and finish the year well.

At this time of the year, we are more likely to be sensitive, 'thin skinned' and emotional because we are run-down and in need of that well-earned break. We shouldn't be surprised. The same thing happens at this time, every year. One of the most significant factors is how we respond to the challenges we face at the end of the year.

It is important to remember that schools are people places. Throughout the year, we have worked hard to build trusting relationships with students, parents and colleagues. Saying or doing something 'dumb' at this time of the year, when our reserves are depleted, will undo all of the good work that we have done throughout the year to build those relationships. A harsh or insensitive word to someone can undermine our



Steve Francis
Creator, Happy School Program

credibility and our reputation. It is important to be aware of our moods and on-guard. We must think before we act.

Monitoring our self-talk and our sensitivity are particularly important at this time of the year. We are far more susceptible to allowing irritations that would not normally have an effect on us, get to us. Our resistance is low and we are vulnerable to both attack from outside and making poor decisions. Now is the time to watch our words, resist temptation to 'shoot from the hip' and make decisions on the run.

Remember back to the start of the year: most of us started with energy, vim and vigor. We were rejuvenated by the Christmas break and were ready to put all of our energies into being as effective as we possibly could. It is when times

"A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well."

– Jeff Bezos

are tough that reputations are truly made. Much of our credibility in the eyes of others is based on results. Not just academic results but our ability to complete our projects, meet deadlines and follow tasks through to completion. The old adage, 'beginners are many, finishers are few' is worth remembering. The final term is always crazy busy.

However, it is essential that we focus, use our time well and sustain our efforts on the things that matter most, right through until the end of the year.

Stephen MR Covey talks about when world-class marathon runners 'hit the wall' and they feel like they can't go on any further: instead of focusing

on their exhaustion and how tired they are feeling, going into the 'survival shuffle', they lift up their head and pick up the pace. I believe this is a vital mindset for staff in schools at this time of the year. By picking up the pace, you are really saying to yourself that you're not just going to finish, you're going to **finish strong!**

It has become a tradition for us to re-share the article 'Finish Strong' at the beginning of November each year, to remind staff of the impact that something we say or do, can have; especially at this time of the year.

Make 'finish strong' your mantra. ★

Steve Francis is an expert in the complexities of leading effective schools, author of four books and the creator of the Happy School program. He works with school leadership teams and staff across Australia and New Zealand to optimise their schools. Steve has been recognised as one of the top 50 most influential educators in Australia.



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Using PERMA

pillars to support teachers

With over 20 years of experience as a teacher, you don't have to tell me that teachers are among those professionals with the highest levels of job stress and burnout across many countries (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008).

What we also know from the research is that 'well teachers' equal 'well students' (Roffey, 2012). Yet, as the demands on teachers increase; having to be involved in about 1000 interpersonal contacts every day (Holmes 2005), the quality of these contacts can either jeopardise or enhance a person's wellbeing. In a nutshell, teachers can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal, humanise or de-humanise students in their classrooms.

Not because they don't care, but because they feel overwhelmed due to the pressure and expectations that both themselves and society place on the role.

The bottom-line is that our teachers need more support and better strategies to manage the cognitive and emotional demands of the job. If teachers have evidence-based strategies to better understand and support their own wellbeing, they will be better placed to not only survive but flourish and become better role models for our students. If we truly want to help young people flourish, we must begin with our teachers.

Thankfully, science is paving the way with proven strategies and tools to enhance wellbeing both individually and across organisations from the field of positive psychology.

Wellbeing is a multidimensional construct that typically differentiates between hedonic wellbeing (feeling good) and eudaimonic well-being (functioning well).

Positive psychology aims to merge these two forms of thought through the study of



Daniela Falecki
Founder and Director,
Teacher Wellbeing

optimal human functioning and what makes life most worth living.

Martin Seligman, often considered the father of positive psychology wanted to bridge the hedonic/eudaimonic divide by identifying wellbeing as a construct that was not limited to life satisfaction alone but as several contributing factors, which formed the mnemonic PERMA.

Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

The model is often described as 'pillars' and involves assisting individuals to explore the five domains that encompass PERMA as a way of holding themselves up.

While the model has not been designed to be prescriptive, the evidence within each pillar tells us there are simple things we can do support our own wellbeing.

Perhaps you could consider these five questions:

- 1. Positive emotion.** When are you happiest at work? What emotion are you experiencing?
- 2. Engagement.** What do you love most about your current role? What strength are you using?
- 3. Relationships.** Who supports you most at work? Who do you support?

- 4. Meaning.** What is most important to you about your role? Why do you do what you do?
- 5. Accomplishment.** What big or small achievements have you made in the past week-month?

Of course, answering these questions is not going to help you tick off things on your to-do list, nor is it going to solve systemic flaws that cause excessive admin. But what if, by reflecting on these questions every so often, you are able to shift your focus to what is working instead of what isn't working.

Perhaps that could be the moment you have a meaningful connection of conversation with a student and they remember it for the rest of their life. Perhaps these small shifts in mindset lead to more productive conversations in the staff room. Perhaps reflecting on how we support our wellbeing is the first step to shifting habits and moving towards a positive organisational culture.

If you want to learn more, you must read the foundational book by Martin Seligman, *Flourish*. You can find more specific tools that map PERMA to both classroom and staff room strategies online. ★

Daniela Falecki is founder and director of Teacher Wellbeing (www.teacher-wellbeing.com.au). She is known as the 'keep-it-real' teacher who specialises in positive psychology. Her passionate, practical approach makes her a sought-after speaker, sharing stories from her 20 years of experience in schools.



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Top tips for elective line generation

By Michael Emmanuel, Managing Director, Edval Education

With many schools about to start generating elective lines for 2019, I thought it might be timely to post some helpful tips.

The elective line generation process is a critical phase in preparing a timetable. Get it right and you have laid a strong foundation for a great outcome. Get it wrong and there are sure to be headaches along the way not to mention your Christmas holidays may be at risk!

Plan

The old saying, 'Fail to plan, plan to fail' could not be more true. Before you even launch your online subject selection forms, you should be thinking about the end solution. Consider the size of your cohort, the resources available at your school and the number of subjects you may be offering. You should also think about how your lines will fit against lines in other years and what relationships should exist within the set of lines that you are about to generate. For example, should you run two ancient history classes in the same line to make collapsing one of those classes easier later on? Or should you perhaps schedule biology and investigating science together in case students who opted to study biology find it too difficult?



Should you run two ancient history classes in the same line to make collapsing one of those classes later, easier?



Structure

As a standard, schools should be generating lines with multiple year data sets. If you have a structure that depends on staged-based curriculum delivery then this is obviously essential.

However, even for a comprehensive NSW secondary school, when generating lines in Year 11, you should be layering years 12, 10 and 9 into the solution so you can discover potential show stoppers.

Consider

When placing classes into your line solution, pay careful consideration to your teaching and rooming resources.

Think about part-time teachers and aligning them into complementary lines to enable better spreads in the timetable.

This is a common mistake made by schools and consequences include moving lessons before or after school, poor spreads or split classes – none of which are desirable.

Test

When you think you have a solution, test it out before signing off. It doesn't take a lot of time to produce a draft timetable if all the proper planning, structure and considerations have been taken into account. Refining this process will also make the task of testing your lines much more efficient. It's highly likely that you'll find an unforeseen issue in your solution, but don't be disheartened. Remember that this is the perfect time to find them because you are in a position to resolve them in the lines. Follow this outline when generating your lines to be in the best position for success when the time comes to finish your timetable. ★

Happy Timetabling.



It's a classroom not a court room

Let me commence this article with a disclaimer and a positive word for those of you who have people in the legal fraternity in your lives.

They battle a reputational problem not easily overcome when there are equally cruel and clever jokes about their profession, such as: "What do you call 100 lawyers at the bottom of the ocean? A good start."

My article today is not a direct attack on the good people who daily preserve the laws and rules that underpin our democracy and our freedoms. It's merely to point out that schools are not judicial systems.

Your classroom is for learning and not for judgment. It's a room of inquiry and relational restoration and not a place to get a ruling on blame from an authoritarian body. Schools should have an entirely different purpose to court rooms and when we invite mechanisms from our courts into our schools, we're asking for trouble. Let me explain why through a typical teacher anecdote.

Teacher returns wearily to class after lunch, ready for what's sometimes called the 'graveyard shift'. After all, it's reasonably universally accepted that teaching students in the afternoon, when they are devoid of energy and brimming with impatience for the end of the day, increases the teaching difficulty to some extent.

Teacher then welcomes the students into the room, but something within what we call our teacher radar begins beeping with alarming ferocity. Teacher isn't quite sure what has happened at lunchtime but something certainly has. Teacher immediately locates the students affected with a quick *Terminator*-style scan of the room where facial expressions are rapidly



Adam Voigt
Founder and Director,
Real Schools

analysed. Potential perpetrators and likely victims – target identified.

The fundamental problem with this oft-seen scenario is what happens next. Teachers are subjected to a wide variety of witness accounts in their pursuit to get themselves to the scene of the crime. We weigh each account like a detective triangulating it against friendship alliances and also the credibility of the witness. It can feel sometimes like you've launched 'educational CSI' with yourself positioned as the judge.

Your arbitrary ruling is eagerly awaited and also influenced by your students, who have now positioned themselves as the lawyers in this episode. A crude explanation of the role of any lawyer might be to help us lie. More moderate, and perhaps accurate, would be to say that they represent our side of the story with the express purpose of minimising the potential of a negative outcome upon us.

When a punishment is on the line, we'll stretch the truth, we'll bend our principles and we'll compromise the facts. Well, at least that's what a well-paid lawyer would do. From a learning perspective, the key issue we have here is that we're teaching our students little more than how to manipulate a judicial style system to their own advantage.

Worse, we're giving them practice



Here's my top 5 suggestions:

1. **Refuse** to investigate beyond getting a rough gist of what happened. "OK, so there was some nasty language between you all and it ended up getting a little physical. Alright – I get what happened" is a good sentence to learn by heart.
2. **Focus** on the harm of the behaviour, rather than trying to work out who is to blame.
3. **Compel** students to repair the harm themselves, rather than wait for your ruling.
4. **Repeat** this past-present-future methodology often enough that you are able to facilitate it nimbly, creatively and rapidly.
5. **Enjoy** the extra time you just created for yourself.

at it and preparing them for a lifestyle of avoiding responsibility, for with responsibility comes consequence. From a teaching perspective, we can plunge oodles of your most precious resource – time – into these pointless investigations. You can collect witness statements from each body in the playground within a 100m radius of the alleged incident and still feel no closer to the truth.

Of course, you could just trust that teaching radar we mentioned earlier, but your

hunch is hardly going to stand up to the most scrutiny inclined parent. And so, if classrooms really are for learning, and not for rulings, punishments, Royal Commissions and the creation of the world's next generation of bush lawyers, how exactly do we see these behavioural and relational infractions as learning opportunities?

Well, it begins with ensuring that all relics of the judicial system are absent from your approach so as to encourage learner, rather than lawyer, behaviours. ★

Adam Voigt is the founder and director of Real Schools. Built upon years of experience as a successful principal, Real Schools helps schools to build and sustain strong, relational school cultures. Adam has delivered a TED Talk and is the schools/education expert for *The Project*.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2018

14 Remote Teaching Information Sessions

LOCATION: WA
CONTACT: teachinwa@education.wa.edu.au
WEBSITE: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au>

ABOUT: These free sessions are for graduates, teachers and school leaders interested in finding out more information about the Remote Teaching Service and Teacher Flying Squad. The sessions will include information about applying for positions in remote public schools, and the processes involved with relocating for short and long term positions.

21-23 5th International STEM in Education Conference

LOCATION: QUT, Brisbane
CONTACT: stemined2018@qut.edu.au
WEBSITE: <https://stem-in-ed2018.com.au>

ABOUT: The conference program involves in-depth research presentations, professional conversations about best practice, engaging panel discussions and symposia, and practical presentations that enable delegates to explore and develop new ideas about integrated STEM education.

DECEMBER 2018

2-6 Australian Association For Research In Education (AARE) Conference 2018

LOCATION: NSW
CONTACT: aare@thinkbusinessevents.com.au
WEBSITE: <https://www.aareconference.com.au>

ABOUT: The theme of this year's conference is 'Education Research Matters: Impact and Engagement'. The AARE conference brings together researchers and educators from across the world, as well as Australia, who work in diverse educational fields.

6-7 'Teacher Creating Impact' MAV – 2018 Annual Conference

LOCATION: NSW
CONTACT: aare@thinkbusinessevents.com.au
WEBSITE: <https://www.mav.vic.edu.au>

ABOUT: At the heart of MAV's Annual Conference are teachers. Each year over 1400 mathematics educators including teachers, academics, policy makers, curriculum experts and resource developers come together to share their collective expertise, experiences and ideas.

9-12 6th World Curriculum Studies Conference

LOCATION: Melbourne
CONTACT: jdiamond@mav.vic.edu.au
WEBSITE: <https://www.iaacs2018.info>

ABOUT: At the heart of MAV's Annual Conference are teachers. Each year over 1400 mathematics educators including teachers, academics, policy makers, curriculum experts and resource developers come together to share their collective expertise, experiences and ideas.

9-12 'Supporting Education for All' Conference

LOCATION: Melbourne
CONTACT: Eventbrite organiser via link below
WEBSITE: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/supporting-education-for-all-conference-tickets-49630983608>

ABOUT: This conference supports 'Education for All' as a school policy. This policy gives schools a clear definition of inclusive education and the legal obligations for supporting students with disabilities. Inclusive education ensures that all members of every school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive school culture. The conference explores, mental health, autism and epilepsy as well as reviewing some of the supporting structures available for teachers in schools across Victoria.

JANUARY 2019

14-16 2019 ACHPER International Conference

LOCATION: AIS
CONTACT: custserv@achper.org.au
WEBSITE: <https://www.achper.org.au>

ABOUT: This conference supports 'Education for All' as a school policy. This policy gives schools a clear definition of inclusive education and the legal obligations for supporting students with disabilities. Inclusive education ensures that all members of every school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive school culture. The conference explores, mental health, autism and epilepsy as well as reviewing some of the supporting structures available for teachers in schools across Victoria.

18-19 5th International MiTE conference

LOCATION: Sydney
CONTACT: MITEconference@uts.edu.au
WEBSITE: <https://mite2019.uts.edu.au>

ABOUT: This is the first time the conference is being held in the southern hemisphere and will provide a wonderful opportunity for teachers, researchers and industry to celebrate the possibilities and explore the challenges of integrating innovative mobile technologies into learning institutions and into the broader field of education to promote best practice by educators and students.

FEBRUARY 2019

25 Sydney Morning Herald Schools Summit

LOCATION: NSW
CONTACT: leah.boulos@informa.com
WEBSITE: <http://www.smhschools.com.au/>

ABOUT: Discounted early bird tickets available until 19th December. Key topics to be addressed: education policy & funding; student engagement, enrichment and empowerment; student well-being & resilience; inclusive education; preparing students for future work requirements; ai and robotics in the classroom; the future of selective schools; what it means to be an impactful teacher; the data driven classroom; the skills and attributes of the teacher of tomorrow; standardised testing; the future of NAPLAN, HSC and ATAR; School shopping & school choice; sharing facilities; and innovative design.



AUGUST 2019

19-22 PULiIMA Indigenous Languages And Technology Conference

LOCATION: Darwin
CONTACT: +61 2 4940 9100
WEBSITE: <http://www.puliima.com>

ABOUT: PULiIMA is a biennial event aimed at bringing people together from all over Australia and internationally to highlight and share the fantastic work being done in our traditional languages, prominence is given to exploring and sharing pioneering language program work and ideas, exciting products and equipment that can be used in community based language projects.



2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages

Events will be popping up throughout the year to celebrate it. Write in and let us know what your school is doing so we can cover your event in **School News**.

Children seek changes to transport

By Mandy Clarke,
Industry Reporter

A major report finds that school transport is failing Australia's youth in 2018.

The NSW report from the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People highlights that school transport isn't working for almost 40 percent of students and two-in-five would like to see major changes.

The main concerns raised by students are unreliability, lack of transport in rural areas, overcrowding and lack of cleanliness. They also complain about the cost, but most concerning are reports of "feeling unsafe" and being on the receiving end of negative attitudes from bus drivers.

Students highlight how important this issue is to them and they want more of a focus on improving school transport with more frequent, cheaper/free buses, better routes (improved in rural areas) and improved security.

Poorly managed school transport is a challenge for many students but is especially adverse for less privileged kids, those with special needs and those who



▲ "Meet the BCI Proma Low Floor, conceived to assist special needs students, quickly accessible for wheelchair through door ramp without the inconvenience of a lift. This school bus can sit up to 29 passengers and be tailored to accommodate several wheelchairs in its adapted roomy front area, with storage on wheel arch for luggage."

– Desmond Armstrong, Bus & Coach International

live in rural communities. Good management of, and improved school transport to and from school, would have such a positive effect on a student's school experience and learning opportunities.

For many disadvantaged kids, transport is something that can be improved quickly and easily by school leaders who would be making a

huge difference in otherwise chaotic lives. Schools also utilise vehicles during the day, whether it is a minivan for sport and music trips or a fleet of coaches to transport a year group to school camp.

Some schools go a step further and invest in their own minivans and buses, which allows a greater flexibility in organisation of field trips. ■

If your school is considering hiring or purchasing a vehicle here are a few tips:

Look at the vehicle's suitability for use and consider the age of your students. What the vehicle will be used for? Is the vehicle accessible for special needs students?

Features. Ask whether they are fitted with features like cruise control, electronic stability control (ESC), ABS with disc brakes and air suspension, and do they meet the latest emissions controls?


Comfort. Check carefully whether the vehicle has maintenance records and safety certificates. Air conditioning may not be considered a necessity to the person holding the purse-strings, but Australia's climate would disagree!

Sweating on the school bus isn't a fond memory for most teenagers and any teacher who's had to walk through a fug of body odour and deodorant would likely recommend air conditioned student transport.

Sustainability. If your school owns its own vehicle, you could consider leasing it out when not in use. Some communities work together to find exciting solutions that could benefit more than just the school itself. On the weekends your vehicle could be used by local community groups or sporting clubs. Particularly if your bus is wheelchair accessible, it could come in handy at other community facilities. Of course, student wellbeing must be prioritised, so buses should be regularly inspected, cleaned and serviced.

Sponsorship. Schools can use the side of the bus for advertising or community notices.

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School lockers, what's the right combination?

By Mandy Clarke,
Industry Reporter

Private schools in Australia generally have lockers for high school students to store their heavy bags inside, but many state schools report not being able to justify funding for the project.

Is it true that lockers are a vital component of a happy school life or can they cause students more stress?

Before the school year starts, students worry about the locker lottery. Especially those students at an awkward middle school age where everything is a huge deal, lockers can become the number one concern for an awkward pre-teen.

They worry: which locker? Will I remember the lock combination? Is it too far from class? Which books do I leave in and take out, etc.?

However, with privacy also a massive issue for children (especially teens), once they get over their initial locker anxiety students like to have a safe, private place in which to store their belongings.

Far from simply being a nice addition to your school storage solutions, lockers can offer many important benefits to students:

Security. With most students carrying a mobile phone, tablet or laptop, lockers for schools are more important than ever when it comes to keeping cases of theft and damage to a minimum.

Many schools now provide laptops for students to use during their lessons, and some install lockers with charging facilities for their storage, which is safer and encourages them to leave their phones in their lockers all day!

Lockers teach independence. Give students the responsibility to look after their own possessions, value their belongings and respect their peers.

Health and safety. Heavy backpacks cause back pain and problems, so school lockers play an important role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of students.

Individuality. Lockers give students a personal area that they can call their own in a school where they must otherwise try to conform.

Privacy. Lockers create boundaries that teach students about mutual respect.

Why you shouldn't dismiss lockers as a costly extravagance...

Heavy school bags. A 'fact sheet' released by the Chiropractor's Associate of Australia reports results of a 2011 observational study of more than 340 schools. The key finding of the study revealed 90 percent of school children have bad posture when carrying their bags and could experience spinal damage as a result, while 75 percent are not using their backpack's ergonomic features, which could prevent such damage.

Many students carrying an average of 17 percent of their body weight on their back, which is almost twice the recommended carrying weight of ten percent.



According to a 2002 international study, *Backpacks on!* daily backpack carrying is a frequent cause of discomfort for school children. The rising prevalence of laptops in secondary schools goes a little way to alleviating the weight of the bag, but several books are still required.

Types of lockers...

Mini or exam hall lockers. Valuables lockers are a welcome addition to any school hall or gymnasium. When students enter exam conditions they can

switch off their mobile phone and store it in a locker with their keys and wallet.

Gym lockers. Larger locker cabinets are ideal for sports locker rooms or changing rooms, choose a size that has ample storage space for keeping clothes, shoes and other personal belongings safe. Compartments may have a hanger bar and even a mirror.

Charge, lock and go lockers. These have a variety of perfectly sized compartments spaces for anything electric and handheld - a great storage solution for tablets, laptops, and e-readers allowing charging access and ventilation.

School lockers. There are lockers specifically designed for school backpacks, books and laptop computers. They tend to have a reinforced door and key, padlock or keyless digital locks.

Materials? Durable plastic, or high-quality steel - simply make sure it is sturdy and easy to clean. Plastic feet prevent your floors from getting scratched up and you must prevent overturning, so a wall attachment may be needed. ■



▲ The Kensington Universal AC Lock & Charge Station was engineered to meet the demands of classrooms, healthcare offices and retail spaces needing a durable storage solution for tablets, laptops, and e-readers.

– James Dibou, Kensington

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Meet the innovators:

A flexible learning lookbook

School News collected insights from influencers in the innovative learning space for you to check out ahead of 2019.

FLEs are all about experimentation: Come up with a hypothetical blueprint you believe will suit your students' needs and run it by experts who have installed flexible classroom designs before so they can advise you on what works.

Give it a go. Take note of how students use the end-result. Make adjustments. There's a reason we all call it a 'flexible' learning environment. You might even be surprised by how children engage with furniture; what was purchased as a table may quickly become a stool.

And there's another aspect to all this: collaboration.

In his talk, 'The future of work', Mark Stevenson said: "The future of work, (and millennials understand this), is much more about networks of collaboration, where you don't lead by having power over people, you lead by giving power to people to co-create something, rather than being told to create something by someone else."

So, let the kids collaborate rather than look over each other's elbows, sat in rows for exam prep.

There's a new style of classroom in town, and it's not here for outdated aesthetic. VE Furniture's Kellie Griffith takes us through her vision for ILEs.



Image courtesy of VE Furniture

Let the kids collaborate rather than look over each other's elbows



"Excite your students with something different whether it be shoeless learning; write-on surfaces, including desks, walls and windows; adding sound, courtesy of soft background music; offering a variety of seating with zoned areas.

"Think mobile and colourful: Teaching students as they wish to be taught requires learning spaces that are multi-faceted and easily reconfigured to support teaching and learning approaches where students

can connect, collaborate and communicate to maximise engagement."

"Create a collaboration hub to promote group discussion, teamwork and the sharing of ideas, experiences and opinions. Create a group study spot to process the information collected in the collaboration hub, share ideas informally and stimulate conversation and mentoring. Create a focussed retreat for individual study and quiet reading that allows for

total concentration, void from distraction."

Ben Britten, the director of digital media at Corporate Initiatives, tells us what he thinks will be trending in the sector next year as educators continue to clip at technology's heels.

"Whether for larger assembly areas or smaller learning spaces, the LED display will be moving indoors over the next few years, enabling screens to be created to any size appropriate to a space. This is a game changer.

"Unlike projection, LED display can be viewed in daylight and command attention. A new form of LED display has just been released with additional advantages for school use. ►



Image courtesy of Resource Furniture



Image courtesy of Corporate Initiatives



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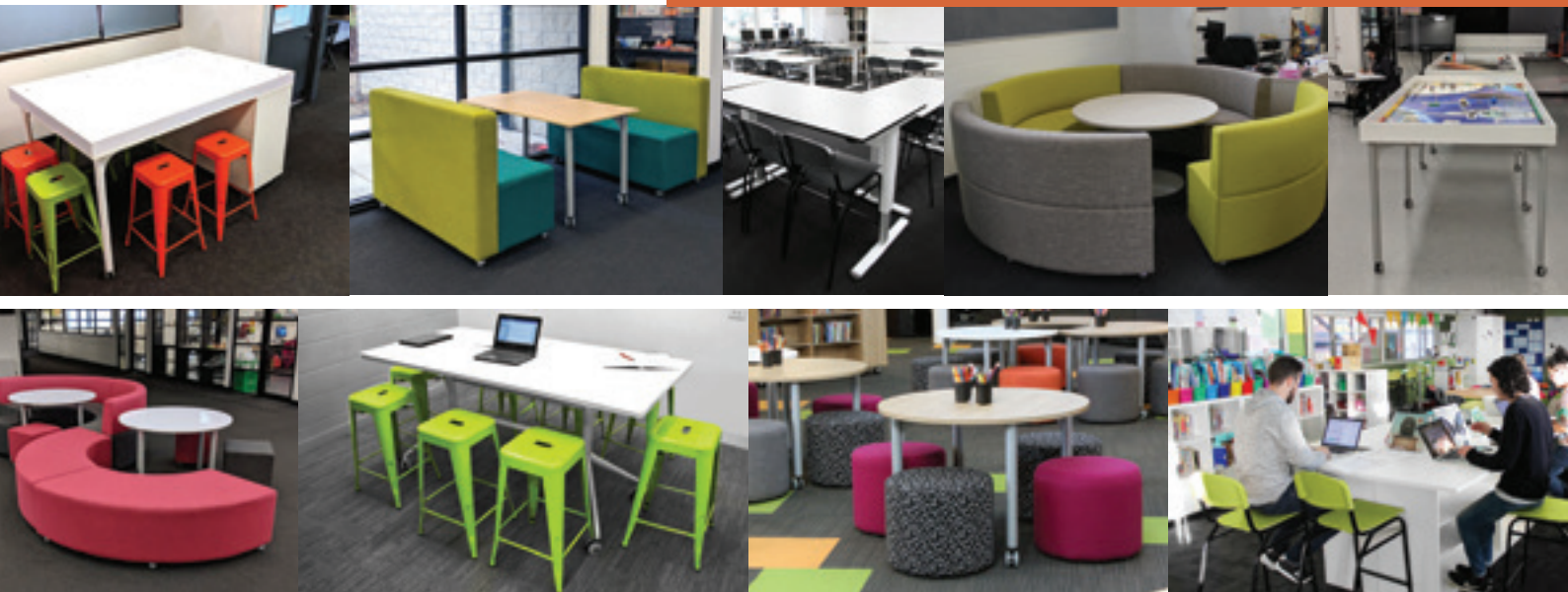


The approach to learning has changed!

Student led learning requires innovative furniture solutions that support differing learning styles!



Positive Space for Innovative Learning



www.vef.com.au



Image courtesy of Modern Teaching Aids

◀ This new generation product offers a smooth bonded surface that is both impact resistant and splash proof, useful attributes in a school environment.

"What schools need to realise is that LED supply is best left to LED specialists as it is regenerative technology that needs lifetime support. Ideally, it should also be optioned with an appropriate sound and camera system in order to maximise the value it can deliver."

Sarah Deere-Jones, from Modern Teaching Aids, gives School News the lowdown on how new-build projects can facilitate exciting pedagogy.

"Collaboration, communication and creation: these are three pedagogical tenets that innovative designs can bring to life. Versatile collaborative spaces resources are ideal for promoting critical and creative thinking and allow students the freedom to communicate clearly during group work; while formal and informal breakout spaces promote the ideology that learning can happen anywhere. Hands-on learning hubs, typically with a STEM focus, will ignite the creativity in each and every student.

"The goal is to encourage students to work collaboratively using high tech, low tech or even no tech! Extending space to the great outdoors will further stimulate thinking.

"Ergonomic, flexible and standing desks give students agency and



Image courtesy of Resource Furniture

give classrooms the ability to cater to individualised learning styles. Stand-up learning resources also encourage movement and active learning and are an essential addition to any ergonomic learning space."

Resource Furniture senior product designer, Michael Merlino emphasises need for planning in the rush for innovation.

"Start with space planning. How will the space/s be used? Engage students and staff in the design process. Research shows they have a greater sense of belonging and ownership if they are actively involved in the design process. Learn how the teachers actually want to use

and teach in the space before furniture shopping.

"Provide a centralised common meeting and breakout space that students want to use. Fun and well-designed furniture, including soft seating options and a mix of small meeting tables and bench height tables provide furniture options with freedom."

CASE STUDY: Clever hub design for St Michael's College

The new Lasallian Education Centre at St Michael's College has been modelled on a university hub design to prepare year 12 students for further

education and provide flexible learning spaces that caters for individual and group learning. The new building not only enables increased capacity at the secondary campus but also provides a contemporary, state-of-the-art learning facility for staff and senior students.

The open plan allows for flexible pedagogical styles that can be easily adapted due to the design and state of the art technology options.

Resource Furniture provided a range of meeting, cafeteria and classroom tables and desks as well as classroom and meeting chairs to complement both the space and learning styles.



Images courtesy of Quantum Libraries

Woodridge North State School renovates

The school's head of curriculum told us: "When renovating our library, we had a clear vision in mind – to entice students and staff to engage with texts! We wanted an innovative space rather than a space full of

shelves and tables. A feature of the library is the 'campfire' space; a custom made semi-circular piece with seating on the inside and continuous table and hokki stools on the outside. Teachers have particularly taken to this area, bringing their classes down for class discussions and close reading sessions.

"Lunch times have been hectic! Students are now so much more excited to come along and read. They sit with friends in the booth areas, enjoy e-books on computers or just lie back on a comfy cushion and get lost in a book!"

Quantum Library Supplies founding director Doug Stewart

added: "The idea was that some areas could be increased or decreased depending on the requirement of the day. By using the Sterling range of shelving, they have a robust shelving system encased in an attractive melamins framework that provides the complete range of shelves." ■

Large format LED display just graduated to something better.



A smooth bonded surface.....



Splash proof, dust proof and impact resistant

No screen commands attention in a large meeting space better than an LED display. Only direct view LED can be bright enough to compete with natural light, and large enough to be seen at the back of the room. Now, however, there is a new and different form of direct view LED display, one that is scaleable for any indoor viewing distance, is impact resistant from ball sport action, and splash proof from spontaneous water fights. With its unique smooth finish it can also be readily deployed for interactive touch. If you were giving it a mark out of ten for school use, it would have to get top marks.

This exciting new product is available exclusively through Ci, Australia's leading LED experts. To learn a little more about Ci and the earlier screen example shown here at Marymede College, visit this video URL:

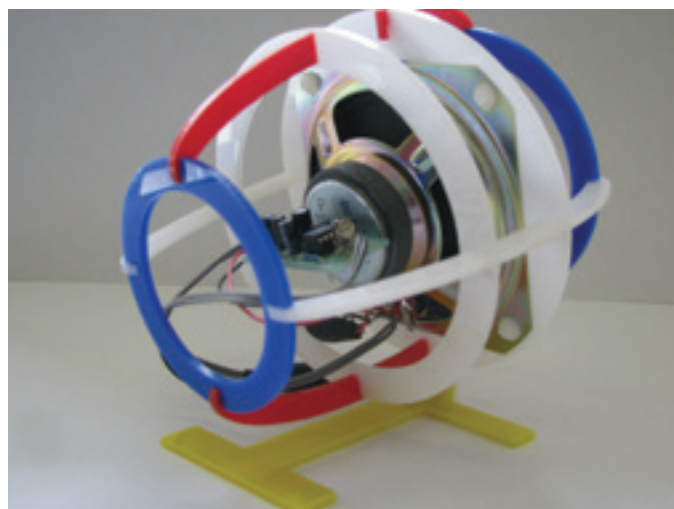
<http://vimeo.com/202342333/0d1f77ceb2>

Or if you would like to explore the possibilities of LED for your school specifically, call Ben Britten of Ci direct on 0437 484 908.



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Laser tech critical to Brisbane Grammar School



By Mandy Clarke,
Industry Reporter

Trodat Trotec Group is a world leader in the field of laser technology; and, as part of the group, Trotec develops, manufactures and markets laser systems for marking, cutting and engraving materials.

Trotec managing director, Reece Moore told us they recently supplied laser machines to Brisbane Grammar School.

Intrigued, *School News* asked BGS head of design and technology, Jamie Foulger a few questions about the process.

How did Trotec work with you and what products/services did they provide?

It's useful in terms of creating in any shape, form or dimension. Projects come to life after assembly!

– BGS design and technology student

"Trotec have installed three laser machines into the school. These also have their own designated external extraction fan systems. Trotec also provide servicing on all the machines and equipment."

Why did you want this technology and what are you using it for?

"Design education has changed over the past 10-15 years to include a strong emphasis on the 'design thinking' characteristics of the pedagogy.

"This shift allows students to 'think'

in a complex and higher ordered aspect of the creative process. To support such an environment, our facility has been evolving to help support student access for rapid prototyping of design solutions.

"Students require a quick turnaround of ideas so that the creative process can be maintained in this higher aspect of 'thinking' engagement. Laser technology has become a large player in this creative process.

"Design solutions can be turned around very quickly in a single classroom session and provide

the young designer with an ability to test, assemble and redesign in a very prompt and immediate time period. Laser solutions lend themselves to modelling in card, paper, thin plywood or plastics."

What are the benefits of this technology so far?

"Other than its expediency, design solutions can be very sophisticated. Students can model mechanical parts, buildings, product designs or packaging designs - the choices are endless."

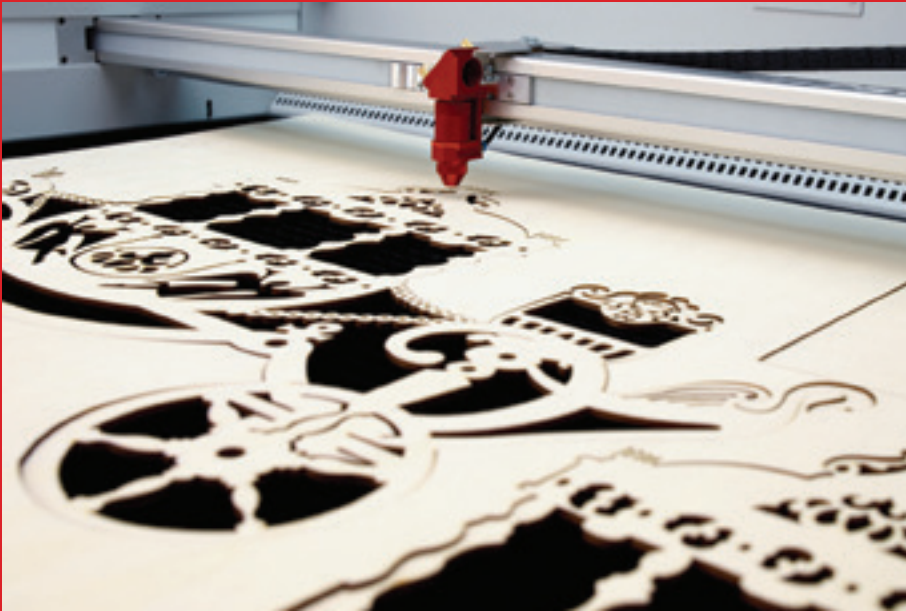
What has been the reaction of other teachers, parents and students?

"Without this type of technology, I don't know how you could run a contemporary design curriculum.

"We are so used to this technology being part of our pedagogy that we would see more reaction if they disappeared. This type of technology is not the add-on to a manufacturing classroom, it forms the starting point of a design facility." ■



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- *Admin*
- *Arts*



Ideal for STEAM curriculum



Zana Fraillon



Award-winning children's fiction author, Zana Fraillon annotates an excerpt from her stunning picture book, *Wisp: A Story of Hope* with useful insights for teachers and students about her writing and research process, historical influence and cultural impact.

By Zana Fraillon, Author

When I was first asked by my publishers to write a picture book about a child growing up in a refugee camp, I wasn't sure I could do it. Sure, I had written novels about children in harsh situations before - children growing up in detention centres; children who had been trafficked into slavery; and children taken from loving families and placed in institutions where they were abused and traumatised. I could write those books because the length gave me enough space to pay respect to the real-life victims and survivors, and also to bring the reader a sense of hope and even moments of joy, in amongst extremely dark situations.

I could give my characters strength and resilience and determination.

I could give them that lightning quick ability children have to find pieces of happiness and laughter despite their situation. I could give them the hope and knowledge they needed to continue to believe that someday, things would change. And in doing so, I could give readers a chance to imagine a different reality, for themselves, for others, and for the whole world even. There is always hope for the future, as long as we can keep imagining.

And understanding that, I suddenly saw how I could

squeeze all those emotions and ideas and lives and issues into a single picture book. It is all about imagination. About imagining our past, our stories, our futures. It is about imagining the world we want to live in. And there are no better imaginers, than children.

Wisp became more than a story of a single child. It became a springboard for understanding how our world is now, and hope for everything it could become. It whispers of community, and of story, of memory and shared culture, of difference and of celebration. It allows children to stretch their minds wide open and imagine what could be.

When writing *Wisp*, the illustrator and I had no contact. I had seen his previous work and knew it

I suddenly saw how I could squeeze all those emotions and ideas and lives and issues into a single picture book.

would suit my story, so was able to trust in the process. However, I had to think how to convey through the words of the story, how I imagined the pictures to look, and then Graham had to take those words and create his own images with them. I couldn't have been happier with the outcome - he somehow took the images from my head and put them down on paper more brilliantly and beautifully than I had even imagined.





But this idea of being inspired by another's work, to create a new collaborative piece is thrilling for me, and it is an idea that children seem especially excited by as well. A favourite activity, especially when reading a story the children haven't heard before, is to give them a jumbled assortment of the pictures, but with no text. The students choose some of the pictures and order them to create their own story. We share these before reading the actual book. It is so wonderful to see how images can inspire such a diverse array of stories, and there is always keen interest to see how many different ideas came from the same images. The pictures in Wisp are especially good for this activity as they are so varied and full of magical imagery that can be interpreted in so many different ways. My favourite example of this so far was when a child took the first picture of the story and made it the last of his story. 'And no matter how dark it got, the light was always there to warm the boy and make him happy'.

One of my favourite things about writing is the ability to play with language and words. To stretch and twist meaning, to mess with convention and rules, and by doing so, create a new meaning, a new way of thinking. The words become suggestions, shadowy, almost magical in our almost, but not quite, understanding of them. What does it mean to grow full with rememberings? Or to spin memories from your fingers, or to bright soak the dirt? I encourage children to play with words and language too. I ask them what a promise might taste like, what memory sounds like, or joy smells like. I ask what ache looks like, or what morning feels like. I often keep the answers anonymous, written down on pieces of paper that are then shared anonymously as a group.

So often writing becomes stilted or false when we know that it will be read by someone else. Whenever I write, the first step is convincing myself that it will never be read by anyone, otherwise I am overcome with doubts, and I second guess every idea and word. But the knowledge of anonymity does wonders for releasing our minds to spread and imagine and twist in unusual ways. Often the shyest of kids will write the most beautifully moving sentiments if allowed the space to remain unknown.

When I read Wisp to children, I love how their interpretations of the story are so wide and varied.

When I read Wisp to children, I love how their interpretations of the story are so wide and varied. One child believed the story was set on the moon because of the empty, dark landscape. Another, that it was on Nauru, because they had seen on the news how there were more than 100 children living in camps and unable to leave. Another thought it was set in refugee camp similar to the one her father had lived in. With reading, books are whatever the reader believes they are. And that is part of the magic. So what now becomes of the child on the moon? In a detention centre? In a camp? What of their lives before? What will happen next? What would you do, if a Wisp were to fall at your feet? What would you do, if you were the child in the story? Where did the Wisp come from? Why does

it glow? When I first imagined the Wisp, it was a steam punk piece of metal junk. How does changing what the Wisp looks like, change the story? What if the Wisp was something else? An animal? A person? A letter? What else might it bring with it? Would it be better if it brought material things that were needed? And for older children with an understanding of Australia's refugee policies, why do they think I chose hope as the thing the Wisp brings?



I love this image of the tree, sprouting up just the other side of the wall, of hope blooming in the world outside at the same time as it begins blooming in Idris.

This image fits so easily with the idea of a wish tree, or a tree of promise, or dreaming, and is a lovely way to end a reading.

Just a simple drawn or cut out tree silhouette is transformed as everyone writes a wish onto a leaf shape, and we watch the tree grow with each wish and dream that is added.

I don't give any restrictions to the wishes people make, and they can be anonymous, but there always seem to be more altruistic wishes by the end than not.

I have grand designs of setting up a tree in the middle of a school or a town square even, and filming a time lapse over the course of the day as more and more wishes and dreams are added to the tree.

I haven't done this yet, but I think it would be a lovely way to illustrate how hope blooms and spreads in our communities, if only we allow it to.

WISP by Zana Fraillon and illustrated by Graeme Baker-Smith is out now, published by Lothian Children's, an imprint of Hachette Australia. ■

Discussion and activity ideas, inspired by Wisp

On refugees and detention...



DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Idris and his family have lived in a refugee camp all his life. This sort of upbringing is difficult for those living in safe and secure communities to even imagine. And yet millions of people live like this and governments struggle to deal with this global crisis. Discuss with students the facts of this crisis. For example, explain to students that there are legal requirements for immigration but that many have no option but to flee persecution in ways which are unsafe or may be deemed illegal. How should governments tackle this issue?
- Discuss the contribution which has been made to Australian society by immigrants, some of whom were deemed illegal, e.g. Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s.



ACTIVITIES

- Brainstorm with students how refugees might be assisted and housed, rather than being kept in detention.
- Encourage empathy by having a guest speaker who has emigrated to Australia describe the journey they took to find safe harbor here, or by reading to students the memoir of someone who has made a successful transition to Australian society.
- Read other picture books about refugees and compare them to this one.

BOOK REVIEWS

New to the bookshelf this term



My Storee

For age 4+
By Paul Russell
Harper Collins

Just because you can't spell doesn't mean you can't write! A young boy has a mind full of wonderful stories but when he writes them down, day after day, they come back covered in red pen after his teachers have corrected his spelling.

An engaging and creatively designed book that provides inspiration and support for reluctant writers and dyslexics, and shows the importance and power of good teachers.



WunderSmith: The Calling of Morrigan Crow

For age 8+
By Jessica Townsend
Hachette

Morrigan Crow may have defeated her deadly curse, passed the dangerous trials and joined the mystical Wundrous Society, but her journey into Nevermoor and all its secrets has only just begun. And she is fast learning that not all magic is used for good.

Return to the magical world of Nevermoor! Morrigan Crow's perilous adventures continue in the most anticipated sequel of the year, a treat for all fans of magic and Wunder.



Wide Big World

For age 5+
By Maxine Beneba Clarke
Hachette

Difference is everywhere, just look and see. This whole-wide-big-world is wondrous-unique.

A beautiful children's picture book about diversity from award-winning author Maxine Beneba Clarke and illustrator Isobel Knowles.



The Wizards of Once: Twice Magic

For ages 8+
By Cressida Cowell
Hachette

This was once the story of a young boy Wizard and a young girl Warrior who had been taught since birth to hate each other like poison.

From the bestselling author of *How to Train Your Dragon* comes an exciting high-adventure series - set in an ancient, magical time, full of Wizards, Warriors, Giants and Sprites.



Muse of Nightmares

For YA readers
By Laini Taylor
Hachette

Sarai has lived and breathed nightmares since she was six years old. She believed she knew every horror, and was beyond surprise. She was wrong.

Love and hate, revenge and redemption, destruction and salvation all clash in this gorgeous sequel to the New York Times bestseller, *Strange the Dreamer*.



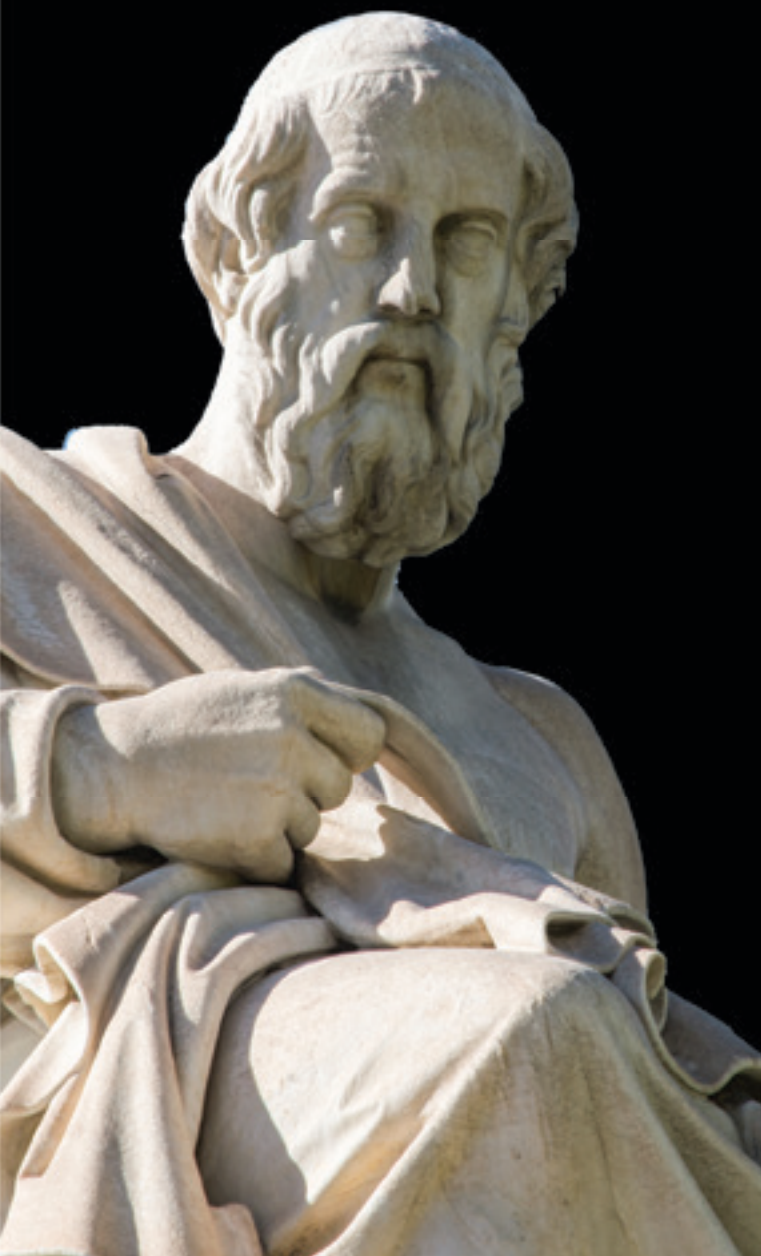
Toto the Ninja Cat and the Incredible Cheese Heist

For ages 8+
By Dermot O'Leary
Hachette

Toto is no ordinary cat, and she can't wait for you to join her on her second ninja adventure!

Ideal for reading aloud or for children to curl up with and read alone, the story features brilliant black and white illustrations throughout. With gentle themes of friendship, inclusivity and winning in the face of adversity, this is a hilarious must-read for all animal-loving kids! ■

What if Plato was wrong and music education doesn't matter?



By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Ever since Plato declared music more important than physics and philosophy, educators have waxed poetic about the benefits of teaching children music.

But do those benefits hold up?

It was Robin Stevens who advocated for a *National Review of Music Education* in the 2003 *Stevens Report*, and it was Robin Stevens in 2014 who heavily critiqued overzealous use of extrinsic music factors to justify all music education rather than specify benefits of particular programs.

In 'Filling the Gaps: What Research is Needed to Assist with Music Education Advocacy in Australia', Stevens argues that while countries with very high PISA scores have extensive music education programs, those programs differ widely; so he asks, "How is it reasonable to draw conclusions about these countries' academic outcomes based on their provision of music education?"

Music Trust took a deeper look at these infamous PISA scores, where literacy and numeracy results for Australian 15-year-olds slid from 9th place worldwide to 19th between 2009 and 2012. Interestingly, *Music Trust* found that in all five of 2009's highest scoring countries, much more class-time was devoted to music than in any Australian government system. "In three countries, music is taught by specialist music teachers and in the other two, it is taught by classroom generalists."

Of those generalists, *Music Trust* further claimed that South Korean generalists receive 160 hours of music education and in Finland, 85 percent of students are taught by generalists with 350 contact hours or more of music education, compared to just 17 hours in Australia.

Claims that music boosts intelligence, emotional wellbeing and psychosocial development, have been researched, debated and oft-proven over the decades but Stevens is hesitant to create unreasonable expectations of broad academic success. Instead,



Isn't it annoying when people quote Plato?

he advocates for specific music education pedagogy to be tied with specific evidence-based research.

In terms of brain research, he elaborates by example: "The problem is when we take all that research and condense it to apply to all music education and make claims of increased brain function. For example, there is obviously greater brain engagement in some musical tasks than others."

What is the takeaway here?

Perhaps that principals and teachers should take their choice of music program seriously and consider what might be their school's best option. Music is beneficial to young learners, sure, but *what method of teaching music is most beneficial to your young learners?*

What methods of music education are Australian schools using? The nation's status quo is uneven, with many schools lacking a music program and/or music specialist altogether. The most recent national data on how many schools teach music in classrooms dates back to the 2005 *National Review of Music Education* (NRME).

In 2008, music educator Ian Harvey surmised, based on this and other available data at the time, that around 88 percent of independent schools and as few as 23 percent of government schools offer a 'sequential, continuous, developmental music education'. Experts seem to agree with Harvey's estimate, qualified by acknowledging there are vast differences across state lines and between government, independent and Catholic schools. ►



Students enjoying a Musica Viva performance. Photo: Emmy Etié



Teachers attending a Musica Viva PD event. Photo: Emmy Etié

◀ According to the NRME: “There are gaps in Australian music curriculum documents in some states and territories, notably in support materials for beginning primary generalist teachers; instrumental and vocal music (including teaching singing); conducting; music technology; music for gifted and talented students; music for Indigenous students, and about Indigenous music; appropriate music pedagogy for different groups, e.g. boys, students with special needs; creativity, improvisation and composition.”

According to *Music Trust*, “at least 87 percent of Queensland **primary** schools offer classroom instruction in music”.

As well, 80 percent of schools sampled nationally by the NRME confirmed they had some form of classroom-based music while 9.4 percent of the sample schools had no music program at all.

The Music Council of Australia found that just 35 percent of Victorian state schools had music programs while 38 percent

of rural Victorian primary schools had no music program at all. It’s difficult to discuss music education in Australian primary schools when, as you can see from the NRME conclusions above, there’s not much nationwide consensus on what that looks like.

So, School News spoke with two primary music education providers to help shed light on what resources are available to teachers in this confusing climate.

I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning

– Plato

Music specialists are now a rarity in schools

Janice Tuck, creative director at Fun Music Company, first revealed: “We are finding that there are less music specialist positions in schools and where there is a specialist, that person is often asked to teach several performing arts subjects such as music, drama and dance.

“So, with detailed curriculum requirements in all these areas,

it’s really difficult for a general or specialist teacher to cover all the curriculum and make sure that it’s fun and educational for the children as well.”

Musica Viva’s artistic director, Michael Sollis agreed: “The reality is that most schools do not have a music specialist and many classroom primary school teachers do not feel like they have the tools or the capability to effectively teach music in their classroom, even though they are the ones responsible for facilitating musical learning and meeting arts curricula.

Questions about pedagogy

Michael spoke to us about the movement to integrate arts into STEM, and how music pedagogy should be at the forefront: “Key to this are resources that inspire students’ creativity through artistic and musical group work, problem solving and music making, particularly via accessible techniques such as singing, body percussion and classroom instruments.”



Images: Fun Music Company





Images: Fun Music Company

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Janice revealed that she formulated her music program “by talking to thousands of active music teachers daily and researching in detail as many major curricula around the world”. She noted: “These findings led me to better understand the core underlying principles that shape our curricula today, which I define as aural, singing/playing, composing and connecting.

Instruments and physical space: implementing a music program

Janice advised: “In regards to

instruments, schools should invest in a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments first, as these are the most practical and useful for general music classes.”

Michael suggested: “A class set of non-melodic percussion – such as hand-held drums, shakers, triangles and bells – is extremely versatile and a good and accessible starting point for any school. As your school music program grows, you will hopefully accumulate more resources and instruments, so a dedicated music classroom is ideal if possible, where students and teachers can sing, play, move and generally make a racket.” ■



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TEACHING RESOURCES

43

Epic tours, extraordinary schools schools and the overseas trip of a lifetime

Imagine taking students to perform at Carnegie Hall or the Chicago Symphony Centre? How about taking a class of science students to meet astronauts, robots and interact with AI on the streets of Tokyo?

Creating an itinerary that will blow kids' minds, in the best possible way, is what learning should really be about.

Music travel specialist Chris Gibbs spoke exclusively with *School News* about the dos and don'ts of a world-class music tour.

Top tips for planning a killer overseas school tour

From World Projects director Chris Gibbs:

1. Be committed to getting the tour off the ground, and begin your preparations as early as you can.
2. Work with your tour operator throughout the entire planning process, so that you can be sure that you get exactly what you want from the tour.
3. Make sure you travel with a tour operator that specialises in your field. This will ensure you have access to the most incredible opportunities, and also that they have the experience to deal with the logistics that are particular to your field.



Photo: World Projects

What might an overseas music tour look like?

He revealed: "Every music tour starts with an initial chat about the specific musical requirements of the tour with a teacher to get a rough idea of budget. From this point, we would make recommendations for destinations, and create an itinerary that meets these needs.

"The most important aspect of each tour is to get the best music experience possible. To determine the destination depends on the type of ensemble travelling, and the group's budget.

"As an example, for wind bands, the USA, the UK and Japan are always incredible options. For orchestras and choirs,

the USA and Europe are excellent options. These will be at the higher end of the budget range.

“Destinations that are a little cheaper, but still offering great musical outcomes, include Singapore and Hawaii.

"If the budget can't stretch to an overseas tour, the Australian International Music Festival, held annually in Sydney, provides great performance opportunities, including the chance to perform at the Sydney Opera House, a bucket list opportunity for any budding young musician.

"A good music tour should provide a variety of performance opportunities, exchanges and workshops or masterclasses." ►

NEW YORK CITY

Monday, April 15, 2019

Morning: Breakfast at hotel. Load coaches with instruments and performance attire. Tour Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts - hub of music, drama, and dance in NYC. Stroll through The Metropolitan Opera House, New York State Theater, Avery Fisher Hall or The Vivian Beaumont Theater.

Afternoon: Lunch. Transfer to Scarsdale High School, meet hosts and set-up. Concert band workshop with Jason Noble, Director of the Columbia University Wind Ensemble and Director of Bands at Scarsdale High School. Orchestra workshop with Brian Worsdale, conductor of the precollege Symphony Orchestra at the Manhattan School of Music. Rehearsal with Guest Artist Colin Williams, Associate Principal Trombone with the New York Philharmonic.

Evening: Pot luck dinner and social time with hosts and performance preparation. Exchange performance with Scarsdale High School, including Guest Artist Colin Williams. Afterwards, say goodbye and return to hotel.

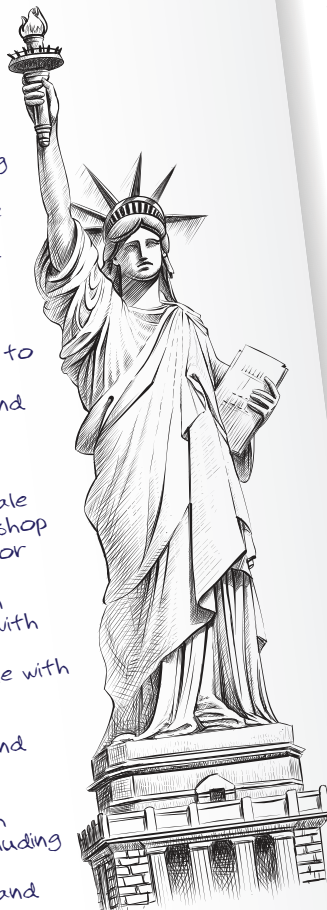


Photo: World Projects



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Photos: World Projects

◀ Pros and cons: cross-faculty tours

According to Chris: "Trying to combine too many different faculties for a tour creates a number of logistical issues, and we would recommend avoiding this where possible as no one faculty would get the absolute best outcome from their tour."

However, he adds: "Having said that, numbers are also important for the financial viability of an overseas tour, so it is sometimes necessary to combine different groups on a tour to get the numbers up and bring the costs down. This can still lead to excellent outcomes if the groups are within the same faculty, and we have done many successful tours combining music, drama and dance groups."

Tania Sirilas, from G.E.T Educational Tours added that cross-faculty tours are gaining

popularity: "We are seeing more and more cross-faculty tours as schools incorporate language and history tours for example." With international tours, it makes sense that history and language or culture could compliment other subjects depending on where you go.

Destination choice is paramount, as Tania notes: "It really depends on teacher preference as most have a destination they want to travel to in mind, but they may like suggestions on what to visit and do based on the curriculum they want to focus on."

What you should and shouldn't worry about

Chris spoke with us about teacher expectations, how involved you need to be in the planning part, and what to do if things go wrong.

"Once the itinerary has been agreed your tour manager organises every element of the tour but I always encourage teachers to be involved as much as possible so that everything meets their exact requirements. I have found that the more involved in the planning process the teacher is, the more likelihood for a successful tour that exceeds expectations."

"Any tour we organise has a dedicated tour manager that stays with the group throughout, so they are always there to handle any issues that might arise. You should also expect 24-hour support so that if anything goes wrong, it is not left up to you to sort it out. This allows you to focus on the music and not the logistics."

Tania also said: "We appoint a dedicated account manager to guide and support your tour planning every step of the way."

"It is also worth remembering

that travel is not an exact science: even with all the experience and planning in the world, things can sometimes go wrong unexpectedly, which is why I recommend travel insurance to every group."

What might an overseas STEM tour look like?

We received an example STEM itinerary from G.E.T Educational Tours to give us an idea. Tania told us that the over 55-year-old Australian company focuses on providing 'Living Lessons' for students and teachers that specialise in a range of curricular tours including language, history, visual and performing arts and STEM.

"STEM is becoming quite a popular, subject-focussed tour, particularly as more females are being encouraged to engage in STEM subjects," revealed spokeswoman Tania. ■



Photos: G.E.T. Educational Tours

STEM Tour: Japan 'Land of Technology'

DAY 1: Flight to Tokyo DAY 2: Tokyo highlights

National Museum of Emerging Science & Innovation (Miraikan) on Odaiba Island, featuring: androids (ASIMO demonstration), DNA cutting edge science experiments, geo cosmos movement and screening, interactive student displays in English, medical research advancements and technologies, space exploration, DNA and cells theatre, earthquake and volcano measurement data exhibit.

Sony ExploraScience room explains how new technology aligns with basic science principles. Interact with many exhibits in the Sound Zone, Light Zone, 4k/3D image and much more.

Toyota Mega Web Theme Park on Odaiba Island: a combination of museum, automobile technology advancement and interactive stations designed to entertain and educate.

DAY 3: TSUKUBA highlights

Tsukuba Science Park (approximately one hour from Tokyo) was the original site for the World Expo in 1985 and has developed into an incredible science city, with a focus on research and development across all branches of science. Visit KEK – home to the Belle II mega accelerator. KEK is a particle

accelerator research laboratory. Enjoy a fascinating guided tour of the two main sections of the plant which is a wonderful experience for students of chemistry and physics in particular.

JAXA Space Research Facility – visit the exhibition room (self-guided) and guided tours are also recommended of the KIBO flight control room and the astronaut training facility. For 70 minutes students witness real-time operations of KIBO, the Japanese Experiment Module on the International Space Station and learn about astronaut selection, training and healthcare. An excellent program, delivered in English.

Cyberdyne Studio displays how future use of robot technology aids industry, in particular medical rehabilitation. Guided tour and demonstration includes a short film followed by the opportunity to wear a robot suit.

DAY 4: Tokyo highlights

NIMS workshop (Japan's National Institute for Materials Science). This introduces students to the metallurgical world and students conduct experiments comparing properties of metals and investigate shape memory alloys before experiencing a guided tour of the NIMS facilities, learning about Creep Test before visiting the NIMS Thermal Spray Laboratory. Science Square

Tsukuba is an exhibit on how the progress of science and technology will change our future. It demonstrates research undertaken at the Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (AIST), a public research institute focusing on Manufacturing, Green Technology and Life Technology.

DAY 5: MT Fuji highlights

Maglev Exhibition Centre in Yamanashi Prefecture (1.5 hours from Tokyo). Students learn how Japanese engineers have evolved the high-speed train industry through the use of magnets. Experiencing the Maglev train test from the observation desk (run every 20 minutes) on the 5.7 km test track where it reaches speeds in excess of 550 km per hour is a great thrill. Workshops on superconducting magnets and where students can make their own mini Maglev.

World Heritage Shiraito Waterfall and micro hydro power sites that use water from Mt Fuji. Students learn how Japanese farmers practice sustainable use of water and other resources. Mt Fuji World Heritage Centre – students learn the great history of the mountain and its special place in Japanese culture before returning to Tokyo later that afternoon.

DAY 6: Tokyo highlights

Edo Tokyo Museum followed by the Meiji

Shrine in Harajuku where students can wander the streets known for their colourful street art, cosplay and fashion scene. Experience the famous Shibuya crossing and beautification of the Shibuya River area.

DAY 7-10: Osaka highlights

Osaka Science Museum features four floors highlighting familiar chemistry, electricity and energy, the universe, and more. See a robot solve the Rubik's Cube in just 16 steps. Osaka National Museum of Art is just next door.

Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan has 15 large tanks and a focus on the fish of the Pacific Rim as well as specific zones featuring Japan Forest, Antarctica and more. The Pacific Rim tank has over 5,400 tonnes of water, housing some of the largest fish in the sea.

Kindai University Osaka displays developments in aquaculture and sustainable fishing with regards to Bluefin Tuna, an important food source in Japanese culture.

Visit Kobe's excellent Earthquake and Disaster Museum or take a day-trip to Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan.

DAY 11: Fly home ■



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Students suffering from higher levels of anxiety were calmer and more resilient following school camp



An increased focus on student-centred learning has arrived at an understanding of the importance of the wellbeing, resilience and mental health of children and young people.

Outdoor education programs offer students the opportunity to learn about their own strengths and weaknesses and how persistence in extending one's (often) self-imposed limitations can bring success – be they physical, emotional or social.

The ability to bounce back from setbacks or challenges with confidence and optimism is a vital tool for any young person as they enter adulthood. Connecting students with the outdoors, within small communities and with their own physical and emotional challenges provides a rich environment for the development of personal and social growth.

Outdoor education programs that encourage students to take on personal challenges in a real-world setting, provide them with opportunities to build their confidence and learn how to deal with obstacles, success



Brendon Fogarty,
*National Head of Curriculum,
Outdoor Education Group*

and failure. Social and emotional skills - such as confidence, self-discipline and coping skills - enable students to persevere in the face of challenge, set higher academic goals and use more effective study practices (Durlak et al, 2011).

A new study by the Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance (OYPRA) developed and conducted over nine years has also shown that outdoor education programs can lead to improved mental health and wellbeing in young people. OYPRA is an alliance of researchers led by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute together with Australia's top universities, state governments, not-for-profit community organisations, and key



representatives from the outdoor industry.

The collaborative OYPRA study program found that those students suffering from higher levels of anxiety were calmer and more resilient following school camp.

Outdoor education programs engage students in practical and active learning experiences in beautiful natural environments.

When provided with these opportunities to apply academic knowledge beyond the classroom walls, they develop a deeper understanding of when and how knowledge can be applied in different contexts. Deep learners are able to transform "factual knowledge into usable knowledge" (Bransford, et al., 2000).

Ultimately, experiential learning

in the outdoors bridges the gap between the theory taught in schools and the practice lived in the real world, and a quality outdoor education program can provide those vital experiences for young people. By moving beyond the theory to practice, students have proven to be able to retain concepts and ideas, consequently leading to increased academic achievement (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018); and nothing prepares young people for real life outside the school gates like outdoor education experiences in the real world. ★

Brendon Fogarty, is the National Head of Curriculum for the Outdoor Education Group; the largest provider of outdoor education and camp programs in Australia

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Learning in the outdoors is more than just hard top camps and hikes; it's about teaching kids universal skills that will serve them well for life – wherever it may take them.

The Outdoor Education Group (OEG) partner with schools to complement and enhance their curriculum; in essence bringing theory to life in the Real World. OEG challenges students and guides their discovery while offering practical and active outdoor learning experiences. By exploring Australia's most diverse and beautiful environments, we equip students with the skills to overcome difficulties and realise learnings with long-term benefits.

We give kids a taste for toughing it out and in turn a better understanding of themselves, their relationships and the world around them.



For more information contact
The Outdoor Education Group by visiting:
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Resilience. Everyone's character is challenged continuously; resilience is how we cope and thrive in the face of these challenges. Our programs are designed to put young people to the test to bring out their best.

Perseverance. Life is full of obstacles. But it's not about being too strong to fall. Our programs provide kids with the courage to persist.

Self-efficacy. Our style of hands-on learning leads to tangible skills that help turn young people into young adults. By achieving more than they believe themselves capable of, they become more aware of their capabilities and increase levels of confidence.

THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION GROUP ▲

We believe nothing prepares students for real life like the
REAL WORLD.

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A very Victorian school excursion

By Mandy Clarke,
Industry Reporter

Be a *Mary Poppins* and take learning outside your classroom.

There's a spoonful of sugar in every school trip and what could be more exciting than a whirlwind tour of Australia's very own, Victoria. Dance alongside the non-animated penguins of Penguin Parade, Phillip Island. (That was the last *Mary Poppins* reference, I promise.)

With horrific stats like one-in-eight primary school children getting less than 30 minutes of outdoor playtime each day, it's no wonder students go wild at the mere mention of a school excursion.

Depending on your location, exploring Victoria might be a local jaunt or a long-haul flight. Either way, there's so many different things to do, and so many ways to integrate cross-faculty learning that it's well-worth the planning.

Let's go fly a kite...

(Okay, that one really was the last *Mary Poppins* reference.)

Victoria has a stunning plethora of national parks and botanical gardens boasting native flora and fauna, with iconic natural sights to see along the Great Ocean Road, across the Twelve Apostles, the Yarra River, and more.

Outdoor learning is not just being eroded by generation



▲ Fun, adventure, challenges and team building: these are all part of what makes Alexandra Adventure Resort one of the best camps in Victoria! Totalling over 16 outdoor activities, there is something to test everyone's skills. Our camp is recently renovated with new beds and teacher facilities – you won't want to leave!

– Karen, Alexandra Adventure Resort

Z's reliance on hand-held technology but also by the pressures of testing and academic studies. All of this in spite the World Health Organisation's recommendation for children to receive at least one hour of physical activity per day.

Sir Ken Robinson, leader in the development of creativity, innovation, and human potential, and chair of the *Dirt is Good* Child Development

Advisory Board, insists: "Play is not a dispensable, frivolous part of childhood. It facilitates many forms of development – social, creative, physical, cognitive and emotional – that are fundamental to the healthy growth and maturity of every child. Children must have the time, space and permission to engage in a variety of play, which schools can offer and encourage parents to make real play part of the everyday."

Schools have the power to do something now to incite enthusiasm for the outdoors among children... carve some time out from the daily classroom grind and go fly a kite! (Last, last *Poppins* nod.)

Shine a spotlight on a special corner of Australia's stunning natural scape, explore our national history, both modern and ancient, through landmarks, museums, galleries, shows, and more. ►



Looking for a solution to your OOSH/OSHC challenges?

Australian families are desperate for good quality, affordable day care or outside school hours care



These days both parents are likely to be employed and working longer hours than ever. This, combined with transport issues, can make the issue of after school clubs or after school care a stressful one for parents and children alike.

AND IT'S BECOMING A MAJOR ISSUE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

Volunteer-managed OOSH or OSHC committees are struggling with the issue of out of school care in the face of new regulatory reforms that increase quality expectations but also increase administrative burdens. Senior educators like you are looking for a better way and OOSH service providers are frequently an attractive option.

You'll be well aware of the difference it makes to you and your school community when you have high quality, well managed outside school hours care on your site. At Sherpa Kids we deliver exactly that - but with a difference that other after school care and OOSH service providers cannot match. Because our business is built on the local franchise model you get the best of both worlds; the care and concern of a local decision maker based in your community, combined with the confidence and authority of stable, professional central management.

Firstly, your service is owned and managed by a carefully selected local community member; usually a mum or dad and, in some cases, an education professional.

They understand families, they understand schools, and they want to mirror your school's values in their before and after school care services and vacation care.

The Out of School Hours (OOSH) care sector is intensely regulated. So, it's important that procedures are followed correctly. When you partner with us we will take care of your OOSH services set-up in full. We'll manage all your administration, recruitment, training, staff rota, parent communication and compliance obligations.

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Fun, flexible and engaging OOSH/OSHC programmes that are syllabus-led.

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REACH ENGAGE CHALLENGE



◀ Outdoor learning ideas in Victoria...

Why Victoria, you may ask... Why take students to Victoria for an educational excursion?

Well, Victoria has curated a reputation for prioritising its natural wonders and Indigenous history; there are many high quality organised outdoor activities that are a critical part of the Victorian economy as well as world-class history and art exhibits.

To put it in perspective, outdoor activities account for four times as many jobs in Victoria than the mining sector!

With an abundance of outdoor activities to choose from: nature-based, camps, outdoor recreational activities, bushwalking, canoeing, birdwatching, beach activities, etc., it is a great location to organise an excursion.

An increasing amount of research is showing educators the value of outdoor play for young children. With this in mind, there are great new programs in Victoria that focus on play in the bush, at the beach and other natural spaces for primary school-aged children.

Adventure therapy and penguin parades...

Go online and check out the *Outdoors Victoria* resource, where there are a plethora of innovative ideas including sea kayaking and 'bush adventure therapy', which targets young people affected by adversity.

See penguins and fur seals in the wild at Phillip Island and learn about Antarctica.

Go fish! Take young anglers to cast a line in a pond or find a farm that will let them catch and help cook their own lunch.

Hearty high seas? Lap Port

Phillip Bay in a ferry boat.

Walk! Learn about Melbourne's amazing history and architecture when you engage in walking tours around the city. Bus tours are a great option for special education groups, or class groups that require wheelchair access. Bus and private tours are particularly good if you can recruit a guide or bus commentator with a sense of humour.

Music and arts events that will make you drool...

Museums: there's so much happening in Victorian museums that we could never quite do them justice here. Keep yourself up-to-date with the latest exhibitions and events at Melbourne Museum, Immigration Museum, Scienceworks, the Royal Exhibition Building and IMAX Melbourne Museum. They publicise their exhibits well in advance so you can find out if one will line-up perfectly with a unit you plan to teach.

A Lego convention is being held at the Royal Exhibition Building in January, which might interest little STEM learners around the country. Melbourne Museum is hosting its epic Nelson Mandela exhibition until March; then Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly series will take over until May 2019.

Melbourne's *International Jazz Festival* will launch mid-2019, attracting young musicians and classic music teachers, while the gymnastics *World Cup* will be gathering in the city this February not to mention, the epic *2019 NRL Harvey Norman All-Stars*. If you can work that last one into your planned school excursion, hat's off.

Try finding any kid or teen who wouldn't want to go and see Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical *School of Rock*, based on the Jack Black cult hit

phenomenon. Of course, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* also hits Melbourne theatres in January. (That one may require pre-pre-pre-booking.)

Did you know that Melbourne Museum is Autism-friendly?

Get the free Field Guide app. to learn about Victoria's unique and diverse wildlife in the great outdoors. It has descriptions of over 950 species, including birds, mammals, fishes, reptiles, frogs and invertebrates from terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. It's part of an ongoing collaboration between Australia's major natural history museums – so you can use it wherever you go!



Are you signed up to Outdoor Classroom Day?

This fantastic global campaign celebrates and inspires outdoor learning and play. The latest *Outdoor Classroom Day* was November 1, 2018 and the next will be May 32, 2019, when thousands of schools and millions of children around the world will take their lessons outside and share their experience.

Why should you join in?

First, it's free! Second, because we must make outdoor learning an essential part of every day, at school and at home. The good news is that there are a growing number of schools worldwide that recognise how important outdoor learning and play is to children. They want to reach

their full potential as much as we want them to, so let's give them the best tools we can.

Research is also showing that outdoor learning improves children's physical and mental health, helping create a lifelong connection with nature. That's why we're starting to see nature therapy-type programs pop-up in the education sector and in our wider communities.

Have you heard of Project Dirt?

Project Dirt asked teachers who have taken part in previous *Outdoor Classroom Days* about the impact of taking children outdoors. Two surveys across 45 countries with teachers who participated in the campaign between 2016-2017.

1. 68 percent of teachers want more time for children to play outdoors.
2. 87 percent of teachers want more time to take lessons outside.
3. 97 percent of teachers worldwide believe that outdoor playtime throughout the school day is critical for children to reach their full potential.
4. 88 percent of teachers globally said that children are happier after playing outdoors, and 89 percent said the same when they learn outdoors.

There are more than 500 Aussie schools already signed up but many more schools are encouraged to join in and spend an entire school day learning and playing outdoors.

Even if you already get your children outdoors regularly, why not use the day to celebrate what you are doing and inspire others.

Check out the online *Outdoor Classroom Day* resource; it encourages schools to share

Managing mental health

in primary vs. secondary students

Final school exams, transition to high school, end-of-year burnout: all stress can be managed with simple techniques to promote life-long strategies for children

With the spotlight on mental health in October around the world, finding ways to cope with times of stress is a vital life skill for children of all ages. But many parents and teachers worry about how to help the children in their care manage their mental health. Across the pond, not-for-profit mental health service Interrelate shared some different suggestions for managing stress in children and teenagers that could prove handy in any school setting...

PRIMARY: 6 ways to manage stress in younger children:

1. **Breathing exercises** – deep inhale followed by a deep exhale. This gets rid of the body's build-up of cortisol (the stress hormone) and is an instant calm. Make it into a regular game and watch kids start to self-manage this exercise when they feel stressed!
2. **Play a 'my favourite place' game** and get everyone to close their eyes and imagine they're in their favourite place. Make sure everyone is hearing and seeing and feeling everything around them. Just five minutes is enough!
3. **Create a free-play art session** where the children get to express exactly what they're feeling right now – no judgements (options 1-3 make a great combined exercise!)
4. **Use music as a stress reliever**, either to calm combined with quiet closed-eyes time, or to create an upbeat, happy, dancing around the room exercise
5. **Embrace the therapeutic effect of blowing bubbles** (this works for kids of any age – including the grown-ups!). The deep breath exercise of blowing the bubbles combined with the distraction of the bubbles is an instant stress reducer
6. **Get outside in the fresh air** – rain, hail or shine! Movement and activity outside provide an instant stress relief. Combined with a discovery or learning exercise allows the brain to forget about stressful thoughts

SECONDARY: Prompts for managing stress and self-care in teenagers:

- How's your food and sleep? Sounds simple but, some healthy nourishment and a **good night's sleep** will always make you feel better
- Take a deep breath, **breathe it out and repeat**. This simple exercise that you can do anywhere, anytime, reduces the cortisol in your body and helps replace it with the happy hormones (especially good right before an exam!)
- What's your favourite place in the world? **The beach**, your friend's back yard pool? Close your eyes for five minutes and take yourself there and imagine all the sights and sounds that make it the best place to be. Feel better?!
- Be prepared. Obvious right? But, we often spend time worrying instead of preparing. No matter the situation, an exam, an assessment, an interview, a new job, block out some **time to prepare** and you'll instantly stop worrying because you've filled your brain with knowledge
- **Hang out with your family**, no seriously! Get together at dinner, talk about the day, have some banter and remind yourself that these guys have your back
- **Get into your flow**. Whether you're the sporty, arty, crafty or musical type. What's that thing that takes you somewhere else? The mental distraction and physical distraction helps clear your mind and promotes a better night's sleep
- If you're struggling with something please **talk to a trusted adult**, whether that's a parent, teacher, family member or friend. Even if you think it's not their area of expertise they'll know how to help

One of the best ways for adults to help children navigate through change is to be present and available. By using simple techniques that can be implemented anywhere and at any time, teachers can help to set up life-long coping mechanisms in children that can help them through stressful situations and retain a healthy outlook on life. ■

The truth about storing chemicals and hazardous products

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Complying with Australian standards and regulations on chemical storage is essential to the health and safety wellbeing of your school but how do you know if you're managing that?

There are lots of areas in a school that require the storage of hazardous materials. It doesn't just refer to staff areas and kitchens where washing up liquid and dishwasher chemicals are found, cleaning storerooms where harsher cleaning chemicals are kept, or maintenance sheds and storage units where petrol, paints, spray paints, oils, and other useful implements reside.

We're predominantly talking about the various chemicals housed around campus in places that students have more regular access. For example, in school science laboratories; solvents, glues and other substances kept in art and craft classrooms; flammable or hazardous solutions stored in woodworking or technology rooms; fixatives and developers in photography studios or dark rooms; pool chemicals kept near swimming pools or changing rooms.

School News spoke to an industry leader to find out exactly what you need to know, and how you can put the right measures in place. First things first, what are the relevant Australian standards?

Well, when it comes to compliance you should be aware of the following Australian standards:

1. AS1940 The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids
2. AS3780 The storage and handling of corrosive substances
3. AS4326 The storage and handling of oxidising agents

Right off-the-mark, some of the simplest things you can do to ensure safety include creating and updating a register or list

First things first, what are the relevant Australian standards?



of hazardous chemicals around campus. The Association of Independent Schools of NSW recommends schools maintain current *Safety Data Sheets* (SDSs) for each hazardous chemical on campus. SDSs provide information on chemical identification, chemical stability and reactivity to help with separation, segregation and storage.

Chemical suppliers should always include a free SDS from the manufacturer or importer of every chemical; if they haven't, then you should request one and if there are issues, you must contact your local work health and safety (WHS) regulator. It is also your responsibility to check that the product or chemical name on the SDS is the same as on the product label of the container. In order for it to comply to WHS regulations, it should be written in English, have 16 sub-headings and include emergency contact information for the relevant chemical manufacturer.

The SDS will tell you how the chemical should be disposed of correctly, recycled or reclaimed; so make sure your dedicated staff

member is the person checking this before endeavoring to dispose of hazardous materials. This document will also explain how products should be stored and it is important to check for each separate chemical, noting chemical properties such as appearance, odour, pH, flash point, melting/boiling point or any other relevant physical data that may impact on storage proximity or incompatibilities.

You should be passionate about labelling because incorrect labels are detrimental, as is not adhering to the recommended storage written on those labels. Any chemical containers without labels should be dealt with immediately.

Bronson Safety representative Jemal Albergo also advised that schools focus on dangerous goods identification. He warned: "Dangerous goods are classified in the *Australian Dangerous Goods Code* (ADG) and packages are required to be labelled according to their properties with the appropriate class label."

Another reason that labelling



is so important is chemical compatibility, Jemal explained: "Incompatible substances need to be separated by distance or a thermal barrier. For the purpose of separation, or segregation, dangerous goods storage cabinets feature a thermal barrier."

Aside from labelling and properly organising your dangerous goods storage cabinets, there are day-to-day necessities for school staff to adhere to as Jemal also explained. "Dangerous goods should be restricted to authorised personnel only: staff trained in the use of the product are the only personnel who should have access to the chemical."

Particularly where dangerous goods are stored within reach of students, the storage cabinets should "have door handles that can be fitted with a padlock". Properly trained staff with access to the cabinets should note that "spills inside storage cabinets should be cleaned up immediately" and that cabinet maintenance is also a priority. "Cabinets have moving parts that need to be maintained," Jemal confirmed.

"Vapours inside the storage cabinet also need to be controlled and the best way to minimise vapour build-up is with mechanical venting of the cabinet." If you are concerned about dangerous goods safety compliance, it's good to speak with a specialist, WHS or your manufacturer who can advise on your specific situation. ■



DANGEROUS GOODS:

Are you doing everything possible to ensure compliance?

Groundsmen and maintenance staff are your unsung heroes – they work behind the scenes to ensure your school is operating safely and smoothly. Recently, there has been a spike in non-conformance issues relating to the proper storage of commonly used flammable goods in maintenance areas and work sites. Bronson Safety supply all the products you need to make sure your school is compliant.

Aerosols
#1 cause of flammable goods breaches

Mower Fuel
#3 cause of flammable goods breaches

Paints
#2 cause of flammable goods breaches

Top 4 storage areas of concern at your school

1 Maintenance Workshop Engine fuel is highly flammable and can be dangerous for the users of machinery. Paints and aerosols should also be stored safely.

2 Pool Chemical Storage Shed Swimming pool chemicals can also be oxidizers and corrosives. Oxidizing materials (such as calcium hypochlorite) have the ability to react chemically to oxidize combustible (burnable) materials. Some pool chemicals can also be corrosive. Corrosives are materials that can attack and chemically destroy body tissues on contact.

3 Science Room and Labs Many flammable and combustible liquids are used in school science laboratories.

4 The Cleaner's Cupboard Cleaning products are a source of potentially hazardous chemicals including antimicrobials, solvents, fragrance, surfactants etc.

Contact the staff at Bronson Safety to get all the information and products you need to keep your school compliant and more importantly safe.



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Poor nutrition

can put children at higher risk of mental illness

One in six children aged eight to 14 years in Australia report going to school or bed hungry, according to a new report by the Australian Child Wellbeing Project (ACWP).

These children are up to three times more likely to report two or more health complaints per week such as headaches, stomach aches, sleeplessness, feeling low, nervous or irritable. They are also more likely to be bullied regularly.

Children in marginalised groups, such as low income, Indigenous and disabled, were most likely to be affected.

According to the report, Australia has a high proportion of children living in poverty compared to the best performing OECD nations and it has not improved in recent years.

Children who go hungry may experience a number of adversities that are likely to impact on their physical and



Natalie Parletta,

Natalie Parletta, Senior Research Fellow: nutrition, mental and physical health, University of South Australia

emotional wellbeing. However there is evidence to suggest that hunger and malnutrition by itself may impact on children's mental health.

Harming children's wellbeing

A survey of American children from low-income families reported that those who experienced frequent hunger were more likely to have emotional, behavioural and academic problems than children from the same low-income communities who



Leonie Segal,

Professor of Health Economics at the School of Population Health, University of South Australia.

didn't experience hunger. These associations were particularly strong for aggression and anxiety.

Another American study found that child hunger was independently associated with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

A study in Bombay found that 129 children who had suffered early malnourishment had lower IQ and a 60 percent rate of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) compared to 15 percent in control children from the same

classrooms. It is of concern that these problems persisted into adulthood.

A large cohort of 1500 children from the island of Mauritius was assessed for malnutrition at age three. When they were followed up at ages eight, 11 and 17, children who were malnourished had lower IQ and more antisocial and aggressive behaviour. These associations were independent of psychosocial adversity.

Selected children from this cohort were enrolled in a preschool enrichment program that provided nutrition, education, and physical activity. 14-20 years later these children had healthier brain development and reduced psychopathology compared with matched controls who didn't take part in the program. The benefits were more pronounced in the children who had been malnourished, suggesting that addressing nutrition is both critical for healthy development and is possible with an appropriately targeted pre-school program.

Perhaps more schools can help by bringing back home economics and cooking lessons for children or offering healthy school breakfasts



How going to bed hungry can impact on a child's mental health

Our brains are made up of essential nutrients and it relies on both macronutrients (fat, carbohydrates, protein) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) for its structure and function.

It is well known that severe nutritional deficiency can have a range of negative effects for our brains. For instance iodine was discovered as the most preventable cause of severe mental retardation and brain damage.

However, even mild to moderate iodine deficiency has been associated with lower cognitive

performance. Low folate levels may be associated with depression and suboptimal nutrient levels in children may contribute to symptoms of ADHD. While omega-3 fatty acids may improve mental health across the lifespan.

Nutritional supplementation for school-aged children who have poor diets has been shown to improve cognition and behaviour. Improving the nutrition status of children with ADHD may reduce learning and behavioural symptoms.

In a placebo-controlled trial, daily vitamin-mineral supplementation was able to reduce violent behaviour of juvenile offenders by 40 percent. Even in school children aged six to 12 years, vitamin-mineral supplementation over four

months reduced the number of antisocial behaviours by 47 percent.

These studies provide proof of concept for the importance of nutrients for mental health.

It has been suggested that sub-clinical levels of nutrients may manifest in psychological symptoms before overt physical symptoms of nutritional deficiency become obvious.

If 15 percent of children in Australia are going hungry and not meeting their nutritional needs for healthy development, what is the impact on their quality of life, academic achievement, societal costs?

What can we do?

The demand for food relief in Australia is continuing to rise. Foodbank provides food relief to 473,000 people each month – and 35 percent are children.

However, in 2013, of the people that food relief agencies helped, 65 percent did not get all they needed and agencies need a great deal more food to meet the demand.

The majority of people seeking food relief are not homeless. Many families get caught up in vicious cycles of running out

of money for food before each payday.

There is a misconception that healthy food is expensive. However a recent cost-analysis of usual diets compared to a healthy plant-based (modified Mediterranean) revealed that the healthy diet was cheaper.

With some basic cooking skills, healthy meals can be cheap, tasty and easy to make. There are some great community cooking programs, many run by volunteers.

Perhaps more schools can help by bringing back home economics and cooking lessons for children or offering healthy school breakfasts.

Food security needs to be made a priority public policy issue, as all Australians should have the opportunity to enjoy the fundamental human right of being able to access adequate, healthy food. ■

Natalie Parletta, Senior Research Fellow: nutrition, mental and physical health, University of South Australia and Leonie Segal, Professor of Health Economics at the School of Population Health, University of South Australia. This article is republished from The Conversation under a creative commons license.



Watch the clock!

Stellar scoreboards motivate teams



Photos: Blue Vane Scoreboards

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Buying a scoreboard for your school will certainly thrill students and the wider school community but it's a notable expense. So, getting the best value for money, perusing every option and considering what the scoreboard will be used for (and in what setting!) is absolutely critical.

These flashy units now come with an array of bells and whistles, from LED to SMART functionality, video and multimedia capabilities, wireless access and even wifi. Schools can factor in price, space and frequency of use to choose between boards with

a basic scoring function to full-blown video scoreboards that display live-action replays and animation to enhance the excitement of any sporting experience (and integrate other school subjects to boot).

School News spoke with a variety of leaders in the sector to find out everything you need to know about buying a scoreboard for your school.

Danthonia Designs' spokesman, Leo Zimmerman told us about a few of the biggest considerations he thinks schools should make before deciding to buy or upgrade. Size is a big one. "How far are the viewers from the scoreboard?" It sounds like a simple question, but too often goes unconsidered until it's too late.

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Photos: Danthonia Designs

Do you want the score and video display on the scoreboard to impact the crowd or act simply as a reference point for the referee? Would you like to display game footage, slo-mo replay, or advertisements? Narrow down your intentions.

Another biggie is screen resolution. "The higher the

resolution, the better the image looks but higher resolution also means higher cost and more electricity consumption – and if the scoreboard is far enough away, the higher resolution may hardly be noticeable," Leo explained. If cost is a big consideration, clarify with your supplier on what resolution you

are being quoted. You may also be able to visit installations in other schools or gyms, so you can see what a particular resolution looks like in real life.

Leo recommended: "Ask your supplier if the resolution being quoted is the actual pixel pitch or virtual pixel pitch because virtual pixel pitch is a software

enhancement to make the picture look better, but will not yield the same quality of image." Adjustable brightness is also important because it's likely that games will be played during the day and night. Leo noted that an outdoor scoreboard should have a brightness of at least 6000 nits. ▶



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Photos: Danthonia Designs'

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Allowing kids to hold onto wonder, the cards can help them process emotion, build confidence and feel safe.

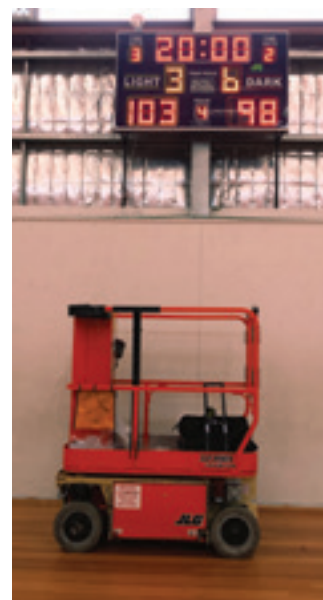
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◀ Different sports have different scoring needs, so think about what your school will be using the scoreboard for as this will inform what product best suits you. From length-of-game to the amount of data required, the needs can vary. Cricket is a very data-heavy game to score, whereas soccer would require much less screen space, for example. Different scoring software will appeal to different sports too, so check that with your supplier.

If future software upgrades are a key consideration, and they should be, it will help if your new scoreboard has a solid data connection. Wifi is a good option but depending on location and the quality of the wifi available, it might not be optimum for video streaming. If you have the budget, it's worth looking into fibre optic cabling. Find out about any software before it's installed, so that it's easy for staff to use and you know whether third-party apps or any other integrated tech is required.

The structure of your scoreboard is also extremely important. The stand needs to be stable, safe and (if outdoors) able to withstand storms or harsh off-season weather. Hot dip galvanised steel or aluminium will help prevent corrosion but there are other types of structures out there so check that an engineer has certified the build at the quoting stage, and consider protective units that will protect against ball damage.

Finally, scoreboards are pieces of IT equipment and should be maintained as such. Just like a computer will have to be serviced every now and again, you can bank on having to call up your supplier to assist with a glitch at some point. So it's important to establish a good relationship with a service provider who can help you out. If they have spare parts stored nationally, that's also a bonus



Top 3 tips

Peter Liistro from Blue Vane Scoreboards recommends:

1. Be clear on the lifespan you will expect from the scoreboard. Some technologies change fast, making a scoreboard obsolete very quickly.
2. The scoreboard will need repairs one day: Is the scoreboard serviceable and can it be done for a reasonable cost?
3. Do some research. Ask sports clubs in your area. What brand and features to they have and are they happy with it?

because it means your wait time will decrease if something needs repairing. Warranties will tend to cover damage but it's worth reading the fine print to be sure that everything is covered, not just delivery of a spare part. ■

Different scoring software will appeal to different sports



From prisons to primary schools:

teaching spiritual freedom

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

Meet 'Miss Karen', as her young students call her; the pioneer who brought yoga to high security women's prison in Queensland.

Humbled by the women she worked with, Karen also taught yoga in the juvenile justice system, which inspired her to teach younger children at early learning centres and primary schools around the state.

"Everyone benefits from a practice of self-love and that inspires me to help young children build a structure of mindfulness."

Her time teaching yoga at the women's correctional facility in Brisbane taught Karen something she now practices with her young students: everyone experiences inner chaos on some level but mindfulness builds a foundation for peace.

"The ability to bring spiritual freedom to people that are incarcerated confirmed for me the power of this practice."



Miss Karen

Her students call her Miss Karen and her classes centre around positive affirmations and structured yoga. She created a set of angel cards for the children to draw from when they arrive to class. "They hold the cards to their hearts, take three deep breaths, choose a card and read the message."

Those messages include 'I am always trying', 'I am thoughtful', 'I am a good friend', and 'I am kindness' and the children's response has been heart-warming.

"Their eyes light up and their confidence blooms," Karen says she created the affirming cards she wishes she could've had.

"As a child, I did not have the structures that allowed me to feel support, freedom or happiness. I struggled with self-love and as a result of this, I created a world of escapism to cope with loneliness. As an adult, I discovered yoga and began my journey of self-love, acceptance and the balance I was craving as a child. I realised that the mindfulness I was learning as an adult,

could have quite easily been taught to me as a child and I wondered why it wasn't.

"So, my passion and mission is to give children the tools to connect with themselves. As I tell them, the beautiful in me sees the beautiful in you." ▲

Karen's angel cards are available online for \$19.95 via bendandstretchwellness.com.





Winning the clutter-free race



By Mandy Clarke,
Industry Reporter

Is order an important key to success in any classroom? *School News* says yes.

Being neat and tidy are often undervalued qualities, but research does show that humans do well in organised environments.

If one teacher creates an organised classroom and the other embraces clutter, which do you imagine would see a boost in student performance?

Studies also show that classroom engagement affects students' academic achievement and having a student-oriented classroom is the best way

to create a positive learning environment. The physical set-up of the classroom plays a crucial role in how the atmosphere of positive learning is received by students and an important element of this is organisation.

When a scatty classroom permits students to leave school bags on the floor for free-reign rummaging, unorganised bookshelves and messy desks, it not only reflects badly on the teacher, but also creates sense of instability in the student. Perhaps it harkens back to a traditional sense of 'house-pride' but when students do not feel secure in their environment, they simply are not able to fulfil their potential and it makes perfect sense that an unruly environment may lead to anxiety and unruly behaviour.

When young children begin their school journey, bags are a big deal. For them, they are a very important part of the whole transitioning process from home to school. The school bag represents an important emotional connection to home for little students.

Heading into class on the very first day to find their own storage space, peg or hook gives them both a sense of belonging and connectedness.

Leaving bags in a safe place before heading into a classroom gives students a feeling of 'shedding their skin'. They are encouraged to leave their 'baggage' behind them and fully focus on their education. It sets them up for the day.

Tips for living that de-cluttered classroom life

- Keep your classroom organised from the point of entry – it will help students feel calmer and more focussed.
- Utilise space – use shelving, hooks and racks to save floorspace.
- Provide each child with their own storage, however small.

When it is time to plan, decide whether you want indoor or outdoor shelves, racks or hooks. An outdoor education bag rack is a great outdoor storage solution for a school with limited space inside a classroom. ►



▲ Our open bag and port racks come in two, three or four tiers, free-standing or fixed to wall. The wall mounted version removes the rear leg/foot and the shape can be completely customised. Our enclosed bag and port racks can even be suspended off the side of buildings/walls. – *Doug Stewart, Quantum Libraries*

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◀ Some are small and portable but help keep classrooms nice and tidy and clear.

Safety first: make sure the storage you consider is safe for the age of your students and for the environment. Does the storage solution you choose need to be fixed to the wall or is free-standing a better option? Some school bag racks can be galvanised for outdoor use if required.

Look for quick and easy installation.

- Easy cleaning options? Choose racks that allow for easy cleaning and are vacuum friendly.
- Is the storage sturdy enough? Make sure it is tried and tested and will outlive all the pulling and tugging from little hands and heavy bags.
- Remember as students get older their bags get heavier; you do not want them to end up 'hanging' from the floor!
- You can find bag and hat



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– Len Hyde, Linc Furniture

hooks that are tough enough and able to withstand harsh conditions (and students).

- Consider custom-made combined storage solutions from trusted suppliers.

Effective classroom management and having

an organised classroom are intertwined, both influencing student behaviour and contributing to creating a more productive learning environment. Being tidy might only seem to be about 'putting things in places' but it is much more than that...

An organised classroom

influences the behaviour within it. Providing well thought-through, good quality storage for bags, hats and shoes is very much part of good teaching practice and can make an educator and their students more successful.

Unleash your inner virgo. ■



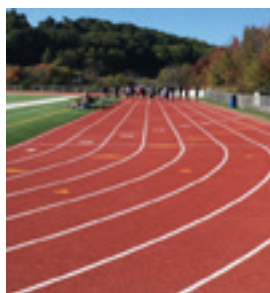
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cutting lawns to size

By Mandy Clarke,
Industry Reporter

An important part of providing a great outdoor learning environment for students is taking good care of your school grounds, gardens and lawns.

Not just for aesthetic reasons, garden design or to protect nature, but also for sport and play.

Lawns can be difficult to maintain because they require dedicated loving care, frequent attention and greater resources than other parts of the school grounds. Turf is unlike any other surface (because it is a living plant) and is subject to damage from lots of traffic, when you think of excess wear and tear on a lawn, you can't conceive of anywhere much worse than a busy school.

Schools have movement going on all the time from carts, buggies and humans, especially where sport activities take place. Shoes can rip and tear turf, and ball games of all varieties can mark it. Temporary structures such as a marquees or tents may also damage lawns, and don't forget all of those pesky Australian animals that can dig and damage.

The amount of damage caused is not only relative to the amount and type of traffic but also to other factors, such as destructive weather, weeds and the turf species used.

Why you should care about grass...

Grass looks great and it is both soft and safe if cared for properly and regularly mowed.

Without a nicely mown lawn, how could you play a game of football?



▲ The Trimax Striker was engineered to withstand tough conditions and with more spindles than comparable rotary mowers the Trimax Striker gives more cuts per forward meter of travel and finer clipping dispersion. Full-width rollers produce striped patterning and guard against scalping. Low maintenance and suitable for compact tractors the Striker is ideal for educational and sports facilities! – Molly Rowlandson, Trimax Mowing Systems

Not just for aesthetic reasons, garden design or to protect nature, but also for sport and play



There are not many other surfaces that look as good and are as resilient and natural for children to run and play on.

Where would you sit on the ground and have a lovely picnic while watching the sport if you didn't have soft and spongy mown grass? A good, strong covering of grass and turf helps

prevent soil erosion and wind erosion on bare earth.

The good news about grass

There are many types to suit most of the soils and environments found in this country, but the bad news is that drought can still create

a big problem. On the other hand, most grasses are easy to re-establish. To best maintain your school lawn if it is anything larger than a nature strip, you will probably need a ride-on mower.

Ride-on lawn mowers are the key to having a happy groundskeeper and the purchase of one is a time-saver and easier on your employee's physical health. Contact a commercial supplier to compare models, features and prices.

Types of ride-on lawn mowers

Rear-engine mowers. As basic ride-ons, they can be less expensive but tend not to be much better powered than higher-end push mowers. They are ideal for smaller lawns and narrower spaces where there are lots of gates and fences. Some users say that rear-engine ride-ons can lack 'grunt', but remember they may also be more convenient for smaller schools and lawns.

Front engine ride-on mowers. With an engine at the front and grass dispersal tending to be at the side, these ride-ons are common in Australia. They tend to offer more 'grunt' and wider cutting widths. Lawn ride-on mowers are smaller than garden ride-ons, which tend to be more like a 'tractor' than a 'mower'.

Zero-turn mowers. Lawn freaks love these because they can make tight turning circles and a 360-degree turn is possible. These make most lawn cutting jobs easy and are best suited to manicuring fussy lawns, sport fields and golf courses.

What should you look for in a mower?

Decide on whether you want grass mowing, mulching and catching action or just spitting?



Decide whether you want automatic or manual. Like cars, autos are much easier to use but manual transmissions are often cheaper.

Do you have hills and slopes?

If yes, then you must consider the weight of the mower and how safe it would be on sloped lawns. A zero-turn mower may be the best option but consult your supplier. Look for reliability and a warranty. Go for design, innovation and quality of manufacture. Commercial mowers and tractors must always provide a high cut quality, fine spread and maximum performance. ■



▲ Mow the school oval with the AutoConnect™ drive over deck, connected in seconds without leaving your seat. Move mulch and impress on open days with our front-end loader. Connect rear implements or pull a trailer with ease. The 3033R Compact Utility Tractor can do it all. – John Deere

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