TEACH | vol 12 | no 1 | 2018

TEACHJOURNAL

OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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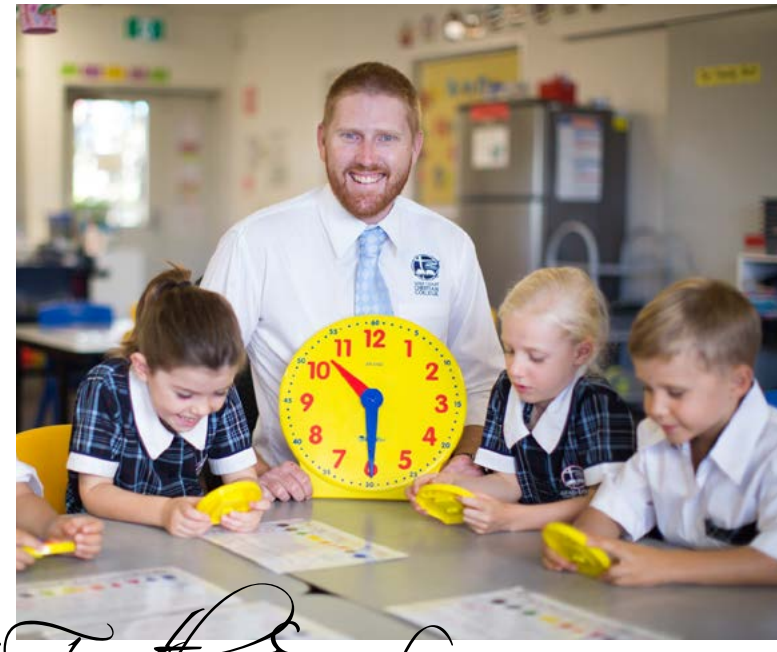

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TEACHJOURNAL
of Christian Education

ABN 53 108 186 401 ISSN 1835-1492
EDITION: VOL 12, No 1, 2018

TEACH is a journal that includes both refereed and non-refereed articles on various aspects of Christian education. It publishes articles of teaching and professional practice; educational administration; research and scholarship; and contains the reflections, impressions and experiences of Christian educators.

The journal invites and welcomes articles, papers, and materials that relate to its mission and vision statements. For further information, and notes for contributors, visit *TEACH* at **research.avondale.edu.au/teach/**

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PUBLISHER
AVONDALE ACADEMIC PRESS
PO Box 19
Cooranbong NSW 2265

Cover
Year eight students Aidan Borgas and Caleb Timms investigate the control of robots in their 2017 Mandatory Technology class at Avondale School.

Photography
Wes Tolhurst

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Ministry Of Teaching

EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Unaware that "perinatal deaths outnumbered adult deaths from breast cancer and represented twice the number of deaths from road trauma" (Baker, 2018, para. 13), this assertion of the Royal College of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians grabbed my attention. Publicity around road death and breast cancer prevention seems to be amongst both the most well known, and affirmed, within the community. Why is the Australian stillbirth rate of about 2200 a year, 30% higher than in other developed countries (para. 2), virtually unknown and unaddressed. The Australia College of Nurses identifies this as a "neglected epidemic" (para. 1).

The stillbirth of daughter Caroline (1999), empowered Kristina Keneally to seek the current Senate enquiry. Yet only 21 submissions have been received and submissions close in a few days (29th June, 2018).

Why the apathy? How can these "small' deaths lose their collective significance? Where is the outcry? Is the sorrow too enduring to be spoken of? Is the pain of recall, too harsh? Is the problem too encompassing to consider any potential solutions? Our nation seeks a research response.

Baker shares the experience of mothers claiming: to have not received a warning of the possibility of still birth, an absent or vague prognosis in addressing scan observations, carrying their child close to term with total unpreparedness for planning an infant funeral.

Another "neglected epidemic" can be homiletically envisaged. If the Christian community is considered the 'mother', it's children the 'baby', and adulthood the birthing, with children emerging into adulthood 'spiritually dead', then another inadequately addressed tragedy confronts us.

The tragic loss of youth from Christian belief is a concern that periodically engages parents, churches and spiritual leadership. Hill (2016) summatively addresses recent research accepting a 'three legged stool' model of engagement—parents, church and youth work, "working together to create a climate and culture of welcome, of priority and of sharing faith" (para. 24).

This issue of TEACH seeks to support your 'youth work', accepting these priorities of faith sharing.

Can classrooms be more welcoming and accommodating so involving children in learning effectively? Read about: aspiring to improve—"Grow", Hillard teachers' review of optimal methods for teaching reading and spelling, and the use of graphic organisers in visual learning. Consider whether best art education is participation in artistic behaviours, or creating excellent product. How do we react to student values affected by 'digitalised society'? What interactions create an accepting and supportive climate for students with traumatic brain injury? Why are teachers rejecting leadership as a career option, or leaving the profession?

Two recent studies can inform a shift from attending professional development, to experiencing satisfying professional learning. The initiatives offered: about 'reflection' by Briscoe (2017) to teachers, and 'valuing trust' to administrators by Savolainen and Lopez-Fresno (2013) may well offer starting points. May your learning with students encompass life's completeness.

"Another "neglected epidemic" can be homiletically envisaged. If the Christian community is considered the 'mother' …"

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[Photography: Glenys Perry]

Caption: Krista Richards is obviously enjoying her teaching of History at the Avondale High School. Photography: Wes Tolhurst

Traumatic Brain Injury: Informed accommodation in the classroom

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Key words: Accomodation, learning strategies, traumatic brain injury and symptoms

Abstract

This paper discusses traumatic brain injury (TBI) and the symptoms that affect a student emotionally, cognitively and socially after experiencing a TBI. Traumatic brain injuries can have a profoundly negative impact on a child's ability to learn at school and interact with peers in social situations. Recent research shows how TBI affects brain function and the impacts that this can have on education. However, research also suggests effective strategies that teachers can use in their classroom when teaching a student who has experienced a TBI.

"The occurrence of TBI is increasing … [it] will be the third leading cause of death and disability by 2020 … Children and adolescents belong to the highest risk age group"

Introduction

Acquired brain injury (ABI) is a term that describes the result of any damage to the brain that occurs after birth; and can be due to lack of oxygen, strokes, neurological disease or accidents. This paper focusses on Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), a subset of ABI, which results from a 'traumatic' event—such as a car accident or a blow to the head—that causes brain impairment (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, [AIHW], 2007). There are two classifications of TBI: open-head and closed-head injuries. Open-head injuries occur when the scalp or skull is pierced and the damage is usually localised. Closed head injuries result from an external force which damages the tissues beneath the skull, including where the head moves backwards and then forwards (as in whiplash or Shaken Baby syndrome) when the damage is likely to be on both sides of the brain (Aldrich & Obrzut, 2012). The occurrence of TBI is increasing globally due to increased vehicle use and according to the World Health Organisation, will be the third leading cause of death and disability by 2020 (Hyder, 2007). The severity of a TBI is measured by the length of time the person is unconscious using the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS). The ratings that originate from the GCS inform both immediate surgical and other medical interventions for the individual (Sherer et al., 2017, p. 125). Traumatic brain injury is potentially lethal; however, with correct rehabilitation and care, the majority of individuals can recover successfully.

Why is this topic important for teachers?

Children and adolescents belong to the highest risk age group for receiving a TBI (Lewandowski & Reiger, 2009). Therefore, it is likely that educational professionals will be required to teach students who are suffering with symptoms related to TBI. In Australia TBI is common—approximately 2.2% of Australians have had a TBI (AIHW, 2007, p. 1). The exact incidence of TBI is difficult to measure, depending on which data is used: length of unconsciousness, hospital admissions, emergency room visits or G.P. visits in addition to under-reporting for mild injuries (Schilling & Getch, 2012). In the US during 2013, just over 54% of all TBI-related hospitalisations and deaths in children were caused by falls and in general, TBI contributes around 30% of all deaths from injuries (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDCP], 2017). The three major causes of TBI in children aged between 0-14 are falls (40%), vehicle accidents (31%) and abuse, which includes shaking or pushing children (14%) (CDCP, 2017; AIHW, 2007).

It is important to understand that the majority of students will return to school still experiencing some symptoms from their traumatic brain injury (Clark, 2012). Unfortunately, research has shown that

many teachers don't realise that these symptoms may not be physical, thus gaining the impression that the child is fully recovered (Glang et al., 2015). Researchers (Glang et al., 2015, p. 216) assert there is a "significant discrepancy between the number of children with TBI reported by hospitals and the number of students receiving special education" due to TBI. It has been suggested that at best, "only one in six children who need post-TBI special education and related services are receiving educational programming designed to address their specific needs" (Glang et al., 2015, p. 213). In fact Ball & Howe, (2013, p. 74) comment: "Children who experience moderate to mild head injuries are unlikely to go to specialist rehabilitation services, may be out of hospital within days of their injury; thus this much larger group is even less likely to receive professional support outside of their initial medical care". Rushworth (2012, p. 8) also notes: "lack of societal awareness compounds the problem. The majority of children with an ABI make a good *physical* recovery and often they will show no outward signs of disability. The common effects of injury, such as poor short-term memory, fatigue or irritability can be misinterpreted as simply flaws in the person."

What else do we know about TBI?

The initial recovery process from TBI is rapid, occurring over an 18-36-month period, with about 80 percent of recovery occurring during the first 6 months (Valente & Fisher, 2011). According to Jagoda (2010) the majority of mild TBI patients will recover quickly and return to somewhat normal functioning within 3 months. However, unfortunately 20% of people who experience a mild TBI continue to live with symptoms needing ongoing medical care. Traumatic brain injuries can result in varying outcomes due to factors such as "the severity of impact, as well as the involvement of varied and often multiple areas of the brain" (Wright, Zeeman & Biezaitis, 2015, p. 1).

Who should assist a child with TBI?

As a consequence of its varied nature, TBI leads to a different range of "physical, psychological and social difficulties, and as a result, requires a diverse range of rehabilitation efforts from a variety of health practitioners across different settings, over the course of the recovery process" (Wright, Zeeman & Biezaitis, 2015, p. 1). Along with health practitioners, school counsellors and psychologists also need to play a vital role in helping students and school staff with management of symptoms caused by the TBI (Canto, Chesire, Buckley & Andrews, 2014). The starting point for teachers in understanding students with TBIs is to either obtain or request a neurophysical evaluation from the case manager of the child's TBI rehabilitation (Mayfield & Homack, 2005). This will give in-depth detail on the extent of the deficits of the student, allow comparisons with prior-to-TBI performance and will also allow the creation and implementation of an Individualised Education Program (IEP) (Levesque, 2011). This program should be created in collaboration with relevant health professionals and should involve the parents in order to meet all the needs of the child.

What are symptoms that teachers need to recognise?

Sherer et al., (2017, p. 126) note that TBI commonly results in a wide range of emotional, sensory and cognitive impairments and these often lead to further neurobehavioral issues such as impaired concentration, insomnia, restlessness and fatigue. In the classroom setting, symptoms of traumatic brain injury can be misunderstood as common behavioural or learning issues (Jantz & Coulter, 2007). Therefore, teachers need to have an understanding of the various intellectual, physical, emotional and social outcomes of TBI so they can recognize and support these students who are struggling to cope. Children that sustain a TBI may have impaired functioning in the classroom such as experiencing cognitive difficulties in concentrating, solving problems and understanding what is required by their teacher (Mayfield & Homack, 2005). However, children with TBI can become capable learners if teachers are willing to investigate their learning difficulties, collaboratively develop effective IEPs and differentiate their teaching to accommodate their needs.

> *"only one in six children who need post-TBI special education … are receiving educational programming designed to address their specific needs"*

Long-term symptoms

Children who sustain a TBI under the age of five will typically report "disruptive behaviour, poor empathy and a lack of moral reasoning when they become older" (Tonks, Slater, Frampton, Wall, Yates & Williams, 2009). This type of behavioural change can be more disturbing for parents than the actual cognitive deficit (Tonks, Yates, Williams, Frampton, & Slater, 2010).

Individuals who have experienced a traumatic brain injury are likely to have difficulties with their social and emotional behaviour (Glang et al., 2015). Individuals with TBI often report poor conduct, emotional distress, and problematic peer relationships (Tonks et al., 2009). Multiple long-term studies have indicated that symptoms of TBI often continue or get worse as the child develops (Fulton, Yeates, Taylor, Walz, & Wade, 2012). This results in children with traumatic brain injury, falling behind their peers in both academic performance and social skills as the educational requirement of independent learning and functioning becomes greater (Fulton, et al., 2012). Perhaps this may explain why a study conducted in

New York City revealed that 50 percent of males and 49 percent of females admitted into the juvenile prison system had a history of traumatic brain injury (Kaba, Diamond, Haque, Macdonald, & Venters, 2014).

Educational challenges

In the classroom setting, children with TBI "present a unique constellation of learning and behavioural challenges" (Glang et al., 2015, p. 212) and struggle with both educational and behavioural challenges. Studies have shown that TBI affects a person's cognitive, academic, emotional, behavioural and social functioning that can have a profound impact on a student's ability to succeed at school (Jantz & Coulter, 2007). Students with TBI can experience similar deficits to children with neurodevelopmental disorders and may have "difficulties with self-regulation like students with emotional disturbance, or may struggle with attention and concentration like students with attention deficit and hypoactive disorder" (Glang et al., 2015, p. 212). Students with TBI may also experience cognitive problems with memory and knowledge gaps as they struggle to remember or relearn previously mastered skills (McAllister, Flashman, Sparling & Saykin, 2004).

According to Arroyos-Jurado and Savage (2008) "these effects can influence students' ability to navigate the behavioural, social, and academic demands of the classroom" and cognitive impairment following TBI is "inevitable and varies according to the severity of injury" (p. 252). Impairment due to TBI can include disorders of learning and memory, complex processing, perception and communication (Arroyos-Jurado & Savage, 2008).

> *Harvey (2006) recommends two concepts as essential to the effective teaching of students with TBI: variability and flexibility.*

Strategies for teachers

Given the physical, cognitive, and behavioural deficits faced by students with TBI, Harvey (2006) recommends two concepts as essential to the effective teaching of students with TBI: variability and flexibility. This suggestion serves as a broad and general principle for overcoming emerging challenges. However, more specific guidance is needed to address precise difficulties such as impacts on memory, attention, speech and communication, vision and behaviour (Clark, 2012).

Memory support

After experiencing a TBI, it is common to lose recollection or have memory loss to the point where one may forget how to conduct simple, everyday tasks (Ylvisaker, Jacobs, & Feeney, 2003). Going back to school with memory deficits can be extremely difficult. According to Schutz, Rivers, McNamara, Schutz and Libato (2010), poor memory is one of the most common symptoms of TBI and "the way to help assist these children is to first understand as much as one can about memory and the different types that are affected by the injury" (Clark 2012, p. 9). Researchers (Knight, Harnett & Titov, 2009) assert multiple areas of memory—short term, intermediate, functional, working, and complex —can be damaged by TBI. However, there are ways teachers can help improve the memory of students after a TBI. These strategies include: coming up with a routine of daily tasks, being organised, using tools that aid the memory, such as posters and check-lists (Clark, 2012). Additionally, Schilling and Getch (2012), suggest strategies and solutions should include providing the students with regular breaks from routines, supplying outlines of lectures and content of classes, and giving alternative assessments.

Issues of attention

Another common deficit caused by TBI is difficulty paying attention. According to Clark (2012) there are four common sense ways to assist students with their attention: find a place to work that limits distractions, avoid multitasking, allow the student to work at a pace that is realistic for them, practice focus and attention skills by doing everyday tasks, such as reading a short story and performing simple mathematics problems, and give breaks when needed. Assistive technology is also highly useful for supporting students with TBI (Dettmer, Ettel, Glang, & McAvoy, 2014). Devices and tools such as daily diaries (electronic) —aiding attention by reminding, smartphones, iPad and computers with educational applications—can provide increased motivation through immediacy of interaction and response, engaging graphic interfacing and individualisation of tasks. All these can help students function proficiently, support memory and reduce cognitive strain (Brain Injury Association, 2015).

Behaviour challenges

Behaviour management plans are also vital in creating a positive and effective learning space for the student. These plans do not only involve reactive discipline but are more focused on proactive discipline by targeting trigger points for the child and giving them a 'safe space' to retreat to if the classroom environment becomes overwhelming (Linden, Braiden, & Miller, 2012, p. 95). Determining the antecedent prior to an outburst or withdrawal is vital in eliminating triggers. Proactive preventive measures include: creating a routine that avoids (where possible) identified antecedents, preparing the student before changes take place in the routine, and redirecting the student as soon as the behaviour begins (Mayfield & Homack, 2005.). Students with TBI are also highly likely to become physically and

mentally fatigued throughout the day so it is important to vary academic and non-academic classes regularly, so they can rest in addition to providing 'brain breaks'. This is will increase productivity dramatically and furthermore improve a student's sense of well-being and self-esteem (Mayfield & Homack, 2005

Regardless of the severity of the injury, communication between the hospital, other supporting services, the parents and other school staff involved with the student is vital in order to have a successful transition into the classroom. The aim of this communication should be to collect "medical and functional information to help the school in developing an appropriate and individualized plan for the student's re-entry into school" (Bowen, 2008, para. 3).

The following table (Adapted from Bowen, 2005) suggests strategies and external aids to support a student with various cognitive deficits.

Social emotional issues and strategies

A frequent and critical result of a TBI for children is the loss of both memory and ability to perform certain tasks at which they previously excelled. Returning to school can be distressing for a student who is recovering from a TBI particularly

> *Proactive preventive measures include: creating a routine that avoids … identified antecedents, preparing the student before changes…, and redirecting the student … behaviour*

Table 1: Strategies and external aids to support a student with cognitive deficits

Cognitive Impairment	Teaching/Learning Strategies	External Aids
ATTENTION • Difficulty concentrating • Easily distracted • Hard to multitask • Easily bored • Unable to complete things • Can't remember • Changes subjects often	• Control noise & activity • Preferential seating • Simple instructions • Slow pace • Allow breaks & rest • Small sections of work • Use cues (verbal gestural, visual) to remind • Repeat instructions	• Earplugs to reduce noise • Timer to focus attention • Place symbols & signs to remind students
MEMORY • Forgets people, places, things • Forgets specific routines & rules • Forgets instructions • Frequently loses things	• Repeat new information • Teach visual imagery • Simplify information • Task analysis • Use fact cards & cue sheets • Teach study skills • Teach note-taking • Teach self-questioning	• Checklists, Post it notes • Keep items in specific locations • Use labels, maps, journals, calendars, planners • Memory notebook • Timers & alarms
ORGANISATION • Forgets specific routines & rules • Frequently loses things • Difficulty starting or finishing a task • Difficulty sequencing tasks	• Review daily routines • Specific locations & labels • Assign an in-class peer buddy • Involve an older student mentor/ learning coach	• Use a visual schedule • Highlighting & colour-coding • Checklists for tasks • Binder with subject sections & homework pockets • Daily planner to record homework • Graphic organisers for sequencing • Timelines for assignment completion
WRITING & INFORMATION PROCESSING • Difficulty starting writing • Losing place and confusion	• Reduce written work • Allow extra time • Allow verbal response • Enlarge print on worksheets • A catch up period at end of the day	• Use digital recorders • Assign peer note-taker • Use word processor • Use peer scribe

> *teachers need to be observant and ensure that the student with a TBI is neither isolated nor bullied*

if medical appointments and hospital visits increase their social isolation (as well as their academic disadvantage). Schilling & Gretch (2012, p. 57) suggest three strategies to address these difficulties: "ongoing guidance and counselling; community or school based coaching of social skills; and Community TBI support groups." The latter enable the student to interact with others who are struggling with the same issues. Teachers who are alert to this difficulty can facilitate interactions with other students through partner and group work, as well as incidental coaching through role plays as needed. In addition, teachers need to be observant and ensure that the student with a TBI is neither isolated nor bullied. Above all, communication between teachers, parents and students, needs to be calm, collaborative, positive and encouraging.

Conclusion

As has been shown, traumatic brain injury has serious and often lasting negative effects on a person's ability to learn and have a successful education. Teachers need to have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of TBI so that they can recognise when a student in their class may be experiencing symptoms related to a head injury. The hospital system, family and school system need to work together to improve the outcomes for young people with traumatic brain injury, beyond initiating an IEP. When compassion, effort and perseverance characterise the teacher's approach, and this is demonstrated in a planned implementation of differentiation within the evaluated facilitation of an effective IEP, progressive improvement in the all-round well-being and self-esteem of the student with a TBI can be expected. TEACH

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Independent studies endorse superior strategies for teaching reading and spelling: Hilliard's journey

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"Nearly 1/3 of Prep students fail to fully realize the phonemic structure of words. This skill is the "raw material for reading and writing".

Key words: Phonics, reading, vocabulary, comprehension, differentiated intervention

Of the many educational outcomes to be achieved in the primary years of schooling, research demonstrates that learning to read is the most significant. The precise way in which the complex processes combine must be understood and demonstrated by teachers in order to identify their students' needs and to teach most effectively. The activities initiated at Hilliard Christian School to enhance achievement of this goal are shared here to support others with the same aim.

A background

There have been numerous large-scale reviews of research - both nationally and internationally - to provide education systems with independent, evidence-based guiding principles for the teaching of reading and spelling.

Consistencies across the findings of the research has identified five essential components of an effective reading program:

1. **Phonemic Awareness** – understanding that words can be broken into separate sounds (phonemes);
2. **Phonics** – learning and using the relationships between sounds and letter-symbols to sound out (decode) written words;
3. **Vocabulary** – the words students need to know in order to comprehend and communicate;
4. **Fluency** – the ability to read accurately, quickly and expressively;
5. **Comprehension** – extracting and constructing meaning from written text using

knowledge of words, concepts, facts and ideas (DEST, 2005; NICHD, 2000: Rose, 2006).

Each component is briefly expounded below.

Phonemic awareness

Replicated, evidence-based research findings demonstrate that reading development requires well developed phonemic awareness. Identifying the separate sounds is necessary before letters can be attached to the phonemes (symbol to sound relationship) and therefore provides the foundation for reading the English alphabetic code.

Nearly 1/3 of Prep students fail to fully realize the phonemic structure of words. This skill is the "raw material for reading and writing". It is impossible to correctly relate a letter to a sound if the sound cannot be perceived (Konza, D. 2010).

Phonics

Scientific research indicates that initial synthetic phonics instruction is the single most effective decoding approach for students. It is not only the seriously 'at-risk' students who achieve greater success under such a phonics regime; those students in the average and above range, as well as students who are making slow progress, will benefit from this approach.

Synthetic phonics has proven to be effective and more efficient than other forms of phonics instruction. Five and seven-year follow-up studies demonstrate that the superior effect of the synthetic approach does not diminish. The enhanced performance of girls over boys in early reading development appears to disappear when a synthetic approach is used – studies have shown boys do much better with this methodology (Johnston, R.S. & Watson J. E. 2005).

Vocabulary

The research is clear regarding implications for instruction that will enable the development of comprehensive, useful vocabularies. Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to being an independent and successful reader, writer and communicator and learner. Perhaps one of the greatest assets teachers and parents can provide their students for succeeding, not only in their education but more generally in life, is a large, rich vocabulary and the ability to use those words well. Capacity to function in today's complex social and economic world is significantly affected by our language skills and word knowledge. Learning to read and write effectively and with fluency affects the long-term trajectory of a student's life. Limited vocabulary can trap students in a cycle of low achievement, poor communication and disengagement (Konza, D. 2010).

The dependence of both academic achievement and reading achievement on vocabulary growth has been clearly established for decades. Unfortunately these findings, generally, have not influenced the practice of teachers.

Current research indicates that there is very little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in school curricula (Beck I. & McKowen M. 2007).

Fluency

Fluency is another vital component of the reading process. It will develop without conscious effort when all the elements of reading are in place. Fluency enables the reader to focus on the meaning of the text. Fluent readers are able to maintain their skill over very long periods of time and can generalise across texts (Konza, D. 2010).

Fluency is among the most difficult component to rectify among older struggling readers. Intervening early when a student displays slow progress in oral reading fluency is more efficient and effective than later attempts. It is generally accepted with grade level text, fluency should occur between the first and third year. Screening and regular monitoring are critical pre-requisites for ensuring the development of fluency over this period of schooling (Spencer S. A. & Manis, 2010).

Fluent reading is a particularly important skill for students as they move through the year levels – they read increasingly longer texts, lengthier narratives and in-depth research topics.

> *"The dependence of both academic … and reading achievement on vocabulary growth … [is] established … [but] these findings … have not influenced the practice of teachers."*

Comprehension

Each of the above elements contributes to comprehension (the ultimate goal of reading) and the extent to which each is developed will affect the level of understanding that can be accessed by the reader (Konza, D. 2010).

Allocated instructional time to teach explicitly comprehension strategies is essential. Teaching comprehension strategies must begin in the early years of schooling and continue to be taught systematically and explicitly. These strategies take students to a new level of active understanding and insight as well as enhancing language and vocabulary knowledge.

It should be acknowledged that some children will learn to read regardless of the method used. These are the children who arrive at schools with the great advantage of an extensive vocabulary and regular and positive experiences with conversation, books and print.

Nevertheless, it is the unequivocal conclusion of the major national and international reviews into effective instruction, that most children benefit from

systematic and explicit teaching and the application of the five essential elements of reading – sometimes referred to as the "five pillars" of reading:

- Phonemic Awareness,
- Phonics,
- Vocabulary,
- Fluency and
- Comprehension

The School's "Reading Journey"

The School

The Hilliard School is situated in a suburb of Hobart and provides schooling for 110 students ranging from Kindergarten to Year Ten. The school is part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist School System and prides itself on providing students with a Christ centred, Bible-based education.

Approximately, one third of students have English as Another Language (EAL) background and approximately three quarters are from a lower socio-economic status (SES).

High quality talk is a key factor in improving student engagement and outcomes.

Project background

In 2016, the Association of Independent Schools, Tasmania, offered Literacy Projects where schools could embark on a "Reading Journey" - *The Big Six* elements required for the effective teaching of reading and spelling from kindergarten to grade six.

An outline mapping

Each term, two after-school sessions were dedicated to understanding and implementing the essential components to teach reading and spelling. Prior to each session, teachers were required to read two researched articles (Konza, 2010 and Bayetto, 2012). Learning was supported by podcasts (Australian Primary Principals Association, APPA) and a power point presentation drew together the essential features of each component. At each session, teachers commented on the readings and opportunities for embedding the components into everyday practice.

The Big Six professional learning included ***oral language*** as a sixth component adding to the "five pillars". Oral language provides the foundation for learning to read, and is related to overall reading achievement throughout primary and secondary schooling (Snow et al, 1995; Wise et al 2007). As well as being essential for literacy learning, successful oral language is critical for student well-being since:

- Almost all classroom-room based learning relies on oral language. "High quality talk is a key factor in improving student engagement and outcomes" (Communication Trust, 2013, p.16).
- Low literacy skills have been related to poorer outcomes in school achievement, measures of self-esteem, physical and mental health, housing, employment, socio-economic status, illicit drug use and criminal activity.

Thus, an individual's oral language and therefore literacy level has a major impact across personal, social and economic domains (Konza, 2010).

A specific 'topicological' mapping

Known words and comprehension

The Simple View of Reading (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) was introduced providing a framework for *The Big Six*. This assisted teachers to understand that reading has two broad sets of sub-skills that contributes to successful reading – *language comprehension* (vocabulary, background knowledge, reasoning language structures) and *word recognition* (decoding, sight recognition). Skilled reading involves the fluent coordination of both processes.

Phonemic awareness and phonics

The *Letters and Sounds* (K-2) framework commenced at Hilliard in 2014. *Letters and Sounds* was founded on the principles of the *Independent Review of Teaching Early Reading* (Rose, 2006). The review led to significant changes in approaches to the teaching of reading in the UK with a strong emphasis on the inclusion of the systematic teaching of phonics.

Letters and Sounds is structured in six overlapping phases requiring at least 30 minutes daily of direct (explicit) teaching. Each phase recommends activities for teaching *phonemic awareness* and *phonic* knowledge and skills systematically and incrementally. Throughout the activities, students apply, practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge, generalising across curriculum areas.

Students' progress is tracked through a reliable assessment process. Informed by objective data, teachers discern the rate at which students are progressing and adapt the pace accordingly. Assessment and tracking identifies learning difficulties at an early stage and additional support can be provided for struggling readers.

> *Implementing the Letters and Sound framework, has given me confidence to provide my students with thorough and explicit knowledge and understanding to be competent readers and writers. The structure allows for the development of students' speaking and listening skills, in preparation*

for reading and writing, by developing their knowledge of phonics and skills with blending and segmenting.

With a synthetic approach to teaching and learning, Letters and Sounds provides students with ability to decode words rather than rely on guess work and using pictures for cues. It is an explicit, step by step method of teaching, that also allows for flexibility in the way that it is delivered. This permits teachers to find interesting and engaging ways for their students to learn. My students have developed a strong understanding of letter and sound knowledge and with blending and segmenting. This has enabled them to become successful readers and writers.

The Letters and Sounds framework enables effective teaching and when used in conjunction with decodable texts, students are building solid reading and spelling skills and are enjoying positive learning experiences.

Angela Robertson, Prep Teacher.

Oral language and vocabulary

The *Speaking and Listening Strand* of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2008) was used for planning *oral language* and *vocabulary*. Teachers were encouraged to plan for a range and depth of oral language experiences, setting times for whole class, small group and partner activities.

Teachers were presented with a range of vocabulary activities, particularly for teaching domain specific vocabulary, morphological clusters, semantic clusters and etymological word webs.

Teachers were introduced to the *"Super Six" comprehension* (NSW DEST, 2010) strategies – definition of comprehension strategies; descriptions and examples of the repertoire of the *Super Six* comprehension strategies; a process for explicit instruction of comprehension strategies and teaching ideas to support the teaching of comprehension strategies

The six elements were consolidated by reviewing research on *What Effective "Literacy Schools" Do* (Konza, 2010) and a self-reflection on the teachers' own environmental and instructional practice.

Differentiated meeting of needs

Prior to introducing *Response to Intervention*, a podcast, *The Evidence That Principals Need to Lead the Planning for Improvement in Reading* (Bayetto, 2012) was viewed. The podcast explained tracking and assessing students on the elements of *The Big Six*. Subsequently, the Response to Intervention (*RtI*) Model (DSF Literacy Services, 2014) was introduced to teachers. Over the past decade, *RtI* has been identified as a model where the needs of all students can be catered for in instruction, assessment and intervention. Primarily it encompasses a multi-tiered approach with the provision of increasing levels of support.

Tier 1 Students are provided with high quality teaching (whole class) that includes a rich oral language program, structured synthetic phonics, alphabetic knowledge, decodable reading books; emphasis on blending and segmenting; accurate and fluent word reading and spelling skills.

Tier 2 Assistance is provided for students who are failing to make adequate progress and are supported by an additional 30 minutes of small group instruction 4-5 times per week. To assist teachers with their planning and assessing progress for targeted second tier students, a proforma was developed by an IST Literacy Consultant.

Tier 3 If these students fail to make progress and are resistant to high intensity/evidence based intervention, they are supported by Multilit – Making Up for Lost Time in Literacy. This is a one-on-one program based on rigorous research.

"Persistent reading problems can be reduced to 5% of "at risk" students with early, appropriate and intensive synthetic phonics"

A flow chart was presented (ACT Government, Education and Training, 2010) to explain clearly the pathway for the school to follow. The earlier and more systematic introduction of intervention for students struggling to acquire basic skills has the potential to reduce the number of students who present with learning difficulties. Persistent reading problems can be reduced to 5% of "at risk" students with early, appropriate and intensive synthetic phonics (Hempenstall, K. 2016).

Targeting intervention

In subsequent sessions, the *Simple View of Reading* framework was used to plot students in the quadrants so that intervention could be targeted to specific needs.

Teachers from grade 3 to grade 6 implemented *No-Nonsense Spelling* (Babcock, 2016) which provided a seamless transition from *Letters and Sounds*.

No-Nonsense Spelling Program (2016) was developed to offer teachers a comprehensive and

accessible progression in the teaching of spelling. Guidance is provided on how to teach the strategies, knowledge and skills students need to learn. The focus of this program is the teaching of spelling but integral to the teaching is the opportunity to promote the learning of spellings, including essential word lists for each grade.

> *In school professional interactions involving consultants with broad expertise has led to teacher implementation of superior strategies*

> *Over the last two years the teachers have implemented the No-Nonsense Spelling Program. They have observed an increase in student performance in spelling over this time and students have enjoyed the activities and lessons in which they have participated. The program is well structured and there are many resources available to assist in the implementation of the different spelling units covered within the program.*
>
> *No-Nonsense Spelling is an excellent follow on from Letters and Sounds in which the students within our Early Years have been participating. The program allows us to assist students become more effective and proficient spellers, which then enables them to become more fluent writers. The program has a systematic approach, teaching the different rules and conventions associated with spelling and requires explicit teaching when learning these skills. The strategies that students are taught assist them to recognize these and they can implement each in their writing to develop their own spelling skills.*
>
> Damien Rabe Grade 3-4; Kristy Baker Grade 5-6.

Conclusion

In school professional interactions involving consultants with broad expertise has led to teacher implementation of superior strategies in teaching reading and spelling consequently benefiting students in Hilliard Christian School. TEACH

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OUTDOOR RECREATION

SHORT COURSES

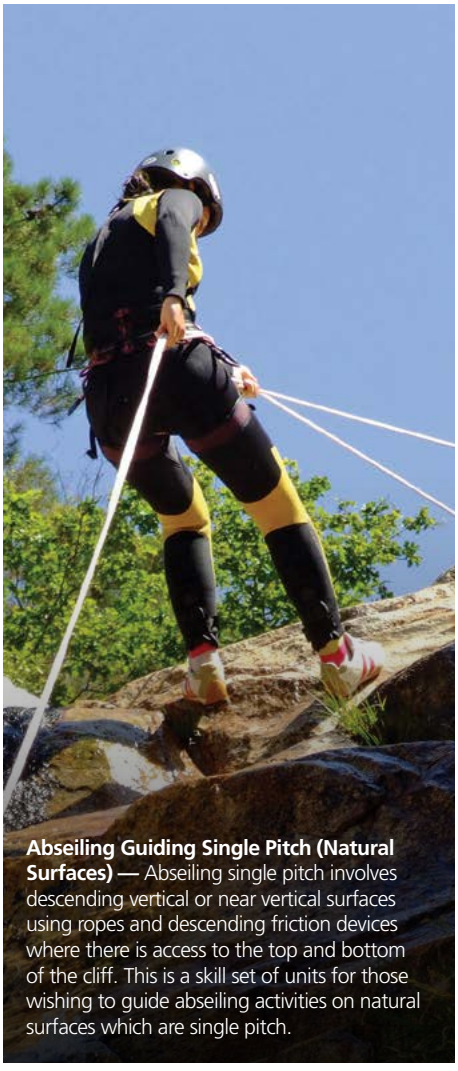
Avondale offers Outdoor Education short courses, ideal for teachers who plan to facilitate effective outdoor education programs and activities for their school students.

These courses will train teachers to be guides in the three activity areas of Bushwalking, Kayaking and Abseiling. The competencies are from the Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package (SIS10) and the qualification is a Statement of Attainment from the Certificate III in Outdoor Recreation, which is the recommended certification for those who wish to guide outdoor education activities. Short courses are available online with a practical assessment in your local area..

BUSHWALKING

Bushwalking Guide Controlled Environments — Controlled bushwalking involves walking in the natural environment for a day or overnight bushwalk. This a skill set of units for those wishing to guide bushwalks in locations such as tracked and easily untracked areas that are reliably marked on maps, and are obvious on the ground.

ABSEILING



Abseiling Guiding Single Pitch (Natural Surfaces) — Abseiling single pitch involves descending vertical or near vertical surfaces using ropes and descending friction devices where there is access to the top and bottom of the cliff. This is a skill set of units for those wishing to guide abseiling activities on natural surfaces which are single pitch.

PADDLING

Canoeing/kayaking Guide Flat Water — Canoeing and kayaking has a broad scope. It involves paddling activities done in a variety of different locations from rivers and lakes to estuaries and protected waters. This is a skill set of units for those wishing to guide canoeing/kayaking trips on flat and undemanding water.

TEACH[R]

Teaching beyond post-modernism in a digitalised society

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Key words: Alter-modernism, post-modernism, internet, digital media, screen use, truth

The rapid and exponential growth of the internet over the past 40 years has changed the nature of society. Indeed, at the end of the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the internet is our defining medium. This has implications for student learning and, consequently, teacher pedagogy.

> *In post-modernism, …The imperative of truth was replaced with the importance of relationships and the need to respect the contextual reality of others.*

In the modernist era, beginning around 1500, with early modern philosophy[1], and ending around the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989[2], truth came to be conceived of as an objective reality to be disseminated in a rational, scientific and systematic fashion. The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who became his own "ism", defined modernist methodology. Out of Kant's deliberations came the Copernican Revolution. "Copernicus was a sixteenth century astronomer who suggested replacing the old Ptolemaic astronomic model, where the Sun and all the heavenly bodies are viewed as orbiting about the Earth, with the new model where the planets, including Earth, are viewed as orbiting the Sun."[3] Kant's parallel theory endeavoured to eschew the human mind as a passive vessel so as to, alternatively, depict it as an active mechanism for thought in cognition. "So, instead of viewing the mind as the passive centre of observation, Kant viewed the mind as an active participator in observation. More radically, the consequence of this theory was that the mind creates and shapes its experiences."[4] However, it was Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the French mathematician and philosopher, who epitomised modernism with the aphorism, "I think, therefore I am."

As one thought as an individual, with the enlightened awareness of living within a post–medieval society, characterised by its perceptions of religious fate and feudal hierarchy, knowledge was comprehended as being factual, scientific and objective. Indeed, these facts could be tested and verified. In social theory, "modernity represents the rise of capitalism, science, and democracy through the rhetoric of universal reason and equality."[5] Further, later modernity, commencing around 1800[6], is to be identified with industrialization and a mechanized workforce.[7] In higher order thinking observations gave way to analysis.

In post-modernism, however, truth became more subjective and based on the experiences of those seeking to discern it. The imperative of truth was replaced with the importance of relationships and the need to respect the contextual reality of others. In this worldview analysis gave way to meta-analysis. Instead of the imperative of individual thought, born from the instruction of rationalist philosophy, there was a collective interpretation of experience. Today this is epitomised by social media, such as Facebook. Therefore, a concern for empirical realities, based on rational thought and a thorough investigation of the facts, became viewed through the lens of subjective and collaborated experiences. Therefore, postmodernism emphasised the elusiveness of meaning and knowledge.[8]

One can now discern a further shift in thought. Indeed, post-modernism has been replaced by a new dominant world-view. In this new era, the internet dominates. Not that the internet was not a feature of post-modernism. However, accessing knowledge is no longer the main issue. As much as its content is created, the internet, in and of itself, creates realities and shapes the lives of those who access it. In this, I am not simply referring to influences, although

[1]For example, the political realism of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527).
[2]The fall of the Berlin Wall symbolically marked the end of the cold war, with its rationalist ideologies and pragmatic responses.
[3]P. Rickman, "Lecture notes on Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason", Autumn, 1995, p. 5.
[4]Rickman, p. 5.
[5]R. Samuels, "Auto-Modernity after Postmodernism: Autonomy and Automation in Culture, Technology, and Education, *University of California, Los Angeles, Writing Programs*, 2008, p. 222
[6]Identified by the theorist, Charles Darwin (1809–1882), existentialist Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862).
[7]B. Nicol, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*, Cambridge University Press, p. 2
[8]A. Kirby, "The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond", Philosophy Now, Issue 58, 2006, p. 3.

the internet remains a dominant influence in the shaping of young minds. Neurologically, brains are being rewired to think in entirely new ways.[9] The result is that the world is now seen and experienced through emerging and alternative world views, relationships are entered into under an entirely new set of assumptions and beliefs, and knowledge is gained and conceived of on the basis of a totally reconstructed paradigm. Along with this, language has also undergone significant changes. As the New York futurist, Domonic Basulto, has observed, Facebook "deconstructed the meaning of 'friend' to near meaninglessness."[10] In this environment, the aim is not to discover and learn, but to be "liked".[11]

But beyond this, as Facebook is designated to an older generation, Instagram and Snapchat, containing only images, videos and brief phonetic messages, have emerged as the new ultimates. Here, it is not a matter of only being liked, but seen and encountered. The distinction between producers and consumers has also been obliterated, as everyone is seen to be a contributor, with the importance of the "expert" being significantly undermined.[12] This is particularly evident with sites such as Wikipedia. To be sure, in most cases, as English philosopher Alan Kirby has rightly observed, "Internet pages are not 'authored' in the sense that anyone knows who wrote them, or cares."[13] In its stead is emerging a new reality that is shaping a worldview taking society into a new phase. While Kirby referred to this emerging society as pseudo-modernism and Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker define metamodernism (from metaxis, between, since metamodernism is said to oscillate between modernism and post-modernism),[14] Basulto, following Nicolàs Bourriaud,[15] has termed the new era, "Alter-modernism". "Alter", because it is characterised by altered perspectives. It is an alternative modernism. In it, the meta-analysis of post-modernism gives way to a collective trans-critical imagination. In the new reality, the usual constructions are broken down and thought, with its accompanying behaviours and norms, moves beyond established conventions.

The imagination replaces empirical evidence, viewed through the lens of experience, and is seen to have no limitations. In place of evidence is the notion of fantasy, created by internet experiences. Indeed, imagination is not constrained by facts or knowledge, but tests possibilities and even embraces that which has no possibility. Indeed, the internet has enabled one to cross boundaries to create ethics, morality, belief and values that are fluid. In this, there are no facts, but experiences formed through "surface dipping" into the world of a multitudinous array of anonymous sites and posts.[16] It spells the end of a natural inclination for critical analysis, as in modernism, or even of a subjective and relativized view of reality, as in post-modernism.

In this emerging reality a neo-romanticism oscillates between modernism's enthusiasm and post-modernism's irony; between projection and perception, form and unformable, determinism and apathy, and coherence and chaos.[17] In this new paradigm, one can discern large proportions of a generation motivated by a regular stream of images, without commentary, and devoid of any particular cause, other than to empower a culture headed to no particular destination.[18] Consequently, the tendency is to experience the cultural moment, in contradistinction to seeking advancement for the long term through the usual conventions of enterprise, creating boundaries and being self-disciplined for the purpose of pursuing excellence.

However, as we delve deeper into the reaches of creative thinking, the implications become quite alarming. Ultimately, what is championed in the neo-romanticism of alter-modernism is the delirium of untruth[19] and the allure of connectedness without the depth required for perceptive and insightful understandings or worthwhile and enriching relationships.[20] Indeed, the cyber lifestyle stores very little to rely on for future emotional maturity or creative thinking. This is accompanied by the demise of the private life, now shared openly and frequently, but more significantly the secret life, which is now a

Ultimately, what is championed in the neo-romanticism of alter-modernism is the delirium of untruth

[9]N. Carr, "The Shallows: How the internet is changing the way we think, read and remember", Norton and Company, New York, 2010.
[10]D. Basulto, "On the Internet, What Comes After Post-modernism?", in *Bigthink*, 2016.
[11]As Ana Homayoun from the New York Times has observed, teenagers "seeking external validation become intoxicated by sensationalist engagement, sometimes sending compromising photos or comments. Of course, some adults have fallen into the same trap." A. Homayoun, "The Secret Social Media Lives of Teenagers", *The New York Times*, June 7, 2017.
[12]T. Nichols, "The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters", Oxford University Press, 2017.
[13]The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond, p. 4.
[14]T. Vermeulen, R. van den Akker, "Notes on Metamodernism", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, Vol. 2, 2010, p. 6.
[15]"The artists assembled in 'Altermodern' channel the different forms of social and technological networking offered by communication and mobility links in a globalized world." Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009, in *Artpulse*, Feb. 3-April 26, 2009, para. 2.
[16]Kirby comments, that in pseudo-modernism a "triteness, a shallowness dominates all. The pseudo-modern era, at least so far, is a cultural desert." Kirby, p. 3.
[17]Notes on Metamodernism, p. 8.
[18]Vermeulen and van den Akker define *metaxis* as "being simultaneously here, there, and nowhere." Notes on Metamodernism, p. 12.
[19]P. Olson, "Why Your Brain Might Be Wired to Believe Fake News", in *Forbes*, Feb. 1, 2017.
[20]J. M. Twenge, "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?", in *The Atlantic*, September 2017.
[21]A. Preston, "The Death of Privacy", in *The Guardian*, 3 August 2014.

shared commodity.[21] The demise of the secret life spells the diminution of introspective reflection, where creative and independent thinking takes place. It is a disappearing safe place to create dreams, energise hope and investigate possibilities. Consequently, the kind of critical thinking that is required to demonstrate higher order thinking has only limited experiences to rely upon. Indeed, excessive exposure to the internet has been found to lead to cognitive impairment and, and the most extreme cases, brain damage.[22] Those students who are consciously resisting this trend are the ones who succeed. To be sure, capital, whether it be intellectual, psychological or emotional, only emerges after effective investments have been made to ensure its emergence, or sufficient intervention has been enacted to path the way for its establishment.

Sigmund Freud's concept of the unconscious mind provides an interpretative framework that aids in discovering a reasoning behind these trends and accompanying behaviours. Freud described the unconscious mind as being like the unseen part of an iceberg. Traditionally, as Freud understood it, the superego, comprising of learned values one gains from family, religion and society, seeks to persuade the ego, or decision-making part of the brain, to turn to moral values instead of pleasure seeking. It enables one to differentiate between right and wrong, the needs of the present and the needs of the future, and one's role in society in relation to others. However, if the traditional feeders of the superego are replaced by superficial encounters and a plethora of posted values, then its ability to inform the ego rapidly breaks down and becomes dysfunctional, as the ability to differentiate, through discernment, diminishes or is obliterated. What is left, in Freud's analysis, is a robust Id. That is, the part of the brain that responds immediately to wants and desires. "The Id is chaotic and animal-like, seeking pleasure and avoiding pain."[23] Since the submerged part of the iceberg has been radically altered in alter-modernism, the tip of the iceberg behaves quite differently.

> *the internet is not simply a vehicle for ... communicating effectively, but a means of illusionary autonomy and control, that facilitates a life devoid of … differentiation*

The internet, with its propensity for pleasure, without a deep emotional or analytical investment, is the ideal place for the Id to flourish. This is manifested in flicking between screens for instant gratification and dopamine rushes, instead of differentiating by following learned conventions, including instructions regarding the virtues of appropriate boundaries, self-discipline and the norms of civil society.

There is enough research to provide evidence of a correlation between the undisciplined allure of the internet and poor performance.[24] This is primarily manifested in multitasking. That is, flicking between sites in the "fear of missing out (FOMO)", rather than focusing on the task at hand.[25] Indeed, when multitasking is attempted, performance slows or there are more mistakes.[26] A study by Karpinksi et al. in 2013, compared multitasking behaviours among students in Europe with those in the United States. They found that students in the United States who were distracted by multitasking suffered with a lower GPA. However, their European counterparts, who multitasked, were not adversely effected. They discovered two reasons for this. Firstly students in the United States, multitasked more. Secondly, European students were more strategic in their multitasking. For example, they would delay reading a message and responding when working on a task.[27]

The allure of the internet is that it facilitates the imagination, creates experiences and allows for surface interactions without discernment.[28] Further, the internet, following the ways of Feud's Id, provides a false feeling of control, autonomy and empowerment, as the viewer feels free to make choices regarding the interactions they are desiring.[29] Indeed, the alter-modernist demands to have input into the narrative of whatever they are experiencing. Where there is input there is power, which feeds the needs of one devoid of the superego. In some scenarios, multi-tasking turns into an outright surrender to the world of the internet, with the illusion of control, but none of its benefits. Here, work is not interrupted or diminished, it just fails to get done. There are not a few among this group who gaze, open eyed and transfixed, into the cyber world of fanciful possibilities, enchanted by its mesmerising glow.

Therefore, in the new order of things, the internet is not simply a vehicle for gaining information and

[22]An extensive Chinese study (2008) found atrophy of gray matter in the brains of all heavy internet users who spent 8-13 hours a day playing games online. L. Dossey, "FOMO, Digital Dementia, and Our Dangerous Experiment", *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, March/April, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2014, p. 71.
[23]S. Georgi, "Sigmund Freud and Motivation" [Slide show], *Education*, April 12, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.slideshare.net/srgeorgi/sigmund-freud-motivation

[24]P. N. Landers, Z. L. Charles-Marcel, "Moderation in Digital Technology", in *Adventist World*, Nov. 11, 2017, p. 26.
[25]In worst case scenarios, the internet has become an all-encompassing distraction. These students have almost, or have totally, ceased the ability to adequately complete assignments.
[26]M.C. Lien, E. Ruthruff, J.C. Johnston, "Attentional limitations in doing two things at once: The search for exceptions. Current Directions in Psychological Science", 2006, 15, 89–93.
[27]A.C. Karprinski, P.A. Kirschner, I. Ozer, J.A. Mellott, P. Ochwo, "An exploration of social networking site use, multitasking, and academic performance among United States and European university students". In *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2013, 29, 1182–1192.
[28]B. Carlson, "Nicholas Carr on the 'Superficial' Webby Mind", in The Atlantic, June 5, 2010.
[29]In a survey conducted at Prescott College 86% of Year 9 students, 82% of Year 10 students and 89% of Year 11s, surveyed indicated that using the internet gave feelings of control and power.

communicating effectively, but a means of illusionary autonomy and control, that facilitates a life devoid of the usual differentiation that enables one to form boundaries and follow appropriate conventions. This is exacerbated by feelings of disenfranchisement among the many who have missed out on the prizes of education. Coupled with a life engrossed with the internet, they have been failed by the super-positive narratives of their post-modernist mentors, who told them that they could achieve anything so long as they believed in themselves and that the way to success was to "just be yourself".[30]

At Prescott College, South Australia, surveys were conducted to identify the internet habits of students in a variety of year levels and to make comparisons between the approach to the internet between high and low performing students.

In Year 11, among the higher performing students, only 3% indicated that they multi-tasked when they were working on an assignment, whereas 49% of lower performing students multitasked. This correlates with the results that no higher performing students wanted to know what people were doing on Instagram or Snapchat. By contrast, 38% of lower performing students did want to know what was happening on their social media and where willing to find out while working on assignments.

In Year 10, the top performing students didn't multi-task by flicking between different sites when attending to school work and always focused on work at home. Further, they are able to differentiate between work and play (computer games and social media surfing), by setting rules and boundaries when working on an assignment. Apart from the highest performing student who didn't access social media at all, high performing students indicated that they set rules and boundaries in place when working on an assignment. In the same class, the bottom three performing students all multi-tasked, but did not indicate that they had the ability to fully focus on their work by establishing rules or setting boundaries. In Year 9, the top three performing students, and only these, indicated that they were able to differentiate between work and play. The three lowest performing students indicated that they multi-tasked when working on an assignment.

Consequently, from a survey of Year 9-11 students at Prescott College, it was found that higher performing students are able to differentiate, by creating effective boundaries and following suitable conventions of behaviour. However, lower performing students were unable to clearly differentiate by forming functional distinctions that form boundaries. The ability to differentiate, however, went further than multitasking. Among lower performing students it was discovered that there was an inability to differentiate between their own work and how this related to the work of others. Consequently, this group were ill equipped to effectively collaborate with other students to successfully complete tasks. By contrast, higher performing students reported that they had the ability to effectively collaborate with others. Further, higher performing students were able to differentiate between using their imaginations for pleasure and work. Consequently, higher performing students reported the ability to utilize their imaginations to be perceptive when facing higher order tasks in an assessment. Additionally, higher succeeding students differentiated between truth and error, the present and the future, personal needs and the needs of others and surface observations and critical thinking. This differentiation emanates from the ability to be discerning. It is what I term *functional discernment*. That is, the ability to be discerning by creating boundaries and following conventions has subsequently allowed for the creation of a storehouse of reflective experiences, where creative thinking has been allowed to flourish in a protected private life.

While the situation can be observed, the question arises as to how effectively student internet use can be responded to, being, typically, deeply entrenched.

Students from Years 9-11 where subsequently asked to construct a schedule in which they would discipline themselves to intentionally differentiate between school work and pleasure when using their media devices. As a prelude, I shared with the students the research that had already been conducted and suggested that creating a program of *functional discernment* would improve their learning. At the conclusion of four weeks trialling a program of disciplined and intentional study without internet distractions, 73% of Year 10 students surveyed found studying to be easier, while 82% were more optimistic about their school work. Further, 45% had observed that their grades had improved. Among Year 9 Students, 80% of respondents believed that following a schedule of intentional and disciplined internet use, led them to feel more confident in their school work. Among Year 11 students, the highest performing students all reported that they followed a schedule balancing study time with pleasure. By contrast, among the lowest performing students only 12.5% reported that they followed a schedule. Further, among the lowest performing students in Year 11 only 43% felt optimistic about their school work, whereas among the highest performing students, all respondents felt optimistic. Consequently, among the Year 11 respondents there appeared to be a potential relationship between following a disciplined schedule that intentionally seeks to manage internet use and positive attitudes to schooling.

"[After] four weeks trialling … 73% of Year 10 students surveyed found studying to be easier, while 82% were more optimistic about their school work."

[30]J. M. Twenge, W. K. Campbell, "The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement", Atria, 2009, p. 19.

> *The internet … [is] a major source of distraction and a creator of a new mind-set lacking in many of the skills required for higher order thinking.*

Conclusion

The Alter-modernist generation has brought with it a new series of challenges. Predominately, these include changes in learning behaviour that may diminish student performance. Freud's analogy of the iceberg provides an interpretative framework to decipher the reasons behind these changes in behaviour and a clue as to how these challenges can be most effectively addressed. The internet has opened students to more information than any previous generation. However, it has also developed into a major source of distraction and a creator of a new mind-set lacking in many of the skills required for higher order thinking. This is most evident in lower performing students. However, higher performing students are to be distinguished by their ability to carefully manage their use of the internet in a scheduled, thoughtful, and intentional manner. After receiving some instruction on the effects of internet use, and the possible benefits of developing a disciplined and scheduled approach to learning, a significant number of students reported beneficial outcomes for their learning. Functional discernment, therefore, is seen to provide significant outcomes for students who intentionally manage their internet use.

Therefore, there are two significant areas for consideration. Firstly, a consideration of the importance of traditional institutions, such as family and religion, in maintaining a dominant influence, in contradistinction to the internet, in forming the superego into a robust, creative, discerning and constructive mechanism for good, within the life of children and adolescents. Secondly, and subsequently, the importance of an intentional approach to using the internet in a managed, scheduled and thoughtful manner, so that an undisciplined use of the internet does not inhibit effective learning. Indeed, students appear to flourish when the internet fails to dominate, but is of assistance to the disciplined, independent and creative thinker. TEACH

Author information

John Lewis is a teacher of Religion and VET Careers, with over 20 years of experience in both secondary and tertiary education. He focuses on: "the student as an agent of discovery. Most important is the discovery of self; as a worthwhile and loved individual, created by God for meaning and purpose in this world." John considers "it is a privilege to be entrusted with, and walk the journey alongside, a young person's formative years."

Promoting visible learning through using graphic organisers

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Key words: Graphic organisers, visible learning, learning strategies

"Your life as a teacher begins the day you realise that you are always a learner"

Robert John Meeham

My context

This quote has provoked much thought throughout my eight years in the teaching profession. It has stimulated my curiosity to try new initiatives in the classroom and has challenged the way I view my role as an educator. As a teacher at Gilson College, I have been given the opportunity to participate and reflect upon my teaching practices through annual *Action Research* projects. Each year, staff members identify an area of their teaching pedagogy they wish to explore in more detail, undertake research into current academic theories, participate in professional learning conversation with colleagues and then implement a range of teaching strategies in the classroom with the intention of improving teacher practice and student learning. This reflective process has enabled me to come to the conclusion that I am a lifelong learner who must take chances to grow and reflect upon my professional practice, to continually develop my professional capacity, and ultimately, to improve and enhance student learning. As a result of this, throughout the course of 2017 I have embarked on a journey to unlock students' knowledge and understanding, and make it more visible through the use of graphic organisers.

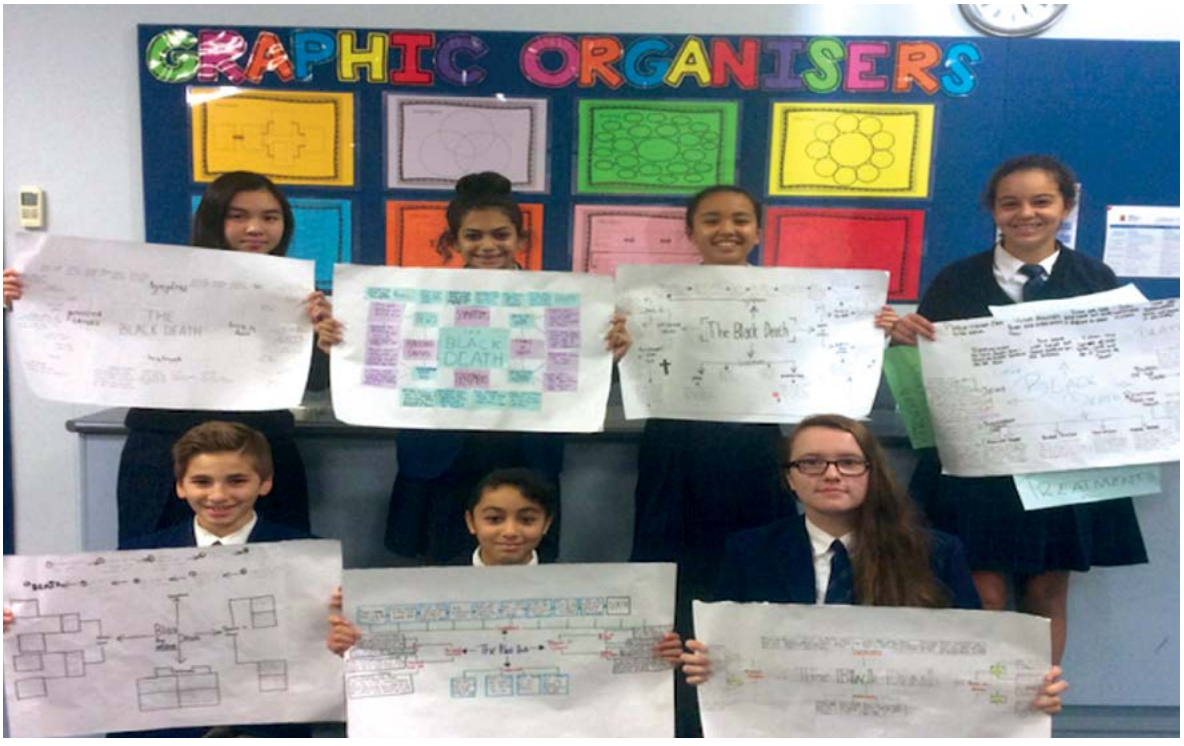

Figure 1: Students of 8AB displaying their mind maps of the Black Death (left to right- Kathy, Angelica, Tulip, Hope, Nelson, Karen & Alissa)

> *Graphic organisers are visual learning strategies that … can be used as tools to organise, simplify and scaffold students' thoughts and ideas.*

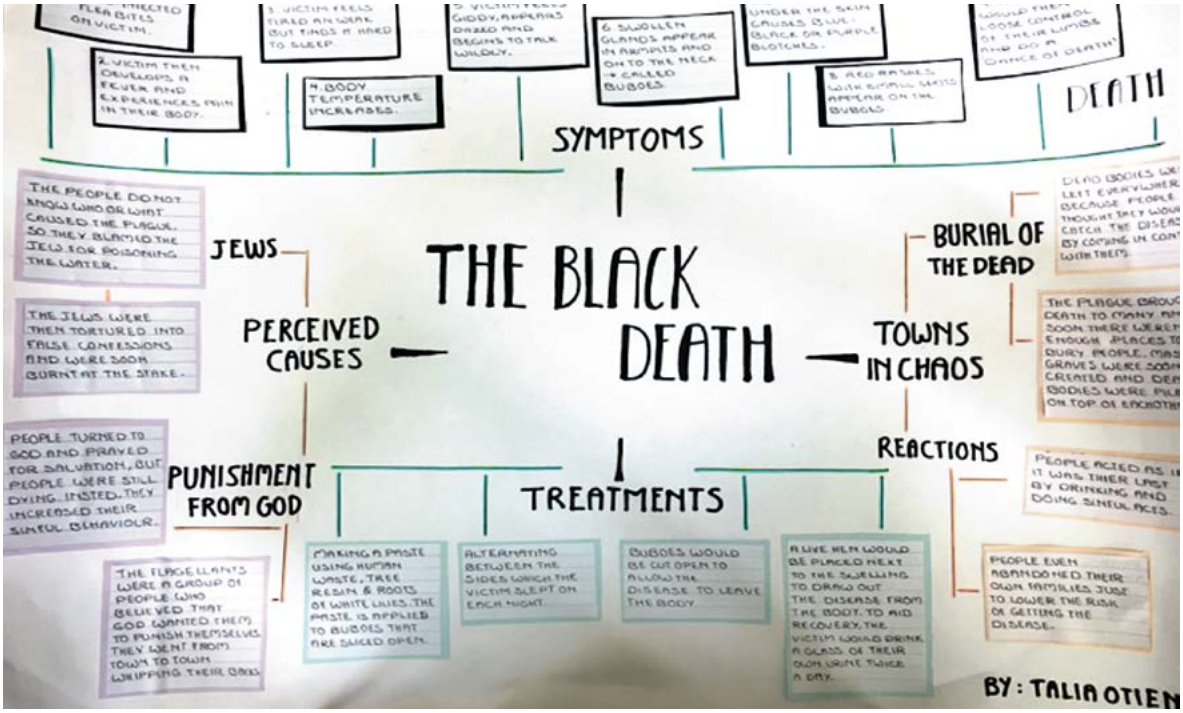

Figure 2: Student work sample of mind mapping the key concepts associated with the Black Death - by Talia

> *The data also revealed that all students … had become more active learners … better able to understand new material … delve into more critical thinking … and establish connections.*

What are graphic organisers?

Graphic organisers are visual learning strategies that guide student thinking and enhance their understanding of subject matter. They can be used as tools to organise, simplify and scaffold students' thoughts and ideas. Learners can use graphic organisers to visually display connections and correlations between facts and concepts. These tools can also be used to prompt and stimulate students' thinking skills and to guide the structure of their responses to learning tasks such as research projects or assessments. The organisers also provide an avenue for making students' learning visible to the teacher and their peers.

Using graphic organisers in my classroom

During recent units of work on *Medieval Europe & the Black Death*, I wanted to provide my Year 8 Humanities students with opportunities to become independent and active learners who are confident and capable individuals. With this goal in mind, I knew I had to unlock their higher order and critical thinking skills and give them practical tools that helped them to think deeply, as well as develop the ability to connect key concepts. Over the course of four weeks, students used a variety of graphic organisers such as *Mind Mapping* for organising and linking concepts, *Cause and Effect Charts* when displaying relationships between phenomena, and *Venn diagrams* to support comparing and contrasting.

As the teaching and learning sequence proceeded and after I assessed the data produced from the students' learning tasks, one thing became apparent: every student was able to demonstrate though his or her graphic organisers, deeper thinking skills, as well as meaningful learning. Their graphic organiser summaries had guided them to construct and generate more effective written and oral responses. The data also revealed that all students in the class had become more active learners who were better able to understand new material. They were also able to delve into more critical thinking by expanding upon key topics in detail and establish connections between different concepts.

Using the graphic organisers was also a great way to integrate ICT to enhance student engagement. My students used a number of iPad apps, such as *Popplet*, *Total Recall* or *SimpleMind* which enabled them to brainstorm key ideas, create timelines to sequence events, and time periods, as well as giving them the ability to transform their knowledge into visual representations that they were able to share with others. Using these apps also allowed students to take information they had internalised and transform it into visual representations that visibly displayed their learning.

Important considerations

There are a large number of graphic organisers available to teachers. It is imperative that teachers

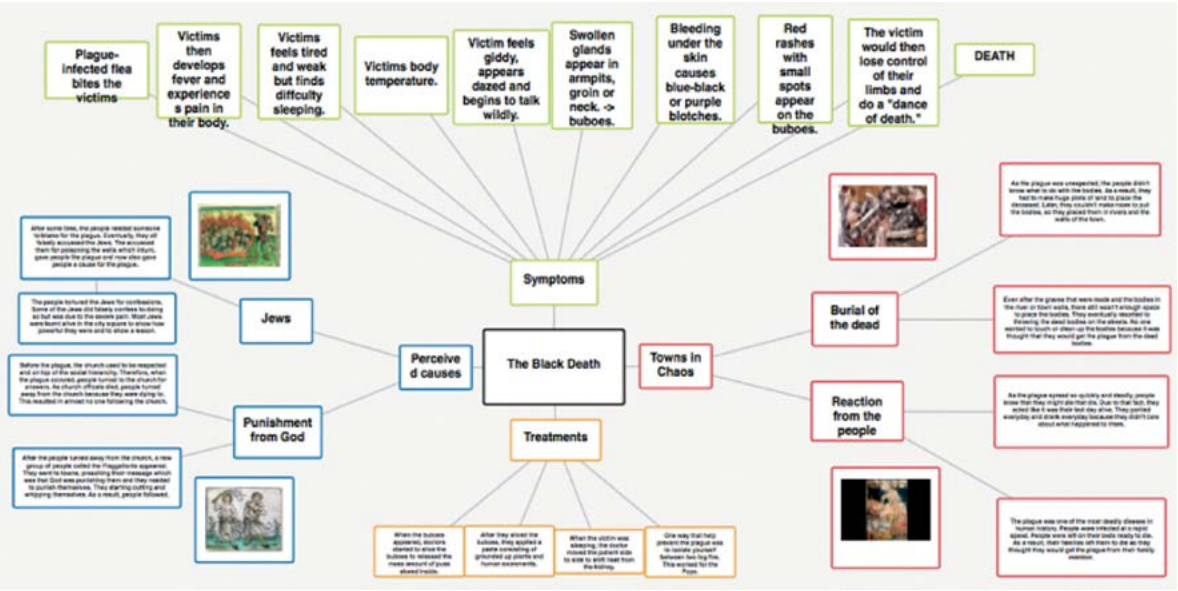

Figure 3: Student work sample of mind mapping, using the *Popplet* app - by Ayden

select and utilise templates appropriate for the purpose of the teaching and learning that is to occur; organisers that will generate specific thinking, understandings and skills. For example, if teachers want students to develop their ability to sequence events and connect ideas, a timeline, flowchart, cycle circle or mind map could be beneficial. Alternatively, if teachers want to improve students' ability to compare and contrast, a Venn diagram or Y chart might be useful.

Advantages of using graphic organisers

The major advantage of using graphic organisers to scaffold student learning is that they can be used by all students regardless of their learning abilities, and can therefore assist teachers to differentiate learning for their students. Every student can use the templates at their individual point of need, using them to breakdown and/or extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Learners will benefit from visually seeing connections and relationships between facts and other information. The organisers then allow students to reflect upon essential information and classify and arrange content in a way that is meaningful to them. By using graphic organisers, students are also able to develop vital comprehension skills as well as connect newly acquired information to existing knowledge and prior understanding, to then make informed statements and judgements about the topic at hand.

Implications for classroom teachers

Graphic organisers are useful tools that can assist teachers to formatively and summatively assess student learning. Educators are able to observe and record students' understanding, provide immediate and ongoing feedback and feed-forward, as well as identify areas or specific concepts that need more explicit teaching. These organisers are also adaptable, being easily applied to any course material for any learning area or year level. Teachers can use the organisers as ways of differentiating students' abilities and empowering each individual learner to succeed. The content developed by students within the graphic organisers provides a 'snapshot' of where each student 'is at' in terms of their learning, their understanding, knowledge and thinking skills. This data can then be used by teachers to drive continuous learning and assist in future planning.

Conclusion

Graphic organisers are important teaching tools that teachers can use to guide students' deep thinking. Using graphic organisers in the classroom has not only enabled me to make my students thinking more visible, but it has enriched classroom learning and fostered student growth and development; for that I will be forever grateful.

In addition, this project has helped me to come to the conclusion that for teachers to be effective in our craft, we must actively pursue and seek out opportunities to help us grow in our professional practice; we must utilise innovative and inclusive practices that will engage our students in the learning process. It is essential that we equip students with a range of skills that will help them succeed in the world around them, and graphic organisers are one such tool. TEACH

> *"The content developed by students [in] graphic organisers provides a 'snapshot' of where each student 'is at' in terms of their learning… understanding, knowledge and thinking skills."*

For more information, further readings and worksheets please see the websites below.

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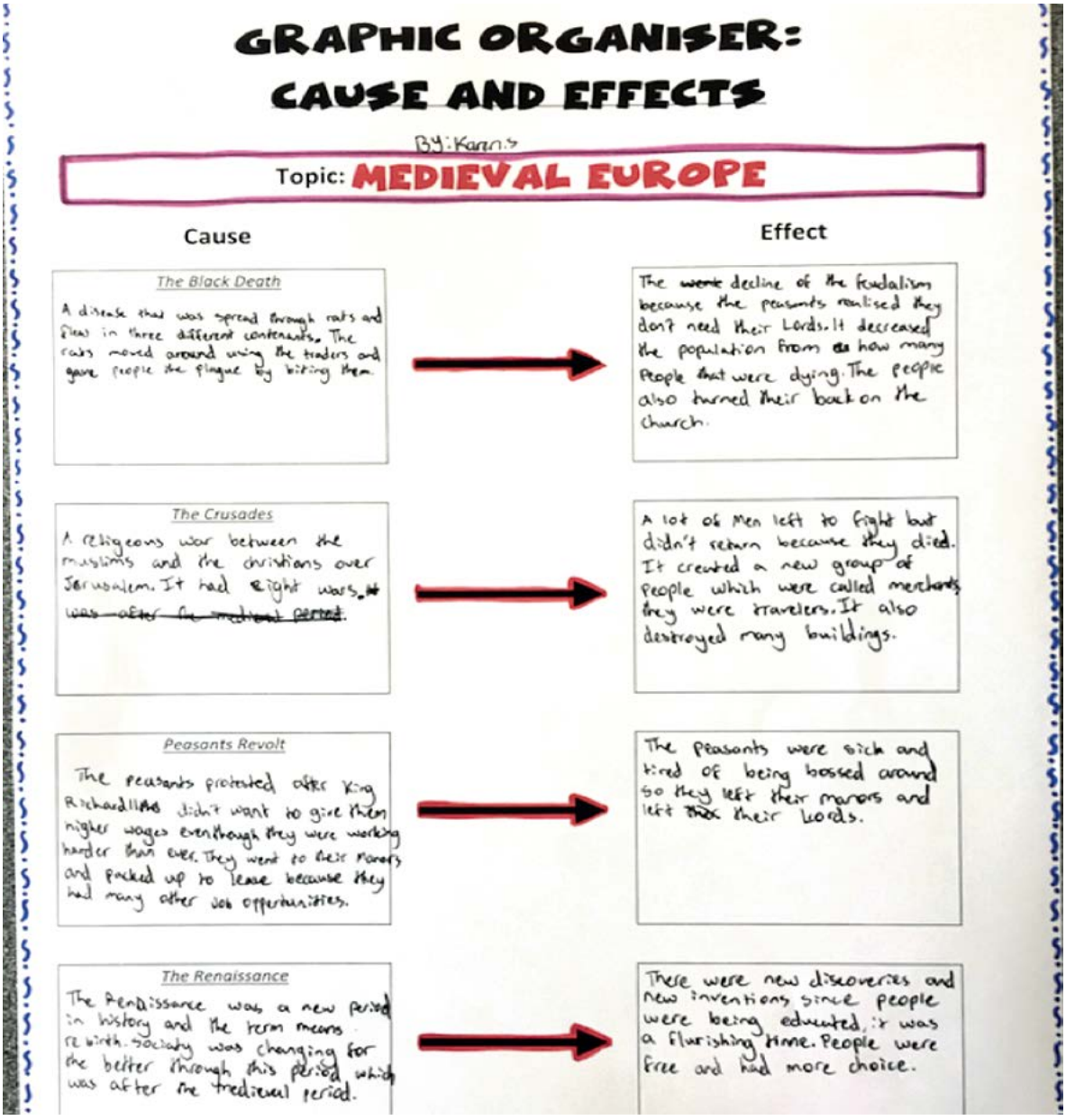

Figure 4: Student work sample of the Cause and Effect graphic organiser- by Karin

A shout out about Teaching for Artistic Behaviour [TAB]

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Key words: Artistic behaviour, choice, 21st century skills, teaching

I never, ever, thought I'd be that teacher—the one you hear screaming at the kids in their class from half a mile away—until I became one.

I'm not a shouter. At least I wasn't a shouter until, after over 20 years teaching in high schools, I began working as a specialist art teacher in a primary school.

How did I move from good behavioural management strategies and a working pedagogy in the high school art room to bored, non-compliant behaviour in the primary school? How did I find my way back from hating art classes as much as the kids did to an environment where we all are engaged, look forward to and love what we do?

How it happened!

Subscribing to many art Facebook pages, it was only a matter of time before the 'fb algorithm' locked into my interest. Teaching for Artistic Behaviour (TAB) appeared on my side bar and, after clicking on the page, a pedagogy and practice was discovered that completely changed my perception of teaching art and I joined a community of over 440 TAB teachers.

I devoured books and articles on TAB/choice based education, scoured the TAB website and haunted the TAB Facebook page. There were many 'Aha' moments, but it was this phrase that gelled for me: 'The real product of art education is not the works of art, but the child...What you need to do as a teacher of art is create kids who make good art, create kids who think well as artists, who have an artistic mind.'

There was no turning back. I don't know the context of this Arundhati Roy (n.d.) quote: "The trouble is that once you see it, you can't unsee it," but I saw it, I couldn't un-see it.

Although this article is about my research into and experiences and understanding of TAB in the primary school, this pedagogy has been successfully implemented in middle schools in the USA since the 1970s.

A quick introduction to TAB

"Teaching for Artistic Behaviour is a grassroots organisation developed by and for teachers and supports choice based art education. The concept emerged over 30 years ago in Massachusetts classrooms through the need for more authentic art making experiences" (TAB, n.d.a, para. 5). Its tenant embraces the 'students as artists' (TAB, n.d.b, para. 2.)

"The essential goal of art teaching, (is) to inspire children to behave like artists—to try on the artist's role—to feel what it is to gather an art idea on one's own and act on it. The goal is to reveal to children that art comes from within themselves—not from the teacher. The goal is to demystify art, and assure children, through the teacher's deeds and words, that art is found in familiar places and ordinary environments, accessible to everyone. It is to bring children closer to art—nearer to themselves, to their own views and visions" (Szekely, n.d., para. 1).

It is to acknowledge the student as Artist.

The student as artist

In a TAB, choice based, Art studio, "Children take ownership of the art ideas they are developing. The teacher's role shifts from authoritarian to enabler, facilitator, consultant, coach and collaborator" (Gaw, 2003, para. 1).

Students "experiment with the materials and techniques of the artist, work with materials they love, and engage with ideas in personally meaningful ways. Additionally, learners in a studio setting collaborate with other artists, explore, try, fail, practice, dream, and reflect. These experiences, practices and behaviours define the work of the artist …" (Hathaway, 2013, p. 13).

This pedagogy enables students to "... rehearse and practice the kinds of personal explorations they can make on their own outside of class. From this point of view, art class is not the ultimate destination for our students' activity as artists but simply the launch pad where we give them the impetus and directions to take off on their own" (k, 2003)..'

Typically this activity occurs in 'Centres.'

> *"Children take ownership of the art ideas they are developing. The teacher's role shifts from authoritarian to enabler, facilitator, consultant, coach and collaborator"*

> *They learn quickly enough that I will not pick up a pencil or a brush and do it for them and, as far as finding materials, the most they'll get from me are directions*

Centres

Centres are a core classroom TAB practice. A Centre is "a three-dimensional lesson plan" (TAB, n.d.c) because the components are embedded in the centres. There are materials in the centre and also information on how to set up those materials. That sort of information is right there, put in a way that the students can access the materials without any adult's help.

Centres are dedicated to different art materials and mediums. In my Art room, on any given day, up to five centres operate. Everything the student needs is readily available at the Centre of their choice. Like choice at a buffet meal, students visit Centres, thus initiating and continuing their work uninterrupted.

When students are encouraged to create freely, following their interests and dreams in their own way, unique work emerges from the Centre of their choice.

What does a choice based art studio and lesson look like?

The space

The TAB Art studio can look as simple as trays on a trolley wheeled into a class, but preferably into a purpose–built room. In my early years of teaching TAB I shared a space with the Music teacher, later I had the privilege of a room set aside just for Art. As the school expanded TAB happened in the library. This year I use the K-2 classroom.

In each situation I set up Centres dedicated to different art materials and mediums. On any given day there might be up to five centres operating where everything the student needs is readily available so that they can work independently and uninterrupted.

The lesson

Teacher involvement

Each lesson begins with a few minutes on the carpet reminding students which Centres are open, the Studio Habit (more about them later) we are highlighting, or I might read an Art-centred children's picture book, before we move to a table for a very short demonstration connected in some way to an existing, or a to-be-opened-that-lesson, Centre. It might be a skill like tying a knot, applying strips of papier mâché to a sculpture, attaching cardboard to cardboard, an introduction to new materials like oil pastels, waking up tempera blocks, printing with found materials, watching a video or discussing an artist's work. Once the demonstration is over students explore the demonstration further, or work on their Art at any of the Centres.

Student activity

Students engage best at Centres where the Centre and the process are clearly labelled—for example a cardboard attachment poster at the Construction Centre or 'blending with watercolours' poster at the Painting Centre—and easy to find. (This also makes cleaning up easier.)

Peers are quick to help fellow artists find materials or solve a problem. Peer learning is key to the TAB process; the teacher is no longer the font of all knowledge. It's incredible what happens when I'm at a Centre and a student asks me a 'how to' question, I throw it over to their peers and they have great suggestions. Yes, there will always be students who can't be bothered trying for themselves of looking for materials, expecting me to do their Art for them, or find what they want for them. They learn quickly enough that I will not pick up a pencil or a brush and do it for them and, as far as finding materials, the most they'll get from me are directions to the appropriate Centre.

Students in a TAB Studio have many opportunities to assess their own work, to decide if it is complete, to decide on the direction of their next piece and to decide if their work will be displayed. This is an assessment challenge and most students want to take their work home. I ask for Artist's Statements for some work and take photos of the students work before it goes home.

Figure 1 Acacial and Kaylee talking about their work (Grades 3 and 6, 2018)

Figure 2 Esther and Emily collaborating on a shopping complex made from waste materials

My school is investigating using Seesaw (https://web.seesaw.me) for students to upload portfolios of their work.

Classroom management

TAB teachers approach classroom management differently. I allow students to sit wherever they like and use one or many Centres, transporting materials from Centres to their table. I don't set themes but encourage students to create from their imagination, observation, memory, class demos and artist discussions.

Some students stay at the same centre all year. In my classes this is particularly true for the Drawing and Construction Centres. I don't discourage this kind of engagement as I observe different ideas form and develop in complexity. I always have at least one 3D option open and, for the K-2 class, a box of blocks for building. Photographs are taken of ephemeral art and, in the case of the Building Centre, a sketch of the finished creation is required.

Cleaning time is an evolving challenge. My latest strategy—and I think it's working—is to call the class to the mat for our critique session before we clean up. Clean up is hard for the students because they have to stop working on their art. (I do give a 10, then 5, then 1 minute count down so that, with a bit of luck, more paints aren't used and their minds just might segue into the 'I have to leave this soon mode.')

Katherine Douglas a co-founder of T*eaching for Artistic Behavior, Inc*. and also a co-author with Jaquith of *Engaging Learners through Artmaking* (2009), taught in an elementary choice-based art program for over 35 years and was awarded Massachusetts Art Educator of the Year in 2016. She suggests placing a photograph, perhaps with little arrows pointing out details, in each Centre showing a clean Centre, so that it's really clear where each material "lives." Katherine further advises adopting a positive attitude, "Quietly rejoice that you have students who care so much about their work that it is difficult to stop working… praise their commitment, and brainstorm ways they can do their work and care for the centre that they love" (Facebook post - closed group, 1 January 2018).

Some teachers use clean up songs. I love that one but I often find myself saying, "I'm not your mother" to encourage engaged involvement.

Critique, self and peer assessment

A critique session can be as simple as a student talking about their work, peers asking questions or one-on-one teacher evaluation. Questions like these are displayed to guide students in peer evaluation.

- What was your biggest challenge?
- What Studio Habits did you use?
- How do you plan to use this work?
- Is this created for anyone special?
- Why did you choose to make this?
- What techniques did you use?
- What advice would you give to someone doing this project?
- Are you planning to make anything else to go with this work?
- What was your favourite part of making this?
- Where (how) did you get this idea?
- Have you ever made anything similar to this before?
- How is this different?

"Some teachers use clean up songs. I love that one but I often find myself saying, "I'm not your mother" to encourage engaged involvement."

Figure 3 Art game play by Matthew and Ben

- How is it similar?
- What did this teach you?
- What next?
- How do you plan to display this work?
- Did anything surprise you about what you ended up with?
- How do you know when you were done?
- What do you like about what you created?
- What do you wonder?
- What do you like best?

Some teachers do "gallery walks" where each child puts their work on the carpet and the class slowly walk around the carpet noticing things.

The studio habits of mind (SHoM or SHoTM)

The Studio Habits form a core rational for the TAB classroom. For the purposes of conserving space I will simply list them.

- Develop Craft.
- Engage & Persist.
- Envision.
- Express.
- Reflect.
- Stretch & Explore.
- Understand the Arts Community.

I have each separate SHoM displayed on the wall as a poster, with a fat arrow pointing to the habit we are concentrating on for that lesson, and both introduce or discuss it. During a lesson I might encourage a student who is Engaging and Persisting using those words so that the concept becomes imbedded in their thinking.

> *Ownership … enables students to assess their own work, make decisions about what direction they will take it until, in their opinion it is finished, what will be tackled next and … be displayed.*

Challenges to implementing TAB

The initial challenge is clearly communicating the benefits of TAB and gaining the support of your school community. Once they are on board, deciding on the centres you will open will determine how you design the layout of your room. Chapter 2 in *Engaging Learners Through Art Making* (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009), is dedicated to the learning environment. Other similar resources are *The Learner Directed Classroom* (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012), *Choice Without Chaos* (Bedrick, 2012), *Studio Thinking 2* (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013), the TAB website (http://teachingforartistic behavior.org) and lurking, searching and asking questions on the TAB Facebook pages are brilliant places to familiarise yourself with the pedagogy, discover how others have implemented their curriculums and what that might look like when connected to the Australia Curriculum.

Moving from teacher directed/project based lessons to choice-based lessons that give the student ownership of what they will do and how they will do it requires the teacher to continually identify who is in control: you or the student? When the focus of control moves from teacher to student control of the the process, and lessons are organised around providing opportunities for play, experimentation and risk taking, rather than producing a polished final product student engagement increases because the content of their art is personal and relevant. Ownership of this nature enables students to assess their own work, make decisions about what direction they will take it until, in their opinion it is finished, what will be tackled next and what will be displayed.

Downplaying extrinsic motivators like grades allows room for intrinsic motivators like curiosity, play, the freedom to make personally relevant choices which increase student engagement, personal relevance and thus creativity.

Students are expected to find an idea, select materials and techniques, arrange materials and tools, pace themselves, create an image or structure,

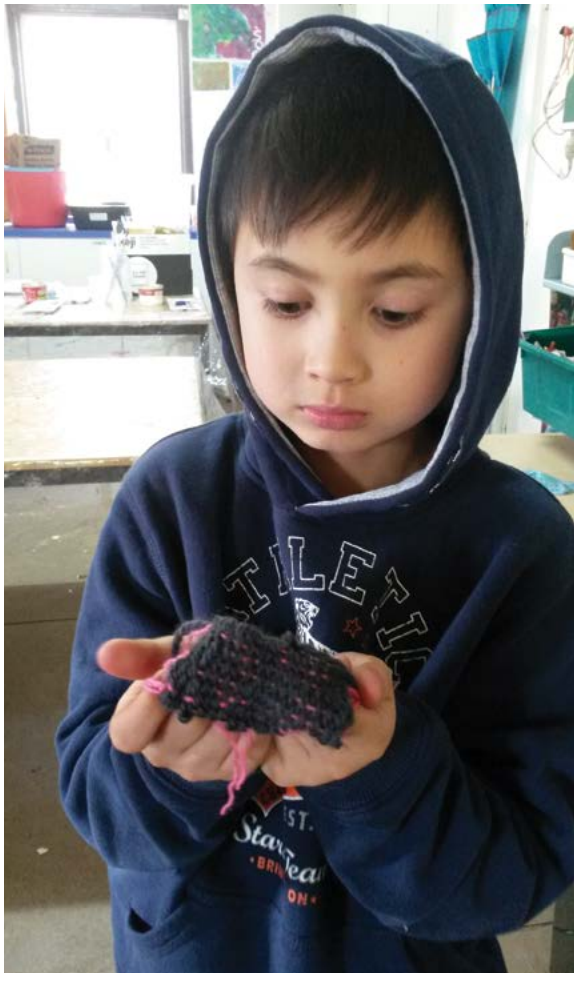

Figure 4 Corrin Cheong with his weaving

overcome obstacles, return materials and tools, discuss artwork and reflect on progress. The real product of art education becomes, not the works of art, but the child.

Choice Studio classrooms offer safe spaces for students to express and process their unique ideas and feelings. George Szekely (1988) cited in (k, 2003, para. 17), asserts they are risk-taking spaces where "... students rehearse and practice the kinds of personal explorations they can make on their own outside of class." Experiencing teaching in this TAB modality confirms it. Implemented in a Christian school context, it enables significant social learning including: ethical cooperative relationships, emergent 21st Century skills and a practical understanding of democracy (Gaw, 2015; Gaw, 2017; Teaching for Artistic Behaviour, 2009). TEACH

Figure 5 Lucas talking about his collage (2017)

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Biographic details

Valerie Clark is an art teacher who has been teaching Art in the private education sector since 1975. Her training is in Fine Arts (Secondary), Curriculum Development and Biblical Studies. Her teaching experience until 2011 was as a secondary teacher in SA and the NT grades 8-12. In 2010 she started to teach K-6 Art and struggled to engage kids and teach Art in a way that was meaningful to them. In 2011 she discovered Teaching for Artistic Behaviour (TAB) resulting in teacher and students enjoying Art classes.

You can find out more about it here: http://teachingforartisticbehavior.org/

> *[TAB] enables significant social learning including: ethical cooperative relationships, emergent 21st Century skills and a practical understanding of democracy*

TRANSFORMING CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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"The outdoor classroom … provides a calming space for students to take a deep breath and be mindful, while connecting with the Creator's handiwork"

How can a school create a learning space that provides a retreat from the regular classroom and provides an environment where children can connect with learning and with God?

When a demountable classroom was removed from a central position in Avondale's Primary Campus, Deb Cooper pondered what to do with the space that was left. "The room had been surrounded by hedging on three sides but was otherwise a blank space." Deb turned the space over to the grounds staff when one of them came up with an idea to convert it into an outdoor classroom.

Says Deb, "Our grounds staff designed, constructed and planted an amazing learning zone that we call our outdoor classroom. A man made stream gurgles through this space with a board walk allowing access to a tiered deck. Shrubs, vines and plants soften the space and attract birds and insects." As the plants mature they will create a canopy and understory of living colour. The cascading creek is not only visually appealing, but provides the sound of running water which is frequently associated with calming the mind.

The teachers are continuing to adjust to the availability of this additional learning environment and have observed "students enjoy the tranquillity of this learning space for quiet reading and reflection, art time, writing, giving speeches, praying or relaxing while listening to a story. The outdoor classroom also provides a calming space for students to take a deep breath and be mindful, while connecting with the Creator's handiwork."

However, practical advice from one teacher reminded, "given the stream sounds, experience recommends a prescribed bathroom stop for all class members, before any session begins so as to avoid multiple interruptions."

Figure 1. The Avondale School outdoor classroom. Photo credit: Jonathan Christian

Figure 2. The creek bed adds soothing natural sound to the outdoor classroom. (Photo credit – Jonathan Christian)

Students from Diane Robert's Year Four class shared:

> We go there to do a quiz or have some spelling revision or even do a test out there. It is different to the other places and classrooms because it helps you to focus more on your work. Being outside helps you to relax a bit more. I personally love doing my work outdoors but I think we could improve it by maybe buying lap tables to lean our work on? That would be perfect! Anyway I love having a chance to be outside!!! (Caitlyn)
>
> It is not much different to working inside, … but you get loads of fresh air which helps us to learn. … That's why I love learning outdoors. (Holly)
>
> I like our outside learning area because it is like a rain forest, and it's very peaceful there. It's different from inside because there is no air conditioner, plus after rain the seats are wet ☺. We normally do worship there. We could improve it by putting fake animals in, and putting a rainproof cover over it. (Anonymous)
>
> My opinion [on] outdoors is that it makes me feel calm, with the birds, the nice water flowing and the beautiful greenery. I think we could improve on more space and a roof over our heads. (Acacia)
>
> Learning indoors is all right, but outdoors there's fresh air and birds singing. It helps me concentrate. Learning outdoors should be done more often. (Ava)

Avondale's outdoor classroom demonstrates that it is possible to bring nature into the learning environment for the benefit of the students and teachers.

The psalmist implores, "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy" (Psalm 96:11-12).

Job advises "ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:7-10). TEACH

> *"We could improve it by putting fake animals in, and putting a rainproof cover over it."*

Figure 3. John Venagas and Grade 5 (2017) enjoying interaction in the outdoor classroom.

TEACH[R]

Valuing early career teachers: Putting the brakes on the exodus

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Key words: Attrition, administration, mentoring, workload, support, tenure, professional development

Abstract

The attrition of early career teachers has been identified as an international issue. This paper reports on an Australian study that sought to identify the lived experiences of beginning teachers in one independent school system in their first three years. Areas such as the teacher's job satisfaction and impacting factors were addressed. Data revealed that the main drivers for teachers terminating their teaching career in the first few years are connected to work/life balance, the level of support from administration, the teacher's mentor, and the level and appropriateness of the professional development they are permitted to attend.

> *between 40% and 50% of teachers in [Australia], North America, United Kingdom, and Hong Kong leave in the first five years after graduation.*

Introduction

It is just two years since the then New South Wales Education Minister, Adrian Picolli, made the statement that tertiary institutions are training too many teachers for the demands of the education market (Ballantyne, 2016). An opposing predication however has come from Associate Professor Philip Riley, a researcher in teacher attrition, who has warned that Australia may well face a teacher shortage in the coming years because of the increasing rate of teachers leaving the classroom (Stroud, 2017). Obviously these two points of view are in opposition, but it is in the best interests of the education sector to try and understand why teachers – both new and experienced – are looking outside the school system for their careers.

This paper reports on a research project that sought to explore the experiences of early career teachers (ECTs) in one independent school system in Australia. The purpose is to contribute a greater understanding of the phenomenon together with provision of some possible solutions.

Background

The rates of attrition for beginning teachers are unacceptably high in most education systems in the western world (Heineke, Mazza, & Tichnor-Wagner, 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Described as 'epidemic' by Gallant and Riley (2014), between 40% and 50% of teachers in North America, United Kingdom, and Hong Kong leave in the first five years after graduation. Longitudinal studies in Australia also reflect similar results (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013).

Recent research has discovered the reasons for this emerging problem of attrition, and they appear to be attributable to a number of factors. The considerable diversity of reasons for this attrition include: lack of mentoring (Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012); individual teacher's poor performance (Henry, Bastian & Fortner, 2011) and workload (Latifoglu, 2016). Further, researching attrition amongst novice teachers, DeAngelis and Presley (2011) discovered that the issue of attrition within the beginning teacher group tended to relate more to the individual school rather than being pervasive across sectors.

The experience of new teachers indicates that the first three years of teaching are the most difficult. Indeed, it is not surprising that Henry, Bastian and Fortner (2011) found that teachers in these first three years were less efficient than those with at least five years' experience. The effect of teachers leaving early in their careers would indicate that some of their most difficult work has already been done and that school systems are at a disadvantage in losing new career teachers who have invested 'personal capital'— emotional and financial; and had so much invested in them already by organisational

entities—monetarily and in professional education, development and mentoring.

In Australia, the Bureau of Statistics has revealed that 53% of people holding teaching qualifications are not practising in the classroom (Stroud, 2017). It was also revealed that in 2014, 5.7% of teachers in Australia left teaching. While this may not seem like an excessive number, given that the total teacher workforce in 2014 was 440,000 (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016), this percentage represents an exodus of more than 25,000 teachers. This level of attrition comes with significant impacts. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011) it can lead to acute shortages of teachers in particular geographical locations or key learning areas.

Also, the frequent and ongoing turnover of teachers causes disruption to students' learning (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) and this needs to be considered, but further it is an additional financial cost to the school system (Fetherston & Lummis, 2012). Additionally, this level of teacher attrition has a negative impact on the morale of the teachers remaining at the school and on the whole school morale (Shockley, Watlington, & Felsher (2013).

There are several studies that have sought to establish reasons why teachers leave the teaching career. Fetherston and Lummis (2012) identified poor leadership but also inadequacy in: "building shared visions, being transparent, protecting staff, listening actively, communicating often, celebrating, enabling and the many other facets of managerial behaviour that constitute effective leadership these days" (p. 10). They further identify teachers who did not point to one particular reason but found that an accumulation of factors built up to a point where they decided the task was no longer tenable.

The increasingly difficult task of maintaining student engagement and the connected issue of behaviour management are ongoing issues for teachers and more so for those in their first year of teaching who are still working out policies, processes and expectations. Not mentioned yet, but of paramount importance is the amount of work new teachers have to do in their early years of teaching "in addition to finding their feet as new professionals, and, sometimes, teaching outside their area of expertise" (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013, p. 121).

Other issues that early career teachers report as having an impact on their tenure in the classroom include a lack of comprehensive, systematic induction programs such as classroom observations with feedback and coaching, and professional development tailored to the novices' need (Henry, Bastian & Fortner, 2011). Another recurring theme is often a perceived lack of administrative support (Menon, 2012).

Buchanan et al. (2013) discuss the isolation a new teacher can feel in the workplace. This can be professional isolation or emotional isolation where the teacher feels separated from the staff and struggling on their own. They may be experiencing a perceived lack of success but not wanting to acknowledge it, or to ask for help.

This research sought to establish the feelings and experiences of beginning teachers in one independent school system in Australia.

Method

Having noticed that the attrition of early career teachers in one independent school system appeared to be paralleling that found in education in general, it was decided that teachers who graduated in the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 would be asked to participate in a study that would identify the demographics of the teachers, their perceived level of administrative support, their experience of mentoring and their induction and orientation experiences. Their intent to remain in teaching was also sought. By surveying graduates over three consecutive years, a sample from each of the first three years of teaching was made possible, assuming students went directly into employment.

A mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) was preferred, beginning with a survey that also included opportunities for comments. This was to be followed by telephone interviews for those who indicated they would be interested and willing to respond in this way. An invitation was posted to each beginning teacher at his/her school, assuming that all might be currently employed.

One hundred and nine invitations were sent out. At the time of posting, ten of the beginning teachers had already left the system; and a further twelve had changed their names or moved schools, leaving a potential of 87 responses. An online survey via Survey Monkey enabled respondents to be completely anonymous, if desired. The survey questions were designed to reflect issues already raised in the literature and discussed in the background section of this paper.

Findings and discussion

The first section of the results is reported within three categories of demographics: the sample, perceptions of administrative processes and level of personal mentoring received. Job satisfaction, attitude to tenure, and evaluation of professional development experienced are individually discussed as specific topics of interest emergent from their early teaching profession experience.

> *"the frequent … turnover of teachers causes disruption to students' learning … an additional financial cost to the school system … [and] a negative impact on the morale of the teachers"*

1. The sample

The study included 17 first year teachers, 15 in their second year and 12 in a third year, being 44 in total, expressing a response rate of close to 50%. Of these, 50% were primary teachers, 48% secondary teachers and 2% early childhood educators. The participants were at schools across Australia, and of those who responded to this optional item, 48% were from New South Wales, 24% from South Australia, 21% from Queensland and 7% from Western Australia.

2. Administrative process perceptions

Twenty five percent (25%) of early career teachers did not generally feel supported by the principal, though there may be isolated times when they did feel supported. This is a key piece of data, given that lack of principal support has been shown to be a critical factor in early career teachers leaving the profession. It needs to be remembered that whether the teacher has in fact been supported or not is not relevant to the study because it is the perception of lack of support for the teacher that is a key factor in teacher attrition. With regard to the staff handbook, policies and procedures, 77% of the participants had access to this information though three of the respondents (7%) said it was either very sparse or out of date. Twenty percent (20%) of respondents reported that they had not had a formal induction into the school. Though 91% of students acknowledged that they had been given reduced teaching loads in their beginning years, this was often infringed upon with extra curricular tasks and several students who reported a reduced load, still felt burdened by the overall requirements.

3. Personal mentoring

Though 91% of early career teachers reported having a mentor, several participants noted that although they had a mentor officially, often their mentor was too busy or stressed to provide needed support. In fact, 62% of respondents reported ad hoc meetings with their mentors, leaving little more than a third who had regular meeting times. A buddy teacher assisted 80% of respondents, but in small schools they were often the same person as the mentor. The most concerning result here is that 20% of respondents had never been observed and given feedback, and 59% had never had their daybook checked.

Establishing good habits of preparation is likely to forestall poor teaching, as well as boredom and inappropriate behaviour by students. It should be noted that many respondents see ad hoc as appropriate, and not overly controlling. However, unfortunately ad hoc supervision tends to be associated with the occurrence of problems—when poor practices or lack of preparation have already occurred, creating below expectation outcomes, and potentially a crisis.

Job satisfaction

Respondents to this study were asked to rate the enjoyment level they experienced of their teaching position in their first year on a scale of 1 – 5 where 1 represents 'no enjoyment at all' and 5 represents 'extreme enjoyment'. The results are shown in Figure 1. It is disturbing that there are almost as many teachers reporting on the negative side of neutral as on the positive side. The top three experiences that generated the most enjoyment for the participants were: other school staff who were supportive, friendly, kind, helpful, respectful and who socialise together; the students; and the actual teaching and seeing the students improving.

The range of issues that caused the respondents' difficulties however, were greater in number and more diverse. Table 1 illustrates some of the issues and the number of early career teachers who listed each of them.

Tenure as a teacher

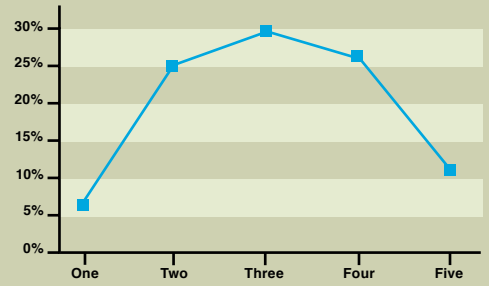
A sample of the respondents had already left teaching (n = 22). When asked why they had left, the answers included: a negative workplace, further study, workload, and a generous offer in another career. Individually, these respondents were quite reticent about returning to teaching. There would have to be some changes for them to consider teaching again.

Only 34% of current early career teachers reported that they intended a long term career in teaching, while 45% did not see themselves staying more than 5 years. While this was only a 'snapshot' of these young teachers' future planning, however their prediction is alarmingly close to the earlier quoted 53% of qualified teachers not currently teaching in Australia.

Some of the more qualitative comments made by the respondents surrounding reasons for a premature departure from the classroom can clearly be placed in two main themes: *work/life balance* and not feeling *empowered* or *supported*.

Only 34% of current early career teachers reported that they intended a long term career in teaching, while 45% did not see themselves staying more than 5 years.

Figure 1: Teacher responses to their enjoyment of their first year of teaching



Professional development

The teachers who participated in the study reported mostly positive experiences of the professional development activities attended. In fact, out of the 60 professional development sessions teachers commented on, only 10 reported them as being 'somewhat useful', or 'not very useful'. The types of professional development early career teachers expressed preference for, and a desire for more information and experience in, were: creative assessments, behavior management, differentiating for special needs, innovative content delivery, and the use of technology in learning.

Summary of recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from this research.

- That principals and school system directors (where they exist) should ensure they develop a positive relationship with early career teachers as soon as they start at the school.
- That the mentor ensures the beginning teacher is welcomed and supported in the school and that regular (weekly or fortnightly) meetings are arranged.
- That there is a formal school induction program for new teachers which is subject to formal supervised system evaluation.
- That beginning teachers are visited by the principal in their classrooms and affirmed for their work several times in the first term.
- That mentors observe, give feedback and check planning and paper work regularly.
- That professional development is provided regularly and that it is aligned to the teacher's needs.

Future research directions or recommendations

Table 1: Specific difficulties experienced by early career teachers

Theme/topic	n	%
Differentiation/special needs	23	52.3
Behaviour Management	18	40.9
Assessments	15	34.1
Reporting	14	31.8
Time management (personal/ professional) / lack of release time	12	27.3
Lack of programs in place/outside subject area	12	27.3
Mentor issues (too busy, stressed or not supportive)	9	20.5
Working /communicating with parents	6	13.6
Staff relations	4	9.1
School's data management system	2	4.5

There is an argument to say that enough research has been done to give schools, principals, and mentors a comprehensive idea of what is required to keep early career teachers in the classroom. This study, though more specific in its outcomes than earlier studies, still identifies the same broad issues that new teachers struggle with. Given that these issues are known and published, it would be worthwhile to do individual case studies of schools that have focused on developing solutions to one or more of these issues, and to research and report their effectiveness.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this study are no surprise and the issues that have been identified in this study as contributors to early career teachers leaving teaching, can be addressed within each school's structure and organisation. The real need is for education authorities to acknowledge that the level of attrition amongst early career teachers is not a positive thing for education systems and consequently, to make early career teachers an even higher priority in their schools in terms of emotional and physical support, as well as further developing academic support. TEACH

> *recommend-ation … the mentor ensures the beginning teacher is welcomed and supported … [and] mentors observe, give feedback and check planning and paper work regularly.*

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School leadership aspiration: Differences in perception of drivers and barriers across hierarchical levels

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Key words: Education perspectives, school leadership, leadership perceptions, leadership aspiration, faith-based education

Abstract

This article discusses the leadership crisis looming in schools. With fewer people aspiring to take on school leadership, school education systems must consider the drivers and barriers of school leadership aspiration. This article describes the perceptions of respondents from three hierarchical levels within a faith-based education system as to the factors influencing their willingness or unwillingness to consider school leadership positions. This research explored survey data, both quantitative and qualitative, relating to school leadership aspirations and influences with regard to applying for school leadership positions.

Five factors were found to influence the unwillingness of respondents to consider school leadership positions, while seven factors were identified to influence willingness to consider school leadership positions. Additionally, four influence factors were identified which, if significantly improved, would act to increase respondent aspiration and thus influence their willingness to consider school leadership positions in the future.

Introduction

There is a leadership crisis developing in schools internationally (Bennett, Carpenter & Hill, 2011). The 'Baby Boomer' generation are retiring from leadership and principal positions, and the evidence suggests the next generations are becoming increasingly less willing to take on leadership positions (Bennett, Carpenter & Hill, 2011; Fink, 2010; Marks, 2013). The global picture of this lack of applicants for principal positions has been described as "a demographic time bomb ticking in many school jurisdictions" (Fink & Brayman, 2004, p. 431). This leadership crisis, coupled with the lack of aspirations, has placed school leadership as an important topic area for further research, with education systems having a need to find ways to attract, recruit or develop, qualified and well-prepared applicants for vacant school leadership positions. This would suggest there may also be a potential problem in the filling of leadership within the Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) educational context, an Australian faith-based education system with over 50 schools and 13,000 students nationwide (Adventist Schools Australia, 2017). There is a need for a study into the present situation in terms of ASA employee aspirations and the drivers and barriers to school leadership aspirations in order to address any potential shortfall which may threaten ASA system sustainability (Renihan, 2012). This research focuses on these areas, from the perspective of three different hierarchical levels within the ASA education system: classroom teachers, school-based administrators, and system-based administrators.

> *Research … suggests that there exists an unwillingness of assistant and vice principals, deputy heads and leading teachers to aspire to be in the principal role.*

Literature review

Historically, the group most likely to replace those leaving school principal positions has been middle leaders, given their exhibited leadership and current

roles. Research in a number of different education contexts, both overseas and within Australia, suggests that there exists an unwillingness of assistant and vice principals, deputy heads and leading teachers to aspire to be in the principal role (d'Arbon, Duignan & Duncan, 2002; Fink, 2011; Lacey, 2003; Lacey & Gronn, 2005). While the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2015 indicated that 3.6% of teaching staff positions are principal positions, only 1.1% of secondary teachers, and 1.6% of primary teachers reported an intention to apply for a principal position in the next three years, according to a national Australian survey (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & McMillan, 2014).

Other research from the Australian educational context supports the notion that there is a shortage of principal applicants (Barty, Thomson, Blackmore & Sachs, 2005; Bush, 2011; d'Arbon, Duignan & Duncan, 2002; Lacey & Gronn, 2005; Lacey, 2006; MacBeath, 2011). Teasdale-Smith (2008, p. 3) stated "Australia, like most other industrialised nations, is expecting a school leadership crisis with fewer people showing an interest in leading schools".

Research indicates a desire for a better life balance is a major reason identified for the lack of school leadership aspirations, as many potential applicants for principal roles believe the job responsibilities to be onerous (Baker, Punswick & Belt, 2010; Fink, 2010). As Fink (2010) lamented, "The combination of younger generations' reticence to assume leadership positions and their passionate desire to maintain a reasonable life-work balance compounds the problem" (p. 69). Concerns relating to the complexity of the role of a principal have also contributed to questions about its attractiveness, along with compensation that is not seen as commensurate with the work, contributing to the decline in the number of school leadership applicants (Bengston, Zepeda & Parylo, 2013; d'Arbon, Duignan, Dwyer & Goodwin, 2001; Kruger, 2008; Peters-Hawkins, Reed & Kingsberry, 2018).

Thompson and Dahling (2010, p. 21) mention "high value for status in one's work and aspirations for advancement in one's career" as a motivation for aspiring to school leadership, while Simon (2015) suggests that "the status in the community of a school principal is another potential catalyst for aspirations to the role"(p. 56). Simon notes that those classroom teachers who prefer to stay in the classroom rather than aspire to school leadership "may perceive the role to be more to do with bureaucracy and less to do with student's learning" (p. 56). Simon also suggests that the impact of current leadership can be significant on the aspiring leader's growth, with the aspirant relying to a significant degree on being in a school where "the principal encourages them generally regarding leadership ambitions, supports them specifically in their taking on opportunities for growth and delegates to them appropriate leadership responsibilities throughout their educational career progression" (p. 62). Townsend and McBeath (2011) completed a study across 60 different countries with the findings emphasising that school leadership must be attainable to young, aspiring leaders. It is important that aspiring leaders are provided opportunities within their school setting in order to facilitate opportunities for growth and development.

A number of Australian researchers have illustrated that while some beginning teachers consider themselves to be future school leaders, the numbers who apply for vacancies varies considerably (Carlin, d'Arbon, Dorman, Duignan & Neidhart, 2003; d'Arbon, Duignan & Duncan, 2002). There is some evidence in the literature that age impacts an individual's tendency to pursue school administrative positions, with both younger and older individuals less likely to apply than middle-aged individuals (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Walker & Kwan, 2009). This also links to the idea that age, or years of teaching experience, impacts on the decision or intention to seek administrative positions. Lacey (2003) found that the length of teaching experience appeared to affect career aspirations, as teachers with less than 5 years experience were more likely to aspire to the role of principal, while those with more than 10 years experience are more likely to want to remain in the classroom. This same research project also found that although there was a significant increase over time in the number of teachers aspiring to the assistant principal position, 50% of younger teachers who had aspired to the principal position at the beginning of their careers no longer did so. Another interesting finding of the Lacey study was that a greater percentage of primary teachers aspired to the principal role than secondary teachers, research confirmed by the 'Staff in Australian Schools' national survey (McKenzie et al., 2014).

Research has suggested that differences by age and experience stem at least in part from individual's perceptions of readiness to assume or be selected for a principal role. Specifically, it was found that younger, less experienced participants expressed greater uncertainty about seeking positions than older, more experienced participants (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). However, there is no doubt that "Making the route to the top a swifter process would render it more appealing to younger teachers" (National College for School Leadership, 2007, p. 7). The imperative here is to provide an increased level

"teachers with less than 5 years experience were more likely to aspire to the role of principal, while those with more than 10 years experience are more likely to want to remain in the classroom."

of support to these younger teachers to inspire a willingness to give consideration to continuing their leadership aspirations, especially given that "few teachers begin their careers with a vision of future leadership roles" (Quinn, Haggard & Ford, 2006, p. 55).

Methodology

The data for this study were collected as part of a larger research project examining the perceptions of the succession process held by those working within the private faith-based education system, Adventist Schools Australia (ASA). This study explores survey data, both quantitative and qualitative, relating to aspirations of and influences on three hierarchical levels of ASA employees with regards to applying for school leadership positions: Classroom teachers, School-based Administrators and System-based Administrators.

The study adopted three specific questions to direct the research:

1. What are the aspirations of ASA employees with respect to school leadership positions?
2. What factors influence ASA employees' **unwillingness** to apply for school leadership positions?
3. What factors influence ASA employees' **willingness** to apply for school leadership positions?

The initial survey structure was based on previous research undertaken by d'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan, Dwyer and Goodwin (2001) in the 'Planning for the Future Leadership of Catholic Schools in New South Wales' project at the Australian Catholic University. The survey was adapted to the ASA context and then piloted to ensure its efficacy in this context. The survey instrument consisted of a questionnaire divided into sections. These sections included demographic items, career aspiration fixed choice items, and willingness/unwillingness to apply for school leadership positions open-ended items. Emails were sent to 1173 ASA employees with an online link to complete the survey via SurveyMonkey. This online link was left open for a one-month time frame. At the completion of the one-month (and subsequently three follow up emails), 504 responses were completed, representing a 42.9% response rate.

The data from the survey was then exported into the statistical analysis software program IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 22. Descriptive statistics were found for the fixed choice items and then further analysis using t-tests and Analysis of Variance located areas of difference in aspirations between respective demographic categories. Following the general principles of thematic analysis the open-ended items were explored to gain a greater understanding of what factors influence ASA employees' unwillingness/willingness to apply for school leadership positions. In thematic analysis, the textual data is first coded, then these codes are refined into a number of smaller categories and finally, nested categories are mapped into substantive themes (Byrne, 2017).

Findings / results

Sample

Of the 400 ASA employee respondents that fully completed the survey, 64.5% were female and 35.5% were male; 21.3% were under 30 years of age, 25.8% were 31-40 years of age, 29.5% were 41-50 years of age and 23.5% were 51+ years of age; 48.0% were employed as primary teachers and 52.0% were employed as secondary teachers.

Present aspiration levels

The data from the quantitative component of the survey indicated 6.5% of respondents had applied for a school leadership position in the past but would not do so in the future. A majority (64.5%) indicated that they have never applied for a school leadership position and do not envisage doing so in the future. Those who indicated that they had applied for a school leadership position in the past (6.7%) were unsure if they would in the future. Those who indicated that they had not yet applied for a school leadership position (19%), envisaged doing so in the future. Only 1.8% indicated that they were actively seeking (active aspirants) a school leadership position.

In terms of gender differences, 74.7% of females compared to 51.1% of males indicated that they had never applied for a school leadership position and did not envisage doing so in the future. However, of those who indicated that they had not yet applied for a school leadership position, 13.4% of the females envisaged doing so in the future, compared to 28.9% of males.

Aspiration to apply for school leadership positions followed the trend that the willingness to apply for leadership positions decreased as age increased. The 'desire to seek leadership' data indicated that 25.9%, 24.8%, 18.8%, and 4.7% of the less than 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51 and over years' age groups respectively, had not yet applied for a school leadership position, but envisaged doing so in the future. Notably, 1.2%, 3.0%, 0.9%, and 2.4% of the less than 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51 and over years' age groups respectively, indicated that they were actively seeking a school leadership position.

> *"Those who indicated that they had applied for a school leadership position in the past (6.7%) were unsure if they would in the future."*

Within the Lack of Educational Support factor, classroom teachers identified a lack of training and preparation for leadership roles.

Aspiration influences

Thematic analysis of the open-ended questions in the survey relating to the respective hierarchical levels perceptions of the factors that influenced them to apply or not to apply for school leadership positions, was undertaken.

Similarities across hierarchical levels

There were *five factors that influenced the unwillingness* to apply for leadership positions identified by all hierarchical levels:

- A perceived lack of educational support from both the education system and the school community (Lack of Educational Support).
- A perceived disruption to preferred family circumstances (Family Influences).
- A perceived role disconnect that leadership is not desirable or a fit with their skillset (Role Disconnect).
- The perception that leadership does not allow for appropriate Work-Life Balance (Work-Life Balance).
- A perception that school leadership positions operate within limiting Church structures and unrealistic expectations (Religious Influences).

Seven factors that influence a willingness to apply for school leadership positions were identified. It is important to note that within these seven willingness factors there exists three distinct factor groupings *(Contribution factors, Christian Worldview factors and Potential Willingness factors)*. One of these, the Potential Willingness factors, are factors which would likely become willingness factors if there was improvement beyond what presently exists in these areas (System Support, Professional Support, System Staffing, Remuneration).

Contribution factors

- The challenge of successfully taking on school leadership and driving an educational program (Challenge).
- The opportunity to make a positive, Christian focused difference for students, staff and the school community (Make a Difference).

Christian Worldview factors

- The belief that God is both calling and enabling the individual to fulfil a leadership role (Spiritual/Calling).

Potential Willingness factors

- Enhanced support from multiple education system levels (System Support).
- Professional opportunities to enhance the leadership capacity of potential school leaders (Professional Support).
- Involvement in school staffing processes (System Staffing).
- Remuneration that is perceived to match the responsibility of the school leadership position (Remuneration).

Differences across hierarchical levels

Unwillingness factors

The data indicated that there were considerable differences across hierarchical level perceptions within some, but not all, unwillingness factors.

Within the Lack of Educational Support factor, classroom teachers identified that this lack had an internal focus, with an emphasis on the limitations within the ASA education system and a lack of training and preparation for leadership roles. Comments such as "*Not feeling adequately prepared for the role*" were quite common, while a number espoused the view that "*Great teachers and leaders are not invested in for these roles*".

For the school-based administrators, however, this lack of support included both an internal and external focus, and an emphasis on training, particularly when in the leadership role. Responses such as "*Inadequate training and induction for the role*", and "*Lack of training and mentoring for new principals*" highlighted the view that some school-based administrators felt more could be done to prepare them for both taking on, and while in such school leadership roles.

System-based administrators also perceived this lack of training, when in the leadership role, as a significant influence on their unwillingness to apply for school leadership positions. Additionally, the system-based administrators identified that the current corporate structure within which ASA operates was not conducive to appropriate educational support for school-based leaders. They see the present corporate structure as fractured, and lacking executive authority across the various levels, generating a "*confusing corporate structure*". System-based administrators also perceived that schools were subjected to too many levels of authority, some of which took a ministerial focus rather than an educational focus.

Interestingly, analysis of respondent comments indicated that the differences between hierarchical levels for the Family Influences, Role Disconnect and Work-Life Balance factors influencing the unwillingness to apply for school leadership positions, were minimal. Comments such as "*I want to spend more time with my family, not less*" (Classroom Teacher) were common across all

hierarchical levels reflecting on the role of family influences. Likewise, for the Work-Life Balance factor, it was common for respondents within each hierarchical level to lament the extraordinary amount of "*time*" and "*size of the role*" (System-Based Administrator). Role Disconnect, "*No longer engaged with students on a day-to-day basis*" (School-Based Administrator) was also seen to influence their unwillingness to apply for school leadership positions to a near equivalent extent by all hierarchical levels.

The perception that the leader has to operate within restricting church structures and expectations (Religious Influences), were largely identified as influences on the unwillingness to apply for school leadership positions by classroom teachers and school-based administrators, evidenced by statements such as "*I don't like the pressure that the Adventist community places on principals*" and "*Being held to an unachievable standard within the Church*". These pressures were perceived as having notably less influence on leadership aspirations for the system-based administrators.

Willingness factors

For the willingness factors, there were considerable hierarchical level differences. For the Contribution factors (Challenge and Make a Difference) and the Christian Worldview factors (Spiritual/Calling), it was the focus of these factors that represented the hierarchical differences. On the other hand, for the Potential Willingness factors (System Support, Professional Support, System Staffing, and Remuneration), factors which if improved would lend themselves towards an increased willingness to apply for school leadership positions, the difference across hierarchical levels was the extent of perceived need for improvement.

For the factors influencing the willingness to apply, it was the potential to make a positive difference to the school and its community, and the challenge in leadership to make a difference – both internal drivers - that most drove the willingness of all hierarchical levels to apply for school leadership positions. The Challenge and Make a Difference factors, as identified by the respondents, were not always easily separated, rather, one often spilled over to the other. It is noteworthy, however, that the Challenge as seen by the system-based administrators, took on a broader perspective of school leadership, including a holistic and strategic orientation, as illustrated in the following comments: "*Enjoy driving the whole program*" and "*Strategically directing school future direction*".

A desire to infuse the school with a spiritual tone, or the belief that they had been 'called' to school leadership, were also significant influences on the decision to apply for leadership positions for all hierarchical levels. For classroom teachers, this call was a 'God convicted' call to Adventist Education as ministry. School-based administrators were more likely to associate 'the calling' with a specific leadership role. In contrast, the system-based administrators saw the 'call' as having a Christian missional focus – that is, providing an opportunity to promote authentic Christianity whilst serving God.

The analysis of the four potential willingness factor elements highlighted the difference in perspectives of the three hierarchical levels. Each level suggested that different degrees of improvement would be needed to convert present educational support elements from currently acting as deterrents, to aspirational influences.

Professional Support—formal training and development, mentoring, and clear pathways to leadership roles—was seen by the classroom teachers as needing significant change to become an important influence on their willingness to apply for school leadership positions. The school-based administrators perceived that some change was needed; as a school-based administrator respondent noted, their aspirations would increase if, "*Support coaching and mentoring into [a leadership] role and a career pathway [were] provided*". System-based administrators, who also identified the need for improvement, in contrast, suggested only small changes were required in order to influence their willingness to apply for school leadership positions.

In terms of the System Staffing element, both the classroom teachers and the school-based administrators saw that any change that emphasised identification of skills and selection of the best candidate, would increase their willingness to apply for school leadership positions. The system-based administrators did not highlight the degree of change necessary to improve the System Staffing element, or how this change would influence their willingness to apply, or not apply, for school leadership positions.

For the Remuneration element, the emphasis for the need for change was greatest for the classroom teachers, then followed by the school-based administrators, and only minor adjustment seemed necessary for the system-based administrators.

> *"classroom teachers and the school-based administrators saw that … emphasised identification of skills and selection of the best candidate, would increase their willingness to apply"*

Unwillingness and willingness connections

The data analysis for the unwillingness to apply for leadership positions factor, Lack of Educational Support, indicated that this factor consisted of the following components: 1) Lack of decision making authority, 2) Staff selection practices, 3) Preparedness for the role, 4) Salary concerns, 5)

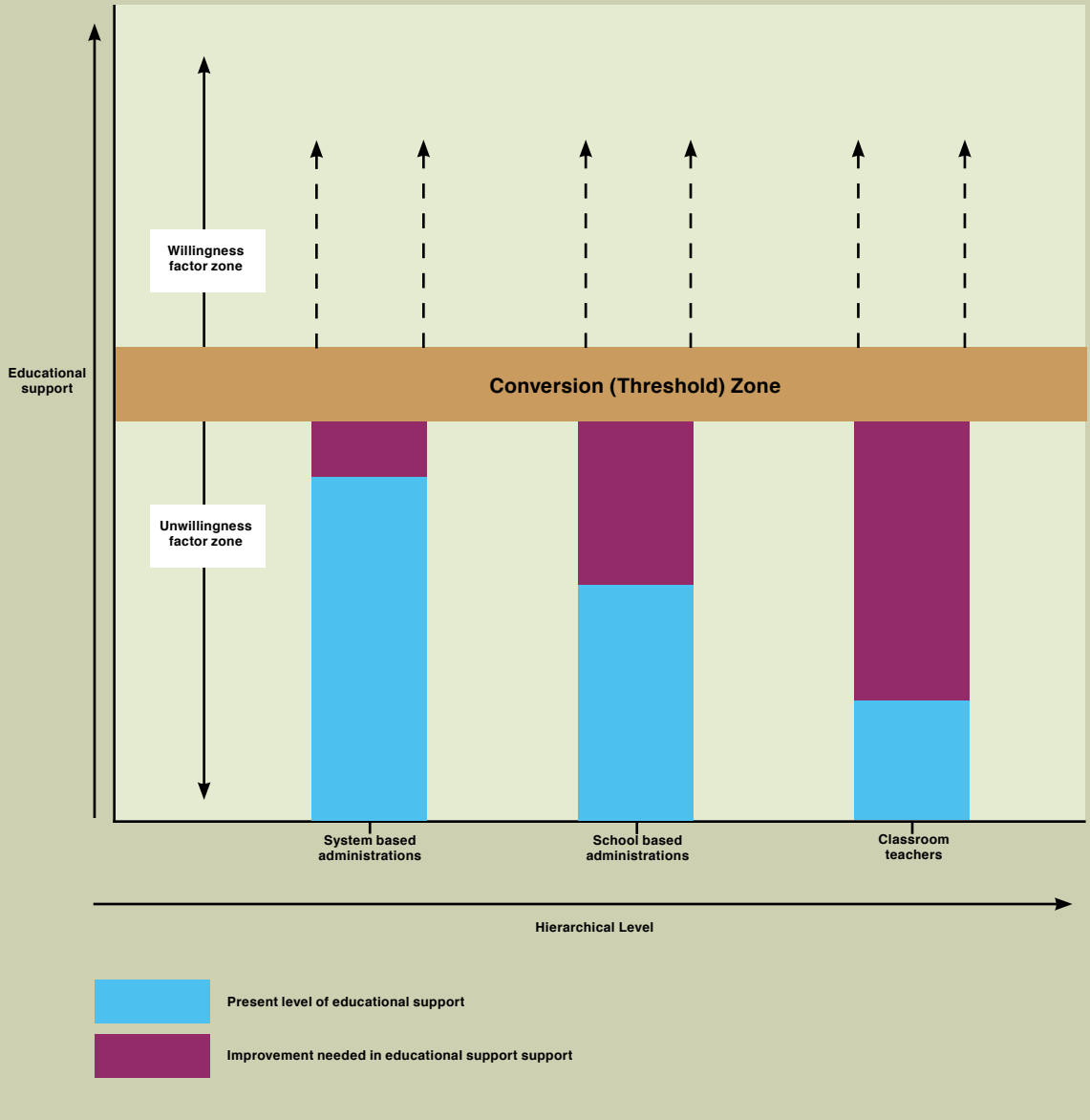
Lack of autonomy, 6) Lack of ongoing training and development, 7) Unsupportive school environments, and 8) System based politics. What is noticed is that these components are to a large extent parallel with the Potential Willingness factors:1) Professional Support, 2) System Support, 3) System Staffing and 4) Remuneration. Therefore, because of the similarities between the Lack of Educational Support factor and the Potential Willingness factors, the manner in which the Potential Willingness factors impact the respective hierarchical level groupings would also be reflected in the impact on the Educational Support factor across these groupings.

This suggests that for Educational Support, a 'threshold level' exists; a level of educational support that converts this unwillingness factor to a willingness factor, and then aspiration into application. That is, there is a perception of a need for appropriate improvement to Educational Support to a satisfactory level for this conversion to take place.

What is noted, however, is that within each

> *a 'threshold level' exists; a level of educational support that converts this unwillingness factor to a willingness factor, and then aspiration into application.*

Figure 1: Perceptions of required improvement and educational support to convert this from an unwillingness to a willingness to apply for school leadership factor.



hierarchical level, there was consistency of responses in terms of improvement needed to the Educational Support factor. But across the three hierarchical levels, there were obvious relative differences in the perceived extent of improvement needed to the Educational Support elements (see Figure 1), to convert this unwillingness factor, to a willingness to consider educational leadership factor. It is clear that different hierarchical levels saw the change necessary to reach this threshold differently. The system-based administrators perceived that the present levels of educational support were near to this threshold level. In contrast, the school-based administrators, and to an even greater extent the classroom teachers, perceived that considerable systemic improvement to Educational Support (Professional Support, System Support, Staffing System and Remuneration), must be implemented in order to positively influence aspirations to apply for school leadership positions.

Discussion

As noted in the findings, the data indicates that 1.2% of ASA employees aged less than 30, and 3.0% of ASA employees aged 31-40, were currently applying for ASA school leadership positions; consistent with national figures (ABS, 2015; McKenzie et al., 2014). This suggests future leadership requirements would not be able to be met under the conditions prevailing at the time of the investigation. There were, however, 25.9% and 24.8% of the less than aged 30 and 31-40 age groups respectively, who expressed an interest in applying for leadership positions in the future, representing key groups who need to be convinced that it is desirable to aspire to school leadership. Additionally, of those ASA employees intending to apply for school leadership positions in the future, 68% were male, compared to only 32% being female.

This appears in contrast to the national figures which indicated an increasing prevalence of females in school leadership positions, with studies finding that 65.2% of all primary school leadership positions were held by females, and 47.8% of all secondary school leadership positions (McKenzie et al., 2014). This gender discrepancy may need to be addressed within the ASA education system. Finally, leadership aspirations were seen to decrease as age increases, emphasising the need to address this leadership aspirations component early on in the employees' career, as not all teachers begin their career aspiring to leadership (Quinn, Haggard & Ford, 2006).

For these ASA employees across all hierarchical levels, firstly, the main barriers to school leadership aspirations were Work-Life Imbalance, followed by Role Disconnect and Family Life impact, resonating with other Australian national research studies (McKenzie et al., 2014). To a lesser extent, the perceived restrictions brought about by working within a faith-based education system was also seen as a barrier to school leadership aspirations, a finding supported from within studies in the Australian Catholic education system (d'Arbon, Duignan, Dwyer & Goodwin, 2001). Secondly, a perceived Lack of Educational Support was seen as a barrier, but there were considerable differences across the hierarchical levels as to the extent of influence level of this lack of educational support.

All hierarchical levels agreed that there was a need for improvement in Educational Support. However, the degree of improvement in educational support levels was different across the hierarchical levels. The classroom teachers may have perceived many inhibiting issues with limited understanding of the broad organisational constraints informing principals and system administrators opinions. By contrast system administrators, and even principals, are distanced from the classroom teacher's microlevel engagement with stakeholders.

For all hierarchical levels, the most significant influence on their leadership aspirations was their desire to make a positive difference - an internal driver - in their respective hierarchical contexts. For the system-based administrators, this internal driver was perceived to be essentially large enough to overcome the perception of there being a lack of educational support. In contrast, for classroom teachers and school-based administrators, the desire to Make a Difference driver was not considered large enough to overcome the perceived lack of educational support and be motivated to apply for school leadership positions.

This research relating to barriers and drivers of school leadership aspiration provides the ASA education system with potential opportunities to increase leadership aspirations in their employees. But this study also acknowledges that these associated changes to remove barriers would be difficult because it would involve changing elements of the present ASA culture, which is difficult to achieve (Schein, 2016).

> *"for classroom teachers and school-based administrators, the desire to Make a Difference … was not … large enough to overcome the perceived lack of educational support"*

Conclusion

There is a concerning lack of leadership aspiration within ASA employees, and this study has identified a number of drivers and barriers to leadership aspiration that need to be addressed in order to assure ASA leadership sustainability into the future. The data indicated that all ASA employees perceived that a desire to positively contribute to the school community was the single most important influence on their desire to take up a school leadership

position. All hierarchical levels, however, recognised that Work-Life Imbalance, Lack of Educational Support, Family Influences, Role Disconnect, and unrealistic Religious (Influence) expectations acted as barriers to this desire to pursue school leadership roles. Even though all hierarchical levels agreed on the nature of the drivers and barriers to leadership, there were considerable differences in the specifics and levels of some of these factors, across the respective hierarchical levels.

Even though this study identified there were relative differences in improvement needed in Educational Support to convert this from a barrier to a driver across hierarchical levels, this study was limited in that it was unable to determine the exact nature and level of the improvement needed. This could be an area of significance in ASA succession practice design or improvement, as it would appear to have the ability to impact on aspiration for school leadership.

> *Even though all hierarchical levels agreed on the nature of the drivers and barriers to leadership, there were considerable differences in the specifics and levels of … these factors*

The difference in perspectives across hierarchical levels relating to perceptions of barriers and drivers of school leadership aspirations would suggest that unless the ASA education system consults widely with their employees from all hierarchical levels, it is unlikely that the ASA education system can effectively increase school leadership aspiration, perpetuating within ASA the leadership crisis also being experienced in other educational contexts. TEACH

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College students' perception of family influence impacting their health and lifestyle

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Key words: Influence of family; college students' health; peer influence, students' perception of health; wellbeing

Abstract

Family influence affects the entire family, especially children, adolescents and even young adults once they leave home. The purpose of this study was to determine college students' perception of family influence impacting their health and lifestyle. This was a cross-sectional, non-experimental study with a descriptive design that used social learning theory to inform and guide the process. The study included 120 college students in a faith-based institution. Each student completed a Likert-type survey (4-point agreement scale) that pertained to their perception of health, and the degree of influence peers and family have on their health. The data analysis showed that respondents are in most agreement (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 0.615) that "*family has influenced my idea of health*", 94.2% indicating their agreement. Three reliable factors and scales - Family Influence (FI) (α = 0.764), Positive Family Impacts (PFI) (α = 0.679) and Negative Impacts (NI) α = 0.613) - were established. Most students indicated agreement with perceiving FI (54.2%) and PFI (58%) with low frequencies of disagreement (19.2% and 14.1% respectively). Most disagreed with perceiving NI (61.7%), but 11.7% agreed they experienced negative health impacts. A weak to moderate positive association between FI and PFI (r = 0.334), a moderate but negative correlation between FI and NI (r = -0.429), and a very weak negative correlation between PFI and NI (-0.242) emerged on analysis. Some statistically significant differences in the mean scales for groups defined by four demographic variables - age, gender, family type and religion, but not ethnicity, were confirmed. The general importance of family health education as a integrative public health potential and contributor to student wellbeing, is asserted. The importance of the contribution of this study to Christian education is the known dependence of effective learning experiences (including spirituality) on student wellbeing.

> *The importance … of this study to Christian education is the known dependence of effective learning experiences (including spirituality) on student wellbeing.*

> *There is an association between over-protective parents and … behaviours in the adult child. … unhealthy eating, lack of exercise, unprotected sexual practices, and smoking.*

Healthy lifestyles are developed and modelled in the family. Level of health habit adoption is impacted in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood and potentially moderated by factors including family structure, parenting style and parental knowledge. Current changes in 'families' may be challenging this transmission of healthy practices, shifting this role into other domains such as the extended family; peers and wider social and community groups including schools, colleges, and university; sporting clubs and churches. Since a core mission of Christian education is effective learning, and this is significantly influenced by the students' level of healthy wellbeing, achieving high levels of student wellbeing becomes an associated prior purpose.

Most college students do not live at home during the school year, which means they are responsible for making their own decisions regarding many things, including health behaviours. "Scholars have posited that family communication is a proximal source of influence on health attitudes and behaviors" (Baiocchi-Wagner & Talley, 2013, p. 194). However, the degree to which communication among family members influences an individual's health is not well understood (Baiocchi-Wagner & Talley, 2013). The purpose of this study was to determine college students' perception of family influence impacting their health and lifestyle.

Background

The National Center for Health Statistics published a report in 2009 which indicated that obesity rates had tripled among young adults between 1971-1974 and 2005-2006 (Baiocchi-Wagner & Talley, 2013). Also, Ramanathan and Crocker (2009) affirmed, "physical activity rates for youth are insufficient for health benefits, whereas inactivity-related diseases like obesity are on the rise" (p. 492). As the United States faces this increasing obesity rate, it is important to understand which health influences are leading to the weight problem. Young adulthood is the time that people start making independent life choices (Paredes, Ferreira, & Pereira, 2014), so to understand the obesity problem, it is essential to determine what variables young adults take into consideration when making healthy choices.

Paredes et al. (2014) asserted that obesity in young adults is not the only health issue prevalent in today's society; college students are provided more opportunities to engage in risky behaviours as they live away from home. There is an association between overprotective parents and unhealthy behaviours in the adult child. The unhealthy behaviours in this context are unhealthy eating, lack of exercise, unprotected sexual practices, and smoking. Based on the research reviewed, the amount of influence that the family holds in affecting college students' perceptions should be examined. It is possible that providing family education could be an effective way to improve health promotion for young adults (Paredes et al., 2014).

Problem, Purpose, and Research Question

Baiocchi-Wagner and Talley (2013) found that "investigating young adult health is exceedingly important, as the time between the ages of 18 and 29 'sets the foundation for future health behaviors and health status'" (p. 193). With more health problems related to risky behaviour and obesity on the rise among adults, it is essential to examine influential factors, such as family influence, in young adults' lives. The majority of students attending college are young adults, and family influences on their health have rarely been studied. The purpose of this study was to determine college students' perception of family influence impacting their health and lifestyle. The research question was: Do college students perceive a family influence impacting their health and lifestyle?

Review of the Literature

All research articles were obtained from the institutional library and the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) database. Eight of the peer-reviewed sources can be applied to studying family's influence on college students' health perceptions. The articles were written between 2009 and 2015. Keywords, such as, *family's influence on health, health perception,* and *student's health* were used to find the articles.

Parental Role in Modelling Health Beliefs and Habits

Ramanathan and Crocker (2009) implemented qualitative methods to answer, "what role do personal, familial, and cultural attitudes and social norms towards activities have on actual physical activity behavior of the Indian Diaspora" (p. 493). This study interviewed six female teens between the ages 15-19 years old whose families were socioeconomically middle- to upper- class. From these interviews, all participants conveyed their parents were physically active in childhood and adulthood, serving as role models for their own level of physical activity. Furthermore, Ramanathan and Crocker discovered that "participants also felt that their parents served as sources of social support through encouragement (e.g., verbal affirmations), facilitation (e.g., buying access to sports equipment), and involvement (e.g., engaging in activity with them)" (p. 497).

In another study, Burke, Woszidlo, and Segrin (2013) asserted that "the association between social skills and psychosocial problems, such as loneliness

and anxiety, is important given the deleterious emotional, physical, and social consequences associated with these problems" (p. 78). Results suggested that "adult children's social skills can be influenced by their fathers' interactional skills," but "maternal influence upon adult children's social skills is non-significant in this sample" (Burke et al., 2013, p. 87).

To assess common health beliefs among college students, Downey and Chang (2013) completed four interrelated studies using a mixed-method design. Upon assessing the college students' answers, Downey and Chang revealed that psychosocial factors were associated with the general perception of health, while less importance was placed on the "absence of illness" (p. 828). Some of these variables influence personal health behaviours and choices. Paredes et al. (2014) observed that "the quality of university students' relationship with their parents mediated the association between mental health, physical symptoms and health behaviour" (p. 43).

Poutianinen, Levalahti, Hakulinen-Viiltanen, and Laatikainen (2015) hypothesised that adolescents who lived in families with mothers or fathers who smoked were at a higher risk to develop smoking behaviours than adolescents whose parents did not smoke. They observed 6,506 children, from the age of 0.5-15 years old, in Finland. The results confirmed that parental smoking was associated with smoking in both boys and girls (Poutianinen et al., 2015).

In summary, parents have served as social support through encouragement, facilitation, and becoming involved in activities with their children. Verbal interaction, financial help, and involvement made a difference in family relationships. These studies imply that there is a parental influence, potentially through modelled behaviour in living healthily, which establishes a habit of healthy lifestyle choices that seem to subsequently affect their children's health choices.

Impact of Parental Involvement in Health Choices

Baiocchi-Wagner and Talley (2013) examined the association between family communication patterns and young adults' patterns of diet and physical activity. This quantitative study included 433 dyads; each dyad consisted of a young adult and an influential family member of the young adult's choice. The age range of the young adults was 18 to 27 years while the age range of the family member was 18 to 87 years. These researchers found that "individuals from families who habitually discuss diet and physical activity also are more likely to perform healthy diet and physical activity-related behaviors" (p. 202), which indicated a positive association between family communication and young adults' health behaviours.

It is also claimed that, "Health-related behavior is acquired, developed, maintained, and potentially changed within a family" (Deutsch, Frese, & Sandholzer, 2014, p. 689). This quantitative study in Germany included 273 office-based family physicians who completed a questionnaire assessing their perspective of families having high impact roles in the health behaviours of an individual (Deutsch et al., 2014). The researchers found that when the family was involved in the care of an individual and the physicians were family-centered care oriented, the outcomes of the patient increased (Deutsch et al., 2014).

Ali and Dean (2015) studied non-resident fathers and their influence in the development of cigarette smoking behaviours in their adolescent children over a 14-year period. This was a quantitative, longitudinal study, which surveyed adolescents, grades 7 through 12, among 132 schools in the United States. The survey consisted of questions regarding the participants' smoking behaviours and relationship characteristics with non-residential fathers and their parental involvement. Ali and Dean found that "easy access to cigarettes and non-residential father smoking are both positively correlated with smoking" (p. 318).

In summary, college students are likely to continue the same health behaviours and practices as their family. The research studies showed an association between the student's decisions and the family's example of health-related practices and beliefs when the students are deciding for themselves what they should put into practice. Many elements are likely to influence what the student puts into practice, and family is one of the most influential factors.

Theoretical Framework

The social learning theory describes one's action or behaviour as a direct result of the environment around the individual and what they have seen and learned. Bandura (1971) acclaimed, "Most of the behaviors that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example" (p. 5). Some actions are performed without any explanation as to where the individual saw it; however, most of the time when an action is carried out, it is because the individual saw someone else doing the same thing. Observational learning classifies, describes and explains how the individual forms a new response based on what he or she saw happen (Bandura, 1971, pp. 5, 6).

Most college students know what their families believe about health and see the different types of health practices used in their home, and often those are the practices they use, without discerning what is helpful or harmful to their health. College students

> *"Most of the behaviors that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example"*

are starting to have to think for themselves because their guide is no longer around to model certain behaviours. As part of this process, students arouse their long-term memory of what they did in the past, or what they saw being performed, and they rely on those memories as a 'reliable' guide. College students put this attitude or behaviour into practice after remembering what they were surrounded by.

College students also use their peers as a guide within this process. Peer acceptance is an important element of college life. If students act out a health behaviour they learned from their family, and their peers scoff and dismiss it, they are not likely to continue that behaviour, for peer pressure is stronger than familial influence (Practice Update, 2001). However, when students practice a health behaviour and their peers eagerly accept it and even join in, the college student will continue that behaviour, based on the positive feedback received. Bandura (1971) believed that "behavior is learned, at least in the rough form before it is performed" (p. 8).

> *when students practice a health behaviour and their peers eagerly accept it and even join in, the … student will continue that behaviour*

In conclusion, the behaviours of college students are examples of the outcome of social learning theory. Students see models around them while growing up and commit to long-term memory everything they are witnessing. Once they come to college and those models are no longer around, they choose to draw out from long-term memory, what behaviours and actions should be put into practice. The students who once relied heavily on their family members, are now forced into deciding for themselves between what they remember, and what they now think are the healthiest practices and beliefs. Peer influence can be a significant distraction from, or support towards, positive health practice.

Methodology

The research design

To effectively collect data from a broad spectrum of students, the best method was implementing a cross-sectional, non-experimental, descriptive design. By using this method the researchers were able to sample a wide variety of participants whose demographics could inform the analysis. Consequently. using a survey gave the best representation of the college's entire student population. Further, completing the survey was more convenient for students than the alternative, more time-consuming data collection methods. Permission was granted to execute the survey over a two-day period, outside the cafeteria during lunchtime.

The survey instrument

The survey instrument was created after completing a detailed review of the literature. Five items at the beginning of the survey gathered demographic information. Two peer groups, as well as the professor and an additional faculty member, reviewed and provided feedback to establish face validity. Corrections were made based on feedback. The final tool was comprised of twenty statements, considered valid in this research study, but the validity has not been tested in other studies. Bias was avoided to the best of the researchers' ability. A 4-point Likert-type scale, used to assess the level of agreement with perceptions of how different variables affect health habits, required selection of one of the following coded responses: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, or strongly agree = 4.

Ethical approval

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was acquired before beginning this research study. Informed consent was gained from those who agreed to participate in the survey. For confidentiality, the participants' names and other identifying factors were not collected. The signed consents were kept separate from the completed surveys.

The sample

The college had a population of about 2000 students. Based on the meal tickets purchased, 718 students typically used the cafeteria on a regular basis. The survey was distributed outside the cafeteria because this was where on any given day; approximately half of the undergraduate student population assembled for meals. All participants were 18 years of age and older. The convenience sample included both male and female students. The participants were given directions to complete the survey, informed of potential risks and implications, and ensured confidentiality. Incomplete surveys were not taken into account, being excluded from the analysis.

Data collection and protection

The survey was executed outside the cafeteria during lunchtime over a two-day period. As the students completed the forms, surveys and informed consents were separated. This process of submitting the surveys ensured confidentiality. The participants were then thanked and offered candy in appreciation for completing the survey. On these two days, an estimate of 718 students used the cafeteria, and a total of 134 surveys were submitted, but because 14 were incomplete, only 120 surveys were considered valid. The response rate achieved was (120/718) 16.7%. All collected data for this research was submitted to the college school of nursing to be stored electronically for a minimum of three years. The school of nursing staff scanned the data into the computer and stored it on discs in a locked cabinet in a locked storage room. No one, other than the nursing

administrators or the research coordinators, has access to the stored records.

Results

In this descriptive study, 120 college students were surveyed to answer the research question, "Do college students perceive a family influence impacting their health and lifestyle?" The purpose was to determine college students' perception of family influence impacting their health and lifestyle. The results of this study were compared to eight relevant, peer-reviewed articles. The results showed a relatively positive outcome for both student and their parent health practices.

Table 1 contains the demographic information. The majority of students surveyed were female (58%). The most common age range among participants was 18-20 years old (65%). Results showed that the ethnicity of participants was predominantly Caucasian (88%). When asked if they were brought up in the Christian faith, the majority of students answered: "yes" (91%). Of the students surveyed, most agreed growing up in a traditional two-parent household (83%).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were analysed to investigate the research question "Do college students perceive a family influence impacting their health and lifestyle?" The statements were ranked from highest to lowest mean score as agreed by the participants and then tabulated (see Table 2). The table assembled also includes descriptive statistics—the frequency and percentage frequency for each item; the standard deviation of the scores representing the level of agreement, quantifying the amount of variation from the mean level of agreement score; the standard error of the mean, indicating the deviation of the sample mean from the population mean; and the interpretation of the mean in terms of the scale. These interpretations were derived from multiple *One Sample t-tests* to distinguish which means were statistically significantly different from scale scores corresponding to strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, uncertain = 2.5, agree = 3, and strongly agree = 4.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for participant demographic and background

Variable / Categories		f	%
Gender			
	Male	50	42
	Female	70	58
Age Range			
	18-20	78	65
	21-23	39	33
	24-26	3	2
Ethnicity			
	Caucasion	105	88
	African American	6	5
	Asian	1	1
	Hispanic	2	2
	Other	6	4
Brought up in the Christian faith			
	Yes	109	91
	No	11	9
Grew up in traditional two-parent household			
	Yes	100	83
	No	20	17

Note. (n = 120).

Differences in the Means and Levels of Agreement Item means can be classified into six different groupings of level of agreement ranging from Agree ($2.75 < M < 3.5$) through Uncertain ($2.25 < M < 2.75$) to Disagree ($1.5 < M < 2.25$).

Agreement

Items showing agreement ($2.75 < M < 3.5$) divide into three different groupings, the one item most agreed (Item 1, $M = 3.34$), being different to eight items (Items 5, 19, 15, 3, 2, 8, 12, 9) with a lower level of agreement but not statistically different means ($2.84 < M < 3.1$), and finally one item with a different and lowest level of agreement (Item 14, $M = 2.76$).

Respondents were in most agreement ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.615$) that "*family has influenced my idea of health*" [Item 1] and at a different higher level of agreement to all other items ($p < 0.050$). All but 7 (5.8%) agreed with this statement.

Agreement at a lower level, with means not different to $M = 3.00$—Agree ($p < 0.001$, except for Item 9, $p = 0.006$) are expressed for **family influence**: *shaping eating habits* [Item 5], further *My health practices are similar to those of my family* [Item 2]; a **family trait**: *having consistent spiritual practices that I follow* [Item 19]; **family (health) habits** *eating well balanced meals* [Item 8], *demonstrating positive health habits* [Item 3], and **personally possessing**: *effective ways to positively handle stress* [Item 15], a practice of *exercising for 30 minutes five times per week* [Item 12], and *eating well-balanced meals* [Item 9]. The mean for a family characteristic—*My family members have effective ways to positively handle stress* [Item 14]—also indicated agreement but at a different and lowest level of agreement ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 0.698$).

> *Respondents were most in agreement that "family influenced my idea of health" … All but 7 agreed*

Overall respondents confidently asserted recognition of health habits in their family, shared spirituality, the influence of family, and adoption of health habits …, yet uncertainty pervaded almost half the items

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for questionnaire items ordered by mean score and level of agreement (Agree, Uncertain, Disagree)

Item no.	Item		SD	D	A	SA	Total	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Level Agree
01	My family has influenced my idea of health.		1	6	64	49	120	3.34	0.615	.056	Most agreed
		%	0.8	5	53.3	40.8	100				
05	My family's eating habits have shaped my own eating habits.		0	19	70	31	120	3.10	0.640	.058	Agree
		%	0	15.8	58.3	25.8	100				
19	My family has consistent spiritual practices that I follow.		4	21	56	39	120	3.08	0.795	.073	Agree
		%	3.3	17.5	46.7	32.5	100				
15	I have effective ways to positively handle stress.		4	16	73	27	120	3.03	0.704	.064	Agree
		%	3.3	13.3	60.8	22.5	100				
03	My family demonstrates positive health habits.		0	30	60	30	120	3.00	0.710	.065	Agree
		%	0	25	50	25	100				
02	My health practices are similar to those of my family.		5	23	60	32	120	2.99	0.794	.072	Agree
		%	4.2	19.2	50	26.7	100				
08	My family members eat well-balanced meals regularly.		2	28	65	25	120	2.94	0.714	.065	Agree
		%	1.7	23.3	20.8	20.8	100				
12	I exercise 30 minutes or more, 5 days a week.		11	28	42	39	120	2.91	0.961	.088	Agree Highest SD
		%	9.2	23.3	35	32.5	100				
09	I eat well-balanced meals regularly.		0	34	71	15	120	2.84	0.622	.057	Agree Lowest SD
		%	0	28.3	59.2	12.5	100				
14	My family members have effective ways to positively handle stress.		5	32	70	13	120	2.76	0.698	.064	Different Lowest Agree
		%	4.2	26.7	58.3	10.8	100				
10	My family's exercise habits have shaped my own exercise habits.		13	38	48	21	120	2.64	0.896	.082	Uncertain
		%	10.8	31.7	40	17.5	100				
16	Because of my family upbringing, I distance myself from friends who engage in unhealthy behaviours.		8	52	45	15	120	2.56	0.797	.073	Uncertain
		%	6.7	43.3	37.5	12.5	100				
13	The way I handle stress is similar to the way my family deals with stress.		6	51	56	7	120	2.53	0.685	0.063	Uncertain
		%	5	42.5	46.7	5.8	100				
20	I make my own choices and don't depend on family to influence me.		12	48	45	15	120	2.53	0.840	.077	Uncertain
		%	10	40	37.5	12.5	100				
04	I have developed some bad health habits from my family.		16	42	53	9	120	2.46	0.819	.075	Uncertain
		%	13.3	35	44.2	7.5	100				
18	Unlike my family members, my friends display more positive health habits.		10	61	41	8	120	2.39	0.737	.067	Uncertain
		%	8.3	50.8	34.2	6.7	100				
17	My peers impact my ideas of health more than my family members.		11	60	42	7	120	2.38	0.734	.067	Uncertain
		%	9.2	50	35	5.8	100				

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for questionnaire items ordered by mean score and level of agreement (Agree, Uncertain, Disagree) - (continued)

Item no.	Item		SD	D	A	SA	Total	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Level Agree
11	My family members exercise 30 minutes or more, 5 days a week.		26	43	37	14	120	2.33	0.945	0.086	Uncertain
		%	21.7	35.8	30.8	11.7	100				
07	I go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals.		28	55	26	11	120	2.17	0.892	.081	Different Lowest disagree
		%	23.3	45.8	21.7	9.2	100				
06	My family members go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals.		44	53	17	6	120	1.88	0.836	0.076	Disagree
		%	36.7	44.2	14.2	5	100				

Key: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *SE* = Standard Error of the Mean

Note. (*N*=120). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*), so higher means indicate higher levels of agreement.

Uncertainty

Eight items (10, 16, 13, 20, 4, 18, 17, 11) expressed for the overall group, uncertainty ($2.33 < M < 2.64$), being not different to 2.50, but being different to all other groups of means ($p < 0.001$ except for Item 11 for which $p=0.045$).

These means indicated equal uncertainty for one **family trait**—*My family members exercise 30 minutes or more, 5 days a week* [Item 11]; seven personal traits—four implying **family influence**: *Because of my family upbringing, I distance myself from friends who engage in unhealthy behaviours* [Item 16], *The way I handle stress is similar to the way my family deals with stress* [Item 13], *I have developed some bad health habits from my family* [Item 4], *My family's exercise habits have shaped my own exercise habits* [Item 10]; and one **personal trait**, related to volition—*I make my own choices and don't depend on family to influence me* [Item 20]; and two related to a **peer trait** and **peer influence**—*Unlike my family members, my friends display more positive health habits*. [Item 18], *My peers impact my idea of health more than my family members* [Item 17].

Disagreement

A **personal trait** item mean ($M = 2.17$) for Item 7 *I go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals* indicated lowest disagreement, and was different to the mean for a **family trait** Item 6 *My family members go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals*, indicating most disagreement ($M = 1.88$, $p<0.001$, except for Item 7, $p <0.05$).

Table 3. includes a graphical representation of levels of agreement across themed items to support the synthesis of the descriptive statistics. Overall respondents confidently asserted recognition of health habits in their family, shared spirituality, the influence of family, and adoption of health habits similar to their families, yet uncertainty pervaded almost half the items (8/20). This included the origin of bad habits, the choice to avoid 'risk-takers', family exercise, comparative peer health, and peer pressure.

The highest mean occurring for Item 1— *My family has influenced my idea of health*—and the high percentage (94%) of respondents indicating some level of agreement provided the most positively affirmed opinion derived from these single item descriptive statistics. In response to the research question—Do college students perceive a family influence impacting their health and lifestyle?—descriptive analysis asserts "yes", almost all college students in this sample, did agree with the premise of the research question.

> *My family members go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals, indicat[ed] most disagreement*

Factor analysis

To provide a stronger basis for asserting the influence of family on student health habits, the data were factor analysed to access a measure consisting of more than one item. Under oblique rotation (delta=0.2) three factors emerged, Family Influence (FI) ($\alpha = 0.764$), Positive Family Impact (PFI) ($\alpha = 0.679$) and Negative Impact (NI) ($\alpha = 0.613$). Tables 4-6 indicate the items within each factor. Tavakol and Dennick (2011, p. 54) reference earlier work including Nunally's

(1978) assertion of the acceptability for research use of factors with alpha values 0.7 – 0.95. Sekaran (2003, p. 311) agrees with the following category levels: < 0.60 poor, a range about 0.70 acceptable and > 0.80 good. Nawaz (2017) with other "post" respondents provides interpretation of the usefulness of different levels of Cronbach's alpha suggesting that in the exploratory stage of research, values > 0.60 but less than 0.70 are useful as any proposed factor and scale (measure) is developed. Only the Negative Impact factor falls into this "poor" category.

Acknowledging there was no missing data for any item (all surveys were complete) factor scales were created, such that the same agreement metrics applied (sum of scale scores/number of scale items). Interpretation of each factor scale frequency table indicated the percentages in different agreement levels. From the FI scale a majority (58.3%) agreed they perceived family influencing their health habits, however 19.2% did not observe this and 22.5% were uncertain. Based on the PFI scale frequencies, a slightly smaller but similar percentage (54.2%) acknowledged positive impacts as an outcome of family influence, more expressed uncertainty (30.8%) but fewer disagreed (14.1%). Negative health impacts were recognised by a small minority (11.7%), a larger proportion were uncertain of this experience (26.6%), but a large majority (61.7%) disagreed that they were negatively impacted in their health habits.

> *"one significant difference … Non-Christian family members disagree[d] they experienced positive impacts from parents … while Christian family students perceived health outcomes"*

Relationships between factors

All Pearson's Correlations between the factors were statistically significant, most at the $p < 0.001$ level (see Table 7.), indicating a weak to moderate positive association between FI and PFI ($r = 0.334$), a moderate but negative correlation between FI and NI ($r = -0.429$), and a very weak negative correlation between PFI and NI (-0.242). These observed associations cannot be implied as causal relationships, but this could be the case, prompting an extension of this research.

Demographic impacts - differences

The relationship of the demographic variables – age, gender, ethnicity, religion and family type – to each of the study factors, was investigated by One-way ANOVA.

Age

An age group difference was established for Family Influence (FI) [$F(117, 2) = 4.020$, $p = 0.020$], but post hoc Tukey and Scheffe tests did not establish statistical differences by age group, however a significant Tukey's HSD Homogeneous Subset difference between the 21-23 years range respondents ($M = 2.222$, disagree) and the 18-20 years of age subset ($M = 2.844$, $p = 0.05$), was asserted. This result is impacted by the small sub-sample of the older age group (n = 3).

Gender

One gender difference for Negative Impacts (NI) was asserted [$F(118,1) = 8.814$, $p = 0.004$], indicating females disagreed ($M = 2.226$) they experienced negative health outcomes, but that males claimed greater disagreement ($M = 1.973$).

Ethnicity

No differences were confirmed between ethnic groups for any factor. However, the small sub-sample of six African Americans were the only group to indicate uncertainty with perceiving positive family impacts ($M = 2.361$) on their health. For the remaining factors, all group means indicated agreed perception of Family Influence and disagreement with perceiving Negative Impact on health.

Religion

Analysis for the influence of religious affiliation indicated only one significant difference being for Positive Family Impact (PFI) [$F(118,1) = 16.954$, $p = 0.000$], Non-Christian family members disagreeing they experienced positive impacts from parents ($M = 2.242$), while Christian family students perceived health outcomes ($M = 2.803$).

Family type

Oneway ANOVA by family type indicated significant group differences for FI, PFI and NI. The traditional family group means indicated agreement with perception of both family influence ($FI_{trad} = 2.803$) and positive impact ($PFI_{trad} = 2.827$) being significantly different [$F_{FI}(118,1) = 4.764$, $p = 0.031$ and $F_{PFI}(118,1) = 18.2$, $p = 0.000$] to the uncertainty evident in the non-traditional families for both factors ($FI_{ntrad} = = 2.525$ and $PFI_{ntrad} = 2.375$). A different [$F(118,1) = 4.192$, $p = 0.0431$) lower mean ($NI_{trad} = 2.082$) indicates students from traditional families disagreed they perceived negative health outcomes while non-traditional family students expressed uncertainty ($NI_{nontrad} = 2.317$).

Discussion

The participants can be summarized as mostly white, young, predominantly female students who were brought up in the Christian faith, studying at a Christian college having grown up in a traditional two-parent home. Based on the results, the majority of participating students felt their family influenced their ideas of health.

Initial findings were not a surprise based on a four-point ranking of agreement within the survey. On the forced decision scale (no uncertain option)

Table 3: Agreement associated with themes

Item	Disagree	Least Disagree	Uncertain	Least Agree	Agree	Most Agree
Family influence						
1. My family has influenced my idea of health.						
5. My family's eating habits have shaped my own eating habits.						
2. My health practices are similar to those of my family.						
4. I have developed some bad health habits from my family.						
10. My family's exercise habits have shaped my own exercise habits.						
13. The way I handle stress is similar to the way my family deals with stress.						
1. Because of my family upbringing, I distance myself from friends who engage in unhealthy behaviours.						
Family trait						
19. My family has consistent spiritual practices that I follow.						
6. My family members go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals.						
Family (health) habits						
3. My family demonstrates positive health habits.						
8. My family members eat well-balanced meals regularly.						
14. My family members have effective ways to positively handle stress.						
11. My family members exercise 30 minutes or more, 5 days a week.						
Peer Influence						
17. My peers impact my idea of health more than my family members.						
Peer trait						
18. Unlike my family members, my friends display more positive health habits.						
Personal traits						
9. I eat well-balanced meals regularly.						
12. I exercise 30 minutes or more, 5 days a week.						
15. I have effective ways to positively handle stress.						
20. I make my own choices and don't depend on family to influence me.						
7. I go out to eat more than eating homemade meals.						
6. My family members go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals.						

> *"The traditional family group means indicated agreement with perception of both family influence … and positive impact … being significantly different …to the uncertainty evident in the non-traditional families for both factors"*

most of the 20-items on the scale had a level of agreement above the midpoint of the scale, indicating the 120 student participants appeared to think family influences were strong contributors to their health and lifestyle. Reinterpretation of the means after the introduction of an 'Uncertain' value (2.5) to the four-point scale, reveals some pervasive uncertainty (8 of the 20 item means) overall. This is consistent with the increasing assertion of emerging independence and individualism in young adulthood.

The findings that emerged from the study are consistent with the literature asserting that family influence affects behaviours in children, adolescents, and young adults (Practice Update, 2001), eating habits (Faber, Dube, & Belanger, 2009), physical activity (Anderson, Hughes, & Fuemmeler, 2007), and lifestyle choices (Strafstrom, 2014). The survey data analysis revealed that most college students perceived family influences their health. Paredes et al. (2014) indicated that parents affect their children's health behaviours and lifestyle choices, especially as they start making their own decisions as young adults. This corresponds with college students' perceptions, the findings indicating students were agreeing to having similar health practices to their family.

As discussed in the literature review, Ramanathan and Crocker (2009) studied how parents serve as role models for their children's level of physical activity. As an example, while college students agreed that family influences their exercise habits, the analysis showed that students perceived that they exercise more than their families – similar but different. Baiocchi-Wagner and Talley (2013) examined the importance of family influence on healthy dietary habits in young adults.

> *The findings that emerged from the study are consistent with the literature asserting that family influence affects behaviours in children, adolescent and young adults*

Table 4: Family Influence (FI) factor item statistics

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Load
q01	My family has influenced my idea of health.	3.342	.615	0.495
q03	My family demonstrates positive health habits.	3.000	.710	0.529
q10	My family exercise habits have shaped my own exercise habits.	2.642	.896	0.706
q11	My family members exercise 30 minutes or more, 5 days a week.	2.325	.945	0.751
q17*	Family influences me more than peers.	2.625	.734	0.512
q18*	Unlike my friends, my family members display more positive health habits.	2.608	.737	0.736

*Indicates reverse coded item

Table 5: Positive Family Impact (PFI) factor item statistics

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Load
q05	My family's eating habits have shaped my own eating habits.	3.100	.640	0.564
q13	The way I handle stress is similar to the way my family deals with stress.	2.533	.685	0.599
q14	My family members have effective ways to positively handle stress.	2.758	.698	0.583
q16	Because of my family upbringing, I distance myself from friends who engage in unhealthy behaviors.	2.558	.797	0.487
q19	My family has consistent spiritual practices that I follow.	3.083	.795	0.753
q20*	I consider my family in making my choices.	2.475	.840	0.608

*Indicates reverse coded item

Table 6: Negative Impact (NI) factor item statistics

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Load
q04	I have developed some bad health habits from my family.	2.458	.819	0.382
q06	My family members go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals.	1.875	.836	0.581
q07	I go out to eat more often than eating homemade meals.	2.167	.892	0.670
q09*	I do not eat well balanced meals.	2.158	.622	0.545
q12*	I do not exercise for 30 minutes on 5 days in the week.	2.092	.961	0.604
q15*	I do not effectively and positively deal with stress.	1.975	.704	0.518

*Indicates a recoded item

Table 7: Correlations between Family Influence, Positive Family Impact and Negative Impact

Scale		(FI) Scale	(PFI) Scale	(NI) Scale
Family Influence (FI) Scale		1.000	0.334**	-0.429**
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000
Positive Family Impact (PFI) Scale		0.334**	1	-0.242**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000		0.008
Negative Impact (NI) Scale		-0.429**	-0.242**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0.008	
	n	120	120	120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis indicated that most participants' family members ate well-balanced meals regularly. The participants agreed that their families' eating habits shaped their own, which was supported by the data showing many participants agreed they ate well-balanced meals regularly.

Correlations suggest highly perceived family influence (FI) was associated (not necessarily causally) with self-observed high levels of positive health impacts (PFI) and low perception of negative health outcomes (NI) and vice versa. Further, the perception of a positive impact of family (PFI) was negatively related to the perception of negative personal health outcomes (NI). Experiencing positive health impacts was associated with a reduced likelihood of perceiving negative impacts on health.

The influence of the demographic variables is mostly predictable, being consistent with other research findings. As an individual moves into adulthood, knowledge, experience and spheres of influence, expand. Consequently, the expression of individuality and personal responsibility within decision-making, moderates perception of personal health attitudes, habits and behaviours as being consequent to family influence. No influence of ethnicity is apparent within this sample, potentially due to the pervasiveness of health education across ethnic groups in the US or alternatively, and more probably, due to the small sample size and its relative homogeneity. Christian values, 'commission' in parents, a responsibility for sharing with children what is most beneficial, and guiding their behaviour by example to on average achieve positive outcomes. Overall non-Christian families in this sample did not achieve this for their children. Similarly, the traditional family group held agreement with perceptions of Family Influence and Positive Impact while the non-traditional family with potentially dispersed, unintegrated and possibly inconsistent parental modelling results in uncertainty about both the influence and positive impact of family.

Limitations and Implications

The homogeneity of the sample is a limitation. Selection bias was another limitation because those who feel they have something to say probably responded. The results lack generalisability because of the small sample size and homogeneity. It is possible that students with poor habits did not want to answer the survey. The data collection tool was new and not tested for reliability. Another limitation of data collection was the survey statement regarding how often the students ate out instead of eating homemade meals. Most students have a meal provided on campus, so there was a higher incidence of eating in the cafeteria among students.

By collecting data about the degree of family influence on the health perceptions of college students, health care professionals may understand the importance of family-centered care and health education. As a consequence, in the future, the health beliefs and behaviours of a family can be altered to encourage more positive and sustainable health outcomes for the entire family unit. This will ensure a continuity of positive health behaviours that may endure for generations to come, creating a healthier future society. However, caution should shape expectations due to the limitations of this work.

> *"the non-traditional family with potentially dispersed, unintegrated and possibly inconsistent parental modelling results in uncertainty about both the influence and positive impact of family"*

Recommendations

As shown in the results, college students on average believed that the family does influence health. Deutsch et al. (2014) stated, "Health-related behavior is acquired, developed, maintained, and potentially changed within a family." With that quote in mind, a recommendation would be to focus on family education as a means of health promotion. By educating the family, common understanding can be gained by each family member, which leads to behaviour change and ultimately more positive health practices. This study focused on the health perception related to family influence; however, further research is needed to examine specific health habits present because of family influence, and how this influence is exerted—being perceived by their child, initiating healthy lifestyle adoption. However, the impact of this strategy overlooks the current college-age population implications.

A second recommendation is applicable in the unique context of this Christian College or similar

institutions. If low perception of family influence and positive health impacts are both associated with negative health impacts, can the unique College context provide a substitute for family influence? Provided the majority of students have experienced family modelling of positive health habits, as this data suggests, the opportunity to influence peers whose family has not portrayed positive health habits, should be proactively leveraged by engaging and informing peer-support strategies. Suitable strategies include health knowledge sharing, establishing peer expectations, and participatory health habit adoption through inclusion in healthy lifestyle activities. Students whose family interaction has limited their health adoption, can gain immediate benefit from this direct strategic intervention.

Finally, added analysis of single items and further investigation of groups, including the level of both family and peer influence, should be completed to explore interactions, and healthy lifestyle implications for young adults.

> *"further research is needed to examine specific health habits present because of family influence, and how this influence is exerted"*

Conclusion

In this study, the participating students felt their family influenced their idea of health and the majority considered their family demonstrated health habits, shaped their eating habits, shared participation in spiritual practices, and molded them to handle stress. Family life affects the entire family, including students once they leave home. Family communication and structure has been shown to affect directly young adults' health behaviours in agreement with other conclusions (Baiocchi-Wagner & Talley, 2013). Previous research emphasised the need to examine current health problems at the family level (Deutsch et al., 2014; Paredes et al., 2014; Practice Update, 2001). When familial influence was assessed among college students, implications concerning education for the family unit were more clearly understood. The specific circumstances that suggest a peer influence strategy might be an effective intervention, also emerged. Concepts of social learning provide a conceptual framework for understanding and planning change in health associated attitudes and behaviours. TEACH

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Grow

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Key words: Growth, reflective practice, graduate teacher, feedback

As many of you know, I am a teacher. Well, I'm what they call a graduate teacher, sort of like a glorified probationary period that you exist in before you are accepted into the fold of fully registered teachers.

In Victoria, to exit this stage you must complete an inquiry project based on an aspect of your teaching practice, with a goal to enhance student learning, and demonstrate that you are a reflective teacher.

As a part of this process I have been subject to a number of visits from a member of our organisation's state office, with the purpose of observing my teaching practice, in order to provide feedback to enhance my performance, and give me information to include and reflect on within my inquiry report.

The person who comes to observe me is one of the loveliest people I have ever had the pleasure to know. She is generous in her praise and gentle in her critique. But after her visit today, I found that I had learnt a far more valuable lesson than I had ever gained from any of her visits previously. It was a lesson I thought I already knew, but one I learnt all the same.

I have always been a reflective person. I wouldn't say that I particularly enjoy the process of reflecting and addressing the shortcomings and deficiencies that come with reflection, but I advocate for its necessity. In short, before today, I felt comfortable in my ability to reflect and improve.

And then I sat down for my post-observation feedback conversation.

The praise that had already come my way based on the lesson that I had taught was generous and encouraging. As our conversation commenced, the praise continued. I had yet to hear a comment of constructive criticism. And I had one single, fleeting moment where I thought to myself…

I did it. I made it. I'm here now. I have climbed the mountain, placed my flag at the top, and I'm here to stay.

The moment vanished, because the suggestions, couched in the utmost kindness and respect, inevitably came.

Next time…
Have you thought about…?
I would like to see…

I turned around on my mountain and looked up. Yes, I had climbed a mountain, but I now stood in the shadow of another. I allowed myself a moment of bewilderment.

I thought I had made it. I thought this was the top.

Oh Erin. Proud, silly, naive little Erin.

Somehow, somewhere I had let myself believe that there was a finish line, a top of the world, a tumble of whimsical, synthesised notes that dissolve into a flashing 'Game Over' screen.

Of course, that's not reality. In life there is no finish line, there is no top of the world, there is no game over. It's just the next race, the next mountain, the next level.

In that moment, though slightly deflated, I saw why life is so brilliantly exciting.

As in my experience, it is possible to fool yourself into believing that there is some level of completion in life, that reflection is only useful as a means to an end, but that, I realised, is the surest way to stagnate. It is the surest way to determine whether you flourish or fail.

And what I learned in that single moment was that growth is unlimited.

There is no ceiling. No highest mountain, or furthest race, or final level.

How far you can grow is limited only by you. TEACH

"Somehow, somewhere I had let myself believe that there was a finish line, a top of the world, a tumble of whimsical, synthesised notes that dissolve into a flashing 'Game Over' screen."

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These reflections were posted on 21st August, 2017 in her first year of teaching professionally.

Vogel brothers: Big hearts for little people

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Key words: Mathletics, presence, chess, faith, models, mentors

Only 14 months apart in age, it's a bit of a novelty to have the sporty, musical, creative brothers Ryan and Casey Vogel teaching at Brisbane Adventist College at the same time. Ryan teaches Year 5, and Casey Year 3, just a few doors away from each other. Haley Vogel, married to Casey, is also a Secondary teacher. You can imagine the conversations between some BAC siblings:

"Mr Vogel is the coolest."
"No! Mr *Vogel* is the coolest."
"Actually, *Mrs* Vogel is the coolest."

The brothers come from good teaching stock. Their father, Craig Vogel, is a biology and chemistry teacher, and Ryan and Casey spent much of their childhood playing sports in the playground after school at Northpine Christian College, and later at Avondale School while they waited for their father to prepare the lab for experiments the next day, or attend staff meetings. They certainly didn't jump into the joys and responsibilities of teaching with their eyes shut! Their older sister is a chemistry teacher.

They're proud of their dad and now, as the responsible ones, standing at the front of the classroom instead of the impressionable ones behind the child-sized desks, they draw inspiration from Craig. "What I remember about Dad was his presence in the classroom," says Casey, who has now been teaching for four years. "He was calm and well prepared. A fair disciplinarian." Ryan, who has been teaching for five years, says that there are times in the middle of saying something to the students, that he notices he's sounding exactly like his father. Surreal moments.

Last term, we sat down with them as they shared some thoughts on teaching.

Was teaching an automatic choice for you both because Dad's a teacher?

Ryan: No. I wanted to be a minister when I was young, but I worked in the kid's club for a couple of StormCo trips and really enjoyed it. I changed my mind from theology when I realised that a lot of the course was theory and they had these massive big Greek language textbooks! By the end of high school, I was thinking of business and was accepted to study that at Newcastle University but decided to defer for a year to check out primary teaching. (It obviously stuck!)

Casey: I worked with children at StormCo and summer camps, but I didn't make the decision until talking to older friends at church who were primary teachers and like mentors to me. They were great role models and they loved it. I probably also picked it because it was familiar to me.

How did it come about that you're both teaching at BAC?

Ryan: I'd been teaching at BAC for two years when another Primary teaching job came up at BAC. I mentioned it to Casey and talked to the principal. She was like: 'Do you get on?' and asked whether working together improved our work or made us less effective. I told her that we get along really well, and are very motivated to get our work done. Teaching at the same school has been really great because we do district sports together, we bounce off each other, and other times we just work at our own job.

Casey: I taught in Melbourne for a year and then decided to move closer to Avondale and do relief teaching because my girlfriend [Haley] was finishing her last year there. After that, BAC seemed like the perfect choice. I've had times in life when everything opened up very quickly and it felt God-led, and this was one of them.

"I've had times in life when everything opened up very quickly and it felt God-led, and this was one of them."

How do you integrate faith and learning in your classroom?

It's not uncommon for the brothers to talk about their faith during English, maths, science – or any other lesson for that matter. Both musicians, their students have caught the singing bug, and you will hear their classrooms erupt into song most mornings for daily devotions.

Ryan: In science, we might be studying something like the human voice and how it works. We talk about how God designed all the different parts of the voice and the body for different functions. We always include God in the little things too, like saying grace at the beginning of lunch, and a prayer before we go home.

Casey: Today we talked about emotions and how Jesus showed emotion – like when he was really angry at the priests in the temple. Our faith is so multifaceted and it's great to be able to link it in.

What do you do in your classroom that's active and fun?

Ryan and Casey call themselves YAMILs. This is a variation on the term given to male cyclists who take up road cycling somewhere around middle age. It stands for Young Adult Men in Lycra (as opposed to Middle Aged Men in Lycra – MAMILs). Being active is an important part of their everyday classroom routine.

Ryan: We have brain breaks. Sometimes we'll go out for handball or do guided movements. It depends on how energetic they are. Other times, I might give them options like constructing with Lego, puzzles or games, reading. We've been doing coding and Mathletics, so sometimes they might choose that, or imaginative play or chess. They love chess and they love playing teacher versus student! I've only lost to one or two students over the years, but they always find it pretty exciting.

Casey: We play a lot of games after they have finished their work, like silent ball where I get them to space out around the classroom and catch a ball, but they're not allowed to move their feet and they have to do it silently. They're getting really good at catching, and I throw in a few extra rules like catching one handed, left handed, standing on one leg, and hot potato.

What would you tell students who might be thinking of teaching when they finish school?

Ryan: Teaching is very satisfying, but it can also be really hard work. In my first year at Taree I was teaching multiple grades and it wasn't what I expected. But I wouldn't change any of that because of what I've learned.

Casey: Teaching is a great way to influence the generation coming through. It's a higher calling for me because you're leading young gents and young ladies to Christ, but also leading them to success in life. There are a lot of hours, there are challenges, and you have to have a bit of persistence, resilience. We debrief when things are hard, but we try to shrug it off as a bad day, go to the gym, and do something that relieves stress – Dad always instilled that in us as well.

As a principal I wish to address two groups: firstly

Parents: We celebrate the 'Vogel brothers' a default for every teacher, for the hard work they put into creating meaningful educational experiences for students. Every lesson, every day, every term, every semester our teachers help your children learn how to solve problems, develop skills and build habits of mind and character that prepare them for the future.

And secondly,

Students: If you're thinking about what you want to be when you leave school, consider teaching. If that's not what you want to be, be a 'teacher' anyway. Share your ideas, don't take for granted your education, never stop learning. Rejoice in what you learn. Be a 'teacher'. TEACH

Playground supervision is part of 'the game' for Ryan and Casey.

> *Share your ideas, don't take for granted your education, never stop learning. Rejoice in what you learn. Be a teacher.*

Successful, yet aspiring to improve student outcomes?

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Key words: learning communities, reflection, school improvement

Our school has always been a well-functioning school, with satisfied clientele, quality teachers and caring leadership. Recently, we have learnt that a school operating under these conditions is not necessarily a school that has a focus on continuous school improvement, nor a specific focus on further improving outcomes for students.

We realised that we were adding too many initiatives from our component reviews to our improvement plan … trying to focus on all of these … was completely un-manageable.

Background

Prior to 2013, school improvement at our school entailed a strategic plan that was formulated by school leadership. The brutal reality was, that the strategic plan usually sat on the shelf gathering dust. Unfortunately, it meant little to staff, and teaching and learning was not the main focus of the strategic plan. Of course, improvement was still taking place as some teachers would see a need in their classes and adapt their programs to meet those needs. This was good practice on the part of each individual teacher and did provide positive outcomes for their students. But collectively we weren't moving beyond these pockets of innovative practice. Furthermore, sharing of ideas and resources was ad hoc, analysis of data was limited, and professional learning was usually based on individual interests rather than the needs of the students.

With the roll-out of Adventist Schools' Australia's Quality Adventist Schools (QAS) framework in 2013, we began to spend a great deal of time collecting and analysing data through the review of various components in the framework. Initially, the QAS was used as a mechanism for driving professional conversations. As a staff group, we dived 'head first' into the component reviews and began to make many recommendations in areas requiring improvement. Staff had a voice and felt empowered that they could make a difference. They felt greater ownership of the improvement process. Many initiatives resulted from our component reviews. These included: "Every child matters" (a focus on differentiation); explicit teaching of reading comprehension; and a greater focus on Adventist special character. In terms of the project management of our initiatives, our intentions were clear and meaningful, but our strategy execution was poor. This was because simultaneously, we were involved in NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan funding, and this initiative was dividing our focus.

As part of the Quality Adventist Schools review process, Adventist schools are required to complete a self-review document that informs the visiting team about the improvement journey of the school. In 2015, our school had their Quality Adventist School Cyclic Review. At this time, we needed to pause and reflect on our progress. The self-reflection, in preparation for the review, was invaluable and we came to a number of conclusions. We realised that we were adding too many initiatives from our component reviews to our improvement plan each year. We also came to the conclusion that trying to focus on all of these recommendations was completely unmanageable. We also realised that we were working on intensive projects, outside of the QAS (such as the NSW Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan) and best practice was to align these projects with other QAS initiatives. Furthermore, we came to the understanding that we were spending too much time on component reviews. We needed to balance our time more wisely between reviews and strategy execution.

Professional learning communities

Following our self-reflection, we aligned our initiatives and we began to focus more heavily on the few areas of greatest need to ensure initiatives could be firmly embedded. Our culture had now developed to a point where teachers no longer operated as 'silos,' but as a cohesive staff who learned together. However, staff turnover and moving from professional learning concepts to practice were major barriers to sustainability. In 2016, we began to understand the importance of establishing professional learning community (PLC) teams to assist the teachers to embed their professional learning into practice.

We now understand and value the impact PLC

teams can have on sustainability of professional practice that enhances student outcomes. Our PLC is based on Halbert & Kaser's (2013) Spirals of *Inquiry* and is student focussed, inquiry driven and evidence based. We scan to find what is going on for our learners, we focus our energies on what will make a difference, we develop hunches to see what is contributing to the situation, we take part in professional learning that is connected to identified student needs, we take action and take risks, and we check to see what difference we have made. Throughout, we use protocols to guide our teams through a process of rich inquiry and norms to guide expected behaviour within teams. We live by the mantra that you cannot learn on behalf of another person but we can assist each other in our learning. Data analysis, professional reading, goal setting and reflections on learning are incorporated into every PLC team meeting. Peer observations are taking place in classes as teachers work together on whole school goals.

Our aim is for the PLC teams is to encourage staff members to be working together for the benefit of every student in the school and develop a strong sense of collective efficacy.

What we have learned about school improvement

Over the past 5 years we have learned the following about implementing a genuine school improvement program into a school:

1. Concentrate on areas of change which have high impact but low effort.
2. Start small, be fast and iterate.
3. Attack the root cause of a problem by focusing on the 'why'.
4. Understand the importance of 'dynamic implementation' where strategy is not rigid but is adapted to the changing environment.
5. Develop a shared understanding of the vision and collaboratively work on ways to achieve the vision.
6. Acknowledge the importance of relational skills when changes take place because what looks like resistance can actually be a lack of clarity or understanding.
7. Acknowledge the importance of professional reading and the value of professional guidance from critical friends.
8. Acknowledge the importance of collectively approaching school improvement with a growth mindset and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Finally, school improvement is a continuous journey and not an event to reach a destination. There are always things we can do better in our quest to offer nurture for today, learning for tomorrow and character for eternity. TEACH

Author information

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> *"school improvement is a continuous journey and not an event to reach a destination"*

Figure 1: Rebecca Downes with students of her Kindergarten Science Class (2017) are all engaged components of their learning community

NASA sent me to space camp: Alumnus wins national award for mission to make science fun

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Key words: Practical, primary science, problem-solving, progressive

It's an invitation no child can refuse. "Let's blow something up, let's break something." No wonder Jacob Windle's students enjoy learning about science. "You talk to kids," says the Avondale College of Higher Education alumnus, a Bachelor of Education (Primary) graduate of 2007. "'What's your favourite subject?' 'Love sport.' Not at the school where I teach."

Jacob is a specialist at St Paul's Primary School in Karratha, Western Australia, whose mission is to "encourage students to be the captain of their own learning journey." Motivated by the misconception that "science is for the academically gifted," Jacob challenges students to believe "everyone is a scientist." His classes are practical. The students rarely work from textbooks because English is often a second or third language and "many can't write their own name. But they can listen, they can problem solve, they can work with their hands and in groups. There's more they can do than they can't."

> *He's transformed traditional and stereotypical mindsets where his philosophy was first scoffed at*

Assessments and some lesson plans, which might take a traditional form one week and role playing the next, are open-ended. Homework is out but hands-on experiments are in—it's all about discovery and intrigue.

For a lesson on flight, Jacob's Year 5 and 6 students threw boomerangs and spears. Jacob has organised an astronomy night and a solar eclipse observation station for his students. A connection with local television media for which students measured, recorded and reported the weather from Karratha generated interest and support from the wider school community. An online forum where Jacob discusses a student's progress keeps carers and parents involved. And a website Jacob created gives his students access to resources and an opportunity to provide feedback. His future plans include integrating robotics and coding into every class.

Jacob has made St Paul's "a school of scientists," says Allen Blewitt, chair of the Australian Scholarships Group National Excellence in Teaching Awards. "He's transformed traditional and stereotypical mindsets where his philosophy was first scoffed at, to getting students to discuss and share their ideas and develop a keen interest in classical sciences." Jacob is one of only 13 educators—from 1350 nominated—to receive a National Excellence in Teaching Award in 2016. He also received an invitation to Space Camp in Alabama, USA, and is now a NASA Australian Education Ambassador.

At the camp, Jacob and other educators completed specific missions. One saw Jacob working as an engineer on a model of the International Space Station, which had been hit by debris. He and a colleague suited up for a virtual space walk to repair the damage. Another mission required the educators to safely pilot a lander to Mars. "I'm surprised I'm alive," says Jacob. "The commander made sure we were all on task otherwise the mission would have failed."

Figure 1: Jacob Windle recipient of the National Excellence in Teaching Award.

The experience encouraged Jacob to give his students more problem-solving activities. And he expects them to make mistakes, which help as they consider the issues for which they must deal as part of finding a solution.

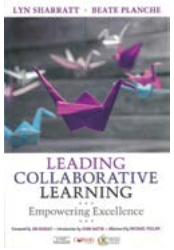
His advice for other teachers is similarly challenging. “Don’t pretend you know everything. Learn something new so you can pass it on to the kids.” New for Jacob is a programming language called Python. “I’m struggling with it, so when I see my kids struggling with their coding, I can say, ‘Don’t worry. I know what it’s like.’” He’s also mastering a fidget spinner, which he’s encouraging his students to use while they’re studying in class. “Don’t hold back the tide. The kids are going to like what they’re going to like, the kids are going to do what they’re going to do, every single trend. You might as well take that trend and use it to your advantage.” TEACH

Author information

Brenton Stacey is Avondale College of Higher Education’s Public Relations Officer. He is also co-convenor of Manifest, an Avondale-led movement exploring, encouraging and celebrating faithful creativity.

Editor’s Note: **Footprint Books** offers TEACH books to review and invites readers wishing to purchase these books online at www.footprint.com.au to quote BCLUB18 and gain a 15% discount (voucher).

BOOK REVIEWS

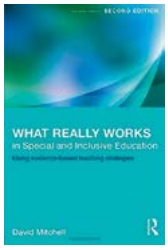


Leading collaborative learning: Empowering excellence

Sharratt, L & Planch, B. (2016).
Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
ISBN 9781483368979 pp. 282

Beverly Christian

Senior lecturer and Head of Discipline, Discipline of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education, NSW



This dual authored book brings together the expertise and experience of educators Sharratt and Planche. Their work contains both theory and practical suggestions for school leaders who wish to maximise learning through creating a collaborative learning culture in their school. The authors recognise that plans and good intentions may not always lead to action and propose a logical and achievable pathway towards *purposeful practice*.

In this book, school leaders and teachers learn to apply a four step collaborative process of

- assessing to plan;
- planning to act;
- acting to make sense of findings; and
- assessing both 'as' and 'of' learning

to every area of education. Although much of what they write fits within existing knowledge on this topic, I believe what sets this book apart is the evidence-based approach taken by the authors, and practical guidelines that are embedded in theory. It is clear on reading this book, that Sharratt and Planche have personally trialled everything they recommend, applied it to broader contexts, and empirically evaluated the effectiveness of their ideas.

This book is more than a superficial description of how teachers may work together. It tackles the complexities and challenges of collaborative learning in a pragmatic way. Each chapter offers insights through vignettes, research, quotes and reflection along with models and tables that will appeal to visual learners. Using this approach, the authors explore ten broad themes ranging from the value of shared beliefs and understandings and how to accelerate learning, to the impact of leadership styles, relationships and creativity on student outcomes. The book is amply resourced with a useful appendix and extensive glossary.

Although I did not need to be convinced that collaboration is important in schools, this book consolidated my belief that collaborative learning is a powerful approach to building professional learning communities. It also expanded my range of resources and provided clear directions to establish a collaborative learning environment that is focused on student learning.

I would highly recommend this book to all principals and school leaders. It has much to offer both the experienced and novice school or department leader. TEACH

See p. 63 for a 15% discount offer.

> *"plans and good intentions may not always lead to action and [the authors] propose a logical and achievable pathway towards purposeful practice."*

What really works in special and inclusive education: Using evidence-based teaching strategies

Mitchell, D. (2013).
New York, NY: Routledge. 368 pp.
ISBN: 978-0415623230

Marion Shields

Senior Lecturer, Discipline of Education, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

This is an excellent book! David Mitchell has identified 24 basic teaching strategies that are used for students with special needs (and others). David writes in a very user-friendly, easy to read style. Each strategy has a chapter, and then each chapter has the following sections:

- The strategy—a brief easy-to-understand description
- The underlying idea—how it really works)
- The practice—principles and specific ideas of how to do it
- The evidence—short, simple descriptions of studies investigating the strategy
- Addressing risks—issues to consider
- Conclusion
- Key References—linked to the evidence.

I found the book not only interesting and easy to read, but also its foundation of over 2000 studies made it practical and workable—enjoy!

Professor John Hattie comments: "This is the book I wish I had written, synthesizing an enormous literature focused on special needs students. It is robust, it is readable, and it is your right-hand resource. A stunner of a book." TEACH

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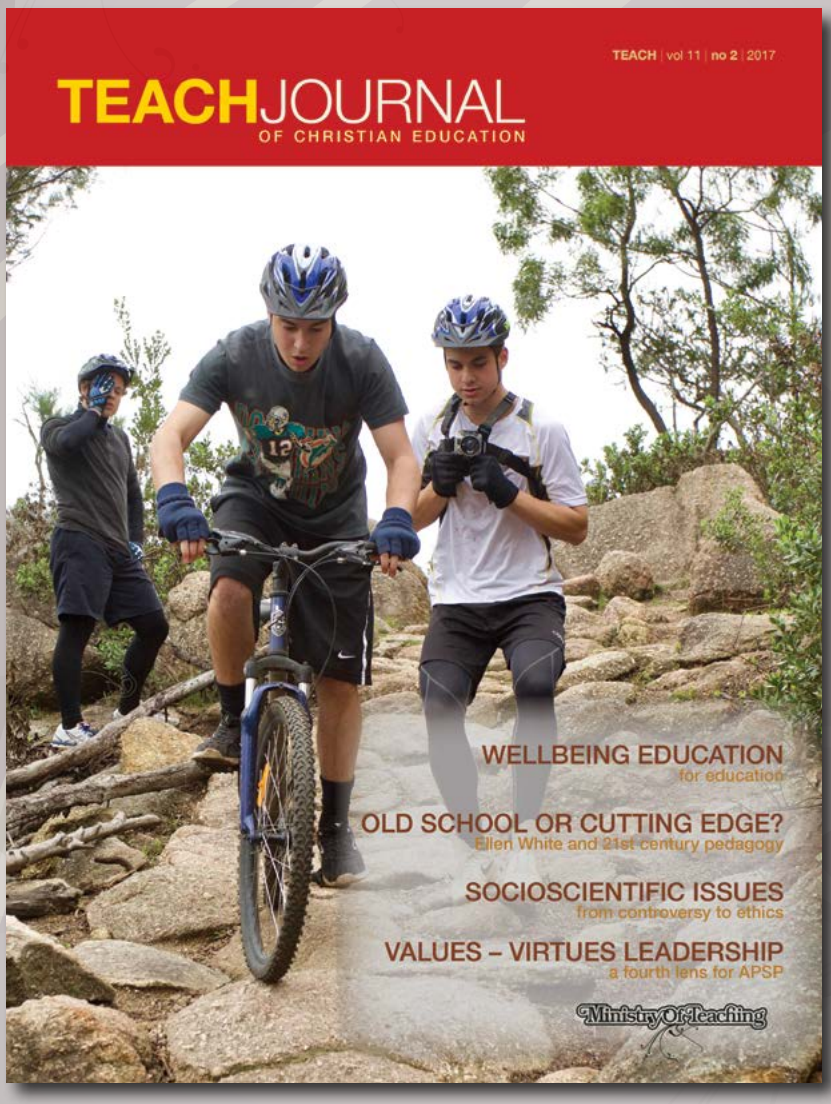

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