

# SchoolNews

The essential industry guide

Issue 22 | Term 4, 2021

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for your students**

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# Back in the classroom? Get learning outside

**In this issue of *School News*, Sheetal Singh has written an in-depth special report (page 06), on how schools can navigate anti-vaccination sentiment among parents.**

It's a relevant, vital topic that we hope our *School News* readers will find helpful, particularly as students return to the classroom after lengthy lockdown periods at home.

Sheetal spoke with one school principal who revealed: "I have had parents over the past few weeks telling me that they don't want their kids in the same class as a vaccinated teacher."

Our Principal Speaks column this issue (page 10), features Gary Underwood from Caboolture's Australian Christian College.



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

The school had just 90 students nine years ago and now teaches 1700 students on campus and online under Principal Gary Underwood's guidance. At 68 years of age, the well-loved principal has announced his retirement and spoke with Sheetal to share his plans for a special *Principal Speaks* column this issue.

He spoke about the challenge of raising literacy rates: "In the areas where our school is located, I would like to see more support for students with lower literacy levels. More students with not the same level of literacy need more time, and I would like to see them getting more help, more funding, and more special skills training so they have a fighting chance by the time they get up to Years 7 and 10."

We discuss literary trends and tools available to schools in more depth on page 14, kicking off our range of solution-focussed feature articles this issue. On page 20 we look at why innovative storage options are the talk of the town, and you can read all about how to create a broadcasting studio on page 34.

Check out two special case studies to see what seamless furniture refurbishments look like

(page 22 and 24). Adam Voigt talks emotional intelligence in the classroom setting on page 26, and we ask whether all teachers are secretly writers on page 27.

We explore EOTC in the COVID-era on page 37—we know you will be clamoring to get outside following lockdown! Flick to page 40 for everything you need to know about school security, read our Q&A with St John Ambulance on page 42, where we find out what a first aid kit really needs, and discover scoreboards galore on page 46 (what are the ultimate sporting specs?).

**What does your school have in the works for 2022? Write in and let us know so we can feature your school!**

Enjoy this issue of *School News* and stay safe! ■

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# Schools preparing to inform divided parents over mandatory COVID-19 vaccines

By Sheetal Singh,  
Industry Reporter

**As double-vaccination rates race ahead for eligible people aged 16 and over in Australia, the hope remains that we will return to normalcy.**

This means students have returned to face-to-face learning after months of remote learning, a relief to many but a move prompting concerns around unvaccinated youngsters.

Despite eligible adults and young people rolling up their sleeves, and despite a recent NSW study indicating that children are less likely to spread the virus, COVID anxiety remains as the delta variant continues to sweep the nation.

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) has confirmed most children diagnosed with COVID-19 during the current outbreak, including those who caught the infection in educational settings, experienced mild or no symptoms, with only two percent requiring hospitalisation.

NCIRS examined 51 schools and childcare centres that had COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the delta variant from July 16 to July 31. The report found that children rarely spread the virus to other children, staff, or teachers.

Dr Archana Koirala, a paediatric infectious disease specialist and Clinical Associate Lecturer at the University of Sydney leading the study, noted that full participation in education services is essential for children to learn and develop socially and for family and societal functioning.

"These results should give confidence to families, schools



*Oakleigh Grammar School Principal, Mark Robertson (center) with school captains.*

**School Principal Mark Robertson said urging parents to vaccinate kids can sometimes be challenging**



and the community that we have robust evidence on how the delta variant behaves in children and educational settings. This evidence is being used to design strategies for returning to face-to-face learning safely as we learn to live with COVID-19," Dr Koirala said.

The Department of Health has announced that everyone over the age of 12 is included in the vaccination program despite low transmission among children. The move aims at keeping kids and teenagers from contracting

the virus from their parents, educational staff, teachers, and other adults in the community.

However, children under the age of 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccine. Clinical trials are being conducted around the globe to evaluate the safety of COVID-19 vaccination for kids under 12.

Melbourne's Oakleigh Grammar School Principal, Mark Robertson, said urging parents to vaccinate kids can sometimes be challenging. "Though most of the parents

are getting their kids vaccinated and cherishing face to face learning, there are some parents who are against it," he said.

"There is small group of parents telling me not to open up the school and to continue with remote learning till the end of this year."

"Our community is divided, and the school is trying its best to impart information to the students and the parents to bring back unity."

Mr Robertson said there are a small number of anti-vaccine and pro-choice parents who are more vocal in the community.

"Though vaccination for kids is not mandatory we are coming forward and encouraging parents to get their kids vaccinated," he said.

"We will also comply with mandatory vaccines for teachers and staff but that is not sitting well with the pro-choice community. ►



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◀ “I have had parents over the past few weeks telling me that they don’t want their kids in the same class as a vaccinated teacher.”

In some cases, parents who don’t want to vaccinate their kids are not entirely against vaccines.

A Sydney woman and mother to two kids aged 13 and 15, said she is against the COVID-19 vaccines, at least for now. She spoke to *School News Australia* anonymously.

“The Pfizer and AstraZeneca are very new vaccines, and I am just not very comfortable with my family getting it,” she said.

“I don’t believe in conspiracy theories that the government is trying to control its people and everything with the vaccine but it’s just so very new and scary at the moment that I am conflicted.

“Also, I want my kids to build immunity on their own against the virus.”

Various data and research conducted globally and in Australia show that the vaccine is safe for young people aged 12 to 15 years old.

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation said the Pfizer shots are safe for kids and advised the Federal Government to include the age group in the vaccination program.

A Melbourne father and a childcare worker who wishes to remain anonymous said that the mandatory vaccination for teachers is nearing an undemocratic rule.

“It is a democracy, and we should have a choice to make informed decision,” he said.

“I am not completely against the vaccine, but I have had to make calls to multiple clinics for a few days to receive my jabs. State did

## I have had parents over the past few weeks telling me that they don’t want their kids in the same class as a vaccinated teacher



not have enough appointments available and that’s frustrating.

“Without it, our livelihood and pay can be taken away which is quite unfair.”

COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone in Australia, including asylum seekers and temporary visa holders. Eligible people in Australia can book their jabs at COVID vaccination hubs, GP clinics and select pharmacies in Australia.

Mr Robertson believes the schools and authorities must listen to the concerns of the anti-vaccine community and take their issues on board.

“These are unprecedented times and I believe it is better if the parents who are against vaccines are heard,” he said.

“We need to be respectful towards them and address their issues patiently. Listening is important.”

Mr Robertson said the misinformation and confusion about vaccination program in schools is also concerning.

“Parents believe that their kids will be vaccinated without their consent in schools, which is not true,” he said.

“I don’t believe any school can inject their students with a dose without the parents’

consent. It’s not legal. I just want schools to furnish their communities with information and try to remove confusion.”

To date, Oakleigh Grammar has had five COVID cases and plans to comply with public health orders to restore to normal.

“We now have to live with COVID. That’s our only option. As a Christian school we believe in safety, and we will work towards keeping our community safe.”

Oakleigh Grammar is also keeping students up to date about COVID-19 vaccines and other measures to keep themselves safe during these times.

Mr Robertson said correct education will allow them to make informed decisions about vaccinations.

“I wish for the families to make a joint decision about vaccines. As much as I want all our eligible kids vaccinated, I want them to sit with their families and discuss it in an informed way about why or why not they want to roll up their sleeves,” he said.

“The information is being imparted to kids so that they are not indulging in conspiracy theories with dubious sources.

“In this school the indication is that more young people

are getting the vaccines.”

As the schools reopen and students return in large numbers, COVID positive cases are expected to rise. For precaution, states have formulated multiple measures that are required to mitigate the risks.

In NSW, teachers, staff, and high school students will be required to wear masks at all times. Additionally, all the teachers are required to receive two doses of vaccines before November 8.

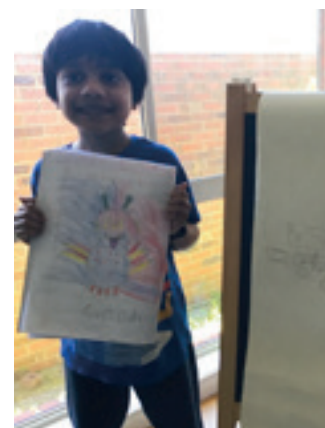
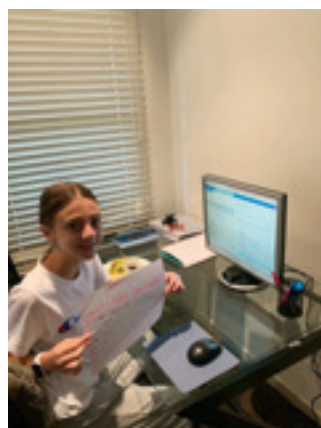
In the state’s vaccination blitz which started in September, tens of thousands of AstraZeneca vaccines have been reserved for school-based education staff.

Similarly, in Victoria, teachers and childcare workers must receive at least the first dose of the vaccine before October 18 or have a booking within the first week of that date. They will be required to be fully vaccinated by November 29.

Victorian schools are also required to implement additional cleaning. The extended and increased cleaning involves progressive cleaning throughout the day, with a focus on high-touch surfaces.

Similar measures are being taken in ACT schools with improved ventilation in schools.

“Other measures in place will include limiting the mingling of classes and year groups, staggering breaks, increased use of outdoor spaces, limitation of on-site visitors to essential visitors only, environmental cleaning, and high vigilance around not allowing anyone with symptoms of illness to attend,” ACT Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry said in a statement. ■







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The Blackmagic Studio Camera features a high speed USB-C expansion port that allows you to record to external disks or connect accessories. Plug in an external USB flash disk and the camera can record high quality 12-bit Blackmagic RAW files for later editing and color correction. Plus the files are small and fast, so editing responsiveness is incredible!

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# Caboolture Principal announces retirement after playing a crucial role

By Sheetal Singh,  
Industry Reporter

**The Principal who changed the community standing of a small Queensland school will retire after nine years at the end of Term 4.**

Caboolture's Australian Christian College (ACC) had just 90 students nine years ago but now teaches 1700 students on campus and online under Principal Gary Underwood's guidance.

*At 68 years of age, the well-loved Mr Underwood has announced his retirement and spoke with School News to share his plans for a special Principal Speaks column this issue.*

"I am looking forward to retiring, but also feel that everything that's happening in the school will continue but I won't be a part of it. So, it's a bit disappointing but also positive and I am looking forward to travelling as soon as everything normalises after COVID," he said.

**"A little sad, in a way."**

Mr Underwood came to ACC from Melbourne with years of teaching experience under his hat. With his expertise, he introduced changes in the school that would increase the students' overall grades.



Gary Underwood (right) with Hon. Mark Ryan MP at the Stage 2 Building opening

In the Caboolture area, kids have to feel safe. If they are not safe in school, they are not happy and they can't learn.



The school invited a literacy coordinator seven years ago, Mr Underwood said, to improve ACC student's literacy and numeracy levels.

"It [the literacy level] was terrible, and students were three years behind the national

average. So, we spent more time on literacy and numeracy than any other subjects like history or geography," he said.

"So that has been a continual focus right through early school and middle school.

We have strong expectations

that are found in our literacy and numeracy teaching. Our view is that we can't expect students to do well in their Years 11 and 12 if they don't have the skills to handle that."

The learning environment of the school was, however, not created by just training the students. Mr Underwood said the school had focused equally on training their teachers by holding regular meetings and feedback programs after school hours.

"We have a very high level of training and professional development for teachers, two nights a week. The environment of correct learning is not created by chance," he said.

"There is a lot of training, accountability and improvement of skill level. Because of that activity level, there is better teaching, and better education doesn't just happen.

"We have excellent 360 programs where the students and teachers are evaluated. Students give feedback independently on their teachers, modifying how teachers are training and improving their skills."

The school has not only earned respect from the Caboolture community but also from the outside areas. The school gets enrolment requests from other areas.

Mr Underwood said ACC



Garry Underwood tying students shoes



Gary Underwood fishing with students





Gary Underwood following the leader with kindy students

was a disciplined school and not a strict one.

"I tell my incoming parents that teachers won't yell at you, and they won't yell at your students because we don't expect them to raise their voices," he said.

"Most kids who come here have come out of other schools—transferring to the area, coming out of other area schools mainly. So, they want to be respected, they want to be understood when they come here, and they don't want to be abused.

"It works out well. If the teachers treat the kids with respect, they are more respectful and disciplined."

The school holds the Christian faith to the highest regard, but Mr Underwood maintains that ACC has kids from other religions.

"The idea is to have the principles of Christianity that is respect and discipline," he said.

**As a retiring Principal, he advises new Principals just to be themselves.**

"New principals need to be themselves. I would ask them not to be someone they are not and just trust their skills and judgement," he said.

The education system has changed more dramatically in the past two years than ever. During COVID-19, there is a focus on online learning and an opportunity to improve some areas of schooling.

"I think COVID will expedite a lot of change, and there are changes that I expect to see, and there are changes I want to see," Mr Underwood said.

"In the areas where our school is located, I would like to see more support for students with lower literacy levels. More students with not the same level of literacy need more time, and I would like to see them getting more help, more funding, and more special skills training so they have a fighting chance by the time they get up to Years 7 and 10."

"I also think we are going to see a lot more integration of campus students and online students. Our online schools are funded as distance learning schools, and they are funded at least 60 percent less. So, there are financial things that need to change."

Mr Underwood credits the considerable expansion of the school to good discipline and Christian principles.

"We have been trying to push the concept of respect, care and acceptance. Getting kids to respect each other, to respect the teachers, accept they are not perfect and care for their fellow classmates," he said.

"We understand kids and teachers are not perfect, we all have flaws— we are good at something and not good at others."

"We don't have major bullying problems, behaviour issues as such and if we do, we have a firm line on that. So, if the students want to stay here, they know what's expected of them in terms of behaviour and learning. This makes a big difference."

"In the Caboolture area, kids have to feel safe. If they are not safe in school, they are not happy and they can't learn." ■



Gary Underwood with kindy students

Credited with improving literacy rates at the school, Principal Underwood recalls, "students were three years behind the national average"

”



Gary Underwood presenting student with award



Gary Underwood reading with students



# Dyson Technologies

## Creating healthier education spaces



**Over the last two years, Australia has experienced some extreme conditions, from devastating bushfires to lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

In a time when people have become increasingly conscious of hygiene and wellbeing as well as the air they breathe, understanding the impact of poor air quality and how we can improve the air we breathe is key, especially for children who are more vulnerable to air pollution.

Cleanliness in schools and shared spaces has never been so high on the agenda and we all want reassurance that these spaces are hygienic.

Dyson has engineered a machine to respond directly

to these concerns – promising cleaner, purified air.

Engineered to tackle indoor air pollution, the Dyson HEPA Cool Formaldehyde automatically senses and captures H1N1 virus, ultrafine particles and gases and removes 99.95% of particles as small as 0.1 microns. It has sealed HEPA 13 standard filtration, destroys formaldehyde and has voice control activation to avoid touchpoints and possible contamination.

### **Why is indoor air quality important?**

Every day we breathe in up to 9,000 litres of air. To put this into perspective, we consume more air every day than any other substance, yet we often don't think about what is in the air we breathe – in fact it can be up to 5 times more polluted than the

air outside. Despite this, and people spending up to 90% of their time indoors, there is still a lack of understanding that air pollution can be produced from everyday indoor activities.

A recent study found that more than half of Australians were not aware that indoor air pollution can have similar effects to outdoor air pollution. Many items in classrooms can release microscopic particulates and gases, including formaldehyde off-gassing from desks and flooring to germs, viruses and bacteria that can spread quickly amongst children.

Increasing ventilation by opening windows can cause poor air to come inside by bringing in pollen and allergens from outside, as well as airborne dust particles and smoke.

**Professor of Global Environmental Health, Sotiris Vardoulakis**, at the Australian National University (ANU) Research School of Population Health, is a leading expert in air quality and indoor pollution. Professor Vardoulakis says: "We're often exposed to many different types of both indoor and outdoor air pollution and the health effects of different pollutants can depend on the individual."

"Certain groups may be particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, including young children and one in nine Australians who suffer from respiratory health conditions such as asthma, hayfever or bronchitis."

Conventional ventilation, air circulation and air conditioning systems in schools may not have adequate HEPA filtration.





They usually contain a filter element that tends to focus on capturing larger particles like dust or airborne debris with the ultimate goal of protecting the airflow systems within, rather than providing efficient particle removal.

Whereas some conventional purifiers can release pollutants back into the room.

They have high face velocity, which means they force air through their filters causing potentially harmful ultrafine particles to escape back into the room.

### **How does Dyson technology provide clean air in classrooms?**

Dyson has engineered its new purifier to create a cleaner, more comfortable educational environment. The new Dyson HEPA Cool Formaldehyde purifier features advanced sensors to automatically detect potentially harmful microscopic particles such as pollutants from the outside, which can penetrate indoors through inadequate ventilation.

An integrated sensor system constantly analyses the air, while Dyson's unique algorithm cross-

checks data every second. It diagnoses the air automatically reacting to purify and display live results on the LCD screen.

It features a fully-sealed 360° filtration system. The HEPA-13 certified filter and active carbon filter work together to capture not only the larger particles but those as small as 0.1 microns, including gases, allergens, bacteria and some viruses to ensure indoor air is safe to breathe. Whereas the catalytic filter continuously destroys formaldehyde, a potentially harmful volatile gas. With its unique Air Multiplier™ technology, the machine can purify an 81m³ room, providing cleaner, purified air through the whole classroom.

In warmer weather, the purifier can also be used as a fan, projecting over 290 litres a second of cooling and purified air. When cooling is no longer required, the backward airflow mode allows you to purify the room without feeling the airflow, diverting it through the back of the machine.

Engineered to purify intelligently, the Dyson Purifier will automatically react to air pollution in auto-mode, detecting pollutant particles and displaying real-time reports on the LCD and Dyson Link app.

The Dyson Link app lets you see which particles have been captured, set schedules and more. You can also control the device hands-free, using compatible voice services.

### **Are Dyson purifiers designed to be safe for children?**

Dyson HEPA Cool Formaldehyde purifier has been engineered without fast spinning external blades or awkward grilles making it safe and easy to clean. Dyson purifiers have a unique air projection loop that multiplies airflow. It generates the circulation power to draw even distant pollutants back into the machine, before projecting purified airflow throughout the room. The machine is also equipped with an automatic standby function so if it's tilted over, it will automatically stop.

Acoustically engineered to reduce turbulence, the new Dyson HEPA Cool Formaldehyde purifier is 20% quieter than the previous model. Perfect for peaceful study environment.

### **Are they high maintenance?**

Many air purifiers can be complicated to dismantle, keep clean and require regular

replacement of the filters in order to function well. This isn't the case with the Dyson HEPA Cool Formaldehyde purifier.

The filter is quick and easy to replace and you'll know exactly when, via the Dyson Link app or LCD screen. While the HEPA and Carbon filters are recommended to be replaced only once a year based on 12 hours usage a day every day, the formaldehyde-destroying catalytic filter never has to be replaced.

### **Can multiple users control the same Dyson purifier?**

One Dyson Link app account can be used to control up to 15 connected purifiers – or an unlimited number of users can control a single purifier. It will only ever choose the most recent update. For example, if more than one person was updating the scheduling, the purifier will use the most recent change – making it easy for you to control air quality from anywhere in the school. ▲

*For more information, visit [dyson.com.au](https://www.dyson.com.au) or speak to a Dyson Expert on 1800 426 337 or at [aucommercial@dyson.com](mailto:aucommercial@dyson.com)*







# Literacy learning levels post-pandemic

By Heather Barker Vermeer  
Industry Reporter

**Literacy trends are observed with great interest and many in the education sector are keen to understand how the global pandemic and its associated lockdowns have impacted on literacy learning amongst our young.**

The recently released summary of this year's National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy shows Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students continued to produce literacy results similar to those recorded by students in 2019, despite having experienced several lockdowns during 2020.

The 2021 NAPLAN tests, on which the summary data is based, took place in May, before the Delta outbreak in Australia led to school closures and remote learning resuming in New South Wales and Victoria. These tests were cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, so no equivalent data exists for last year.

Year 3 and 5 results have seen a steady upward trend in reading and Year 5, 7 and 9 have seen a steady upward trend in numeracy, resulting in total gains equivalent to at least 3 months of learning. The ongoing downward trend in writing in Year 5, 7 and 9 has begun to reverse, flattening, and showing signs of an upward trend.

"These results will be welcomed by governments, schools, parents and carers as a first

national insight into the educational impact of the pandemic," said Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority CEO, David de Carvalho.

"It's reassuring to see that overall, our students' literacy and numeracy standards have not significantly suffered, despite the major disruptions of COVID-19 and remote learning. However, this does not mean there has been no impact on specific students or demographic groups."

The overall impact of lockdowns on children's education is unknown, with many factors influencing at home learning, but these preliminary figures demonstrate that, in the main, it's good news in terms of literacy standards.

"Generally, the average trend is positive, with improvements for Year 3 and 5 reading and Year 5, 7 and 9 numeracy showing gains equivalent to a term's worth of learning since the base year," says de Carvalho. He is also pleased with the signs that writing standards, which had previously been in gradual decline, appear to be levelling out, or better.

"The overall decline in writing has begun to flatten, and achievement in Year 5, 7 and 9 has begun to reverse and show signs of an upward trend.

"The results suggest that persistent effort to improve outcomes pays off," he said. "It is testament to the resilience of students, teachers, parents and carers, and school and system leaders during these challenging times."





NAPLAN testing has moved largely online over the past year – a total of 70 percent of schools delivered the tests online in 2021.

### Investigating trending tools for literacy education, we sought key industry perspectives.

Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Director of Strategy and Senior Research Fellow at MultiLit advised that “while the research literature on teaching literacy is growing at a rapid pace, it is remarkably consistent”.

“The scientific consensus for the past several decades at least has been that beginning readers need explicit and systematic instruction in the letter-sound relationships that allow them to ‘decode’ words when learning to read, and that this should be embedded in a varied and rich program of language development, including children’s literature.

“This creates the virtuous cycle of becoming successful at reading, which leads to greater enjoyment of reading, which



Dr Jennifer Buckingham

leads to more and better reading. Children will engage with literacy when they feel successful and supported. Explicit instruction is all about creating the conditions for success.

“There is an enormous demand for professional learning on evidence-based approaches to teaching literacy.

“Since I launched the Five from Five project (a free online resource for teachers and parents) in 2016, the interest among teachers has grown to

the point that thousands of teachers attend professional learning events in their own time every month. I am professionally and personally driven to give teachers access to information that will help them to do what is arguably the most fundamental purpose of schools: teaching children to read.”

Dr Buckingham’s dos and don’ts for teaching learners of varied ability level:

“Do: Provide a programme of systematic and explicit instruction in the five ‘keys’ to reading for all children from the first weeks of school. Early screening assessments are useful but are not fool proof in identifying students who might have difficulty learning to read, so the best approach is to provide the highest quality instruction to all children, leaving nothing to chance.

“Do: Use appropriate assessments to monitor students’ reading progress and respond accordingly.

“Do: Make sure that children get lots of reading practice on the right texts for their

age and stage of reading development. Decodable texts rather than predictable texts are best for beginning readers. Once they crack the code, their independent reading will expand to include all kinds of age-appropriate books.

“Don’t: Assume students who are having difficulty with reading will catch up or ‘get it’. Early intervention is best but it’s never too late to help a struggling reader.”

Debbie Esquilant, Manager, Learning A-Z and Kurzweil Education, at IG3 Education told us:

“Teaching resources that empower the teacher to have a greater impact on a student’s learning by providing a collection of flexible curriculum resources aligned to research based best practices and being able to personalise instruction are trending within the industry now.

“It is crucial for programmes to support a broader range of students needs and learning styles, there are many ways in which schools and teachers are achieving this. ►

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Image courtesy of IG3 Education

◀ “Digital literacy tools using adaptive learning is having a large impact on education, especially for students who require additional support and for classrooms where teachers are teaching learners with varied abilities or levels, the benefits of AI in education have been highlighted over the past two years because of the pandemic and schools moving towards an online remote learning model.

“AI is providing teachers with the ability to provide their

students with resources that can be adapted to the individual student’s needs, ensuring that one on one support to a student either through the initial testing stages or from the program’s ability to respond to a student’s needs creating an individualised learning plan focusing on those concepts in learning that the student is lacking in and working with the student to ensure they are provided with the right learning materials to enhance their learning.

“Blended learning allows schools to not only focus on literacy but also on other important areas such as social emotional learning, which has been shown to increase academic achievement, greater understanding of themselves and their peers and reduce a student’s emotional stress.

“In a classroom environment when all students are learning at the same level and pace teachers have experienced that gifted students can easily get bored and struggling students are being left behind, with blended learning instruction remains effective throughout the entire learning process therefore setting students up for success.”

*Philip O’Carroll, co-founder and editor at Fitzroy Readers, emphasised the importance of personalising the learning process:*

“We encourage teachers to use a variety of activities to get first-year students acquainted with letters and how they sound. The most effective approach is for a literacy programme provider to regularly correspond with teachers or chat over the

phone to recommend relevant materials and build a resourceful working relationship over time.

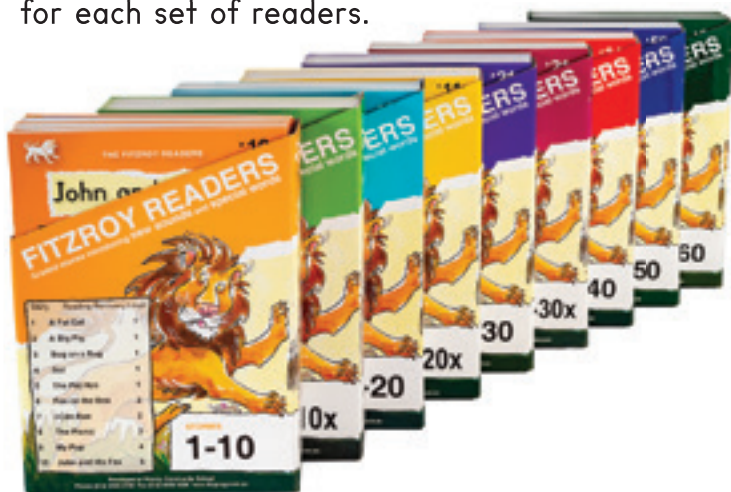
“In literacy, logical sequencing is the key. There is no gain in leaping to a new activity when the students are not familiar with the fundamentals underlying the activity. For example, I recommend introducing one or two letters at a time and inviting the children to connect the letters to the correct drawings. Then there’s the ‘architectural’ approach. Join all the letters which match and bingo, you’ve drawn a house, or a snake, or...

“I believe strongly that it is good practice to provide some extra activities for the benefit of the children who race through primary activities and need something else to do.

“On the other end of the spectrum, if the little ones are getting worn out, I think it works well sometimes to choose an easy word like it (or another word they can read) and collect ideas from the children to make a story about it. They take this seriously, and when it’s all over, we can run off a copy for them to take home!”▶

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“We encourage teachers to use a variety of activities to get first-year students acquainted with letters and how they sound.”

– Philip O’Carroll, co-founder and editor at Fitzroy Readers

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[multilit.com/minilitsage](https://multilit.com/minilitsage)





Images courtesy of Sunshine Books

◀ Paul George, General Manager of Sunshine Books, acknowledged that the last two years have presented many new challenges for schools as the need to teach remotely has been ever-present and in some cases long-term. He said:

"Being able to provide the same level of quality teaching remotely has been hard for teachers and children and their families. More than ever, teachers have had to look for quality digital resources to support their students learning at home. For literacy learning, online programs that provide digital books and activities have had a big part to play to ensure that children could continue to access a wide range of books for their reading. In terms of online literacy programs, the ones that best reflect and support how teachers teach literacy in the classroom are ideal.

"A classroom literacy program starts with quality books and that is where the program

needs to start. Lots of engaging levelled fiction and non-fiction texts. The beauty of digital texts is that there can be many extra elements that bring the text to life such as animations, embedded videos, narration and text highlighting. These are important features of good online literacy programs. Any interactive activities and games should relate to the text and not stand-alone. The program should also offer tracking and reporting so that teachers can see at a glance what their students have completed and their results.

"Teaching to individual needs is just as important in remote learning as it is in face-to-face teaching. Using digital tools for learning is normal for our children. There was a time that just using these tools provided an engagement factor.

"Now it comes down to online resources that are well constructed and engaging. Students expect digital books for example to be multi-modal with

visual and textual information presented in a range of ways."

Hannah Creelman, Primary School Teacher and Digital Education Specialist at Britannica Digital Learning, emphasised the importance of personalising the learning process:

"The best digital tools incorporate synchronous and asynchronous learning. Using digital multimedia tools like podcasts, animations and live sessions enable a variety of diverse learning styles and provide constant connection between educators and students allowing them to openly discuss, question, clarify and share collaboratively. Online learning scenarios also give teachers immense flexibility in allowing students to access the content in their own time and at their own pace.

"Good digital tools will also include reporting and assessment data so teachers can track student progress in real



Hannah Creelman

time. They also provide instant feedback, reinforcement and encouragement to the student."

Hannah points out that "schools tend to overlook the capacity to integrate digital literacy tools outside of the classroom. In doing so students will develop literacy skills that not only benefit them in reading and writing across all subject areas, but that strengthen their speaking abilities as well as self-efficacy enabling them to communicate effectively



Images courtesy of Fitzroy Readers





Image courtesy of Britannica Digital Learning

### Dos, Don'ts and how to boost engagement

"Digital tools themselves are engaging and exciting for learners, those that provide content across multiple formats such as text and video as well as gamification, definitely boost engagement. Gamification enables learners to learn, practice and implement their knowledge and skills while participating in a fun and exciting game.

"The use of video and animations are also hugely

beneficial to student learning because they make content more understandable and skill acquisition more comprehensible for the learner.

"Another method to boost engagement is through the use of virtual and augmented reality experiences, allowing students experiential learning in situations and scenarios they would not normally have access to such as walking on the moon, exploring the ancient ruins in Machu Picchu or participating in a science experiment with low-risk danger." ■

with confidence. Tools such as audiobooks enable students to select a genre of their choice and listen to a story being read in multiple languages.

Also, author read-alouds, where authors read a book that is of high interest to the student

are engaging and motivating. Implementing reading strategies that focus on enhancing reading skills, such as annotating and summarising teach students better thinking routines and support them to better dissect text, ask questions, find evidence and much more."



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# Tech storage for the 2020s

**Cambridge Gardens Public School knows only too well the increased risk of theft when technology is involved.**

As of May 27, this year, the Sydney school has been broken into 19 times, with iPads, projectors and computers stolen, the Daily Telegraph reported at the time.

When devices can be remotely disabled by a school, rendering them useless to the thieves, theft then becomes even more frustrating and wasteful. Deterrents alone can't mitigate risk, though. So, how do schools safeguard their increasing stocks of digital devices and technology?

Many schools operate a *Bring*



*Image courtesy of IntraSpace*

*Your Own Device (BYOD)* to school system, but this is unsuitable with lots of schools in low socio-economic areas. BYOD removes some of the onus from the school itself, when it comes to storing devices but charging cables, screens and

other technology still needs a home and sufficient device charging capacity needs to be provided. Regardless of what percentage of a school's students bring their own devices, a base stock of laptops or Chromebooks is necessary

in the 2020s, as is somewhere secure to store them.

Taking chances with cupboards just isn't going to cut it and specific secure lockers are a must.

Not only does the amount of tech a school now holds provide a security risk of theft, it also inevitably increases the amount of classroom clutter. Storage cabinets can be static or mobile, with many integrating charging ports and racks or pouches to hold and charge dozens of devices at once. Many include smart ventilation systems, cable management and external displays to show the charging status of devices inside.

Flexible options for wall mounting, or transportation with caster wheels are widely available, with some cabinets

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designed to be stackable for optimum space saving. Dividers and clips keep devices safely apart and secure during charging and transportation between classrooms.

If Melbourne's recent earthquake is anything to go by, schools might also reconsider loose storage as a high-risk factor. If device storage cabinets are not wall-mounted, they can be attached to the ceiling with hooks to minimise movement when not in use.

Our increased tendency to teach outside the classroom means weatherproofing must also be factored in when contemplating device storage options. The chance of a sudden shower isn't the only risk that comes into play when transporting your stack of devices outside, humidity and temperature fluctuation can lead to moisture build up, so quality storage is key.

For some schools, the library will be device storage HQ. For others, a dedicated resource room is available, and some will keep it all in their classrooms. Wherever tech is housed, organisation is not only a space saver but



Image courtesy of Sebel Furniture

a time saver. It can also keep your school safe not only from theft, but potential fire risk.

Plus, keeping those wires in order is also guaranteed to have a positive effect on stress levels for teachers and students. Tidy tech, tidy minds!

### Storage innovations, according to the industry-makers

Sebel representative Steph Cox keeps an eye on school purchasing trends and shared some observations with us this issue. She said:

"Charging stations in the library are popular or an area in the back of the room to charge. Students are encouraged to

bring their device fully charged to school each day. Storage options can be custom designed to allow different tray sizes for different resources.

"A mixture of trays and shelving combined into one piece of furniture is effective and efficient. These all come with castors for flexible classroom design, which means teachers can move them around easily. This is useful, especially if they are required to move in and out of a locked storage area that maybe found in a STEM or TAS rooms."

IntraSpace Managing Director, Jeff Morren, had plenty of purchasing insights to reveal to us, emphasising the importance of choosing the right material

for your school locker fit out.

"Indoor lockers can be metal, laminate or laminate with compact laminate. Outdoors, the best is plastic—water resistant and waterproof models are useful. Another good option for semi-outdoor areas (that still requires a good style of locker) is something that has a PVC carcass with compact laminate doors. This gives a durable and good-looking finish.

"When it comes to locking, it is always best to have a padlock receptor, as key locking has other issues when a student loses the key. We also have a large range of four-digit keypad style locks or integrated swipe card style which can make the management of all lockers centralised and easier to manage."

His top innovative learning tip for schools looking to prioritise flexibility, is to go mobile: "Having mobile laminate bag lockers is a good idea as they can double up as a classroom divider. There is always a need for storage in schools – there can never be enough." ■

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# Seamless furniture refurbishment turns heads at SA school

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

**A collaboration between Brighton Secondary School and Resource Furniture became the stunning backdrop for celebrations on the official September opening of this South Australian school's new building, Tarni Warra meaning 'sound of the waves' in Kaurana language.**

The project included a significant refurbishment of the school's original 1952 Spence building and was made possible through a \$13.8 million investment by the state government's Capital Works Program, signalling the important shift from Year Seven to high school.

The school told us they are thrilled with the finished building



Images courtesy of Resource Furniture

and recently welcomed the first crop of excited Year 8 students to enjoy its new flexible learning spaces, ahead of Year 7s joining the school in 2022. The building is designed to cater for up to 600 students for their core learning.

This impressive school refurbishment project was completed in just over 12 months. The educational

furniture and storage solutions within the space were exactly what the school had in mind, according to school Venue and Facilities Manager, Marcus Falckh. The learning space was finished, furnishings were supplied, and all were fitted both within budget and on time!

He said: "We wanted a flexible and functional learning space

for our Year 7 and 8 students and to achieve this we worked closely with the architect and furniture supplier. We are very happy with the result."

All the furniture is designed to move easily around the space and to present learners with options. This increases functionality and caters to many different learning and teaching styles.

"The tables are on castors which means teachers can easily rearrange the room to fit the needs of the lesson" Marcus said.

"We like that we have such a variety of furniture, while still achieving consistency and we appreciate the student lockers which seamlessly fit into spaces throughout the building."

Resource Furniture sourced and custom-made much of the furniture to fit the school's brief and the colours and wood grains sourced are exactly what the school and architect wanted.



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Images courtesy of Resource Furniture

Marcus said: "Resource Furniture perfectly matched the timber tones used throughout building to the furniture they supplied.

They also constructed the lockers to match the timber and created a beautiful seamless look. It all works together and all fits into the space.

"The students absolutely love it."

Emma Gillings from Resource Furniture told us: "At Brighton Secondary School, our approach was to work alongside the school and architect to fulfil the brief.

We furnished the space with a range of educational furniture and storage, and

we were able to create the right functionality, colour scheme, and flexible layout.

"We are very proud of our work on this space. To achieve the perfect finishes in the general learning areas we used neutral tones and wood grain.

To differentiate the breakout and media spaces we introduced colour--mustard yellow.

"The storage lockers were custom made throughout the whole building, to do this we worked closely with the joiner and when it came time for the lockers to be fitted, we did hold our breath, but they fitted in like butter!" ■



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# Macquarie University's Central Courtyard a vibrant hub for students

**Architect:** Architectus  
**Installer:** Interior Works  
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**Designed by award winning architects, Architectus, the Central Courtyard redevelopment is Macquarie University's largest transformation in 54 years—constructing a vibrant, central 'hub' for the University where students can relax, study, socialise, eat, and live.**

Sprawling over 68,000 m2 of prime campus real estate, the courtyard and surrounding buildings feature indoor and outdoor casual lounging and dining spaces, formal classrooms and informal study areas, a graduation hall and stage, function rooms, research services, and student accommodation. Architectus specified a selection of acoustic treatments to keep the noise level down in shared spaces and enhance the design storytelling.

## Connecting study and leisure

One central courtyard, a brand new four-level building, is the largest element of the project and home to the graduation hall, food and beverage outlets, 26 formal classrooms, and informal breakout spaces split across two floors. The indoor and outdoor spaces flow seamlessly, linking the building to the landscape beyond. Through clever design, each area feels part of the next, as the gentle white noise hum



*Images courtesy of Autex Acoustic*

of life, and the aroma of food cooking and coffee brewing, connects the spaces.

Incorporating colourful modular furniture, playful textures, and biophilic design principles, Architectus wanted the breakout spaces to "uplift the everyday experiences of the campus community". However, as they're intended to host any number of students socialising or studying between classes, these spaces had the potential to become painfully noisy. To create a comfortable and relaxing environment, acoustic treatment was vital.

While they were originally looking at an acoustic solution from overseas, the architects felt an Australian made product

would align better with the project's values, so they contacted Autex Acoustics®.

As local manufacturers, we could provide a solution that fit both the aesthetic and acoustic requirements of the space with short lead times, ensuring the project remained on track. Architectus specified Frontier™ Acoustic Fins in the style Talus for two of the breakout spaces. When applied to the ceiling, the Fins appear fluid, gently rippling as you change perspectives. Imitating the lush surrounding bush, Talus in Acros evokes a 'leafy canopy' in one of the breakout spaces, while the same style in the colour Savoye forms an undulating ceiling-scape in the adjacent lounge area.



## Contemporary campus living

The two student accommodation towers, a first for Macquarie University, will be home for 342 students—catering to both their lifestyle and study needs. On the ground floor, each building has a communal socialising area with lounges and café style seating designed to host informal gatherings and study groups. Composition® in Silver is applied to sections of the wall, providing both acoustic absorption and a pinnable surface for hanging posters and notices.

To accommodate different lifestyle preferences, the towers offer a range of room styles from studio apartments and double-occupancy rooms, to six-bedroom apartments—giving students the option to form share houses. Each room is equipped with a kitchen, bathroom, secure storage, beds, and small study nooks with desks, shelving, and Composition® pinboards. Pinnable, self-healing, and hook-and-loop receptive, Composition is perfect for the rooms as it offers the occupants space to hang photos or study notes without damaging the walls.

## Welcoming students to a modern learning environment

This forward-thinking educational precinct is designed to evolve and adapt with the university, offering students a modern approach to tertiary study. After seven years of hard work, the central courtyard and surrounding buildings were officially opened to students at o-week in February 2021, with an overwhelmingly positive response. ■





Excessive noise *and* reverberation interfere with *speech* intelligibility, resulting in *reduced* understanding and therefore *reduced* learning.

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\*Seep, Benjamin., Glosemeyer, Robin., Hulce, Emily., Linn, Matt. Aytar, Pamela.  
(2009) Classroom Acoustics – A Resource for Creating Learning Environments with Desirable Learning Conditions. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED451697.pdf>



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# A range of emotions

**Emotional Intelligence (EI) is one of those topics that we teachers refer to a lot, but perhaps we could do well with just occasionally sitting down to consider just what we know, mean and still need to discover about that term.**

We may well be aware that people with high levels of EI tend to function and achieve more prolifically and we know that an ambition near to our very purpose for being educators is to help raise young people who reach and display their EI potential. But questions often remain, such as:

- Is EI a matter of nature or nurture?
- Can you build EI in another person?
- How would you even start with that?

Getting started first requires us to dispel a myth about EI – that a wide emotional vocabulary merely reflects EI. While knowing and using a wide range of words to describe our feelings can signify a robust level of EI, our emotional vocab is more than just a verbal litmus test of how much EI we have. In fact, language is the way we can build EI in young people.

You see, the more we use words of affect/feelings, the larger our students' emotional vocabs become. And what the literature reveals is that the larger their emotional vocab, the more emotionally intelligent they become. EI and emotional vocab loop on each other and build each other the more we speak to the vast range of feelings that human beings can experience.

Our words + their words = growth in emotional intelligence.

That's how simple the equation can be. In the restorative literature, I'm often leaning on the genius of Sylvan Tomkins in this regard. Tomkins referred to human beings as experiencing nine innate affects or feelings:



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Interest—Excitement
Neutral Affects
Surprise—Startle
Negative Affects
Shame—Humiliation
Distress—Anguish
Disgust
Fear—Terror
Anger—Rage
Dismay

Now there are some weird ones in there. Disgust (a taste-based affect evolved in humans to help us reject foods that are off or poisonous) and dissmell (pretty much the same thing, but with our nose) aren't all that relevant to the classroom.

But the other emotions – be they positive, neutral or negative – all have a place and a role for us.

Enjoyment-Joy, for instance plays the role of making us feel good, to seek pleasure/satisfaction and to sustain our wellbeing.

And even the Fear-Terror range plays a role, chiefly in helping us to recognise threats to our safety and to swiftly avoid or confront them (the old fight or flight mechanism).

All of our emotions are useful in some way and young people who have heard the words that we might place along these affective ranges are best equipped to handle and deploy them at the right time.

You can feel a little shame when you hurt another's feelings, for instance, and know that it's a signal to apologise, rather than to lie or blame somebody else.

And there's the point. It's our actions and choices that reveal our true EI. And it's our words that best equip kids to choose actions appropriate to the severity of the stimuli. Choose them wisely.

## The Cheat Sheet

Don't have time to soak in the whole article today?

## Here's the big points:

1. Kids (and you!) aren't stuck with their current level of EI.
2. Language is the key to EI developments.
3. Almost all emotions are can be felt on a range.
4. All emotions – even those that feel bad – are useful in some way.
5. Our actions and choices are the biggest indicators of our EI.

## AITSL standards for teachers (and you addressed them by reading!)

### The Big One

- 1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development & characteristics.

### But also...

- 3.3 Use teaching strategies.
- 3.5 Use effective classroom communication.
- 4.3 Manage challenging behaviour. ■

**Adam Voigt** is a former School Principal and the Founder & CEO of Real Schools. Adam is also the author of 'Restoring Teaching', a book aimed at restoring esteem for the role of educators through establishing strong, productive and restorative cultures around Australia's schools. Visit [www.adamvoigt.com.au](http://www.adamvoigt.com.au)



# Are all teachers secretly writers?

By Karyn Sepulveda,  
Primary Teacher & Author

**If you look up the biographies of authors, you will find that many are also teachers, or ex-teachers; Rachael Johns, Josephine Moon and John Marsden, to name a few.**

While mingling at a writer's retreat and meeting fellow authors, I lost count of how many times someone would respond with, 'me too!' when I told them I was a teacher. It made me wonder, why do so many teachers write?

I discovered my love of writing around the same time I started work as a fulltime teacher. I would take every opportunity I could to write, often late into the night. I loved creating the writing programs at my school and would enthusiastically lead narrative writing tasks. When I had my children and moved to part-time work, I took the opportunity to complete a *Masters of Creative Arts* and then took my commitment further by choosing to work casually as I pursued my writing career. So perhaps it is the flexibility of various teaching roles that explains why there are many writer-teachers. Being able to casually teach was certainly a financially viable way for me to have the time to take my writing seriously.

I feel the bigger reason there are so many writer-teachers though, is that the most important attributes of a writer; creativity and resilience, are also needed in teaching. Teachers are the most creative bunch of people you will meet. They must think on their feet, design lessons that suit an array of needs and figure out a way to fit an entire curriculum into those short school days. Teachers are also accustomed to working very hard, for often very little external recognition – but nevertheless, a level of personal reward, which is also the story of a writer's life.



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Every author has a different journey to publication, but for me, it was slow and very bumpy. There were many times that I felt like giving up, but each time it was my love of writing that kept me trying. The inevitable rejection and roadblocks along the way built my resilience and helped me to hone my writing skills. Upon publication of my first book, although there was a lot of joy, there was also criticism and vulnerability to cope with. Again, strengthening me as both a writer and person.

I feel the same about teaching in many ways. There are days when everything runs smoothly, and you see those *aha* moments in your students. But then there are days when nothing from the timetable is taught, and you've spent more time attending to discipline issues than actual teaching. This can lead to a feeling of hopelessness. Yet teachers get up the next morning, ready to face a fresh day with their students and try again. It is our love of working with children and

seeing them progress that keeps us in the job. The challenges along the way make us wiser and more resilient teachers.

What I have discovered is that teachers can often feel a little stifled by what they *have* to teach and our creativity suffers. Our greatest attribute can become our biggest obstacle. A teacher's creativity can be pushed aside to just get through the curriculum and that leaves us feeling flat and uninspired. Bringing focus to our own creativity and filling our cup is the perfect way to allow inspiration to flow again and find that balance of creativity in both our teaching and personal life.

A simple way to inject more creativity into your life is setting

aside a short time each week to do a creative task, just for the enjoyment of it. For example, writing a short story, mindful colouring-in or designing a new garden-bed. Setting aside five to ten minutes a day for your students to also be creative just for the enjoyment of it, is just as beneficial – be sure to take part as well!

I hope to see the list of writer-teachers continue to grow. So, if there is a story idea that you have been thinking about, or a desire within you to try your hand at writing, I offer my full encouragement to give it a go! You may find that teaching and writing is the perfect combination for you also. ■

**Karyn Sepulveda**, author of *The Women's Circle* and *Letters To My Yesterday*, is primary teacher and creativity mentor. She loves to help people connect to the power of their own creativity so they can transform their lives. Find out more at [www.karynsepulveda.com](http://www.karynsepulveda.com) or on Instagram @karyn\_sep.



# Using technology

## To simultaneously teach face to face and remote learning

**As Greater Sydney and other areas across the country emerge from lockdown, students and teachers return to campus.**

Numerous questions and concerns are circulating in our minds, keeping us awake at night: "What is this going to look like?", "What if some of my class have to self-isolate at home?", "How can I still deliver quality teaching and learning for all my students when I don't know if they will be attending school for the next two weeks?"

As a maths and technology teacher, I have had the challenge of teaching subjects requiring students to learn methodologies to answer mathematical problems and learn practical processes to solve tangible problems via Zoom and 'offline'



**Lindsey Davis**  
*Integrate AV*

activities. I have videoed myself, screen recorded, created step by step guides and scaffolded existing content beyond belief. I have even put together project materials and equipment into packs for entire year groups and posted them home so Year 7 can still create their electronic e-textiles plush monsters and Year 8 can still program an actual microbit all from home. My aim

was to create some semblance of the enjoyment achieved when students build something themselves and it works! Teaching sewing techniques by holding up my examples to my camera and feeling helpless when my students struggle to thread their needle, or their yarn becomes knotted, but also sharing in their triumph when they email me photos and videos of their working creations.

After all of this, we are now returning to face-to-face learning for the second or third time since the pandemic began. This Delta strain brings with it more unease around how contagious it is, and how this might impact on student health and their attendance. Some of our students may catch COVID, which feels awful, and of course they will be absent while they recover. Some of our students will be close or casual contacts and

need to remain at home for at least a few days if not a couple of weeks, and of course we will have students in our classrooms.

We hear plenty of terms to describe teaching methods and practices to try, such as 'Blended Learning' or 'Rooming and Zooming', but what does this mean and what will it look like for individual teachers and their students? This will of course look different depending on the year group, subject area, nature of your students etc. As a consultant with IntegrateAV and my years in the education technology industry in Australia prior to classroom teaching, I have had the opportunity to learn a variety of strategies, which I intend to use in my classroom to help my students to learn in a fun and engaging way regardless of whether they are in front of me or at home. ►



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◀ The main strategies we will need as teachers will depend on the technology available in our classrooms for ourselves and our students in conjunction with what our students have available to connect from home. The following strategies include a range of possible solutions to teaching students in the classroom and at home simultaneously, with the aim of keeping things simple and manageable for the teacher and still engaging and meaningful for all students.

### **Using an interactive flat panel (IFP)**

Many of us are aware of the range of teaching tools available literally at our fingertips with an IFP. We were already using them in our classrooms prior to lockdown to present content, access a variety of learning resources, and connect with student devices.

These fabulous teaching tools can also enable a range of blended learning approaches which do not require any additional time outside of the lesson time from the teacher. For example, utilising screen recording tools, connecting to a video conference call during your lesson and the opportunity to annotate directly onto your

teaching file, and share this content with your students live regardless of their location.

### **Screen recording options**

It may not always be possible to connect to a video conference call during your actual lesson, or your students may not be able to connect from home during their exact timetabled lesson with you. Screen recording then becomes a helpful tool to share your lesson with your remote students, after delivering it to your face-to-face students.

There are a number of screen recording tools available for use on your IFP, such as SMART Recorder. If storage is an issue, you may find cloud-based tools such as Loom are more convenient, as you can simply share a secure link to your video, rather than having to post it to platforms like YouTube.

Whatever recorder you choose, setting up the tool ready to press record from your IFP, at the beginning of your lesson, will allow you to teach those in your classroom and share the lesson to your remote students for them to access at a time convenient to them. It also means the video they watch will be a clear view of what is on your screen, as

opposed to a view from a laptop or iPad attempting to capture you and the content on the screen from a distance in the classroom.

For this to work successfully, you will need to have a decent microphone. Many IFPs come with inbuilt microphones, which have a range to pick up your voice from a couple of meters away. If you need to walk further away from your IFP during your lesson, you might want to consider a lapel mic, as these can connect wirelessly to your IFP and allow you to be clearly heard in the recording regardless of your position in your classroom.

These screen recordings can be uploaded onto your learning management system, or the links shared, so all students can access the lesson content after it has been delivered.

### **Video conferencing in the classroom**

IFPs also have the added advantage of being connected to the internet. As a result, using the same idea as above with screen recording, your remote students can connect to a video conference at their timetabled lesson, which you can manage from your IFP. Your IFP does not need to have a camera for

this method of conference call, as all your remote students will see is the back of your head or your forehead as you teach the students in your classroom throughout the call. I do recommend, as with the screen recording option, you have a good microphone either built into your IFP, a small USB microphone mounted to your panel, or a lapel mic, so your remote students can hear you clearly.

For a smooth call, simply connect to your video conferencing platform such as Zoom, Teams or Hangouts-Meet on your IFP, share your screen and have your microphone on. You can then teach from your IFP for both the students in your classroom and at home at the same time.

### **Seeing all your students**

One of the downsides to your students learning from home and you teaching in your classroom is the difficulty to see their faces or engage with them to assess their understanding. Your video conferencing platform may have a pop out view of your remote students which you could see on your IFP, but this can also be a distraction for students in front of you.



I recommend using another device, or several devices, if you are lucky enough to have some class iPads, for example, where you can also join your video conference.

One option would be to have a laptop connected to your IFP and set up the display preferences to extend the screens. You can then have the student's camera views on the laptop angled towards you, and the shared screen content on the IFP angled at your students.

This allows you to see your students' faces, but they will not see you.

To enable your remote students to see you and your shared content, I recommend joining your video conference twice from two different devices.

This could be your teaching computer and your IFP, or an iPad or tablet and your IFP. Angle the smaller device so you can see its screen and consequently your remote students' faces, but also enable the camera to face you and be on.

Make sure the microphone and speaker on the smaller device are both off, and the microphone and speaker on your IFP are on to avoid any echo. Now you can teach from your IFP and share your screen to be seen clearly by your remote students, in addition to seeing your students' faces and reactions and of course enabling them to also see you.

### Enabling communication from your remote students

The above setups have their advantages, but it will still be tricky for remote students to ask questions or collaborate with their class from home. You could enable the chat feature of your video conferencing platform on your IFP; however, this would mean you would need to respond on your screen, with your back to your class, and some students may not want their questions to be viewed by everyone.

One option would be to nominate some students to act as the administrators of the lesson call. They can monitor the chat questions and mute and unmute students as needed during the lesson. This is an opportunity to further develop video conferencing



The main strategies we will need as teachers will depend on the technology available in our classrooms

”

Image courtesy of Integrate AV

continue using this format in my classroom to continue to engage all my learners wherever they may be learning from.

### Getting ready

By the time you read this we may all be a few weeks into this new norm of blended learning simultaneously teaching students in the classroom and at home. We may have already found what works best for our students and ourselves, or we may feel we need more support.

*The staff at Integrate AV have an education background and the technical knowledge to help you navigate these new teaching methods. They offer advice on hardware and software solutions to meet you and your school's needs and high quality professional development via video conference to hold your hand or further develop your existing technical skills. Contact your consultant on 1800 742 748 or [info@integrateav.com.au](mailto:info@integrateav.com.au) to see how they can assist you. From everyone at Integrate AV, we wish you and your students every success with your new teaching and learning strategies. ▲*

skills for the students acting as administrators and rewarding 21st century communication skills for all students.

### Maintaining engagement

The above suggestions assume you will be teaching directly from your IFP throughout the lesson in order to share a presentation's content with all your students. This form of digital "chalk and talk" is not ideal, for all involved. Software such as SMART Learning Suite and SMART Lumio are fabulous for situations like these. You can still deliver presentations, but you can also add interactive elements for all your students regardless of their location.

Simply upload existing Powerpoints or any file type into Lumio and add interactive elements with the click of a plus icon. There are votes and polls, games and quiz tools which allow every student to engage whether at home or in the classroom. Collective mind mapping with 'shout it outs' allows students to think collectively and gives every student the opportunity to participate. Another opportunity for assessment for learning is to

use the Handouts tool to share your screen to be interacted with either individually or collectively by students on any device, anywhere and for you to view students' screens live from your IFP to monitor their progress and understanding. Having this range and variety of interactive capability all on the same software platform saves a significant amount of time searching for a suitable activity to match your lesson content, as well as providing one simple way for students to connect each lesson.

My high school students have deeply valued this opportunity to collaborate and compete against each other during video conference lessons, with a number commenting on how they understood the content better by having a go and sharing their ideas with their peers. I intend to

*Lindsey Davis enjoys supporting people in their use of technology. With a keen interest in quality professional development which aims to give teachers the confidence to model technology use in their classroom and improve the outcomes of their students. Lindsey has five years teaching secondary maths in UK and four years as a Training Manager for a national technology company in Australia. Lindsey also spent two years teaching maths and technology in Australia with a focus on learning support for the last two years she has been supporting the education team at Integrate AV with their professional development program both online and face to face.*



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**Wow factor:**

# Broadcasting studios for schools



*Image courtesy of Blackmagic Design*

By Rosie Clarke, Editor

**Podcast and media production are ideal projects to feature on a digital technologies curriculum but not every school knows how to implement them.**

Podcasts are subscription-based audio (and video) files that listeners can download or stream online. They are increasingly popular among young people and the influx of COVID lockdowns has sparked a huge rise in overall audience figures for the medium. Where traditional media such as film and TV has struggled to stay in production during COVID, podcasts have boomed and are especially popular with youth. According to Edison Research, half of all podcast listeners are between ages 12 and 34—this is a growing media industry and one that teenagers are primed to master due to their tech-savvy nature and curiosity in subject matter—podcasts cover content ranging from hard journalism to science facts, to storytelling, gaming and much more.



*Bob Caniglia*

Schools are catching on quick to the possibilities—student-run podcasts can accomplish what school newspapers or newsletters used to and prove valuable as assessment items. From researching and writing content to learning how to use the recording software and editing features, podcasts can integrate any subject area (whether it's English, Maths, or Music) with a variety of learning areas (such as innovation and sustainability, analysis, collaboration, problem solving, and creativity).

But what equipment do students need in order to design, implement, and document their product for assessment? How feasible is it for schools to set up their own broadcasting studio? It can be daunting! So we endeavoured to find out more this issue. We asked two expert suppliers assisting schools around the country for their insights on the ideal broadcasting studio setup.

Bob Caniglia from Blackmagic Design advised: "Students need to learn how to shoot, post and share their media. This means they need to get experience with cameras, lighting, mics, a video switcher and post-production software that lets them edit and color. They need HD quality at the minimum.

"A core requirement for any school should also be to teach how media is shared and get them prepared for how professionals work. Luckily, high quality broadcast and film technology today is affordable enough that it can fit into most budgets. A full camera and switching set up today costs less than a single lens 20 years ago. Make sure

you choose gear that is built to be open and upgradable. And try to avoid software that charges you for upgrades."

## **Student streamers all the rage**

"Streaming is a trend that needs to be understood by students and most of the schools we speak with have grown their streaming capabilities. I would be surprised if any teaching professional reading this story has not watched a multi-camera class or sporting stream from the school and that is only going to keep happening more and more.

"The great thing for cash strapped school budgets is that multi-camera streaming can be done affordably. You can get a full set up with several cameras, a broadcast quality switcher, lights, and basic audio for less than \$5K. With the same technology available to students that is available to Hollywood, sports broadcasters, and the biggest streamers, I don't see any reason why fiction and documentary work should not be expected of students as part of their coursework. ►





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◀ “Technology is no longer a barrier to students being able to create, and there has been a real blurring of the line between what is typical broadcast news gear and filmmaking gear. DaVinci Resolve software is used by the biggest Hollywood blockbusters and any student can download it for free. And the same ATEM switchers being used in schools are also being used by live broadcasters are also being used to capture drama and multi-camera fictional projects.

“For other uses of a school’s broadcast gear, we see our customers all over the world using their set ups for sports, local town government meetings, virtual classrooms, filmmaking of every kind, etc. In the US, most towns have local access stations that are piggy backing with schools to create

all sorts of amazing programs because the schools are where the best gear and help is.”

### **What resources do you recommend that are available to schools?**

“YouTube has an amazing number of tutorials and the filmmaking community in general incredibly helpful. The AFTRS also has a number of great programs across Australia and most cities have very active filmmaking communities.”

### **Broadcast space to stun students**

Samuel Drury, Application Engineer for Technical Systems at Jands informed us: “When it comes to creating a suitable broadcast space that can be used by teachers and students alike, there are some key aspects:

1. Acoustics of the room
2. Audio equipment
3. Lighting equipment

“These are critical for ensuring a professional looking and sounding environment that will play nice for multiple mediums of production. Acoustics refer to taming the reflections within a space. reverberation/echo is a key difference between a low-end and high-end production space.

“While a space could have the most high-tech equipment to capture 8K 120FPS content, with microphones that are top of the line, if the reflections within a room aren’t tamed, the quality of that space drops dramatically. It becomes hard to listen and concentrate. Ways to manage this can be with thick curtains, carpet, and acoustic panelling on the walls/roof in podcast rooms especially!

“Audio equipment is next on the list, specifically, microphones. While a great looking camera is useful, a high-quality audio product is essential (with the right applications in mind – think about the difference between recording a guitar and a podcast interview).

“Lighting is important for video podcasts and streaming facilities. Being able to control the space with even lighting allows for green screens and allowing to create depth of field. Relying on general ceiling lights for a video space will create shadows on faces and video recording equipment will struggle.

“Tablets and portable devices are more popular within schools-- devices that can plug straight into iPads allow the students to create creative content without having to know the ins-and-outs of professional audio and video equipment. With at-home-learning becoming the norm for schools around the country, appropriate equipment assisted with online lessons, are also making sure teachers are heard and students are engaged.

“Microphones that are equivalent to the quality found on some of the biggest podcasts in the world (found on Spotify and Apple Podcasts) are available as ‘plug and play’ solutions. Look for features like: dynamic or condenser style recording microphones (condensers are great for science projects that require picking up every tiny sound!), high quality pre-amplifications for clean recordings, and headphone playback.”

### **What resources do you recommend that are available to schools?**

“The biggest problem the industry does have right now, is the access to educational resources that can inform, while not being too technical about the specifics of how devices work. Jands has multiple free informational webinars available on our website, including online trainings, industry Q&A sessions and deep dives into the latest systems and technology.” ■



*Images courtesy of Jands*



# Outside – the new inside? EOTC in the COVID-era

By Heather Barker Vermeer  
Industry Reporter

**“Education outside the classroom (EOTC) has become an attractive approach, not only for learning but also for health,” so begins the latest international study in this field.**

Published in June 2021 by a team of Danish researchers, *‘The Association between Education Outside the Classroom and Physical Activity: Differences Attributable to the Type of Space?’* looks at EOTC post-COVID.

Coming out of the University of Copenhagen, the explorative study of the effects of EOTC on the sedentary, light, and vigorous physical activity of students, and



includes international findings. It sets the health values of learning outside against the context of the here and now – a post-lockdown world.” EOTC gained increased attention worldwide as a strategy to reduce the spread of infection when reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic,” say

the study’s authors. “Worldwide, reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic meant increased use of outdoor environments in teaching lessons. In Denmark, a reduction in virus transmission was the main argument for the relocation of lessons to outdoors<sup>3</sup>.

“When schools reopened,

many were obligated to teach outdoors. Teacher gained experiences using EOTC and more regular physical practice during curriculum-based teaching became an option. Few studies have analysed the association between EOTC and pupils’ physical activity (PA).”

This cross-sectional study is the first to investigate the association between EOTC in green space and pupils’ PA, comparing school days with EOTC sessions in various environments and non-EOTC school day. It is based on a large sample of cases and defines EOTC, “In this approach, pupils are taught traditional school topics outside the school buildings or school grounds in, for example, nature, culture and societal institutions, or companies.” ►

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Image courtesy of Wilderness Escape

◀ Teachers from 17 school classes practised EOTC for one school year, on a weekly basis, and physical activity of the 617 pupils, aged nine to 13, was measured. Detailed findings can be examined in the published study, which show the time spent in SED on school days with green EOTC was 24.3 minutes less than during school days without EOTC in a green space.

“A side effect was the gained collective level of experience with teaching in outdoor environments and, thus, a chance for more regular practice of curriculum-based teaching in green space, which has the potential to simulate pupils’ cardio-vascular health and promising learning perspectives,” says the research paper.

“Knowledge of the impact on learning and health must be a top priority to inform evidence-based upscaling for the continuation of the experience gained during school reopening.”

Outdoor education provides a unique experience that

## In Denmark, reduction in virus transmission was the main argument for the relocation of lessons to outdoors



few other aspects of school life can rival, giving students opportunities to develop initiative, resourcefulness, and better self-awareness. Fostering an appreciation of the natural environment and broadening students’ horizons, are further positives that sit alongside encouraging interaction with others and bolstering physical health.

It is difficult to overstate the benefits of a well-planned outdoor education programme, so with the planning, come the rewards. And, as this recent research shows, providing EOTC

opportunities is well worth the effort for the measurable, positive outcomes it produces. Through a purely health-focused lens, EOTC succeeds in a creating a reduction in sedentary states of learning, which can create a blueprint and enduring habits for healthier lives.

Galleries, museums, and other external learning providers can offer structure and peace of mind for teachers—as well as COVID proof protocol assistance when planning activities and school excursion.

It is worthwhile making contact

to find out about new exhibits, events, and limited-time offerings that may have unique relevance to your curriculum or prompt assessment ideas. The quality of the ongoing partnership between the teacher and the outside-the-classroom provider before, during and after the visit is considered vital to maximising the benefits. Venues like museums and galleries work hard to tailor programmes and activities that will tie seamlessly into lesson plans and have experience collaborating with classroom teachers and working with students, so partnering with them during the planning stage presents a layered resource for schools and can help develop EOTC experiences into an integral component of the curriculum.

To deliver students the best possible learning opportunity, be clear about the goals of any experience and how it connects back to your planned curriculum. ■



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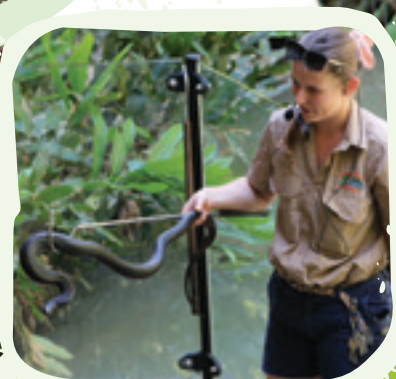
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# Security! Keep your school safe in 2022

By Heather Barker Vermeer  
Industry Reporter

## Providing a safe place of learning is the number one priority for all schools.

Beyond the physical, cyber security is an increasingly essential aspect of school life in the 2020s, with remote online learning having put extra onus on this over the past year. Many schools choose to create their own security risk management plans and policies, sometimes with the support and advice of security consultants to do this.

Identifying security risks at your school and planning how to reduce these risks informs your unique security risk management plan. When creating this plan, schools should:

First, audit and assess its security risks. Ranking security issues identified in the audit in their order of importance will allow schools to determine which actions need to be prioritised when writing a security risk management plan. After the security audit and risk management planning has taken place, the school's security policies should be drawn up. Access policies, such as visitor policy, pedestrian and vehicle access should be adapted to fit with building and systems changes, as well as keeping up to date with digital developments.

If you find that your school meets certain risk requirements, it may qualify for government funding towards installation of intruder alert systems and more. Alternatively, if your school has suffered property damage in the past, the government may pay for a formal security audit. For schools that do not meet the criteria for additional funding, you can undertake your own audit by following the risk management tools provided online by your state department or use a licensed security consultant.

Bespoke advice around security design, covering all security system requirements and options



Image courtesy of Salto

including alarms, CCTV, lighting and more can be provided by security consultants, and look for general advice from your local and state education departments.

Conferences and online events dedicated entirely to school cyber security are highlighting current cyber security trends and the risks they pose to our education sector; sharing information that is particularly urgent, given the digital attacks Australia has experienced this year across sectors.

'Distributed denial of service' (DDoS) attacks have hit schools globally during 2020/21 so there is increased need to become educated on how vulnerable

schools can be to these and what they can do to strengthen their defences. Security consultants can help schools understand how to try to prevent online security breaches and the disruptions they cause but what some of the solutions are if they find themselves targeted.

### School sector viewpoint:

*Hayden Flett, Solutions Manager at SALTO Systems Oceania, explained to us the two types of access control systems he sees in schools that he says pose significant risks, limitations and costs...*

"The first are master key systems. Mechanical keys can be lost,

borrowed, stolen, and copied – they are also impossible to restrict by time or user. Audit trails cannot be produced for accountability, and rekeying locks because of lost keys can be a very expensive and time-consuming exercise. The second system we see are electronic key systems with no 'smarts' in the lock itself. A completely offline system, the locks cannot be controlled remotely or real-time. These systems are very limited in functionality – you cannot automate doors, nor effect an emergency lockdown which is often requested by schools. It's therefore important that schools ensure that whatever system they choose, it can grow with their security needs and safety concerns.

"Schools often have very tight budgets, and a wide variety of access points that can be located in new, old and heritage buildings.

"Wireless locking technology, that does not require expensive and labour-intensive cabling, can meet all these challenges and more. These systems can also integrate with other security platforms such as alarms or CCTV, and even internal IT systems to manage user identities with minimal fuss.

Sharing his top recommendation for schools, he added:

"Traditionally, electronic access control (EAC) has been hard-wired, so it can be very expensive to secure access points with the cabling needed for these solutions. As a consequence, schools are often under the misconception that only their perimeter can and should be secured with EAC.

"The problem is that you will still need multiple credentials to access different areas of the school – this is not a one-card and convenient solution for users. Secondly, a typical school can have between 500-1000 doors, half of which are internal doors. The latest wireless access control solutions can easily and cost-effectively equip these doors in addition to exterior access points, adding complete and layered control to your school security." ■



# Secure and cost-effective:

## How wireless electronic access control benefits schools

**Losing keys is a major problem for schools. A school's property is open to theft, damage, and loss caused by these events. Organising for keys to be replaced, or rekeying and replacing locks is an expensive and time-consuming exercise.**

So how to manage access? The alternative is electronic access control (EAC), but for many schools, the costs can be prohibitive because traditional hard-wired systems require doors to be cabled. This is expensive, difficult for older or heritage buildings, and often limited to perimeter security - so schools still have to juggle multiple credentials.

Thankfully, advances in electronic access control are putting the powerful capabilities of these systems within the reach of many schools. Smart access control platforms such as SALTO, leverage



wireless locking technology that does not require the expensive cabling of traditional hard-wired systems. This flexibility means a quick and simple installation that can be expanded in stages, as and when budgets allow.

Access can be granted or revoked quickly and remotely, and credentials can take a variety

of convenient forms such as cards, fobs, and smartphones. EAC not only controls access but reports on it, giving full visibility of who has been (or tried to go) where. By making doors more intelligent by specifying when they lock, open, and for who, these systems also report on doors that have been left open or forced open by intruders or vandals.

Most importantly, schools may need to facilitate lockdowns or improve emergency egress. The faster they can be executed, the better protected the staff and students. Traditional locks, with physical keys held by only one or a few staff member(s), can endanger a safe outcome. EACs such as SALTO allow real-time response to an incident. Control can be given to individual teachers to lock their rooms, or the manager can instigate a campus-wide lockdown from a central control point.

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# Q&A: First aid essentials for your students



*Images courtesy of St John Ambulance Australia*

**By Rosie Clarke, Editor**

**All school leaders know that it is of the utmost importance to have adequately qualified first aid attendants both on school grounds and present at extra-curricular school activities.**

However, there are additional benefits to in-school first aid learning for staff and students—no-one can predict when an

emergency may occur, and having these skills will prove life and death. What types of courses are available? How intensive is student first aid training? What exactly should your first aid supply kits contain? We took all your questions and more to an expert in the field this issue.

*School News* had the chance to interview a representative from St John Ambulance Australia (Vic), Emma Klinakis, to ask about first aid dos and don'ts for Aussie schools.

**Q: What are your First Aid Course recommendations for school personnel?**

A: It is recommended that first aid officers are current and up to date, which means completing the Provide CPR course every 12 months. CPR skills decline over time, so a refresher keeps your knowledge front of mind. In addition, Provide First Aid should be completed every three years, which covers the range of common topics such as asthma, fractures, diabetes, bites and stings as

well as CPR and defibrillation. Depending on individual state/territory requirements, more courses may be needed.

For example, the Course In Verifying the Correct Use of Adrenaline Injector Devices is required in Victoria for the two nominated school anaphylaxis supervisors per campus. This course also needs the Course in Allergy and Anaphylaxis Awareness or the Course in First Aid Management of Anaphylaxis as a prerequisite.





Training needs for schools can be complex, so contact a St John office in your own state or territory and they can explain what is needed locally.

**Q: How about student courses? Can you talk about how these might run, and what the benefits are to schools?**

A: First aid is a vital life skill for all students to learn, as children are often the only ones around at home if Mum or Dad suffer an accident or falls ill suddenly. The Australian Resuscitation Council recommend basic life support skills are taught to students annually.

We know that children look forward to their lessons with us all year and retain the information well, building skills incrementally over their Primary School education. St John Ambulance offers free training nationally for all Primary School students to ensure they don't miss out on learning the basics and can gain the confidence to step into the best of their abilities. In 45 engaging and practical minutes, they learn age-appropriate skills they will draw upon for life, and with these



Images courtesy of St John Ambulance Australia

incursions offered free by St John to any Primary School, there is no barrier to participation.

**Q: What are some misconceptions about first aid?**

A: One is that children can't learn first aid because they are not physically strong enough—we have found time and time again that this is incorrect. Students as young as five can grasp and retain concepts such as what is an emergency and how to call 000 and draw upon them in a real-life emergency. Via our free schools program, we build on this knowledge year on year up to Grade 6 when they perform CPR on manikins.

**Q: How do you recommend that schools manage supplies?**

A: First aid supplies can quickly deplete at schools, and staying on top of your school's kits can be a challenge. A few tips to make it easier is to have a list of contents needed for each kit, so that when you need to reorder you know exactly what is required for each kit. We also recommend you keep an inventory of stock on hand, which can be updated when the onsite nurse or first aider does their weekly check of first aid kits. When there is an incident, recording the events, how the injury was managed, what items were used, and how, can help

plan for future stock needed. You may find you need extra stock of regularly used items, such as adhesive strips, saline, bandages, and ice packs.

Having a quantity of field pouch kits (bum-bags) is handy as these can easily be carried by staff during recess or lunch and allows for hands free treatment. This saves time going to look for a kit whilst in the playground or sports field as these areas aren't quickly accessible, which means injuries can be treated on the spot.

**Q: What would a 'good' versus 'bad' school first aid kit contain?**

A: A good kit is compliant and has all stock in date and the necessary items according to content list on hand. It also contains a surplus of certain stock items that are used regularly. It's also important the kit is in good condition with no broken zips and no rust on metal kits.

A bad kit contains expired stock and is considered non-compliant. Poorly managed kits may contain items that are not on the contents list such as nail polish remover or paracetamol. ■



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**“The engaging presenter provided practical and relevant info for the students. The fun and enjoyment the kids had was AMAZING!!”**

**Hailee Eade,**  
Skye Primary School,  
May 2021



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# Know the score and more

By Heather Barker Vermeer  
Industry Reporter

**Your school's sporting fixtures can be elevated to exciting community sporting spectacles with the right elements in place.**

A digital scoreboard lifts the experience into an attractive spectator event and, with the technology in this space reaching ever more professional heights, you'll be attracting a lot more than more supporters on the side-lines.

Moving way beyond the basic manual scoreboard, with number being flipped over by a willing, or reluctant, volunteer, scoreboards have also come a long way from simply displaying digital numerical scores.

Some of the very latest video scoreboards can live stream footage, replays, player stats, team info and more. Wider school announcement can be shared, and advertising can even be incorporated into the event, to increase revenue and community involvement at the same time as teams battle it out on the field.

Having more supporters at your school games brings a lot of benefits. Beyond having more voices cheering your teams on

to success, a wider presence provides a bigger audience those potential advertisers can reach, for example. The drawback of having visual technology 'like you see on tv' will not only attract more people, but a wider range too, building the diversity and depth of 'feel-good' about your school in its community. Kids will love the hi-tech as much as the older spectators who will welcome well-visible scores, replays and match updates.

## State of the industry: purchasing and installation trends for school scoreboards and electronic signs

School News spoke with supplier to the school sector, Wayne Barr from Solid Display Systems to share some tips and top considerations on purchasing electronic signage.

"Specs wise, every school has different scoreboard needs. It's

crucial to have a site meeting (or remote) to discuss what those needs are for a particular school and what they are expecting? It is rarely just a 'scoreboard' to show game scores. "Combined with the physical characteristics of the site, the goal is then to partner with the school to design a bespoke solution. Often, schools provide the scoreboard specs to us and just want the cheapest quote."



© kontur-vid - stock.adobe.com



Images courtesy of Solid Scoreboards





Images courtesy of Solid Scoreboards

The drawcard of having visual technology ‘like you see on tv’ will not only attract more people, but a wider range too...

“This is tough because many times they are requesting old or inferior technology. It is always best for a school to be open to discussion--it’s important that they have all of the relevant data, latest technology and available options on hand before purchasing because, once installed, the school needs to be happy with their decision for 10+ years!

“I have seen some interesting uses of digital signage: QR codes have always been a great idea for us geeks, but now the general public uses them, we have had great success from displaying huge QRs on the screen. They can take the viewer to the current ad supplier, or direct them to scores at another ground (for the 2nd team, etc. There is no reason a PE teacher can’t wander out on the ground with the Year 8s and play a

game on the main oval. The PE teacher will have a remote on a lanyard around his neck; ‘click’, it’s on--they can select a sport, or a simple point-scorer for a fun activity.

“Kids love this! Their interaction lifts a level with their wins on the big screen. Outdoor movies are also a blast!

“A few months ago, I drove past one of our screens at Haileybury. They had the Olympics playing full screen--why not? The funny thing was that the kids weren’t there! COVID! It was for the ground staff.

“This is a considerable investment, so schools must have the best solution for them, and they must think long-term. You have this big, beautiful scoreboard screen--don’t just use it for the First XI on Saturdays.” ■







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# How students are helping to breathe new life into their schools

**School transformations are incredibly exciting for teachers, parents and of course students, especially when the whole school community has spent months and often years planning, petitioning, and fundraising for the developments.**

But schools are now finding some creative and educational ways to involve their students in these often arduous but rewarding journeys.

Students at Maldon Primary School in regional Victoria, played an active role in securing a grant for the upgrade of their soccer field which was just dirt and dust in the summer months.

The appearance of the grounds also detracted from the school's beautiful heritage façade.

It was during a persuasive writing task in 2019, that a group of students from the school (from Grade 2 to Grade 6) wrote letters to the Acting Principal, the Department of Education and the local Member of Parliament to complain about the state of their soccer field. The students used their persuasive writing skills to successfully obtain a School Pride Grant to install a new soccer pitch.

Grassports Australia – one of APT's expert design and installation partners, was engaged to complete the exciting project.

With extensive experience in school sports facility design and installation, Grassports again excelled at installing Maldon Primary Schools' new soccer field using APT's Australian made Supergrasse NP40 turf and Supergrasse Top 10 HP turf in red for the running tracks and cricket wicket.

"We went from a dust bowl to a beautiful green and red synthetic



*Maldon Primary School*



field where the children can now play cricket, soccer, run around the track, as well as play games on," praises Alisa Burdett, Acting School Principal at the time of installation.

"The school community loves the look of the synthetic sport surface and the children play on it every single day."

Another school who valued the input of their students was

School of the Good Shepherd in Gladstone Park, Victoria.

The school had a field that was muddy all winter and unable to grow grass in summer which made it mostly unusable for students and teachers.

The School Representative Council (SRC), made up of students across different year levels, was set the task of brainstorming the 'perfect playground' that stimulated learning and play.

This encouraged the kids to use their imaginations whilst also considering practicalities and learning development.

Based on the students' feedback an initial design was created and delivered back to the SRC. They were delighted to see that their ideas had been included, except for the swimming pool due to budget restraints.

It was then up to Grassports to bring their ideas to life.

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# Why schools should back bag storage

By Heather Barker Vermeer  
Industry Reporter

**Messy corridors, cluttered classrooms, untidy entrances, none of these make for a good impression of a school, especially those wishing to win over prospective students' families and potential new staff.**

Always one of the main offenders in any school cluttering situation are bags. Bulky rucksacks can create problem areas if the right storage solutions aren't found – or used!

There can be many reasons this important aspect of organisation within a school is overlooked, and there are many reasons why it shouldn't be.

A perceived lack of space is often a reason bag storage is overlooked, but this can be something of a contradiction, given the hazards and untidiness errant backpacks can create! The health and safety risks of allowing bags to litter the floors of classrooms or corridors are many and varied. With some careful thought, and often minimal outlay, schools can solve this problem with effective, aesthetically pleasing storage.

Covered areas are evidently needed to provide protection for bags in all-weather if storage is in an outdoor-facing part of the school. But there exist many solutions for creating bespoke, enclosed solutions, which negate this need for a covered area, or the expense and effort of altering buildings to create one. There is much more now available on the market, beyond the standard open cubbyholes favoured by many schools as all-encompassing storage options. Enclosed hooks and shelters specifically designed for backpacks, sports bags, drink bottles and coats aren't the lowest cost option, but



*Images courtesy of Safehook*

make an impressive statement and can provide a purpose-built solution for your storage needs.

Security considerations sometimes cause bag storage options, such as lockers, to be shunned. The threat of vandalism or theft is reason enough for some schools to insist their students carry their bags with them throughout the day. One of the concerns in doing this, however,

is that it risks compromising students' health and wellbeing.

A Chiropractors' Association of Australia study found that 90 per cent of school children exhibited bad posture when carrying their school bag. The research, which was carried out at 340 schools across Australia, also found that 75 percent of students were not using the ergonomic features of their backpacks, which could

help prevent spinal damage. Many students were found to be carrying an average of 17 percent of their body weight on their back. The recommendation is that people carry no more than the equivalent of 10 per cent.

According to the Institute of Health & Welfare, 16 percent of the population (around 4 million Australians) have back problems, with an estimated 70–90 percent of people suffering from low back pain at some point in their lives. Low back pain is now the leading cause of disability worldwide.

Coupled with the ever-increasing numbers of neck problems that are occurring due to the lengthy periods of time people are spending looking down at their phones and devices, officially known as 'text neck', the need for good spinal care has never been more urgent and more important. Removing heavy bags from the equation when young bodies are developing is only ever going to have a positive outcome.

Whether you choose an off-the-shelf (excuse the pun) bag storage solution, or whether you opt for a bespoke, custom-made option, having bags off kids' backs and away from the floor is a win, on multiple levels. ►

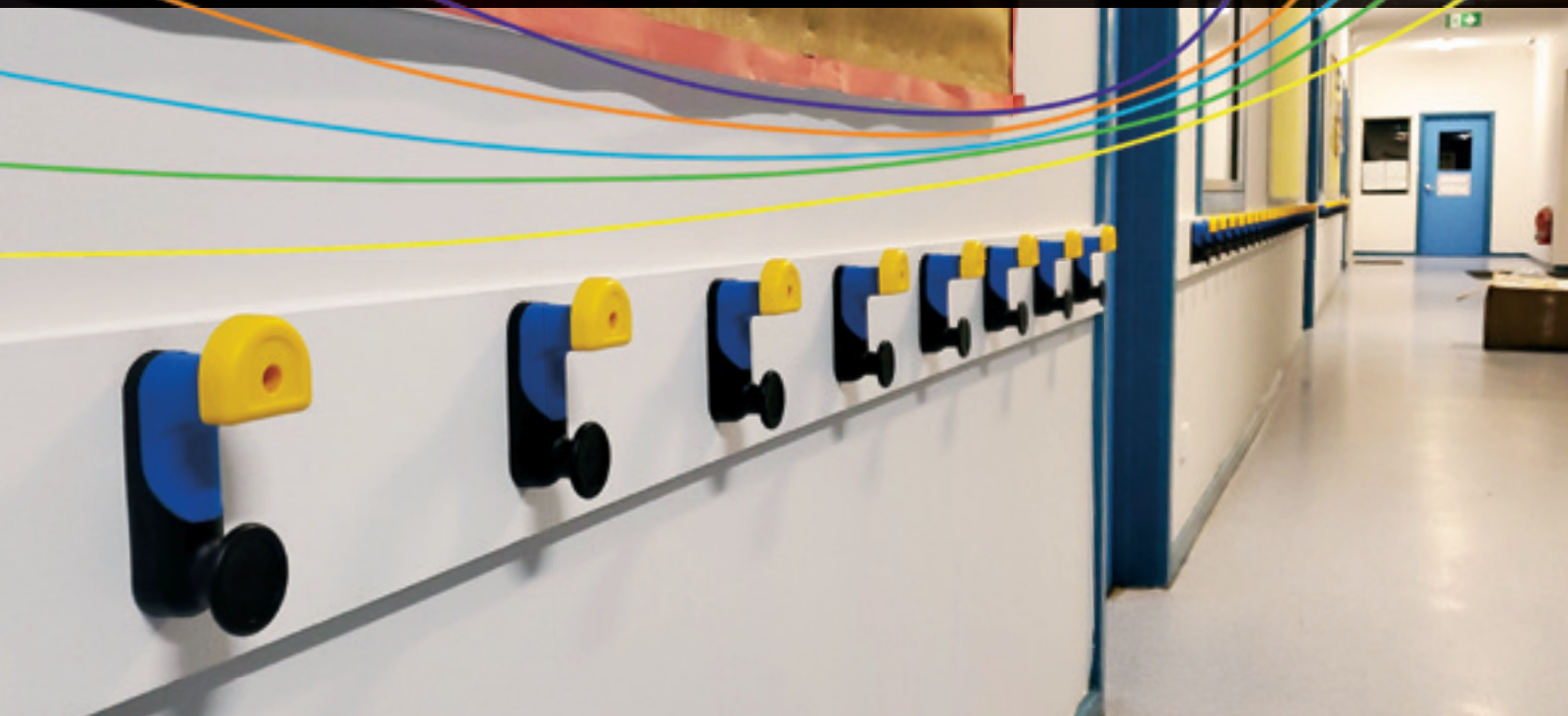
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Images courtesy of Safehook

### ◀ Industry perspective:

When it comes to school bag storage areas, specialised, purpose made products are available from companies that cater specifically to schools. Safehook representative from Linc Furniture, Len Hyde, spoke with us this issue. He said: "Addressing opportunities to improve safety efficiency and pedestrian traffic flow in school bag and hat storage areas can be a much-overlooked part of a schools' safety evaluation process, yet when it comes to

enhancing safe traffic movement within a public space in a school environment it could be considered one of the easiest areas to gain the greatest rewards, all without having to spend a lot of money doing so.

"Some bag storage ideas are stuck in the 1970s, back in the days when kids used hard suite cases. Schools need to consider the cost of cleaning, accessibility, budgets, health, and safety requirements, and more. Wall-mounted bag storage hooks are efficient on all fronts. One of the first concerns raised by schools

is the cost of transforming their school bag storage areas. Storage hooks are compact in design, incredibly strong, durable, fit for purpose and safe without the cost of traditional storage systems. They take advantage of otherwise vacant wall hanging space to store bags and hats.

"One of the biggest advantages of this is that this system has a small footprint minimising encroachment into walkways and the like. Really important when space is a premium. Getting bags off the floor and onto the wall rather than blocking traffic ways

and creating stumbling blocks is easily achieved with the bonus of reducing the opportunity for bag invaders like insects' birds and other nasties creeping into bags when they are stored on the ground or on open shelves.

"Safety is important — ensure there are no sharp edges or protrusions with hooks that are oversized to minimise contact injuries, made tough to minimise breakage, easy to install with screws that are recessed into or behind the mouldings, and a raft of colours to affordably freshen up bag storage areas." ■



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## Fielding Options:

# Upgrade School Mowers and Tractors

By Heather Barker Vermeer  
Industry Reporter

**Although not always an indicator of sporting prowess, the quality of its playing fields can speak volumes about a school.**

Maintaining good grounds is usually the pride and joy of a school's groundsperson or caretaker, with some fields being kept to a standard a professional sports stadium would be proud to display.

While strong horticultural knowledge and training is key for those charged with keeping playing fields spick and span, it can be argued that having the right equipment is equally important.

There are several variables to consider when sizing up the best mowing option for your school, including size of your playing fields, type of grass, climate, which sports are played on the fields and how frequently, undulation, human resource and, of course, budget.

Getting the right mower for your school will depend on the size of the playing fields and the school's budget, but there are some simple pointers you can use to make the process easier.

There probably isn't a groundsperson out there who wouldn't choose a ride-on on mower, but the amount of

options are often overwhelming. Do you choose a machine that catches the grass cuttings, disperses them, or mulches them, for example? How powerful do you want, or need, your mower's engine to be? Is speed of mowing an important factor? How long can you expect a mower to last?

As with any equipment, ease and expense of maintenance should be strong considerations. Like a car, replacement parts can be costly or difficult to source, depending on what brand you choose.

Or do you go all out and plump for a farm-worthy tractor for your school?

In Australia, 15,700 new tractors have been sold in the year to June 2021, up 37 percent on the 12 months prior, according to the Tractor and Machinery Association of Australia. It also reports a record 78 percent increase year-on-year in New South Wales, attributing the uptake to a record harvest and generous tax incentives. Something to consider.

**Getting the lowdown on mowing from the industry: Special consideration when selecting mowers creates a premium cut**

The first step for schools looking to invest and improve their lawn maintenance programs is to first ensure the basics are right. ▶

Add new equipment to your fleet and take advantage of the latest advancements



Images courtesy of John Deere







Images courtesy of John Deere



◀ This includes being certain fields have good soil health and regular aeration, the correct watering program is in place and that mowing equipment is fit-for-purpose.

John Deere, Australia and New Zealand Production Systems Manager, Steph Gersekowski, is encouraging schools to be selective about what mower or tractor they use to deliver the best possible outcome for their grounds.

"In terms of equipment, you need to consider area size, type of turf and what you're looking to achieve. If you're investing in equipment, make sure you're also investing in regular equipment maintenance to not only support optimal machine performance but also optimal results. For example, dull blades can leave your turf looking ragged and discoloured, and in some cases may even pull up portions of grass if the blades are too dull to achieve a clean cut," Ms Gersekowski said

"For sports fields where you want to achieve a premium cut, I recommend a commercial front mower that is specially designed for an enviable cut quality when mowing thick grass at high speeds. However, if you want to achieve a true precision cut, choose a model which offers adjustable hydraulic down pressure and a rear yoke attaching point on the cutting unit to ensure perfect contact with the turf to achieve superior cut quality."

Ms Gersekowski also noted operator comfort, ease of use and streamlined maintenance features as key qualities to look for in new equipment.

"In terms of technological advancements in ride-ons I'd say a great new feature is the 30-second oil change system, which allows owners to change oil by simply twisting on a new

cartridge that contains both the oil and the filter so there's no engine oil drainage needed. This integrated system is exclusive to John Deere and reduces the skill and effort traditionally required for oil changes, removing the fuss and mess," Ms Gersekowski said

"Another useful new feature for zero turn mowers is the swift ability for the user to switch between mulching and side discharging without leaving the seat. Meanwhile displays on some models also allow you to see machine warnings, receive on-board electrical diagnostics, and set service timers on a large, easy-to-read screen. For compact tractors, one of the greatest customer concerns involves difficulty in attaching tractor implements. The latest options have overcome this by providing an easy hookup and a guaranteed fit for all Category One implements that are designed to meet the ASAE Category One Standard S278.6 for quick-attach hitches."

### **Financing options are also available**

Ms Gersekowski noted: "Financing new equipment has a number of advantages. Equipment leasing can help maintain cash flow to free up cash for other areas that need it. The latest technology is available—add new equipment to your fleet and take advantage of the latest advancements. Depending on the type and design of your lease, you can package maintenance to keep unexpected costs to a minimum.

"On the other hand, equipment loans can have competitive rates with timely special offers throughout the year. No early termination fees add flexibility to make changes when and if you need it, and you also own your product at the end of your loan." ●





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