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TeachersMatter

The Magazine of Spectrum Education



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Hello,

and welcome to Issue 26!

One thing that lets me know that winter is well and truly here is lemons. How I love lemons – their brilliant colour, delicious smell and tangy taste! So, to celebrate all things lemony Emma from Lark's Kitchen has filled pages with delicious treats to make with lemons.

We have an amazing selection of articles for you to read in this issue covering topics including developing respectful listening in your students, knowing the types of students you are working with, the importance of connecting children with nature and the 20 must-know facts about teens – to name but a few.

Keeping students engaged in these long winter months can sometimes be tricky. Cathryn Berger Kaye's article gives many practical strategies and ideas about how to keep up interest by using engaging teaching

styles. Continuing on the theme of engagement, Hannah Tyreman discusses using 'open classrooms' as a form of sustainable, accessible and interesting Professional Development for teachers. The idea of increasing collaboration and trust amongst staff, and departments, is a fantastic idea and this programme has a hugely transformative effect.

Sometimes students are not the only people in schools who need a bit of an extra push during winter! Whilst Dr. Laura Markham discusses how to use strategies other than time out for children, Dr. Helen Street talks about how teachers can use time out as a benefit for their own well being. Furthering this theme of self-care, Deborah Barclay gives strategies to help you create more space in your life. So I suggest you use your newly created 'haven' to soak up some of the wonderful

ideas offered in this issue by our marvellous contributors!

Finally, if you missed the opportunity to attend the TeachersMatter Conference this year, go to www.teachersmatter.co.nz and register for the best one yet! Yes, it's the 10th TeachersMatter Conference, and with the theme 'Simply the Best' you will get to listen to, and share ideas with some of the best in education.

Have an awesome term!

Live, laugh, play and learn,

Sarah



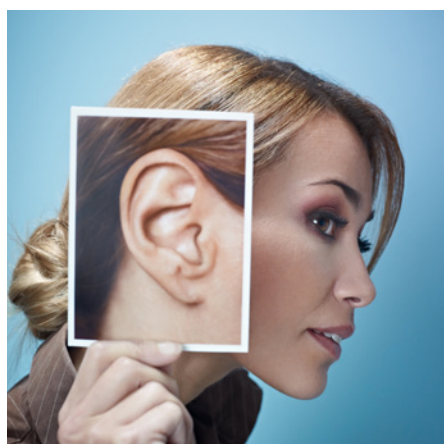
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In Issues 23 and 24 of Teachers Matter Magazine, I published an article describing a model of Inquiry that I recently developed for use with my students. In that article, I did not acknowledge the work of other educators, including Lane Clark, who have influenced my ideas on inquiry learning and the model that I use in my classroom. Specifically, it may have appeared to the reader that I was claiming ownership of the 'So What™' stage as a unique and differentiating element in MY inquiry model...but the So What™ stage (along with the accompanying descriptor 'making a difference in their lives and the lives of others™') pre-existed in Lane Clark's ThinkInQ Real Learning' process. It was an oversight on my part to not correctly attribute these elements to Lane Clark and I apologise for any confusion this may have caused. - Angela Stensness

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Engaging teaching styles

Student motivation comes from within when they are interested, challenged and involved by engaging teaching styles

How do you motivate students? That's a question I am often asked, and I always reply that motivation comes from within. What educators can do is engage students by harnessing their ideas, interests, curiosity, abilities, talents and skills, and through that engagement, students are more likely to choose to be motivated.

Compelling topics, connections to their interests, personal relevance and meaning and authentic experiences are likely to motivate students. They want to move, talk, experiment, stretch, meet challenges, make choices and be surprised. They have questions and want to discover answers that propel the learning process. Educators can integrate protocols and strategies that increase positive dynamics of inquiry, critical thinking, reflection and participation in every classroom. I have found success using the following strategies to engage students.

Accurate Image Language

Words help students create an image in their mind. That image is clearer when the words are more exact and descriptive, which often means more positive than negative. This approach establishes clarity for the listener and a greater likelihood of meeting the desired learning and behavior outcomes. For example, instead of saying, "Don't slam the door," say, "Close the door quietly." Instead of saying, "Don't forget your homework," say, "Remember your homework." With accurate, concrete language, confusion is mitigated.

Similarly when building skills, replace statements or questions that lack specificity, such as, "Can't you just listen to me?" with specific requests, such as, "Eye contact helps with listening; let's practice this first." This simple, powerful adjustment in language establishes a climate conducive

to responsiveness and engagement. Be transparent; students quickly understand that a poster that says, "Don't forget to come" is less effective than one that says, "Remember to come" or "Join us!"

Be the Concept

Have students dramatise a concept to demonstrate understanding or to teach others. Adding this kinesthetic construct helps students understand and recall as a result of personal experience. For example, to develop collaboration skills, introduce the

introduce a fiction or nonfiction book, not a textbook. Distribute the book to each student, advising students to keep the books closed until told otherwise and follow this sequence of directions 100%.

Tell students to look only at the front cover and tell you what the book is about. Write their comments on chart paper or the whiteboard in one of the colours in a random design, not a list.

Tell students to look only at the back cover and tell you what the book is about. Write those comments in a different colour.

Have students hold the book looking at the back cover, then flip the pages of the book from back to front quickly, noticing anything that pops out to them. Be sure to model the technique first. Ask them once more what the book is about and record their comments using a third colour.

Repeat the flipping and question one last time, adding comments in the fourth colour.

Ask students what happened during this process. Students typically say that they previewed the book, and usually everyone finds something in it that sparked their interest or curiosity.

As a follow up, allow three minutes for students to open to any part of the book and read. Then have them form triads and allow two minutes for them to share what they have learned.

This entire sequence takes less than 15 minutes; interest in the book, however, will have increased through examining and foreshadowing. Remind students that they now have a quick way to preview many books: look at the front cover and the back cover and flip twice back to front to see what jumps out. This is a great strategy for librarians to highlight as well.

"What educators can do is engage students by harnessing their ideas, interests, curiosity, abilities, talents, and skills, and through that engagement, students are more likely to choose to be motivated."

word support, a word that educators use often yet rarely examine for meaning. Group two to six students randomly and simply say, "In 20 seconds, show 'support.'" They may lean on one another, form a chair out of their arms, pat someone on the back, or provide a thumbs-up. Students will have multiple images to trigger thinking and varied associations. After leading this activity during a professional development session, one teacher said, "I'm going to have my students become mitosis!" Teachers use this strategy to seal an idea or concept in a short amount of time with high participation.

Book Flip

To spark student interest in reading a book, review the book as a group. Use an easel pad or a whiteboard and four differently coloured markers. This process works to

Book Puzzle

When handing out a new textbook, ask students to form groups of four to look at the front cover and back cover and pause at the table of contents. Each student then selects a single chapter of his or her choosing to review. Allow three to four minutes for students to review the chapters, suggesting that they first browse through all of the pages before settling in to finding highlights. Give each student two minutes to share highlights with his or her small group. Debrief by discussing what was learned and what students may anticipate in the class. This can lead to further discussion of the resources and understanding they bring to their learning environment.

Define This

To engage students in active learning and build a better understanding and retention of words, terms and concepts, avoid offering definitions. Instead, have students construct definitions. Begin by offering a basis for understanding. For example, if introducing the word *apartheid*, describe how people were treated when this policy was in place. Once the foundation is established, begin the process for deductive reasoning in pairs or small groups. Definitions can be written, drawn or acted out. Often the framework is, "In a small group, come up with a definition for [a certain word or phrase] in 10 words or less and include an image." To culminate, students can discuss each other's definitions to refine them. When students discuss and deduce what a word means and create an image, the likelihood of recall can increase. Teachers also gain a landscape of what students do and don't understand, can correct misconceptions, and more readily engage the class moving forward.

Each One, Teach One

Using index size cards or paper, give each student one fact, concept or quote to share with others. Allow students to walk around, form pairs to exchange information by reading the card aloud, and then find the next partner. With each pairing, the exchanges likely will become less about reading the card and more about summarising what is on the card from memory. Quote cards can be exchanged on the basis of a preference for the quotes. Fact cards can introduce a new unit or lesson or be a summary for review. To conclude, the class can discuss collective learning and how each segment of information contributes to the whole. Students also like creating the cards themselves, which can be

adapted as an effective approach to making engaging presentations.

One Minute Think Tank

How often does a teacher ask, "Any questions?" followed by minimal, if any, student response? Encourage all students to ask questions with the "one minute think tank." After presenting a topic, have students find a partner and give them one minute to come up with a related question. The limited time plus the opportunity to talk gets students motivated and asking questions.

This activity has myriad applications; for example, you can give students one minute to work with a partner or group to craft the opening and closing sentences of an essay, resolve a query, rewrite a quote, develop five note-taking tips, reflect on an experience, or come up with a better homework assignment than the teacher (and they typically do!). This strategy reengages students whose attention may have wandered and gives students time to think about their ideas with one person before sharing as a class. Use it frequently to reignite individual and collective engagement and classroom discussions.

Social Relief

Simply put, students need to talk to one another. Learning is a social experience. Idea developers rarely work alone; instead, they have a series of conversations to advance their concepts. Similarly, students need times to talk out loud and to listen to others. Vary the time; how students are grouped; whether they sit, stand, or walk; and the numbers of students—and see how social relief solidifies and furthers learning.

Under Direct

While I was leading ninth graders in a workshop, I distributed cards with a different quote on them. They were seated at tables of four with one sheet of easel pad paper and four markers. I instructed them to "draw a quote." Several hands immediately popped up.

Question: What do you want us to do?

My answer: Draw a quote.

Another hand: What do we do first?

My answer: Draw a quote.

And another hand: Do we do this together?

My answer: Draw a quote.

After a few more rounds, they looked at each other, and in five minutes had completed exceptional quote art.


When teachers give a direction, most often students raise a hand and ask, "What do you want me to do?" That is precisely the problem. They want the teacher to say what to do, point by point, so that the students' priority becomes determining what will please the teacher, rather than demonstrating their learning or exploring what they want to know.

The antidote is to "under direct." Provide directions that are clear and brief. If questions ensue, stick with the same exact direction. This encourages problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking, and authentic learning. If a student is getting particularly frustrated, you must respond further; teachers must be persistent in most circumstances, however, to break the cycle of students' over dependency on teachers.

Closing Thought

Self-directed learning, participation and creativity mixed with a dose of inspiration draw upon students' innate curiosity and desire to know. Through everyday integration of effective teaching strategies, teachers move students toward high levels of engagement and success.

Excerpts of this article were adapted from Strategies for Success with 21st Century Skills: A Learning Curriculum that Serves (ABCD Books, 2012) by Cathryn Berger Kaye.

This article was first published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Principal Leadership magazine in March 2014. For more information about NASSP programs and services, visit www.nassp.org. 

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Learning to listen respectfully

And how to cultivate this skill in students

Having prepared her class for the unit on “Sustainable Futures,” eighth grade social studies teacher, Mikaela Riley, projected a chart on the white board showing that the size of the Earth’s population would about double by 2050, mainly as a result of population growth in India and China (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population). On the other hand, the amount of food production is steadily decreasing due to climate change. Mrs. Riley posed a question to the class to initiate discussion: “What might be done to solve the problems related to food production and the earth’s population growth?” The following discussion ensued.* (Adapted from Swartz et al)

Carlos “I don’t know”

Mrs. Riley “Well, let’s use our critical and creative thinking as well as drawing on past knowledge. It will become a serious problem in your lifetime. We may not have enough food, water and space to sustain such a large and growing population. How might we solve this problem?”

Michael “We could send some people somewhere where they won’t need food and space”

Mrs. Riley “Where might that be?”

Michael “Into space.”

Mrs. Riley “Why there?”

Michael “They won’t need to eat our food or live here anymore.”

Jessica..... (Giggles) “That’s stupid. Of course they’ll need food in space.”

Matt “I think that wars will keep the population in check.”

Jessica..... “That’s a dumb answer too. Wars don’t solve problems.”

Marissa “Some people think so. That’s why we have so many wars. Look at what is happening in the Middle East.”

Jasper “My uncle was wounded in Afghanistan”

Mrs. Riley “Let’s hold on a moment! I can see that we’re not listening to each other. Let’s stop this conversation and learn how to listen to each other with more understanding and respect”.

It is obvious to Mrs. Riley that in order for this group of students to conduct classroom dialogues well, understanding what listening respectfully means and some skills of respectful listening must be mastered. Of course this will take practice and Mrs. Riley, along with other staff members, will need to offer many opportunities in their lessons for students to practice, apply, monitor and assess their own growth in these listening skills. This article is intended to describe what constitutes skillful listening and how teachers can cultivate this disposition in students today and as they become efficacious citizens in their future globalised community.

Eight Dimensions of Internalisation

It is easy to think of listening respectfully as a disposition that students either use or don’t use; that they have or don’t have. It would be more accurate, in describing the acquisition of this and other dispositions by asking the following questions:

1. Awareness: Do the students have a conceptual understanding of the meaning of the disposition—what does “listening respectfully” mean? Can they articulate what it looks like, sounds like and feels like? Can they give some examples and

non-examples? Can they use synonyms for the label and cite instances when they used or should have used the disposition? Can they recognise when it is happening?

2. Skills and Strategies: How skillfully do the students execute the disposition with confidence, grace, and style? Do they have a range of strategies, tools, and tactics to carry out the listening respectfully??

3. Situational alertness: Is the disposition being used appropriately and consistently across many diverse situations? Are students alert to situational cues that signal when to employ and when *not* to employ respectful listening?

4. Autonomy: Is the disposition being used autonomously—without prompting or being reminded by others? Does the motivation and inclination to listening respectfully emanate from within—without seeking reward, recognition or approval from others?

5. Benefits and values: Does the student realise the benefits and values of choosing to use the respectful listening? Do they predict the consequences of choosing when to use or when not to use the disposition?

6. Self-monitoring: Do the students reflect on their skillfulness in using the disposition? Are they becoming being of their own listening skills and making a commitment to constantly improve the performance and apply the disposition in an ever-widening set of circumstances? (This capacity is known as self-directed neuroplasticity (Rock & Schwartz). Do they advocate for the use of respectful listening when they see that other individuals and groups need it?

7. Mindfulness: Is respectful listening used consciously, proactively and intentionally? Dispositions are not habits that are on “autopilot.” Being alert to situational cues, do students consciously realise that this is a time and place when, for example, he/she needs to listen respectfully?

8. Moving to Action: Thomas Edison once said, “Vision without execution is hallucination.” Do students have the will and motivation to move to action on the disposition? While students may display the first seven of these dimensions, the disposition must be thoughtfully acted on, carried out, and fulfilled. Additionally,

students should be prepared to call for the use of the disposition for others. So in a group situation, for example, the students are willing to call on the need for respectful listening. This is probably the most challenging of all the dimensions.

Teaching the Capabilities of Respectful Listening

Students need more than just the name of the disposition. Mrs. Riley starts this process first with some direct instruction

in skillful listening. “Over the next few days and in future discussions, I want us to practice three steps that can improve our listening skills. You will remember them by the three ‘P’s’ of listening: Pausing, Paraphrasing and Probing” (Costa and Kallick). She also tells them that she will use the term “Listening respectfully” to describe this way to engage in listening to others. She explains “respectfully” as a disposition that puts the listener in the place of the speaker as if the listener had the speaker’s point of view and feelings. This, she says, will enhance the understanding the listener has of the speaker’s ideas. The teacher



then writes these focal points on a chart which she posts on the wall.

Listening Respectfully

1. Pause: give the person you are listening to a chance to think about and finish what he or she is saying.

2. Paraphrase: Summarize what the person is saying in your own words.

3. Probe: Inquire into the person's meaning by asking clarifying questions.

Mrs. Riley will want the students to practice these skills as they discuss further the population issues as well as other topics. In fact she will want to help them *internalise this disposition*. Obviously, more than just this introductory experience is needed. Mrs. Riley says: "Let's start with the first 'P—Pausing'. For the listener, there are three meanings to pausing.

Pausing your lips— during conversations, there will be only one pair of lips moving at any one time.

Pausing also means using "wait time" before responding to a person's answer or asking another question. Do not respond impulsively. Rather we give your speaker time to consider options, alternatives and other possibilities before they give an answer. We want the speaker to compose their best, most thoughtful answer rather than giving an impulsive, off the top of the head answer (Rowe).

Pausing also means 'pausing your brain'. It's like pushing the pause button on your Blue Ray. We set aside our thoughts that may be off the topic or that are about some personal experiences that you may want to share but won't necessarily contribute to the discussion" (Derber).

Mrs. Riley then says: "Let's practice pausing. I'd like you to form into pairs. I want each of you to read the second paragraph on page 45 in your social studies book about the projection of population trends in the US and the world. When one partner has finished, look up and tell your partner in your own words what that paragraph means to you.

Before any of you say anything, however, I want you to pause and count backwards from 3: (3-2-1). Let's try it."

The students practice and, after a while, the teacher invites reflection:

Mrs. Riley "How was that for you, when you had to pause?" What did you tell yourself?

Marissa
"T h a t w a s hard—not to say anything. I had a lot of ideas but I couldn't say them."

Jasper "I t seemed weird. That's not the way we talk at home."

Carlos "I had to listen. While I had some ideas, Danielle had some different ideas. It was neat."

Mrs. Riley "So what did you have to do inside your head to remain silent?"

Marissa "I had to tell myself not to say anything. I wanted to talk but couldn't while Maria was talking"

Jessica "Counting backwards helped me remember to be quiet."

Michael "Matt forgot to pause and he interrupted me. Can we try that again?"

The teacher also works with the students to elaborate the next step in skillful listening. "The second 'P' is Paraphrasing," she says. "Paraphrasing lets others know that you are listening, that you understand their ideas, that you are trying to understand them, and that you care about and respect their ideas. Paraphrasing implies that you want to understand another person before you give your ideas. It means summarising or putting another person's idea into your own words. Here's an example. I'm going to ask Carlos to share his idea about controlling population. Now pay

attention to what I say when Carlos is finished talking. Carlos, say your idea again." (Mrs. Riley demonstrates.)

Carlos "I think we should pass a law limiting the number of children people can have. They do that in some other countries."

Mrs. Riley "So Carlos's suggestion is to control the population through legislation. Making it against the law to have more than a certain number of children."

Mrs. Riley
"What did you hear me do with Carlos's idea?"

Jessica "You said it in your own words but you still used his idea."

Mrs. Riley "Yes, exactly. Now I want you to try it. Again, let's get into pairs and read the next paragraph you page 45. "I want you to try it now. Let's listen to and paraphrase each other. And let's be aware of what we do inside head to remind ourselves to paraphrase"(Washburn)

Mrs. Riley "How was that for you, when you had to listen to and paraphrase your partner's idea?"

Matt "That was hard—Michael went on and on and I didn't get to share my idea."

Jasper "It seemed weird, too. That's not the way we talk at home either."

Marissa "T h a t w a s n e a t. Listening before prejudging someone's contribution makes sense. Being silent helps. I was surprised at the great ideas and how much Ellie added."

Mrs. Riley "So what did you have to do inside your head to paraphrase your partner's ideas?"

"Is respectful listening used consciously, proactively and intentionally?"

Matt “Michael talked a long time and I couldn’t remember all he said. I had to remember his main idea. Making a list inside my head of his main ideas helped.

Mrs. Riley “So what is the value of listening respectfully?”

Jessica..... “If you don’t listen to others’ ideas and problems you could miss a great idea or a giant problem that you had been unaware of before.”

Mrs. Riley “Tonight at home, I’d like you to practice your paraphrasing with your parents or brothers or sisters. Let’s also remember when we practice, to use what we learned yesterday about pausing.”

Jasper “They’ll think I’m weird”

The elaboration continues. “The third ‘P’ in our good listening skills is probing. This is appropriate when your partner says something or uses some words that you don’t fully understand. It lets your partner know that you respect their idea and that you are seeking deeper meaning and understanding so you clarify their terms. It is very respectful because it honours their thoughts and you want to understand them better. Let me give you an example. Carlos, let’s go back and reconstruct our conversation from yesterday. I’m going to demonstrate probing with Carlos and the rest of you observe what I say.” The teacher models:

Carlos..... “I think we should pass a law limiting the number of children people can have. They do that in some other countries.”

Mrs. Riley “So Carlos’s suggestion is to control the population through legislation. Making it against the law to have more than a certain number of children. So how many children should be the limit?”

Mrs. Riley “What did you hear me do with Carlos’s suggestion?”

Tamika “You summarised then you asked him to be more specific.”

Mrs. Riley “Yes. Now, let me demonstrate some more. Carlos, when you said ‘other countries’, which other countries do you know of from your reading that limits the number of children that people can have?” “Again, what did you hear me do with Carlos’s idea?”

Tamika “You made him be more specific. He had to give some exact names of countries; he couldn’t just say ‘some countries’.”

Carlos..... “I had to make it clear to you what I meant and then you could understand me better.

Mrs. Riley “Yes, exactly. Now I want you to try it. Again, let’s get into pairs and read the next paragraph on page 45. Let’s also remember be aware of what’s going on inside your brain. What do you say, to yourself to remind yourself of what you are practicing and why we are doing this? I want you to use what we learned yesterday and the day before about pausing and paraphrasing.”

The students then practice pausing, paraphrasing and probing as they continue discussing the problems of the population growth. Towards the end of the period, Mrs. Riley asks the students to anticipate and project in what other classes, careers, jobs or situations it would be important to listen respectfully?

Carlos..... “My uncle designs web pages. I listened to him and learned. I still get suggestions and I’m making my website even better.”


Michael “When I got my I-pad I had to really listen to my sister who knew how to download songs and apps and videos onto it. It didn’t make sense at first and I was really confused but I kept probing her until I understood how to do it.”

Matt “When my mom gets mad at me for doing something she doesn’t like, I wish she’d listen to my side so I’d know she really understands what’s bugging me.”

Marissa..... “In my dad’s job, he has to listen all the time. He’s a personnel manager and almost every night he tells about some problem he’s having between his employees and how he has to listen to the complaints and suggestions from each of them.”

Elie “I have to listen to my soccer coach. He’s always saying to the team, ‘Listen up, listen up!’ I thought I was listening and now I know how to make my brain really listen.”

Jasper “I think I’ll try this at home.”

Besides the 8 dimensions listed above, another and more critical factor for learning to listen respectfully (or any other learning for that matter) must be included. Imitation and emulation are the most basic forms of learning. Teachers, therefore, realise the importance of their own display of these desirable dispositions in the presence of their students. Thus, in day-to-day events when problems arise in schools and classrooms, students must see the significant adults employing the same types of behaviours. Without this consistency there is likely to be a credibility gap. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Skillful, respectful listening starts with us. 

Arthur is co-director of the Institute for Intelligent Behaviour and the creator of “Habits of Mind.” Actively concerned that there must be worldwide change in educational systems if we are to meet the needs of a global society, Arthur compels educators to create classrooms that are thoughtful places to learn.
www.habits-of-mind.net

Three actions to upgrade curriculum, assessment, and standards for the contemporary learner

Moving schools along the pathway to the present

A baby born in Wellington in 2013 will be in the high school graduating class of 2031.

What are the implications of this startling reality for professional educators? Perhaps a scenario might shed light on this question. Imagine that a task force composed of scientists, anthropologists, educators, business leaders, artists and technology designers is visiting schools across your country. Their charge is to ascertain the approximate year for which students are being prepared. They come to your school. To inform their findings, they analyse artifacts such as your curriculum, the daily schedule in which you operate, the length of the school year, the way students are grouped for instruction, meeting patterns of the faculty and access to digital and media tools. A very revealing form of evidence is what assessments are valued, because what is assessed is one of the drivers of school decision-making. After reviewing the artifacts, it is unlikely that the task force will determine that learners are being prepared for five or ten years from now. Are we content with that reality?

Each day children walk through the school doors, educators are expected to prepare them for the future. As Sir Ken Robinson suggests:

"All children start their school careers with sparkling imaginations, fertile minds and a willingness to take risks with what they think," he says. "Most students never get to explore the full range of their abilities and interests...Education is the system that's supposed to develop our natural abilities and enable us to make our way in the world." All children start their school careers with sparkling imaginations, fertile minds, and a willingness to take risks with what they think," he says. "Most students never get to explore the full range of their abilities and interests ...Education

is the system that's supposed to develop our natural abilities and enable us to make our way in the world."

As of this writing 13% of the 21st century is over, yet our school schedules work within the confines of the agrarian calendar of the 19th century. I submit that teachers and administrators will make the transition to embrace digital, media and global literacies much faster than our institutions. It will take longer for schools to shed dated structures which will prove a

"As of this writing 13% of the 21st century is over, yet our school schedules work within the confines of the agrarian calendar of the 19th century."

great but necessary challenge. Becoming a contemporary school will require a genuine rethinking of the formats of our programmes regarding the nature of our schedules, the ways we group learners, our personnel configurations and the use of space (both physical and virtual). These latter points are the focus for many educators who are looking for future shifts and I certainly am committed to those efforts. Having said that, in the short term, however, there are actions educators can take to engage the contemporary learner.

Three Actions for Now

It has been my experience that the overwhelming majority of teachers and administrators do not want, nor support, dated conditions. There is nothing that they would like more than to modernise curriculum, provide their learners with the best type of learning experiences, engage them in the apt use of new technologies and create more flexible and dynamic schedules to prompt learning and achievement. I would like to identify three key actions that can assist in moving our schools along the pathway to the present.

1. Each teacher should commit to one "upgrade" per unit of study to replace a dated assessment with a contemporary form.
2. Each administrator should commit to one "upgrade" to employ for communication with staff and the community.
3. Professional development should use revised national standards as an opportunity to modernise curriculum and teaching.

In this article, I will elaborate on each of these points with a specific eye towards how to act on them in order to benefit your learners.

1. Upgrading: One Unit at a Time

When writing curriculum there are three basic elements requiring choices on the part of educators: content, skills and assessments. Every day in classrooms throughout the world, teachers are selecting the "what" students should engage in, that is, the knowledge and essential understandings; the "how" students should process and employ skills to dive into the content; and the "outcome" of

the work which will be the products and performances developed by learners. These three elements are mutually dependent. I have proposed a model for upgrading these elements, one unit at a time, to match the needs of our learners. The model is based on the concept of strategic replacement of content, skills and/or assessment in our unit planning. *Replacement* is a key word, given that the demands on teachers make the idea of adding anything onto the curriculum impossible, but we can substitute and upgrade our practice leading for engaged student learning.

For example, a teacher might take a unit in his fifth grade social studies curriculum on the Thirteen Colonies: Seeds of a Nation. Originally groups of students were to create a poster display on one of the colonies to reflect their knowledge about its geography, native people, settlers and government. The teacher makes an upgrade, so that the poster is replaced. The students will each create a short video-documentary using music, voice-over, images and interviews. Consider a physics teacher at a high school who replaces her textbook description of the laws of physics and asks students to “flip” the classroom with homework and view a Khan Academy video on the laws. Replay them and respond with questions on the class wiki. A kindergarten teacher asks students to create a book using iAuthor on an iPad while they import images and create captions about insects in the school garden. Students studying French set up a monthly Skype session with a class in Paris where students are studying English and have actual real-time conversations.

What criteria constitute a quality upgrade? For the past year, based on workshops and field experience across the county and internationally, I would submit that there are four critical points for teachers to consider when deciding whether to use an application to support student learning.

- **The application engages the learner in active inquiry RE-SEARCH and promotes curiosity.** Evan, a high school student, is using the application, Wolfram Alpha (<http://www.wolframalpha.com>) in his algebra class to solve a polynomial equation and visualise the steps towards the solution. He finds the application helpful, but what also occurs to Evan, is that he can revisit the site in his social studies class as well.



PHOTO: STUART MILES

Currently he is studying life in present day China. Evan researches the statistics on China using the Wolfram Alpha application and queries its per capita income, the life expectancy of its citizens and its population size. Questions naturally emerge from his study: *What was going on in the last forty years of history to account for the economic changes in China? What accounts for certain cities having huge population surges versus other cities in China?* He decides to run additional statistics on Wolfram Alpha on neighboring countries in Asia: India, Singapore, South Korea, North Korea, Japan, and Viet Nam. Evan is motivated to raise further questions via the power of this application.

- **Investigation using the application deepens the content.** Inspired by her teacher, fourth grader, Joanna, is crystal clear that she wants to be an astronomer when she grows up. Her class is studying the solar system and specifically the first moon landing. Joanna's teacher gave her a digital application, We Choose the Moon to employ in her report (<http://wechoosethemoon.org>). Joanna is enthralled with the story, the video clips and the ability to go deeper into the content with ease. She is motivated to find details and information, which provides a more

complex and deeper sense of the content and issue she is studying.

- **Use of the tool generates independence.** Providing students with a way and support for improving their own performance independently is one of the great outcomes of strategic use of digital tools. Consider how Billy, a middle schooler, struggles with building up his personal vocabulary when he relies on flashcards, which he often loses. The cards can help, but they are limiting. He has a new teacher this fall, Mr. Jones, who encourages Billy to use VisuWords, an active dynamic visual graphic vocabulary builder finding synonyms and word roots. (<http://www.visuwords.com>). In addition, each student has his or her own personal vocabulary builder through Vocabulary.com (<http://www.vocabulary.com>). Billy is expanding his vocabulary with independence and excitement. Gone are the flashcards.
- **The quality of work in student performances and products is improved.** When we ask our students to produce new media and employ a range of digital tools, the question of quality outcomes should be in the forefront. One effective approach to ensure excellence is collaboratively developed digital and media rubrics.

If we ask our students in advance what makes an outstanding podcast both in terms of technical display and content, it is more likely that the student can reflect those criteria in the finished work. Using these tools should go beyond products that are old style in a new format, otherwise we might fall into the trap that Alan November raises: "...we teach students to create paper or do some kind of other work that could have been done without a computer." He provides an example, "Too many of our elementary students are memorising the fifty state capitals, when they could be building interactive digital maps of the history of the state capitals." (November, 2012). In short, quality student 21st century products are directly linked to quality teacher assessment designs.

2. Administrators Updating Leadership Practice

If teachers can make the transition to upgrading and modernising the curriculum then it is critical that administrators make a corresponding shift. I would recommend that each administrator consider replacing a dated leadership approach with a newer one. For example, a superintendent of a school district can run a meeting with faculty and principals using web 2.0 tools like, <http://www.todaysmeet.com> to get feedback and provide a backchannel for interaction among participants. Instead of always conducting Back to School Night as a "one time only event", why not have a webinar broadcast for parents who cannot attend? So many parents who work would love to feel part of the community and might miss the evening. In fact, a webinar series for parents might be a real motivator for involvement. The principal and staff members could update each school webpage to be more interactive for the school community with a monthly blog post. Students could become webmasters of the school site and learn critical skills while working with the administration.

When school leadership uses software for curriculum mapping initiatives they are employing a 21st century approach to sharing student learning through web-based communication. Mapping is a concrete and practical approach to document the sequence

of units of study through the year in each class. Mapping software provides administrators and teachers access to seeing the flow and sequence of curriculum year to year and across the day. Thus, professionals in a school have immediate access to both agreed upon targets in consensus maps but more importantly the individual teacher's diary map at any level K-12 in a school. Informed teachers make informed decisions. For those of us who have mapped for years, we see that one source for the gaps we see in our school programmes is the gap in authentic information between teachers. In short, leadership can employ more effective electronic communication both personally and school/district wide by using modern tools.

3. Standards as an Opportunity to Modernise

In New Zealand, Australia and the United States there has been a commitment in the last few years to align local school curriculum to revised and updated standards. In our team's four-phase model, MTTC (*Mapping to the Core: Integrating the Common Core Standards in Your Local School Curriculum*), we advocate that the new standards can revitalise a school's mission.

Rather than viewing the advent and integration of these dynamic standards as an act of "compliance", educators can view this transition as an opportunity to modernize curriculum and teaching. A critical point to be raised is that standards are not curriculum. Standards do not declare what to teach, how to assess, how to deliver instruction, or even when to deliver lesson plans and unit designs. The details and richness of curriculum planning is left to your local school and district so that you can **be responsive** to the specific needs of your learners. Our team believes that mapping and laying out the curriculum with embedded standards K-12, being thoughtfully scaffolded, is the key to supporting student learning and achievement.


The newer standards have been vetted and crafted to prepare our contemporary learners to become career and college ready. The words digital, media and global, are laced throughout the standards with significant emphasis featured in ELA standards on "Speaking and Listening" across all subject areas. Consider the following Anchor Standard for all students K-12 which directly declares that our learners starting at the youngest ages needs to make deliberate choices of digital media to generate their ideas

and share information. (<http://www.corestandards.org>) CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

For example, in the Common Core State Standards from the United States, digital and media literacy is featured prominently describing the career and college ready student. These descriptions are really the driving mission of my country's new standards. There are some particularly revealing phrases for teachers to consider: "...thoughtfully to enhance"; "tailor their searches online"; "familiar with strengths and limitations". The architects of new national standards are not looking for students to simply jump into tools but rather that:

They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.

Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals. The invitation to upgrade and to update curriculum and instruction is a clarion call.

To conclude, three actions can be taken by educators to update curriculum and teaching, thus, preparing learners for their future. When teachers replace dated units of study with contemporary content, skills, and assessments, our students are engaged in the "now" of learning. When administrators employ 21st century tools for communication and leading, they model the proficiencies to emulate in classrooms. When states and local schools align their curriculum plans to rigorous standards, the results ripple through all of our educative settings. 

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"We'll be friends forever,
won't we, Pooh?" asked Piglet.
"Even longer," Pooh answered.

A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh



PHOTO COURTESY DISNEY.COM

8 ways to nurture friendships in our schools

Fun, fickle and fragile

There is something quite special and even magical about close friendships — no matter what age we are. Moments of joy and delight with people who we value not only make life more fun — they have hidden layers of benefit we often forget. Friendships build human connectedness and bondedness, and help create life-affirming experiences that can help build emotional, social and psychological competence.

We (as human beings) are biologically wired to be social beings — living in close proximity, cooperatively working to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of our community to ensure the survival of the species. Positive human relationships are also seen as the most significant protective factor in resilience studies, meaning that we are more physically and psychologically buoyant when we have

family and friends who care for us and who we care for when adversity arrives in our lives often unexpectedly and unwelcome.

School transitions, whether in early years or into high school, are stressful for students. Having a friend by your side makes this challenge much easier especially for sensitive children who struggle with change and new situations. Once at school, friendships or the absence of friendships can help or hinder what happens in the classroom. Most schools have anti-bullying programmes and I wonder if we should reframe that focus toward making and nurturing friendships in our schools because the wellbeing of students is deeply affected by the social dynamics of having friends.

"... some children are more likely than others to be selected as friends to participate in friendships of high

quality as they explore similarity and personal attributes as determinants of the constructs of companionship, affection and intimacy." — *The Company They Keep: Friendships in Childhood and Adolescence* edited by William M. Bukowski, Andrew F. Newcomb, Willard W. Hartup.

Nothing tugs at a parent's heart strings as much as the words: "No-one wants to play with me!" or "I have no friends!" These same words can also cause teachers much angst. So let's explore eight ways to help children form good friendships in our schools that will not just be fun but which will be supportive and long-lasting just like Winnie the Pooh and Piglet's mateship.

Beware of some of the definite differences between most girl and boy friendships. Boys often use less verbal communication to build their friendship bonds so they

Maggie Dent

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actually need to spend more face-to-face time playing together doing physical stuff. Creating 'adventure type' opportunities for young lads that stimulate lots of 'dopamine' — the brain chemical that makes boys feel alive, engaged and interested — helps build stronger connectors of affection. Think games with balls, sandpits, building things, climbing frames and of course sports activities.

Boys' are often more fragile around friendships than girls — meaning that when they are able to have a good mate accompany them to kindergarten, pre-school, Year 1 and even high school — they will be happier to attend. Without a close, loyal friend they can struggle more. If boys have no friends they often display aggressive behaviour towards other students and staff because they feel isolated and disconnected.

Be careful when considering separating key friendships thinking, "My son or daughter seems popular with lots of other students" — underneath, many children may have a strong affection for only one or two best friends and can feel terribly wronged and wounded by the forced separation. Indeed such a move has seen students leave schools and cause enormous long-term challenges.

Create a 'Friendship Chair' initiative, which is happening in some schools, where children can come and sit if they don't have anyone to play with. When managed well by older students, this has been shown to be a powerful transformative initiative in the school playground.

Girls can be like butterflies — flitting around being friends with lots of girls. This is helpful because girls can tend to be much more manipulative in their friendship dynamics — best friends today, worst enemies tomorrow and in a few days back to being besties! As adults you can help by not stepping into girl friendship dramas and sorting them out — just be quietly supportive and encouraging, reminding girls about empathy, and exploring how others may feel when we are mean and unkind.

Teach children about what bullying really is — a concerted, repeated choice of behaviour that involves an inappropriate use of power, which impacts another child's wellbeing. Some childhood nastiness, when a spontaneous moment of unpleasantness occurs, is not bullying.

Having shared interests is 'glue' that bonds friendships — no matter what age. Endless hours of play helps children build a 'play code', which is an innate willingness to play with other children. This code includes learning how to take turns, how to share, and how to win and lose with a degree of grace. Encouraging play activities in recess and lunchtime helps to build the 'play code' learning. Nothing works better at building positive affection and companionship in childhood than real play — in all its forms — imaginative, competitive, unstructured, organised, free range and adventuresome.

Friendship conflicts, much like sibling rivalry, are a normal part of life. It is part of

our job as parents and educators to help our children resolve these conflicts by making them aware of how to manage different wants, needs and big ugly emotions. The key is to always remember that when we feel unloved and rejected our 'primitive' brain can hijack our 'upstairs' brain and we can get angry or frustrated very quickly. Children are children and still developing their emotional and social competence.

Given that we have a tsunami of iPads, computers, tablets and hand-held games and activities to occupy our children's time, I have deep concerns that today's children are going to have more problems forming and keeping real friendships than children of previous generations. An inability to do this is an enormous concern. To help children under 10 who have poor social skills and struggle with friendship, I have created an audio track called "I Am a Good Friend" (available at maggiedent.com) that helps them visualise what it looks and feels like to be a friend.

We all want our students to enjoy their schooling journey and having friends to share the journey is definitely a positive protective factor. Let's have conversations in our staffrooms about the value and importance of friendship building for the purpose of enhancing school culture, student wellbeing and improved learning outcomes. Staff also function better having friends or staff buddies and so maybe the same principles apply to them — a friendship chair in the staffroom may not work as well as a good couch and great coffee, a place to linger and chat!

"If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I never have to live without you."


A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*. 



PHOTO COURTESY DISNEY.COM

Maggie is an author, educator, and parenting and resilience specialist with a particular interest in the early years and adolescence. Her latest book, *9 Things: A back-to-basics guide to calm, common-sense, connected parenting birth-8* is released now.

www.maggiedent.com

10 tips for peaceful teaching

Building respect in your classroom

“I’m a teacher of 4-5 year olds. I made the decision that I wouldn’t do time-outs with kids anymore and now I’d never go back. I always knew the teacher sets the tone for the classroom, but the results of my no time-out experiment blew me away. I was more respectful with the kids and their needs as a classroom management tool and then as their needs were acknowledged, the kids became more respectful to each other. I was forced to address the real problems behind behaviours and kids started to try to solve problems themselves in real ways too, not just to get the result they wanted. Basically, I showed I cared more about them as people and they started to feel respected and were more respectful to each other. If I ever get the opportunity to do a PhD in education, it will be on this topic in some way. That’s how amazing my results have been.” Erin

I’m often asked whether peaceful parenting ideas can work in a classroom. As Erin so eloquently testifies, the answer is YES! Of course, it isn’t easy. It takes regulating ourselves. It takes patience. Sometimes you really can’t help a child with her emotions because you have 20 more who need you. And as every teacher knows, what happens at home will always affect the child’s behaviour at school.

But all humans respond to respect. And even very young children love to contribute to the group and to find solutions to problems.

I’ve been told by teachers I respect that we can be guided by the same ideas that guide us in parenting peacefully. For instance, any classroom of children would benefit if we, the adults in the room, could remember that:

1. Children follow our lead. If we get anxious and raise our voice, so will they. If we communicate with our calm that it’s not an emergency and we will figure things out together, they will learn emotional regulation more quickly. If we apologise when we make mistakes, they’ll learn to do the same. If we treat them with respect and empathy, they’ll treat others with respect and empathy.

2. Children respond to Connection. Children are designed to orient themselves around their parents. When kids come to school, they look for an adult to follow. But there’s a caveat here. They need to trust that the adult is on their side. To be the adult a child wants to follow, connect warmly to that child. When she gets dysregulated, start by connecting with her to restore safety to the situation. Sometimes, that’s all a child needs to pull herself together.

3. Children respond better to coaching than to control. All humans resist being pushed around, and children are no exception. But

expresses. Be sure you connect with each child daily, even for just a short time. If you see trouble brewing, try to address it BEFORE the child gets dysregulated by connecting with him and listening to what he’s upset about.

5. Empathy can be a magic wand. “I often do pull-outs to work with children one-on-one or in small groups. I’ve found that connecting by listening to the students’ various “complaints” or worries (about any old thing that is bothering them) for a dedicated 5 minutes before we start the academics works wonders!!! Once they’ve unloaded they’re much more ready to focus. I almost never offer advice or solve problems,

“To be the adult a child wants to follow, connect warmly to that child.”

children are very interested in questions of fairness (as any parent of more than one child can attest!) So why not talk to three year olds about what rules the classroom needs, and why? Don’t worry; they won’t advocate a free for all. In fact, kids will usually offer many more rules than you will think are necessary. But when children are involved in making the rules, they’re much more likely to “own” and follow them. Write and post the agreed-upon rules (keeping them to a minimum), point to them as necessary as you remind children of them, and be open to helping children add new rules as the need develops.

4. Preventive Maintenance prevents breakdowns. Since teachers can’t just drop everything and respond to a child who is having a breakdown, it’s critical to build in preventive maintenance. When you can, respond with empathy to what each child

but just listen with empathy. I often say, ‘Boy, that doesn’t sound fair,’ and it’s almost a silver bullet.” - Christy

6. Children have a reason for what they do. It may not be a good reason, but if we want to change behaviour, it helps to understand that the child isn’t just trying to drive us crazy. So while it’s unacceptable for a child to hum loudly as he works, kick the desk in front of him, or push the child behind him in line, he has a reason. (Maybe the humming helps him focus, he kicks the desk because he has so much pent-up energy, and the child behind was standing too close for his sensory comfort.) Of course, you need to set limits to keep all the children in your class safe and focused, but understanding that the child has a reason will help you set the limit in a way the child is more likely to follow.




7. Children WANT a chance to repair infractions. Talk to the class about how to repair mistakes. When a child hurts another child, what's the best way to repair that relationship? Punish the child who did the hurting? Help that child make amends? Facilitate a discussion so that both children can learn to express their needs without attacking the other child? You'll learn a lot from hearing the children talk about this. And you'll end up with a protocol to help prevent and address altercations, one that doesn't include punishment.

8. When children get dysregulated, they need a chance to restore their equilibrium. Putting children in timeout makes them feel bad about themselves, and doesn't help them regulate themselves the next time. Instead, try helping kids learn to monitor their own emotions and self-regulate with a "Cosy Corner." Make it a positive space that the children can take themselves to when they need to "find their calm place" inside. Practice in class "finding your calm place" and get the kids talking about what helps them. When a child is upset, listen, empathize, and help her feel connected. Then, ask her if it would help her to take

a few minutes in the Cosy Corner to feel better. If you need to have a conversation with her about what she might choose to do differently next time, wait until she's out of the Cosy Corner and feeling better.

9. When children's needs are met, they're ready to cooperate. Most "misbehaviour" results from a child's needs not being met. For instance, a child who acts out in line might get dysregulated with transitions, so he needs to hold the teacher's hand as the line leaves the classroom. A child who finds it hard to say goodbye to parents and responds by starting trouble might need a special job near the teacher so he can connect and feel valued as he begins his school day. All children need to move, often, and it can be hard for some kids to sit still and focus for long without activity. It can be tough to figure out what a child needs in a given situation, but if we watch and listen, children will often tell us. And our commitment to supporting the child to meet his needs in a healthier way may get him on track for the rest of his life.

10. Children live up - or down - to our expectations. Children see themselves reflected in our eyes, and they assume we're right about who they are. Most adults have a story about a teacher who made a big difference in our lives. Invariably, that teacher believed in us, and helped us live up to our potential. Believing in a child may be the greatest gift we can give them.

Thanks to all the teachers out there who give so much and make such a difference in children's lives. You're truly making the world a better place. 

Laura is the founder of www.AhaParenting.com and author of *Peaceful parent, happy Kids: How to stop yelling and start connecting*. Laura trained as a psychologist, but she's also a Mum, so she translates proven science into practical solutions.

The top 5 reasons to hold an open classrooms week

Turn your door green today!

The best kind of professional development is that which is accessible, engaging and provides sufficient time for reflection. So often we focus on the students' learning that there's little time left for us to consider our own. It was in March 2013 that Reading College started to look at a more sustainable, accessible and time-friendly Professional Development (PD) for its staff. We wanted learning to be as much any time and any place as it was for our students, and it began with bite-size, 30 minute sessions, as well as a range of online content.

The programme was named 'Pass It On' and the ethos was that staff will share with one another, learn together and inspire each other and their students. As well as offering PD at any time or place, we wanted there to be multiple access points to engaging with learning. It was 'open classrooms week' that first fit this bill. The week was designed to enable learning conversations between colleagues, and we hoped that it would be a vehicle for the sharing of good practice and the start of more cross-departmental collaborative learning too.

On the Monday of the first week, all staff were given a door hanger that was red on one side and green on the other. They were to hang this on their door and if staff wanted visitors then all they had to do was ensure it was green side up. If staff wanted to visit, then all they had to do was open the door to the world of learning contained within. If you're thinking that this form of informal PD could suit your school/college, then these top 5 reasons may persuade you:



1. Staff love it!

'I enjoyed the opportunity to see my colleagues teach in a truly informal and non threatening way.'

Observations have a stigma attached to them, but this kind of green door visit is a far more friendly way to achieve an insight into your colleagues' teaching in order to inform your own practice.

2. Inspectors love it!

In our recent Inspection Report, Ofsted cited the 'green door' as part of the consideration of PD effectiveness at the College.

'Opportunities for teachers to take part in professional development are plentiful and varied. Much professional development is innovative and makes good use of web technologies to allow teachers to learn at a time that suits them, or collaboratively with colleagues. Staff increase the range of teaching strategies they use with learners by

learning from each other. For example, on a 'Green Door' day, teachers hang a green sign on their classroom door to indicate to colleagues that they may come in to observe a lesson.'

3. A great teacher-blogger loves it!

Ross McGill (@TeacherToolkit) has written an excellent teaching book entitled '100 Ideas for Secondary Teachers'. In it, he references open classrooms.

He says, "Creating an open door culture in your classroom will not only benefit you as a teacher but also your colleagues, the school and your student community. That's got to be a win-win situation, right?" He also writes about the many benefits: "They include promoting reflection and evaluation of your teaching, as well as increasing collaboration and trust among teachers and across the curriculum."

We actually got the idea from a visit that was made to Swindon College. This all goes to show that being aware of what others within the sector and beyond are up to can inform your own practice, perhaps in a hugely transformative way.

4. Both teaching and support staff love it!

It's a great time to sit in on a colleague's lesson in the same area as you but much can be gained from having a wider view of the teaching occurring across the whole school/college. Go it alone and reflect on your own practice or report back to department colleagues at your weekly meeting. Go with colleagues so that you can see and then immediately discuss how what you've seen could improve practice in your area.

Open Classrooms Week- The Visited**Mar****Prepare for Visitors****Tell your students to expect visitors.****Make chairs available for visitors.****Have a sign on the door/chair to indicate the content of the lesson.****Set the expectations****Try to speak to your visitor (if you can) to let them know:****Whether they can speak to students/wander the room****What stage of the learning your students are at****Share your experiences afterwards****Open Classrooms Week- Visitors****Mar****Do make the most of it****Seek to develop your own practice by looking for goodness.****Take opportunities to wander the room and speak to learners if offered.****Make notes for feedback on the Padlet/extended reflection form later.****Don't disturb the learning****Speak to the teacher 1-1 (if you get the opportunity)
to ask if you can speak to learners****Do share with department colleagues****5. Students love it too!**

The final reason to get involved in open classrooms week is that it's great for your students too! Add a new dimension to the experience: Why not take a student with you on your travels?

"It's been great to discuss my practice with everyone and the students have enjoyed having different individuals in the room to discuss with them what they've been learning."


"I've really enjoyed seeing so many good examples of student led learning in action across the college."

"I think it's a great way of getting students used to having visitors to enable them to feel comfortable."

When I took part for a week, I witnessed physics, sports, catering, construction, public services, maths, dance, English, employability, games design, business, health & social care, history, law, literature, art & design and lessons in the LLD/D department. PHEW! I can't think of any other week when that would have been possible; especially in such a relaxed and informal manner. This week provided some much needed reflection on my own practice and I loved having others in my room; it wasn't as intimidating as I'd previously thought as I knew everyone was looking for the goodness in what they saw.

One of our members of staff recently said about PD, *"If we can transform ourselves, imagine how we can transform our students, employers and communities."*

So what are you waiting for? Turn your door green today!

What will you learn, share and be inspired by? 

Hannah has worked in the Further Education sector in the UK since 2008, first in customer services and then as a lecturer. She now teaches A level English Language and Literature and has responsibility for CPD and induction of new staff across the College. She is the originator and manager of #ReadTL; a free teaching and learning conference for educators in all sectors; especially in further and vocational education. @hannahtyremman www.hannahruthtyremman.wordpress.com

The 5 unintended consequences of giving too much praise and affirmation

The dark side of self esteem

I ♥ ME

In 1967, a young psychology professor at the University of California named Stanley Coopersmith was one of the first academics to formally propose that self-esteem was the crucial ingredient for child rearing. Coopersmith's work sparked a shift in the way children were seen – a shift that was to become later known as the self-esteem movement.

Within a decade, this new approach to educating and raising young people had firmly taken hold. Between the 1970s and 1980s, the number of psychology and education journal articles devoted to self-esteem doubled and went on to increase a further 52% during the 1990s.

This trend was also being seen in society more broadly. In the early 1980s, the attitude towards the role and place of children shifted from 'children should be seen and not heard' to 'children are to be prized, protected and above all else, pampered'. From birth, children were bombarded with the message that they were 'special', 'magnificent', 'unique', 'wonderful' and set to 'be a leader'.

During this time too, competition became a dirty word in schools -everyone in the athletics race began getting a prize, test scores were inflated and report cards couched with positive language lest the student's self-esteem become dented by negative or constructive feedback.

In fairness, such a shift away from the sometimes harsh and stern approaches used by parents and teachers in previous eras

did represent a very positive step. However, I would argue that the pendulum has swung too far and that the self-esteem movement has had some unintended consequences -a dark side -which cannot be ignored.

The five shadows of self esteem

1. Depression

Because so much of the focus of the self-esteem movement has been on the way a student feels about themselves and life (rather than what a child does), Martin Seligman suggests that parents and teachers have made this generation of children more vulnerable to depression.

After all, feelings and emotions are intangible and subjective. Furthermore they can be fleeting which can result in a profound sense of helplessness or lack of control.

2. Narcissism

Lillian Katz, a professor in early childhood development education at the University of Illinois suggests that "many of the practices advocated in pursuit of high self esteem may instead inadvertently develop narcissism

in the form of excessive preoccupation with oneself."

As evidence of this trend, the number of university or college students who rate 'high' on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) has increased by almost 70% between 1987

and 2006.

3. Dependence

By far the most common complaint I hear from employers and managers of Gen Y is that this young group seem to need to be affirmed for everything they do! "Why do we have to congratulate Gen Y for simply turning up to work?" I am often asked by frustrated bosses.

In contrast with older generations, Gen Y tend to crave external affirmation for their performance, development and effort. In one recent study, 60% of Gen Y employees reported wanting to receive feedback from their managers on a daily basis and 35% wanted feedback multiple times a day.

Realising this, some employers have decided to leverage Gen Y's need for affirmation in order to motivate them. In an article for the Wall Street Journal, journalist Jeffrey Zaslow cited a scooter store in Texas which now employs a full-time 'celebrations assistant'. The job description for this position includes throwing large amounts of confetti at employees each week, handing out helium balloons and 'randomly showing up at employees desks offering high-fives to acknowledge a job well done'.

Such a heavy reliance on external praise and feedback in Gen Y seems to be a key factor in the development of the 'if no-one is going to notice, why bother trying at all' attitude so prevalent in this group. It can also result in them appearing high maintenance for employers who expect their team members to be self directed and internally motivated.

4. Apathy

American author Tim Elmore argues that the emergence of the 'everyone gets a prize' mentality that has emerged in schools actually robs young people of a genuine pride in their achievements along with motivation to strive for excellence and



improvement. This is something I often refer to as communism on the sports field.

After all, what's the point of pursuing excellence and striving to win if there is no true competition or reward for effort?

Further still, young people today are anything but naive. They will quickly learn to ignore or grow suspicious of empty flattery. If they are repeatedly told that everybody is special, they quickly learn that this must mean that no-body is really special at all.

5. Fragility

Perhaps the most telling indicator of the dark side of excessive praise and affirmation is the way young people respond when they receive the opposite of these things. Stories abound of young people simply folding at the knees, dissolving into tears or violently lashing out when criticism or constructive feedback is given. One teacher recently told me of a student's devastation when she was asked to review her work and do a second draft – "Why do you hate me so much?" the student asked.

In contrast with generations who grew up in the pre self-esteem era, young people today are less able to separate their performance from their personhood. As a result, any negative feedback is seen as a personal attack.

This final point goes to the heart of the issue: if young people today have been raised in the era of self-esteem, why does everything seem to come crashing down like a house of cards at the first hint of criticism and negative feedback?

I believe it is because one of the greatest myths of the last three decades is that self esteem can be given or bestowed when it simply cannot. As psychology professor Jean Twenge suggests, true self esteem is an outcome, not a cause.



PHOTO TONO BALAGUER

Let's be clear: you can certainly give encouragement, affirm progress and build confidence in young people. However, true self-esteem is always internally driven. If we are to set Gen Y up for long-term success, it is critical we foster a healthy sense of self-pride in them that is linked to overcoming challenges, pushing the limits of personal achievement and persisting through setbacks. 🍷

Michael is an award-winning speaker, social researcher and 3-time bestselling author. His most recent book *Winning the battle for Relevance* is a landmark title that explores why even the greatest businesses and institutions become obsolete and how others can avoid their fate.
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"The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them."

— Ralph Nichols

The art of listening

How to wait your turn!

Have you ever experienced conversations where it feels like someone is *not really listening*, just waiting for their turn to speak?

I think most of us will have at some stage, and I imagine that perhaps a few of us may have been the impatient one wanting their turn at times too!

I know that my impulsivity sometimes has me jumping in during a conversation before I pause to absorb what has been said, I know at times I get excited and want to share my great idea or current thought before the other person has finished... so this is a work in progress for me. I also know learning 'wait time' made me a better teacher. I know when I manage my impulsivity and attend to the conversation it is amazing how the questions come naturally, how much I learn about the other person, and myself. One of my favourite things is meeting new people and hearing about their world, I have had amazing conversations with fellow passengers on planes (I know this isn't everyone's cup of tea!), taxi drivers and people I meet whilst waiting in line. Even though I rarely meet these people again my world is richer for the conversations we have had.



PHOTO: DIEGO CERVO

"Listening looks easy, but it's not simple. Every head is a world." — Cuban Proverb

Real listening demands for a short time that we are living in the moment, alongside the person we are listening to, with mind and heart open. Real listening is about the other person. We hear them and help them tell their story, by honestly being there. The questions we ask are genuine and not designed to meet our agenda but theirs- sometimes they don't even know what their agenda is and being listened to helps them discover it. Celia Lashlie spoke about this at the Teachers Matter conference earlier this year when suggesting that if we want to help people we work and live with we need to stop looking at our watches and computers and other assorted gadgets,

stop believing we know the answer and know better, and instead focus on the other person, step inside their bubble and hear their truth. I couldn't agree more.

"Silence is a source of great strength."

— Lao Tzu

“The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer.”

— Henry David Thoreau

I am currently doing an online course on the Habits of Mind. One of the strategies we have been focusing on is *pausing, paraphrasing and probing*. Very briefly here is the strategy as I understand it:

Pausing

allows the speaker space to think and speak clearly; they may continue speaking and go deeper than they would normally. Pausing also allows the listener the opportunity to reflect on what they have heard.

Paraphrasing

is when the listener tells the speaker what they have heard and checks in to see that they have got it right. Paraphrasing gives the speaker a chance to reflect on what they have spoken about and clarify any misconceptions.


Probing

is when the listener asks questions to get greater clarity about the problem or learn more about the other person and their perspective. Through answering

questions the speaker may come to new understandings or greater clarity, they may discover solutions that they didn't know were there.

This work provides a great framework to develop our real listening skills. And it's worth the effort. Real listening is pivotal to building great teams, working with others and helping people build resiliency (their can-do-ness!). We have opportunities to use real listening at school, at home and in community and social groups that we belong to. It can help us to reduce miscommunication and unnecessary stress from conflict, create more harmonious relationships and become more open to new ideas and ways of thinking.

Feeling heard has the capacity to fill our tanks (metaphorically and physiologically) and improve our sense of wellbeing and worth. Real listening is reciprocal- both parties gain from the dialogue, I often learn from you when I actively tune in.

What a wonderful gift to give to a student, a colleague, a loved one... I encourage you to spend some time and energy this week sharing your gift of really listening. 

Megan is a committed learner. She has been a teacher and an educational leader who has specialised in health education for a number of years. She is an avid promoter of building resilience in our students and selves.

Letting go of rules

And reinforcing appropriate behaviour

I am currently working with several people teaching them to train their own horses to load on to horse floats using behavioural techniques. Many of these horses have behavioural problems associated with loading and part of the process is to build trust between owner and horse – but what does this mean in behavioural terms? How do we know when the horse trusts us or what will help the horse to trust us? If the horse has had repeated experiences involving either pain or fear during the loading process their ability to learn will be impaired and they may well associate us with this fear and pain. Training may entail removing the obvious pain such as whips and ropes – but if we perceive the process as painless with no fearful objects involved we may be unable to ‘see’ what is behind the fear. We then ask the horse to load and wonder why the horse performs any number of undesirable behaviours such as backing off rapidly or rearing that may or may not be an expression of fear or pain. Many traditional ways of loading horses involve ropes, lots of pressure and the odd big stick – unfortunately these methods work often enough to reinforce the people using the method – they say things like ‘well the horse loaded fine last time, they’re just trying it on’. The problem is these methods frequently reinforce pain and fear associated with the float and this often goes unnoticed until the next attempt to load the horse. Our biggest problem however lies in the fact that we are unable to clearly identify fear and can only presume, or make assumptions and that can lead us down a slippery slope of circular arguments.

My role in helping to solve these issues is to provide a training process that removes assumptions and measures observable behavior, clearing defining the unwanted

behaviour so that anyone watching can identify the same behaviour. This information gives us a baseline which can then provide a comparison when we measure the behaviour after training. A plan is devised to provide some structure and consistency to the training and to allow for others to replicate the process. A step by step procedure is written up and the horse is reinforced for every correct response – if a response isn’t achieved training goes back to the last step performed accurately. We don’t waste time analysing what the horse is thinking or not thinking - we simply deal with what we can see. We then measure the amount of unwanted behaviours after training and compare with our baseline measure. This is the typical approach used in applied behaviour analysis to bring about behavioural change providing visual evidence in the form of graphs that demonstrate that the treatment or training was the most likely reason for this behavioural change. Behaviourists use graphs to explain behavioural change and avoid common mentalisms such as trust and fear because they complicate rather than simplify the explanatory process. Mentalisms or constructs don’t explain a behaviour although our common understanding of these words seems to lead us to believe otherwise. They usually confound our understanding and certainly don’t enable us as trainers to plan a programme.

Our conversations are littered with words that attempt to describe an abstraction such as trust and while few of us would have difficulty understanding the word trust in a sentence, trying to describe it and give examples of it may cause us to question our mutual understanding. I began my career as a classroom teacher and was immersed in education, writing and the arts. Crossing over to psychology and the sciences has given me much food

for thought, in particular the many ways we use constructs within education to describe children and their behaviour. Just take a moment and ponder the following list of likely descriptors for a child’s behaviour.

Restless
Distracted
Off task
Talkative
Uncooperative
Naughty
Rude

The problem with all these words is they don’t define the actual behaviour of the child and one person’s interpretation of restless may not be the same as another. We then come unstuck as to how we deal with this behaviour based on a construct. If we think rude means swearing we may have a very different approach to handling the behaviour than someone who thinks rude means calling out in class.

Coming back to the word trust we start to see how this may cause problems not only with horses, but with people and children – what does trust mean behaviourally? What does trust look like? How does a trust-worthy person behave? It might also help us to consider what a lack of trust looks like? If we lack trust in something or someone – we might say we don’t know what they will do next or we are uncertain about what will happen. We might also say there is no consistency in the behaviour of the other person or no predictable results from the object or thing. Once we begin to think about what trust looks like we can then begin to build a trusting environment for our children through our behaviour – we can demonstrate trust rather than simply talking about it.

A small list of ideas might include


- be consistent in your behaviour and interactions
- be consistent in reinforcement and reprimands – follow through with what you say you will do
- have clear expectations that match each child's capabilities
- increase expectations in a linear fashion but also reward easy tasks occasionally to reinforce 'everyday' behaviour
- explain problems to your children – if

you're not well tell them so if you are inconsistent that day they know why

- never underestimate children's ability to be flexible and cope with change
- give responsibility appropriately – for example expect your children to know how to behave, but don't overload them with emotional responsibility such as knowing how to respond to you if you or they are angry or upset

Trust brings great rewards in any relationship – it leads to a feeling of safety and predictability – certainty that you are loved, but is also enables

one to feel free, free to explore, free to be yourself, to be spontaneous, to learn, having faith that the other person will be there for you, providing support and love.

Just like the horses who need to regain trust in order to learn to load successfully, our children need to have trust in us in order to learn effectively. While the school environment may not always be safe and loving for all children, we as their teachers can provide the certainty and consistency – the trust - that is needed in order for them to deal with whatever may take place in school. 



Kate provides individually tailored professional development for Early Childhood Centres and schools on evidence-based behaviour management. She also consults for parents of children with specific behaviour concerns.

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Simple teaching strategies for today's visual learners

Using graphic organisers in your classroom

What is Velcro Learning?

What is Velcro Learning? Velcro Learning is when knowledge and relevance come together to create learning. Teachers can use this type of learning to adapt their teaching to suit the needs of today's learner. By incorporating visual learning, technology and multi-modal instruction into their daily classroom lesson planning, teachers can maintain active student engagement and foster learning communities where successful project based learning can take place.

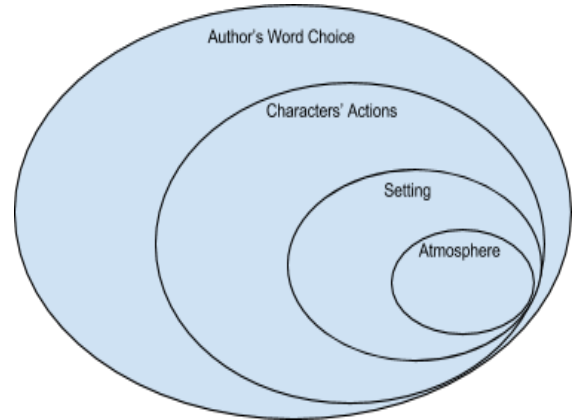
What is whole-mind instruction?

Whole-mind instruction is the balance between teaching to the left (literal) side of the brain vs. teaching to the right (artistic) side of the brain. It is important because modern/technology savvy learners need lessons that demonstrate a balance of the two, whereas traditional instruction focuses mainly on instructing towards the left side of the brain/literal thinking.

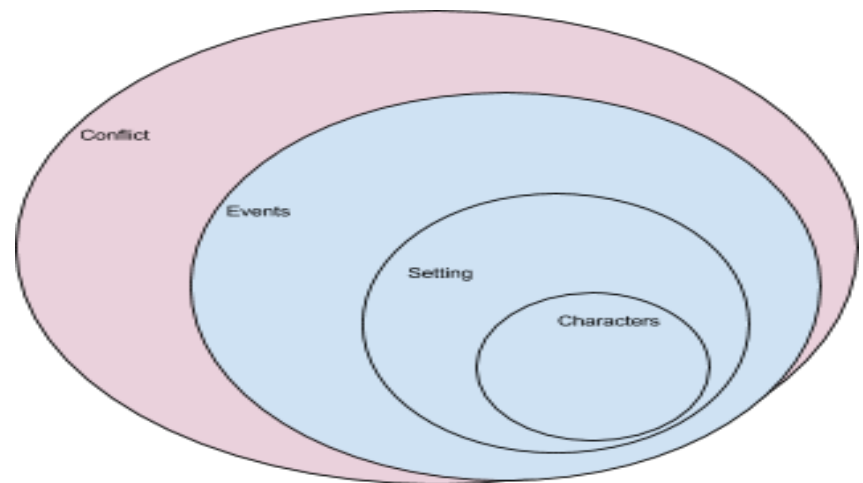
How do I implement these strategies into my classroom?

Certain visual models of instruction (graphic organisers) can be used quite easily to implement whole-mind instruction that creates a bridge between knowledge and relevance. For instance, in my 8th grade English Language Arts classroom, I introduced the *concentric circle* visual organizer for our current novel, "A Separate Peace," by John Knowles. In chapter one, I used a set of four circles: characters, setting, events, and conflict. Students were allowed to collaborate in partners or a triad to complete the information (knowledge that they had gained about the novel so far), to create thumbnail sketches of their details (visualize), then we followed up the cooperative group work with a whole class Socratic


For analyzing a text for story elements:



For analyzing a text for atmosphere:



Seminar on "How do our friendships impact our decisions?" (relevance).

It's May and I have been working with all sorts of graphic organisers all year, conducting Socratic Seminars, and asking my students to elaborate and provide text support. This one simple organizer magically lifted barriers and my student responses were at a higher level of comprehension of the nuances of the novel and the complexities of the friendship and peer pressure between Phineas and Finny. 

Lauren Rivers is a veteran teacher of 17 years. Having studied Elementary Education at the University of Maryland and completed her Master's Degree in Administration at McDaniel College, she has a true passion for providing students with instruction that is up to date and pushes them to the next level. Currently, Lauren teaches English Language Arts to 8th graders in the state of Maryland. She has 2 children, a husband, a chihuahua named Bernie and is also an artist.

Use the Seven Connecting Habits to help resolve challenging classroom behaviours

Delete and upload new habits

When faced with behaviours that are challenging in the classroom, we often despair and chastise. These choices are our best attempt to get what we want. We may want to try and make the child behave better, or to control the situation, or for the child to feel guilty and comply.

Our use of Glasser's Seven Disconnecting Habits of *Nagging, Complaining, Criticising, Blaming, Threatening, Punishing and Bribing* are entrenched habits in our repertoire of ways to get that compliance.

My question is where does the power to change come from? Does it come from within the child or can external controls work. Sure they may work in the short term and for some children, however they are destructive to the relationship that we can have with the child. They impact on children in ways that are far reaching.

There is a lot of evidence that the relationship makes a difference. We have the choice of controlling the behaviours and continue to destroy any possibility to influence the child.

As teachers we need to think about what it is that we really want? Do we want children who are constantly in protection mode or do we



want them in growth mode? Constant use of the Seven Disconnecting Habits is more likely to have children staying in protection mode.

On the other hand, Glasser's Seven Connecting Habits build trust and relationships. *Listening, Encouraging, Appreciating, Respecting, Negotiating Differences, Supporting and Trusting* (Learn St.) has children in growth mode. Isn't this what we want?

This is not an easy transition for some because they are correctly labelled as habits. They can easily become our 'default' or 'go-to' behaviours. We can use them unconsciously.

Becoming aware of them is the first step. Every time you use a disconnecting habit remind yourself of what it does to relationships. Even the slightest criticism has been known to have family members falling out for years.


Become aware of what you really want when you use these behaviours. Ask yourself this magic question from Nancy Buck. "What is it that I really want that I am trying to get by criticising this child?"

Self awareness and self evaluation brings you to a place where you can eliminate or delete these destructive behaviours.

But the interesting thing is that with behaviour we can't just delete the

behaviours. We need to upload new behaviours as replacement behaviours. The great thing about the Connecting Habits is that they are the replacement behaviours.

In thinking about our child with the challenging behaviours, it is the same for him or her. We can't just ask anyone to stop particular behaviours; rather we need to teach them replacement behaviours. They need to upload the more productive behaviours and practise them, putting them into their chosen behaviours as ways to get what they want.

All behaviours are purposeful and as such the choices that children make in our classrooms are aimed at getting what they want which will be needs satisfying at that time. Our job as teachers is to teach them better ways to get what they want using responsible behaviours that do not take away for the needs of others. 

Most relationships fail because we spend too much time pointing out each other's mistakes instead of using the connecting habits of listening, encouraging, appreciating, respecting, negotiating differences, supporting and trusting.

Bette has been following the work of Dr William Glasser and Choice Theory Psychology for more than 40 years. She is president of the William Glasser Institute - New Zealand and is currently a member of the Glasser International Board representing Australia and New Zealand. The Glasser Quality School movement in both countries is making a difference in the lives of children and teachers.
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Project based learning

Student engagement through subject integration

Life in the office, out in the field, or on the farm is all about integration and transferring knowledge from what is known here to what is required there. This integration is not static. It will involve integrating what one knows already, or searching for new patterns and processes in a continuous learning context. It will also require the sort of persistence in the face of failure that is an integral part of problem solving, a crucial life skill. Such a work context is alien to the silo nature of school learning which makes transfer and integration across subjects difficult, if not impossible.

Project based learning is a proven way of achieving this integration at the school level.

What is project based learning?

Project based learning is much more than a project in a single subject that past practices may point us toward. It is a cross curricula process, a practical use of curriculum overlap, where through authentic problem solving the students are enabled to develop competencies and skills in a number of interrelated subject areas. Thus what might be called work proficiency skills are enabled, such as higher level thinking, communication, collaboration and transferring knowledge across disciplines. Further, the students are enabled to develop their social and emotional skills such as becoming self-directed learners and effective team players. Finally, the disciplines themselves are extended from the classroom stage where finding the right answer has been the end to creating the right answer.

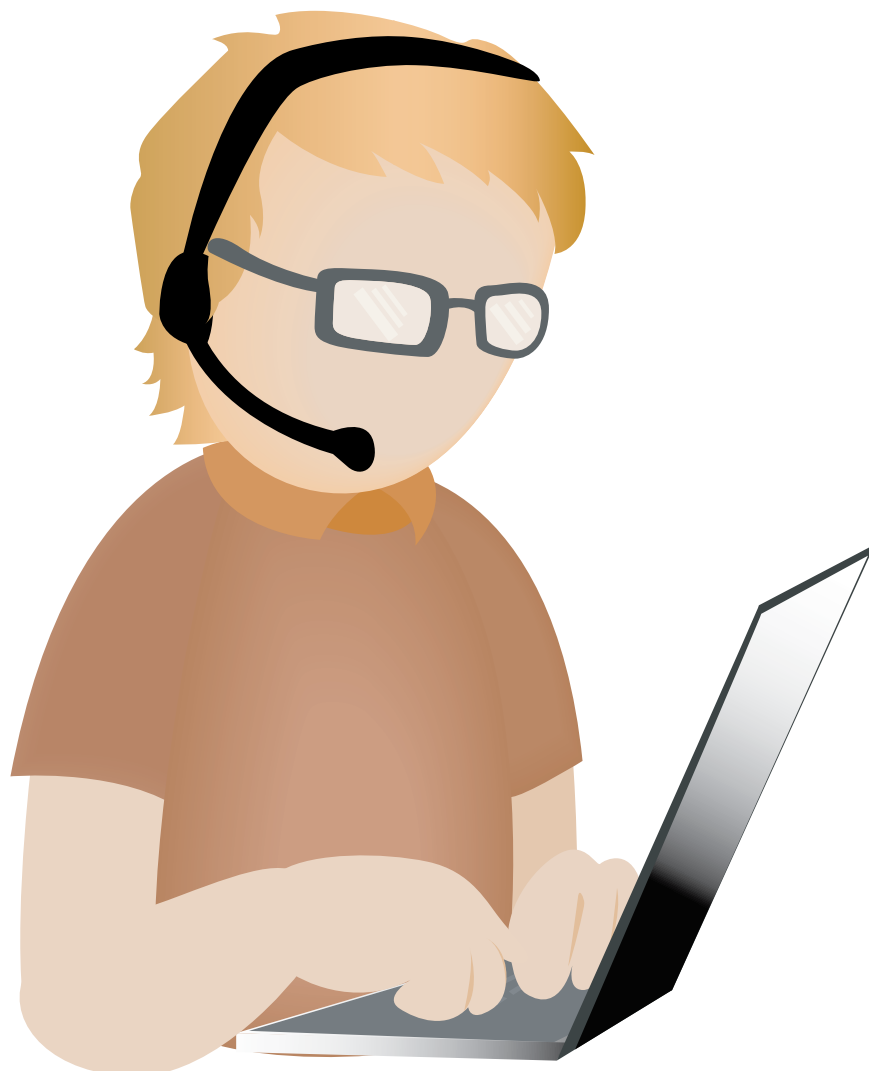
Beyond and above, the project must be real and authentic in a way that will engage and motivate the students. This engagement will be greater if the project at least impinges on the world of the students.

Selecting the topic and getting started

Selecting the project was simple enough. Like many schools we had decided to use radio advertising to promote enrolment but had no idea which radio station to use. Thus the concept for the project was ready waiting for us: to do a survey/research of our parents and the likely catchment area for future students to ascertain what radio stations they listened to. This fulfilled all the above PBL criteria.

The first task was to select who the target group was to be.

To ascertain this, collaborative groups were set up from the information obtained from the sociograms the class had done at the start of the year (See *Classroom Relationships and Sociograms*; Teachers Matter Issue 13). Individual students were selected from across the various sociogram groupings in an effort to obtain a greater cross section of ideas and thus add depth to the interdependent thinking involved. In doing this, any potential social cliques that may have been tempted to indulge in off task socialising was lessened if not eliminated. In addition, the socially dominant students were grouped together to remove the possibility of group members being intimidated by their presence (See *Facilitating Learning Through Collaborative Groups*; Teachers Matter Issue 22).



Next, an organising question was needed which was, who are the groups that could influence which school the potential students would attend? To kick start this each child was asked to discuss with their parents who they thought had an influence. Back at school each group brainstormed further and then in a whole class period, taking turns, put an idea forward until every group had exhausted their lists. Once this was done the analyses that was now on the whiteboard was evaluated to see if there were some common patterns. Eventually three groups appeared: parents, grandparents and students themselves.

Planning the survey

What method would be used to gather the data became the next question. Two obvious ways appeared, either to do a telephone survey or a house to house canvas. A command decision by the teacher was in order here. In this case a telephone survey was decided. This was partly because of time, but also because it enabled further curriculum overlap where the protocols the students would use for personal safety transferred to net safety in social media and other areas.

A teacher lesson followed. First it addressed safety issues which included identifying themselves by just a first name and the school and carefully avoiding giving out a surname or an address. Then it dealt with the questions to be asked and the importance of them being simple, unambiguous and non-threatening. Recording was to be meticulous with replies to be written down in summary form and repeated back to ensure they had got it right. Finally was the importance of signing off with a thank you and a request to ask if they wanted to be phoned back with the results. Throughout good manners were included such as being careful to not interrupt or get into any argument or discussion away from the topic, peppered at appropriate times with please and thank you or equivalent.

Execution

The organising question this time was what script can be written that will develop not only rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees to ensure their cooperation but also obtain the data we require?

Therefore a preliminary question was what data is required? That had already been answered earlier – parents, grandparents, and students – therefore the script had

to have included in it something that distinguished this. Overall the KISS principle was emphasised: Keep It Short and Simple and go for the general.

The collaborative groups were re-activated to develop this script, progressing through the same process as when selecting the target group as detailed above. Developing a common script as the end product of this process gave both quality control and integrity to the project.

Role play was added at this stage as preparation for the real thing.

In order to prevent telephoning anyone twice, the phone book was divided between groups to organise their own calling lists. As a general guide the requirement was no more than five, no less than two calls per student.

Presentation of results

Before starting on the final presentation of the organising question, what graph would be the most suitable, needed to be decided. This requires the trial construction of several different graph types to ascertain which most clearly showed the information obtained. Depending on the class level perhaps the most simple – a bar graph, pie graph, and line graph – may be the range to survey. The colour scheme to be used with the graph also needs thought, bringing in a brief but important link to the art curriculum.

Finally the formal written report is completed. First is an introduction setting the scene by explaining the purpose of the report and a general outline of the nature of the survey. After this comes a detailed section with a narrative interpreting the graph(s) detailing both pros and cons. To complete the report the final paragraph is a recommendation of what radio station(s) to use. Attention needs to be drawn to layout too: certainly headings to be used and the positioning of the graphs but more sophistication can be added by trying out other variations such as different font styles.

Concurrent activity: social and emotional learning

Social and Emotional Learning is a significant aspect of PBL projects. To achieve the greatest benefit each student needs to keep a self-critical reflective

journal or a portfolio (See *Using portfolios to grow and show professional development: Teachers Matter Issue 19*). This then records and raises to the consciousness level the progress that is being made in the personal intelligence areas. These records can either be long term over a whole term or even a year, or short term over just the length of the project. Short term is the best initial time frame. These should be available for teacher perusal; however teacher interference must be non-threatening formative assessment.


This work is so important for personal growth that space to do this must be timetabled in on an almost daily basis.

Organising questions are important and at least in the initial stage teacher supplied. Here is a starting set, to be modified according to the student level.

Self-awareness. What did I learn about myself; especially in things I was good at and things I had to work on to improve? This is all about becoming aware of strengths and weaknesses, and therefore where they need to focus so they can perform better.

Self-management. When did I control my impulsivity and thinking carefully before acting, and therefore not make careless or confrontational comments or decisions? This is all about controlling emotions.

Social awareness. When was I able to calm a situation because I was either aware of how the participants felt and therefore modified my actions accordingly and helped sooth the situation? This is all about recognising the emotional make up of other people and behaving accordingly.

Relationships. What actions did I take to build and maintain positive relationships with those I contacted or worked with? This is all about building positive relationships and networks. 

Alan is an educational consultant based in New Zealand. As a principal, he was known for his leadership role in the use of thinking skills, learning styles and multiple intelligences, information technology and the development of the school as a learning community.
acooper@clear.net.nz

What kind of learners do you have in your class?

Why “Silence is Golden” – for some!

Personality type

Extraversion and Introversion describe the two different ways people receive their energy. We can all use both; however we naturally prefer to use one more than the other. When we are utilising our natural preferences, we learn with greater ease and confidence

The Extravert

My daughter arrives home from school regaling me with the story about how her teacher had asked a question and she had instantly raised her hand to answer it without even understanding what the question was!

“Wow, were you embarrassed?” I asked. “Oh for a moment” she replied, “but then everyone laughed and I got so much attention!”

Who has witnessed a student in their class like this and possibly found this behaviour ‘air headed’ or maybe attention seeking!

However, this is not necessarily the case!

This is an example of the preferred learning style of an Extravert.

My daughter is an Extravert and Extraverts learn by talking and interacting with the external world of people, events and activities. These students are very social and engaging, sometimes painfully so! The constant exchange of ideas and thoughts with others and the process of talking these through is extremely important to an Extravert’s learning as this is how they gain an understanding about the work that they receive.

Extraverts Talk-Think-Talk

Research has shown that Extraverts tend to respond to questions and ideas using their short-term memory. Therefore, their responses are often spontaneous and not

well thought out, as their answers appear to be on the ‘tip of their tongues’

My daughter and I are both Extraverts and we need to think out loud and discuss any assignments, tests or written material and in doing so we are able to make sense of what we need to write or learn. We are stimulated by the exchange of ideas and the discussion. Having done so we are able to continue with our work in silence... until the next burst of conversation hits us!

Teaching tips for the Extraverted student

It is very important for teachers to recognise the need for Extraverts to work in groups, gather ideas from external sources, look at a variety of topics and give them time for experiential learning. One teaching strategy is to provide these ‘outspoken’ students with a second chance. Allow them time to ‘think’ about their first answer before responding again! Do not take the first answer as ‘gospel’. In doing so they will have time to reflect on what they have just said and when given the chance to ‘talk’ again, talk with greater depth and authenticity.

Understand that these students will usually jump enthusiastically into situations and discussions without much thought and often put one foot into their mouth only to be followed by the other. Teach them to count to 5 before responding to questions!

Encourage them to stay on task with work to be checked at the end of group discussions. They can often be easily distracted and

“If you are able to recognise these differences, you can then use appropriate techniques to provide your Extraverted and Introverted learners with an even more ‘preferred’ learning experience!”

distracting for others and without a set outcome, very little work may get done. Life is too interesting!

Do not put a large group of Extraverts together with only a couple of Introverts in the mix, the Introverts won’t get a word in and the elevated noise level will be very stressful for all who are not a part of the discussion!

Once Extraverts have been able to ‘talk,’ get them to ‘think,’ put their thoughts on paper and then allow a further discussion time to keep those thoughts rolling.

Do not mistake the Extraverts outgoing behaviour for confidence as they are as easily crushed by criticism, as the Introvert. They need positive feedback acknowledging their strengths and this is best given in front of others, as the attention is as much a part of the reward as the praise!

The Introvert

“I have been in Mr Todd’s class for a year and today he called me James!” This is the dilemma of my Introvert son Jack. Unlike his Extravert sister rather than make his presence felt, his natural preference is to sit quietly and reflect on the topic taught or the questions being asked.

Introverts “Think - Talk - Think”

Research has shown that the Introvert (unlike the Extravert) draws their information from their long term memory to build more intricate associations; as a result more time is needed to develop their ideas and articulate them. When asked a question with the expectation of an instant reply, their initial answer may be wrong for completely different reasons than that of the Extravert. This is because the Introvert requires time to collect their thoughts and a quick answer may not be their true response.

Students with a preference for Introversion, prefer the inner world of ideas and thoughts, they choose to listen, observe and absorb. They are reserved and take longer to get to know. They like to focus on a few things in depth rather than many different topics like the Extravert and communicate more easily by writing. They may enjoy the company of others but the constant social chatter that energises the Extravert can be tiring. They need a learning environment that is quiet and private. They may be thinking rather than ignoring you as you may have imagined.

The Introvert’s unobtrusive presence in the classroom and their unwillingness to participate immediately in discussion often means that they are either unheard, considered to not be listening or a gem because they are not making a disturbance!

Teaching tips for the Introverted Student

As a teacher you will need to ensure that your classroom environment also embraces the Introvert student.

The Introvert should not be judged on classroom participation and must not be forgotten as they have got so much to give!

Ensure that there is a quiet time during the day for independent learning, reading and writing, allowing the Introvert to process and resolve their own thoughts without interference. My son often brings his work home because he finds the classroom environment too noisy and overwhelming for him to concentrate. Set up times for individual interactions between the teacher and students where the preferred Introvert style of discussion can take place. This one




on one conversation will give them the opportunity to quietly discuss their ideas and feelings. Make sure that this is an activity that everyone takes part in to avoid any discrimination.

Allow the Introvert learner time to ‘think’ about questions before they are required to ‘talk’ about them and then time again to ‘think’ about what has been discussed.

Teamwork is a part of life, and placing Introverts in small groups can help to prepare them for the workplace, this allows them to engage with others in a comfortable learning environment. Wherever possible give them the work or questions in advance, either during class time or to take home to think about overnight and prepare their responses. Like the Extraverts they require a deadline, but for a different reason, if you don’t ask for a response to a question from an Introvert, they may hold it in their head forever!

If you are able to recognise these differences, you can then use appropriate techniques to provide your Extraverted and Introverted learners with an even more ‘preferred’ learning experience!

Who are you teaching?

Let’s find out. 

Based in Adelaide, Kate has been a successful businesswoman for over 25 years. She has experience of diverse sectors such as teaching, food and fitness. Kate is trained in personality profiling, specialising in the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. She is highly experienced in the relationship between personality, people and performance.

What do your students do when they don't know what to do?

Part 5 of a 5-part series

Over the past few weeks I've been thinking about the Habits of Mind as described by Art Costa and Bena Kallick. These Habits of Mind are the dispositions that a student has towards behaving intelligently when confronted with problems. My question has been do the PYP Attitudes and the IB Learner Profile also promote these Habits of Mind? How closely are these linked? Over the past 4 posts I've looked at each and have seen that certainly there is a great similarity between them and the attributes promoted by the IBO. This is my final post about these Habits of Mind.

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Costa and Kallick write about risk takers as being pioneers, having an urge to go beyond their comfort zone and established limits and live on the edge of their competences. They write about the fact that the risks are calculated ones, not just impulsive ones, that the consequences have been considered, but that these people

Finding Humour

I couldn't find an equivalent for this Habit, but I can appreciate that it is an important one, particularly as it seems to be linked to creativity and higher level thinking skills such as anticipation, finding novel relationships, visual imagery and making analogies.

Thinking Interdependently - PYP Attitude: Cooperation

In an age when cooperation and collaboration are highly valued, being able to think interdependently means that students are sensitive to the needs of others. Being able to pool collective knowledge, being able to see things from another perspective, being able to think critically and to accept constructive criticism from others, all these are skills that are important in the 21st century. Another PYP attitude is independence. This refers to thinking and acting independently, with students making their own judgements based on reasoned argument. Being able to justify ideas is also an important part of working with others.

Learning Continuously - PYP Attitude: Curiosity

This attitude is embodied in those who are life-long learners. They are curious about the nature of learning, about the world, its peoples and cultures. They are constantly searching for new and better ways of doing things, they are continually improving themselves. Costa and Kallick write "intelligent people are in a continuous

'We want students who are motivated by the challenge of finding the answer to their questions, not students who just want to get things "right".'

Taking Responsible Risks - IB Learner Profile: Risk Taker


Of all the attributes of the Learner Profile this one has probably been the most controversial - many have questioned whether this is perhaps a "Western" value. However, when you consider the way the IB defines risk taker it is in a way that seems to fit very well into the habits of mind:

are comfortable with uncertainty and that they accept failure as a challenge to growth. Here is an interesting thing: they write that it is only through repeated experiences that risk taking becomes educated. Therefore, it seems that schools are a "safe" place to give students that experience. We want students who are motivated by the challenge of finding the answer to their questions, not students who just want to get things "right". We want students to take intellectual risks, to think new ideas. Since the Learner Profile also applies to teachers, we want to encourage this risk taking attitude among teachers too. If teachers are trapped by fear and mistrust, then how can they model risk taking to their students?



learning mode.” Problems and conflicts are simply seen as valuable learning opportunities. People who are curious are also open minded - they are interested in the unknown even when it might be outside their comfort zone. Curiosity is what makes students eager to learn.

The Habits of Mind as defined by Costa and Kallick give students a way of asking intelligent questions when they don’t immediately know what to do. It

gives them the ability to reflect on past experiences, consider the resources they may need, to think flexibly and consider alternatives, to develop strategies and to consider other people who may be able to help them. They write that these Habits transcend the subjects traditionally taught in schools and that they are relevant to success in all areas of life. 

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What does the playground have to do with success?

Blending Academic and Social Norms

Primary teachers are fond of saying, “A child has to do well enough on the playground to do well enough in the classroom.” As a self-contained middle school teacher I found the axiom to be true in that setting also. I knew the middle class parents would not let me include social skills in their children’s report cards and yet the gap between those “inside circle” students and the “social outcast” was painful to experience. This is what I did.

We started out the year in straight rows. At least once a week I would wander away from the front of the teaching area and share a vignette from my school days. They were always tales of how being tablemates with my best friends made my day. Within three weeks I had the leaders of the class privately approaching me about forming groups. It was essential that they initiated this request – it allowed me leverage – the currency of adolescence.

The façade of me being reluctant allow me the caveat of “OK I am willing to but (I love those “Buts” when you have leverage):

- being a member of a group was optional.
- all members of a group had to do better than how each student preformed when not in a group. As we neared the end of the first month I had a pretty clear picture of what each student’s academic norm was.
- the group would be limited to a month
- new groups formed every month and previous composition couldn’t be duplicated
- any groups larger than four members had to have special approval.

- if a group was warned about...and did not change the group could be separated... with members not having the option of joining other groups.

With much energy they submitted their requests for groups. A side bulletin board posted the approved groups along with the above rules. And yes, there were some “loners.”

However, the beauty of the design appeared by the start of the third month. As a new month approached, groups of BFF (Best Friends Forever) were in jeopardy. How do teenagers preserve their haven? The answer: add a loner. Every month the loners’ value increased. Of course, in this system *new kids* where most welcomed. Talk about an easy way to integrate a new member.

It was great to have the two or three academic-oriented middle class students in a group openly seek a loner. As an “in” group approached me to see if it was OK to add an “outsider” I had the leverage of reverse psychology, “I don’t know. Do you really think you could handle his lack of..., her habit of... (sometimes this included social hygiene)?” The key was they were initiating the request.

Norms and Privileges

Each month a side bulletin board listed the group’s names and its members on the left side with rows and columns to the right. As you can imagine several proposed names were rejected. I had to secretly educate myself on what the words meant.


The school dates of the month were the columns. All obligations were listed on an adjacent whiteboard. For instance, doing

your spelling homework was worth 5 points; math 5 points; bringing your field trip form 10 points etc. The last column had the running total accumulation.

While the quality of their work was individually recorded in the academic grade book, the fact that an obligation was done was a collective social score.

At the start of the day groups presented their assignments and received their points. All members had to have their obligation done for the group to receive the points for that item. One group might have all members presenting their spelling homework and field trip release form but one member didn’t do the math assignment – that group’s score would be 15 points.

It was amazing how members contacted each other at night to remind them to do each obligation...learning truly is a social event.

All social privileges were bestowed based on a group’s points. This included which groups left for lunch first, first pick of an assigned topic for social studies research, running errands, etc. The group in first place at the end of the month got to pick a charity to donate \$10 (Aah, how we subsidise our profession) from a list of approved organisations. When they received a thank you letter – they beamed. 

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Your CV

A statement of your life

Sometimes things come together. Perhaps it is serendipity. Perhaps it is the way of the World.

In the space of a week, three separate folk got in touch with me and each spoke about having to rewrite their Curriculum Vitae – the story of their experiences and qualifications.

It is worth noting that all of the three folk were well versed in life (a combined total of over 140 years on the Planet) and each hadn't put a CV together for ages. Yes, perhaps it is a way of today's World.

visual shout out – look at me, look at me, look at me!

All of the three CV folk are not Instagram types. They are more likely to take photos of others rather than want to be centre frame themselves. However, a CV needs to put you centre frame and you need to be positive in your self - assessment. My trio undervalued things they have done.

Value Experience

Some years ago I was running a programme on Presentation Skills and asked people

Sheez - nothing much had happened in the previous three months!

On a related note, one of the trio of CV folk said she didn't think she had anything much to put in a CV as she had spent the last 20 years only doing casual work and being a Mum to her two children.

Instead of seeing this as 'nothing much' and 'things that most other people have done', these two things might be a road to some of the most important traits for today's World.

Her range of casual work included a plethora of activities, job tasks and situations all indicating her ability to learn new things, be flexible, adapt to new surroundings and be a good team player. Even though her jobs were 'casual' she had done them for a long time and had a good relationship with the employers.

And being a Mum – and a very good one – for 20 years. Well, her two kids would write the best testimonial that anyone could wish for.

"When you employ me this is what you get: character, experience, flexibility in learning and a belief that you do your best with everything you attempt."

My conversations with each sparked ideas about a general CV, a statement of life. Welcome to me! This is what I've done, this is who I am and here is what I can bring to you and your place.

to tell a story from their recent months that could captivate listeners and then make a valid point about a theme they wanted to explore. One of the women said that nothing much had happened in the previous three months; certainly nothing other people would be interested in hearing.

I asked her to look again and that sometimes it is the simple things in life that we need to explore. After quite some time she stood up and started to relate a story of something that had happened to her a few weeks prior. The (true) story started with... 'Three weeks ago we were flying back to Australia from Spain where I had been playing for the Australian Women's Basketball team ...'

State Your Ethos

Another of the CV trio said that he wasn't reaching an interview stage for any jobs and felt his CV wasn't getting passed the first scan. He said he thought he needed a better opening to his CV, something that inspired the reader to at least go to paragraph two if not page two.

When I first went out teaching I was asked to go to a series of interviews at a Government High School in Western Australia – Wanneroo Senior High School. In 1979 the newly built WSHS was a Lighthouse school - a state experiment with teaching zones of 100 minutes, a six-day cyclical timetable, 30 minutes of Pastoral Care to start every day and a handpicked staff.

The Selfie

If there is an image of today's World that is (perhaps sadly) symbolic it may very well be that of a person holding up a smart phone and taking a snap of them self and then sending it out to the nether lands of virtual connectivity. The Instagram invites you to capture your moment and do a



PHOTO: TARCZAS

In my first interview the Principal Glynn Watkins asked me to explain my ethos as a teacher – my philosophy for life and education. I was 21.

Whatever I said worked. After three lots of interviews, I was selected to teach English and Social Science. I was also asked, along with each of the other first year out teachers, to give a short talk on my 'ethos' to the other staff members. Wow – nice stretch!

It was through Glynn Watkins that I learned the word quiddity, meaning 'essential about-ness, your inherent nature or essence'. To me that exploration is the most essential thing in life. Work out what you stand for and represent that in your daily living. So perhaps an opening paragraph could be:

When you employ me this is what you get: character, experience, flexibility in learning and a belief that you do your best with everything you attempt.

And then...

If I was a song I would be the old Tex Williams song 'Do what you do do well...' give everything your best shot. Except I think I'd bring a more modern beat and rhythm to such a tune!

Character

The third member of the CV trio is an old mate. When I looked at his CV he had omitted some things from his life that I thought would be valuable to know.


Simple things like:

1. He was a Gold Medal Professional Dancer at the World Competitions in Royal Albert Hall, London
2. That after he finished as a professional dancer he competed in Aerobics and he and his partner finished 5th in Australia even though he had only been involved in aerobics for 6 months.

He responded by saying that his job applications were for jobs in IT and data programming and dance and aerobics weren't highly sort after skills for sitting at a computer screen. I responded by saying, "Yes, but they say so much about you as a person."

- The ability to perform under pressure
- The character trait of grit
- The aspect of teamwork

When you are hired to a workplace, you are hired to do a job but you bring far more than a single skill set, you bring who you are and your ability to reach and teach others.

Finally, when you lead a learning life, your CV is a rich one. If somewhere in your brew of jobs you have been a teacher then your CV is even richer. Good teachers bring empathy, ethos, character and skill to workplaces – they also bring the ability to create thriving environments for learning to take place. 

An author, songwriter, radio and television presenter and creator of the Dynamic Thinking course for Leadership, Glenn delivers a message of creativity, innovation and thinking smarter. He teaches people how to be a learner and thinker in today's fast-paced and ever-changing world through the use of creative thinking, humour, enthusiasm and attitude. Glenn's new book, *Thinking Caps*, is available from Spectrum.
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A to Z of effective teaching

A by-the-letter guide

Journaling

Taking time to reflect and ponder on what has been learned is important for transfer and closure of information to occur. Without reflection, deep processing of the content may not occur. Journal writing is a wonderful strategy for this as it helps make connections between previous knowledge and new concepts. Set your students 2-5 minutes, a couple of times a week, to write in a learning journal. You may use starter questions such as; What did I learn today? How does this connect to what I already know? How might this be useful in the future? In 5 years time I will remember this piece of work because? If I redid this piece of work I would?

In general, journal writing is not marked by the teacher, however you may spot check to ensure transfer is taking place.

Journal writing can also be used as a great prefocus exercise before a new topic.

Judgement

It can be easy to get into the trap of making judgements as a teacher. A judgement is an opinion expressed as a fact. Rather than make a judgement, make observations that are factual. Here are some examples: Judgement: "That stupid meeting was a waste of time" versus the observation "I didn't recognise any immediate value in that meeting."

Judgement: "Sally is disrespectful and does not want to learn" versus the Observation: "Sally is talking in a loud voice and is not completing her work"

Judgement: Trevor is the smartest student in the school" Observation: Yrevor has had the highest test scores in the last 2 tests.

Judgements tend to imply that you have no control over the situation while observations give you and others the feeling that you can have an effect on this situation.

Kinesthetic


There are two types of kinesthetic learners – the tactile; preferring physical input and the internal; who are intuitive, infer meaning and preferring to learn by feelings.

Tactile learners like to learn by doing, they prefer role playing, hands on learning, making models, using flip cards and may like action novels. In contrast, a internal kinesthetic learners pays attention to strong non verbals, listens to HOW information in conveyed (as opposed to WHAT is being said.) They enjoy stores, TV and movies that have heart and feeling, and need to have a positive feeling about a task before attempting it.

Key Points

Learning to summarise the key points is an essential learning skill. To find the main points, take note of the headline, as this will often be a broad summary of the topic. Each paragraph is likely to contain a main point. Key points are often expressed as a bullet point list or short sentences. Key points might also be a list of important 'facts' from the text.

Knowledge

Knowledge is having an understanding of or awareness of something or someone. It may be expressed through description, demonstration of a skill, facts or information. There is both practical and theoretical knowledge. Gaining knowledge involves thinking processes such as perception, communication and reasoning. The study of knowledge is called epistemology. Philosophers continue to debate the definition of knowledge. Many believe the foundation of knowledge is being able to take theory and ideas and apply these in practical situations.. 

"Learning to summarise the key points is an essential learning skill."

Karen is a leading authority on effective learning and teaching in Australasia. She is the founder and CEO of Spectrum Education. A highly skilled and dynamic presenter, she works with teachers, parents, students and corporate clients.
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Children and the importance of connecting with nature

A creative arts spin on science investigations

As an early childhood advocate, I am particularly passionate about children having opportunities and extended periods of time to explore their natural environment. Whether this may be experiences in the garden investigating leaf litter or planting veges, or going on a nature walk to look at the trees and listen to the birds.... it is so important children are actually given the freedom to be in nature, learning about their world and developing a connection that runs deep.

My favourite learning journeys with children are when we look at plants and animals, in particular insects and mini worlds. To truly take an inquiry approach however, plenty of time must be spent in the “outdoor classroom” as it is pointless to teach about nature using just paper based resources or models. Bringing the outdoors inside can lead to amazing play scenarios and, even better, bringing the inside out means more time in nature for exploration and learning.

Investigating the lifecycle of the butterfly is something I do each year with young children. The learning journey we go on together lends itself to the most engaging and exciting creative learning experiences. Whether it be garden exploration as we go on a bug hunt, looking for caterpillars, butterflies, chrysalis or eggs, or an art response through painting, drawing, sculpting or designing, the learning is rich and multi-faceted and always directed by the children, in the aspects of the experience that they are most interested in.

“The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle is a firm favourite in classrooms and homes all over the world, and for very good reason! There is so much to take from this wonderful picture book, from sequencing and ordering events, to lifecycle investigations, to discussion about food and sorting. I always start with this story in particular, and



move on to non-fiction texts afterwards. The children are very capable of telling the story too! Through play or literacy targeted mat sessions, provide them with props and pictures and they will take the lead!

I always like to incorporate musical experiences in my teaching! Here is a wonderful music and movement activity to try with your children, using colourful sheer scarves.

“A Caterpillar Lifecycle” - a musical scarf activity

(Sung to the tune of The Wheels on the bus)

Provide each child with a scarf. The children lie down on their scarves and then wriggle around like caterpillars trying to keep the scarf under them.

Sing: The caterpillars are wriggling all around, all around, all around. The caterpillars are wriggling around, all around the garden.

The children then roll into a ball and cover themselves with their scarf - just their head if the scarves are small)

Sing: The caterpillars are building their cocoon, their cocoon, their cocoon. The caterpillars are building their cocoon and now they're fast asleep, shhhh!

Wait a few moments while the children are very quiet in their cocoons.

Sing: The butterflies are flying high and low, all around, up and down. The butterflies are flying high and low, until they rest on the ground.

Children will be using their scarf to fly like a butterfly all around the room, but at the end have to come and sit down quietly.

“Flight of the Bumblebee” by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov is a fantastic piece of music for getting children up and zooming. Boys especially love this one as it is quite fast paced and they often feel like little “superheros” as they act out flying around the indoor or outdoor space whilst listening to the imaginative music. The girls love to take turns wearing a beautiful handmade crown, with natural materials and jewels, as they pretend to be the Queen Bee.

I like to set the scene by talking about bees, and their important job, often turning it into a little story. The children love to discover the bees in the garden in the spring, following

our music and movement experience. You can also add shimmering scarves to the experience for the children to use as wings so they can really feel they are taking flight.

If you head to your local farmers market on the weekend you can also pick up fresh honeycomb and dried pollen that the children will marvel at up close. There are plenty of delicious cooking experiences you can do with honey as the focus, and perhaps you can invite a real bee keeper to visit the children to show the special clothing they wear and the slats for the honeycomb in the bee hive.

“Here is the Bee Hive” is a delightful little finger rhyme about bees that children adore.....

Here is the beehive, where are the bees?
(Hold one hand closed tight and “look” for bees)
Hidden away where nobody sees.
(Try to peek into the hole of the beehive)
Soon they come creeping out of their hive,
1,2,3,4,5
(Take fingers out of the closed fist one by one)
Buzzzzzzzzzz!
(Make all the little fingers fly into the air like little bees)

There are so many art experiences relating to flowers you can do with young ones. My students especially love making perfumes and potions with flower petals and essential oils, and using flowers and foliage to make beautiful nature crowns.

Exploring famous artworks with children is a wonderful cultural experience. One of my favourite artworks to look at with children is The Snail (or “L’escargot”) by Henri Matisse. Matisse is a particular favourite of mine as he was the artist who at the age of 72 became unwell and could not stand to paint for long periods of time, began to “paint with scissors”. He would paint large sheets of paper with watercolours and then cut freehanded shapes to create his masterpieces.

This is a technique children love to explore, and delight in finding they share a connection with this wonderful artist. The picture book “Snail Trail” by Jo Saxton is perfect to complement this art study. There is so much you can explore here, and by giving children the materials for open ended, unique expression they will be

responding and reflecting as they imagine and create.

For a scientific look at snails, why not collect some from the garden and display an observatory snail house in your classroom (you only need a glass tank, some foliage and tray of water). Clipboards with paper and black markers provide a lovely invitation to draw the snails and you can focus on extending vocabulary by using rich, detailed language focused on snails in your discussions with the children.

As you know by now, I love a finger play or two! This little snail rhyme is a perfect accompaniment for your snail investigations!

“The Snail”

Slowly, slowly, very slowly
Creeps the garden snail.
Slowly, slowly, very slowly
Up the wooden rail.
(Creep fingers up your arm)
Silver snail is slowly moving
Up the window pane
He leaves a shiny path behind him
And then comes down again
(Creep fingers up over head and then down again)
Silver snail is never worried
Though he wanders far and wide
For on his back his house he carries
And when he's tired he pops inside.
(Creep fingers back over chest and down arm again. Close hand into a fist at the end)

Enjoy your nature explorations, and don't forget to take your teaching outside to allow children to really connect with the world around them! 🐌

Rebecca is a passionate early childhood teacher, talented storyteller and trained opera singer. She is an advocate for play based learning, connecting children with the nature and the importance of music and the creative arts which is reflected in her specialised programme. www.musicalexperiencesforchildren.com Rebecca is also on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MusicalExperiencesForChildren

An intersection of fine art, folklore and sense of place

Museum Mice

After-school enrichment programmes provide opportunities for teachers to get even more creative with curriculum. Typically, a teacher will propose to teach a class once or twice a week consistently for a short duration of time. Its duration can last from a week to a full semester. I have personally found these afterschool courses to be dynamic as they provide a vehicle for creative autonomy.

Recently, during the winter trimester, this curious educator at Palm Beach Day Academy (PBDA) and equally adventurous museum curators from the Norton Museum of Art (Norton) collaborated on exploring ways in which museum experiences could be infused with engagement in folklore. What



resulted was *Museum Mice*, a class suited for curious critters eager to scurry about and explore an art museum. This pilot course endeavoured to integrate visual literacy and art appreciation with local folklore.

Folklore Inspiration ~ Who Works at the Museum?

Inspired by the down-to-earth wisdom of folklorist and Local Learning© Director Paddy Bowman, I created a pilot curriculum integrating themes in museum studies, art analysis, occupational folklore, and visual literacy. Prior to this course, much of the concentration was placed on the history of the museum (e.g., founder and namesake), its main jobs and role in the community and the uniqueness of their collections. Studying different types of jobs



within a museum and possibly interviewing various specialists presented a fascinating opportunity. Local folklore's appeal had to do with taking a closer look at *culture*. Bowman suggested taking a closer look at the various occupations within the museum as it would provide a means for the children to learn about the people who work behind the scenes and also basic interviewing techniques. Since elementary-aged students already study occupations as part of the Social Studies curriculum, this subject was developmentally appropriate. It could also be tailored for older students (middle and high school) who may be interested in learning about careers within the museum field.

Museum Partnerships

Museum galleries serve as natural "classrooms" filled with various paintings and objects to provoke curiosity, discovery, wonder and reflection. They are places and spaces which have always inspired and provoked me to simply enjoy the experience of taking it all in. As such, it has been a personal joy to coordinate partnerships between five grade levels (Pre-Kindergarten to Third Grade) and six local institutions. These institutions include an historical mansion from the gilded age, Japanese cultural museum, botanical

garden, sculpture garden and a disaster relief agency.

Selection of Museum Site

A number of factors were considered prior to approaching the Curator/Director of Education at a museum. These factors were related to feasibility and logistics as well as whether the museum's current exhibits would match our understanding goals and objectives for the course programme. The Norton Museum of Art was chosen for the following reasons: 1) established relationships with curators and docents, 2) opportunity to utilise its eclectic art collection in developmentally appropriate ways with early elementary students, and 3) proximity to the campus. Once the potential site was chosen, I contacted the Associate Curator of Education and presented a proposed scope and sequence (see Figure 1A & Figure 1B). Since a partnership with the Norton Museum of Art was already established, it was not difficult to justify expanding the partnership to an afterschool course. I have found that educational specialists working in non-traditional settings appreciate a plan of action, scope and sequence. It gives them an opportunity to connect their exhibits with the curricular objectives and also work from a very specific frame of reference.

Figure 1A

Introduction to The Norton Museum of Art	<p>The Norton as a “Special Place”</p> <p>Meet the Norton’s Curators of Education</p> <p>Sculpture and Painting as art forms</p>	<p>The Main Jobs of Museums:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect 2. Preserve 3. Display/Exhibit 4. Explain <p>Layout of The Norton</p> <p>What is a Curator of Education?</p> <p>Introduction to sculpture and painting</p>	<p>What is an art museum?</p> <p>What is the purpose of an art museum?</p> <p>Why is The Norton special to the community?</p> <p>Why do we do what we do?</p>	<p>PBDA Museum Mice begin the exciting journey of meeting and learning from the curators of education representing The Norton Museum of Art.</p> <p>Students will be introduced to The Norton as a “special place” within the local Palm Beach community</p>
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Figure 1B

Occupational Folklore	<p>Defining what it means to be a “museum community”</p> <p>Profiles of museum staff (Curator, Preparator, Docent)</p> <p>Interviewing Techniques</p>	<p>Individuals who work “BEHIND THE SCENES” are purposeful about telling a story to the museum visitor</p>	<p>What kinds of decisions do museum specialists make to tell a story/ create an exhibit?</p>	<p>Students will meet museum specialists and engage in a dialogue of discovery and exploration</p>
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Curators, Docents and Mice.... Oh my!

Our initial cohort was comprised of ten students, ranging from first through third grades. Over the course of ten afterschool sessions, the children were engaged in activities centered on the themes of art appreciation and museum folklore. The students and I would visit the Norton every other week, which carved out time for a follow-up classroom discussion with me after each visit. This enabled me to reinforce new information/concepts learned as well as preview the next topic such as artist and works with the children. During each visit, the Mice brought their field(mice) journals upon which to write and draw their observations/ruminations. It was a fantastic way to collect their thoughts in real time and also reinforced the idea of the museum classroom. The children also met with the Associate and Assistant Curators of Education, Curator of American

Art and with two Senior Docents who worked very closely with our Kindergarten students through the museum partnership. The children not only learned about the responsibilities of each person, but also connected with them on a personal level. In fact, our last visit culminated with both docents taking the children to view their own “favourite” pieces at the Norton.

Lasting Impressions

Students learned a variety of art basics, but left with some memorable takeaways: how the paint on a gallery’s walls contributes to the story behind a collection, what is meant by *juxtaposition*, the sculptures of artist Phyllida Barlow, how curators map out art pieces to convey a theme and how *community* can be conveyed on a two-dimensional painting. However, the biggest impression was a sense of place and connection with a particular museum. My students will

never forget being Museum Mice because of their shared experience at the museum with committed and passionate educators. While we initially hoped the children would connect in meaningful ways to the art, we found that they connected more profoundly to the museum itself as a space in which personal discoveries were boundless. 

Rochelle is the learning specialist and coordinator of support services at Palm Beach Day Academy. She is passionate about creating powerful learning experiences for students and colleagues. Rochelle holds graduate degrees in educational psychology and school psychology from Fordham University.


Self-directed learners

And why the world needs them

The planet as we know it is changing at an incredible rate with technology, climate, population, learning, health and social changes presenting some complex challenges. Teaching students how to read and write was once sufficient but not now. Young minds need to know how to think in critical and creative ways in order to deal with the juggernaut of social, moral and ethical change across the globe. Our young people need to be self-

- Knowing how to interpret and organize the overabundance of technological information
- Pride and craftsmanship in self and product
- Knowing and accepting oneself
- Personal commitment to something other than self

Elite minds are self-directed. They have control over their inner self. Compliance, governance and external controls do not develop elite minds. Daniel Pink in his book 'Drive', says that 'the secret to performance and satisfaction at work, at school and in life is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things and to do better by ourselves and our world.'

John Hattie states that feedback is the number one element for effective learning success. He places cognitive training second. Neuroscience over that past decade has made a valuable contribution to the learning process with insights into neuroplasticity and neurogenesis. The human brain can, and does, reconstruct itself from experience so if a learner is prepared to persist with learning processes that are productive and meaningful then neural pathways will be reinforced. The down side to neural development is that bad learning habits will be cemented if practiced. Environment, relationships (mentors, teachers, parents), processes, time and readiness are all virtual aspects of successful learning. 

"Our education system is not really designed to promote self-directed learners yet it remains the number one goal in education."

directed learners so that they can take their place successfully in the world without the support of parents, schools and teachers.

Educators know that new goals are needed for our very survival. Our education system is not really designed to promote self-directed learners yet it remains the number one goal in education. Some of these goals as identified by Costa and Kallick in their book 'Assessment Strategies for Self-Directed Learning' are:

- The capacity for lifelong learning
- Knowing how to behave when answers to problems are not apparent
- Cooperativeness and team building
- Precise communication in a variety of modes
- Appreciation of disparate value systems
- Development of critical and creative thinking
- Enjoyment of resolving paradoxical situations

Today's students need cognitive training and a passion for creative thinking. Individual intuition is sometimes frowned upon in classrooms but its encouragement is absolutely essential if we are to have any chance of developing life-long learners who have the ability to think for themselves and operate with autonomy. The more control people have over others the more susceptible they are to the stresses of modern life.

We are all born natural, self-directed learners who are creative, curious and playful. Our personal concepts shape our identity and it's in our infant years that the brain downloads information about relationships, environments and our capacity to learn. Schools, and in particular teachers, are the great hope in disseminating this message to parents in the community. Providing our children with an enriched learning environment as infants which is then supported with a school experience that is enriched is ideal but still doesn't guarantee success.

Live Life Learning consults to schools, individuals and organisations about cognitive learning strategies. Terry uses the Young Thinkers Program (developed by John Joseph and Focus Education Australia) as a tool to assist parents, teachers and individuals in developing critical, creative thinkers. To find out more about the Young Thinkers Program or workshops, contact Terry Westblade at terry@livelifelearning.com.au or www.livelifelearning.com.au



What is your personal brand? And does it fairly represent you?



When I was 16, I had an English teacher who gave me permission to be myself. I was someone who, all through childhood, had hidden from the world to read my books, and was even bullied for using the vocabulary I so loved in them.

My teacher made it *cool* to be thrilled by literature.

She would sit, perched at the edge of her desk, legs almost impossibly intertwined beneath her, eyes shining as she explained Shakespeare with a husky voice and sense of humour that even the most jaded teenagers could appreciate.

I no longer felt I had to hide.

Heartbreakingly, I had only one year with Mrs. Gould. She passed away the following summer. But her legacy lived on in me. Her devil-may-care passion for writing, and way of challenging the status quo played a part in my one day becoming a journalist.

Have you ever wondered what your legacy will be? What your students will say about you in 30 years? Or even what they say about you now?

That lasting impression is your personal brand.

Yes, that sounds like a marketing tool. But personal brands aren't just 'images' created to promote CEOs and Superstars. Their relevance is universal and their effect, lasting.

Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, defines a personal brand as "...what people say about you when you're not in the room." So the truth is you have a personal brand already. It's called your *reputation*. It affects your career path, the way you're viewed and treated by students, colleagues and higher-ups as well as the legacy you will leave.

What do you think people say about you when you leave the room? How do your students describe you when they leave the classroom? What do parents say to each

"Personal brands aren't just 'images' created to promote CEOs and Superstars. Their relevance is universal and their effect, lasting."

other after a parent-teacher interview with you? Do you think it's a fair representation of your true talents and value? Wouldn't you like it to be?

The point of recognising that you have a personal brand, is the power that gives you to make sure your brand reflects who you really are, the authentic you. Not an image. It's about making clear the unique value you bring - to your classroom, your school and your community.

What is your unique value? Well, what are your strengths, passions and talents - not just what's on your CV, but the skills you were born with; the life experience you've accumulated; and what you do passionately, that puts you "in flow"? What do you excel at 24/7? It could be working with numbers, writing, public speaking or being sensitive enough to judge everyone's mood in a room. Are you consistently playing to those core strengths - in the classroom as well as the real world?

Interestingly, sometimes our core strengths are hard for us to recognise. We can take them entirely for granted, because they are so embedded in us, so "second nature".

My business partner and I recently spoke at the 2014 Teachers Matter Conference, where we met a young woman who felt she had only limited value to offer at this stage in her life. Painfully aware of her lack of experience, she could only claim her fairly recent teaching qualification as a core strength, nothing more. When we asked about other talents, or hobbies, she answered, "All I've done is spent a year travelling on an OE."

"All" she's done? We pointed out she was already bringing an international perspective into the classroom. However, international travel also requires overcoming language barriers, identifying cultural differences, successfully navigating those differences as well as navigating new physical environments, overcoming fear and shyness, and the list goes on....

If this young teacher took the time to analyse her experience, she'd discover her strengths. One question she might ask herself is "what did she do differently, more easily, than her travelling companions?" With that awareness, she could see how what she offers is different from the teachers around her. She could also confidently share her strengths with her students, adding clear, identifiable value to their lives.

However even when we know our strengths, we are often so focussed on trying to shore up our weaknesses that our "value proposition" gets overshadowed.

In the book "Now, Discover Your Strengths"; Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., the authors' reason that it's time to change. Instead of over-focussing on trying to repair our weaknesses, we can simply mitigate them and play consistently to our strengths. Doing that, they say, will bring us closer toward the near-perfect standard we all aim to achieve - and without it even costing us much energy.

Playing to our strengths also provides a confidence and visibility boost. By making clear to yourself the value you bring to the world, you build strength and confidence from within. That helps you perform your best under normal circumstances and remain resilient when challenged.

In addition, you draw more respect and recognition from the outside world. In "Be Your Own Brand: Achieve More of What You Want by Being More of Who You Are", David McNally and Karl D. Speak write, "It's not about packaging - a great brand has equity because people can cut right through the external trappings and see the value in associating with it."


Clearly, teaching is a profession that's all about paying attention to others: giving students time and attention, answering their questions, minimising their confusion and insecurity. Very little time is spent on introspection. But it is just this kind of self-examination that can lead you down the

path to discovering the value you offer and revealing your personal brand.

My business partner Maaïke fondly remembers an English teacher who had a clear personal brand. She was one of the older teachers in the school, not the coolest or most outspoken. But with her quiet force and gentle nature, she was one of the most powerful in getting a group of kids full of energy and attitude to soften and open up. In part it was the way she spoke: with clear respect for others, but also with a calmness and kindness in her voice that commanded the same in return. To this day, Maaïke uses that same technique to address a restless audience.

Maaïke and I challenge everybody we meet to take the time to explore what their personal brand already is, and whether it reflects their authentic self. If it doesn't, we urge people to find a way to align the two and then start to find ways to communicate or radiate their strengths and talents. And as Maaïke's English teacher proved, it can even be done quietly.

Finally, as David McNally and Karl D. Speak put it, "You can't control other's perceptions, but you can and do guide people to see you as you want to be seen, based on what they need and want from you in a relationship. The deeper the relationship, the more the mutual understanding grows."

To that we'd add, the more mutual understanding you grow, the more lasting a legacy you will leave. 

Pallas is co-founder of and personal brand coach for Personal Branz Ltd. Her background is in television journalism. She is also a writer and public speaker.
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Using timeout to improve your wellbeing

From Meatloaf to meditation



With the year more than halfway over already and reports looming, it is timely to look at our own wellbeing as educators and busy adults. After all, nowadays we all seem to be living in an increasingly busy and stressful world. It is with these thoughts in mind that I want to discuss the importance of paying attention to arguably, the most fundamentally vital aspect of effective education – teacher wellbeing.

Teacher wellbeing, and consequently teacher stress, is significantly associated with teacher-student and peer relationships. It is also significantly related to effective teaching practice, effective classroom management and to student social and emotional competency. Furthermore, student social and emotional competency is significantly related to student academic learning, student resiliency and student educational outcomes.

Simply put, mentally healthy teachers have better social and emotional awareness than their stressed peers. They are able to form healthier relationships with others, have a greater capacity to teach and are better able to engage their students in a love of learning. Improved wellbeing and effective stress management can transform a good teacher into a great one.

So how can teachers improve their wellbeing and better manage their stress when life is so overloaded and busy?

Although there are many different strategies for helping teachers to deal with stressors at work and at home, I want to take this opportunity to focus on the importance of taking time out.

We all know how great it can be to take time out from the hectic pace of life once in a while. How good it can feel to go away for a week or a long weekend. Even a fleeting trip to the hairdressers can offer a much-needed chance to jump off the roller coaster for an hour.

Indeed, there is certainly no shortage of magazine articles telling us to put down our checklists and take some valuable and regular ‘me’ time to help manage stress effectively. In many of these articles we are told that meditation and yoga can be particularly beneficial for helping us manage our stress; and that additional exercise benefits us emotionally as much as it does physically. The arguments put forward to get us to the next yoga class or Bali retreat can certainly be very persuasive. But are they real?

Do we all need to be standing in warrior pose and clearing our minds in order to feel calmer and healthier in life?

The answer is a surprisingly loud ‘no’.

It is certainly true that yoga and meditation can benefit some of us, but for others these pursuits can actually create more stress than they alleviate. Simply put, if you love yoga and feel energized and relaxed after a class, it can indeed be a very effective means to manage stress and enhance wellbeing. However, if you find yourself excruciatingly bored after five minutes of downward facing dog, and consider your yoga class something to tick off your ‘to do’ list; your well-meaning efforts are likely to be stressing you more than they are providing relief.

For an activity to truly benefit your wellbeing it needs to do several things:

- It needs to engage you – to take your attention so that you are absorbed in the activity and not in something else (so that you are not wondering when the class will be over or daydreaming about whether or not to buy a coffee when you are finally free...).
- It needs to energize you mentally, so that you walk away feeling refreshed and more enthusiastic about the week ahead.
- It needs to take away your sense of time – so that time comes to a standstill during the activity and you can hardly believe how fast it has gone once you have finished.
- It needs to be fun – not necessarily in a laugh-out-loud sense, but certainly in a way that means you describe your chosen activity as ‘enjoyable to do’.

It does not matter what the activity is, although it certainly helps to find something sustainable and good for your health (this means drinking copious amounts of alcohol on a Friday night sadly does not qualify). For one person, their chosen passion may be yoga, for another it may mean playing Meatloaf songs in an amateur rock band.

It is also good to realise that when life is busy and we feel tired, we will not necessarily be champing at the bit to get to our football game or art group. It is far more important to realise the benefits during the journey, than before it begins. Indeed, many of us know only too well that we benefit from taking regular time to submerge ourselves in something we love to do. Still, it is all

"It is not a luxury to take regular time out from a busy teaching life. We need to wake up to the fact that teacher wellbeing is a vital foundation for effective education."

too easy to fall prey to procrastination and other tactics of avoidance.

In an attempt to make sure that you take action, rather than merely spend time in contemplation, consider the following procrastination beaters:

- Pre-empt obstacles. If you know that you are always running for your PJs and a bottle of wine by the time Friday evening arrives, choose a different day to take on that art class. If you come alive at night, but dread the alarm, maybe a dawn boot camp is not the best time to indulge in your love of exercise...
- Do not wait to 'feel in the right mood'. Humans are resistant to change. Change is stressful – even when we want it to happen. Don't be surprised if you are overcome with overwhelming fatigue just before you plan to leave for your first dance class... know that this feeling will pass as soon as you get started. Motivation and the energy of doing something you love come with task persistence, not in advance.
- If you can, find a buddy to take time out with – at least until you establish a routine. We are more likely to keep to a promise made to another (e.g. 'I'll pick you up at 6.00...') than one we make to ourselves.
- If you really feel time poor, promise yourself ten minutes to walk on the beach or that you will simply complete five laps of the pool. Set yourself a small goal that you can envisage completing with relative ease. Generally speaking, we find that once we begin we will find our rhythm and keep going.
- Make sure you add your time out to your schedule – do not expect to simply fit it in. If you think you will start that novel at the weekend, or do some gardening for an hour but you do not schedule a time... it

is all too easy for the weekend to fill with other things.

- It is important to know that taking time out regularly (as in weekly) is far more beneficial than holding your breath for the next school holiday to come along. Beneficial time out needs to be taken in regular bursts, preferably for a couple of hours, at regular intervals, if it is to truly benefit our mental health.

And... if you are reading this thinking that with all the will in the world, taking two hours in a busy week is unrealistic. And in fact, if you had two hours free every week, you probably wouldn't be feeling stressed in the first place... then you may need to take a leap of faith for a while. Give 'time-out' a go and see what happens. You may well find that you feel less pressured and less overloaded on a day-to-day basis simply because you are taking regular time to lower your stress.

Sometimes the best way to make more time in life, is to take some time for yourself. 📖

Dr Helen Street is an applied social psychologist with a passion for wellbeing in education. She is also chair of The Positive Schools Conferences (positiveschools.com.au). In June, Helen published her third book, a collection of essays co-edited with Neil Porter, '*Better than OK: Helping Young People to Flourish at School and Beyond*' (Fremantle Press). Helen's previous books include 'Life Overload' and 'Standing Without Shoes' (with George W. Burns). She also contributes regularly to the education blog, Positive Times.



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Using cameras in the classroom

Built in vs. compac



PHOTO: DEBORAH KOLB

You hear much discussion about one laptop or tablet per child. However at the same time we are entering an exciting world where we have one camera per child. Schools are increasingly permitting students to use tablets and phones in the classroom and with them comes a built-in camera. This is a wonderful resource that you should be making the most of but it does require a bit of thought. Let's have a look at some activities you could do with your students' built-in cameras and examine the potential pitfalls.

Let's say you are using the cameras to allow children to apply their learning to their environment. For example, you have been doing rhyming words and want them to take pictures of two objects that rhyme or in numeracy they are looking for certain shapes, angles or patterns. This is fine with their built-in cameras so long as they are working in a light environment and are going up close to the objects rather than using the zoom (if there is one). This is because phones and tablets do not have optical zoom. Thus, when you zoom in you are using digital zoom and thereby

compromising the quality of the image. Phones and tablets, due to the desire to remain slim line, also have smaller sensors. Sensors capture all the light available and turn it into a digital signal, meaning tablets and smartphones can struggle with dim lighting. Nothing is more frustrating than students ending up with dark incomprehensible photos. To avoid this you can do a little work with them on photography basics prior to the activities, showing them how they could move the objects into a light space and move nearer to the object to take the photo.

Even bearing this in mind, teachers and students should be aware that other rich contextual activities will require digital still cameras. For example a science inquiry might have them find mini-beasts, parts of plants or the body. Much more learning will take place if they have a camera with a decent zoom and possibly with a close-up option. Alternatively you could even use a visualiser or digital microscope. However once you and your students are aware of the capabilities of the built-in camera, the world is your oyster.

Traditionally classroom cameras have largely been used to stimulate writing be it recounts, processes or descriptions. The students capture their photos of the field trip or the stages of them making a cake and use them to produce a piece of prose or poetry, often digitally. This is really where a student-owned device comes into its own (subject to the above lighting and proximity issues!) because it allows them to take their *own* photos. They are not using the class field trip photos to stimulate their stories but the photos that they took and that interest them. A student might arrive with an amazing shot he/she took of a sunset to stimulate poetry writing, or a series of photos of them working on a project with dad for a recount. This is the real beauty of each child having their own camera, even if it is a built-in one!

In addition, it is incredibly easy for the students to access these photos to edit and to drop into pages/Google docs/ word, or to upload to a blog or another online medium as they are working on a computer and this will most likely be on a wireless network. Many laptops and tablets have very easy to use editing apps available as well as digital story apps which means that the technical issues that often distracted the students from the writing part of the activity are largely removed. However, there is another side to the coin, and that is the ease with which the students can take and share photos that may not be related to the task

at hand and may be inappropriate or hurtful. Most schools have a cyber-policy but with the increased access to cameras it may be worth just revisiting it to ensure that it is adequate for the resources that the students now have available.

"Once you and your students are aware of the capabilities of the built-in camera, the world is your oyster"


You also have a fantastic assessment tool to hand. Students can take photographs of their writing at the beginning of term and at the end. Now you can have just-in-time photos of those wonderful learning moments and great achievements because every child has a camera to capture their own and each other's experiences. The only word of warning on this is that a Smartphone or tablet is not going to suffice if you want to capture those looks of triumph when a student delivers a flawless speech in the school production, dances their socks off, scores a try and so on. Smartphones and tablets do offer the ability to capture multiple sequential shots but if you want sharp image quality and to see the emotion on a student's face, it comes down to a fast camera and a good quality lens. Even a regular point and shoot camera will struggle at a sporting event so do ensure that your school or team has access to at least one serious camera.

The other reason why you should also consider keeping a compact camera is if you are heading off on a five day camp or planning a long shoot you need to consider battery life and storage. A compact camera

allows you to switch batteries and swap out storage. Tablets and most phones are not so designed. You can buy extra batteries to plug in such as the Sony Capacity USB charger, but these can be cumbersome when taking photos. Work with students to

ensure that if they are using a tablet or phone it is fully charged on arrival and have your "real" camera as back up!

Our advice is that schools invest in a range of options. Make use of the built-in cameras for simple point and shoot photos

in good lighting conditions. However every classroom needs to have at least one compact still camera for shooting better quality images. Look out for multi-buy deals and kits sets that include bags and storage. Depending on the size of the school, you should also have access to one or more higher end cameras for capturing significant events and achievements which will incorporate the ability to take good action shots so that you don't miss those moments and happy expressions that make teaching worthwhile! 

Jenny is the CEO for Breathe Technology. Her enthusiasm for technology came when thrown in the deep end whilst teaching in Taiwan. She has supported classroom teachers to use educational technology in the UK and NZ. www.breathetechnology.co.nz



PHOTO: MIKEKIEV

Study tips for success

Back to basics

Choose a Study Environment

It is important to have a place that is yours for study. If possible design a space that is only for study so you know when you are there, that is what you are doing - study. Choose somewhere quiet and free from distractions such as the TV, people talking, social media or your phone. The worst place to study is in or on your bed. Bed is for sleep and studying on your bed either can send you to sleep, or when you attempt to go to sleep, your brain starts thinking stopping you from sleeping.

Organisation

To make your study more effective, ensure you have folders, trays or boxes to keep

your work space neat and tidy. If you are working on a computer, create folders for each subject and then folders for each topic within the subject folder, to avoid confusion and for fast access to your notes. A notice board is useful, to be able to pin reminders or important information to. Create a planner showing important dates of when assignments are due and when you are going to study for each subject each week.

Set Goals

Before you start, set mini goals of what you would like to achieve in your study time. Make a quick list of what you

"Reward yourself once you have completed your planned study with something you enjoy and find relaxing."

need to do and split it up into small manageable chunks. If you have maths equations, give yourself a time limit on each equation. When reading break the text up into paragraphs, pages or chapters and then review what you have read, by pausing to think about the meaning of what you just read.

Reminder Pad

Have a small reminder pad beside you while studying. When your mind wanders and starts thinking about another task, topic or job simply jot it down on your reminder pad and focus back on what you are doing. This is also a great strategy if your brain is 'thinking' in the middle of the night. Write your thoughts down and go back to sleep knowing that you will be able to deal with the ideas in the morning.


Concentration

A great way to keep focused is to use the iStudyAlarm app. You can download it onto your smart phone. The app times you to study for 20 minute segments and take a 5 minute break. If you find your mind is wondering, stand up, turn away from your study and stretch up tall then sit back down and start again, however stay in the room. When you take a break, leave your study place in order to let you brain know that you are taking a break. When you really wish to concentrate, turn the music off or listen to Baroque music softly in the background.

Make Studying a Habit

Get into the habit of having a time each day that is your study time. Just as you might have sports practice at 4pm, or music practice at 5pm, make a time for your study. It may be before or after dinner, at 8pm or early in the morning. The worst time to study is the one hour straight after school. If you are feeling overwhelmed, make a list of everything you need to do, prioritise and start with number one.

Relax

Reward yourself once you have completed your planned study with something you enjoy and find relaxing. It is important to find time to relax after study, as your brain will be processing your content subconsciously. If you go straight to another brain intense focused activity, or anything that you need to focus deeply on, your brain will not have the benefit of the extra processing. 

Karen is a leading authority on effective learning and teaching in Australasia. She is the founder and CEO of Spectrum Education. A highly skilled and dynamic presenter, she works with teachers, parents, students and corporate clients.

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“

Karen is the consummate professional who inspires the listener and creates opportunities for the learner to ask questions and structure their learning at the correct pace for change to occur.

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- Mark Ellis, Principal

“

Karen lives her philosophies and her delivery is relational, humorous, relevant and pertinent. She is an inspiring presenter and I am loving the impact she has had on my team.

”

- Lesley Johnson,
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20 must know facts about teens

The constants in the lives of teenagers

Every two years Dolly, Australia's most popular magazine for teenage girls, takes a look at the constants in the lives of teenagers – such as school, sex, relationships, alcohol, family and body image – and tracks their thoughts, behaviours and the trends that shape them. Using a mixture of surveys and focus groups the Dolly Youth Monitor has been tracking teenage trends for over two decades.

As director of Parentingideas, I've been fortunate enough to be involved in the interpretation and presentation of the data to various groups for two Dolly Youth Monitor surveys. Based on the up-to-date insights provided by the survey, here are twenty things you should know as an educator or parent involved with teenagers today.

1 Today's teens grow up in small families with 45% having one or no other siblings. One in three has parents who never married or who are no longer married. Most listen to their parents, but they also agree that it's healthy to have different opinions or beliefs from their parents.

2 Family is very important to teenagers but the thing they can't live without is their phone. The number of teens with smartphones has doubled in two years. 80 per cent of teenagers now have a Smartphone.

3 Bullying is still one of the biggest concerns for young people. Online bullying of teenage girls has increased massively in two years. In 2011, 9% said they'd been bullied. In 2013 it is 36%.

4 Most bullying of boys occurs at school. 74% of teenage boys who are bullied say their bullying happens at school, while bullying of girls is shared more equally between school (55%) and online (43%). The online nature of bullying magnifies the impact of the bullying as everyone can see what's happening.

5 Losing their virginity begins in this age group. Sixteen per cent of 14 to 17 year olds admit to having sex, with most saying they lost their virginity to a girlfriend or boyfriend. Four in five who are sexually active use a condom. The safe sex education message is getting through.



PHOTO: CATHY YEULET

6 Smoking is on the outer. Only 12% smoke and eight in 10 would like their parents to stop smoking.

7 However, drinking alcohol is still popular. Forty-one per cent say they have been drunk, and the average age that this group first tasted alcohol was 14.

8 Everyone does it. Ninety-nine per cent say it's acceptable to drink alcohol occasionally.

9 And their parents make it easy for them to drink. Thirty-four per cent of teens in the 14-17 year old age say their parents have bought them alcohol.

10 How a girl looks is linked to her weight. The number one reason girls want to lose weight is to look good. Interestingly, the same reason holds true for boys. 52% of girls would like to lose weight, but only 33% think they are overweight.

11 Hyper-networking drives teen life ... and most of it is online. One in two teenagers feels constant pressure to keep up-to-date with social media. If they don't keep up they may miss out on invitations to parties, knowing what's going on, gossip and the latest trends.

12 Teens are a lot smarter about using Facebook than two years ago. They have fewer Facebook friends, and now are more likely to use Facebook to stay in contact with 'real world' friends rather than purely collecting 'virtual' friends and 'likes'.

13 They are safety conscious too. Only 4% of teens have a totally public profile, which means they are learning about the all-encompassing nature of Facebook.

14 Girls are selective in their use of social media. They are using Facebook* to connect with friends, Tumblr as a creative outlet and Instagram* as an artistic form of self expression. *Don't know what these are? You should. Google them to find out.

15 Teens today are uncertain about the future. Their biggest worry is getting a good job, followed by the need to make money and achieve financial security. This is perhaps due to the global financial crisis of 2008 and the resultant conservative approach to finances shown at home.

16 Here's a disturbing statistic that may be a sign of the times. Twenty-seven per cent of girls and 36% of boys think their generation won't be better off than their parents.


17 This leads girls in particular to invest in their future. Forty-six per cent of girls (compared to 26% of boys) are saving for the future with 27% of girls (and only 5% of boys) saving money for university.

18 They like to help. Eighty-one per cent of teens say they would like to volunteer their time to help others. The harder edge to this is that most admit volunteering would look on the resume.

19 Girls drive themselves harder than boys. Eighty per cent of girls, compared to 72% of boys, believe they need a tertiary education to succeed. This hasn't changed in two years.

20 Stress is coming from everywhere. In 2011 most teen stress came from teachers at school. In 2013, pressure from school is still a factor but it's been joined by pressure from parents and themselves to do well. Pressure to stay up-to-date and present the best possible image on social media is also a source of stress.

There would have been few surprises here for many teachers or parents who are in touch with the lives of young people today. In fact, these findings will confirm much of your experience.

However the thing that stood out for me throughout this process was that young people today live with pressure. *'They always have,'* I hear you say. Yes, today's teens worry about their bodies, school, family, friendships and the opposite sex just as they always have. But social networking, the current economic climate and the rate of technological change is adding a new dimension to the pressures that today's young people experience. 

Michael is the author of 8 parenting books, including his new release *Thriving!* and the best-selling *Why First Borns Rule the World* and *Last Borns Want to Change it*. His popular parenting columns appear in newspapers and magazines across Australia. He appears regularly on television including Channel 10's *The Circle*, and is a popular & entertaining speaker. He also has a regular fortnightly half hour parenting segment on ABC radio Victoria.

Michael has an education background, and holds a Master of Educational Studies with research into what makes healthy families tick.

Lucious lemon treats

In my kitchen I either have no lemons or tons! I hate to see them go to waste so I have started to gather up a few recipes that use lemons. Oddly enough whenever I use lemon I also need sour cream, so you can usually find a big tub of sour cream in the fridge too (full fat none of that lite rubbish!).



Lemon loaf

4 eggs
200g sugar
140ml oil
80g sour cream
the zest of 1 lemon
200g flour
2 tsp baking powder
30g ground almonds

For syrup & icing:

1 cup of lemon juice
3/4 cup sugar
About 1 cup of icing sugar

Preheat oven to 170C.

In a bowl, combine eggs, sugar, oil, sour cream & lemon zest. Mix until sugar has dissolved.

Sieve the remaining dry ingredients and fold through until well combined.

Place mix into a lined loaf tin, and bake for 45-50 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean.

Place the lemon juice & sugar into a saucepan and heat until it becomes a syrup.

Spike the loaf all over and pour 3/4 of the syrup over. Add icing sugar to the remaining syrup until it becomes a thick icing consistency.

Spread over the loaf, & you're done!

Here are some tips; If you don't have ground almonds don't stress just replace with flour. It doesn't need the icing if you don't have the time or can't be bothered it's just as good without it.



Lemon and Passionfruit Cupcakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups plain flour
 1/4 tsp baking powder
 1/4 tsp baking soda
 1/2 tsp salt
 1/3 cup milk
 115g unsalted butter (room temperature)
 1 cup caster sugar
 zest of two lemons
 2 eggs

Pre-heat the oven to 180C. Grease a 12 hole muffin tray and line with cupcake cases. Sift the dry ingredients into a bowl and set aside. Cream the butter and sugar with a handheld electric mixer for about 5 minutes (make sure you scrape down the bowl as you go). Add the lemon zest and the eggs one at a time and mix well. Add in the dry ingredients and then the milk. Divide the mixture between the cupcake cases, filling them so they are two thirds full.

Passionfruit and lemon, two flavours that are meant to be together! I have been playing around with cupcake recipes to try and get one that does not go dry and I have got it! I know you will enjoy these and so will the people that you share them with! To make the passionfruit icing I add in freeze dried passionfruit pulp, but if you can't get your hands on any of that, then two tablespoons of passionfruit pulp will be fine. Buttercream versus cream cheese icing – totally a personal opinion. I am more of a cream cheese fan.

Bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.

When cooked let them sit in the tray for 10 minutes before putting them on a wire cooling rack. Once the cupcakes are cool then you can ice them.

Passionfruit Cream Cheese Icing

125g unsalted butter
 175g full fat cream cheese
 3 1/2 cups icing sugar – sifted
 1 tablespoon of freeze dried passionfruit powder

Beat the butter in a bowl with an electric mixer until smooth. Add in the cream cheese and beat again. Add the icing sugar in three batches, mixing well each time. Add in the passionfruit powder and mix well. Taste test, if it is not strong enough add a little more.

To decorate I drizzle some passionfruit syrup over the top of the iced cupcakes and then scatter some more lemon zest on.

Emma is an experienced New Zealand teacher who is a passionate foodie. She works four days a week so that on her fifth day she can pursue her passion for food on her blog, Lark's Larder. Emma believes that food is about bringing people together. She enjoys a challenge in the kitchen, loves food styling and crafting recipes.
www.larkslarder.com


EMMA LARK

This recipe my husband also calls lemon honey. I personally believe that lemon curd and lemon honey are not the “same same” but if he wants to use this to slather it all over his toast I am not going to complain, because the recipe makes heaps and someone needs to eat it! I love it because it can be made quickly in the microwave.

Lemon Curd

4 large lemons
125g butter
2 cups sugar
4 eggs, beaten

Grate the zest of the lemons and juice the lemons place them with all the other ingredients into a microwave safe bowl. Heat on medium heat for 8- 10 minutes stirring after each minute.

Place into jars. 



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JOKES

THINGS TO MAKE YOU SMILE

Nature Jokes

*Q: How can you tell the ocean is friendly?
A: It waves.*

*Q: What kind of hair do oceans have?
A: Wavy!*

*Q: What did Mars say to Saturn?
A: Give me a ring sometime.*

*Q: What did the big flower say to the small flower?
A: What's up Bud.*

*Q: Where does seaweed go to look for a job?
A: The kelp wanted section.*



GROANERS

*Q: When is the moon the heaviest?
A: When it's full!*

*Q: What type of songs do the planets sing?
A: Nep-tunes!*

*Q: What kind of flower grows on your face?
A: Tulips!*

*Q: What washes up on very small beaches?
A: Microwaves!*

*Q: What do you call an attractive volcano?
A: Lava-ble!*



RIDDLES



Time to de-clutter?

What can we throw so that Murphy doesn't come back to bite us?

My grandmother raised her family through the Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s. Anyone who lived through that time had a very real well-reinforced reason not to throw anything out. The challenge she left when she died, however, was the long-lasting result of that 'might-be-useful-one-day' attitude. My mother and aunties had to weave their way between shoulder-high boxes of mostly junk when it came time to sort out her effects.

People today don't have that excuse, but judging by some homes and offices, you'd think they did! The modern version, loosely translated into Murphy's Law (got to blame someone!), is that as soon as you throw an item out, you need it.

Just imagine that every item we have, every possession we own, has an invisible silver cord attached from us to it. In fact, on an energy level that's true. Every 'thing' we have responsibility for claims some of our mental energy, whether or not we're aware of it. The question for you to consider is whether the connection, the attachment, energises or depletes you.

I believe the Japanese focus on simplicity is on the right track. Less is best. I like to think of it as the Zen of a Clean Office. There is a completely different energy in a clean, uncluttered place. So, let's consider a few useful pointers to help you let go.

Throw-Out Exercise

Next time you're in the environment that gives you most grief, look around as if you were seeing it through a stranger's eyes.

What haven't you looked at or used for some time?

Now, with that awareness, jot down anything you can see, or know is lurking somewhere out of sight, that you really could throw out. One of my students realised that she hadn't vacuumed under



ILLUSTRATION: LORELYN MEDINA

her bed for a very long time, due to the huge pile of 'Better Home and Garden' type magazines she kept promising herself to go back through (oh yeah!). She hauled out, dusted off, and delivered them to the doctor's waiting room across the road. They welcomed this wonderful treasure trove of pristine magazines with open arms: Maggie walked away feeling fabulous and light as air.

Still need help?

Ask yourself:

- Why am I not letting these obsolete things go?
- What's the worst thing that can happen if I remove them from my environment?
- What's the benefit of clearing them out?
- Who else can get value from my 'junk'? You don't need to be reminded how many educational organisations on tight budgets would really appreciate your obsolete computers and programmes (if your school is well-off you're sure to know someone in a less financial

position); kindergartens take just about any 'junk' and recycle it into wonderful works of art; charity organisations struggle to run on a pittance and are grateful for *any* assistance; refugee groups constantly seek help for escapees from situations you can only imagine. Do yourself a favour – invoke the Law of Release. The amazing thing is – as you free yourself on a physical level, your energy lifts and you find you'll be less tired and able to work harder, faster and more effectively.

And some further key 'pruning' questions:

- Will I ever need it?
- Would it matter if I lost it?
- Has someone else kept a copy, and can they find it?
- Do I need all of it, or just a part?
- What's the worst thing that will happen if I throw this away?

Some Quick Throw Tips

If you receive regular mail, emails or faxes you don't want to receive (and who doesn't?), take a moment to get off the lists, if at all possible. A few daily wasted minutes adds up to hours of wasted time and therefore money – not just for you but also for other staff members, sometimes for years to come.

Paper mail

Usually a 'return to sender' on the envelope and a polite request to be taken off the mailing list is sufficient (except for a few very persistent magazine and marketing companies!).

If it's someone with whom you have a relationship, a polite note or phone call works well. Explain that you wish them all the best, and therefore would like to help them keep their marketing costs down, save them time and preserve trees! You've found you don't need their regular mail outs, but you'll keep their details on record and call them when you require their services (or some other diplomatic words). When said with a pleasant smile in your voice, almost everyone appreciates your thoughtfulness and you don't burn bridges you might need one day.

Faxes

Same as above, but because they are delivered via a telephone line, if any particularly hard-of-hearing organisations take no notice you can call Telecom and lay a complaint.

I've even heard of companies sending an account for the wasted fax paper.

Another particularly extreme solution, and I don't recommend it unless you're really driven to distraction and they just WON'T listen, is to tape up the two ends of the offending fax whilst in your machine, and return it to them, with some very pointed message from your unsmiling self scrawled on it. It creates a never-ending message – until their fax paper runs out!

Do an audit on your filing habits

Look through your cabinets and drawers, consider what comes in, is filed, and never again sees the light of day. You may be shocked to find that a huge amount of what you save is only a paper security blanket, with no real use.

Encourage your team not to be hoarders. Reward streamlined systems and efficient behaviour. For example, you only need one squirrel in a school to take responsibility for office memos and the like – make sure everyone knows who that person is – usually an Office Manager or school secretary. Discourage the others from duplication - small inefficiency habits of every staff member can cost a lot of time and money. Problem is - the faster and easier the communication, the higher the degree of waste. (Consider how far and fast an irrelevant and time-wasting email can spread. People don't fax silly jokes to their whole list of fax numbers!)

Audit your systems and records requirements

From time to time have a staff meeting, or delegate a sub-group (with authority to ask questions and make recommendations) to check the paperwork and systems you currently use. You might be handling and storing records unnecessarily.

What forms do you require your parents to fill in? Picking up on Linda Vining's constant push for excellent customer service, the more user-friendly your school, the better your marketing image. How about having a brainstorm session with some 'customers' to objectively evaluate your form-filling requirements. Quite aside from the benefits to your parents, if you can streamline your forms and systems you'll save hundreds of hours a year of unnecessary processing and filing and many thousands of dollars in wages and storage costs.

As I ran a time management course for a rapidly growing security company, one of the newer staff members commented in passing that her biggest challenge was a particular report. It came in from all the subsidiaries, was processed by her and then a summary of the results and some recommendations for action were sent back to the source.

By a stroke of luck we had the Chief Financial Officer in the room that day. He looked at her in shock, and said, 'Are we still doing that? I didn't realise – with the improved systems we've installed we don't need it anymore!'

Needless to say, that issue was very quickly resolved. With just that one improvement they rapidly saved themselves more than the investment they'd made in hiring me!

Problem was, the girl doing the job had no way of knowing the task was obsolete. Her immediate boss was fairly new to the firm and hadn't thought to check. The senior people who did know were focused on more strategic issues and had no idea what was happening down in the bowels of the company. What it needed was time to step back and take an objective view, which had been created by running the course.

Step back, check your processes and have fun clearing out! 🗑️

Robyn is known around the world as the Time Queen, helping people discover new angles on time. Her website, www.gettingagrip.com, offers many resources. She is a CSP (Certified Speaking Professional)

Creating your own space in a busy world

Make time to rest, relax and reflect

Almost everyone you talk to these days is busy. Busy working through a long 'to do' list, catching up with friends, juggling kid's activities, attending family commitments, exercising, keeping homes in order... an endless list of things to do. You know life is crazy busy when you email a colleague to meet up for a quick coffee and the first free space in your diary is 3 weeks away! When did life become so full that fitting in time to see a friend even involved scheduling an appointment?

The world we connect with now is like a fast paced ride on a six lane highway. We live in a culture that forces us to do, do, do. With the rapid growth of technology it is typical for us to handle a number of tasks in rapid succession. Women in particular work a double shift – working all day and quickly moving into 'work' mode at home, with little or no time to sit and rest.

In a world increasingly saturated by interactive screens and wireless technology, we are surrounded with visual stimuli and audio overload. We are pulled outside of ourselves to meet the demands of life - work, emails, paying bills, phone calls, appointments, the needs of other people, etc ... With increased schedules, people zone out at night to mindless entertainment on TV or social media instead of creating time and space to quieten the mind and wind down.

What was once down time - like the quiet drive home from work, has now become a window of opportunity to quickly check your phone for emails or texts, or if you're like me, quickly scan the NZ Herald app to see what is happening in the wider world.



PHOTO: RACORN

We have become wired for alerts from devices that can access us 24/7. We are both simultaneously over stimulating ourselves and distracting ourselves, by devices that can access us 24/7.

It takes awareness and a conscious effort to create a quality life where you can carve out time for yourself to unwind and experience the 'quiet' in a noisy world. Being self-aware empowers you to make better decisions that will impact your life - your health & your well-being.

When I work with clients who are feeling overwhelmed and anxious about their schedules one of the exercises I ask them

to do is a 'Life Style Audit' which involves reviewing eight aspects of their personal

life; relationships, time for self, personal growth, pursuing their passion, diet/nutrition, physical health, sleep and 'being present'. This exercise helps clarify priorities for goal setting, allowing the client to plan so that their life is closer to their definition of balance. Keeping in mind that balance is unique and personal to each individual - what may be balance for some may be stressful or boring for others. Often what becomes clear from this exercise is how much people tolerate in their life and how little time they allocate for themselves.

"Get creative and find a small space or a small room in your home that can become your haven – a place to unwind where you feel peaceful and rejuvenated."

We tend to get dragged down and overwhelmed by things that accumulate over time and end up cluttering our minds. Examples could be other people's behaviour, incomplete tasks, frustrations, problems, clutter, unmet needs, overdue books, outdated wardrobe, unresolved issues or guilt over lack of exercise, eating habits, lack of sleep etc... Although people may not want to do anything about them in that moment, just writing them down raises awareness.

Below are some strategies that I suggest to clients – to enable them to create more space in their lives. Keep in mind that positive changes are more likely to be sustained if they are small and gradual.

Be consciously aware of information you are receiving

Take control and manage your technology - you decide when to open emails, respond to texts and answer the phone at home.

Examine how much time you invest in watching TV at night

Most people could claim at least one extra hour each night if they consciously chose to switch off the box in the evening.

Challenge yourself to go for a brisk walk without a device plugged into your ears

The great bonus with exercise is that it affects a neurotransmitter that has an antidepressant-like effect on your brain. You feel great on your return and ... you'll be amazed at what you notice around you when you are 'present' during the walk.

Say 'Yes' to the things you really want to do

Saying yes out of obligation builds resentment. Learn how to buy yourself time before committing to something you will later regret.

Cultivate Positive Practices

What activities bring you to a positive feeling place? It could be reading, journaling, walking, meditating, sitting in the sun ... Do something that fills your own glass.

Remember that what you are good at or skilled at is not necessarily your passion

What is it that you absolutely love to do or would love to spend your time doing if you could? Create time in your life to invest in what you love to do.

Avoid people who thrive on drama –

They will drain your energy and often don't take your advice anyway – they just want an ear to bend.

Create Your Own Sanctuary

Get creative and find a small space or a small room in your home that can become your haven – a place to unwind where you feel peaceful and rejuvenated.

Take time to reflect

Similar to meditation, reflection allows you time to allow the truth of the moment. All you need is a few minutes each day to sit quietly and turn off your 'monkey mind' - internal chatter. You'll be surprised at what comes to the surface.

Carry a small notebook with you

Write down anything you remember you need or need to do. Carrying this 'stuff' in your head is draining.

Allocate non- negotiable time in your diary each week

Block out an hour in your diary at the beginning of each week - no appointments, no tasks, no racing to anywhere, time just for yourself.

Avoid 'Cocktail Conversation'

These are the times you are at a social gathering making small talk with people you'll never see again. Aim for more meaningful interactions.

Know thyself well

We cannot all be experts at everything. Work out what you are really good at and what you're not. Can you delegate tasks or pay someone to do a job for you? Last year I started paying a lawnmower to come in and keep our grass cut. It's the best \$25 I spend each fortnight. Arriving home to freshly


mowed lawns gives me so much pleasure. And ... I am giving someone else business - win/win!

Lose the People Pleaser Badge

This has to take a hike as you start putting yourself first. If at first you struggle with this, remember that the better care you take of yourself the more you can give genuinely to others.

Practice Being Present

Being 'present' is a real buzz word these days – you read about it in every self-help book and self-development article - but what does it really mean? Aren't we present all of the time as a consequence of showing up and living our lives? Being present simply means to be fully engaged in the moment – not time travelling in your mind to the past or the future. It is about being in a highly aware state of what you are thinking and where your thoughts are travelling! This takes practice but is worth getting better at!

Don't let a crisis be the catalyst to bring you to a halt, forcing you to make immediate changes. Be aware of what you are filling your life with and gradually make small changes. A high quality life has a lot to do with what you remove from it! Create your own space in a busy world, to take time to rest, relax and reflect. 

Deborah has been a primary school teacher for 16 years and a deputy principal in an Auckland school for the past five years. Deborah has a special interest in behaviour management and delving into the deeper issues underlying children's behaviour.

Asking for help with style

How to get what you want!!

So you need something?
Some folks ask.

Some folks expect people to mind read and just give

Some folks would never ask, they always find a way on their own.

So who are you?

When you need something done, and when you research the people who get things done, and how they do it there is a common sense system that works. Skip any of the steps and you risk never getting the mission completed and/or annoying or burning bridges with the people who possibly could help you and would have if you had stuck with the system...

The greatest satisfaction is to do it yourself.

Whether you want to start a business, raise money for your charity, invent or create a new product - anything YOU want to do, aim to do it yourself if you possibly can. Then you will owe nothing to any body and there will be a major sense of personal self satisfaction. You will also be setting yourself up for achieving even bigger missions. The more you achieve, the more you feel you can continue to achieve!! Always start with YOU!!

If you feel you need help, advice or a partner, make sure you have done ALL you can possibly do FIRST.

Have you read and watched everything on the subject? Have you done all the possible research and ground-work and all YOU can possibly do by yourself? If you have, you now know you will need specific help in specific areas and from who!!

"You have to build a relationship before you start asking for things."

There are people who will help you.

However, you have to build a relationship with them before you start asking for things. It is very rude to email a random request for money or sponsorship or charity dollars if you have not spoken to the person for months. Just because it is your charity or your special event does not mean this person wants to be involved, especially if you have just sent out a group email, with no personal touches and you have not bothered to build a personal relationship.


Yes, there are people who will help you.

However, people who can help you are much more likely to want to help you if they can clearly see how much effort you have already made yourself. And no random, generic requests, show you have done the research and ask specifically for the help you want. *NOTE: If you are asking for advice, only ask advice from people you respect and if you will implement the advice. It is rude to run around asking for lots of people's advice and then implement nothing. If a person is prepared to invest time in sharing their help and advice, they will never do it again for you or anybody else, if you ignore them, or worse, fail to thank them for their time, energy and wisdom.*

Communicate and THANK...

If someone does help you, please clearly communicate what you did with their help, advice or money. NO, not a generic email with random thanks but a personal call or note to share specifically what you did with the help/advice/money. Before you ever ask again, continue with the personal contact - at least 5 times, not asking for anything, before you ask again.

You do not want the reputation of the person who, "We only ever hear from when they want something!!"

If you are serious about raising money for a charity and/or adding value to your world, and you really feel you need help, please do it with style, good manners, respect and no guilt attached. If you ask in the right way people will help, if they do not help, take a look at YOU and the way you asked. 

Rowena is the founder of The Max, a group of private and prestigious fitness business colleges in Australia and New Zealand. She is an internationally requested speaker, is on the board of a medical college in New Zealand, has written 13 books and is the editor of MAXimum RESULTS magazine.

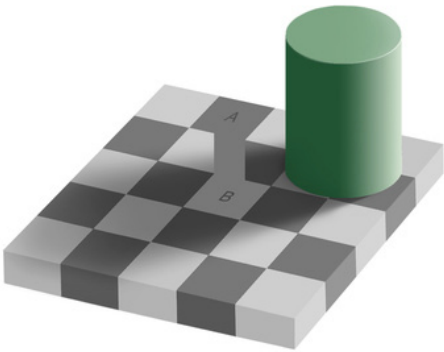


Why do optical illusions work?

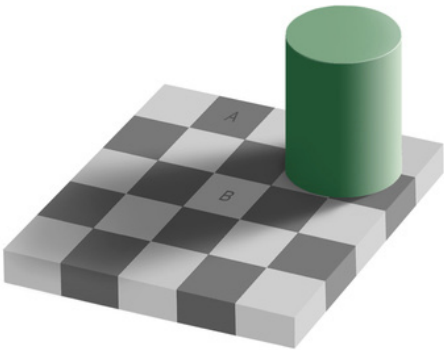
How your brain is wired

Optical illusions work because your brain is wired to see what is **essential**; not what is **real**.

Here is an amazing optical illusion to present to your brain. I am always astounded when I see it. Look at the picture below. Which square is darker....A or B?



If you are like me then the answer seems simple and obvious. Square A. But not so fast. In reality both squares are exactly the same shade! Don't believe it? Neither did I. Take a look at the next picture.



What you are viewing is **Adelson's checker shadow illusion**. It is an optical illusion published by Edward H. Adelson, Professor of Vision Science at MIT in 1995.

What is especially astonishing about this illusion is that even after your brain knows the squares are the same shade it still experiences them as being different!!

So what's going on here?

I always tell people in my live seminars the best definition of learning they will ever hear is that "learning is connecting new information to what you already know". That's how your brain works. It connects new information and stimuli to what you have already stored in your brain. Memories, experiences, emotions, etc.

In the illusion above we have a prior stored memory of how checker boards are "supposed to look". They are "supposed" to alternate light and dark. This checker board is different though....but your brain can't see it because there is nothing like it in your brain to connect it to.

Also, your brain has stored memories of shadows and what they are "supposed to look like". This shadow is different though; it isn't there. The shadow just seems to be there; but it's not. Your brain fills it in based on prior stored memories.

So all in all we have a recipe for getting things wrong!

Remember....what you think, what you say, what you do it always based upon what you know. What you know might be wrong; a wise person is always mindful of this.

For those of you who are inclined to want a technical explanation regarding why the illusion works, here it is:


"The visual system needs to determine the colour of objects in the world. In this case the problem is to determine the gray shade of the checks on the floor. Just measuring the light coming from a surface (the luminance) is not enough: a cast shadow will dim a surface, so that a white surface in shadow may be reflecting less light than a black surface in full light. The visual system uses several tricks to determine where the shadows are and how to compensate for

them, in order to determine the shade of gray "paint" that belongs to the surface.

The first trick is based on local contrast. In shadow or not, a check that is lighter than its neighbouring checks is probably lighter than average, and vice versa. In the figure, the light check in shadow is surrounded by darker checks. Thus, even though the check is physically dark, it is light when compared to its neighbours. The dark checks outside the shadow, conversely, are surrounded by lighter checks, so they look dark by comparison.

A second trick is based on the fact that shadows often have soft edges, while paint boundaries (like the checks) often have sharp edges. The visual system tends to ignore gradual changes in light level, so that it can determine the colour of the surfaces without being misled by shadows. In this figure, the shadow looks like a shadow, both because it is fuzzy and because the shadow casting object is visible.

The "paintness" of the checks is aided by the form of the "X-junctions" formed by 4 abutting checks. This type of junction is usually a signal that all the edges should be interpreted as changes in surface colour rather than in terms of shadows or lighting.

As with many so-called illusions, this effect really demonstrates the success rather than the failure of the visual system. The visual system is not very good at being a physical light meter, but that is not its purpose. The important task is to break the image information down into meaningful components, and thereby perceive the nature of the objects in view." 

Terry is a master teacher and learning skills specialist. He has presented on the brain for over 30 years and has a wealth of teaching experience and extensive involvement in applied neuroscience.
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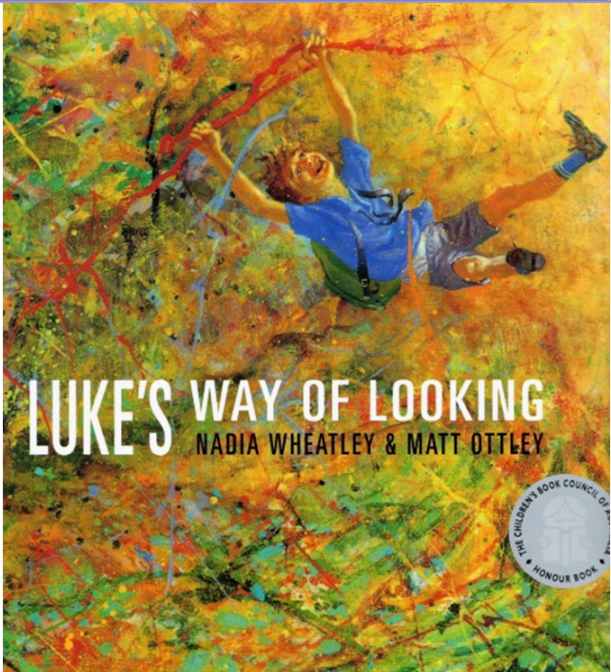
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Luke’s way of looking

Author Nadia Wheatley
Illustrator Matt Ottley
Publisher Walker Books
ISBN 978-1-921977-72-5

This award winning book celebrates what it means to be different. Luke is an unusual boy who shows his difference in the artwork he produces. His teacher, Mr Barraclough, becomes irate because Luke creates pictures with unconventional colours and shapes that do not conform to Mr Barraclough’s expectation. Being different can make us feel lonely, powerless and small and can allow other people to pick on us. But Luke’s life changes when he walks into a gallery of modern art and realises that some other people too, see the world differently. This realisation empowers him and he becomes more confident and self-aware.

This book has the potential to be a very sophisticated picture book, and would fit in well with senior art programmes.

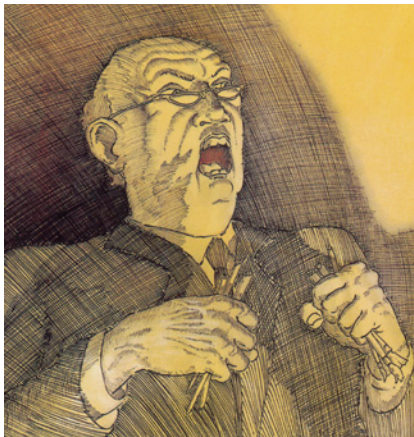
1. Characters

a. Mr Barraclough.

What kind of a teacher is he?

Compare the pictures of Mr Barraclough at the beginning, with the last picture of him and discuss why the illustrator has done this and how it impacts on how you see the teacher.

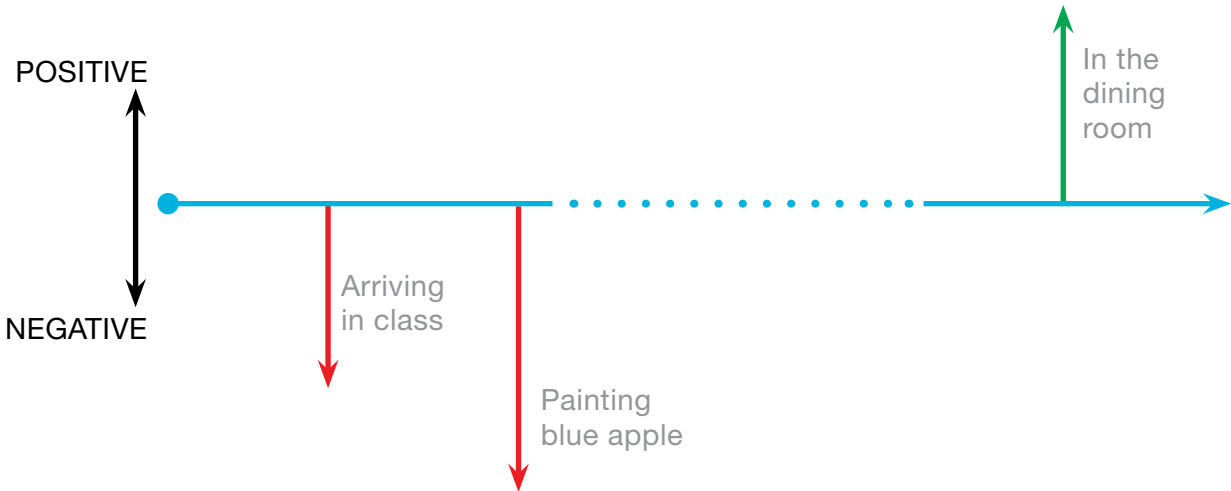
What might Mr Barraclough been thinking when he looked at Luke’s painting of the watermelon but said nothing.



b. Luke

Timeline of how he felt, positive or negative, at each major event in the storyline.

Examples in grey.



c. Character changes

As the story progresses, the characters change.

Brainstorm, discuss and write down words that describe the characters at each end of the storyline.

Examples in grey.

	At the beginning....	At the end....
Luke	On his own, Scruffy intimidated	Confident Colourful in personality free
Mr Barraclough	Bully Scary Overpowering	Thoughtful Changing Real (has colour)

2. The Narrator

The person telling the story is the narrator. Sometimes the narrator is a character in the story and other times is an invisible person who can see what's going on.

- In this storyline, does the narrator like each of the characters and how do we know?
- Have a student assume a character and tell the story from their perspective.

How would the story change if Luke told his story?

How would it change if Mr Barraclough was telling Luke's story?

3. Panel Discussion

Select two children to be the characters, Give them a label to help with stronger identification with character.

Question examples

Mr Barraclough

Why did you shout at Luke over his painting of the school?

Why do you think the illustrator portrayed you with black and white and crosshatching?

Luke

What made you get on the bus that Friday morning instead of going to school?

4. The craft of the illustrator

Matt Ottley has used many examples of symbolism and themes throughout this book.

We recommend that you go to the following website to read his description and explanations of aspects of each illustration. He explains in detail how each illustration was constructed and how they interweave. You will have a greater understanding of this story than before.

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/raps/luke/monotes401.htm>

a. Shadows.

How are shadows used in the illustrations?

Describe the kinds of feelings, ideas or impressions that are created by the shadows.

b. Inspired by artists.

Matt Ottley does not depict the specific painting or art work of any artist. He has made his paintings reminiscent of a number of styles or art periods.


Eg Luke's painting of the school has clouds reminiscent of Van Gogh's depiction of clouds.

Can you identify any other styles or artists he has alluded to?

c. Explore the double layout with the hanging toaster and jug.

What can you see in this double layout?

Hints: Clarra Bough is anagram of Barraclough

Light appearing on Luke's face. 



Barbara has been a primary school teacher for 36 years. She has specialised in the teaching of literacy for more than 20 years and recently retired a position as a Resource Teacher: Literacy, which she held for the last 16 years.

Tricia has been involved in the field of literacy for 17 years, firstly as a Resource Teacher: Reading, then as a Resource Teacher: Literacy. She is passionate about books and reading and feels privileged to be in a position where she can share that passion with students, their parents, and fellow teachers.



responsibility as parents to provide a loving environment for our children and to equip them to live responsible and independent adult lives.

Love is Truth

There is a verse in the Bible that talks about 'speaking the truth in love...' (Ephesians 4:15).

Love, by its very nature, must be focused on truth – on what is right and what is best for the other person. Love cannot flourish where there is dysfunctional behaviour, nor does it give in to demands or manipulation. Love does not support lies, cover-ups or deceit.

Love can, however, be displayed in spite of shortcomings. Love accepts *what is*, while believing and fighting for *what should be* and *can be*. Someone once said that we are all riddled with flaws – in fact we are almost entirely made up of flaws stitched together with good intentions! It's the good intentions that give us belief and hope when the current reality doesn't look so rosy. Good parents use love to show empathy and cut their kids slack when they are in genuine need; and they also show the wisdom of love to put pressure on them when they are just being slack!

I challenge you to tell your kids the truth around subjects such as sex, drugs and alcohol. You cannot control the decisions your yadult will make on these issues but you can have a clear conscience that you held nothing back – you told them the whole story. Love includes the patience to look towards the end result. Becoming an adult is a journey and a process. Young people oscillate between mature and immature thoughts and behaviour. Eventually, and quite naturally, most will do more right than wrong, gradually emulating sound adult behaviour, until one day they cross the line from dependence to independence.

Love your young adults intentionally - Dare to tell them the truth

If authentic love is founded on truth, why are parents so afraid of being honest with their kids? Why do we want to gloss over reality and why do we want our kids to have an easier life than we did? In many cases we experience such strong emotional love for our children that we can be consumed with our feelings at the expense of what is best for them. Warm fuzzies are great when they translate into lots of affection but they can also work against us. We don't like being unpopular with our kids. We know that

The art of intentional love

Chapter One from Parenting Yadults

Relationships are volatile, demanding and rewarding – but that is also the nature of love!

We use the word 'love' so loosely for all kinds of things. We love the cat, hot dogs, our car, our mother, our wife and our kids – but surely these are not all the same love. Indeed they are not. The love between parents and their children is unique – difficult to describe to those who don't have children. It is a love signified by sacrifice, faith, joy, happiness, longing, disappointment and often pain. I vividly remember the overwhelming love that poured out of me the first time I saw my daughters. As time went by I grew to love them even more. I would have, and still would, give my life for either of my girls.

But love and dislike can easily cohabit – as many parents of yadults will testify. You've just had another run-in with your child, and you're fuming. "How can I parent this kid? Love her? I don't even like her much! I've got three other kids who have turned out just fine and then there is *Chantelle*! Where did I go wrong? She's the black sheep of the family. She defies every attempt to help her."

What were you expecting?

A woman and her 17-year-old son were having one of those marathon arguments that starts on one subject but morphs into something completely different. Neither of them were winning the argument, which had degenerated into personal criticism and name-calling. The mother was calling her son 'useless' and 'lazy' and he was retorting by accusing her of being 'Hitler in a skirt'. Finally in pure exasperation, the lad yelled at his mother, "Well if I'm that bad, why did you have me?" That took her completely by surprise and she paused for a moment to think of the perfect reply, "Because we didn't know it was going to be YOU! We were hoping for someone with a job!"

As funny and bizarre as that reply is, it reveals something about how we relate – parents and children have certain expectations of each other and when those expectations are not met, the relationship suffers.

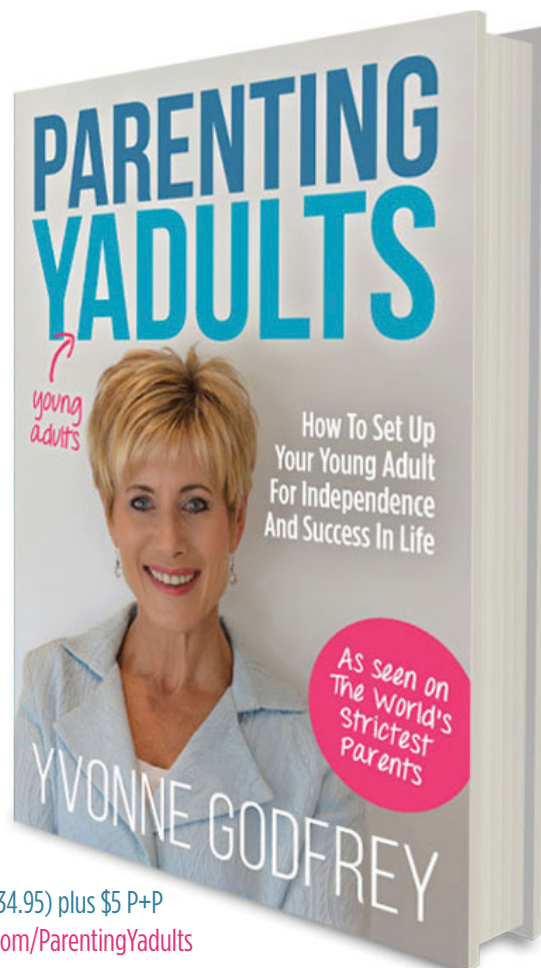
Kids don't ask to be born and parents don't know what they are going to get! Having a baby is definitely an act of faith. But it's our

Is Your Young Adult Equipped To Make It In The Real World? Are They Ready To Lead A Responsible, Independent And Successful Adult Life?

This book contains the tools to ramp up your final parenting years guaranteeing your 16–24 year old (your yadult) enters adulthood with confidence, clarity and motivation.

Whether you're in crisis mode or things just need a little fine-tuning, here's a small taste of what you'll discover...

- ✓ Simple, easy ideas to inspire your yadult to be self-motivated — instead of nagging!
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To book Family Coaching or to have Yvonne speak at your next conference

email her at: Yvonne@ParentingYadults.co.nz

To order your copy of Parenting Yadults at the Teachers Matter Special Price of \$30 (normally \$34.95) plus \$5 P+P

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yadults can overstate their emotions and feel very differently from week to week, day to day, or even hour to hour.

But, in the heat of conflict, when kids accuse their parents of not loving them or when kids say that they *hate* their parents, many parents buckle and don't follow through with tough or unpopular decisions. Let me introduce you what I call 'intentional love'. Intentional love looks into the future. It starts with the end in mind and focuses on what is best for our children in the long term. The intention is that we love our kids enough to lead them and equip them so that we can release them to live responsible, independent and successful lives. Love, lead and let go!

Intentional love shapes our children into adults who are competent, can compete in the real world and have developed good character along the way. Intentional love stays focused and doesn't become seduced or distracted by what is convenient, easy or popular.


Love Protects

A parent's love is like a force-field that protects the family from anything or anyone who might threaten its safety. This is not

about paranoia, but good parents have peripheral vision that is always on the lookout for potential dangers. Sadly, there are too many homes today that are not protected – their fences of protection are broken down.

Poppy was a troubled 16-year-old girl who came to live with us for a few months. She started watching a TV programme that followed the lives of teenage mothers, and pretty soon she was immersed in their dramas. Poppy had massive emotional gaps in her life and I was concerned that she would begin to 'see' herself as a teenage mum, which in time could lead to her creating a real life scenario. I brought it to her attention and strongly suggested that she stop watching the show. Of course she didn't like my suggestion, which by necessity quickly turned into a command. I cared about Poppy enough to be unpopular. I stood between her and something that I believed would ultimately cause her harm. This was protective love in action. It was also visionary love at work because I could see the possible long-term outcome of a misspent focus.

There are traps out there that your yadult doesn't have to fall into if you love them intentionally enough to tell them the truth and equip them with the proper tools. I

don't want you to be afraid of what the future holds for your yadult. The process towards independence can be fast-tracked and your kids don't have to waste years meandering along the pathway. I have found that when yadults are challenged, encouraged and empowered, they are keen to grow. They quickly latch onto concepts that will take them into a bigger world with bigger returns. With just a little more savvy and effort, your yadults can be streets ahead of the masses. 

Yvonne has worked with hundreds of yadults (young adults) equipping them with confidence, clarity and competence to seek their path in life. Yvonne's book 'Parenting Yadults' brings parents and educators tools to transition their young adults into the 'real world'.
027 249 5444 / 09 413 9777
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www.parentingyadults.com



Everything is hard before it is easy

And that included learning



"To get to easy you have to go through hard." This was a recent Mountain Dew advert on the back of a bus and on billboards in Wellington.

This parallels a message I have been teaching students about learning – "Everything is hard before it is easy."

When students are studying for an exam, the best tip I can ever offer is the idea they need to learn what they don't know. Going over and over what they do know is largely a waste of time. Learning is finding out what you don't know and learning it. For example, our daughter brought home 10 spelling words and advised us that the teacher had asked her to write them all out ten times a night for 4 nights. I asked her which ones she could already spell. After a shrug of shoulders, I tested her. She accurately and confidently spelt nine correctly. She only now needs to learn one. One of the words on her list that she could spell was 'family'. If she writes this out 40

times over the week, will she get better at spelling it? No – it's a waste of time.

This is true of all learning; going over what you know makes you feel good. "Oh I know that", "Aren't I clever?", "I'm so smart" are the internal responses that send endorphins through the brain and make us feel good. In contrast, when you attempt to learn something that you don't know – it is hard. The internal voice might say, "This is hard", "I'm not as smart as I thought I was", "I can't do this." It is uncomfortable, awkward and that feeling of potential failure is something most of us like to avoid, however this is exactly what learning new and unfamiliar content feels like. When learning gets hard, many people give up. Again the key is, as the advert says, "To get to easy, you have to go through hard."

Michael McQueen, award winning speaker, author and social researcher (Keynote speaker at the next Teachers Matter Conference 2015) explains a difference between the Gen Y, the Baby Boomers and

the Gen X (approximately pre 1980). He proposes these earlier generations were taught that life is hard, life is unfair, toughen up and get over it. In contrast, the Gen Y's generally believe life is supposed to be easy.

Buckminster Fuller: "Life is full of lessons to be learned. When you have learned one lesson, life will give you a bigger lesson."

So why do they think life is easy?



Advertising tells us life is easy – fast loans so you can buy what you like, beauty products that will solve all your challenges, gadgets to make life simple such as vacuum cleaners that clean the floor automatically, keyless cars, dishwashers, fast food, just add water products, even spray and wipe has been replaced with wet and forget! *Easy...*



Bubble wrapped children -Teachers consistently tell me the challenges they deal with – parents that insist on doing everything for their child – from hanging

up their bag at school to doing their homework for them. Just this week, I witnessed Mums filling out 14 and 15 year old boys' registration forms at a workshop – presumably because it was quicker and neater to do it themselves. As Steve Gurney, 9 time winning of the Coast to Coast race (another wonderful Keynote speaker at the 2015 Teachers Matter Conference), advocates our children are no longer allowed to 'eat dirt', fail, fall or learn through the experiences that make them stronger and resilient. *Life is easy.*

Everyone is equal philosophy - The current generation are growing up in such a PC world that everyone gets a ribbon for participation, whether they put in an effort or not. The score is no longer kept when young children play sport. Everyone gets a prize when playing Pass the Parcel at birthdays. Schools are discussing whether honours boards should be taken down. *It is easy to get rewards.*

Dumbing down of the curriculum – previous generations were required to learn the periodic table and now students are given it – now whilst I understand the logic of this, that it is the understanding of the concept rather than the memorisation of a concept that is important, it has perhaps robbed our students of the need to practice, repeat and memorise information. I recently asked a group of students if they could recall their best friend's phone number – an overwhelming percentage of students said no, "It's in my phone." *Learning is easy; the facts will be given to me.*

In what other ways have our children been taught that life is easy?


The challenge with this 'life is easy' sell, says Michael McQueen, is when life gets hard, young people either change their goal (leave

school, change jobs, find a new partner etc) or they think they are not good enough and their self esteem plummets. Recently I was speaking to 120 Scholarship students. They remarked scholarship is hard. I smiled and replied, "It is supposed to be – if it was easy everyone would do it!" This was a revelation for so many of them.

I believe we have a huge responsibility as teachers and parents to ensure our children know that life can be hard, that they will fail and that life can be unfair. I'm not suggesting we be all doom and gloom, simply that bad stuff will happen amongst the good.

Twentieth Century Philosopher, Buckminster Fuller, said, "Life is full of lessons to be learned. When you have learned one lesson, life will give you a bigger lesson." Have you noticed that? Once you get through a big challenge, you are given a bigger one to deal with. Challenges and life lessons never get easier.

How will children learn about winning and losing if they don't experience it? How will they learn to take disappointment? What happens when they don't get their way? How will they develop the skills of persistence, grit, resilience, responsible risk taking, flexible thinking, creativity etc. if life and learning is always easy?

In what ways might you go about helping students know that they need to go through hard to get to easy? 

Karen is a leading authority on effective learning and teaching in Australasia. She is the founder and CEO of Spectrum Education. A highly skilled and dynamic presenter, she works with teachers, parents, students and corporate clients.
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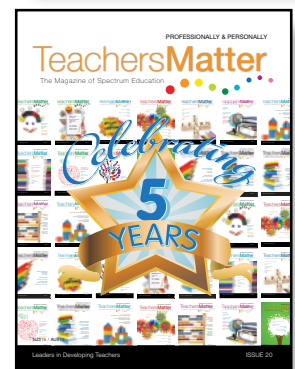
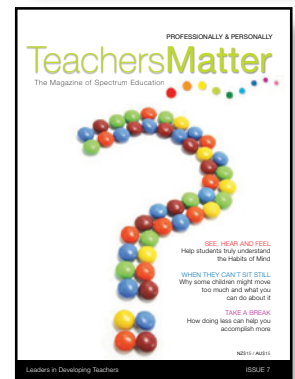
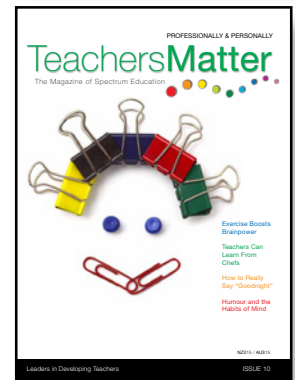
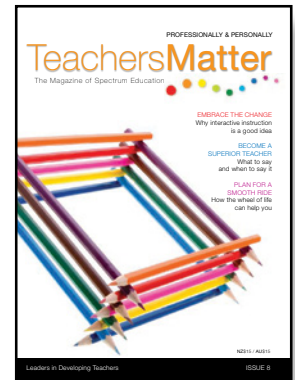
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“

*Every child is an artist. The problem is
how to remain an artist once we grow up.*

”

Picasso



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