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Editorial

Parker Palmer (2007, p.11) reminds us that

"Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves."

Never a truer word was spoken about the work of teachers in the middle years. At a time when young adolescents are trying to make sense of themselves and their place in the world it is their teachers who play a critical role in guiding the way. The contributors to this journal in this edition are keenly aware of their role in helping students make connections – with their teachers, each other, their subject disciplines and the broader community. As such the *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling* becomes a great opportunity for the sharing of examples of practice and research that provides an evidence base to this practice.

The theme of community particularly underpins two programs shared in the *Focus on Schools* section of this

edition. Both programs exemplify 'reaching out' into the community to provide opportunities for students to collaborate, problem solve, create, build and showcase their efforts - but in very different contexts. These programs epitomise the tremendous untapped potential that exists in our middle years students. It is no surprise that with opportunity, encouragement and guidance they will always exceed our expectations. In the non-refereed section the contributors again point to the importance of connections to community. Dowden and Drager describe a community-based program - VITAL ProJex – focusing on the development of values, morals and ethics particularly for students at risk.

Resilience is an aspect of teachers' work with adolescents that continues to become an increasingly greater focus in schools. Fuller and Wickling, share their extensive research on resilience – the results are surprising in some instances and sobering in others. In the *Focus on Schools* section is example of a program at St Michael's Collegiate Middle School which shows how this school is endeavouring to 'find time' to improve the resilience of their students.

In the refereed section Poskitt shares her research about the views of young people with regard to the use of

technology in schools. There is no doubt that technology enhances the opportunity to create connections in the classroom but the role of the teacher, as Poskitt finds, is critical in helping students to effectively navigate their learning journey accompanied by the ICTs available today.

Thank you to all of the contributors to this edition. A further way you can connect with Adolescent Success is through the Thursday evening Twitter Chats #MYEdOz to share your thoughts on a variety of different topics related to early adolescents. A growing band of middle years' educators has been participating in the Chats and the scope of participants continues to grow.

To conclude this editorial on the notion of connection I will return to the wise words of Parker Palmer:

"The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts – meaning heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self."

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CONTENTS

What adolescents think about technology use

Jenny Poskitt (Massey University, New Zealand)

Abstract

A New Zealand comparative case study investigated the impact of technological device use in literacy, over a three month period, for Year (Grade) 4-6 and Year 7-8 students. In school A (Year 4-6 students) data were gathered from two pairs of control matched classes, one of each pair of classes using technological devices; in school B (Year 7-8 students) comparisons were made pre and post technology use. In both schools, pre and post- standardised achievement data were analysed, along with classroom observations, student and teacher interview data. Whilst significant progress was made in student achievement, when compared with national average point score shifts (author, in press), of particular interest in this article are young adolescent students' views about effective pedagogy and technology use. For adolescents, availability of devices made learning more: fun, time efficient, accessible outside of school hours; and enhanced their research and presentation of learning. At times, friends and classmates helped by sharing information and new ideas, but frequent talking and distractions hindered learning. However, the pedagogical actions of teachers (particularly explicit, focused teaching of literacy and technology knowledge strategies) and provision of choices, varied and active learning opportunities were perceived to make the greatest difference to student learning.

Keywords: young adolescents, technological devices, pedagogical strategies, student voice, improved learning

Introduction

Schools are increasingly adopting the use of digital technologies in the belief that their use enhances the appeal, relevance and effectiveness of learning inside and outside school for young adolescents. Yet principals sometimes question the efficacy, partly through fear of student access to potentially undesirable information or associated distractions, additional resources required for professional learning and purchase of equipment, and perceptions of tenuous links between technological use and student achievement gains. Published research reveals mixed views on the impact of digital technology use on student learning (e.g. Cheung & Slavin, 2013; Livingstone, 2012); with variance attributed to factors such as research design, socio-economic background, student age and gender. While there is research on teacher technological pedagogical and content knowledge (e.g. Kulik, 2003), the interaction between teachers' pedagogical practice and young adolescent student knowledge, attitudes and classroom learning activities is less well known. This paper examines these interactions and impact on student learning in two New Zealand case study schools.

Literature review

Adolescence

Adolescence is characterised by significant physical changes as the human body matures from child to adult form. Most importantly for schooling are the myriad brain changes that occur during puberty (Nagal, 2010). Effectively, the brain undergoes transformation. Localised synaptic pruning occurs

of less frequently used pathways, whilst other synaptic pathways are strengthened through continued myelination of nerve fibres enabling greater connectivity (hence more abstract and conceptual thought) to evolve (Steinberg, 2006). Indeed, Steinberg (2006, p.70) argues, "at the core of adolescent development is the attainment of a more fully conscious, self-directed and self-regulating mind." However, in the early stages of adolescence, rapid development of the limbic (emotional centre) results in heightened emotional arousal and impulsive behaviours, increasing pleasure and emotional rewards from interactions with peers, higher levels of risk-taking and minimal capacity to evaluate risk (Steinberg, 2006) or, at times, to focus on cognitive matters. Not surprisingly students experience declining interest in school and seek more stimulating experiences (Poskitt, 2015). They have an increasing need for connection to the world outside of school and family (Langenkamp, 2010; Lansford, Killea-Jones, Miller & Costanzo, 2009); a need for growing competence, confidence, and a positive self-concept (Preckel, Niepel, Schneider & Bruner, 2013) as their identity evolves.

Student engagement in learning

Recognition of students' divaricate interests, alongside the importance of attainment of educational outcomes to prepare students for effective citizenship and productive employment in society, has resulted in extensive research in the student engagement literature. Key factors to retaining student interest in school learning include establishing and enriching young people's sense of belonging and connectedness to their school

(teachers and peers), fostering the intrinsic value of learning, developing a sense of agency and self-efficacy, and realizing that engagement is a variable state influenced by internal and external factors, some of which the teacher and student can modify (Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010). Realizing the notion of engagement is comprised of three components: behavioural, emotional and cognitive elements, schools (and students) have a role in enhancing all three. One means of more accurately targeting time and resources to make a difference for student engagement in learning is investigating adolescents' perceptions of educational experiences.

Student voice

Seeking the views of young people through 'student voice' research is based on beliefs about the rights of young people to have a say, to be listened to, empowered, and for their contribution to make a difference (Cook-Sather, 2014). Not only does such student voice yield more authentic research results through insights into which educational policies and practices truly serve student needs, it has the potential to empower students to identify issues and possible solutions (Mansfield, 2014). As Mansfield (2014, p. 399) argues:

Seeking student voice to improve educational practice is supported by literature in student development, motivation theory, self-determination theory, and constructivist learning theory because these fields recognize the importance of active student engagement in and feedback to the educational process (Sands et al., 2007). At the most basic level, student voice efforts result in development of civic habits

essential to democracy, while engaging students at higher levels results in curricular improvements and strengthens teacher-student relationships (Fielding, 2001, 2004; Mitra, 2006, 2008; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Sands et al., 2007).

Attracting student attentional engagement

Student voice research is an important means of understanding what is happening in schools from the viewpoint of the 'recipients' of education and, more critically, what schools can do to improve educational experiences and outcomes for students, particularly those who are under-represented or marginalised (Cook-Sather, 2014; Mansfield, 2014). It is important to realise student focus and engagement varies according to levels of interest, perceptions of competence and influence of friends. What attracts student attention, referred to as 'attentional engagement', has a number of features including, "equipment with various tools/objects/technologies (e.g. computers), tasks (e.g. labs/assignments), activities or disciplines (e.g. dance or math), people (e.g. peers, teachers, coaches) and places/social settings (e.g. school or community agency)" according to Lawson and Lawson (2013, p.444). The level and duration of attentional engagement can be influenced by the use of particular technologies and also the accompanying pedagogical approaches (Docker, Haug & Lewis, 2010), and the balance of peer and teacher interaction alongside sustained time using devices.

Influence of technological device use

A review of literature related to

the value of technological device use in schools reveals widespread agreement about the motivational impact on students, increased interest in learning tasks, improved student attitudes towards learning, efficiencies in teacher instructional time, and heightened feelings of connectedness to the world beyond school and the workforce (Chen, Chaing & Lin, 2013; Cheung & Slavin, 2012; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Kulik & Kulik, 1991; Wright, 2010). Apart from some learning and assessment tasks that can only be completed with the use of technology, there are mixed views in the research literature about the effects of technological device use on student achievement (Cheung & Slavin, 2013; de Koster, Kuipert & Volman, 2012; Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009; Livingstone, 2012; Mangen, Walgermo & Bronnick, 2013; Slavin, Lake, Davis & Madden, 2011). Some of the variable outcomes are attributed to research design, such as size of study, a lack of comparative data, inadequate measures of shifts, or insufficient details about the context and educational interventions (Cheung & Slavin, 2013; Kulik, 2003). Nevertheless, meta-analysis studies suggest several factors influence positive gains for particular students using technological devices: students from lower socio-economic family backgrounds, lower to middle ability, increasing age of student and gender - with boys typically showing greater gains (Cheung & Slavin, 2013; Freddano & Paolo, 2012). Another influencing factor is pedagogical practice.

Pedagogical practice

The approach taken to integration of technological devices into classroom pedagogy varies according to teacher beliefs about

curriculum, learning, teaching and their confidence with technology (de Koster, Kuipert and Volman, 2011; Voogt, 2010). Building on the pedagogical content knowledge concepts of Shulman (1986, 1987), researchers have integrated technological knowledge (TK) into a technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) framework (Harris, Mishra, & Koehler, 2009; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Pierson, 2001). The TPACK framework argues for the connection and interaction of:

- technological content knowledge (TCK – understanding how technology and content can interact positively and negatively for learning; realising some tools are better suited to certain subject areas than others) and
- technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK – teacher knowledge of a range of technological tools, their pedagogical affordances, limitations and applicability to types of pedagogical approaches) and
- technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK – understanding the complex interplay between content, pedagogy and technology and developing capacity to "interweave these interdependent factors" (Harris et al., 2009, p.396-397).

Harris et al., (2009) argue the dynamic and evolving nature of technological knowledge, requiring teachers to skilfully apply their knowledge and skills in accordance with students' emerging learning needs and preferences. These findings are supported by the work of Abdul Razak and Connolly (2013) who found student preference for games based or

traditional learning approaches was influenced by teachers' pedagogical style. Optimal student learning appears to need alignment between the teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge, learning content and learning activities; and responsiveness to student experience with, and attitudes towards, technological devices.

In classes with a teacher-directed style, technology is largely used for independent work by students to practise or reinforce learning, whereas in more innovative classes ICT use is often associated with open-ended, exploratory activities with student input. However, the latter encounter more technical and organisational challenges with equipment and software, as well as incomplete work due to disruptions to learning time. In order to achieve deeper learning, Hutchison, Beschoner and Schmidt-Crawford

(2012), recommend teachers give students explicit instructions on basic features of applications, opportunities to explore and experiment with tools and time to teach one another. In the early stages of implementation, teachers and students are likely to encounter difficulties such as manipulating images, saving and sharing work, becoming familiar with specific functionalities and disruptions to learning time solving technology issues (Hutchison, Beschoner and Schmidt-Crawford, 2012).

Livingstone (2012) contends there is minimal evidence of the impact of ICT on learning, partly due to the lack of comparative studies. Studies using matched control designs with qualitative elements to provide depth and insight are deemed by Cheung and Slavin (2012, 2013) to be necessary. This article seeks to contribute to the literature regarding comparative

data, contextual information about classroom interventions and student perspectives of effective pedagogy and technology use.

Research design

Sample

The comparative case studies took place over two 12 week periods; school A in term two (April to July) of the four term school year; and school B in term three (July to September). School A participants (n=100 students; four teachers) were Year (Grade) 4, 5 and 6 (aged 8 to 11 years old) in one urban primary school in New Zealand; and in school B (90 students, four teachers) in Year 7 and 8 (aged 11-13 years old). The research sample represented the school population, comprising predominantly European, followed by Māori and small proportions of other nationalities (such as

Indian/Pakistan/Sri Lankan; South East Asian; Chinese and Pacifica). Families of children attending school A tended to represent middle to higher socio-economic status (SES) while school B were middle to lower SES. Of the eight participating teachers, five were female, three male, and all identified as European New Zealanders. In school A two teachers volunteered to experiment with technological devices ('technology' teachers), and two teachers agreed to defer use in literacy (reading) lessons until the subsequent school term ('non-technology' teachers); in school B the four teachers integrated technology into their literacy programmes. Although school A technology classes used common devices and software such as laptops, notebooks, iPods, iPads, interactive whiteboards, software such as Kid Pix, Lexia, MyPortfolio, digital cameras and searches of the school intranet, internet, and Youtube; school B mostly used iPads, searched the internet and used Google Doc platforms.

Procedure

All measures were administered in the students' respective classrooms or nearby withdrawal room (for student group interviews) and carried out by the author, except the pre-test and post-test in reading comprehension which was administered by classroom teachers but analysed by the author. University ethics committee approval was granted and ethical principles were applied: informed active consent, with the right to decline to participate or to withdraw at any time, assurances of confidentiality, truthfulness and avoidance of harm. All participating students undertook the pre-test and post-test, and group student interviews. Participating teachers

were interviewed at the beginning and end of the study, and classroom observations were undertaken beginning, and end of the study period by the author.

Data were recorded only for the consenting students, with a particular focus on the nature of the reading activities engaged in whilst being instructed by the teacher and in subsequent independent learning time; and teacher to student, student to student interactions. Details of the standardised reading-comprehension test composition, student achievement results (e-asTTle, normed for New Zealand students) and teacher interviews can be found in (author, in press).

Results

In essence, all classes made significant progress, with up to four times the national expected point score difference. There was minimal difference between the Year 4 'technology' and 'non-technology' student achievement in reading comprehension, but a positive difference for the older students using technological devices. Examination of observational and student interview data revealed some intriguing explanations.

School A (students Years 4-6)

Anxieties and frustrations about technical issues with technology use

Observational and student interview data with the Year 4 students revealed initial anxieties in using technology (e.g. worries about effects on eyesight or brain), concerns about distraction of games from 'real learning' and a perception that 'real reading' only

occurred with print copy materials. Moreover, some of the Year 4 students struggled, particularly with iPads, to scroll pages, flick from one screen to another, change fonts or other document appearance options. These younger students lacked knowledge and skill in moving from one website to another, basic searching tasks, saving and retrieving files. Similar frustrations and anxieties were encountered in a study by Beavis, Muspratt and Thompson (2015). However, these issues were somewhat mitigated in the older students' classes due to greater familiarity with the tools outside of school, and in school B, an Apple consultant had spent time with teachers and students in the first days of using iPads, tutoring them in the 'technical' basics of scrolling, saving, retrieving files and essentials about frequently used apps.

Realizing the benefits of technology use

However, after a school term (three months) in the study, school A 'technology' research students' interviews (Years 4-6) revealed their appreciation for:

- Additional features of reading electronically ('click' for: definitions, pronunciation, further information or visual images)
- Ready access to researching information
- Increased variety of reading 'follow up' activities (e.g. applying comprehension strategies while viewing moving images)
- Ease of regulating their own learning (e.g. deepening or extending understanding by further searching)
- Improved presentation (colourful



and varied fonts, not worrying about spelling or neatness)

- Realising transferability of reading skills from print to electronic forms
- Ease of sharing learning (teacher, students, parents)

Students were considerably more positive about the use and value of technology at the end of the research study although they noted difficulties with re-reading and locating information in an electronic document compared with print forms.

Influence of teacher pedagogical practice

Analysis of classroom observations of teachers' reading instruction with small groups revealed interesting patterns. Both Year 4 teachers began the session with a clear focus for their small group session. Teacher attention and continual reference to comprehension strategies ensured students maintained focus on the important features for reading, especially when teachers asked them to identify specific information, to evaluate and make judgments from their reading. These behaviours were influential in the significant progress the classes made in reading comprehension.

However, Table 1 displays subtle differences in pedagogical practice. Teacher 1 (non-technology) spent more time extending students' vocabulary, checking for student understanding, and encouraging students to make inferences from the text. Teacher 2 (technology), directed students to identify specific information, predict and make judgments, but was diverted with 'technical instructions' (e.g. "use the search bar", "open the website"). Yet this teacher optimised opportunities while searching

websites to develop students' critical thinking and evaluative skills about the trustworthiness of information. Nevertheless, such diversion of teacher instructional time may provide some explanation as to why the Year 4 students' 'technology' and 'non-technology' achievement results were equivocal (rather than higher for 'technology' students).

Observations of student activity during independent learning time away from the teachers revealed

well organised 'follow-up' activities. Students' time was spent on tasks directly related to reading comprehension; regardless of technology use (e.g. summarising a story, predicting endings, evaluating options). However, technology use (once technically capable) freed students from anxiety about neatness or other related presentation difficulties and enabled them to use more of their lesson time applying reading comprehension strategies or extending research skills.

Table 1

Observational extracts from Year 4 technology and non-technology teacher instructional time	
Non-technology class (Teacher 1)	Technology class (Teacher 2)
<p>During an instructional session with a small group reading a shared text, the following discussion occurred between the teacher (T) and students (S):</p> <p>T: There are some dangers that divers face, can you find out some more dangers from the text please (1)</p> <p>S: The divers must come up slowly.</p> <p>T: Why must they come up slowly?(2)</p> <p>Students did not know.</p> <p>Teacher provided a brief explanation using a comparison with them swimming in a pool.</p> <p>T: Finds a word then points "What does this word mean?" (3)</p> <p>S:Discovery</p> <p>T: What was the main idea you found in the text? (4) (listened to all group members' ideas)</p> <p>T: Who do you think should keep the treasure? (5) Read to page 18 and tell me what you think...</p> <p>Key: Notice the teacher's attention on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying specific information 2. Checking for understanding 3. Extending vocabulary 4. Inferring from the text 5. Evaluating and making judgments 	<p>During an instructional session with a small group reading a shared text, the following discussion occurred between the teacher (T) and students (S):</p> <p>T: Today we are reading on computers. <i>Open yours up and search the KiwiKids news site. How might you find that?</i> (1)</p> <p>S: Use the search bar</p> <p>T: Smart strategy, <i>the search bar helps you find things on the internet</i> (1). First make a prediction (2), then use the website to describe liger (3).</p> <p>Group did not know.</p> <p>S: Maybe an animal, something like a tiger?</p> <p>T: <i>Open up the website</i> (1)... <i>Remember you can click on highlighted words to clarify the meaning, like a dictionary.</i> What have you found out (3)?</p> <p>T: No, we're looking for something else.</p> <p>S: It is a half lion, half tiger.</p> <p>T: <i>Do you think it is a reliable website</i> (4)?</p> <p>S: Yes</p> <p>T: How do you know? <i>What signs do you look for to know it is reliable?</i></p> <p>S1: Read a couple of sites to see if the information is similar?</p> <p>S2: Look for the http?</p> <p>T: Yes, what about the content?</p> <p>S3: The language used?</p> <p>S4: Read to see if the author is an authority, like a scientist for information on animals?</p> <p>T: It is a reliable website so it is probably true. Search using another term, half tiger and half lion (1, 3) and read that article...</p> <p>T: When was that article written? (3) ... If it was only 40 days ago would we find that information in a book? What comprehension strategies were you using?</p> <p>S: Visualising what I thought it would look like before viewing the picture.</p> <p>S: Predicting what it might look like</p> <p>T: If I wanted to check if the website was reliable I could go to Geographic for kids...(4)</p> <p>Notice the teacher's attention on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical instruction 2. Predicting 3. Identifying specific information 4. Evaluating and making judgments

NB: (x) = type of teacher action e.g. (1) refers to statements/questions inviting students to identify specific information

Differences in teacher instructional practice were even more intriguing with the Year 5/6 students (Table 2). Notice Teacher 3 (non-technology) multiple purposes for the session (thinking, questioning, understanding what good readers do), the proportion of teacher talk to students, and the length of teacher utterances. In contrast Teacher 4 (technology), while not stating the purpose at the outset, was focused throughout the session on character. Students were asked to identify specific information and to infer. Only one statement was of

a 'technical' nature (e.g. instructing students how to open an electronic folder), other instructions were linked to comprehension strategies (what features helped you come to that understanding?) and directing student attention to specific details (e.g. sound) to deepen their understanding. These older students needed less frequent explicit 'technical' instruction on device use. Most noticeable in this extract was prompting of active student learning by the teacher's succinct, targeted questions and instructions.

Table 2

Observational extracts from Year 5/6 technology and non-technology teacher instructional time	
Non-technology class (Teacher 3)	Technology class (Teacher 4)
<p>Addressing a 'book' reading group on the mat,</p> <p>T: What is our purpose? Because you have read most of the book do you think you now know who the man is behind the mask? Why? Why did I ask why? What did I get you to do?</p> <p>S: Help us think</p> <p>T: What sort of thinking am I getting you to do? I want you to justify – give a reason for your answer. If you think it is the son in the mask, who is the other person?</p> <p>S: I think it is the half-brother.</p> <p>T: Can you explain or justify your answer?</p> <p>S: inaudible.</p> <p>T: Remember we ask questions to build our understanding. How do we know what type of question it is? How do questions build our understanding? How does questioning help your understanding?</p> <p>S: You do more reading because you go back to find the answer.</p> <p>T: Okay, so it helps you read more... Good readers ask questions during and after they read. Sometimes the answers are in the text, sometimes you have to draw on your prior knowledge to help you understand or read other books to help you understand. What other books might you need to read to help you understand difficult words?</p> <p>S: Dictionary</p> <p>T: Indeed. Now think about some questions about the text. Look at the picture, title, text – all of these things help us. Readers work out puzzles so look at all these pieces to work it out...</p> <p>Note the teacher's:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiple purposes (thinking, questioning, understanding what good readers do) 2. Proportion of talk to students' 3. Length of utterances 	<p>A group of children, each with a laptop, are with the teacher for reading instruction:</p> <p>T: Today we will use the comprehension skills of visualising and inferring. Open your folder to your character reference please (instructed two students to click on a folder, then room 1 folder, then their own folder) (3)</p> <p>T: Yesterday we worked on inference – what helped you understand the character? (1)...</p> <p>Today we will use visual text for inference and looking for clues to add to our character inference (2). View this part of the clip to think about how the sound and music help develop your understanding (2)</p> <p>S: Scary music makes you think it's a scary character</p> <p>S: The music starts quiet and then gets louder and faster</p> <p>S: Yeah and the lighting gets darker to make you more scared</p> <p>T: So the music helps you infer it is a scary character (2, 3)... Jot down those ideas...</p> <p>T: Now view the next part of the clip... what are you inferring about the character now?</p> <p>S: shy, quiet</p> <p>T: What features helped you come to that understanding? (2, 3)</p> <p>S: volume, background lighting...</p> <p>Note the teacher's attention on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inference 2. Identifying specific information 3. Technical instruction

School B (students Years 7/8)

Enhancing 'technical' use of iPads

Accompanying the introduction of iPads (one device per student in the four classes), was tutoring from an external (Apple) consultant who demonstrated to the students technical aspects of using the devices (e.g. opening/closing, saving/retrieving files; scrolling, main features of key applications). Spending time the first day with such tuition resulted in more confident users and minimised subsequent disruptions to learning due to basic 'technical' matters. Notwithstanding this, minor technical issues still arose, such as 'freezing' of devices, periodic loss of work, and neglecting to recharge batteries.

Enthusiastic response to iPads and learning

Student interviews revealed high levels of enthusiasm for use of iPads in their literacy learning. Table 3 displays student perceptions related to four themes: what helped their learning, what distracted them from learning, how the teacher enhanced their learning and what they would like changed.



Table 3

Student (Year 7/8) views about the impact of iPad use on learning	
Positive aspects helping learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very high support for 1:1 iPads • Ease of researching, recording, presenting ideas (c.f. pen/paper) • Time efficiencies (not waiting, faster) • Value of optional workshops • Continuity of learning outside school 	Distractions from learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent interruptions and noise of other students • Student behaviour • Minor cover misuse of iPads (e.g. photo booth)
What teachers do to help learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops (specific skills/topics) • Choices (what, when, where, who) • Clear instructions, willing to re-explain • Teaching strategies/knowledge • Modelling, guidance, brainstorming, questioning to stimulate thinking • Feedback 	Changes students would like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More workshops (teacher instruction) • Fairer distribution of teacher time and attention • More frequent/timely individual help • More varied (active, creative) activities • Reduce classroom noise levels • Reduce interruptions by other students

These Year 7 and 8 students (aged 11-13 years) were excited about iPad availability and valued the ease, speed and time efficiencies of iPad use. Some students continued school learning at home by accessing Google Docs remotely; something they had not previously done. Nevertheless, the majority of factors helping their learning were more related to pedagogy (e.g. clear instructions, questioning) than the use of technology. Earlier in the school year, students had been introduced to an independent learning programme in literacy and maths. They were given required 'must do' tasks and could select amongst a range of 'may do' tasks to complete within the week, at a time and order students chose. Teachers offered several workshop (instructional sessions) choices for students to select at least one, or up to several to attend. Students commented on the value of the workshops, choices, instructions, questioning and feedback to aid their learning (refer to Table 3).

Apart from periodic inappropriate use of iPads (such as distorting personal photos through Photo

Booth, or searching information unrelated to the current learning topic), the main distractions from learning were other student behaviours (talking, showing irrelevant website information, noise levels) and wanting more individual help from the teacher.

Discussion

Technological device use

Student interview data across the Year 4-8 groups revealed the value of technological device use in raising student enjoyment and motivational levels, greater efficiencies in learning time (ease of research, and reduced waiting time for the teacher and other students), more attention on deeper learning (less time wasted on presentation such as neatness and searching dictionaries for correct spelling), and greater variety of active learning tasks. Student voice research in this regard is consistent with international literature on the appeal of technological devices to increase student interest and motivational levels (Cheung & Slavin, 2013; Wright, 2010).

Nevertheless, incorporation of technological devices did not result in utopia. Extracts of teacher instructional time revealed diversion of teacher and student attention to 'technical' aspects of using the devices at the expense of 'focused reading' learning time. Moreover, some frustrations were expressed about devices occasionally malfunctioning, or temptations (games, alternative websites) diverting student attention from the task at hand. A similar trend was found by de Koster et al., (2011) and Hutchison et al., (2012).

Pedagogical considerations

Student interview data revealed, with respect to student learning and engagement, greater influence of pedagogical approaches over use of technological devices. Targeted teacher questioning and clear instruction focused student attention on central features of their learning (comprehension strategies), as well as verbal discussion and associated 'follow-up' activities that elicited active learning from the students.

Observations of subtle variations in quality learning time during teacher instruction and independent activity shed further insights into how learning with technology was affected by pedagogical practice.

Learning preferences for adolescents

As discussed in the introduction, adolescents are typically seeking active (cognitive and physical) learning, choices in their learning (how, what, when, who with), optimal levels of learning tasks as well as friendly teachers who explain things clearly and precisely (Poskitt, 2015). Furthermore, factors like variety, novelty, self-regulation influence student engagement in learning (Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010); classroom factors evident in the Year 6 (teacher 4) class and the Year 7/8 independent learning programme.

Cheung and Slavin (2012) argued *integrated* technological innovations showed more promising evidence of positive student achievement gains than computer-assisted programmes alone. Ultimately, "what matters is how technology integrates with non-technology components of reading instruction" (Cheung & Slavin, 2012, p.22). The 'how' has been revealed in this case study through extracts of teacher instructional strategies, follow-up learning activities and student responses to these approaches.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence of the importance of clear teacher instruction, modelling and scaffolding (of both the content – reading comprehension – and the technological tool), focusing student attention on details through specific questioning and

targeted (teacher directed and independent) tasks to actively apply comprehension (and technology) skills, alignment of the task to match the knowledge and skills being developed and to optimise lesson time on purposeful learning. The latter required teachers to not only deliberately plan their instructional and student independent learning time, but to listen to student views and to be responsive to their emerging learning needs (such as the transfer of comprehension strategies from print to electronic medium, and the desire for more individualised teacher instructional time).

Quality of instruction, appropriate levels of instruction, incentive and time were identified by Slavin (1994, 2009) as four factors of effective teaching. To that list, this current study might add listening to student voice. Beavis, Muspratt and Thompson (2015) highlight the importance of listening to student voices and experiences to integrate technological devices into the learning experiences of students, appreciating the need for a variety of approaches to suit the personalised needs of students. Finding time to listen and to adapt learning programmes in accordance with adolescent preferences for learning requires teachers with an open-minded approach to education, willingness to experiment and learn with students; what Svihla, Reeve, Sagy and Kali (2015) refer to as *design* technology integration, enabling incorporation of technology into curriculum for real-world use.

This study revealed how technical frustrations detracted from central learning, particularly with younger adolescents (Year 4 'technology' students); yet with greater competence in Year 5/6 technical disruptions were minimal, and

featured even less with the Year 7/8 students where time had been invested in 'technical instruction' with the introduction of iPads. The research was limited to only two schools, each for the duration of one school term, in one aspect of literacy (reading comprehension). Results may differ in other schools and time periods. More research is needed before generalisations can be made in relation to teacher instructional practices, student voice and particular technological devices, and in different aspects of literacy (such as student writing) or other curriculum areas.

Nevertheless, the study suggests extensive software or application use is not necessary; rather a responsiveness to and input from the learner, resulting in a dynamic pedagogical approach, or as Svihla et al. (2015) argue - design, where technology device use is incorporated organically, enabling teachers and students to extend variety, choices and application of learning. Teachers need to be open to seeking and incorporating student input into technological learning programmes. In the words of a Year 8 student:

I enjoy the freedom and searching on my iPad but I love it most when the teacher cruises the classroom and pauses with me – her questions about my learning and explanations help me do so much more.

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Table 1: Observational extracts from Year 4 technology and non-technology teacher instructional time

Table 2: Observational extracts from Year 5/6 technology and non-technology teacher instructional time

Table 3: Student (Year 7/8) views about impact of iPad use on learning



What can 91,369 young people tell us about resilience?

Andrew Fuller & Andrew Wicking

Creating safe, healthy and fulfilling lives

Resilience is the ability of a young person to draw upon the strengths within themselves and around them to flexibly respond to life while remaining true to who they are and creating positive relationships with others. The more resilience a young person has the more likely they are to have a safe, healthy and fulfilling life – something we all want for our young people.

The approach of Resilient Youth Australia is to build resilience by working intentionally through three Resilience Pathways: the Safe,

Healthy and Fulfilling pathways. Making these pathways possible for young people helps them to create positive relationships which supports their academic success, constructive leadership and problem solving skills, while protecting them against mental health problems, substance abuse, the persistent experience of depression and anxiety and involvement in destructive extremist groups.

In the paper to follow we will present in summary the latest results of the Resilience Survey, incorporating analysis with a special focus on the key transition periods for Australian school students.

How to assess resilience

Resilient Youth Australia has developed a 99 question, online Resilience Survey, which incorporates a series of reliable, valid, gold standard measures, principally: the Developmental Assets Profile, the General Health Questionnaire, and the Children's Hope Scale.

Used in over 600 communities around Australia, as well as internationally, Resilient Youth Australia has administered the Resilience Survey to 91,369 young Australians in Years 3-12, 44,536 girls and 46,833 boys, as of April 25th 2016.



Our data shows that in Years 3-12, 43% of students (47% of girls and 40% of boys) have good or high levels of resilience. However, there is a steady drop from 59% of students who report good or excellent levels in primary school to 27% by Years 11-12.

Safe pathway

To live in a home where at least one parent or caring adult loves you, cares for you and listens to you is a gift that lasts a lifetime. The majority of students measured by our survey feel safe at home and at school.

However, there is a pattern of disconnection and disengagement. Feeling encouraged by school sits at around 86% in primary school and then falls to 77% in Years 7-8 before falling again in Years 9-10 to 68%. Feeling encouraged rises again in Years 11-12 to 72% but not as much as we'd like. Generally, boys feel less encouraged than girls.

Connection to adults also varies markedly over the school years with 25 % of Years 3-4 students saying they cannot identify an adult in their lives who listens to them. This decreases to 13% in Years 5-6 before rising again in Years 7-8 to 32% and 39% on years 9-10 and by Years 11-12 rises again to 41%.

Safe Pathway: Belonging

Our sense of belonging is the most powerful antidote we have to suicide, violence and to drug abuse. The sense of belonging at school is strong in the primary years with girls having a stronger sense of belonging than boys. Over the secondary/ high school years it drifts so much so that by Years 11-12, 23% of girls and 26% of boys, have a low sense of school belonging.

Safe pathway: Bullying

The pattern of face to face bullying is a steady decline in the proportion of students reporting having been bullied in the past year from 25% in Years 3-4, 22 % in Years 5-6, 19% in years 7-8, 18% in Years 9-10 and 11% in Years 11-12. Conversely, the rate of online bullying makes a rise from 4% in Years 3-4,

5 % in Years 5-6, 8% by Years 7-8, 10% in years 9-10 and declines in Year 11-12 to 8%.

Healthy pathway: Mind health

The percentages of girls and boys reporting having good or excellent levels of positive relationships in their lives is relatively steady. The percentage of students reporting that they have two or more groups of friends remains steady with two notable low points: Years 3-4 and Years 7-8 indicating the need for diversifying friendship groups, and broadening social connections especially at these times.

Across all year levels, boys exhibit lower levels of social skills than girls. The presence of social skills is a powerful protective factor against relationship problems and alcohol and drug use problems.

Indications show that the percentage of students reporting serious psychological problems again increases:

	Boys	Girls
Years 3-4	13%	12%
Years 5-6	13%	14%
Years 7-8	13%	20%
Years 9-10	15%	26%
Years 11-12	18%	28%

This appears related to losing sleep due to worry (especially for girls), not getting at least eight hours sleep

and experiencing difficulties in concentrating. The proportion of students who stay fit or report that they eat healthily declines across the school years.

Healthy pathway: Hope

If learned helplessness is a key predictor of the likelihood of depression, "learned hopefulness" is an antidote. While most students are hopeful and can anticipate good things and plan ways to get the things they want, about 8 % of students have very low levels of hope.

Fulfilling pathway: Learning

The percentages of students who feel positively engaged in school varies across the years:

	Boys	Girls
Years 3-4	83%	92%
Years 5-6	82%	92%
Years 7-8	71%	79%
Years 9-10	63%	70%
Years 11-12	65%	72%

The transition away from primary school is a negative jolt, especially for girls.

Fulfilling Pathway: Values

There is a series of positive values of students that we should be capitalising on. These remain fairly steady across the school years. To give you a flavour of the picture let's present Years 9-10.

Most students have positive values, are engaged in school, are motivated to learn, are connected to the adults in their lives and feel safe at home and at school. The strength of relationships between students and their teachers frays and lessens in secondary/ high school and with that comes

a slowing of momentum. The percentage of students with positive values are:

	Boys	Girls
Values diversity	82%	90%
Endorses non-violent ways of solving problems	66%	79%
Have a sense of purpose	68%	60%
Stand up for what they believe in	67%	67%
Think it is important to help others	79%	83%

Implications of this research for building resilience

This research points to different strategies and needs at different stages of schooling.

Years 3 and 4

Two main priorities seem apparent at this transition period. Firstly, to focus on the development of positive relationships. Broadening and deepening friendships will increase the sense of connectedness and belonging to school. By practicing how to create, maintain and repair friendships we can build values, social competencies, emotional intelligence and protect against violence, drug abuse and bullying.

This would also require schools to employ relationship-based approaches to behavioural incidents where there is an emphasis on forgiveness and the maintenance of attachment.

Secondly, the introduction of a resilient brain programs in Years 3 and 4 to help students to learn about their brains and how to

optimise them; students engage when they experience success. A resilient brain program might involve:

- i. teachers, parents, grandparents, carers and students in sessions building concentration, creativity, learning and memory skills.
- ii. actively building creativity and imagination through exploration of intriguing ideas and phenomenon in the world.
- iii. emphasising the essential ingredients of brain power- sleep, healthy eating, movement and exercise.
- iv. reducing the emphasis on homework and replacing it with investigations, math quests, reading for fun and research.
- v. developing ideas through conversations.

Years 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 are a great time to consolidate resilience. The relative turbulence of Years 3 and 4 is past and transition is yet to occur. Students are overwhelmingly positive, engaged and raring to go and we need to capitalise on that momentum.

Firstly, build learning engagement through resilient brain programs that help students and parents understand how their brains work and the skills that build academic success. Specifically build skills in:

- Memory
- Concentration
- Note making
- Visual representations
- Using graphic organisers
- Identifying similarities and differences

- Utilising feedback
- How to practice well
- Creativity
- Decision-making
- Problem solving
- Persistence.

Secondly, develop social skills and personal identity through ‘students create the future projects’. These are student led/adult supported projects-for-change, where teams of students take on a social issue and create a movement for change in their school, town, community or world for one week. Make sure students at this stage are empowered and that their voice is heard.

Thirdly, develop an emphasis on experiential learning especially in Science, Mathematics and English. This requires additional training for teaching staff in theatre sports and literacy methods, hands-on mathematics-blocks, dice, dominoes, shopping and practical science experiments.

Years 7 and 8

By Years 7 and 8 too many students feel disconnected, disengaged and alienated. They have great capabilities but too many of them don’t apply them at school. This represents a major opportunity lost. This is a time of maximal neuroplasticity but despite the great surge in cognitive ability, the engagement seen in Years 5-6 slows and lessens, positive connection weakens and achievement levels in numeracy and literacy languish. Students need to learn about how to capitalise on the increased cognitive capacity of their brains.

One of the doorways to engagement for this age group is the strength of positive

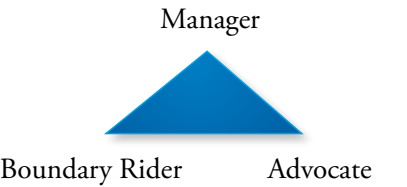
relationships students form with one another and with teachers. The resilience survey indicates that the current structure of school does not strengthen connection.

To capitalise on the enormous opportunities of this age range, we need to consider more powerfully implementing the research findings on effective middle schooling, essentially fewer subject areas and fewer but more connected relationships.

The central intention of managing behavioural incidents should always be “how can we help this student to be a happy engaged learner”. This means that relationships and forgiveness are at the heart of effective student management not rules and consequences. One way to do this is to create pods.

A pod is a group of three teachers who between them care for the learning and emotional needs of a group of students as well as being the main link point for family liaison in high schools. Ideally, the three teachers continue with the same group of students throughout their time at the school.

Most students will be able to relate to all three teachers. Some students however are unable to hear mixed news (praise as well as suggestions) from the one person. For these students we split the roles of the pod into:



The boundary rider’s job is to put consequences in place. The advocate’s role is to engage and support the student and to remove themselves whenever possible,

from disciplinary processes. The manager’s role is to oversee the process and to have the final say in the event of professional disagreements about student management. Successful teachers of adolescents base their work on relationships rather than power. Teachers need to “own” their own classrooms so they can develop support and routines, implement guided practice and create a visually interesting, engaging and safe learning environment.

Years 9 and 10

Year 10 is when the lowest levels of resilience occur. It coincides with increased feelings of alienation and disconnection. While the origins of this low point may occur earlier through not establishing close positive relationships or having a sense of success at school, Year 10 is the pinch point. If we can make a difference in Years 9-10 we will substantially improve resilience.

By Years 9 and 10 we have a group of students who feel disengaged from school and are relatively impervious to classroom-based interventions. This means that while building resilience curricula should still be implemented, it will only go so far.

Increasing the knowledge of Year 9 and 10 students about creating and maintaining positive relationships should be considered. This should be based on the characteristics of successful relationships - trust, forgiveness, integrity, hope and compassion.

For students in Years 9 and 10 it appears to be the ideal time to incorporate opportunities for students in creating the future and building the skills of entrepreneurialism through

student-led businesses and initiatives. This would help build positive identity through living values in action.

This is the time to shift the balance of learning away from classrooms towards real-life immersive, experiential challenge based learning. A number of areas can contribute to this:

- Robotics
- Coding
- Commerce skills
- Forensics
- Drama
- Community arts
- Analysis of local business
- Students create the future projects.
- Virtual technologies
- E-publications

It is also highly desirable that parents see themselves as powerful participants in their teens’ school success and brain development. Assisting parents to learn about study strategies, the teen brain and how to maintain motivation would be valuable.

Finally, students’ brains grow quickly when they are challenged to be curious and creative. Challenges also build dopamine, the foundation of motivation. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to involve young people in projects that make a difference in the world.

Years 11 and 12

Building resilience in Years 11-12 is about managing organisation and time; stress; energy; and aftercare.

Organisation and Time

Compassionate individual mentoring and coaching of

students so they achieve milestones and maintain motivation is helpful. The frame that needs to be firmly but caringly established is that successful completion of Years 11 and 12 is a journey. There is a systematic way of doing it well and as teachers we will help you to follow that system. Parents need to be educated about the process of successfully completing Years 11 and 12.

Stress

Incorporating anxiety reduction methods into these years is essential. 52% of students feel under strain. Mindfulness approaches are useful for some but more active forms of anxiety reduction need to be practiced. We need to manage expectations and catastrophic thinking. As part of the process of Years 11-12, "take care of yourself" times need to be scheduled. Developing a series of video clips of students who have coped well in Years 11-12 would be valuable.

Energy

The results of the resilience survey show that many students are sleep deprived, social media dependent, eating poorly and not exercising or looking after themselves. In short, a recipe for fatigue and sadness. As well as educating parents and students about how to maintain energy, we would like to suggest that each student nominates two "guardian angels" one in school, one out of school who check in with the student and also can contact the student welfare coordinator if they feel concerned.

Aftercare

We know from previous research that students with high levels of

school belonging may be at risk in the year after school. The resilience survey indicates that 16% of girls and 8 % of boys have high levels of school belonging. Linking these students with post-school mentors, past students or people in local industry could be considered.

Conclusion

Resilience is about young people reaching their potential. Given the considerable amount of time, personnel and financial resources employed to increase student wellbeing in the school setting, it is imperative that we begin with knowledge of the strengths and vulnerabilities of our cohort.

Assessing the resilience levels of our students from year levels 3 through to 12, with sensitivity to their school and developmental transitions, enables the design and evaluation of positive, targeted, intentional resilience building actions.

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being".

- Johann W van Goethe

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On Facebook like "Resilient Youth Australia":

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Investing in Australian youth: A community organisation that makes a difference

Tony Dowden (*University of Southern Queensland*)

Mark Drager (*VITAL ProJex*)

Introduction

Society has long recognised that successfully raising the next generation takes more than parental commitment alone. An African proverb, the source unknown, says it takes 'a whole village to raise a child'. The Jesuit maxim of 'give me a child of seven and I'll show you the man', attributed to Saint Francis Xavier in the 16th century, suggests it has been long understood that formal education shapes children and young people.

One of the triumphs of Australian education is that we have grasped the importance of high quality early childhood education and have taken serious steps towards providing universal access to education in the early years and ensuring all early childhood teachers receive specialised training. In contrast, the report card on how we educate young adolescents (10-15 years old) is a mixed bag.

Reform of the middle years of schooling (Years 5-9) is a grass-

roots movement driven by parents, educators and community members who are dissatisfied with traditional approaches to primary and secondary schooling. While many young adolescents enjoy school and have positive experiences, many more have unhappy experiences. Research convincingly shows that disengagement, alienation and boredom with schooling peaks in the middle years (Middle Years of Schooling Association, 2008). Young adolescents are generally interested in real-life experiences and authentic contexts for learning, but often much less enthusiastic about traditional academic subjects, especially when lessons have little or no relevance to their interests or concerns.

A key focus of reform in the middle years of schooling is to help upper primary and junior secondary teachers to recognise and understand the developmental needs of young adolescents and, therefore, design interesting and engaging learning activities

that young people respond to. Unfortunately, many teachers do not know about the developmental needs of young adolescents, nor do they know how to design programs that young people will respond to. The reality is that the quality of teacher education for the middle years in Australia is patchy. A few universities in Australia have excellent middle level courses run by expert teaching staff, but most teacher education programs have an inadequate focus on preparing teachers for the middle years of schooling (Pendergast & Bahr, 2010).

Harnessing local community organisations

Community organisations have the potential to play an important role in the education and personal development of young people. School communities in Australia well understand the value of extra-curricular activities for young adolescents, such as participating in organised sports or over-night

camps, but the reality is that most activities are expensive; with extracurricular fees being thousands of dollars on top of standard fees in the independent school sector, and unlikely to be fully funded in the public school sector.

A generation ago most communities in Australia boasted a range of sporting clubs – especially team codes – and popular youth movements such as boy scouts and girl guides. The emphasis was on participation and inclusion, and fees were nominal. Most community organisations were run by an informal army of volunteers. But nowadays extracurricular activities are much more difficult to run. Organisations are routinely faced with large overheads relating to insurance and licencing, while others struggle to find new volunteers. Activities are increasingly expensive and in competition with virtual activities online. The advent of professionalism means that many, if not all, sports clubs are oriented more towards developing elite players than promoting mass participation, and few individuals are willing to work without pay.

Current trends are creating new opportunities for highly focused

community organisations that specialise in the delivery of extra-curricular services to young adolescents. The rest of this article interweaves discussion of the developmental characteristics of young adolescents (Caskey & Anfara, 2014) with the activities of a non-profit community organisation called V.I.T.A.L. ProJex' <http://www.vitalprojex.com/>.

Values integrated through action-based learning

V.I.T.A.L. (Values Integrated Through Action-based Learning) ProJex – hereafter referred to as VITAL ProJex – is a non-profit community organisation based in South East Queensland that is dedicated to helping young people realise their personal potential by exploring their developing morals, values and ethics. One of VITAL ProJex's programs, 'Unlimited', specifically targets young people aged 10-14, especially those at risk of prematurely exiting schooling due to disengagement, suspension or expulsion.

Kobe's story

Kobe (Year 7) was losing control of many aspects of his life. The Unlimited program helped him get back on track. Here is his story: <http://vitalprojex.com/programs-no-limits-and-unlimited/unlimited-grade-school-values-program/>. Kobe's experience raises questions, especially how a short program like Unlimited could have had such a powerful impact. The short answer is that Unlimited created an environment Kobe was able to relate to, accept and take ownership of, thus enabling him to find fresh self-belief. The longer answer is that the aims and purposes of Unlimited align with the developmental needs of young people.

Young adolescence

As young people – aged approximately 10-15 – negotiate their way through the developmental stage of young adolescence they face two major life upheavals: firstly, when their biological timetable for puberty abruptly commences, and secondly, when they make the transition from primary to secondary schooling. Many young people also face other personal upheavals such



as family relocations that necessitate a changes of school, modifications in their family structure due to failed relationships, and significant issues relating to poverty or poor health. Young people also become increasingly aware that their peer group is divided by invisible fault-lines that include gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, immigrant/refugee status, religious belief and socio-economic status.

Today's young people live in an urbanised, globalised and digitally connected world that is radically different to the teen-age world their parents and teachers experienced. They are exposed to trillions of unedited adult messages received 24/7 in a kaleidoscope of seductive images and sound-bites about a panoply of issues including: friendship, love, sex, marriage, beauty, fashion, music, diet, exercise, obesity, alcohol, drugs, violence, terrorism, suicide, divorce, loneliness, spirituality and saving the planet. Yet, despite easy access to digital connectivity, some young people are not well connected to their local communities.

Unlimited program

The Unlimited program, which is targeted at 10-14 year olds, aims to:

- Help participants understand that personal potential is essentially unlimited;
- Create safe learning contexts where participants develop respect for self and others;
- Help participants discover the importance of appropriate behaviour via action-based learning;
- Empower participants to make healthy life decisions by accepting personal responsibility for their actions; and
- Encourage participants to discover enhanced meaning and purpose to their lives.

At the commencement of each new Unlimited training session, the facilitators and participants collaboratively establish ground rules (referred to as 'principles') to guide individual behaviour. Young people need the security of boundaries but freedom to exercise a modicum of responsibility. They tend to test the limits of acceptable behaviour. Girls will often test adults as a group in incremental steps, whereas boys tend to operate on an individual basis and test adults in increasingly brazen ways that, in some contexts, are closely related to gaining status within their peer group. Research supports the notion that young adolescents usually act as well or as poorly as they are expected to act. Unlimited assumes that when participants are treated with respect and adults set high expectations, there is little they cannot accomplish.

A maximum number of ten participants in each Unlimited program helps participants to get to know each other quickly. Research supports the view that young adolescents learn best by participating in hands-on activities in small groups. Early activities in each Unlimited program provide opportunities for participants to learn to respect and trust each other. In addition, facilitators are trained to work with participants in ways that are trust-building, sympathetic, needs-aware, and relatively power neutral. It is crucial that the context for social learning is supportive; thus the Unlimited learning environment must avoid undue criticism, humiliation or sarcasm, and be free of shame, guilt or anti-social behaviour.

During young adolescence the ever-present reality is that every person is adjusting to profound personal changes in the physical,

social, emotional and intellectual domains, but according to personal timetables that may be significantly different to others. This can lead to introspection and moodiness that might be sparked by careless remarks when individuals are feeling vulnerable. Indeed, preoccupation with body image and self-consciousness can prompt some adolescents to avoid physical activity. VITAL ProJex addresses these issues by dividing participants in Unlimited programs into small and same-sex groups during training sessions. Although young people learn by doing and socially, they also think in ways that become progressively more abstract and reflective. By following up problem-solving activities with an opportunity to debrief and reflect on personal behaviour, students are able to identify how they have grown, and can continue to grow, in terms of their morals, values and ethics.

Values development

Young people develop their values in the middle years. Within a few short years they move from an unquestioning acceptance of the values of their parents/guardian and other significant adults to developing their own personal values. Young people are often idealistic and only just starting to perceive grey shades within appearances of black and white. They need opportunities to consider and justify different options as well as experiencing the consequences of some of these options. Challenging group activities and guided personal reflection are effective learning experiences for exploring fairness, justice and equity.

Young adolescents progressively develop a sense of self and personal

and social values which shape them as adults. They become increasingly aware they are a unique individual with particular gifts and talents and an emerging adult personality. Yet young people are fragile. Social maturation is generally slower than physical and intellectual maturation and this is typically expressed by egotistical and less socially acceptable behaviour such as overreacting emotionally, ridiculing others or being easily embarrassed. When young adolescents lack sufficient family and community support they can rapidly lose their ability to cope with life circumstances.

Dee's story

Dee (12 years old) migrated from the South Pacific nation of Samoa to Sydney. She missed her mother and felt alienated at school. She soon found herself sucked into a negative spiral of violence. The Unlimited program (then referred to as 'No Limits') provided the catalyst that helped her to make the spectacular move from being a bully to someone who cared for others. Here is her story: <http://vimeo.com/59965958>. Like all young adolescents Dee desperately needed to affiliate with and belong to a group and, once this need was met and she was enabled to reflect on her behaviour, she drew from the values embedded within her communal Samoan culture and commenced to care for her peers.

Team building

Young adolescents need high-quality social interactions with other people. They also need to gain experience making decisions and accepting responsibility for these decisions. Team work helps young people to look beyond

themselves, curb erratic behaviour relating to self-consciousness and pitch in to help their team. Learning to work as a team is an especially important life skill for individuals who tend to be loners and are unrealistic or unreasonable in their expectations of others.

In one activity in the Unlimited program, a group of participants is presented with a problem-solving activity that involves the group crossing an imaginary crocodile-infested river via a limited number of stepping stones. Successful completion of the activity requires high level communication and extensive physical interaction, including preventing each other from falling into the water. Participants quickly learn when they need to rely on their peers and when they should offer assistance and encouragement to their peers. This activity helps participants, who as young adolescents are still emerging from childhood egotism, to move their focus from self to others. All benefit from the shared experience and positive feedback from each other. Young people develop positive self-esteem and personal confidence when they successfully complete challenging activities but experiencing success as a team is especially desirable for young adolescents because it creates powerful bonds and strengthens their sense of affiliation and belonging to a group.

Team reflection

Group activities in the Unlimited program are always challenging and capitalise on young adolescents' increasing intellectual capacity and their growing ability to apply moral reasoning. Reflective debriefing on activities is very important. Typical questions might include: What

did I do? How did I feel? What could I do better? How did I help or encourage others? How did they help or encourage me? Was I aware of the feelings of others? How did the team do? Did I like being in the team? How did we measure success? How could the team improve? Team discussion along the lines of what makes a true friend or what makes individuals feel sad, angry or embarrassed is also likely to be fruitful.

Conclusion

Despite rapid advances in digital technologies, it still takes a whole community to raise a child. Community organisations can work alongside the formal education system to help nurture and educate young people. In Queensland, VITAL ProJex has positioned itself to perform a key role in this process by catalysing personal ethical formation and enabling young people to overcome barriers to becoming productive citizens in Australian society.

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Casebrook Intermediate School at the School Gardens Show 2016

Paul Cook & Lauren Dick McCann

"This project has changed the way I look at things around me."
A Year 8 Casebrook Intermediate Student.

The School Gardens Show was an exhibition by 12 schools from March 11-13th 2016. Sponsored by Oderings Garden Centres and in partnership with the Canterbury Horticultural Society it was held at the Woolston Club on Hargood St, Christchurch.

The garden show is held annually and this was its second year (though our first time to exhibit). Its purpose is to encourage Christchurch schools and students to develop a richer and more comprehensive knowledge of the gardener's world. Developing an intellectual understanding, combined with the joy of creating and watching a garden develop through the seasons, until the tasty fruition of harvest.

Casebrook Intermediate School has an organic vegetable garden established 10 years ago and is currently organised by Health and Technology teacher Lauren Dick-McCann. With produce grown on site regularly incorporated into the recipes developed at the schools own kitchen/classroom. Using this wealth of background knowledge and resources was an excellent springboard for the display.



We also fortuitously had an aluminium geodesic dome! The dome was developed and made by a team of 12 Year 8 children with their Technology/Maths teacher Paul Cook as a Cantamath display in 2015. Cantamath is a Canterbury provincial competition of reasoning and mathematical knowledge combined with a display competition of mathematical models. We assembled the dome in situ and our students earned an Excellence Award in the whole class category. Later this year the completed dome, tables and hydroponic unit will be assembled at Casebrook Intermediate School as a productive glasshouse.

The New Zealand Curriculum has 5 key competencies at the core of education in the New Zealand classroom-

Thinking.

Relating to others.

Using language symbols and texts.

Managing self.

Participating and contributing.

'People use these competencies to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities. More complex than skills, the competencies draw also on knowledge, attitude, and values in ways that lead to action. They are not separate or stand-alone. They are the key to learning in every learning area.' (The New Zealand Curriculum, 2007).

Thinking skills and problem solving relate readily to the construction design, gardening for displays, and finding ways to communicate learning. These were all developed into a rich, diverse and educative display. From recorded commentary by the students to explain their findings

and conclusions (displayed on a monitor during the exhibition), to information posters used to highlight specific facts and the design process, for use on the display boards.

The whole process was an authentic learning experience from research and construction to installation for our students. They were engaged and enthusiastic about each stage. The teamwork required to assemble the dome drew unsolicited positive comments from many other exhibitors. Comments about the way that the children interacted – mentioning respectful language, cooperation and a quiet productive manner - came from several sources.

Casebrook Intermediate's effort was focused using three teams of talented and determined children. One group of 12 children researched the causes and effects of climate change and the actions we can take to support our environment. Students initially brainstormed all that they knew and understood, quickly realising they had many questions around global warming, humans' impact on climate change and what could be done about it. We enlisted the help of a recent University of Canterbury Health Science graduate Laura Christensen. Laura's thesis had been focused on how edible gardens can impact health. She was able to provide a deeper understanding of the issues relating to climate change and challenged the students to "think globally and act locally."

The student research group took up this challenge and in pairs researched an area that interested them. They chose a variety of topics ranging from the importance of trees and the

impact of deforestation, the extent of human impact on the environment, and understanding our carbon footprint. They decided that the best way to share their understanding and educate others in our community was to present their work through a slide show which was incorporated into our garden area and played continuously throughout the competition.

The research group had highlighted that water is an increasingly precious resource as our climate is warming and sea levels are rising. As a result of greenhouse gases our seasons will change and consequently the way in which we grow food in the future will be affected.

The plant-growing group (of 15 students) was curious about how climate change will impact on us locally and wondered how it will change the way we grow food in Canterbury. They researched different ways of using less water to maintain production in an increasingly warmer and drier climate. These questions generated many forms of student outcomes.

They experimented making mini glasshouses and trialling self-watering systems for growing food quickly using less water. Others grew a wide variety of vegetables, herbs and fruit for our display garden. Some from seed collected from last years garden and cuttings, others grown from purchased seedlings. Some children created planter bags that sewn by Fabric Technology students. These were designed to grow vegetables in and constructed from a fabric that will allow them to be reused for several growth cycles.

Food Technology students

researched the uses and nutritional value of the fruit, vegetables and herbs being grown and preserved some of the produce from our school garden for display in the exhibit. These students also created leaf-imprinted concrete pavers and bowls as a symbolic reminder to us to take action now and to act sustainably so as to ensure our environment is not remembered only as fossilised stone.

Finally to give structure to the display a group of 10 Hard Materials Technology students made curved wooden worktables and a hydroponic unit for water efficient growing of plants (growing hydroponically uses only 10% of the water needed for an in ground garden). This team started by assembling the geodesic dome

in a multi-purpose schoolroom so that the necessary tables and hydroponic unit could be designed and fitted. Using coloured chalk to draw on the carpet, they were able to resolve what layout would best suit the circular space. Once sizes were clarified the next task was to create a small marquette of the framing for the tables. This stage was guided by their technology teacher helping to identify the layout that would be the simplest to construct and most effective to support for the slatted table top. The hydroponic unit was based on designs found on the internet, modified to suit the size indicated by our chalk layout, what products were available, and were workable by the students. All of these elements were housed within the framework of our aluminium

geodesic dome. With all these different parts to the display it certainly had the teachers (Lauren Dick-McCann and Paul Cook) racing around at times.

Setting up the display was done over two days with a representative sample of the children that had developed different aspects of the garden. This was a big logistical event, with trailers and many journeys to the display and back. The display drew amazingly positive comments with most people surprised at the level of achievement for Intermediate aged children and Casebrook Intermediate School's effort was recognised by the judges with a Silver Award.

This was an intense immersive experience for all the students and the teachers involved. The exhibition is timed for the end the Christchurch summer but is only about six weeks after school starts for the year. This required a great deal of flexibility to the school timetable, occupying all the timetabled time (and many lunchtimes) other than the core of Technology lessons taught over this period. The nearly 40 children involved (more than 20% of our Year 8 students) have contributed in many diverse ways, but all have spoken of how excited they were to be involved and of the extension to their own skills and experiences this project has empowered them with. The opportunity to contribute to their school environment is one that our students consistently cherish. That's participation plus!



Capable and caring adolescents: It's time they were celebrated

Emma Hopkins (Mount St Benedict College)

Sadly, I have often been party to adults either criticising or worrying about our middle school students. In both cases, the emphasis seems to be on the range of desirable qualities our students lack. What I don't hear as often is adults discussing the capabilities of middle school students. In this article I'd like to recount my school's experience of an inaugural program in which the remarkable attributes of our year 7 students were recognised, fostered and applauded.

In 2015, Mount St Benedict College, an independent Catholic girls' school in Sydney's north-west, launched MYBennies, an integrated subject for year 7 students. The 21st century skills became the framework for this course, supported by a multi-disciplinary approach to the curriculum, which also incorporated the pastoral and mission outcomes of the college. Through the course of the year, the students participated in four units, each one increasingly encouraging the student to challenge herself and accept more responsibility for her learning.

For the final unit, the students undertook a culminating project, titled MYChoice. This project was

developed to maximise engagement and was designed around four key elements. Firstly, students undertook personal reflection which encouraged them to think deeply about what they felt passionate about. This approach meant the project was immediately interesting to each individual student. Furthermore it validated the student by acknowledging her interests as important and worthwhile. The range of topics that ensued was astonishing: from sport and cooking, to disabilities and mental health; from animal cruelty and social justice, to art and education. It was immediately apparent that teenagers today are unfairly tarred when painted as both apathetic and narcissistic. These students were neither. Within a week, both the students and teachers were abuzz with anticipation.

Secondly, students considered how their individual passions could be harnessed to fill a real need or provide an opportunity in modern society. This empowered the students with the notion that they could make a difference. After undertaking preliminary research, they developed an individualised driving question to best direct their efforts for the rest of the project.

For example, Alicia explained, *"Helping people with special needs has always been a passion of mine, and this was the perfect opportunity for me to pursue this, but also make a huge difference in others' lives."* In response to her passion, her driving question for the MYChoice project was - *How can I help improve the overall wellbeing of special needs children through interactive and engaging activities?*

Thirdly, the students embraced the role of designer. Each student had the responsibility to develop a product which met her individual design brief, while managing the design process along the way. Students had approximately 21 lessons (of 52 minutes each) for this undertaking. One year 7 student commented, *"...this might sound great, only being limited to your imagination... [but] generating an idea, creating your own task and getting all the preparation done as well is all hard work..."* GANTT Charts and Progress Logs are examples of some of the tools customised to support the students.

Furthermore, a notable shift in the teachers' approaches occurred as they too embraced a new role. As mentors, teachers took a back seat, all the while assuring students

that anything was possible and that they would support students in their endeavours. They committed to saying 'Yes, that's possible', as opposed to 'No, I don't think so' and encouraged students to think outside the box. The result was students who had the confidence to take risks. There was a clear message that the product was far less important than the individual's learning experience. It is also noteworthy that this approach facilitated differentiation and allowed the project to cater for the specific needs of individual students.

As way of final submission, each student launched her final product to an audience whose members had a specific interest in the topic. Many of these audience members were sourced from the wider community and hold positions of responsibility within organisations and businesses. The authenticity of this arrangement motivated the students to achieve well beyond expectations. The products were well-considered and executed; however it was how eloquently and passionately the students spoke

about their work that received the most comments. Many spoke confidently for 10 minutes and thoughtfully answered candid questions from the audience, a feat that would terrify most high school students.

The students' work was highly individualised and, as mentioned, covered a diverse range of interests. Here is a sample of some of the MYChoice projects.

Alicia's interest in helping people with special needs saw her develop three therapy routines specifically



designed for children with cerebral palsy. Alicia organised to present her product to the support unit in a local primary school. She commented, *"It was one of the most amazing experiences to see the children's faces light up as they had fun, but also strengthen their muscles, and to see that what I had done. I actually did make a big difference..."*

Jasmine's MYChoice project began with a curiosity about a Good Samaritan Kinder school in the Philippines. Upon learning about the nature and extent of poverty in the Philippines, she contacted relevant individuals, all of whom were adults in significant roles, and successfully organised for a laptop to be donated to the school. Jasmine's sense of social justice has been ignited and she hopes her project has provided a framework for future donations. She commented *"I am definitely planning on continuing my progress by donating in the future and throughout my years at Bennies and I am also planning to go the Philippines in year 11."*

For her MYChoice project, Mikaela identified her passion as art and recognised poor self-esteem in teens as an area of concern. *"This motivated me to find a way to help them, using simple materials and no specific artistic skills. I combined these*

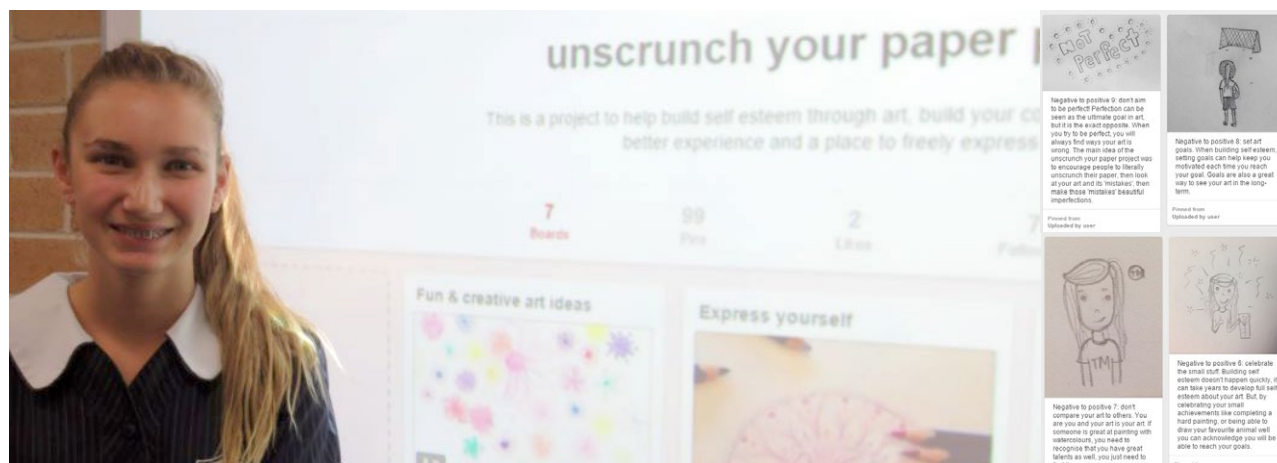
two ideas on a Pinterest board... [which] is a relevant site for my peers." One of Mikaela's focuses was "Unscrunch Your Paper", a call to action. Her vision was that young artists stop worrying about other peoples' opinions of their work, embrace their passion and recognise their unique contributions. Mikaela recognised the possibility of her MYChoice project as stimulating a movement as people both followed and liked her Pinterest page. She was excited it see what the future held.

Ciara described her Project School Box as "simple but effective". She explained how it... *aims to build the foundation for girl's education. ... it is basically an old recycled shoe box that you do not use anymore, you will then fill it up with stationary and school supplies that you would [normally] put in a pencil case. The school box will then be wrapped up and sent to an oppressed country and essentially ... give the chance to learn.* Ciara's project demonstrated a genuine understanding of sustainability and active global citizenship, themes that had been explored extensively in the previous unit, titled "Window to the World".

Georgia's focus of MYChoice was a little know condition called Cru di Chat Syndrome. She sought to raise

awareness as well as funds. Georgia organised a collaborative cake stall in which her year 7 peers provided cake mixes and in an afternoon, made light work baking hundreds of cupcakes. Staff at the college were impressed not only by her passion, but also her organisation skills and commitment to seeing the project to fruition. She raised over \$700 which will make a real difference to the child and his family, to whom it was donated.

In conclusion, MYChoice is a culminating unit which, in its inaugural year, allowed year 7 students to demonstrate their progress in the attainment of 21st century skills via the integrated MYBennies course. Its design provides an enriching and authentic learning experience that reinforces the message that our middle school students can be passionate learners who are capable of meeting challenges and exceeding expectations. MYChoice is not about the products the students design; rather it's about fostering a sense of worth, connectedness and empowerment, all of which will serve students well beyond the middle years.



Finding time to recognise the importance of wellbeing in the middle years

Debra Williamson (Head of Middle School)

At St Michael's Collegiate Middle School, an all-girl Independent School in Hobart, our Middle School is the daily home for students in Years 5-8. A significant focus has developed around Wellbeing helping support girls in building resilience in a range of areas. These areas include how to accept failure, how to manage friendships as they change during these important years, anxiety, and parental pressures to be involved in many co-curricular activities and yet still be academically successful to name a few. The teaching staff involved were being reactive rather than proactive, so we analysed how to make curriculum changes to cater for these pressures. We responded to the research, which strongly suggests that schools need to be catering for the wellbeing of students in order for learning to take place. Paula Prentis, a social worker specialising in child and adolescent health, says that:

'Teachers are on the front lines wondering how to help as they see firsthand the consequences in both cognitive and psychological decline. As anxiety levels increase, executive functions diminish and IQ levels drop. As such, anxiety is, indeed, a learning disability. Anxiety is less likely to flourish in an environment—and within

the context of a curriculum—that supports the developing self.' (Prentis, 2016)

Our current daily structure of a timetabled 30-minute time slot every day is designed to create space in an already overcrowded curriculum for Pastoral/Wellbeing, assembly, Chapel and House time. This targeted time begins immediately after lunch with the Tuesday session dedicated to embed a Wellbeing/Pastoral Program. Guest speakers are often timetabled to come in to focus on particular topics. Here, for example, we have invited cyber bullying specialists to speak with our girls on being cyber safe and Brainstorm Production annually present their show, also dealing with cyber bullying. We have chosen not to use a commercial wellbeing program, as the stand-alone programs do not seem to cater for the diverse and ever changing challenges facing young women of today. Instead, we aim to select from a range of programs to form an eclectic mix as required.

In developing such a program, the Middle School teaching team met to review what was already being taught or provided around Wellbeing. As a result, we found teachers were covering many

aspects relating to Wellbeing; however, these appeared to be isolated lessons rather than being cohesively linked. As a team, we decided to link concepts being taught in Health classes and Faith and Life lessons to form our own Wellbeing/Pastoral sessions. Now, when the Health class is focusing on mental health issues our pastoral teachers also cover mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and the increasing incidence in girls of self-harming. Self-harm is a very difficult area to deal with as discussed in the article, *How to Deal with Self Harm*, written by Sue Osborne, journalist for the Independent Education Journal. She discusses how self-harm can be contagious in peer groups, which means that dealing with this in an open forum is more likely to encourage rather than discourage self-harm. Staff were given articles to read and we invited our counsellors to speak with staff on how to recognise the signs when a student is harming and how to support the individual student along with monitoring the peer group.

Our Chaplain, Scott Sargent, as part of our Faith and Life program works with our girls on 'Signature Strengths' (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These 'Signature Strengths'

are a very strong component of our Wellbeing Program and one that we are continually developing. As Scott commented, 'In both Year 5 and 7 Faith and Life students learn to identify both their own and others Signature Strengths. Signature Strengths are the individual composition of strengths that each person has, usually the top five evident strengths, comprised from twenty-four Character Strengths identified in Positive Psychology as common to history's major religions and cultures. They include the strengths of curiosity, love of learning, perseverance, spirituality, courage, fairness, social intelligence and gratitude. Evidence confirms that utilising one's own unique combination of Signature Strengths and identifying and affirming the Signature Strengths of others leads to increased life satisfaction, stronger relationships and higher levels of accomplishment'.

There are many different and highly regarded Wellbeing Programs and staff at Collegiate are using aspects of these as resources in order to build their Wellbeing Program. We have staff across the school who form part of our Wellbeing team including our Chaplain, Scott Sargent, Simon Bennett, Co-ordinator of Religion and Philosophy, our school Psychologist, the Pastoral Contacts and me, as Head of the Middle School. Simon is also supporting

our staff to implement, Positive Psychology/PERMA. As a school, we are privileged to have staff who are so willing to share their expertise and run staff professional development sessions.

Last year Collegiate held the inaugural 'Time and Space' Year 7 Father/Daughter evening and the 'Time and Space', Year 8 Mother/Daughter evening. Bill Jennings, the creator of the program, conducted these evenings. Bill has been developing these intergenerational programs for young people and their parents or mentors since 1997. Bill developed them to give people 'time and space' for parents and their children to share important moments together in a school community setting. They become special and powerful nights for the girls as they witness their fathers/mothers discussing the importance of their role and the girls experience their fathers/mothers discussing what it means to them to be a dad/mother (or mentor). These young women are given an insight into how fathers/mothers handle the 'letting go' process as they start to forge some independence. These evenings are now an integral component to our Wellbeing Program.

There have been three key learnings after reflection on our Wellbeing Programs. Firstly, staff require professional development in varied

aspects in order to better support our girls. Secondly, parents also required and benefited from some training and support. Finally, we also needed to make time – time for the program to exist and dedicated planning time for teachers to ensure the program could come together – this scarce resource is often one of the hardest things to find. Our program is a still work in progress, but we are well on the way to improving the Wellbeing of our girls in their middle years.

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A traditional school embarks on a new journey

John Chalvatsis, Head of Middle School at the established Ipswich Grammar School, had a vision to create an innovative learning environment whereby “the teachers could maximise every possible learning space”.

John was looking for an environment that would see students “writing on whiteboards, windows and tables”. These spaces also had to be comfortable and colourful to encourage engagement and flexibility to move. And finally, the space had to “include furniture that suits every shape and size of the student”.

It was during an International Boys School Coalition conference in New Zealand in 2009 that John first came across Furnware. In subsequent years he regularly

came across Furnware at education conferences. John could see the ideas and learning opportunities flexible furniture could create and in sharing this vision with leadership members, teachers and students, he elicited an immediate positive response.

The project’s success can be attributed to the collaborative approach John took with all the key stakeholders, including Furnware. John notes, “Furnware were terrific in assisting with any enquiries, colour schemes and ideas from the various schools they have worked with.”

Local Furnware representative Matt Diener met with John on numerous occasions to discuss his vision for teaching and learning. It was during these visits that he

was able to engage with teachers and students and establish what was important for them to achieve with these new spaces. From here, he was able to design an innovative solution to meet the needs of all John’s stakeholders.

Matt was clear about why this project was such a success for Ipswich Grammar; “John approached the project looking for a partner to work with. With an open mind and a very clear set of goals about how these learning spaces would work John and his team have achieved a great result.”

As for John’s thoughts on the spaces now; “Wow, what a difference – the boys surveyed indicated that 96% like the new rooms and 89% believe it will help them to improve their studies.”

Before the upgrade, spaces were tired and uninspiring



The Waverley Table system configured for group work



Round Table with writeable surface paired with Quarter Circle Ottomans and Freeville Table System in the foreground



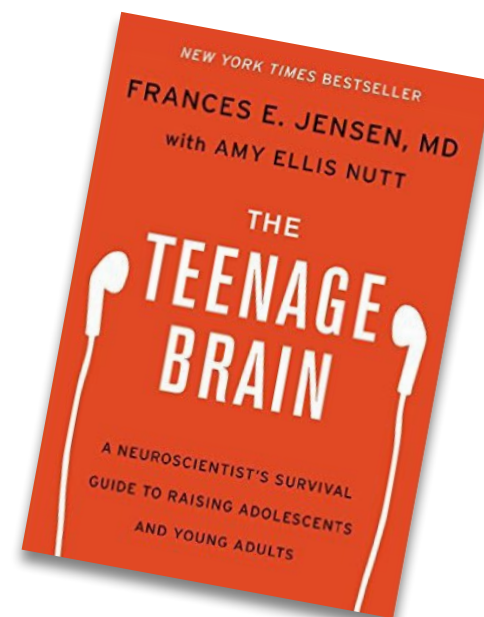
The Waverley Table system configured for working in small groups

Teachers move freely around the classroom as needed





Book Review



Frances E. Jensen (2015)

‘The teenage brain.’

ISBN: 9780062067845, New York: Harper Collins

Reviewed by David Wilcox

‘There has been, over the past decade, a veritable explosion of research and understanding into the unique makeup of the developing adolescent brain. Educators have access to many articles on the topic, from the simplistic to those so loaded with neurological terminology that they become quite inaccessible.

In ‘The Teenage Brain, however, author Frances Jensen manages to effectively blend cutting edge research with her neuroscience background and filter it all through the moderating lens of a mother’s personal experiences. The result is a book which tackles the insights gained from extensive neurological research and puts them into the

contexts of today’s teacher, parent or youth worker.

Each chapter explores the development of the adolescent brain within the context of a specific element of a teen’s life, be that the impact of the neurological changes on learning through to the effects on brain development from things like drug use, stress or the ‘digital invasion’. In clear terms, Jensen seeks to “truly understand why teenagers are moody, impulsive, and bored; why they act out, talk back, and don’t pay attention; why drugs and alcohol are so dangerous for them; and why they make poor decisions...”

Being both meaty and anecdotal,

The Teenage Brain is a great resource to be read cover to cover or to be picked at smorgasboard-style. This is an excellent resource for any person who works with adolescents and desires to better understand their unique developmental needs.

About the author

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Toowoomba



Information for Contributors

Adolescent Success welcomes submissions for journal inclusion that reflect the aims of the Association and address issues relevant to the middle years of schooling. Possible topics include: the developmental needs and interests of young adolescents; family and community partnerships; varied approaches to teaching and learning integrated curriculum; authentic assessment; school leadership and organisational structures in the middle years; information and communication technologies and resources in the middle years; research findings and future developments in the middle years.

Contributions may take the form of:

- academic and research papers that make an original contribution of an empirical or theoretical nature
- literature reviews
- papers of a practical or applied nature
- reports
- viewpoints
- book reviews

Contributions

- The journal has two levels of acceptance of papers for publication: refereed and non refereed. Refereed papers will have two referees selected from relevant fields of study by the editor. Papers must clearly indicate if they wish to be considered for refereed status. Refereed articles will be included in a specific section of the journal.
- Contributions shall be submitted electronically via email to the MYSA email address, or on CD, as a Microsoft Word document. Articles must be double-spaced, without the use of styles, 12 point font Times New Roman. The submitted article and CD become the property of MYSA.
- All contributors need to complete an Author's agreement form to be submitted with the article.
- Papers should be between 700 and 5000 words in length.
- Each article should have a

separate title page that contains the title, the names of all authors, their contact addresses, email addresses, and telephone and facsimile numbers. The names of the authors should not appear on the rest of the paper.

- An abstract of no more than 200 words must accompany each refereed article.
- All references should be placed at the end of text using APA (6th edition). For example:

Journal article

Rumble, P., & Aspland, T. (2010). The four tributes model of the middle school teacher. *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling*, 10(1), 4–15.

Book

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Chapter in edited book

Ajsen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: a theory of planned behaviour. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckman (Eds), *Action control. From cognition to behaviour* (pp. 11–40). Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

- Footnotes are not to be used.
- Figures and diagrams should be professionally prepared and submitted in a form suitable for reproduction, indicating preferred placement.
- Photographs should be submitted separately (not included within the text). All student photographs, art work,

poetry etc must be accompanied by copyright release forms, which are available on the website or from the editor.

- If the material has been published elsewhere, details must be included on the author's agreement form.
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- It is the right of the editor to make minor editorial amendments without consultation.
- Upon acceptance of contributions for publication, the contributors will be advised of the likely issue and date of publication. A complimentary copy of the journal in which the article appears will be sent to contributors.

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