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Fearless (feer-lis) Adjective

1. Without fear; bold or brave; intrepid.

What does fearless mean to you?

Madonna King

JOURNALIST & AUTHOR OF *BEING 14*

Being fearless is rarely easy. To me it means speaking up, irrespective of the cost. It might relate to a suspicion of domestic violence next door, or bullying at school, or disagreeing with the rowdy majority — but we need to be brave and speak out, as ‘Dolly’ Everett reminded us, ‘even if our voice shakes’.

Kim Schade

MOUNT CARMEL COLLEGE, TAS

Being fearless means taking a chance, being honest and open and not being afraid to listen to the views of others. It means being courageous and resilient and being able to say yes, and at times no. Knowing and acknowledging that we all have strengths and weaknesses.

Jonathon Mascorella

LORETO KIRRIBILLI, NSW

To be fearless is to have freedom, which is built on confidence, knowledge and understanding. In being truly fearless, we can allow ourselves to be creative and investigate new solutions and ideas, knowing that we will make mistakes, learn and develop deeper knowledge and a broader understanding of how to progress.

Dr Terrance Fitzsimmons

AUSTRALIAN GENDER EQUALITY COUNCIL

A fearless woman would view the world as a level playing field, without doubts as to her ability or about the views of others of her. She would navigate the unknown with confidence, compassion and determination, both anchored and buoyed by a strong set of values.

Samantha Lau

YEAR 12 STUDENT, THE MAC.ROBERTSON GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL, VIC

Fearless doesn't always mean taking a situation and throwing yourself in head-first. It's more characterised by a deep-seated, budding belief that the concern can be addressed, the problem resolved, the goal achieved — any form in which it appears. For that belief to grow, for one to be fearless, there has to be a fierce determination to trust in yourself, stand for others and to not let age, gender, or anything else diminish your voice or the weight of your words.

Raagini Mehra

YEAR 12 STUDENT, THE MAC.ROBERTSON GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL, VIC

Looking introspectively — knowing you are your own constant, having your own moral compass that drives you. Allowing yourself to be insecure knowing there will be times full of fear and reaching in and also reaching out to our support systems.

Kate Mount

ST PETER'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, SA

To be fearless I step beyond my comfort zone, I question and critically reflect; continually searching for innovative ways of doing things, not always with the popular or majority consensus. Fearlessness is a quality that leads to change and builds resilience, which are essential in creative leadership and practice.

Julie Mencher

PSYCHOTHERAPIST AND CONSULTANT

To me, fearlessness is a misnomer. Since we can't control what we feel and since fear is both an inevitable and protective response to our world, the elimination of fear is neither possible nor desirable. Activating the courage to take action which pushes *through* fear represents true fearlessness.

Zoe Shim

HEAD GIRL, TARA ANGLICAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, NSW

For me, fearless means being willing to take risks in order to achieve your goals and being confident in your decisions. A fearless leader is ambitious and committed to their overall vision in changing the world for the better, exemplifying resilience and passion to overcome potential downfalls.

Maree Crabbe

FOUNDER, RISK AND REALITY

Being fearless means not being controlled, limited and defined by fears. It means having the courage required to face challenges and tackle difficult problems. We may not always feel fearless, but we can choose to act in ways that set fear aside for the sake of something more important.

Stephanie Bagshaw

DEPUTY HEAD GIRL, CHISIPITE SENIOR SCHOOL, ZIMBABWE

Being fearless is not about having no fears. It's about being able to look beyond those fears and step out of your comfort zone so that you can realise your full potential and allow yourself to grow. It's about taking the risk and trying new things even though you might fail.

Ros Curtis

ALLIANCE PRESIDENT AND PRINCIPAL, ST MARGARET'S ANGLICAN GIRLS SCHOOL, QLD

As humans, we are never without our fears. However, we can project being fearless by exhibiting courage. Courage is essential for resilience and for life. Being courageous, is about confronting difficulties, despite one's fears. Therefore, I can appear 'fearless' when I do what is right, even when it is not easy. I may appear 'fearless' when I make difficult decisions or have hard conversations, because I do not let fears hold me back. As a leader, courage is essential. To some, that may appear as being fearless.

Tiuaana-Marie Aiono

HEAD GIRL, QUEEN MARGARET COLLEGE, NEW ZEALAND

"To learn to succeed you must first learn to fail" these words by Michael Jordan sum up what I believe it means to be fearless. To be fearless you must be able to allow yourself to be vulnerable and make mistakes. Success does not come without failure and being comfortable.

Dr Kathrine Dix

SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, ACER

I didn't come from a fearless mother. She showed me what fearing life looks like — and I love her for it. I chose a different path — the one less travelled — and found freedom in the fearless courage that you need when you reach way beyond 'your potential' and eventually succeed.

Dr Nicole Archard

PRINCIPAL, LORETO COLLEGE MARRYATVILLE, SA

To be fearless is to be bold and brave. It is when you know being quiet is the safest option but you take a deep breath and claim your voice instead. When you are fearless you are not defined by expectations or stereotypes, you are free and happy to be who and what you are.

Xanthe Lowe-Brown

SCHOOL CAPTAIN, ST MARGARET'S ANGLICAN GIRLS SCHOOL, QLD

To me, being fearless means having the courage to stand out and to put yourself out there, not worrying what anyone thinks of you. Being fearless means to follow through on a decision that you believe is right, which other people might not agree on. It means giving everything a go, facing challenges with courage and not holding back because of self-doubt or insecurity.

Julia Casella

HEAD GIRL, ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE, WA

Through strength in self, we impede the barriers of self-doubt which restrains our attainment of full potential. In trusting the power of our voices — as one among millions — to invoke change, we liberate ourselves from the chains of social inequity. This is the very essence of fearlessness.

Tahlia De Felicis

SCHOOL CAPTAIN, MOUNT ALVERNIA COLLEGE, QLD

To me fearless means putting aside everything that scares you, stepping out of your comfort zone and not worrying about judgement from others. It is when we are fearless that we experience the most and create lasting memories with great effects on our lives.

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Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Labor Senator for South Australia



Delivered at the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia's Fearless Girls, Strong Women conference in Adelaide on May 7, 2018. The findings of the Mission Australia Youth Survey for 2017 make for interesting reading. Young people were asked to rank how concerned they had been about a number of issues in the past year. The responses were consistent with previous years, which may indicate that we have a chronic problem here.

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My father was regarded as crazy for uprooting the family and leaving apartheid South Africa — "Why put your family at risk?" he was asked. He replied with equal conviction: "I see opportunity for a better life, a better future and equal opportunity."

Welcome to In Alliance 2018

With new strategic priorities in place for 2018, it seemed like the perfect time to reimagine our institutional magazine, *In Alliance*, first published in 1995. But we knew we had to do more than merely redesign it; we wanted to rethink its purpose and potential, as well as the relevance of a print publication in today's digital media paradigm.

From how to promote the distinctive work of girls' schools and the unparalleled opportunities they provide for girls and young women to what we can contribute to the conversation on gender equality and equity of opportunity, and how we deliver up-to-date news, issues and research to our members — the whys and hows of what worked in communications even five years ago are obsolete, superseded by new media and rapidly changing expectations.

The 2018 edition of *In Alliance* is our response, along with our digital news platform [IA] News. This combination of print and digital gives us the flexibility to communicate news and research as it happens, while allowing us the time to collaborate with academics, researchers and authors to produce a magazine curated specifically for educators in girls' schools.

As the content for 2018 came together it was clear that there was a serendipitous connecting theme throughout the articles — fearlessness. And what better theme in this first quarter of the 21st century as cultural change shifts stereotypes around gender roles. While legal equality was achieved decades ago in countries like Australia and New Zealand, workplace inequalities and gender bias persists. The all too pervasive issue of sexual harassment is exposed through global campaigns such as #MeToo — indicating just how deep-seated bias and harassment really are. Running with the theme of fearlessness we asked our contributors, student leaders and educators what it means to be fearless and you can read their fascinating responses on page 3.

While legal equality was achieved decades ago in countries like Australia and New Zealand, workplace inequalities and gender bias persists.

Gender roles, sexualisation of women, pornography, toxic masculinity, relationships: these were part of the lexicon of our 2018 biennial educators' conference, and they dominate media headlines and social feeds too. We invited several of the conference's presenters to

contribute to this publication and add to our understanding of these issues and the implications for girls.

There's no denying that there has never been a better time to be standing up for gender equality as argued by Dr Nicole Archard (page 46) and Dr Terry Fitzsimmons (page 39). Senator Penny Wong (page 7) encourages women to be rule makers not rule takers. Articles by Maree Crabbe (page 20), Marcelle Nader-Turner (page 26) and Peggy Orenstein (page 16) provide a real, and sometimes terrifying, picture of the world young women face.

According to the Australian Gender Equality Council women earn 23 per cent less than men, one-in-five women experience sexual violence after the age of 15, women retire with 42 per cent less superannuation than men, one-in-two women are discriminated against at work for being mothers, and girls receive 27 per cent less pocket money than boys.

These statistics only serve to reinforce that the Alliance has a vital role to play as an advocate for girls' schools and girls' education. With the support and involvement of our members — through encouragement, through mentorship, through sharing perspectives, through being great role models — we can make a difference for girls and women. ▲

Loren Bridge, Executive Officer

Opening Address: Fearless Girls Strong Women, Biennial Educators Conference

SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE, SHADOW MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, LABOR SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA



IMAGE: FEARLESS GIRLS STRONG WOMEN, 2018 CONFERENCE OPENING EVENT

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ay I begin by acknowledging the Kurna people who are the traditional owners of the lands on which we are meeting this evening, and by paying our respects to their elders past and present. (Other acknowledgments omitted.) We all know the story of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani schoolgirl who was shot by the Taliban in 2012 for her fearless outspokenness in favour of girls' education. Malala's life was hanging by a thread when she was taken to the UK for life-saving surgery. In 2014, she became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, which she shared with Kailash Satyarthi of India, himself an anti-child slavery and children's education activist.

Malala's website is arresting. Blazoned across the opening page is a stark reminder of the entrenched nature of the opposition to girls' education in so many parts of the world: "I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not — it is the story of many girls".

What Malala's story tells us is that too many girls in too many parts of the world live fearful lives. And while we can take heart that educational availability, standards and achievement for girls in Australia and New Zealand are outstanding by any measure — due in no small measure to the efforts of people in this room — we know that girls still experience anxiety as they move through school and contemplate a career.

The findings of the Mission Australia Youth Survey for 2017 make for interesting reading. Young people were asked to rank how concerned they had been about a number of issues in the past year. The responses were consistent with previous years, which may indicate that we have a chronic problem here.

Coping with stress, school or study problems and body image ranked as the top three issues of concern. Over four in ten respondents indicated that they were either extremely concerned or very concerned about coping with stress. Around one third of young people were concerned about school or study problems and body image. Around one in five respondents were either extremely concerned or very concerned about depression.

The proportion of females concerned about each of these issues was much higher than the proportion of males.

I don't suggest that many girls in our schools are fearful. But the underlying issues of bullying, anxiety, depression and poor self-image do suggest that too many girls are far from 'fearless', and that anxiety does impact on their wellbeing. And, of course, the whole purpose of your conference this weekend is to develop fearless girls and strong women.

I know there are many in this room who are far more expert than I in identifying the symptoms and managing the effects of anxiety and depression in girls.

But the literature and commentary around the causes of anxiety and depression in girls suggests that we are facing a 'complex' problem, a problem

that, because of its multi-dimensional and multi-factorial character, does not lend itself to a simple or universal solution. As they say, 'complex' problems tend to have 'messy' solutions.

To frame my remarks to you this afternoon, I thought that I might reflect on just two of the qualities that Malala Yousafzai has brought to the issue of girls' and women's education. In the first place, she brings to her advocacy a distinctive and personal voice. And second, she refuses to be defined by the expectations and prejudices of others.

We all know that it is not easy to surmount the anxiety, caution and lack of self-confidence that so many girls and women experience. For each Elizabeth Broderick, Quentin Bryce and Tara Moss — each of them confident women with powerful voices — there are thousands of women who struggle even to be heard, much less have impact.

I'm not talking here about formal training in public speaking and advocacy, important as they are. Rather, I am talking about finding the confidence to speak, to make the leap into saying what we think and standing up for what we believe in.

This is partly a question of talking to girls about how to overcome the fear that many of them have about speaking out. And it is also a question of our modelling exactly that behaviour.

If finding our own voice is difficult, then breaking down the conventional frameworks that so often constrain women's freedom and opportunity is even more problematic. Too often, women are expected to live in a

world where the rules are actually set by men. It is just not good enough that women are expected to be rule takers. Women must be rule makers too.

Men so often define the competition in which women are expected to play, whether it is the professions, business, academia or politics. It is critical that women, too, define the competition and set the rules.

I work and live in an intensely competitive environment. It is a world dominated by men. This is not only

We all know that one's personal experience is never normative. But sharing personal experience can help us to shape the way we might tackle things. So, against the backdrop of Malala Yousafzai's courage and personal style, I hope that you might accept some of my own reflections on how to be fearless and strong in the spirit in which they are offered.

demonstrated by the continuing gender imbalance, but by the very way that parliamentary business is conducted.

Politics is by its very nature a form of combat (happily unarmed in Australia's way of playing it), where coming second is usually coming last. It is a winner-take-all business, and for that reason alone it can be bruising and hurtful. As Don Russell, who was until very recently head of the Premier's Department here in Adelaide, is wont to say, "In politics, nothing ends well".

As a student attending a fine school in Adelaide, I never dreamt of politics as a career. Like many of my high-performing peers, medicine was my goal, until my aversion to the sight of blood took me to the law and . . . well, here we are. But school, and it goes without saying, my family, did prepare me for the competitive world of my current profession in significant ways.

First, my family and my education helped to instil and reinforce a very strong moral compass, a set of values by which I try to live and act. My schooling reinforced what I hope was an innate conviction that every human being, by virtue of our very humanity, has dignity and value. We enshrine that sense of individual human worth in the rule of law. That inspired me as a litigator when I practised law, and it inspires me as a legislator in the practice of politics.

Second, my secondary education provided me with the platform on which and the tools with which I could begin

to find my own voice. It afforded me the intellectual and moral frameworks in which I could begin to develop two critical qualities: I began to learn to be comfortable with and value myself as I was, and to be comfortable with and value others as they were. And given that I had to learn to deal with being different when I first arrived in Australia, that was not so easy, at least at the beginning.

The third thing my education did for me was to encourage me to think of the broader context within which I sought to attain specific goals. I contemplated the possibilities of the entire journey, even as I tackled individual or specific goals.

Perhaps my father's Chinese heritage was at work here. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tze said that "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" (千里之行, 始於足下). But this sense of proportion has been terribly important to me, especially as I have had to pick myself up, dust myself off, and get on with the journey.

For me, at least, this is less about endurance and perseverance than it is about resilience. My family and my education combined to give me a strong sense of purpose, not only a personal sense of purpose but also the broader sense of the purposiveness of common enterprise.

The fourth lesson that I have taken from my education is the value of contestability. I enjoy argument. I enjoy it, not for its own sake, but for the outcomes that argument and contest deliver.

Contestability certainly delivers more comprehensive and more practicable outcomes. And it also delivers a better informed and better rounded individual.

And the final contribution my schooling made to my personal approach to managing competition was to be able to situate myself within a tradition — a history or a social narrative, or whatever one should currently call it. I am not talking here about some fixed system with pre-allocated roles and pre-ordained outcomes. I am talking about the living, evolutionary and dynamic world in which we live, take hope, celebrate our successes and learn from our defeats.

This is precisely what I mean by breaking down the conventional barriers that constrain women, operating instead on the basis of an enabling tradition that encourages and rewards achievement.

Some of my closest friends and some of the people whom I most admire have demonstrated the nobility and grace that comes with discovering their own voice, being

The power of student voice

If finding our own voice is difficult, then breaking down the conventional frameworks that so often constrain women's freedom and opportunity is even more problematic. Too often, women are expected to live in a world where the rules are actually set by men. It is just not good enough that women are expected to be rule takers. Women must be rule makers too.

happy in their own skin, having a strong moral compass, valuing contestability and valuing others. Julia Gillard, another immigrant to South Australia, is a person of singular strength and dignity.

No doubt she experienced the various anxieties that inevitably attend our way through school and university. Yet she is a woman of indomitable strength whom, irrespective of one's political persuasion, one can hold up to our young women in our schools as a role model.

Julia once said, "All my life I've believed that men and women have equal capacities and talents . . . consequently there should be equality in life's chances". This, it seems to me, is what your conference this weekend is really all about. To the extent that you can teach girls to be fearless, to the extent that you can help them to become strong women, to that extent will they achieve the equality that is their right.

I finish on the single proposition which underpins why I do the work I do, and I suspect why you do what you do. I want a world in which our daughters have the same opportunities as our sons. Such a world is worth working for. ▲

Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP Canberra.

REFERENCE

Bullot, A., Cave, L., Fildes, J., Hall, S. and Plummer, J. (2017). Mission Australia's 2017 Youth Survey Report. Mission Australia.

SAMANTHA LAU, RAAGINI MEHRA, SHABREA TEO AND NICOLE TO, YEAR 12 STUDENTS, THE MAC.ROBERTSON GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL, VICTORIA



W

e are extremely excited to be here today, and are honoured to be sharing our perspectives and experiences regarding student voice and implementing change in our school. Mac.Rob is a place

where students, like us, are encouraged to speak up and stand for what they believe in; over the course of this presentation, we hope to show you exactly how this has been authentically enacted and, equally as importantly, why. We hope you will find value in some of the ideas and concepts we touch on today and will be able to take something away to apply in your own environments.

The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School — known more fondly as Mac.Rob — is an academically selective, public secondary school situated near Melbourne's Central Business District. The school provides education for girls in Years 9 to 12, with a cohort close to one thousand students from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

To give a brief outline of the school's history: Mac.Rob began as the co-educational Melbourne Continuation School in 1905, Victoria's first state high school. However, the lack of stability of the physical buildings meant that in 1927, the boys were moved to a new campus; and the girls were left behind in an environment with rotting floors and collapsing ceilings until the building was condemned.

Lack of funding and minimal support for women's education during such a time meant that the girls were left without access to educational facilities. In 1934, Sir MacPherson Robertson, founder of a confectionary company where Freddo Frog and Cherry Ripe chocolates originated, made a generous donation to construct a new campus for the girls, established as The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School. It is this history of struggle and triumph for girls' education that has and continues to shape female- and student-focused education at Mac.Rob today.

Mac.Rob is undeniably academically rigorous — the selective nature of the school means that Mac.Rob has been the top-performing secondary school in the Victorian Certificate of Education for a number of years. However, the school focuses equally on providing a holistic education that drives the provision of other extra-curricular

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS A TRANSCRIPT OF A PRESENTATION DELIVERED AT THE ALLIANCE OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS AUSTRALASIA'S FEARLESS GIRLS, STRONG WOMEN CONFERENCE IN ADELAIDE ON MAY 7, 2018.

opportunities in the fields of art, drama, music, sport and leadership. It is through these channels that student voice is born, fostered, and encouraged. Personal integrity, independence and mutual respect are highly regarded and strongly communicated through the school's motto, "Potens Sui" — Latin for "mastery of self".

These values are ingrained within the school culture, which drives and endorses student voice, and allows it to flourish throughout Mac.Rob's curriculum and community. In this way, student voice at Mac.Rob allows students to foster school culture and drive positive change at the school.

Student voice is at the core of Mac.Rob's values and daily practice. Upon entering the school, it is evident that the community is strongly student-led. Thirty-two student leaders across fifteen portfolios are appointed and tasked with the responsibility of organising events, assemblies, and engaging the student body, with over one hundred other badged positions giving students across all year levels the opportunity to authentically contribute to the school culture. For instance, key events and initiatives in the school calendar such as House Chorals, Drama, assemblies, volunteering events, and music concerts, as well as Pallas — the annual school magazine — are almost entirely student-led with some guidance by staff. Students are encouraged to tell stories about their experiences, submit articles to the school newsletter, attend various events and leadership forums run by organisations with whom we are affiliated, and be co-writers of the school's history. In a formal context, students are invited to serve on committees such as School Council.

Mac.Rob recognises that students are a key stakeholder in the school community and hence we are invited to speak up and join in the discussion about the development and management of the school. Student voice at Mac.Rob drives positive change in the official decision-

making process and thus is not stifled, but encouraged.

Because of this endorsement and normalisation of student voice at Mac.Rob, we are able to drive legitimate action in a formal capacity within the school. It is the existence of structured avenues for communication and student input which enable us to influence and drive school improvement.

To begin with, the Student Representative Council (SRC) is one of the fifteen leadership portfolios at Mac.Rob. The core purpose of SRC is to promote and advocate for student voice, empowering students to communicate their concerns and ideas about our school. SRC seeks to legitimise and strengthen student concerns and suggestions about how the school may be improved, and thus creates a culture of thinking, questioning, challenging and actioning within the school.

Under the umbrella of SRC is the Student Action Team (SAT), a group of students who liaise directly with teachers regarding three key domains in the school: wellbeing, curriculum, and buildings and infrastructure. The SAT gathers and collates both qualitative and quantitative data directly from the student body regarding these domains, which is then relayed back to respective staff committees during meetings to develop and enact appropriate solutions to any identified issues.

In 2015, the SRC President presented her vision about student voice to the school review panel — a board of teachers. It was that moment which sparked a change in our school, as she challenged the status quo, placing importance on student voice and its vitality in creating a culture of listening and open communication. As a result, seeing the power and passion of one individual led to a shift in teachers' mindsets, and quickly drew support from the student body. A teacher who attended this presentation recently reflected on this, saying:

"That speech was one of the most emotional moments of my ten years at Mac.Rob. There was a small group of teacher and student observers who had tears in their eyes because they appreciated how difficult it was for her to challenge the status quo in her pursuit of student voice in the decision-making processes of the school."

There is power in unity and there is power in numbers, and that is what we continue to see at Mac.Rob, through the collaboration of students and teachers.

Her legacy and pursuit for student voice continues, as we see this change enacted through the major efforts undertaken by SAT to collect data from students. In 2015, student surveys and student-facilitated teacher focus groups were employed to generate positive and constructive discussions between students and teachers about the curriculum and classroom environment. Results

and outcomes were documented in a report titled Creating Conversations aimed to help shape the school's future development, which was inspired by VicSRC's Teach the Teacher program. In the same year, the SRC Progress Report was published. The report used data from surveys to collate suggestions put forward by all year levels regarding topical issues such as uniform, timetabling, curriculum, e-learning, and transition between schools and across year levels. This report was shared with the staff Executive Leadership Team, who analysed the report, presented a response to the issues outlined, and sought to implement viable student suggestions in decision-making processes. Student data and input continues to be frequently collected and updated through Google Forms and surveys, as well as Open Forums which involve direct in-person communication between members of SAT and the student body.

SAT has played an instrumental part in leading various school-wide projects alongside staff. These projects are examples of student voice resulting in very visible and tangible results. Some general projects which have been implemented are the introduction of shorts to the uniform for summer wear, a key issue highlighted by students in the Progress Report of 2015; commencement of combined form assemblies where different year levels meet once a week; and the purchase of portable chargers for use in the library as had been requested by students. Curriculum projects include the review and updating of the Year 10 curriculum to provide greater focus on breadth and balance in subject choice; the introduction of annual synchronous and asynchronous e-learning days where classes are delivered digitally to us in the comfort of our homes; and the implementation of an interdisciplinary project titled 'Mission to Mars' in the Year 9 curriculum which encourages critical thinking and teamwork to plan a hypothetical mission to Mars. Wellbeing projects include reform of the peer mentoring program for new students following constructive feedback from Year 9s transitioning into the school; and the opening of a relaxation room in the school where students are able to rest and have quiet time to themselves during the school day when needed.

Now, for 2018, current projects include reforming sex education across all year levels, with a focus on consent and sexual harassment; providing a smoother transition for students entering into VCE; and creating a single online platform where all student resources, including subject, leadership and extracurricular information are accessible. The sustained involvement of student members in various staff committee meetings furthers SAT's focus on making teachers more cognisant of student concerns, both within and outside of the classroom, so that they are able to better connect and collaborate with their students to facilitate productive change.



IMAGE: (LEFT TO RIGHT) SAMANTHA LAU (SRC PRESIDENT), RAAGINI MEHRA (SRC VICE PRESIDENT), SHABREA TEO (SAT LEADER), NICOLE TO (SAT LEADER)

In line with this productive change is the publication of a professional learning text for staff to read this year that was written and compiled wholly by students. Last year, an enormous effort was undertaken by a committee of nine students from SRC to collate data detailing student opinions, personal stories, student responses from surveys, Open Forums and interviews. The aim of this publication is to provide teachers with a deeper insight into student experiences at Mac.Rob — focusing on wellbeing and pedagogy, where positive and constructive feedback on aspects including transitioning from other schools and across year levels, effective learning and enhancing class engagement is put forward. This book has become tangible proof of Mac.Rob's ideology of supporting student voice and encouraging students to put forward their ideas for improving the systems on which the school runs.

Furthermore, each year two students are invited to formally sit on the official School Council. It was only this year that the Deputy Premier and Education Minister James Merlino mandated that two students must be represented on every government secondary school council with full voting rights. Mac.Rob, however, has implemented this practice since the late 1980s, being one of the first schools to have done so. As such, Mac.Rob has led the way for schools seeking to obtain student input in decision-making, and continues to do so, with students playing a large role in deciding the future direction of the school.

Additionally, this environment of empowering students to speak up and be the creators of the culture has established itself within Mac.Rob and is strongly supported by our teachers. This is evident through our open-door policy, where staff physically leave their office doors open, encouraging open communication and fostering strong teacher-student relationships, in the hope that students will feel more comfortable approaching their teachers with any queries or ideas that they may have.

This open communication is also reflected through teachers approaching us as students. Often teachers will speak with us to gain student perspectives on projects that they are working on or to seek suggestions for how they can engage with their classes better.

It is also a common practice at Mac.Rob to have student leaders regularly meeting with respective teachers to plan events, as well as present their progress throughout the year at the Executive Leadership Team, staff meetings and assemblies. Thus, the continual communication between the staff and student body is evident, strengthening the level of understanding and sense of unity throughout the school.

Student representatives frequently report back to the student body at various stages while implementing a change by presenting at assemblies and posting on social media. This allows for full transparency and for the student body to be fully aware of improvements on multiple aspects

So why is fostering student voice at a girls' school so important? As women who will one day enter the workforce, we are bound to face challenges: discrepancies in wage, promotion and career advancement and harassment. Mac.Rob ensures its students are ready for this: its cultivation of student voice encourages girls to speak up, to back themselves, and to develop key skills which transfer into the future and enable success.

within the school. The core of the MacRob student voice culture is to enhance visibility.

We see this through our Q&A sessions where the principal and assistant principal answer some of our students' most pressing questions at a whole school assembly, illustrating Mac.Rob's uniqueness in direct and open communication.

So why is fostering student voice at a girls' school so important? As women who will one day enter the workforce, we are bound to face challenges: discrepancies in wage, promotion and career advancement and harassment. Mac.Rob ensures its students are ready for this: its cultivation of student voice encourages girls to speak up, to back themselves, and to develop key skills which transfer into the future and enable success.

When students know that they have the opportunity to contribute and have their voices heard, and that their opinions are truly valued, they are motivated to improve the school for the benefit of the present and future school communities. This is undeniable, and it is exemplified through all of the projects and initiatives we have outlined. In undertaking these projects, we learn the power of teamwork and the importance of taking initiative — to be the first to take a step and to stand bolder and stronger. With support, we are able to harness our voice, the courage to speak up and the ability to thrive in challenging environments, such as, the male-dominated workforce. We can tangibly see this enacted through our alumnae, who, as strong women, recount their success stories and teach us how we can become innovators as they have done, without limitations.

This perpetuates the growth mindset at Mac.Rob. We are taught to embrace both our strengths and weaknesses, to be innovators and leaders and to be brave with our actions and our voices. Our motto, "Mastery of Self", remains pertinent to us everyday — we are fearless girls equipped to become strong women. Thus, every girl leaves Mac.Rob not only prepared but eager to embrace the challenges of the future world. Fostering and cultivating student voice leads girls to develop the school

community, and what begins as developing the school community soon evolves into developing the world.

Schools benefit from consulting those whose lives they affect most: the students. Mac.Rob is a clear example of a school where student voice, opinions and input are taken seriously. As we have outlined, students are consistently consulted in the decision-making

processes and are provided with innumerable opportunities to speak up and be instigators of change.

Indeed, our role as leaders is to enable the capacity of others, create agency and pass the baton on to future leaders of Mac.Rob, inspiring the next generation — to be brave, fearless and strong — just as we were once inspired by student leaders before us. However, this celebration and continuation of student voice would not be possible without teachers and educators being willing to listen to what we have to say. Hence, as educators in girls' schools, it is important to first create and foster an environment of open communication in order to encourage your students to harness their voice and most importantly, speak up! It is the support and encouragement from educators such as yourselves which allows students to engage in the conversation and ultimately better our schools. ▲

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Our Barbie vaginas, ourselves: The troubling divide between “sex positive” and true confidence

PEGGY ORENSTEIN

One night not long ago while coming home late from a dinner with friends, I passed frat row near the University of California-Berkeley campus. Groups of girls were clacking along the street in their party uniforms: short skirts, bare midriffs, five-inch heels. One of them stopped and lifted her skirt above her waist, revealing a tiny thong, a flat belly, and some righteously toned glutes. She looked happy and strong, laughing, surrounded by friends, having fun. Then she turned toward a building where two bros, appraising the relative “hotness” of those trying to gain entrée to their party, were posted by the door.

Honestly? I didn't know whether to be impressed or appalled. I have spent three years interviewing dozens of young women about their attitudes toward and experiences with physical intimacy. On the one hand, girls would enthuse about pop icons like Beyoncé, Gaga, Miley, and Nicki who were actively “taking control” of their sexuality. Whereas earlier generations of feminist-identified women may have seen Kim Kardashian West's “happy #internationalwomensday” tweet and accompanying nude selfie (Instagram caption: “When you're like I have nothing to wear LOL” 8 March 2016) as something to denounce, many of today's generation talked about it as an expression rather than an imposition of sexuality — brand promotion done on her own terms.

Young women may not have a million-dollar empire to promote, but they can relate. As one college sophomore

told me, she never feels more “liberated” than “when I wear a crop top and my boobs are showing and my legs are showing and I'm wearing super high heels.” She added, “I'm proud of my body, and I like to show it off.”

But a moment later it became clear that unless, through fortuitous genetics or incessant work, you were able

to “show off” the right body, the threat of ridicule lurked. The young woman told me that a friend had recently gained some weight. It's not that she *couldn't* wear skimpy clothes, the woman explained. “But she knows how she would feel if there were asshole-y boys who were like, ‘She's a fat girl.’”

Young women talked about feeling simultaneously free to choose a sexualised image — which was nobody's damned business but their own — and having no other choice. “You want to stand out,” one college freshman explains. “It's not just about being hot, but who can be the *hottest*.”

But as journalist Ariel Levy (2005) pointed out in her book, *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, “hot” is not the same as “beautiful” or “attractive”: It is a narrow, commercialised vision of sexiness that, when applied to women, can be reduced to two words: “f_kable” and “sellable.” No

... young people are growing up with far more access to porn than ever before. Which means their early ideas about sex are drawn from fiction that has largely been produced for male masturbation.

coincidence, Levy added, that this is “the literal job criteria for stars of the sex industry.” And maybe no coincidence that young people are growing up with far more access to porn than ever before. Which means their early ideas about sex are drawn from fiction that has largely been produced for male masturbation.

Perhaps nowhere is that influence more clear than in the emergence of full-frontal waxing. Once the province of fetishists and, yes, porn stars, the Brazilian moved mainstream in 2000, thanks to *Sex and the City*. (“I feel like one of those freaking hairless dogs!” Carrie complained after visiting an overzealous aesthetician.) In 2003, trendsetter Victoria Beckham declared that Brazilians should be “compulsory” starting at age 15. She may get her wish: A study of two universities, published in 2014 (Butler et al.), found that nearly half of female college students were entirely hairless and just four per cent went fully *au naturel*.

Most young women I met had been removing their pubic hair — all of it — since they were about 14. They cast it as a “personal choice,” saying it made them feel “cleaner.” Yet, when I pressed further, another darker motivation emerged: avoiding humiliation. “I remember all these boys were telling stories about this girl in high school, how she kind of ‘got around,’” one young woman told me. “And people would go down there to finger her, or whatever, and there would be hair, and they were appalled...guys act like they would be *disgusted* by it.”

“There's this real sense of shame if you don't have your genitals prepared,” agreed Debby Herbenick, an associate professor at Indiana University's School of Public Health. Herbenick studies something called “genital self-image” — how people feel about their private parts. Women's feelings about their genitals have been directly linked to their enjoyment of sex, she told me. In interviews with young women, she found that those who were uncomfortable with their genitalia were not only less sexually satisfied, but also more likely to engage in unprotected sex. Herbenick is concerned that young women's genital self-image is under siege, with more pressure than ever to see their vulvae as unacceptable in their natural state. She recalled a student who started shaving after a boy announced — during one of her class discussions — that he'd never seen pubic hair on a woman

in real life, and that if he came across it he'd walk out the door.

There's no question that a bald vulva is baby smooth — some would say disturbingly so. Perhaps in the 1920s, when women first started shaving their legs and armpits, *that* act seemed creepily infantilising, too, but now depilating those areas is a standard rite of passage. That early wave of hair removal was driven by flapper fashions that displayed a woman's limbs; arms and legs were, for the first time, no longer part of the private realm. Today's pubic hair removal could be seen the same way: We have opened our most intimate parts to unprecedented scrutiny, evaluation, commodification.

Consider: Largely as a result of the Brazilian trend, cosmetic labiaplasty, the clipping of the folds of skin that make up the vulva, has skyrocketed as well. While it's still a small slice of overall cosmetic surgeries, according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, there was a 16 per cent rise in the procedure between 2014 and 2015 — following a 49 per cent jump the previous year. Labiaplasty is rarely undertaken for sexual function or pleasure; it can actually impede both. Never mind: In 2014, Dr Michael Edwards, the society's president-elect, hailed the uptick as part of “an ever-evolving concept of beauty and self-confidence.” One sought-after look, incidentally, is called — wait for it — the Barbie: a clamshell-type effect, meaning the outer labia appears fused, with no visible labia minora. I trust I don't need to remind the reader that Barbie (a) is made of plastic and (b) has no vagina.

It might be tempting to pass off my concerns as the hand-wringing of an older generation. And if all that sexiness were making for better sex, I might embrace it. Yet while young women talked about dress and depilation as things they did for themselves, when they talked about actual sex, that phrase disappeared. Virtually none of the women I met had been told what (or where) a clitoris was. Sex education tends to stick with a woman's internal parts—uteri, tubes, ovaries. Those classic diagrams of a woman's reproductive system, the ones shaped like the head of a steer, blur into a grey Y between the legs, as if the vulva and the labia, let alone the clitoris, don't exist. Whereas we talk about male puberty and the emergence of a near-unstoppable sex drive, female puberty is defined by...periods and the possibility of unwanted pregnancy. When do we talk to girls about desire and pleasure?

Few of the young women I met had ever had an



It's not surprising that young women feel powerful when they feel "hot": it's presented to them over and over as a precondition for success. But the truth is that "hot" tells girls that appearing sexually confident is more important than actually being confident. And because of that, as often as not, the confidence that "hot" confers comes off with their clothes.

orgasm with a partner, either, though according to one longitudinal study (Caron, 2015), the percentage of college women who fake it is on the rise, from less than half in the early 1990s to 69 per cent in 2013. Meanwhile, a researcher at the University of Michigan (McClelland, 2009) found that when asked to talk about good sex, college men are likely to talk about pleasure while women are likely to use their partners' satisfaction to measure their own.

It's not surprising that young women feel powerful when they feel "hot": it's presented to them over and over as a precondition for success. But the truth is that "hot" tells girls that *appearing* sexually confident is more important than actually being confident. And because of that, as often as not, the confidence that "hot" confers comes off with their clothes. ▲

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Putting porn in the picture: Pornography, young people and sexuality

MAREE CRABBE, COORDINATOR, REALITY & RISK

The impact of pornography on young people's relationships makes it a key violence prevention issue. A new suite of resources assists young people, parents, schools and community organisations to understand and address pornography's influence.

(Warning: note to readers. This article contains explicit language and content describing acts depicted in pornography.)

I'm in the beautiful city of Budapest. It's been a long day of interviews — with the director of a sex industry association, a gynaecologist and the head of the human trafficking unit at Hungarian Police — and I'm now listening as porn performer Anthony Hardwood describes how porn has changed over his 14 years in the business.

When I started it was very lovey-dovey? [But now] the whole industry has changed ... it's more tough and more rough you can sell it, you know, and the customers love it, they buy the movies, they just love it.

... [The directors] want to see energy and they want to see screaming and yelling and very hard fking and sweating and just like, you know, you have to destroy the girl.**

My interview with Hardwood is part of my research for a documentary film *Love and Sex in an Age of Pornography*, which was broadcast in 2013 on SBS and in other countries around the world. The film juxtaposes our interviews of representatives from the pornography industry with the voices of Australian young people, who describe how their experiences of sex and relationships have been influenced by porn. The film is part of *Reality & Risk: Pornography, young people and sexuality*, a community education project I developed through Brophy Family and Youth Services with my colleague David Corlett, to get people talking about porn and its influence.

For some people, pornography represents freedom — an unashamed embrace of anything and everything sexual, and a rebuttal of

conservative forces that have sought to define what is acceptable to a narrow, limited view of human sexuality that breeds sexual neuroses and legitimises the silencing and oppression of sexual minorities.

Realities of life on set

Hardwood — who sports the muscular physique of someone who spends a great deal of time at the gym — has come straight from the porn set. Over the next couple of hours, my interview with Hardwood moves across a range of personal and professional territory: how he got into the industry and why, what a regular day looks like, what performers are paid, the rates of sexually transmissible infections, how his family feel about his work, its impact on his private life, and his future hopes. But most striking are his candid descriptions of what takes place on set.

The industry has developed its own shorthand vocabulary for many of the sexual practices it employs, some of which appear to be experiments in physical and emotional endurance: DP (double penetration, simultaneous anal and vaginal sex), double anal (two penises in one anus), ATM ('arse-to-mouth', where anal sex is followed immediately by oral sex), deep throating (fellatio with the penis pushed into the throat, also known as 'throat f**king'), facials (ejaculation on the face, sometimes by many men at once) and fish hooks, 'you know, where you stretch the girl's mouth'. Hardwood refers to these acts with the familiarity of an industry native. He talks about women enduring the pain involved in this line of work and how it's difficult for the male performer if his female colleague is crying.

Hardwood's candour is remarkable. He makes no attempt to hide the cold, hard reality that porn is a massive, global business that profits from the eroticisation of gendered aggression.

Hardwood has spent much of his career in Los Angeles, the global centre of the porn industry. When I visit LA a few months later, his descriptions of the market's appetite for aggressive content are corroborated in our interviews with other performers, and with directors, producers and agents. Veteran performer Nina Hartley described how 'there has been an increase in what I would call the aggression that we see on camera'. And, according to influential director John Stagliano, 'Rough sex and strong sex works because it's incredible to look at. As human beings we want to see stuff like that.'

Their commentary is also supported by academic research. A recent content analysis of best-selling porn found that 88 per cent of scenes contained physical aggression, and 48 per cent of scenes contained verbal aggression (Bridges, Wosnitzer, Scharrer, Sun and Liberman, 2010). The aggression was overwhelmingly directed at female performers (94 per cent of cases).

The industry's descriptions — and the statistics that quantify the prevalence of aggression — are disconcerting. Why is there so much demand for this kind of content? What does it say about the state of gender relations? Has feminism got us nowhere?

Gendered hostility

To be sure, these are controversial questions. Pornography is one of those subjects that can divide people: lovers, family, colleagues, traditional political allies from within the left and the right — and feminists.

Some people seem less offended by the misogyny these stories convey than by the challenge they pose to a narrative of pornography's contribution to a progressive society.

For some people, pornography represents freedom — an unashamed embrace of anything and everything sexual, and a rebuttal of conservative forces that have sought to define what is acceptable to a narrow, limited view of human sexuality that breeds sexual neuroses and legitimises the silencing and oppression of sexual minorities. Sometimes an investment in this porn-as-liberator view appears to lead to a denial of its gendered hostility, with advocates claiming — despite so much evidence to the contrary — that aggression as described by Hardwood is rare.

Then there are those who reject a socio-cultural analysis of porn's influence, preferring to view porn as a private matter of individual choice: 'Each to their own. Whatever floats your boat, it's none of my business.' If exposure to porn and, importantly, exposure to the influence of porn, were simply a matter of individual free choice, this position would be more feasible. But, with the advent of the internet, that is simply not the case — if, indeed, it ever was.

Porn's pervasiveness is unprecedented. It can be more difficult to avoid porn than to see it — thanks, in part, to the industry's aggressive marketing strategies. An astonishing 30 per cent of all internet traffic is porn-related (Anthony, 2012), and global porn revenue is more than that of Apple, Google, Amazon and Microsoft combined (Berman, 2011).

Nor is porn's presence benign. Its influence on sexual imaginations, expectations and experiences is now a significant challenge to many individuals' capacity to develop relationships and sexuality that are mutual, respectful and fully consenting. This is particularly so for young people.

Conversations with young people

The journey that led me to Budapest and LA began in secondary school classrooms in south-west Victoria. Through my work delivering a sexual violence prevention program with hundreds of young people each year, I noticed that pornography was increasingly playing a role in how young people learn about, think about and experience sexuality. The young people I worked with were keen to have the conversations — about porn, and about the issues it raises around gender, sex, respect, aggression, consent, arousal and pleasure. But the adults in their lives were often unaware of the issues, or felt ill-equipped, unable or unwilling to have those conversations.

Twenty-year-old Sara was interviewed for our documentary film. She first saw pornography at school. She described feeling embarrassed and horrified by its 'ugly' portrayals of sex, which didn't align with what she'd hoped sex would be. Unfortunately, as Sara's experiences attest, porn's influence is not confined to those who choose to view it.

I think when boys start having sex they imagine porn and like everything that goes on in porn because that's the dream really. Like boys, you know, have their way with girls, whatever they want ... They don't really ask, they just sort of do and hope that you will go along with it. Like anal, that's a big thing, like, you know, when you're going at it they just sort of try and slip it in the other hole and you're like 'hang on a minute, like that's not what I want.

And Sara was not alone. Young women repeatedly described to us being pressured to do what their partner had seen in porn, regardless of whether or not they liked it or wanted to, even if they found it painful or humiliating.

Young women talked about struggling with how to respond, wanting to be generous and accommodating partners, but generally not wanting to do the acts that their partners initiate from porn.

Girls, like, they love it in the porn so maybe boys think that girls like that. And, you know, when you love someone you're always willing to just, you know, make them happy. If they want to give me a pearl necklace [ejaculate on the neck] and I'm in love then I'll do it for them and I'll pretend that I like it.

These stories were confirmed in our interviews with young men, who regularly described aspiring to engage in —

or, indeed, initiating — the sex they've seen in porn.

Some of our most interesting interviews were with young gay men who, to my surprise, described the regular portrayal of gendered aggression in gay male pornography.

There's the typical top and bottom in gay porn ... there's a passive and a dominant role. The dominating type are normally the big muscular blokes who have a deep voice and are very straight acting, whereas the submissive people are normally the femme-type guys who are the slim ones. That top guy can be almost an arsehole and just be very rough and very aggressive. I don't know. The bottom guy just seems like a piece of meat in a way, like, the top guy's there to do what he wants, to get his rocks off, and then the bottom guy is sort of just left to hang out and take it.

What these young men shared was supported by my subsequent reading, research and interviews: it seems that gay male pornography manages to communicate the same types of messages about gender inequality, gendered violence and degradation that are so common in heterosexual porn — even in the absence of any female performers (Kendall, 2004).

Gay porn is a genre commonly viewed as a source of liberation for a community whose sexuality has been silenced and pathologised. Yet, while my interviewees described gay porn providing a reassurance that they are not alone in their attraction to other men, they also articulated repulsion at its painful, degrading and aggressive portrayals, and concerns that it reinforces limiting stereotypes that impact on their lived experiences.

Pornography's influence on young people is a phenomenon that is increasingly recognised internationally. In 2013, the United Kingdom's Children's Commissioner released the report *Basically ... porn is everywhere: A rapid evidence assessment of the effects of pornography access and exposure on children and young people* (Horvath et al. 2013). The report was commissioned when these issues emerged as a key theme in an inquiry into child sexual exploitation. As the authors explain in their foreword:

We had frequent accounts of both girls' and boys' expectations of sex being drawn from pornography they had seen ... We also found compelling evidence that too many boys believe that they have an absolute entitlement to sex at any time, in any place, in any way and with whomever they wish. Equally worryingly, we heard that too often girls feel they have no alternative but to submit to boys' demands, regardless of their own wishes.

These themes are echoed in a very recent study that found a normalisation of coercive heterosexual anal sex among young people, where both young women and young men expected men 'to persuade or coerce reluctant partners' (Marston & Lewis, 2014). Participants in the research

frequently cited pornography as the explanation for engaging in anal sex, an act that both male and female participants expected to be painful for women. While some women enjoy anal sex, most do not (Häggström-Nordin, Hanson & Tydén, 2005), and it appears that this is widely understood — yet, apparently, this is not a sufficient deterrent for many men wishing to do it.

Pornography openly promotes a script that not only privileges male sexual pleasure, it suggests that male pleasure is derived through dominance and through sex acts — and ways of performing them — that are at women's expense. It conveys that there is something sexy about hurting women, or successfully pushing women to comply with sex they don't want or like, and may find painful or degrading. Porn normalises female sexual subservience and male entitlement, but it does more than that. It eroticises male aggression towards women.

This is often not overtly expressed. According to *Hardwood*, when female performers allow their pain to reflect in their expression:

The director immediately starts to say, "No, no, we don't want to see that kind of face reaction. We want to see you enjoy it, enjoy it.

Research suggests that this kind of obscuring is normal, with 95 per cent of incidents of aggression in best-selling pornography met with either a neutral or a positive, pleased response by the target of the aggression (Bridges et al. 2010). Porn's message to viewers is that women like it when men hit, choke or gag them; and they enjoy whatever men do to them, particularly aggressive, thrusting, penetrative sex.

The most effective way we can support young people on this, or any other violence prevention or wellbeing-related issue, is a multi-faceted approach in which the key messages are reinforced across different parts of young people's lives (Flood, Fergus & Heenan, 2009, pp 23).

Pornography is a violence prevention issue

For those involved in preventing family violence and sexual assault, pornography is a critical issue to address.

Many young men's — and young women's — expectations of gender and sex are being shaped by pornography depicting female sexual subservience to sex that many women don't enjoy. This is a recipe for coercion

and sexual assault — and for the perpetuation of gender inequality and violence against women, more broadly.

Clearly, porn is not alone in conveying that women are inferior and/or for men's sexual consumption. Those messages are supported and reinforced in a vast array of other contexts: from advertising, music videos and films, to lap-dancing venues, high-level political discourse, and sometimes even academia (HASTAC, 2015). But pornography communicates these messages par excellence. Porn makes an emphatic and substantial contribution to an insidious kind of 'cultural wallpaper' that normalises and, indeed, eroticises, violence against women. And, due to the normalisation of its consumption, the fraught nature of porn debates, and the fact that its use is frequently in private contexts, pornography's influence often occurs without the presence of any real critique.

That makes porn a violence prevention issue we can't afford to ignore.

But how do we begin to tackle such a powerful influence? Who should do it? And where?

As is the case with violence prevention more broadly, a sound understanding of gender, power and violence is a critical foundation. For this reason, sexual and family violence services are well placed to address pornography's influence as part of wider prevention efforts, and to support others to do so.

Young people — who are at an important and formative stage in their development, and are a relatively accessible audience — are a priority population for violence prevention (Flood, Fergus & Heenan, 2009, pp 8-10). The most effective way we can support young

people on this, or any other violence prevention or wellbeing-related issue, is a multi-faceted approach in which the key messages are reinforced across different parts of young people's lives (Flood, Fergus & Heenan, 2009, pp 23). Some of the key sites for intervention are homes, through parent engagement, and schools.

A growing number of parents, schools and workers are identifying that, in the 21st century, supporting young

people to critique pornography's influence is an important part of equipping them to navigate relationships that are respectful, mutually pleasurable and fully consenting.

Many parents, schools and community organisations do not feel well-equipped for the task. These are politically sensitive, confronting issues that many prefer to ignore. But, with the appropriate support and resources, people's

confidence to address pornography is growing. Schools are increasingly open to including the issue of pornography in their policies, parent education and curriculum. Indeed, more and more schools and education departments are requesting support to do just that.

Organisations with expertise in gender, power and violence can play an important role in advocating for the need to address pornography, and building awareness and confidence for schools, parents, community organisations and policy makers on these issues.

In order to do so, violence prevention organisations need a clear understanding of pornography's prevalence, nature and influence, informed by their existing gender and power framework, and access to high-quality resources.

New resources to address porn's influence

Since the Reality & Risk project began in 2009, awareness of pornography's influence has grown. We've delivered training and workshops to over 1,000 teachers and workers from a wide range of contexts, presented to parents, spoken with hundreds of young people and met with many school leaders.

AGGRESSION AND DEGRADATION IN PORN THE ACTS OBSERVED IN THE RECENT CONTENT ANALYSIS BY BRIDGES ET AL. OF BEST-SELLING PORN INCLUDED:

- CHOKING IN 27 PER CENT OF SCENES
- SPANKING IN 75 PER CENT OF SCENES
- GAGGING IN 54 PER CENT OF SCENES
- VERBAL AGGRESSION IN 48 PER CENT OF SCENES
- 'ATM' IN 41 PER CENT OF SCENES.

We've also advocated to political, bureaucratic and community leaders about how significant pornography is as a violence prevention issue.

Reality & Risk has also focused on creating tools to assist in this work. We have contributed to government sexuality and respectful relationships education resources, and pre-service teacher training resources. To complement these, we recently released *In The Picture: Supporting young people in an era of explicit sexual imagery*, a resource that supports secondary schools to develop a whole-school approach to the issues. To our knowledge, *In The Picture* is the first resource of its kind.

We have also developed It's Time We Talked (www.itstimewetalked.com), a website with resources for young people, parents, schools and community organisations. And,

to complete the suite of resources, we're producing a second documentary film, *The Porn Factor*, designed for adults, including pre-service and in-service teachers, parents, youth workers, doctors, psychologists and workers from the family and sexual violence fields, which will be available later this year. Unlike our earlier film, which was made to open up the conversation with a general broadcast audience, *The Porn Factor's* thesis-driven approach provides an overt articulation of the issues through interviews with experts in the field.

There is still a great deal more work to do. And I look forward to working with others — in government and the community sector — to integrate pornography as a prevention issue into education, training and policy nationally.

Say it how it is

I've been in a lot of schools, community organisations and government department offices since I sat opposite Anthony Hardwood as he oscillated between boyish giggles, awkward explanations and stomach-churning scene descriptions. When I reflect on the journey that this project has been, I think there is something we can learn from an industry that speaks so openly about how violence against women sells. Like them, we need to say it how it is, and not be afraid to do so. Actually, I think we can't afford not to. To fail to take up this challenge is to risk leaving young people's sexuality and relationships education to the likes of Anthony Hardwood and John Stagliano.

In my experience, given the opportunity — the language, permission, and a safe, supportive context — most young people, parents, teachers, youth workers and school principals are willing and able to engage in conversations about pornography that might have previously felt 'too hard'. Indeed, many people are relieved to find tools to help them have those conversations with their students, children, colleagues, school principal, other parents or other educators.

Pornography is not going to go away. It is, and will continue to be, a powerful influencing factor in many people's lives, including young people. And any honest assessment of its influence will identify multiple, significant harms.

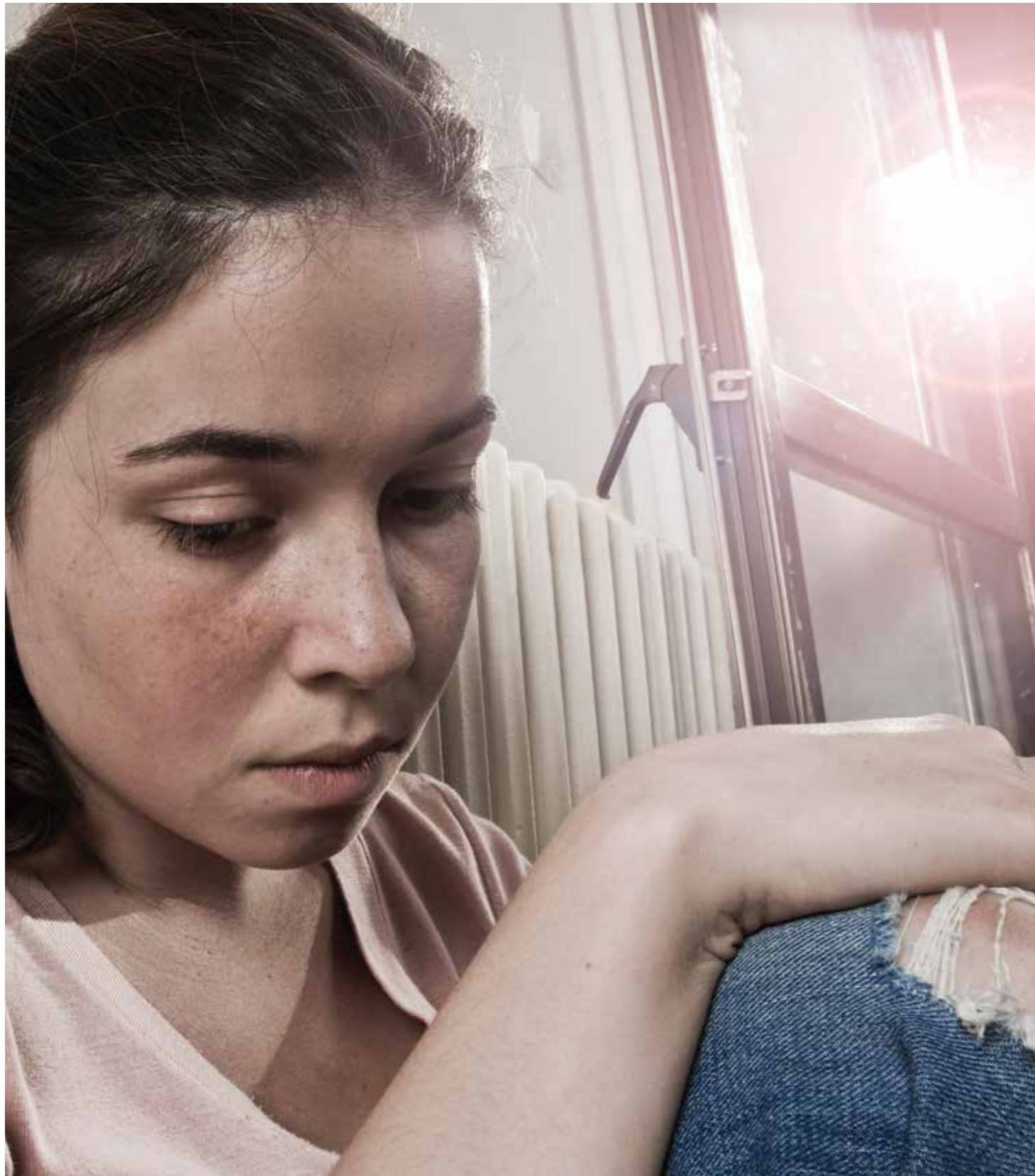
But, by putting pornography in the violence prevention picture, we can support young people to critique its messages about men, women, power, sex, pleasure and aggression, and assist them to instead choose relationships and sexuality that privilege — and eroticise — mutuality, equality, consent, safety and respect. ▲

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Is there something wrong with me? Pornography and relationship violence

As a school counsellor, I have the privilege of hearing the stories and experiences of many young women as they navigate their way through adolescence. They enter a phase of their lives that often causes them to question much of what they have taken for granted about their own view of the world and themselves in it. They become, quite suddenly, very aware of themselves as sexualised and as there to please others — sexually, behaviourally and by their appearance. Judgments can be harsh, and totalising narratives and stereotypes of gender are often highly visible. Of particular concern and frequently discussed are the sexual narratives.

The relational depictions of sexual behaviours, which I as an adult female would certainly call rape, are most often not referred to in this way by the girls. They are framed within a self-blaming context, where their use of alcohol, for example, or being in a relationship with the abuser is deemed to be acceptable, albeit very distressing. Sexual coercion is certainly “normal”. “That’s what boys do” is commonly heard. Being forced to do things sexually, either physically or by use of verbal abuse, is common. Girls fulfilling the expectation of sexual pleaser while simultaneously trying to dodge the “slut” label is a constant issue to be managed.

In the last few years, pornography has become a significant and extremely common presence in the lives of young people. The stories girls tell me have changed. The sex is rougher, more aggressive. The expectations are more extreme and boys’ treatment of girls, particularly the way they speak to them on social media, has become hateful and sexually threatening. Obviously, this is not the case with every young man or young woman, but the upward

is not associated with the abuse or oppression they have experienced, nor is it seen as outside of themselves. Ideally, programmes that address the systemic issues involved in sexual narratives of abuse and power will be adopted by more schools within the health programme, and dominant discourses around gender, sexuality and the critiquing of pornography and its messages will be questioned more as a result.

Of particular importance is the need for schools with boys to take a more proactive stance in educating their young men against the infiltration of pornography’s script on their developing sexual tastes. Research consistently shows that these tastes change and become significantly more extreme the more they view pornography. Is it predominantly girls’ schools that are spending the most time dealing with these issues in classrooms and in curricula planning? Girls are being taught how to identify abusive relationships, how to avoid sexual assault, what to look out for at parties — where there may be drinks and coercive

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trend is significant enough that I can justify writing a relatively general article about this issue.

Within this context of a normalised relationship and sexual abuse, a number of emotional issues arise that are then viewed as *problems of the self* by girls. Their anxiety or their depression is seen as a personal failing by them and others around them and

behaviours — with young men they know and with young men they don't.

For real change to take place, a significant amount of focused time needs to be taken in boys' schools to do the kind of deliberate and thorough teaching that is taking place in many girls' schools. A one-sided approach is woefully inadequate for all concerned.

The influence of pornography and media on adolescent relationships

Pornography is now, undoubtedly, one of the most significant influences on adolescent sexuality, certainly more than ever before, with 47 per cent of 15- to 19-year-old boys using pornography every day, and a further 27 per cent using it weekly (Lim, Agius, Carrotte, Vella, & Hellard, 2017).

Unlike the pornography of the past, which dealt with fairly basic run-of-the-mill sex, a bad storyline and a cameraman, the current situation has young people watching scenes of extreme violence and degradation towards women — acts of sexual torture that are being framed as relational sex by the porn industry. Not only are boys being hardwired to find violence against women sexy, but girls are feeling a strong social obligation to take part in sexual acts that are humiliating and painful, because they truly believe that to be a girlfriend, or a chosen sexual partner, is to sell oneself to the kind of degradation that pornography has sold to them (Lim et al., 2017).

Girls are buying into this because they feel trapped and confused by the lack of information they have about the alternatives, and because they have a serious lack of understanding about their own bodies. How can young women who do not even know the names of their genitals, let alone the function of them, or the celebration of them as part of their understanding and expectation of sexual pleasure, take control of their own bodies in a sexual encounter (Welles, 2005)? It is hardly surprising that young women hand over their bodies and their sexual experiences to young men, because, essentially, they have been led to believe that they are there to be used for the sexual gratification of men. Therefore, in some way sexual ownership and agency can easily be seen as belonging to them, or at the very least, either party.

The normalisation of sexual violence, according to Clark (2008), either explicitly or implicitly cannot be denied. Sexualised material aimed at youth has saturated the media, blurring the line between the offensive and the normal, and making it increasingly difficult for young people to access a moral or ethical guideline to assist them in knowing and understanding boundaries for their own bodies, or general

relationship and gender philosophies — for example, the role of adolescent girls in responding to, rather than initiating, sexual activity.

The sheer volume of sexualised material in the media that directly targets early or pre-adolescents directly links to the normalisation of oppressive and abusive treatment of females (Flood, 2009). This proliferation of images leads to gradual desensitisation and acceptance. Research carried out among teen girls found that their objections to sexualised images tended to decrease over time (Dines, 2009). As Merskin (2004) points out, the message to girls (as eventual women) is to always be sexually available, to always have sex on their minds, to be willing to be dominated, and eventually to be aggressed against. This makes it increasingly difficult for girls and young women to separate what they *know* to be OK, versus what they *think* is socially acceptable and *normal* and therefore *OK*.

The Parents Television Council (2009) states that the aggression and violence depicted towards young women with increasing frequency is contributing to an atmosphere of normalisation and acceptance of the abuse of women, and in many cases is being seen as a humorous and trivial matter. The increased attendance of pornography or pornographic reference in everyday life for young people is significantly contributing to the caricature of what it is to be a beautiful young woman.

According to the British Board of Film Classification (2009), cited in Papadopoulos (2010), female beauty is now only legitimated by way of overt sexualisation. The difficulty with this is asserted further by the recognition that young women are somehow expected to assimilate the messages received at a conscious level of understanding and via the assistance of positive peer and parental relationships. The reality of the implications of continual chronic and increasingly misogynistic values, messages and images equates to an environment of abuse and conditioned acceptance of male dominance and abuse by the females who both experience it and witness it (Johnson, 2009, cited in Papadopoulos, 2010).

Flood (2009) states that boys and young men exposed to pornography are more likely to see sex as casual and are more inclined to believe that harassing girls sexually or holding a girl down is acceptable. Flood (2009) goes on to say that there is *compelling evidence* from around the world that pornography has negative effects on individuals and the community, which by portraying sex in unrealistic and violent ways, with hostile and callous attitudes to women, shapes the framework by which young people express and accept their sexual experiences.

Adolescent relationship violence

Adolescent relationships are a blur of “normality” and “violence” according to Holford (2012), who states that experiences and understandings of what may or may not be called violence or abuse lies within middle-class teen subjectivity. Much of the literature and studies on this subject (Holford, 2012; Hird & Jackson, 2001; Jackson, 2001; Jackson, 2002; Jackson, Cram & Seymour, 2000) shows a general trend of sexual coercion, sexual and physical violence, and emotional abuse within teenage relationships. Depending on the study, some were as high as three quarters of all girls (Haynie, Farhat, Brooks-Russell, Wang, Barbieri, & Iannotti, 2013).

Relationship violence within this age group has existed for much longer than the current trend of violent degrading pornography. The present situation is now a culmination of long-standing gendered violence and oppression, coupled with an overt misogyny, which has been imbedded as the new normal and the new sexy.

The difficulty lies within the realms of what is considered normal by the peer group and what is downplayed and disavowed by the young people themselves. Young women, in particular, are more likely to reinterpret experiences of power differentials and downplay harm, which often perpetuate existing power structures (Holford, 2012). Within this, the idea of relationship violence is condemned by the young people themselves; however, the underlying justifications and assumptions and coercive and controlling partner behaviour are not seen as unacceptable, but merely examples of love and affection, with the display of jealousy and controlling “ownership” behaviour, often seen as a sign of love (Chung, 2005; Chung, 2007).

Moreover, the literature shows that blame is attributed to the female in the abusive relationship and girls see themselves as emotional caretakers of the relationship arena (Angelique, 2012; Donovan & Hester, 2010; Enander, 2011). In addition to this, Holford (2012) asserts that part of this phenomenon takes place because of the position that adolescent sexuality has within the western framework. Mainstream discourses position adolescent sex as inherently wrong or bad, dangerous and risky. The distinctions, therefore, between consensual or non-consensual sex are a secondary issue to the primary one, which is that — according to mainstream beliefs — teenagers should not be having sex. The real issues of relationship interactions and positive sexuality opportunities are lost within the framework of what adults will allow (Holford, 2012). Therefore, teenagers themselves are less clear about what is good in a relationship and the spectrum of what constitutes positive sexuality is muddled in the process of that framework (Holford, 2012).

The difficulty with this is the dichotomy between the saturation of messages given by the media as to how teenagers should be sexually active, and at the very least sexualised, and the backlash of authority figures who condemn the pervasive messages and the behaviours that stem from them (Manganello, 2008).

While adolescent relationships are given legitimacy by their peers, for sexual intimacy to occur within this construction, the research shows that the most likely place for coercion and violence to occur is within a monogamous relationship (Manganello, 2008; Holford, 2012; Hird & Jackson, 2001). This is also the place where it is legitimated by way of gendered power assumptions, and where heterosexuality through an expression of sexually violent masculinity is validated (Pascoe, 2007; Richardson, 2010).

Pascoe (2007) and Richardson (2010) discuss the example, or prevalence, of the perpetrator and victim remaining in the same social circles after a relationship assault, and how this connection contributes to the marginalisation of the girls within the social structure, but also highlights the interconnection and embeddedness of sexual violence, gendered power and social status. Dickerson (2013) goes some way to explain these behaviours by describing the post-structural therapist as one who sees and understands patriarchy as the grand narrative whereby all people, often invisibly, are influenced. It creates a framework for how gendered behaviours within relationships should take place, creating conditions for people to respond despite what the individual may prefer.

To explain this further, Weiss (2009) uses the framework of *accounts* (Scott & Lyman, 1968) to distinguish the various social vocabularies involved in sexual assault and the narratives used to justify and explain sexual victimisation. Accounts, according to Scott and Lyman (1968) are explanations that are used to reinterpret behaviour that is questioned due to the nature of the conduct. Using this ideology of reinterpretation, accounts that are successful neutralise the perpetrators culpability, redefine the offending behaviour as something tolerable and acceptable, or blame the behaviour on mitigating circumstances or as justifiable based on the provocative behaviour of the victim. It is in this way that accounts verbally bridge the gap between expectation and action and help restore equilibrium to social relationships (Scott & Lyman, 1968).

An example: A simple example of this is Matthew, the popular Year 12 boy, liked by everyone for being a nice guy — he's popular, good looking and plays for the school rugby team. Alicia has liked him for a long time and her friends tease her about this openly, making it no secret to Matthew or his friends that she really likes him. A party takes place

that weekend and everyone knows that Alicia is only going because Matthew is going to be there. Her friends and his friends will be there, too. Cut to further in the night, when Alicia has had quite a bit to drink, but Matthew has only had a couple of drinks because he has rugby the next morning. Matthew talks to Alicia and she openly flirts with him, laughing and touching his arm and chest as they talk. He asks her to go for a walk with him. People see them leave. Outside, Matthew and Alicia are alone and Matthew kisses Alicia. It quickly escalates, and Matthew has sex with her. Sometime later, Alicia comes inside very upset, saying to her friends that Matthew raped her.

The most likely outcome: Alicia will be supported by her friends that evening. Following the weekend, Matthew will be incredulous at her accusations and his friends will question Alicia via social media about what she has said. They will tell her that he's such a nice guy, and that she shouldn't say those things about him. Alicia's friends will then mostly side with Matthew. A couple will quietly support her in the background (if she's lucky), but the rectifying of the situation will be via supporting Matthew. To go against Matthew and his group of friends, is social suicide for the girls. The girls themselves are only afforded their social status because they have been given it by the boys. Alicia has now questioned and critiqued the "boy culture" and she will pay the price by being socially isolated from both groups if she doesn't back down from the rape accusation. The others justify their support of Matthew and his innocence because:

Alicia liked him

Alicia led him to believe she wanted more from him

Alicia was flirting with him

Alicia deliberately went to the party to see Matthew

Matthew is a really nice guy

Matthew has never been in trouble

Matthew is "cool" as far as the guy code goes —

masculine and sporty.

The social relationship construct is where the most credible accounts take place — those that are widely accepted and socially recognised, that are taken for granted and are well-known "truths". In this format, individuals' accounts are part of a widely known and accepted script, which are neither unique nor individualised, but are part of a socially accepted and shared language that is interwoven with the belief systems of the people who invoke or honour them. Because the vocabulary of accounts is standardised and situated within the culture, it is expected that the language and accounts that victims use will mirror the minimising that offenders employ, which reflect the gendered stereotypes and common rape myths accepted by

mainstream belief systems surrounding sexual victimisation (Weiss, 2009).

This idea is mirrored by a number of other researchers (Barter, 2009; Sears, Byers, Whelan & Saint-Pierre, 2006; Flood & Pease, 2009; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Jackson, 2002; Hird & Jackson, 2001) who have shown that attitudes of sexual aggression and intimidation are often embedded in a cultural framework of unequal gendered power that foster an acceptance of forced sex and relationship violence in general. The expectation and construction of masculinities that are "hard" and incorporate a sexually aggressive persona are shown to be supported and encouraged by peer groups, including when male adolescents communicate their use of partner violence with their friends.

When this is coupled with the expectations put upon women to be passive and submissive and cultural norms of idealised romance expect the male to "chase" the female and "seduce" her, the line between consent and coercion and the notion of informed consent, within a landscape of socially constructed oppressive norms, becomes difficult to decipher. In addition to this Sears et al. (2006) found that victims of partner violence rarely tell anyone, the reason being that they are afraid they will be perceived as deserving the abuse or as being "stupid". This further supports the idea that language and behaviours used after the abuse are in fact scripts used to remain as a member of the mainstream system and thereby to maintain social acceptance.

Flood & Pease (2009) discuss the consistent relationship between attitudes in society that support and adhere to sexist and patriarchal views and women's violence-supportive beliefs and the greater likelihood, therefore, that they will blame themselves as victims, or blame other victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse.

Jackson and Hird (2001) would frame this as the normalising of sexual coercion within the expectations of heteronormativity and the rape myths and gender norms that have become imbedded as truths within society. Positioning theory has a lot to offer young women in this area. Moghaddam and Harré (2010) stated that positioning theory is about "how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others". Further, that "it is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others" (2010). Positioning has direct moral implications, such as some person or group being located as 'trusted' or 'distrusted', 'with us' or 'against us', 'to be saved' or 'to be wiped out' (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010).

Positioning theory gives young women the opportunity to find the space to stand up against an injustice, the ability to contradict an accepted norm or

social *truth*, and enables agency to be exercised (Winslade, 2005). Feminism has created the opportunity for a counter story to patriarchal dominance. However, how this is used and accessed by adolescents is questionable within the current social setting.

Adolescent relationship violence within a New Zealand context

New Zealand has a significant issue with adolescent relationship violence (Beres, 2017) with this problem highlighted across the West in numerous studies, as stated before, showing that this time in a young person's life is the most likely time for relationship abuses to occur. A third of teens reported being physically harmed and nearly a quarter of all secondary school girls and 9 per cent of secondary school boys reported unwanted sexual behaviour. Emotional and psychological abuses occur frequently and often go unreported (Beres, 2017).

Fanslow and Robinson (2007) found a significant number of New Zealand children and young people reported unwanted touching or being made to do things they did not want to do. This links to studies that show direct correlations between child physical and sexual abuse, adolescent relationship abuse and violence-supportive beliefs that carry through into adulthood (Flood & Pease, 2009), and the normalisation of certain types of negative behaviours.

Hird and Jackson (2001) have clearly outlined coercion as a normalised part of heterosexual relationships. Coercion is physically non-violent, but a study by Gavey (2005) showed that a significant number of young women had had unwanted sex as a way to avoid rape. Gavey suggested this illustrates that coercive sex may be unwanted but it may also be more indicative of a reluctance to use the word rape or to be seen as a victim.

The New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims (2006) showed that dating relationships in adolescence have the highest rates of physical and emotional violence compared with any other age group. Moffit and Caspi (1999), researchers for the Dunedin longitudinal study, reported that 48 per cent of couples report being physically abused by a partner by the age of 21. They also reported that three out of four teenage girls in New Zealand had experienced at least one incident of unwanted sexual activity.

The drivers of and vulnerability to sexual coercion are broad across a social and personal framework, with the most common reasons being that: adolescent girls wanted to show their partner they loved them; they thought it was what their partner wanted; alcohol and other drugs; and rape-supportive beliefs and approval from the peer

group (Flood and Pease, 2009; Jackson, 2001). For Hird and Jackson (2001) a major concern is the way in which coercion has been adopted as a normative heterosexual behaviour, reinforced by gendered roles of activity and passivity. They state that to define relationships based on stereotypes of masculinity and femininity is a prescription for coercion, which underpins an immutable biological narrative thereby making coercion inevitable.

Pornography, relationship violence and mental health

The incidence of women's experiences of depression and individual pathology is rooted in the powerlessness and oppression of women as a class, with this psychological distress primarily created by political, societal and cultural forces — as noted by a number of scholars who have emphasised the loss of voice girls experience as they navigate adolescence (Lee, 1997; Tolman, 1999; Hird & Jackson, 2001; Bordeau, Briggs, Staton & Wasik, 2008).

To still deem someone as mentally unwell, or struggling with their mental health, despite a great improvement over recent years, carries a level of stigma. The western world of medicine positions mental illness within the person and not as an external problem the way many other cultures do (Bush, Collings, Tamasese, & Waldegrave, 2005).

However, two theoretical models, namely some feminist perspectives and narrative therapy, address women's experiences of trauma and the ensuing mental distress as the repercussions of injustice and not as a personal failing.

Feminist political perspectives share a significant amount with the narrative therapy model. Narrative therapy questions the 'taken-for-granted' and feminism questions, and challenges dominant ways of understanding gender and relationships and the impact that patriarchy has on the lives of people (Thomas & Davies, 2002). They share the ideas of power, the importance of being able to tell one's story, the use of voice and the idea of the person as political. While some of their philosophical foundations do differ, in particular the idea of constructed realities through history and culture — as seen from a narrative perspective as opposed to a more essentialist approach of "true self" and "the feminine psyche" as viewed by some feminist theorists (Lee, 1997; Gremillion, 2004). To combine the two and apply a feminist narrative approach, addresses the long history of work done by feminist therapists to adapt and define therapies appropriate for women and the need for practitioner accountability. In doing so, the male-centred traditions of

“Pain is real when you get other people to believe in it. If no one believes in it but you, your pain is madness or hysteria”

— NAOMI WOLF

psychotherapy and the hierarchies involved in male-therapist and female-client relationships were critiqued, focusing on and thereby addressing socio-cultural factors.

The premise that a profession was based on misogynist notions of gender functions, enabling it to be used as a tool to control women’s bodies and lives, was identified. It highlighted that this permitted a pathologising and depoliticisation of women’s experiences, rendered them isolated from a structure by which an explanation could be found for their personal problems as a result of the political causes and consequences (Braude, 1987; Lee, 1997). Draucker (1998) states that the therapies that address women’s experiences of sexual violence from a mental health perspective miss the political implications of rape by, instead, focusing on individual symptoms. This, in turn, leads to the bulk of resources and attention being turned away from prevention efforts and political attention while positioning sexual assault within pathology.

Conclusion

This article portrays the importance of the adolescent female experience within the normalised and often accepted framework of a sexually coercive and abusive relationship structure, now significantly amplified and legitimised by the pornography industry (Hird & Jackson, 2001; Lim et al, 2017). Subsequent depression and anxiety as a result of relationship violence or sexual assault, or the isolation from the peer group can occur when a girl speaks out about her abuse. The role of narrative therapy, positioning theory, and feminist theories have been discussed as vehicles for maintaining an integrity and “sense of self” for the girls who experience relationship violence, by focusing on the narratives and experiences that position them as agentic rather than “disordered victims”. The role of feminism and its relationship to narrative therapy is explored within the context of cultural norms and “truths” around female sexuality in relation to pornography and mainstream messages, taken-for-granted *truths*, and the subsequent osmosis that has occurred within adolescent relationship meaning making. This article highlights a widespread issue among young people’s dating behaviour and attitudes, and the extent to which pornography is now contributing to what was already a critical issue.

There is however an urgent need for a wider and

more encompassing understanding and critique of the culturally bound framework within which these behaviours and understandings take

place. A requirement for all young people to have equal and thorough access to health programmes that have a strong and repeated focus on gendered norms, and on pornography’s influence and damage, is essential. At the core of this there needs to be positive relationship programmes, focusing on consent, female sexual pleasure, and body knowledge and understanding for girls. How that discussion can create space for personal agency and strength for young women to find their own construct of themselves within a dating partnership is an ongoing conversation requiring multi-systemic approaches, and a critical view of the language we use. ▲

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First day, first class: What our students are hearing

The first class of the first day of the year is as formative a time for students as it is for teachers. Many of us can recall first lessons from our own student days that made us feel excited, anxious, confused, hopeful, disappointed or a combination of all such emotions. As our recent research has shown (McWilliam & Taylor 2017a), effective teachers understand the importance of establishing learning productive routines to get students engaged from the very start of their teaching year — to minimise anxiety and maximise curiosity. It follows that effective teachers are focused and deliberate in their planning to set up learning-rich classroom environments from day one, lesson one (McWilliam & Taylor, 2017b). But while our research to date has given us a better understanding of how teachers think about and communicate the messages they want to give to their next cohort of students, we know much less about how *students* experience first day, first class. What messages are Australian students getting in their first lessons of the year and what sense are they making of it?

The research approach

We deemed focus group methodology to be most appropriate to our research objective because it is a method designed to combine the findings of two separately conducted studies — our 2017 (and replicated at four new sites in 2018) ‘first day, first class’ study of teacher practice and the 2018 student experience study — in “a true partnership” (Morgan, 1997, p. 3). In other words, we understand the student experience to be no less important than that of the teachers whom we have videoed and from whom we sought follow-up feedback via email and interview.

Focus groups allow the gathering of data on a specific

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topic by means of a semi-structured group interview process moderated by a group leader. As a method of inquiry, the organisation of student representatives into focus groups of 6 to 10 students allowed us to probe student ‘first day, first class’ recollections and understandings in a less formal, more conversational setting than allowed by an individual evaluation sheet or on-line survey. We were able literally to ‘hear’ what

the students thought they heard on day one by means of their participation in the small group discussions involving same-age students from within and across the schools’ secondary level populations.

We conducted the research in collaboration with five single-sex and co-educational schools in Victoria and Queensland, schools that had been involved in the collection of teachers’ ‘first day, first class’ video data and were conversant with the research aims. Each of these schools was keen for their students to be involved and eager to receive their feedback as an informal audit of their first week. The schools organised year-level focus groups to meet

with one of us during one fifty-minute period of their school day. We conducted 19 student focus group conversations — six in a non-government boys' school, five in two non-government girls' schools, two in a government select-entry girls' school and six in a non-government co-educational school. While some of the students were drawn from classes whose teachers had been videoed, others were randomly selected from within the year level according to the dictates of the school timetable. All year levels from 7 to 12 were represented, with most focus groups drawn from students in years 7, 9 and 11.

While we wanted the conversation about their 'first day, first class' experience to ebb and flow in a relatively natural way in the student group, we also prepared an opening question that served as a node from which such discussion could emerge. The question we designed for this purpose was: *What messages did you get in your first classes about how to be a successful student this year?* A number of sub-questions were used to probe student responses, included some of the following:

Is it easier to get the message in some subjects than others? (culture-related)

What did the teacher tell you about themselves?
What did you want to know?

What surprised you?

What would you have liked more of? Less of?

What advice for a new teacher next year?

What advice for a new student next year?

What do you think success would look like for you personally in twenty years' time?

There was variation in the emphasis given to particular questions in accordance with the students' age level and schooling context. For example, some Year 7 students who were new to a school and were experiencing single-sex education for the first time were probed more about their transition experience, while Year 12s had more to say about the pressing issues associated with a 'high stakes' exit year. All focus groups were conducted

Regardless of the level, the message was that this year will demand more of the students. This message was often accompanied by the observation that the threat had not materialised — work was pretty much the same, admittedly only a month into the new year. Some students indicated that they felt the warnings were 'over-egged'. When asked if they had experienced any high challenge activities, most struggled to identify any.

approximately a month from the start of the school's academic year, enough time for the student participants to get some reflective distance while still retaining fresh memories of their first day classes.

Common themes

While the discussions were wide-ranging, reflective of the age levels and unique school contexts, some teacher messages about success were heard consistently across all student cohorts. They can be summarised as follows:

You will need to work hard this year.

You should seek to participate actively this year.

You will need to be self-motivated this year.

Work hard

The 'hard work' message came as no surprise to us as long-term educators and researchers. It was also fully anticipated by the students at every level, a perennial of classroom discourse since pre-war days when Latin mottos like 'labor vincit' — *work conquers* — adorned school crests (see Steele, 1997, p. 202). It was interesting to note, however, some caveats to this advice that were addressed particularly to those girls enrolled in high-end academic schools. They remembered their teachers cautioning them to "study hard but get enough sleep" or to "go to bed early". This concern for adequate sleep did not seem to be 'heard' to the same degree by the boys' cohorts, for whom messages about working hard, getting organised and being disciplined came relatively unadorned. Some students did mimic the idea of 'working smarter not (just) harder' as a regular piece of teacherly advice, expressing some doubt as to whether the teachers themselves actually knew what this meant in practice.

A related message was that 'it will be harder this year' than last. Regardless of the level, the message was that this year will demand more of the students. This message was often accompanied by the observation that the threat had not materialised — work was pretty much the same, admittedly only a month into the new year. Some students indicated that they felt the warnings were 'over-egged'. When asked if they had experienced any high challenge activities, most struggled to identify any.

Participate actively

It was clear that teachers were universally giving the message to their students that passive compliance — consistency and conformity — would not be sufficient to achieve success. More would be required by way of active engagement. "Joining in discussions", "asking questions", "keeping a focus", "taking up opportunities offered", "making good use of the e-portfolio" and "communicating with teachers regularly, for example, by email" were all offered as examples of value-adding participation in the year ahead. We noted in relation to this last point that teachers invariably responded to student emails with very quick turnaround times, often within the hour. Students acknowledged that their teachers were impressive in this regards, acknowledging that teachers deserved a life outside of school though admitting sending emails requesting teacher assistance relatively late in the evening. This seems further evidence for debunking the myth of teachers working mere six hour days.

Be self-motivated

Much was made by teachers of the need for students to 'step up' in the new year to a higher level of self-management and self-efficacy, the general message being that, because you are a year older, more initiative will be expected to emanate from you and you will be less dependent from your teachers. However, we detected mixed messages in relation to this point, particularly in reporting from the girls' focus groups. Girls were being encouraged by their teachers to 'have confidence' and 'not to be afraid to make mistakes', because help was readily available from the teacher. A Year 11 class was encouraged by their teachers to see Year 11 as a "massive learning year" in which success would come from "learning from mistakes". When probed about how many students had actually 'made mistakes' a month into the term, no student could actually remember having done so and, naturally enough, none could say what s/he had learned from making mistakes.

This raises for us questions around the opportunities that might have been missed to set up 'low threat, high challenge' learning tasks early in the year. While the idea that it is important to welcome error — to fail and to learn from your mistakes — is now a familiar mantra linking learning and success, it does not seem that many teachers of these students are yet designing tasks that allow for that possibility early in the year. Instead, "low threat, low challenge" seems to be the norm in the first days and weeks. The difficulty here is that it is hard to raise a low bar once it has become the classroom norm. In other words, culture, once established, eats strategy for breakfast. The appeal to the students that they should feel

confident enough to make mistakes from which to learn is one that can quickly wither on the vine of good intentions. For girls battling a cultural push to 'perfectionism', it is important that the disposition to welcome error is experienced as more than a rhetorical flourish.

There are, however, some notable exceptions to this. Mention was made in one school of an early Year 7 camp that was *both* high challenge *and* fun. A deliberate strategy of asking the students to take 'one step further' was seen to encourage all students — both boys and girls — to extend themselves and take risks. Students commented on the value of this strategy — that is was not empty rhetoric but a pedagogical tactic that resulted in real performance improvement outcomes for the students. In another case, the entire Year 9 program was geared from day one to independent (non-teacher-led) work and group decision-making. The "Enterprise-Explore-Engage" design, built into the student experience from the outset, was valued by all students.

Building relationships

If there is one way in which classroom cultures have changed dramatically in recent decades, it is in the nature of the teacher/student relationship. While many classrooms still have on show elements of their 'egg-crate' industrial past (McWilliam, 2013), and while regimes of testing still insist on promoting "a high standard of standardness" (Mulcahy, 2003), the importance of a warm and trusting teacher/student relationship is now unquestioned in most contemporary Australian schools. This means that adages like 'don't smile until Easter' that were once taken as sage advice for the beginning teacher are not just old hat but actively frowned on by teachers and students alike.

There was general agreement across all focus groups in all schools that having a personal connection with the teacher "makes things more comfortable and teachers more likeable". 'Likeable teachers' are those whose humanity is on display. While this is sometimes done successfully through teachers talking about their personal lives (pet dogs featured quite regularly, it seems, in teachers' first day self-introductions), the more valued way of signalling this quality was for a teacher to be "honest and sincere" in their attempts to break down barriers to themselves and to learning. One Year 11 Chemistry teacher was commented on very positively in separate focus groups for her 'fun-loving' ability to engage her students by means of a "Pun Wall", "Molecular Mondays" and so on.

In the senior years, students expressed an interest in "how the [new] teacher got to be teaching them" i.e., the teacher's background as a teacher, more than in other aspects of their personal lives. They expressed a need to

feel confident that they had a high quality teacher to steer them around the dangerous shoals of high stakes exams at the year's end. In one focus group, Year 11 students said they were surprised by a teacher announcing it was his first year of teaching, but on further reflection they reasoned that he must be very capable to be teaching at this high-end academic school in just his first year of teaching. We suspect that he will still be somewhat 'on probation' for this high-powered group of students.

While most teachers did try, according to the students, to 'show their human side' early in the year, some also invest quite a deal of time in admonitions about rules and lateness. A few teachers try to 'balance' both imperatives (one was reported as 'scary' and then showed pictures of her dogs, which mitigated her 'scariness' somewhat). 'Don't freak us out' was one way students in a Year 10 focus group expressed their desire for less finger-wagging and more fun. By contrast, Year 12s were concerned not to waste time in 'getting to know you' sessions. They wanted the teacher to 'get on with it', already sensing the pressure that they had been anticipating in their final school year.

Conclusion

The above discussion has only scratched the surface of the student reflections as articulated in the focus groups we conducted in February this year. There is much more to reflect on in the students' comments about teaching style preferences, gender relations inside the classroom, future success and so on, but those reflections will need a further paper to elaborate on their implications. What is clear is that Australia's secondary school students are not merely passive when it comes to 'hearing' teachers' first day first class encouragements, cautions and admonitions. They process them, accepting, doubting, rejecting, ignoring and delighting in what they hear and see. Through such processing they learn about where they sit in the picture of future learning – its rigours and its pleasures. And these first impressions are likely to stay with them for life. ▲

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How far away from gender equality are we? A snapshot of Australia in 2018

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The journey towards gender equality in the West has been a long one and it would be nice to say that we are nearly there. Certainly, we are no longer talking about suffrage or the right of women to work after they marry, borrow money in their own name, or why they should receive the same pay by law – matters that were resolved in the 1970s. However, there is still a long way to go before we get there and on current trend, gender equality lies further ahead in time than the suffragettes lie behind.

Australia, despite its promising start as the second country in the world to grant women suffrage and the first to allow them to stand for election, now stands at 35th in the world on measures of gender equality, having slipped 20 places in the last 15 years (World Economic Forum, 2017). While we rank equal first in the education of women, we are 42nd in terms of economic participation and 48th in terms of political empowerment, ranking behind many third world countries (World Economic Forum, 2017). However, it is not so much that we are falling behind as much as that we are treading water while countries around us do more to engage with gender inequality. Our sister nation New Zealand, for example, ranks ninth in the world.

Education and leadership

As a country, we can be proud of our educational achievements and more so of our women who comprise 57.5 per cent of our university graduates, with women exceeding men as graduates since 1985 (ABS, 2016). In terms of our MBA graduates, those most likely to reach executive and CEO roles, women comprise 35 per cent of graduates and have exceeded 28 per cent since 1995. What is interesting is that these statistics show that women have been achieving academically for well over a generation. We certainly do not have a lack of women in the talent pipeline. Yet in 2018 only 5.5 per cent of our ASX200 CEOs are women, and likewise only 5.5 per cent of ASX200 chairpersons are women (ASX, 2018). Of concern is that this represents a decline in the number of women in these roles from 6.5 per cent in both categories in 2017 (ASX, 2017). However, even these statistics do not reveal the full extent of the issue.

If we look at the market capital controlled by these women in 2018, it represents only 3.2 per cent of the capital controlled by all the ASX200 firms combined. This means that these women CEOs are in the smaller firms of the ASX200 rather than at the top end.

A sobering reminder of the glacial pace of change in this area can be found by extrapolating the rate of progress of women into these peak leadership roles. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) and its predecessor, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), have maintained records since 2002 of the number of female CEOs (EOWA, 2002–2012; ASX 2013–2018). In 2002 there were four women CEOs in the ASX200 and in 2018 there were 11. If we project how long it will be at current rates of progress before we get to gender parity in this critical area it will be the year AD 2221. More than 200 years from now!

On a brighter note, over the past decade women have been joining boards in non-executive director roles in ever greater numbers. In 2009 only 8.5 per cent of board positions were held by women (EOWA, 2009). In 2017 that number stood at 28 per cent (WGEA, 2017). A 20 percentage point climb in less than ten years. The reason for this dramatic increase lies in two changes that occurred in 2009. In this year the ASX introduced reporting guidelines that included explaining what listed firms were doing in the area of gender equality; however, of greater significance were the initiatives commenced in that year by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and which continue into the present, in support of educating, mentoring and sponsoring women into board roles. No other country in the world has achieved this kind of success without introducing quotas. Nonetheless, and like countries which have introduced quotas, this rise in non-executive board roles has produced little if any trickledown effect into women in chair and CEO roles, showing just how complex the issue of gender equality is.

Gender pay gap

In 1973, the first act of the Whitlam Government was to abolish the legally mandated pay disparity of 25 per cent between men and women employed by the federal government. Despite this significant move, the current pay gap in full-time remuneration in Australia is 23 per cent (WGEA, 2017). This statistic varies from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) gender pay gap figure, which is the most cited figure by the government and the media, and only measures full-time base salary. Full-time remuneration as a pay gap measure includes bonuses, overtime, salary packaging, employee share schemes and other forms of remuneration. Full-time remuneration is therefore a more reliable figure in measuring modern workplace remuneration and the current gender pay gap. However, we also need to remember that even this statistic omits women in part-time and casual roles, and in 2018 there were three women in part-time roles for every one man (WGEA, 2017). In fact, there are more women in part-time and casual roles than there are in full-time roles, and we have no statistics that examine the pay gaps in these

The gender pay gap is a widely misunderstood statistic. This is because the pay gap is actually comprised and caused by different factors and represents an aggregated number across the entire economy.

areas. Given that part-time roles are generally less well remunerated than full-time roles per hour, on average, it is quite possible that the gender pay gap in Australia is significantly higher than 25 per cent.

The gender pay gap varies state by state and industry by industry. Using ABS pay gap data, which is roughly 8–9 percentage points lower than the real pay gap using full remuneration figures, Western Australia has the highest gap at 22.5 per cent and South Australia has the lowest with 10.3 per cent (WGEA, 2017). There is also a difference between the public and private sectors of nearly 10 percentage points, with the gender pay gap being 19.2 per cent in the private sector and only 10.8 per cent in the public sector (WGEA, 2017) again using ABS data. Managerial discretion in pay setting is implicated as one of the reasons for this significant difference. By industry, the financial and insurance services sector is by far the worst with a 31.9 per cent pay gap, and the mining sector among the lowest with a 14.7 per cent gap.

The gender pay gap is a widely misunderstood statistic. This is because the pay gap is actually comprised and caused by different factors and represents an aggregated number across the entire economy. The gender pay gap can be explained by four factors:

- the significantly higher number of men in senior higher paid roles
- the predominance of men in higher paying industry sectors
- the effects of uninterrupted service of men relative to women on positions within salary bands
- discrimination and bias in recruitment, selection and promotion against women generally.

Therefore, to tackle the gender pay gap we need to address each of these elements separately, as each has a different cause.

It has been said that the gender pay gap is a financial representation and aggregation of all the factors that face women in the workforce as opposed to those faced by men. It should come as no surprise then to find that when Westpac released its *Westpac Kids and Money* report (2016)

it was found that girls receive 27 per cent less pocket money than boys and that the division of domestic labour represented by the chores children undertook were also gendered, with girls doing the dishes, laundry and cleaning the house, whereas boys mowed the lawn, took out the rubbish and washed the car. These findings are perhaps among the most disturbing in terms of the future of gender equality in

Australia, since if we are socialising our children to expect gendered roles and pay we will not see gender equality for generations to come.

“Pink” and “blue”: the origin of gendered roles

Social role theory (Eagly, Wood & Diekmann, 2000) notes that gender emerges from the sex of a child and the messages they receive from parents, friends and society generally regarding the ways in which they should behave and react to the world. This means that decisions made by parents and schools, as well as what young children observe generally, informs their attitudes, and these will affect the rest of their lives. As noted above, currently girls receive 27 per cent less pocket money than boys, a figure remarkably close to the full-time remuneration pay gap for adults. If we apply social role theory it is not a coincidence that this figure is so close to the real gender pay gap. Research undertaken in the past few years also shows a division of domestic labour

in children that reflects that of their parents (Goldberg, Prause, Lucas-Thompson & Himsel, 2008).

Likewise, the decisions we make regarding what our sons can do and what our daughters cannot, creates perceptions and real consequences for them as they grow up. Allowing one to ride a bike to their friend's house and another to not do so, or to buy one a bike at one age for one child and at a later age for the other creates differences in self-confidence, among other things. These decisions are known as "pink" and "blue" decisions and have critical impact upon development and the gendering of tasks and attitudes in children (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990). These seemingly innocuous decisions have real consequences later in life and are relatively easily addressed by parents by demonstrating gender egalitarian parenting and undertaking gender-equal domestic labour. Schools also have a role to play in ensuring that similar courses are offered to boys and girls, and that traditionally male careers are manifestly demonstrated as not only being available to girls but are highly suited to girls. In this regard female role models from these industries have been shown to have a significant impact on the formation of career attitudes in young women (England, 2010; Sims & Lorenzi, 1992).

One significant consequence of getting this wrong is that, currently, women are grossly underrepresented in some of our highest paid industries, such as mining, energy and construction, where on average women only represent 10 per cent of the workforce. On the other hand, women dominate relatively low-paid work sectors, such as retail, hospitality and social assistance (WGEA, 2017). Women have made a significant impact upon highly paid positions in support industries, such as law, consulting and accounting; however, there is a very small pipeline in operational careers, such as engineering. Coincidentally, most CEOs in Australia have an operational rather than support function background (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers are usually well paid and, because of Australia's dominant industries, roles such as engineering feature more heavily in our economies than many others. However, women represent less than 12 per cent of engineering graduates.

These statistics show that we have a gender segregated society, with gender roles being prescribed early in life by decisions made by society generally, but by parents, schools and media specifically. Today there are very few reasons why men and women cannot do the same work.

Superannuation outcomes

Another consequence of the gender pay gap is that women who are at retirement age in Australia, on average, are retiring on 52.8 per cent less superannuation than men. Across all superannuation balances and across all age groups, women have 44.3 per cent less than men in their superannuation accounts (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018). The significant disparity between men and women arises primarily because of the gender pay gap's compounding effect upon returns on superannuation fund balances, as well as women being absent from the workforce for longer periods than men due to caring responsibilities. This results in women being more vulnerable in retirement and greater numbers of women over 65 living in poverty relative to men.

The Australian workplace

Despite progress being made on many fronts and there being Employers of Choice for Women (WGEA, 2017), there are many structural barriers to women's progression in the workplace. A study undertaken in Western Australia (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2015) identified four pillars that allow primary carers to remain in the full-time workforce: spousal support, family support, paid child care options, and workplace flexibility. Child care is often framed as a women's issue rather than the family issue it should be. This is because 95 per cent of primary carers of children are women (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018). Of the four pillars, by and large, the only organisational support that can be given by small and medium employers is flexibility. Large employers, however, do have the capacity to provide on-site child care and while some do, most do not for a combination of reasons. Among these are Australia's complex and prohibitive child care provisions, which cross federal, state and local jurisdictional boundaries, as well as businesses not seeing child care as being part of their mandate to employees.

Despite flexibility being a viable option for the retention and progression of women in the workplace, Australia has been slow to embrace its full potential. Often part-time, casual or reduced days or hours are seen as the only flexible options, whereas true workplace flexibility is about being able to maintain full-time hours but in a manner accommodating of child care and other domestic needs. With our ageing population, elder care is becoming a close second to child care in terms of requiring flexibility in the workplace.

At the heart of why most organisations are yet to embrace true flexible working is organisational or industry culture. There is a belief that you cannot manage someone

unless you can see them. So, no matter how much firms at their senior levels espouse workplace flexibility as an option, such roles are rarely created. There is an expression "Culture eats strategy for breakfast". It is not sufficient to simply have policies, and it is not even sufficient for boards and CEOs to espouse support for their use. It really comes down to whether middle managers will embrace them and whether other employees will support those who choose to work flexibly. In other words, policies need to be supported in practice, and a workplace culture that embraces flexibility is required. This means training in the strategic aims of flexibility policies as well as the practical implementation of the policy, how it will be measured and rewarded, how people will be held accountable for their practice and undertaking to change structures and individuals that get in the way.

Flexible working is an example of a policy that can be highly effective, if implemented strategically. However, in many organisations and sectors, such as professional accounting, consulting and law, undertaking a flexible role is seen as the best way to derail your career and those who use these policies are seen as not being serious about their careers (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2015). Critically, in terms of changing the cultural norms around how flexibility is viewed, for flexibility to function effectively it needs to be understood that flexibility does not necessarily mean part-time; it can mean doing the same work at times that incorporate the ability to work around other non-negotiables in life, such as child care.

On a practical level, implementing flexibility requires thinking about communications, IT and other physical infrastructure that supports people working remotely from the office, and clients being briefed on when and where they can contact employees. It requires different ways of measuring and rewarding performance and managing those who cannot or do not support the new way of working.

Most of these things are in the hands of the leadership group; however, each of us can support others in undertaking flexible work and then we need to "vote with our feet" if we find ourselves in organisations that do not manifestly value flexible work.

Unequal distribution of domestic labour and child care

According to the ABS (2016), while workforce participation rates for women have been gradually increasing over the past few decades, this is not compensated for by a reduction of time spent carrying out unpaid work around the home. Women spend around the same amount of time on household work (which includes

caring for children as well as domestic activities and shopping) today (an average of 33 hours and 45 minutes a week) as they did in 1992. Currently, men only spend 18 hours and 20 minutes a week on domestic labour. In other words, women do almost twice as much domestic labour as men, and this varies little in relation to whether both spouses are engaged in full-time work.

This imbalance persists between couples even where the primary earner in the household is the woman. Women often suffer discrimination at work, even where there is no manifest work-life conflict, because some employers perceive that there could be conflict in the future and pre-empt or act accordingly. Young women also suffer from a phenomenon known as the "maybe baby" effect, where it is presumed that she will have children in the near future (De Henau, Meulders & O'Dorchai, 2010). This can take many forms, from not recruiting young women in the first place, to potential job assignments being withheld or, reassigned to outright "redundancies" and "restructuring" being used as excuses to sideline working mothers.

Women take 95 per cent of primary parental leave (outside of the public sector), and women spend almost three times as much time caring for children each day compared to men (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018). Because women are the primary carers of children, as noted above, they suffer additional discrimination caused by work-life conflict and the lack of flexibility in the workplace. While child care should be a family issue rather than a "women's issue" the statistics clearly show that the burden currently falls upon women and, therefore, the consequences of our broken child care system falls squarely upon them (see Brennan & Oloman, 2009, for a full discussion of this topic).

Currently, the cost of having two children in full-time child care equals the after-tax earnings of the average Australian woman (Care for Kids, 2014). This represents a significant disincentive to stay in the workforce. Evidence suggests that issues surrounding child care cost, quality, location, opening hours, and availability on demand are the most significant cause of women choosing to leave the workforce or remaining outside the workforce for longer than they would otherwise desire (Brennan & Oloman, 2009; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2015).

What is significant, and for whatever reason is never discussed or debated publicly, is that child care costs represent less than 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and yet the contribution to GDP of equal workforce participation of women has been consistently calculated to increase GDP by 11 to 12 per cent (Goldman Sachs, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2017). Simply put, if the greatest

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barrier to women's full-time participation in the workforce is the cost, availability and quality of child care and the return on investment in providing this system is 12 times, it seems absurd that we would hesitate for a second as a country from doing so. However, whatever debate there is seems to be centred around the notion that child care is an economic issue for the family unit alone and not for society at large, and that some form of percentage rebate is an answer to the issue. This again seems absurd, since we, as a society, have no issue with primary and secondary education being paid for by the state. Perhaps the repositioning of the debate as one of early education rather than child care might see the issue gain more traction. Free, universal child care or early education was one of the platforms of the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s for good reason, and incidentally only one of two platforms that were not attained by them. The second being the right to reproductive freedom, which, surprisingly to most Australians, is still an issue in several states in Australia.

Sexual harassment, discrimination and bias

The statistics in this area are extremely disturbing and perhaps are the most disheartening of all of the issues I have considered in this article. In terms of overt discrimination, the Australian Human Rights Commission (2018) reports that in 2018, one in every two women has experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime, one in three has experienced physical or sexual violence over the age of 15, one in two women reports having experienced workplace discrimination as a result of pregnancy, parental leave, or on return to work, and one in five mothers reported that she was made redundant, restructured, dismissed or that her contract was not renewed.

Alongside overt discrimination, women are also discriminated against in terms of leadership assessment, suitability for promotion and assignment to projects, and client-facing leadership roles, as well as recruitment to roles

that have been regarded as traditionally male (see Eagly & Carli, 2007 for a full review of these phenomena). These facts all point to a failure of our society to address and educate the attitudes of our young men towards women, and our older men in how these matters affect women and what should be done to address them.

Conclusion

It is easy to point the finger at government or corporations as being responsible for the continuation of gender inequality in Australia and, of course, they are the custodians of the structures that perpetuate gender inequality. However, it is you and I who can choose to conform or try to undo the norms that are the cause of the problem.

We need to manifestly demonstrate to our children what gender equality looks like. Shared parenting, equal opportunities and commitments to our sons and daughters, and sharing domestic duties equally with our spouses, are all positive examples to our children. Simple things, such as giving our children an equal division of labour and pocket money for household chores also sets an example. As educators we must teach the value of gender equality and manifestly demonstrate respect and equal opportunity for all, regardless of gender.

Children take these lessons into adulthood, and they replicate them within their families and eventually within their workplaces. Governments, too, exist to serve their societies. If there is a societal shift, laws and institutions will shift to align to it.

To reach gender equality sooner than AD 2221, we desperately need a societal shift and this shift starts with you. ▲



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Gender equality and the purposeful education of girls



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The relationship between societal gender inequality and the education of girls is a complex phenomenon to understand as these issues are both simultaneously dependent and interdependent of each other. While gender inequality is not the result of education, and it could be argued it should not be the place of education to fix such a social dilemma, the education of girls has the potential to either perpetuate issues of inequality in society or abate them. Schooling is itself a replication of our social world and, as such, has the potential to reproduce inequalities that exist within it.

However, there is also the potential to address these concerns through the purposeful education of girls and the use of intentional teaching. The learning experiences of girls can be shaped and developed into alternative narratives, which can challenge societal representations of gender and so work against perpetuating negative gendered assumptions. In such an environment, girls can construct identities that are free from biases and instead build ones from a position of confidence and self-assuredness. The result of this education ensures that girls will not only have the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in their future societal roles, but they will also have the belief that they have a rightful place within all aspects of society as well as the capacity to be successful, regardless of the role they wish to play.

Gender, equality and the global context

In understanding the social inequality of girls and women, it is important to assess the global context, particularly in relation to women and the economy. It is well documented by the World Economic Forum that the greater the participation of women in the workforce, the larger the impact on the national and global economy. However, it is also recognised that within certain professions and occupations, workforce participation is not equal between men and women, women do not have equal access to leadership positions, and within all professions and occupations in Australia, women are not recognised with equal pay for equal work (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2018). In understanding Australia's place in relation to global gender equality, the most recent rankings from the World Economic Forum (2017) place Australia as follows:

Economic participation and opportunity (42); Political empowerment (48); Health and survival (104); and Educational attainment (1). Overall, this equates to a gender equality global index rank of 35. Countries that ranked higher than Australia in relation to gender equality

include the expected: New Zealand (9) and Canada (16). But also the unexpected: Nicaragua (6) and Cuba (25). With an equal global ranking of (1) for educational attainment, access to and completing formal education is clearly not an issue for girls in Australia; however, what is an issue is how this attainment translates into economic, social, and wellbeing outcomes for women.

While the World Economic Forum rankings present some interesting data for us to consider how we might attain greater gender equality in Australia, the Australian government is instead focused on world rankings in relation to educational outcomes, particularly those associated with the areas of literacy, numeracy, and science. The most recent Australian government report into education, led by David Gonski, *Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools* (2018), outlines a series of recommendations for schools that are aimed at lifting our perceived global educational standing. However, this report has a very clear omission, which is addressing how schooling can be used to bring about gender parity in Australia. The rankings outlined by the World Economic Forum establish a stark contrast to the often-cited Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results where Australia was most recently ranked as follows: science (14), reading (16), and mathematics (25) (OECD, 2015). While it is acknowledged that Australia has decreased in PISA rankings over the last few years, these results, when placed against Australia's gender equality global index rank of (35) in comparison to countries such as New Zealand's rank of (9), indicate that the issue is not so much about education, per se, but rather the link between education and social outcomes.

Gender and schooling

More than a decade ago, feminist educational sociologist Madeleine Arnot, in her text *Reproducing Gender? Essays on educational theory and feminist politics* (2002), warned that the paradoxical nature of women's educational success against economic inequality was likely to be heightened rather than answered through girls' schooling experiences. Arnot (2002) stated that "the growth of feminism as a political movement and as an academic discourse has directed interest back to the ways in which pedagogy within formal and informal instructional contexts contributes to the reproduction of the sexual division of labour". Arnot's contemporary, Elaine Unterhalter (2007), also supported this view, claiming that "many sociological studies of schools indicate that far from being spaces which fulfil needs, rights or capabilities, they establish complex social relations which sometimes confirm gender inequalities and sometimes contribute to their transformation". Therefore, in Australia our focus seems to be misplaced. Rather than taking heed of what others have identified as gender inequality exacerbated by schooling, we have turned our focus instead to the minutiae of educational outcomes, that being literacy and numeracy.

According to the report by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Education and Work, Australia*, (2017), if you are a girl in Australia, you are more likely to finish Year 12, more likely to go to university, and more likely to undertake postgraduate education. Clearly, girls have greater academic outcomes than boys in Australia on these measures. However, as stated previously, this educational achievement does not translate into life success in relation to measures of equality associated with economic advantage, political participation, and leadership acquisition and some career pathways.

In relation to leadership, Archard, Morda, and Waniganayake (2017) have stated, "The extent to which the early formation of leadership potential can create or reinforce gendered assumptions is strongly aligned to the beliefs and attitudes towards women in a given society. Moreover, these societal 'norms' can impact on girls' ability to fulfil leadership roles during their childhood as well as throughout their lives." The complexity of this issue, therefore, lies in attempting to understand whether education can either be used as a tool to address the inequitable life outcomes of girls and women, or whether education is a contributing factor in reproducing such inequality in the first place.

The purposeful education of girls

It has been argued that societal gender imbalances are likely to be influenced in educational settings if social and cultural influences that exist outside school are then replicated within it (Archard, 2013). The role of girls' education, and in particular single-sex schools for girls, is therefore to ensure that girls are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to overcome social and cultural gender biases and in doing so actively break the stereotypical norms that define women in society. As such, girls' schools should actively put measures in place to not imitate society, but instead challenge social norms. In achieving this outcome, girls' schools are recognised as doing more than just teaching the curriculum and offering a range of sporting and co-curricular opportunities — all schools do this, whether they be single-sex, co-educational, independent, government, religious or secular based. What girls' schools do differently, compared to all other types of schools, is purposefully develop girls to be able to understand their gender identity and to shape their self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-confidence, so that girls develop the knowledge and skills required to reject and overcome the gender stereotypes that attempt to define them. Schooling is so much more than academic outcomes — certainly these create opportunities, but it is the other skills that young women develop in relation to their belief in themselves that drive successful life outcomes.

Teachers in girls' schools can develop learning experiences that present alternative narratives for girls that challenge and thereby do not perpetuate gendered assumptions. When developing girls for leadership, Archard (2013) has outlined a framework and associated strategies to be used by schools for contesting the assumptions that might influence girls in their leadership development and future acquisition of these roles. Such interventions include teacher intentionality in curricula decisions and pedagogical delivery that is aimed at building girls' self-confidence and self-efficacy. These approaches ensure that girls' learning opportunities are directed towards breaking down gendered norms, so building new identities that are not bound by stereotypes. These strategies enable girls to not just identify themselves outside of cultural gendered roles, but also believe they have the capacity to fulfil these roles. In delivering these outcomes, teachers are also able to take into consideration the developmental needs of girls as they move from childhood, through adolescence, and into young womanhood. During adolescence, there may be a loss or silencing of voice. In this stage of development girls are in conflict with their inner selves and the need to adhere to adult gender expectations of politeness and unassertiveness (Archard, 2013a). Therefore, when girls' confidence levels

lower and levels of doubt increase during adolescence (Archard, 2012), teachers can explicitly put strategies into place to both prevent and address these concerns and thereby assist girls in their development of a confident self.

The need for more girls' schools

One answer to the problems of gender inequality may lie simply in making more schooling experiences available for girls in single-sex environments. The often-cited response to this argument is that single-sex schools are not "natural" and that the world is co-educational, therefore schools should be. However, this should not be reduced to an "either-or" argument, but instead it should be an argument about choice. Single-sex schools for girls take away gender stereotypes, thereby equipping girls with a non-stereotypical view of themselves and the world. Such an approach to education does not mean that girls cannot participate and do things that we might label as stereotypically feminine — it is just as important to celebrate being a girl. However, we must also ensure that girls are not excluded from opportunities just because they are a girl. If governments were genuine in wanting to improve Australia's economic position, not to mention educational standing, they would not take away the choice of single-sex schooling. Currently in Australia there are no government single-sex schools in Queensland, Western Australia or the Northern Territory, with only a small number spread across the other States. And with the majority of single-sex schools being independent, there is no choice for many parents who cannot afford this option.

Conclusion

There are many complex reasons why women do not have equal participation and rewards in society; however, all these reasons are linked to social and cultural influences to do with gender. So why not endorse educational environments that not only achieve high academic results, but also deliberately address the social and cultural barriers that keep women from leadership positions and equal participation in the workforce in general? If governments merely addressed the issue of gender inequality through education, they would add millions of dollars to the Australian economy. Surely that makes women and girls worth the investment. ▲

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The father-daughter relationship: What can we learn?

MADONNA KING



What can we learn from 1,300 teen girls about their relationship with their fathers? And given the chance, how would 400 fathers improve the bond they share with their daughters? That's the crux of the research project I've undertaken over the past 15 months, and the results paint a picture that we all have a stake in because it helps us understand the way teenage girls interact with each other and with other forms of authority. That's invaluable for families, and schools.

Girls, vocal and fiery and opinionated, need to learn to talk to their dads, in the way they did before adolescence sets in.

Fathers need to stop stepping back, and step up, particularly as their daughters become teenagers.

A mother's role is crucial in a father-daughter bond, and sometimes women might need to step back, to allow their partners to play a bigger role.

Schools, too, can be vital in providing a conduit to re-engaging fathers and daughters. That could benefit the school too.

These are all generalisations, of course, but proof of their need surfaced time and time again, while writing *Fathers and Daughters*.

Girls told of how, with the onset of puberty, their bonds with their father often fractured.

I feel less comfortable talking to him about things that I might have previously been able to.

We fight a lot more and I have started to get angry with him lately.

As I am becoming a young woman, I have become a bit more independent and do not share some things with him anymore. I'm an only child so I used to treat Dad almost like a brother. We'd "playful fight" a lot. But now that I've matured we don't have as much to talk about.

Over the past two years I felt a drift away from my father and am trying to come back. This most likely occurred due to a clash in ideas, as I try to make my own decisions and form choices in what I think is right and wrong, possibly disagreeing with what he believes.

Yes, we were once very close and he was openly affectionate, but now that I am older we have grown more distant. I think he is put off by me growing up and not being his little girl anymore.

Fathers articulated the same chasm, when asked about their relationship with their teen daughters.

It was amazing — 10/10 — until she was a teenager. Then the wall came up. I would say it's a work in progress but happy to score it a 7/10.

It is trying. We have our good moments, but most of the time I feel like she is questioning me, questioning my authority and direction. I think she thinks she knows better.

At fourteen, very good one day a week. The rest not so good. Apparently I don't understand anything — whatever that means!

Semi-detached at the moment. She is interested in her friends and her own world far more than her family.

Jeez, this is a moment-to-moment proposition. On balance I describe my relationship with my daughter as strong or good. We talk a fair bit and I'm genuinely interested in what's going on for her. She often messages me with quirky good photos or things that have caught her attention. When she is calm she seems to understand my reasons if I've felt the need to apply limits, but in the middle of a meltdown there is no logic or reason.

Challenging and sometimes strained. She has been distant and finds it difficult to strike up a good conversation. Often answers are in one or two words.

So what's behind this fissure, that can set in when girls reach adolescence, and how can it be addressed?

The 1300 girls were aged 10 to 17, and it was apparent they believed it had a range of causes. Her father's long working hours, or working away, a natural closeness to her mother, circumstance, a belief that her father was no longer as interested in her and didn't know how to communicate with her, all played a role in girls' perceptions that their father now didn't know them as well as their mother, siblings, friends and, in many cases, even teachers. Technology and her father's age — irrespective of whether he was thirty-eight or sixty-six — were also catalysts for girls seeing the bond with their father become superficial.

Despite that, girls admire their dads, even though they wouldn't dare tell them. Persistence, work ethic, confidence and intelligence, easy and non-judgemental manner topped the list of attributes penned by teenage girls about their fathers. They see him as logical, organised and staying calm when bedlam explodes around them.

This is gold for fathers, trying to stay crucial as their daughter navigates the tricky teen years. It means he can use those characteristics that she admires to help build her confidence, provide a can-do attitude, gift her with an ability to stand up and be heard, encourage learning and inject a healthy dose of perspective into her teen world. School principals, teachers, psychologists and parenting experts all interviewed during this project also nominated the importance of male role models in passing on an ability to set goals, grow in independence, and learn how to be treated by men. A father is a girl's prime role model for men. This gives fathers an extraordinary power. She will learn what to expect of men from her father or father-figure, and how he treats her, her mother and other women.

Practical things shouldn't be forgotten either — like learning to drive, change a tyre, replace a light bulb and understand the weather system. Can mothers do this too? Of course they can, but it gives fathers a means of staying close to their daughters.

So what do girls believe their dads can do to help stay connected with them?

Be there more.

Put the phone away and not just focus on the solution. Talk about it.' 'While he's present at home a lot, he's not always mentally present, and sometimes when I need him to focus on something that has to do with me, he doesn't. This is especially frustrating if I've created something for him that may take a bit of effort to look at and he tells me he'll get to it later and never does.

Spend more time with me.

Maybe be around a bit more and could eat dinner with the rest of the family more often.

He needs to spend more time with the family and less time working.' 'He is constantly travelling and is not often home, but that is because of work so I am understanding of it. We could also have more family dinners together because he usually isn't at the table for very long.

After 'being there', doing things together featured strongly.

Play with me.

My dad has problems with his knees so he can't do much activity but we used to go out and play volleyball. I loved it so much. For five years he hasn't been allowed to but I wish he could.

I would like to go camping once.

He could get involved in some more activities I enjoy and understand why I like them.

He could take me out for a walk or a bike ride or something.

My father could be available for me on the weekends to play a board game or cards or a video game.

He always puts in an effort, but to extend an effort he could maybe offer to take me somewhere we both like.

I'd love to do the Kokoda Track with Dad. Dad would love that. He'd find it a real challenge and I'd love to do that with him.

How many of them would say that to their fathers? Hardly any, because they fear Dad will say 'no'. He'll be too busy, or away at work, or worse still, not interested. But ask fathers a similar question, and the same answers pop up.

I'd like to spend more one-on-one time [with my daughter] — for example bush walking or camping.

I would like to get back to more one-on-one time with my girls. The last eighteen months have been very difficult with work and it has impacted on the time I used to spend with them.

I need to gain an understanding of how she thinks and why she thinks that way to improve it. Also I need to spend more time with her, but in the past six months she's been unwilling and I've only seen her one time. Our relationship is done by text now, and if I didn't text her she would not contact me.

I would like to improve my communication with her so that she could come to me about issues. To be more discursive and less shouty.

Become better at sharing emotions and feelings with each other. Having her fully comfortable saying what she thinks and what's on her mind, particularly if she thinks it differs to my view or what she thinks I'm thinking.

Whilst we have lovely conversations about society, politics, business etc., I'd like our conversations to be more about them personally.

Parenting a teenager is not easy, because their wants and needs can change with the breeze. But sometimes it's the simple things they yearn.

I wish I could talk to him about boys. I wish he would tell me, like they do in cheesy movies, that no-one would ever be good enough for me.

If you die, what career would you want me to have and are you proud to be my father?

When was the last time you went through a struggling time? What helped? How long did it last?

Just imagine the change we could make for our teenagers if we could bridge this divide, currently being damaged by time, communication and even an inability to know where to start?

Certainly, during my research, some factors stood out as a vaccination against a fractured father-daughter relationship: bonding over a love and participation in sport; growing up in rural Australia and wanting to work on the land, with dad; and fathers showing affection and not stepping back when your daughter reaches adolescence. Another factor was mentioned by hundreds of girls, and it relates to

Another principal says he believes that mothers often become too emotionally invested in advocating for their daughters. 'Women almost feel the pain of their daughter. Fathers will just say, "Make new friends in the class".'

how fathers treat their daughters' developing opinions.

That won't surprise those teaching girls. 'Fathers should leave being QC in the courtroom and be dad in the lounge room,' one school leader told me. Others quickly pointed out an irony in how some fathers treat their teen daughters' opinions. These girls are being schooled to have convictions, analyse the different sides of an argument, find the supporting evidence, and then prosecute it with passion and clarity. Fathers support this, in the school context. The resurgence in the popularity of public speaking and debating shows parents want their daughters to be able to argue the veracity of a case and to stand up for themselves. They applaud strong marks for assignments based on research, analysis and communication.

They like that their daughters can hold their own, in peer groups, but especially when there are boys involved. They fork out money for girls to be able to do this, well. And then the girls come home and, in many cases, their fathers — as the girls tell it — object when girls' 'views conflict with their fathers'.

Those girls who saw their fathers as belittling their views — whether it was on same-sex marriage, the republic or immigration — were quick to tag their father as 'old' or 'old-fashioned'. 'I used to look up to my dad a lot. He was my hero,' one teen said. 'My dad is quite a lot older. He's sixty-five. There's a big age gap and I've noticed a lot of what he says is politically incorrect. It hasn't lessened how much I love him, but sometimes I look at him and think, "You really shouldn't say that."' That was at the softer end of the girls' reflections. Many used the words 'politically incorrect', but others chose 'bigot', 'out-of-date', 'racist', 'homophobic', 'misogynist' and 'rude'. And it made no difference whether their father was sixty-five or thirty-eight. It wasn't his age; it was whether girls viewed their father (and his attitude) as old. But the bigger point here was that this only came from girls who felt their fathers didn't listen to, or value, their opinion. Those girls struggled to find a way to reconnect with their father.

The role played by others invested in a strong father-daughter bond is significant, particularly mothers and schools. One principal puts it this way: 'dads to me seem to be much more grounded and to roll with the punches. My sense is that if we saw dads more involved then perhaps we would get less of the preciousness around how girls are treated and perhaps we wouldn't get as much of that

over-dramatisation of the small, which mums sometimes do.' Another principal says he believes that mothers often become too emotionally

invested in advocating for their daughters. He gives the example of a friendship fallout among teenage girls. 'Women almost feel the pain of their daughter. Fathers will just say, "Make new friends in the class".'

That view was widely shared, as was the advice that sometimes, mothers might have to step back, to allow fathers to step up. But the bottom line is that we all have a part to play in helping our daughters develop and keep strong male role models, particularly during the teen-hood tunnel.

And anyone needing confirmation of that should spend five minutes with Dr Bruce Robinson, a surgeon and professor of medicine, whose job includes telling an ill person they are going to die. He hates it. It breaks his heart. But what do fathers, in particular, say in response to the news that their life is ending?

Why didn't they spend more time with their children? Why? ▲

Madonna King is a journalist and author. Her book Being 14, on the challenges faced by teen girls, became a best-seller in 2017.

The twenties matter: Life's defining decade

ROS CURTIS, PRINCIPAL, ST MARGARET'S ANGLICAN GIRLS' SCHOOL, QUEENSLAND

One of the things I have observed over the last decade or so is that there is a growing trend to delay what some may call “getting on with the business or seriousness of life”, as if doing this in the 20s is way too young and there is plenty of time. The 20s have become almost a throwaway decade and, at that age, people keep telling you that you have nothing but time.

This trivialises the importance of the 20s, as it is the most defining decade of adulthood; the behaviour and actions of young people in their 20s, and the decisions they take, can have a significant long-term impact on ultimately who and what they will become.

One of the most powerful social forces shaping modern Australia is the rise of the KIPPERS (Kids In Parents' Pockets Eroding Retirement Saving). Well-known Australian social commentator Bernard Salt commented on this phenomenon, where today's 20-somethings are happy to remain in the family home for as long as possible and that suits the 50-something parents who like to feel needed.

In 1986, only 12 per cent of 25- to 29-year-olds lived with their parents; this statistic in 2011 had lifted to 27 per cent, and I am sure that six or so years later it is higher again. Parents are enabling a prolonged adolescence by supporting their 20-something children long after they themselves were supported when they graduated from school and university. This has consequences for the KIPPERS (or “kidults” as they are sometimes called) as well as for the parents of KIPPERS, who have been called NETTELS (Not Enough Time To Enjoy Life).

NETTELS are defined as those very busy couples and families, usually found in the capital cities burdened with a large mortgage, a relatively expensive lifestyle, and a

long working week, and with children who are staying home longer or who keep returning home, at great cost to them.

We have all heard people say in reference to the past, 60 years of age is the new 40 and so on.

However, what is important to note is that we cannot apply that to every decade; 30 is not the new 20.

This is the thesis of clinical psychologist and author Dr Meg Jay (2012), who expresses concerns about the delay that many aspire to — leaving home happens later, completing tertiary study happens later, work happens later, marriage happens later, having children happens later — people settle down to the “business of life” later. This means that for some their 20s is a bit of a developmental downtime. In her 2012 book, *The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter – and How to Make the Most of Them Now*, Jay hopes to create a sense of urgency for 20-somethings so they don't end up in their 30s feeling like they wasted the past 10 years.

There is so much known about child development phases — books accessible to the public are published for parents and educators, but very few resources are available on adult development, particularly the second and last significant brain growth spurt that occurs in the late 20s. People can change significantly in that decade. In fact, your personality changes more in your 20s than in any other time in your life. Jay's research claims that 80 per cent of life's most defining moments will happen by age 35 (2013).

The 20s are the years people spend educating themselves about their options; it is a time to explore but

not to procrastinate. Exploration should occur within a time frame or a plan of some sort — the 20s should not be one of “benign neglect” (Jay, 2013). It is important to think of it as the most transformative decade or, as Jay likes to call it, a “developmental sweet spot” and one that should not be frittered away.

Let's just take this one fact as an example and relate it to the long-term financial security of young women. The first 10 years of a career will have an exponential impact on how much money is going to be earned in a lifetime. Therefore, a delay in starting a career and earning in the 20s can have an enormous long-term impact.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data (2018), a woman's average weekly earnings are 80 per cent of her male counterparts.

The average life expectancy of women is 84 and men is 79. With the average age of widowhood at 75, this means that for the last 10 years (on average) of a woman's life, she will be solely responsible for her financial health and subsequent quality of life.

The ABS (2018) also tells us, that:

- there has been a significant increase in the number of women never marrying
- there is an increase in the median age at which they first marry
- approximately 33 per cent of all marriages will end in divorce
- for a woman, the average time spent divorced is approximately 24 years.

The combination of longer life expectancy, earning less than men, and long periods of financial independence and a “throwaway decade” or lack of earnings in their 20s becomes a financial issue for women.

Now add into the mix that the average woman could spend 15 per cent of her working life outside the workforce due to having and rearing children. This absence from work means that women tend to have a huge gap in their superannuation earnings, and they retire on approximately one- to two-thirds of a male's superannuation payout.

Noting that most women will be solely responsible for their finances at some point in their life, this is an area of concern. The last sobering statistic is that 34 per cent of women in Australia over 60 years of age live in permanent income poverty. In other words, according to the latest research (Smith & Hetherington, 2016) at least one in three Australian women live in poverty.

Our society has robbed some of our young people of their urgency and ambition and we have enabled, even encouraged, young people to take time off and extend their adolescence. However, there is the need to encourage young

people, particularly young women, to think about their financial future.

We all have to face reality. Time runs out. The 20s is the decade for these decisive moments or right moments and young people need to start to plan and prepare for them.

Jay (2012) proposes that there are a number of things people should do in their 20s.

The first is to get identity capital. Identity capital can be defined as how we build ourselves over time. Some capital goes into a resume, like a degree and other qualifications; other capital is more personal, like attitude to work, and how we interact with others. Identity capital is built over time, so it is always important to do something that adds value to who we are and is an investment of who we might be next. So, if a young person takes time to explore study and work opportunities, they need to ensure that what they do counts and that they are not caught in an endless cycle of unfinished university courses and personal travel.

Jay also encourages us to explore our “weak ties” (2013). Most people have the support of very close friends and families. These people are one's urban tribe and they are great to help and cheerlead us through all endeavours. But they can also limit us as they may be too similar or too like-minded to offer another perspective; they think and speak the same way as we do, therefore, on occasion, we all need to move out of this circle. New ideas and opportunities will come from weak ties. These are friends of friends of friends, a friend's boss, a one-time acquaintance. Many jobs are not advertised; they are gained through connections and those connections can be weak ties. So, it is important to give attention to these weak ties and not just maintain a focus on one's urban tribe.

The message is simple. We need to encourage young people to be intentional with their everyday present actions and ensure that those actions, even if they are exploring new ideas, countries, fields of study and work, add to their identity capital. They need to be encouraged not to procrastinate or stay distracted, and to not avoid making any decisions. In other words, young people need to be serious about and in their 20s. ▲

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A neuroscientific approach to learning

CATHERINE BRANDON, DIRECTOR, GENAZZANO INSTITUTE, VICTORIA

In recent decades, technological advancements and discoveries in neuroscience have paved the way for exciting innovations and progress in a variety of disciplines, such as brain research, health, marketing and rehabilitation. Educators and scientists alike are motivated to explore and answer the obvious question: How can new insights in neuroscience assist us to make a real impact in a field that is all about the brain — the field of learning?

Find a love of learning. Discover what interests you. Be curious and try to want to know more. Eleanor, Year 12

The Science of Learning

Certainly, the notion of improving learning through taking on ideas from the latest academic research is far from new. However, researchers and educators have long suggested there is a real disconnect between controlled laboratory findings and how things operate in the reality of the classroom. Dr Jared Cooney Horvath is a neuroscientist and educator with an expertise in this very subject. He says (Horvath & Cooney, 2017) that the key to bridging science and educational practice is in the “translation”. Dr Horvath suggests (Horvath & Cooney, 2017) that while research or technology can deliver us new evidence about brain function, it is *teachers* — the classroom experts — who can purposefully translate a neuroscientific principle into an activity, a framework, or an approach to meet the learning objective for a variety of subjects, age groups, and classroom contexts.

Looking through the lens of the brain, the Science of Learning sheds light on the *how* and the *why* of learning, enabling us to find new meaning in some of the tried and true teaching practices, as well as in some fresh approaches. It is a progressive field with much potential to transform teaching and learning. Universities, such as The University

of Melbourne and The University of Queensland, are leading the way in establishing a model for the collaboration of researchers and educators aimed at exploring the ways

in which ideas from neuroscience can be made accessible and practical, in order to facilitate more effective teaching and learning.

Educational neuroscience at Genazzano

As educators we are driven by the desire to improve learning outcomes for our students now and into the future. ‘Science of Learning’ is about education, neuroscience and cognitive psychology, providing teachers with further understanding of the learning process of the brain. Karen Jebb, Principal, Genazzano FCJ College

The Genazzano Institute of Learning and Brain Sciences is a new initiative that underpins Genazzano’s goals of promoting knowledge about the brain and learning for educators, students and the wider community. Under the leadership of Principal Karen Jebb, Genazzano has embraced the philosophy of seeking to understand how the brain learns, as a fundamental platform for promoting optimal learning. The core objectives are to:

1. build collaboration and collective expertise among the teaching staff in the Science of Learning
2. support students to build an understanding of brain health and function, and to develop passion and agency in their own learning
3. promote education and information about the brain and learning to the wider community.



The vision for the Institute has evolved; it is emerging as an exciting hub to champion educational neuroscience. While still in its infancy, the Institute has partnered with key industry and educational bodies and has already delivered some exciting projects with more in the planning.

To support teachers to collectively build knowledge and skills, Genazzano has embarked on a significant and comprehensive three-year Science of Learning professional learning course for all teachers. The course focuses on the role of the brain in the learning process and

To support teachers to collectively build knowledge and skills, Genazzano has embarked on a significant and comprehensive three-year Science of Learning professional learning course for all teachers.

supports teachers to interpret principles and consider how they can creatively use, embed, or present the ideas in their own classrooms and contexts to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

A group of teachers commenced the learning last year as a pilot project. Their enthusiasm for the programme was universal, with a number of teachers stating that it is “the best professional learning programme we have ever done”. In 2018, the programme is being delivered to all teaching staff, along with additional professional learning opportunities through a project with The University of Melbourne.

I have found that learning ‘how the brain works’ ... has motivated me to want to learn more about learning. Professional dialogue has inspired me, as I listen to colleagues and hear how they have applied the content and concepts investigated during our professional learning sessions.
Penelope Karasavidis, Mathematics Teacher

Own your own learning

In order to assist students to develop better awareness of their own brain’s health and function, the College is introducing a number of strategies to engage students and provide learning opportunities. Alongside

various seminars and competitions, discussions have started organically in classrooms, with many teachers sharing Science of Learning principles with students to explain learning strategies, or involving students in classroom projects to test the principles in action.

Student leaders have been appointed to work with the student body to promote an interest in neuroscience and education about the brain. Their initiatives have included a campaign called “Own your own learning”, which included an extensive survey about student learning perceptions and practices, and a number of student-led lunchtime forums to discuss learning tips, choosing subjects, and strategies for exam preparation. The forums have been well attended with students saying they are interested in hearing from older peers who have first-hand knowledge of many of the experiences they are going through.

Engaging communities

Inspiring and engaging the community has been a rewarding aspect of the Institute’s work. The Genazzano Institute website and newsletter are vehicles for communication about research, featuring articles and information about upcoming events. Examples of these include free community talks on topics such as “The Learning Brain” and “High Performance Brain: Strategies for Learning and Life”. Genazzano Institute’s own “Explain the Brain” infographic competition was launched last year. The competition is open to all secondary students and was established to encourage young people to build knowledge and develop an interest in neuroscience. It has been incredibly successful, with hundreds of creative entries received from students around Australia keen to demonstrate what they know about the brain! The community has responded with genuine interest and enthusiasm. Now the Institute is eager to offer further engagement opportunities.

Looking ahead, the Institute plans to progress work with partners to explore the exciting educational potential of technology, such as virtual reality and brain-controlled apparatus. A number of events for teachers and the community are planned for 2019, which we hope will offer valuable and practical insights about the brain that are applicable to not only the classroom, but to any area

of learning, including the workplace, the home and creative pursuits.

Five brain tips to boost memory

Spacing out practice. When learning new material, preparing for a performance, or studying for a test, research shows that regularly spaced out revision or practice is more beneficial than last-minute cramming. Break up practice sessions and allow plenty of time before a test or performance to revise.

Write out notes by hand. Research has shown that taking notes longhand supports memory to a greater extent than typing out notes. Writing engages the brain in deeper processing and often requires reframing or summarising, which helps to consolidate the learning.

Avoiding multitasking. “Multitasking” is actually switching your attention from one task to another very quickly. But it takes time to refocus, so both tasks suffer. Multitasking may be fine if the task is automatic or unimportant; however, when learning or revision is important, ensure that the brain is fully focused on the relevant material. That means no interruptions or distractions, such as social media!

Link learning to prior knowledge. Connect new learning to prior experiences or knowledge to strengthen memories. Background knowledge is like the “glue that makes learning stick” as it assists us to make sense of, interpret, and categorise new information and experiences.

Sleep. Quality sleep is essential for memory consolidation and processing new information. Low quality sleep can impact mood, focus and the ability to comprehend, learn and remember. The recommended time for school aged children is 9–11 hours while teens should aim for 8–10 hours a night. ▲

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The library and teaching and learning for 21st century

AMANDA STEWART, HEAD OF LIBRARY, PENRHOS COLLEGE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



We know that teaching in the 21st century context has a strong emphasis on students learning the skills they need to be able to successfully live and work in our rapidly changing world. They need to be technologically savvy and highly adaptable, be adept at communication and problem solving, and be able to navigate through the deluge of information and misinformation that they face daily from a variety of different sources.

Physically what does this look like?

In refurbishing the library, we aimed to design it as the nexus point for our students to develop these skills. To this end, we created spaces that were flexible, with furniture that could be easily moved. We provided a variety of teaching and learning areas to cater for individual preferences, such as carrells for private study; sound-proofed tutorial rooms with whiteboard walls and Skype capability for small group collaboration; a larger collaborative learning space with multiple monitors and high-end microphones and cameras, and state-of-the-art technology to facilitate presentations and communication with the wider community, both locally, interstate, and globally; and areas large enough to accommodate either one class or the whole year group. Finally, we extended our opening hours to reflect student demand to use these facilities before and after school.

Practically, what do we do?

The library is central in the creation and curation of digital materials to support the curriculum and transform the learning experience. We use emerging technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) to provide students with the immersive and highly engaging experience of visiting places and historical time periods that they couldn't get to otherwise. We also use these technologies to create our own virtual expeditions, linked to both academic and pastoral our curricula. A recent example of this is a 360-degree tour that we created and annotated for our Year 11 Biology students who were studying bushfire prevention in the Perth Hills. This can be used as revision for students, but it also enables those who may have been absent to experience the excursion. Similarly, we encourage our students (and in particular our boarders) to use this equipment to create and share their own expeditions. One of our boarders is about to create a tour of her hometown of Broome to share with us. This gives us the opportunity to teach our students to be critical and creative in the photos that they take and the information they use to annotate these. We are able to clarify the importance of being ethical in their use of what they find and how they communicate this. It also provides students with opportunities to connect and work with others nationally and globally, building understanding and respect for other's beliefs and perspectives.

We work collaboratively with the different departments to develop the 21st century learning skills of: knowledge construction; self-regulation; real-world and innovative problem solving; skilful communication; and use

of information and communications technology (ICT) for learning. Knowledge construction is one of the obvious domains for the library. However, working with learning teams, we have created opportunities for all of the other domains of 21st century learning.

For example, together with an English class, we identified a real-world problem for them to solve:

A local bookseller had been given unproofed copies of novels by literary agents wanting to sell their authors' works to this shop. Space is at a premium in the shop so in this tight economic market, they only wanted to stock what was going to sell. Their client markets are K-12 schools such as Penrhos. So they asked for our help. They wanted feedback on what they should/should not stock. Students then selected stories to read, practised their communication skills and gave live feedback to the owners of this bookshop.

In terms of ICT for communication, we organise: Skype sessions for Business students to discuss marketing strategies with existing business owners; author talks to give our English students the opportunity to discuss their work with authors who may not live in Perth; a virtual visit of the Queensland Aquarium for our Outdoor Education students; and participation in events such as a Q&A with global identity Dr David Suzuki. One of our students decided to explain the science behind why we see the sky as blue by building a virtual reality world using Tilt Brush. We then downloaded this world to our VR headsets so that her class could experience the 360-degree world that she had built, while listening to her presentation. It was a very immersive experience and, as one student commented, "this takes presenting to the next level".

But what about the books?

We have built up a very strong culture around the love of reading for pleasure. This isn't going to change. Learning about literature remains an important part of the library programme. We know that reading for pleasure encourages a meaningful use of leisure time and that this has been directly linked to improved literacy skills of comprehension and creative writing. From the classics to contemporary literature, reading encourages students to develop empathy and respect for others; to appreciate diversity; and, often, to find validation for their own life experiences. The tactile nature of handling a book means that the physical collection isn't something that is going to diminish. However, our digital library has also proved very popular — especially when students are on their holidays. Our book club has a strong membership, and this year we are meeting up in a virtual book club with Wesley and Guildford Grammar. ▲

Establishing a vibrant community of passionate readers

HELEN STOWER AND PENNY WARING, MOUNT ALVERNIA COLLEGE, QUEENSLAND

Read Like a Girl is a community partnership for the literacy advancement of girls and is a combined endeavour led by Mount Alvernia College and St Rita's College. Riverbend Books is a community partner in this project. It encapsulates a calendar of reading events aimed at instilling a foundation and love of reading in the college communities and, more broadly, among girls everywhere.

Read Like a Girl began in late 2016 over a cup of coffee with two teacher-librarians and a children's literature specialist. All three were keen to ensure that a vibrant reading culture was available to the girls in their communities. After some brainstorming and conversations with other passionate colleagues in the teaching and book worlds, a proposed calendar of events for 2017 was drafted and presented to the college leadership teams and parent groups within the schools. The goals of this project were to provide girls with opportunities to: attend book events and meet authors; participate in conversations about literature, reading and storytelling; purchase books; network with other girls, women and people who value reading and academic success; and develop knowledge of the possibilities literacy creates.

The project is now in its second year and has grown to include a third school, St John Fisher College. Over the two years, some of the practicalities of managing the programme have changed, but essentially each school develops a schedule of events to fit their campus calendar and the student, staff and parent population and culture. The partnership means that each school provides support for one another through a commitment to information sharing, event invitations and attendance, and marketing. For the school library teams involved, the project has involved

collaborating, marketing, and event management. For the students from the colleges, the project has introduced them to some wonderful local and international authors, seen them attend and help host literary events, such as book launches, allowed them to buy books and have them signed by the author, attend writing

workshops, network with like-minded readers, booksellers and publishers, and celebrate a love of reading.

The case for reading frequency and reading for enjoyment

With reading and writing being pivotal skills in many curriculum areas, it is little wonder that a students' academic success is heavily impacted by their command of language. While classroom instruction in reading and writing is undoubtedly important, the role of reading for pleasure is often overlooked as a key factor in building literacy and determining students' success in school and later life.

Reading self-selected books (for pleasure, in particular) has been found to have a major positive impact on children's academic performance (see, for example, Whitten, Labby & Sullivan, 2016) as well as influencing their employment success (Centre for Youth Literature, 2009). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that "[o]n average, students who read daily for enjoyment score the equivalent of one-and-a-half years of schooling better than those who do not" (OECD, 2011). Whether or not a student reads for enjoyment can have a greater impact on their educational



outcomes than other socioeconomic measures, such as the level of educational attainment and income of their parents (Department of Education, 2012), and the reading socialisation of their parents (Nagel & Verboord, 2012).

There is a strong case to be made for the cumulative effect of reading on academic achievement. In her book *Overcoming Dyslexia*, neuroscientist Sally Shaywitz (as cited in Kirkland, 2016) presents the benefits of reading for a minimum of 20 minutes a day by pointing out the statistical benefits of such a habit and its impact on academic performance. Consider student A, who reads for just one extra minute a day. This is 365 additional minutes of reading a year, which equates to 91,000 words (assuming a reading speed of 250 words a minute). Now, consider student B, who reads for an extra 20 minutes a day. This is 7,300 additional minutes of reading a year, which equates to 1,825,000 words a year (assuming the same reading speed).

The quantitative value of reading for enjoyment cannot be understated, and there are also many qualitative benefits. According to the Centre for Youth Literature in Victoria (2009), reading for pleasure helps students to empathise with and understand the lives of those in diverse situations, cultures and times, and it also helps students to develop their own perspectives on life. As an added bonus, reading is a safe, inexpensive and fun way to spend time.

The issue: reading for enjoyment is declining

A study by researchers Manuel and Carter (2015) of 2,117 Australian teenagers aged between 12 and 16 confirmed that “reading books ranked as a preferred activity for around one-fifth of [teenaged] respondents, while 32 per cent would prefer not to or never to read in their spare time”. In addition, recent research by Roy Morgan (2016) suggested that reading among adolescent girls is generally declining. There are myriad factors that interfere with reading for pleasure. Key among these are crowded curriculums, increased workload in the senior phase of study, more screen time, and general time constraints on students (Manuel & Carter, 2015).

Why dedicated reading programs that sit outside curriculum areas can make an impact

Manuel and Carter (2015) found a strong correlation between the motivation to read, choice of reading materials, and dedicated time for reading. The researchers rightly noted that the current Australian English curriculum “contains hundreds of mandatory content points, with not a single point requiring or advocating reading for pleasure” (Manuel & Carter, 2015). Indeed, there appears to have been a strong sense among the teaching profession for some time, that “literature must be aligned to the curriculum to be acknowledged” (Centre for Youth Literature, 2016).

This is taken to be the reality in this era of increased reliance on standardised benchmarks for measuring success. Arguably, in such an environment the role of the school library in developing and supporting programs that support reading for pleasure has never been so important (OECD, 2011). This argument is endorsed by the research of Nagel and Verboord (2012), who state that programmes in secondary schools impact the frequency of book reading among adolescents and Young Adults. Australian research indicates, more specifically, that activities enabling “students to come into contact with books and offer them the experience of reading as a pleasurable activity [are] worthwhile” (La Marca, 2004).

What does *Read Like a Girl* look like in the schools involved?

The Mount Alvernia College *Read Like a Girl* events have included:

- An International Women’s Day Breakfast in 2017 and 2018. This event invites students and the significant women in their lives, as well as women from the broader College community, to attend a literary breakfast that includes a keynote address by an author.
- Two book launches in partnership with Pantera Press Publishing. These events launched the books *Draekora* and *Graevale* (both from the *Medoran Chronicles*) both by author Lynette Noni.
- A Literacy Week Festival in 2017 and 2018. This event invites students to participate in a week-long festival that includes literary displays and artefacts, a book-themed morning tea party, a living book presentation, and author talks.
- A *Read Like a Girl with your Dad* event in 2018. This event invited Year Seven and Year Eight students and their fathers, or significant males in their life, to borrow and read the book *Don’t Call me Ishmael* and then attend a pizza night with a presentation by the author of the book, Michael Gerard Bauer.

The St Rita’s College *Read Like a Girl* events have included:

- A number of school visits and workshops from authors in 2017 and 2018, including Lynette Noni, Kate DiCamillo, Kate McCaffrey, Peadar O’Guilin and Sofe Laguna. During these visits, groups of students have had the opportunity to discuss writing craft with the authors, listen to them speak about their inspiration and careers, and ask questions.
- Book launches, including the 2017 Queensland paperback release of Kate DiCamillo’s novel,

Raymie Nightingale, and the 2018 launch of the debut novel, *Indigo Blue* by Australian author Jessica Watson.

- A variety of evening events with authors, for example, we hosted our first *Read Like a Girl* adults' event in 2018 with author Sofie Laguna in conversation with Suzy Wilson from Riverbend Books. Our *Indigo Blue* book launch in 2018 saw Jessica Watson take to the stage to talk about her sailing, which was the inspiration for her novel, before she was joined by LoveOzYA and ABC radio's Rhianna Patrick for a candid interview about becoming a writer. In 2017, school principal Dale Morrow interviewed author Kate McCaffrey about growing up and finding one's identity in a digital world.
- As this article goes to press, we are hosting a Read Like a Girl writers' conference in 2018 where students have the opportunity to attend a writing workshop with a writing from their chosen genre, followed by a panel discussion with the authors and a book signing.

Both schools host an annual Christmas in-store Book Fair. This event invites all members of the community to a launch evening followed by a weekend of shopping at Riverbend Books. A percentage of the sales from books purchased over the weekend is allocated to the school to spend on collection development.

The outcomes

The results of *Read Like a Girl* speak for themselves. In 18 months since the programme's launch, borrowing and reading rates at our school libraries have tripled that of 2016. Our book events are a regular feature on the school calendar, and our students are highly involved in these events, from attending and meeting authors, to helping set up and run the events. One of the events this year with Australian author Jessica Watson attracted more than 500 attendees. The aim of promoting reading for enjoyment is well and truly being fulfilled.

One of the greatest (and somewhat unexpected) benefits of *Read Like a Girl* is the worthwhile connections that we have been able to build in the process. We have made connections with authors (such as Rebecca Sparrow, Jessica Watson, Sofie Laguna, Lynette Noni, Kate McCaffrey, Kate DiCamillo, Taryn Bashford and Paedar O'Guilin) and have developed strong relationships with publishers and members of the young adult (YA) community (such as Rhianna Patrick from #LoveOzYA and ABC radio). Particular mention also needs to be made of our partner Riverbend Books at Bulimba. We work closely with Pauline McLeod, a children's literature specialist and owner Suzy Wilson, who is the founder of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

Riverbend Books supports our events through marketing, book sales and their invaluable connections to authors and the YA literature scene. We believe it is important to have these local partnerships, and it is good for our students to see us supporting local businesses and Australian authors. Our collaborative relationships have provided our students with the ability to develop their own networks with peers who share their love of reading and have enabled us to foster our own professional growth.

Conclusion

For the schools involved in the partnership, the *Read Like a Girl* initiative has provided numerous opportunities for students to connect with the world of literature and reading for pleasure. Educators, parents and researchers alike agree literature can be transformative and validate the importance of story reading to brain development and academic success. It has been an exciting two years of book launches, author events, and writing workshops, and we are looking forward to more of the same in coming years. ▲

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Gen Z: Hungry for a good story

STEPHANIE RUSSELL, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL — WELLBEING, WOODFORD HOUSE, NEW ZEALAND

It was always going to take more than a box of barley sugars, a carton of juice and the 40-hour-famine initiative to inspire our Generation Z digital natives. At Woodford House, we have been challenged on how we best inspire our

girls to think globally and act locally. Gone are the days of videos of starving African children that once prompted the mass Generation Y uptake of the 40-hour famine. Gone are the days of "slacktivist" Millennials. Instead, Generation Z is a sophisticated cohort, born in the late 1990s to the first decade of the 2000s. They are recognised worldwide for their technological skills, their social consciousness, their pragmatic optimism, and their motivated focus on solutions.

Canadian social activist Craig Kielburger, co-founder of youth development charity Free the Children, believes "this generation is growing up in the shadow of 9/11, growing up with global issues like climate change and poverty dominating the news, at a level where they understand how interconnected we are in this world. In previous generations, there was a feeling that when you were young, you were a passive bystander, an adult-in-waiting, but today, because of technology, young people have this sense of self-confidence and a belief they can change the world." (White, 2018)

Our active Generation Z love to build empathy through storytelling. This reflects their daily crafting of personal stories on social media. This bears out local parental observations of time spent on carefully curated Instagram stories and short-lived Snapchat threads. It hasn't happened if it hasn't been posted and liked. Why so? Neuroscience has shown that narrative is very useful in conveying information: stories evoke emotion and empathy

and release dopamine into the system. Called Gandhi neurons, (Roland, 2017) these pathways allow us to respond as if we were

also experiencing the event and really feel for the people to whom we watch or listen. Empathy and understanding of one another can translate into positive action, locally and globally.

The Senior Curator of Public Programmes at the National Library of New Zealand, Zoe Roland, said, "oral and personal narrative storytelling as a community-focused history cannot be underestimated in its ability to shape and lead compassionate citizenship."

It has been heartening to witness this Generation Z magic at Woodford House. The year began with a service focus for Year 12 students and a Red Cross addressed on the topical issue of refugees. We heard from 18-year-old Mayada Ali, a refugee from Iraq and Syria, who is in Year 12 at Palmerston North Girls' High School. Her story was harrowing and eye-opening as she spoke of her journey to being able to freely enjoy an education.

Spoken like a true Generation Z, Scarlett says: “I think my drive comes from helping others. When the Red Cross visited us, I saw an opportunity to incorporate service into my future career.”

For me, my childhood memories are the war in Iraq. My sibling and I did not go to school every day because there were terrorists and tanks everywhere ... After seven years, another war started with conflict in Aleppo. One of my friends died in a bomb attack. That really made me sad. We started moving from city to city in Syria for our safety. It was better to stay home, and I couldn't go to school in my last years because it wasn't safe.

I am happy because I have a safe life. I am happy because I go to school every day and because I have freedom. Whatever the life circumstances are, never give up, be a strong person.

Her story prompted action from two of our Year 12 students, Katarina Porima and Scarlett Neilson, who became part of the first National Red Cross Youth Ambassadors group. “I've always been interested in Foreign Affairs, so I was inspired when Red Cross came and said that we could have an opportunity to be a part of that,” Katarina said.

Our girls hope to expose New Zealand youth to what the Red Cross organisation does and to work here at Woodford House.

Spoken like a true Generation Z, Scarlett says: “I think my drive comes from helping others. When the Red Cross visited us, I saw an opportunity to incorporate service into my future career.”

Lara Bowering, new owner of the Havelock North Physiotherapy Clinic, spoke thoughtfully at the Prefects Servant Leadership dinner for Woodford House, Iona College and Lindisfarne College in March. Lara outlined how, at 17 years old, poised to study aeronautical engineering, she volunteered in Africa for a year at remote and desperate HIV camps, and later with landmine survivors. This time influenced her future course of study and her future, altogether. Lara is still fully immersed in service work all over the globe, even as she operates her two physiotherapy practices in Tauranga and Havelock North. An early adopter, she challenged the Generation

Z listeners to consider that being humanitarian and successful in business were not mutually exclusive. Her time working alongside agencies and organisations in Nepal,

Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and India resonated with the prefects who had travelled, or are travelling this year, to similar overseas service destinations. Her advice? “Don't think of ‘what’ you're doing, think of the ‘who’ and the ‘why’. The problems are so big. Sometimes all you can do is be in the moment with the person.”

Service Prefect Lucy Roberts said, “she has seen and done so much in so many places. We're all keen to have her speak again.”

It is great to see that academic research supports what is already in process at Woodford House. Our girls are already thinking and acting on a global and local stage. They are energised and inspired by a strong personal story and, having heard the maxim “be the change you want to see in the world”; many are working to be similar role models themselves. ▲

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Transforming practice with a research mindset

KATE MOUNT, DIRECTOR EARLY LEARNERS' CENTRE, ST PETER'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Our Early Learners' Centre (ELC) is nestled in a beautiful conservation area called Ferguson Park and is part of an ELC-to-Year-12 school. We accommodate 120 students every day, ranging in age from two to five years. Our Centre has been deeply inspired by the Reggio Emilia principles and, for the past 13 years, has invested in deepening this practice.

On behalf of the Minister for Education and Child Development, we were selected by the South Australian Collaborative Childhood Project as one of four sites to receive a grant for research that embeds the principles of Reggio Emilia and to share this beyond our Centre. This special initiative for 2018 is named Project Quattro.

With the mindset of research and educators researching alongside children, our Centre has been driven to authentically enact this principle in our everyday life. We saw the opportunity of the grant as a vehicle to further promote and develop our advocacy for childhood and to assist us to deepen our research processes. We believe we have a responsibility to share our practice beyond our Centre and to engage educators from a wide range of sectors in dialogue about early childhood practices and values.

Our design process for learning: Planning for the Possible

In 2017, our Centre took the initiative to develop an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation that reflects our image of a child. This led to the development of "Planning for the Possible". The driving force for the development and reimagining of this was to uphold the image of child, the child as an active protagonist, in our

everyday practice. The programme model that we had used previously had several disconnects for us. In 2016, we were challenged by Professor Carla Rinaldi during a visit to our Centre to consider this programme and perhaps reframe our thinking.

In late 2017, we presented our work at the Reimagining Childhood Conference, an international gathering held in Adelaide for the meeting of the Scientific Committee from Reggio Emilia. Professor Rinaldi could see for herself the depth of our journey and commended our courage in embarking on a strong journey of change.

We knew that we still had a distance to travel but felt that we were close to the model of progettazione and that, with further unpacking and reflection, we could simplify our process to make it more accessible to others.

Key components to fuel our thinking came with being part of Project Quattro. This enabled us to be active participants, with visits from the President of Reggio Children, Claudia Giudici, and pedagoga Paola Strozzi in May 2018. We were very fortunate to work in collaboration with these international leaders. The experience challenged us because of the importance of being articulate when it came to translating our practice and journey, so that we gained the maximum benefit from the opportunity. Our thinking was enhanced by their provocations, and we were able to clearly see that the key stages of Goals,

When the children's interests are supported by pedagogical values and a shared enthusiasm from the teacher, the result will be a rich inquiry led by the children. Although our Planning for the Possible is flexible and open, it is based on key concepts inspired by the structure of scientific research, such as intentions, observation and data collection, analysis, interpretation and synthesis.

Observations, Interpretation and Relaunch would assist us to make our process user-friendly. After all, it was essential that not only the key educators grasped this, but that the co-educators working alongside them did as well. Following the visit and after much deep reflection, we could clearly see the next steps in front of us.

It was a key task to develop tools that supported the educators in the implementation. These included observation tools that focused on educator and child intentions. These were developed by Reggio Emilia educators to support their research and were a guide for us to adapt and use as we required.

It was a privilege to work first-hand with our Italian visitors; to have them in our Centre and considering our context and circumstances felt too good to be true.

Shared understanding and common values

For a team of 30 staff working side-by-side, it is essential to have a shared understanding of our image of child as a capable and competent citizen. We have refined an organisational structure that supports a range of meeting styles to enhance communication and collaboration in order to avoid cultural fragmentation.

Creating a culture of learning

Planning for the Possible is our method for designing learning processes. It is a flexible approach that facilitates the most important encounter — children's and teachers' intentions. When the children's interests are supported by pedagogical values and a shared enthusiasm from the teacher, the result will be a rich inquiry led by the children. Although our Planning for the Possible is flexible and open, it is based on key concepts inspired by the structure of scientific research, such as intentions, observation and data collection, analysis, interpretation and synthesis.

This planning process promotes the critical and active role of the teacher as a researcher in the context of school as a place of research. In contrast to the set curriculum where teachers are prescribing the content and manner in which children should learn, we are promoting individuality, and co-construction of knowledge and creativity throughout the

learning process. This is possible because the educators are equipped with a skill set of deep listening, continual reflection, knowledge about the hundred languages of expressing understandings, and clarity around learning intentions. Emphasis is on learning values rather than disciplines, promoting processes rather than products.

Enacting our design

Our everyday landscape, Ferguson Park, has been the scenario of our learning. The ELC children have a deep connection with the natural environment that inspires our planning. This relationship has been created thanks to a process of familiarity, which encourages discovery and curiosity. For the children, the park is the place of endless possibilities where, every day, something interesting and fascinating can be learnt. The weather, the seasons, the times of the day are all possibilities of transformation and evolution that can enrich our learning.

Challenging the norms around nature thinking

What can the children discover in a park beyond playing with sticks and other natural materials?

The children can connect with their sense of nature and desire to extend their curiosities. These experiences need to be more than an event such as a visit to the park, but rather a sustained experience that has an intention and enables the revisitation of places and memories that will expand the children's understandings.

The exploration of a place is also an encounter with a culture. Ferguson Park has been our vehicle to build this connection between the culture of our land through the traditional owners, the Kaurana people, and ourselves. Our identities have been extended and enriched with new stories, narratives and possibilities for the future. Our

resources of people, place and nature have enabled us to use this open classroom as a key component for our deep planning cycle. An example is that we constantly connect the outside experience with the life of the ELC, linking learning across these spheres rather than compartmentalising it. Our inquiries centred around ecological understandings are a representation of learning that continues through time, months, terms and beyond. A special connection of this valuable learning has brought to us one of our more recent projects, the ELC Path, which was constructed in the Centre. We have travelled such a rich journey through opening our eyes and our senses to the wonders of Ferguson Park because of deeply listening to the children and their encounters.

The Path

The creation of the ELC Path began with the idea of making visible children's narratives inspired by Ferguson Park. The continual visits evolved into stories, rich memories, rituals and the naming of special place. The native wattle, known affectionately as the Pom Pom flowers, is an example of a relationship shared by the two-year-old children. They told stories about these flowers that need to be remembered and retold. This formed the construction of symbols representing memories in Ferguson Park, which transformed into a special path that brings to life this important cycle of learning every day. This intimate relationship with a place is now a fundamental aspect of our Centre's identity, which we celebrated with the creation of a work of art — our ELC Path. The path now provides a connection for children and families in the future, a place to remember the significant story behind each symbol and to reconnect with these as they become visible to others in their future park explorations. It will ensure this learning will remain present in our minds and not be lost as we move to the next project.

The child's voice

During the construction of the path, through the formation of ideas, we were empowered by the child's voice. A key transformation throughout the process of implementing our new planning cycle has been the value given to the voice of the child, not only by the educators but by their peers and the extended community. It is a political

choice to empower children to express their point of view and to know that their actions can make a difference. We cannot say that we are doing this unless we enact this practice with actions that support change every day in the ELC. Our path project provided daily examples of this; it was an example of democracy and empowerment where children could visibly see that they were being listened to and valued. This becomes a culture of change, not only at the ELC but also an action of advocacy on behalf of all children every day, everywhere. Our families have responded positively to the shift in position of the child as decision makers, and the learning environment and culture has transformed as a result.

Participation

The culture of inclusivity can be described as working partnerships. These included the educators, the children, the families, our public artist and members of our wider school community, for example the Property Services division. The members of Property Services all worked in unison to create the path. Much of the work was in the research phase, with several visits and revisits to the park to discuss, debate and ponder our choice of symbols. Experts in our children's groups shared with others across the age groups and with the adults. Parents and grandparents were curious, so they too came to be part of this phase. We used skill sets; for example, one of our Property Services members brought his drone, which we needed to plan the positioning of the path. Active participation was a value that we instilled and continue to honour.

Partnerships were formed between our public artist Christine, our Kaurna friend Tamaru and our staff, children and parents. We now know the meaning of true collaboration and will be seeking this model for future projects. The key factor was enabling and allowing our perspectives to be shifted and enhanced by the point of view of others. Participation by a community represents a value for life and can shift future possibilities for many.

Conclusion

By belonging to a special group, Project Quattro, we have had a driving force enabling us to search for new meanings and ways of doing things. The Planning for the Possible learning process that we have implemented



TIDE: A middle school approach

KIM SCHADE, DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING, MOUNT CARMEL COLLEGE, TASMANIA

has transformed and enabled us to be authentic in our endeavour to uphold the strong image of child and, equally, the image of educator. Our processes for continual reflection and improvement are embedded in our research cycle, and our organisational structures are in place to ensure this sustainability. We have been honoured by our children, who have filled us with inspiration for how we can improve and be inspired every single day. We delight in our collaborations together and the shift in perspectives across the Centre.

We have transformed our use of a new space, Ferguson Park, which was there right by our back door. We had been unaware of the power of this place and of the possibilities. We did not know the transformation of connection that this environment could bring to our culture. Now, this is our everyday and we cannot remember the previous scenarios.

We recognise that we needed to be brave to try a new process, to question our practice, to hold up the mirror every day, to experiment, and to give vulnerability to our practice in order to see the possibilities and move forwards. We know that we have to be genuine collaborators and we can see the strengths in this process for all participants.

We have been able to see and to recognise the potential of nature, of the child, of the collaboration of us as researchers. The places that were always there are now enriched with new meanings, values and opportunities. We have a new path moving forwards, deepened understandings, and an embedded, reflective, honest practice. We have committed educators working with us who are prepared to grow, to change and to challenge.

We are ready for the next visitor, perhaps it will be Professor Rinaldi later in the year, who can witness a new chapter of continued strong, visionary, embedded practice that upholds contemporary pedagogy in a world of constant challenge and change. ▲

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In 2015, at Mount Carmel College, Hobart, the decision was made to investigate ways to continue to grow the College, not only in terms of enrolments, but also in developing ways to foster engagement and excellence in education. To help us achieve our specific needs, it was decided to investigate further what middle schooling could offer us.

We started by doing some research, which told us of the relevance of middle schooling to today's students. In the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* the authors suggest, "Enhancing middle years development [is] one of the eight areas for action" (Barr, Pike, Bartlett, Constable, Lomax-Smith, Gillard, Scrymgour, Welford, & Firth, 2008).

The middle years (MY) are loosely defined as being between the ages of 10 and 15 years old. This linked in to our early thoughts where we were considering having Years 5 to 8 form part of our middle school. Our research concentrated on brain theories and how girls in this age group think and respond. We learned that between the ages of 8 and 14, a person's brain goes through changes almost as radical as those that take place in the first two years of life. Sometimes called the second chance, it is a time, if used correctly, when learning and wellbeing can be fostered and extended. The notions of neural plasticity and how this relates to moulding development, and how experience in the MY can actually have a real impact on future change in a young person's life, reinforced what we were already thinking. It is a period of rapid growth intellectually, socially and morally. Young people begin to look beyond themselves; they are searching for meaning and relevance.

After much research, discussion and thought, we concluded that it was vital to establish and develop a middle school for our students. From beginnings in research and theory, we now needed to develop a model that suited our particular girls' needs. Our guiding philosophy was based on the following:

- During the MY, the needs of young adolescents are quite different and sometimes challenging; there is significant physical, emotional, intellectual and moral development.

- The transition period from childhood to early adulthood is a time when having positive social relationships, developing a positive self-concept, and being genuinely and authentically engaged in learning are all important.
- Many young adolescents feel an intense need to belong and be accepted by their peers; they strive to be independent and outwardly confident, but they are often insecure and sensitive.
- At school, they seek challenges and engagement. A hands-on approach is often preferred, and they usually enjoy working cooperatively with their peers. During the MY, learners are developing their ability to manage their own learning.
- Our focus is on 21st century skills: the four Cs. "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn" (Toffler, 1970, p 414). Therefore, the skills of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication are the basis for our pedagogy. This will in turn affect the design of our building, with areas specifically designed to enhance this approach to learning.
- Our focus at this time is on belonging, nurturing and supporting our students to cross this bridge as they take supported risks, ask questions, are creative, and develop their critical-thinking skills.
- Our commitment is to engage and inspire our students at this level to be successful and to achieve the best possible learning outcomes.
- Our aim is to minimise the "jolt" associated with a move to secondary school, enabling a smooth transition, marked by key milestones and rites of passage.



As we were starting afresh, we were able to design a middle school that suited us. We focused on: the curriculum (including staffing and timetabling), building design and pastoral care.

In our College setting, we are uniquely positioned to develop a MY programme, and to avoid the often fraught and anxious “big jump” transition to secondary school. We are one community, but we have the capacity to develop our own unique sub-school structure best suited to the needs of our own students.

Within this structure, we are able to tailor our teaching needs to ensure that we have the right mix of teachers. Key teachers know students well and within this sub-culture can provide pastoral care, support, encouragement and mentorship. We can focus on connections and relationships with a supported framework. We can design and build a structure that supports our curriculum and pastoral aims.

The curriculum

The curriculum developed for the MY focuses on a key teacher model, with the core subjects of Mathematics and Science being taught by one teacher. This allows for integration within the curriculum where relevant, and also ensures a continuity of relationship between the teacher and students. We called this subject “Discover”. The subjects of English, History, Geography, and Theology and Spirituality are also taught by one teacher allowing for integration where relevant, and allowing for the development of a strong relationship between the teacher and students. We called this subject “Explore”.

By having overarching names for a number of subjects it makes our teaching times more flexible. If there is a concept worth exploring further, and the students are engaged, then we are able to cater for this. It reduces the stopping and starting. Students are able to take a concept and develop it fully with the barrier of prescriptive labels removed. It also enables us to work across classes. Discover and Explore teachers are allocated fortnightly meeting times to work on areas of possible integration between the core subject areas. It is important that any integration that occurs is natural and affords enhanced possibilities.

The concept of TIDE (Technology, Innovation, Design and Engineering) was introduced to our Year 7 students in 2017, as a trial.

This linked the core subject areas, allowing students to respond to an overarching problem in a variety of ways.

Teachers from Explore and Discover worked with students on creative ways to solve a problem or issue, for two weeks each semester. To illustrate: the first TIDE looked at the history students had studied, asking them to identify a problem of the time, and to come up with potential ways to solve that particular problem. For example, it could have been sanitation, or the water supply. Applying engineering design methodology, students identified the problem, came up with possible solutions, designed a solution, tested the solution, and then evaluated their success. For two weeks students worked in various groups across the Year 7 area. The results were then presented to students, staff and families at an evening event.

This was successful in 2017 and a highlight for students and staff. However, in 2018 we focused on developing this concept further as work in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) area develops and grows.

How we have changed:

- We realised that students needed further grounding in the engineering process and STEM concepts. In Year 6, teachers worked one afternoon a week on STEM problems. Students learned how to see problems, how to work around solving them, how to respond, and how to develop and construct.
- A partnership with the university was established that allowed selected students from Years 6 and 7 to attend a two-hour workshop on engineering concepts each week over a period of ten weeks, along with engineering students.
- A decision was made to add another E to TIDE. The extra E is for Engagement, because we realised the importance of relevance and engagement.
- TIDE will run once this year for Year 7s and it will run for a longer period of time. Students will not only work with their classroom teacher on solving a problem, but they will also work with other teachers as mentors. In addition, we are reaching out to members of our community to act as mentors. The problem itself will centre on water, but that is as prescriptive as we are going to be. Students will be carefully guided through the process and all Explore and Discover lessons will be suspended for three weeks to allow work on TIDE.

Where to? In terms of curriculum, and as we learn more, we will continue to adjust TIDE. We are considering

In our college setting, we are uniquely positioned to develop a MY programme, and to avoid the often fraught and anxious “big jump” transition to secondary school. We are one community, but we have the capacity to develop our own unique sub-school structure best suited to the needs of our own students.

Pastoral care

Pastoral care is integral to us as a Catholic college. Our middle school has its own identity and practices in terms of meetings and assemblies, leadership structure and

pastoral meeting times. The importance of being connected to the rest of the College remains a corner stone, and therefore there are regular whole-school assemblies and house assemblies, plus a big sister programme that ensures interaction with girls in the senior school. Having an identity is important for us but being connected is also a focus.

The future

We evaluate continually, making adjustments in terms of pedagogy and best practice. Our work in professional learning teams continues to develop, while our work with TIDE is ongoing. It is vitally important for us that we look within and develop strength, but that we also reach out and encourage involvement with the community. Fostering empathy and understanding is important for us. Having a strong leadership team has been important to the continued development and success of our MY programme. We have had three principals involved so far: Susan Ryan, who started the programme; Lyndal Tewes, who developed and supported the programme; and Fiona Nolan, who in 2018 continues to encourage and support new ideas and developments.

Our strength lies in our staff and our students. Our staff are eager to learn, keen to try new pedagogies, continually learning and developing, and our students are engaged, willing to learn and are eager participants in the learning journey. ▲

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Embedded STEM @ Loreto

JONATHAN MASCORELLA, TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION FACILITATOR, LORETO KIRRIBILLI AND DR SIMON CROOK, HONORARY ASSOCIATE, THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY; AND FOUNDER, CROOKED SCIENCE

The rhetoric of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and learning within the transdisciplinary spectrum of education has gone on for some time, and as teachers we know all too well the complexities and rewards of the methodology. From a curriculum design perspective, some opposition still exists to the nature of a subject approach, which essentially relies on individual schools embracing and working through the complex manoeuvre of designing solutions, or aligning to the already created iSTEM NESAs endorsed curriculum, available in New South Wales.

Loreto Kirribilli is a K-12 Independent Catholic School that caters for girls, located in Kirribilli, Sydney. Previously at Loreto we had spent some time investigating and establishing micro-units that sat between or at the end of semesters, which were used to achieve the objectives set out by the federal government (Education Council, 2015) for engaging more young people in understanding the problems and solutions within STEM. The task at hand was then to expand these and continue developing an approach that would see more students across Stage 4 and 5 given the opportunity to explore these options, with the long-term intention of improving numbers across these individual Key Learning Areas (KLAs) into the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

The following article explores the foundations and context of our approach, using existing and our own empirical research to support our decisions and trajectory. It will then examine the professional learning and emphasis on capacity building that is the core of success in STEM at Loreto Kirribilli, and the partnerships and networks we established to achieve our objectives. Finally, we will discuss some of the outcomes students have achieved and showcase example activities that embrace the transdisciplinary approach. As a disclaimer, this is not some recipe for absolute success, though it is a journey we are

on with the potential to assist educators in developing an approach that brings success and professional growth to your own institutions.

Foundations

The Australian government's strategy for STEM education is to focus on four key areas of impact: Education, Knowledge, Innovation and Influence (Office of the Chief Scientist, 2013). These key elements are underpinned by science, technology, engineering and mathematics and explains the role STEM education plays in building a 'better Australia' and addressing the societal challenges we face.

The ongoing investment in STEM education in Australia has been strong, with state and federal governments investing heavily into schools, programs and resources for developing STEM capacity (Education Council, 2015; Henebery, 2017; NSW Government, 2017). There are also a number of public discussions that aim to develop understanding in parents and the broader community on exactly what STEM education is, and how it will benefit students long term (Pfeiffer, 2017). Reports by PwC are disseminating knowledge and understanding of benefits to organisations who will be there to provide students career pathways post-school or university (PwC Australia, 2015a,



It is predicted that 44 per cent of jobs are at risk from digital disruption; innovation and STEM education are key to future growth; and that there will be an increase in GDP of \$57.4bn if we shift just 1 per cent of our workforce into STEM roles (PwC Australia, 2015a).

2015b). It is predicted that 44 per cent of jobs are at risk from digital disruption; innovation and STEM education are key to future growth; and that there will be an increase in GDP of \$57.4bn if we shift just 1 per cent of our workforce into STEM roles (PwC Australia, 2015a). Universities are developing courses that support these styles of learning and knowledge, such as the University of Technology Sydney which is delivering courses in Transdisciplinary Studies, packaging together multiple content areas with foundational subjects to provide a course that is adaptive and potentially STEM focused. Courses like these are working to adapt to the type of learning that STEM aligns to, whilst ensuring industry has the capacity to support a future workforce that presents with a broad range of skills. At a recent STEM Network conference, this was referred to as 'people who are like a capital T; depth in some areas and breadth in many'.

Before formalising an approach, we captured student perspectives on current offerings and their conceptual knowledge of STEM as part of our ongoing feedback process post-delivery of each unit, as it is important to understand student perspectives and attitudes in planning for achievement (Akey, 2006). After completing a unit on automation and robotics in 2017, Year 8 students were asked if they would choose an elective in STEM if it was offered, with 60 per cent of students indicating they would consider this option. Anecdotal evidence in classes and through discussion with students and parents at information evenings indicated a real need for a practical STEM initiative to be implemented. In considering such an implementation, we adopted three pillars as a framework, two of which came directly from the government report and resulting strategy, *Knowledge and Influence* (Australian Science Teachers Association, 2015). By getting the local educational strategy correct and ensuring students had the capacity and opportunity to build knowledge and influence, we were confident the outcomes could be achieved. The third pillar consisted of a focus on scale, to ensure the program could be improved over time whilst ensuring more students had access to the program as the strength of it was built. In operationalising this framework, we considered our objectives in conjunction with these pillars and the government strategy objectives.

The three core objectives for Loreto were simple, building on the objectives laid out by government for integrating and

building STEM capacity in schools. Firstly, we needed to enrich the already current STEM learning taking place in Stage 4 — essentially strengthening and refining the teaching and learning of these units. Two had already been developed: one around the concept of bees and their habitats for Year 7, and the other focused on automation, robotics and cars in Year 8. These units ran over 3 weeks each, for a total of 9 lessons and brought together the different KLAs to deliver the various aspects of each topic. A fantastic platform for engaging students that, like any sound teaching unit, goes through constant development and change for enhancement and refinement.

The second objective was to ensure STEM programs were diverse and progressive, starting with the Stage 4 offering and developing into a fully implemented elective for Stage 5. Phase one included a 100 hour elective in Year 9, 2018, with a further offering of a 200 hour elective in Year 9, 2019. This would drive capacity building amongst staff using a Teacher Educator role and splitting the teaching load between a maths and science teacher, who spent time developing their skills in STEM curriculum, projects and delivery. Our third objective was on improving transitional pathways for girls into STEM careers and further learning in STEM courses at university and beyond. This meant strengthening the quality of learning and improving engagement with problem solving in real-world contexts, as it has been identified that these are critical to the future success of young people in work (PwC Australia, 2015). The approach can be best appreciated using Figure 1.

To achieve these objectives there needed to be strong collaboration between the faculties to build capacity of teachers to deliver the curriculum (Beswick, Fraser, & Crowley, 2016). Utilising leadership from one person already provided an allocation for innovation, and engaging two teachers, one from science and one from mathematics, provided a close-knit team that could build curriculum, focus on the strategy and bring a wealth of expertise to the program being initiated. This is not feasible in some contexts, however professional learning on the 4Cs (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017), which involves Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Communication

and Creativity, indicated the importance of bringing various strengths together. As everyone brings character strengths and capabilities, these needed to be diversely integrated to ensure a cohesive and successful outcome that catered for the breadth of students who would undertake the course (Anderson, 2017), and collaboration has been shown to be successful in a number of contexts, particularly in building capacity (Australian Science Teachers Association, 2015).

According to Shulman (1987, as cited in Beswick, Fraser, & Crowley, 2016), the seven kinds of knowledge necessary for expert teaching and learning include content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge; curriculum knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of learners; knowledge of educational contexts; and knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values. Through collaborative curriculum development, we felt there was a greater potential for learning success. To a similar degree, we were also conscious of ensuring the gender diversity of STEM teaching faculty. We wanted the STEM Key Learning Area to send a positive message to the young women at our school. Our position was that with a diversity of gender, we could ensure the young women selecting these courses were empowered and supported. Looking into the future, this might break down barriers as they consider careers in STEM fields (Smith, Handley, Zale, Rushing, & Potvin, 2015). It's an ongoing problem (Connolly, 2017) but the Loreto core mission speaks directly to issues such as these and seeks to overcome them, which this initiative works diligently towards.

In the bigger picture, we are currently in the midst of a curriculum review and as such are drafting what will become known as the Loreto Learning Lens. It brings together the 4Cs in conjunction with the Learning Disposition Wheel (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017), Positive Education and Character Strengths (Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2015) and the core values of a Loreto Education, including Verity, Felicity, Justice, Sincerity and Freedom. These core values are central to our educative journey and, as we continue to refine the Learning Lens, so to do we refine our STEM strategy in amongst the bigger picture of our Loreto education.

Developing curriculum

As an all-girls school, our core focus is on ensuring the outcomes of our objectives met with students' contextual needs and improving transitional pathways to further learning and careers in STEM, identified as a critical

pillar of our strategy. The decline in students choosing STEM subjects is identified as increasing between middle and high school, a trend we wanted to overcome (Marginson & Australian Council of Learned Academies, 2013). By overcoming this trend, we could work on improving students feeling confident to tackle these subjects beyond school and enter careers that build on these foundations. We needed to inspire them and not create fear. To build the curriculum and enhance our offering, we have been implementing an approach from primary school up to the Stage 5 elective. Each stage has been refined through constant review and gathering evidence from students on their opinions toward STEM learning opportunities.

Starting in primary school, we build a sound, progressive foundation in robotics including investment in simple robotics tools like Sphero, BeeBot and Dash and Dot. These solutions build skills in simple tasks like connecting to operational devices and using platforms like iOS to control the devices, and in later years can be used to integrate Blockly programming styles (code representation using a variety of coloured blocks that provide decision, input, output and variable control, depending on the platform).

In the senior school, one aspect of our STEM program in need of refinement focused on the Year 8 automation and robotics unit. Previously, the unit was complex and involved a vast number of electrical connections, causing problems for the girls. In our research on how to best approach future iterations, anecdotal evidence from students pointed to a concern about robotics and coding in STEM. For instance, feedback from students on what they found challenging in robotics in STEM classes included: "It's mostly about engineering which I found really challenging", and "The robotics side. I think this is because I wasn't sure of the foundations going into the unit." Whilst we needed to expose students to these content areas, it needed to be deeper and provide for a broader section of student interests. On the other hand, some students specifically identified robotics and coding as areas of interest, providing feedback like "I would like to learn more about computer programming" and "How robots work and what characteristics they have". Further to this, others indicated a desire to learn deeper engineering concepts: "I'd love to learn how to code, and also be taught what each part of a breadboard¹ does and so we actually understand what we are doing when we wire up robots." Hence, our planning needed to take into account all of these aspects.

¹ A breadboard provides space for prototyping electrical components when working with DC power and input/output functions like Arduino or Internet of Things projects.

Earlier in the year, we were fortunate to receive a spot in the STEM Teacher Enrichment Academy with the University of Sydney. This partnership has provided the time, space and support with a team of six from Loreto, two from each of the Mathematics, Science and Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) faculties, to take new or developed units into a more refined, transdisciplinary teaching methodology. With strong support from our School Executive, we were able to commit the time to this partnership and build an excellent unit of work for Year 8. Taking the previously complex unit that was more interdisciplinary, a number of key refinements were made. These included:

- Creating content that crossed all three subject areas, using a collection of digital and physical materials
- Incorporating a greater level of teamwork for students, by ensuring all classes were grouped consistently on the timetable
- Simplification of project elements
- Capacity building in teachers through professional learning.

There were three main objectives of the project: 1) teach students to understand and interpret data through experiment and statistics; 2) teach students of the morals and values behind cars, automation and robots in everyday life; and 3) deliver some basic extension of the electronics learnt in Year 8 Science using more complex circuitry, introducing them to Arduino technologies and coding these to interpret inputs and provide output. Firstly, students in Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) created a small data logger, that could explain in a more tangible way the process of data collection from an input/output perspective. Students then collected data in their science classes, and analysed this data, along with additional statistics, in mathematics classes. Science helped students use data to conduct experiments, whilst mathematics activities focused on understanding the data and statistical interpretations. In TAS, we focused on the morals and values of automation, building electric circuits using Arduino and coding.

To simplify the electronics component, we designed and had a small printed circuit board (PCB) built in China for \$6 a piece, which sandwiched on to the Arduino boards with the motor controllers, making the robot cars simple to build and incorporate lights, motors, distance sensors, temperature sensors and switches on a 3D printed bumper. They were also simple to take the control unit out and leave the robotic base behind, cutting costs dramatically. Coding the units relied on providing the base code as a library, and students only needed to provide basic changes to variables to

alter functionality, such as distance away from objects before avoidance, or temperature at which to alert the "driver".

This project, whilst not particularly simple to design and build, is a significant example of how the school is focused on delivering quality STEM outcomes according to a framework devised to drive unit development. It works to achieve the objectives put forward by the framework, which are aligned with Government objectives for STEM education in Australia. Using this approach in all our programs, coupled with continued refinement and feedback from students and teachers, there is a great potential of success in all aspects of the program. Follow up comments from students who completed the unit include: "The work was relevant to our daily lives and important for the future"; "[I was] able to learn more about the implications technology and the STEM field are having on our world"; "[The learning] is continuous; so easy to follow through all subjects"; and "We have [had] the chance to design and innovate". As always, there are elements we need to improve too, including "The fact that you sometimes have to use the knowledge you have learnt in previous classes, but it's sometimes hard to combine information together"; "Understanding what part of the project belongs in what subject"; and "I found making the Ardi² in technology most challenging. There were lots of little parts and it was all very confusing". Excellent feedback we can use for continued development.

Beyond Year 8, the current STEM elective caters for 11 students, which provided a significant opportunity for trial, learning and development of the curriculum with an intimate feedback loop. We took our learnings from the Year 8 elective and student feedback on the topics of interest, and built a program that incorporates a significant number of projects. Built on the iSTEM curriculum, units focus on real-world budget and resource sensitive solutions to providing electricity, lighting and comfortable living environments through material selection and low-cost environment conditioning. Students learn about biometric computing (such as electromyography using Myoware or Opensignals hardware), logic devices and mechanical systems. The next unit incorporates Designing for Space, in which we hope to launch our own weather balloon to take pictures of the Earth from many thousands of meters above sea level.

These experiences are critical to student enjoyment of learning and whilst a major component is following a framework and curriculum plan, a significant achievement is the positive feedback we receive from students and the refinements we are able to incorporate.

² Ardi is the name by which our Arduino robot became affectionately known.

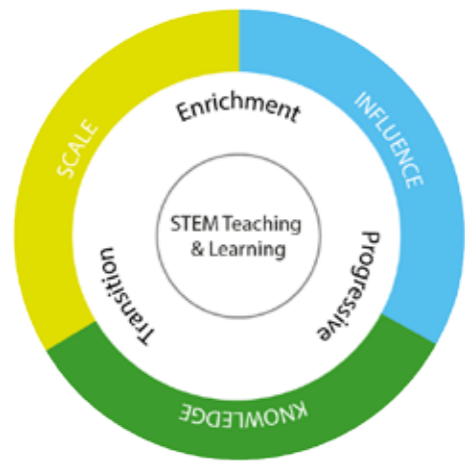


FIGURE 1: A VISUAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE STEM APPROACH AT LORETO KIRRIBILLI

greater buy-in, particularly as it was tied to a specific unit being delivered in class.

For the teachers of the iSTEM elective, this often looks like delivering small bites of topic material in weekly meetings. Teachers of this unit come from differing backgrounds: one each from Mathematics, Science and TAS. The strength of this unit is that professional learning draws on the expertise of all three areas and programs are written collaboratively. By taking this approach, there is a greater potential to build a deeper capacity for teachers to deliver content. This is further supported by the partnerships with the University of Sydney, parents and other providers.

Partnerships

We are particularly cautious of creating partnerships that impact our brand. The Loreto name is significant in education, and speaks highly of the values we teach and distil within our students. By jeopardising our brand, we put pressure on these values and align ourselves to the ethical and moral positions of others, which we might not always agree with. Hence, the partnerships we create are built on careful and considered discourse that builds these to enhance learning and capacity. A key partnership we obtained is with the University of Sydney, as already explored. This partnership has been the most progressive, enabling change within our Year 8 units, supporting development of the iSTEM elective and enabling us to embed real change. In future years, Stage 4 may have a three-lesson-per-cycle STEM specific transdisciplinary workshop series, which has its own project tied to the curriculum in each of Science, Technology and Mathematics. It's not a promise, but it's on the cards! Another example is CrookED Science, which has been engaged at Loreto for STEM education consultancy. CrookED Science has assisted with Higher School Certificate (HSC) physics — mentoring physics teachers and working with the Year 12 students — and has also been involved in the internal review of the Science Faculty at Loreto.

Through the University of Technology Sydney, we have engaged with the STEAMPunk program, engaging Year 10 girls in a program of exploring possibilities for developing solutions to real-world problems that leverage an enquiry-based approach, particularly in bringing innovative technologies and engineering together. With Actura, we evaluate robotics projects and support students in trips to NASA in Florida and Texas in the United States. These trips provide an invaluable experience for students to heighten their awareness for possible career paths in space exploration and science. Our most significant partnership,

Professional learning

At Loreto Kirribilli, we recognise a need for strong capacity and teacher development, realised through our Professional Appraisal Teams and Professional Learning Teams which were established in 2014. The focus is on developing a strong culture of learning amongst staff, often entirely transparent to students. This assists us in modeling best practice for students, teaching them the value of lifelong learning. Prior to 2018, there was a significant focus on the Learning Disposition Wheel and the 4Cs. Conclusions from Professional Learning throughout 2017 indicated a need to create roles for people to enhance capacity in Literacy, Numeracy, STEM, Gifted Education and Special Needs. The people assigned to these roles would work closely with staff to use data in enhancing their teaching practice. It would also require them to consider innovative ways of implementing these focus areas into teaching, learning and broader professional development. The partnerships we have created, such as the STEM Teacher Enrichment Academy, provide targeted professional learning for a broader spectrum of staff.

The STEM Teacher Educator at Loreto was engaged in providing weekly training to staff in the many weeks leading up to the start of the Year 8 STEM project in 2018. This involved delivering concepts of electronics and basic circuitry, robotics and coding that were aligned with the program. The purpose of this was to ensure staff had the capacity for teaching the Ardi program. There was a greater level of success in the 2018 iteration of this, which had only limited success in the year previous. In 2017, the program was much more reliant on the online content delivered to students, with time often creating roadblocks for completing the content in the teacher's own time. By creating specific learning periods before school, there was

Conclusions from Professional Learning throughout 2017 indicated a need to create roles for people to enhance capacity in Literacy, Numeracy, STEM, Gifted Education and Special Needs.

however, is with parents who provide countless hours of support to students in bringing industry expertise to the classroom. As experienced as the teachers at Loreto are, and for the wealth of expertise we bring, there is a special level of clarity brought to projects when a parent provides time and knowledge to students studying design.

The final word

How do we move beyond the STEM acronym, embracing its principles and ensuring we reach the objectives, without it becoming a buzzword? There are many people, particularly in the arts, that fear STEM is an exclusive club, ostracising the arts, and that instead it should be STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) (Wade-Leeuwen, Vovers & Silk, 2018). However, at Loreto Kirribilli we take a different tack. We identify STEM as being the core need and area for development that will embrace other areas as the need fits. However, we unapologetically emphasise the benefits of authentically integrating science with technology, with engineering, and with maths. At Loreto, we have the support from the very top of the school leadership — the only way initiatives will truly work in any school. STEM exists as an integrated program of study in Years 7-10 and is ever increasing in its popularity and status. At Loreto, girls can, and do, succeed at STEM. ▲

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Enterprising Nation

MATHEW STEIN, HEAD OF FACULTY — GLOBAL STUDIES, ST MARGARET'S ANGLICAN GIRLS SCHOOL, QUEENSLAND.

The confronting fact is that Australians are not entrepreneurial, we are not enterprising, we don't demonstrate initiative. We need to embrace and admire people who can create businesses (Salt, 2017).

(Spring, 2008, Barr et al., 2008) and that students are inoculated with 21st century skills such as entrepreneurial thinking (Bowman, 2010; Lingard, 2010). The National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA) has also played a part in

shaping the national conversation (Kinner, 2017).

This reflection on entrepreneurship began with a quote from Bernard Salt (of smashed avocado notoriety!) as he lamented the dearth of entrepreneurs in Australia (Salt, 2017). To the extent that his observations are true, state and federal governments, as well as the private sector, have responded by piling on funding for entrepreneurship education and all things start-up, disruptive and STEM. There is no doubt that the interest in raising the profile and performance of Australia's entrepreneurs is genuine; however, I also suspect there is something in it for these parties too: a homegrown Aussie Elon perhaps?

StartupAUS, a national start-up advocacy group, commissioned a report into entrepreneurial thinking and its pedagogical imperatives and, amongst others, made the following recommendations:

- More entrepreneurial programs in primary and secondary schools
- More entrepreneurial programs in universities
- Start-up scholarships for STEM graduates
- Immersive experiences for students in international start-up hubs (Kinner, 2017).

So that teachers might begin to understand the onrushing wave of entrepreneurship programs for schools, it is worth dispelling one persistent myth: enterprise education happens in a business/economics class. Entrepreneurship as a 21st century competency applies to *all disciplines and spheres of life*. It enables citizens to nurture their personal development, to actively contribute to social development, to enter the job market as an employee or self-employed, and to start-up or scale-up ventures which may have a cultural, social or commercial motive (Bacigalupo et al., 2016).

Bacigalupo et al. (2016) define entrepreneurship as acting upon opportunities and ideas and transforming them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social. We tend to think of entrepreneurs as possessing ethereal powers or being the beneficiaries of improbable strings of good fortune and that their ideas, success and lives are somehow beyond us. However, it is too easy to wave away the success of people like Elon Musk and attribute it to luck. To suggest that Janine Allis was simply in the right place at the right time devalues her tenacity and her skilful manoeuvrability in a dynamic economic environment. Though their narratives are extraordinary, they are not any more extraordinary than you or I (Sarasvathy, 2008). Entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Janine Allis demonstrate competencies that are learnable and ways of thinking that can be taught. Entrepreneurship, therefore, lies within.

First, some context. There are many economic forces that have shaped the remarkable world around us, but few have been more significant or ubiquitous than globalisation. Though its consequences polarise people, the economic phenomenon itself is neutral. Globalisation is simply a term that seeks to capture the tendency toward increased interconnectedness between nations (Spring, 2008) through inter alia, enhanced interconnections, deregulation of knowledge and the expansion of global corporations (Starr, 2012; Lauder et al., 2006).

The education sector has been exposed to these forces of globalisation, and it has changed the way that schools operate (Spring, 2008; Starr, 2012; Earley, 2016). For example, at a federal level, the Melbourne Declaration represents the Australian Government's efforts to ensure schools meet the competitive needs of the global economy

Spending some time examining Figure 1. reveals the cross-disciplinary nature of all the entrepreneurship competencies articulated. Pick a competency at random and it will be as applicable in a science classroom as a music classroom, as relevant in an art lesson as a design technology lesson. Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking, not some inert set of concepts that sits on the pages of a text.



FIGURE 1: ENTERPRISE COMPETENCIES AS SLICES OF A PIE CHART. EACH SLICE HAS A DIFFERENT COLOUR: PURPLE FOR THE COMPETENCIES IN THE 'IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES' AREA; ORANGE FOR THOSE IN THE 'RESOURCES' AREA; AND GREEN FOR THOSE IN THE 'INTO ACTION' AREA (BACIGALUPO ET AL., 2016).

Teaching entrepreneurship involves the use of authentic, student-focused teaching strategies. This supports students as they begin to acquire entrepreneurial skills. In Danish schools, where entrepreneurship is taught across the curriculum, teachers note positive effects of students who are more motivated, more willing to learn and better able to forge stronger relationships with peers (Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, 2017). This makes students feel more connected to the school and is positively linked to their results and their perseverance (Aulet, 2013).

Danish researchers have found that entrepreneurial education ought to contain five dimensions: (1) it should be fun

and (2) authentic; it must (3) take place through collaboration; (4) give students the possibility to take ownership of the design of their task; and (5) allow the possibility of bringing different kinds of talents into play (Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, 2017). Effective entrepreneurship teaching typically includes the above elements, and it engages the pupils or students in a process in which they use their own experience, knowledge and interests as a starting point (Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, 2017).

The competences displayed by entrepreneurs comprise different cognitive as well as non-cognitive skills. Cognitive skills are easy to assess either formatively or summatively via traditional methods. It is not so easy to assess non-cognitive skills (for instance creativity and managing uncertainty). Therefore, several tools have been developed to assess non-cognitive entrepreneurial skills. One way is to have the student evaluate his or her own skills (Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, 2017).

At St Margaret's, our journey down the path of promoting and facilitating entrepreneurial behaviour within our girls is, fittingly enough, in a start-up phase. We are proud to be offering a dedicated subject in Years 9 and 10 where students are taught about start-ups, marketing and financing options such as venture capitalists. Complementing this theoretical approach will be our 'in-house' entrepreneurial evenings, where the girls will hear short, sharp presentations from a wide variety of successful entrepreneurs. We believe this will add to the authenticity of our program and enable our girls to hear some real success stories. Finally, we will assess the students by asking them to develop and perfect a pitch that they can deliver in front of venture capitalists from the Brisbane community. We hope to ignite a fire in the belly and show our girls that there are many ways to get from where they are to where they want to be.

The global economy is changing, and with it, the skills required to succeed. Knowledge — and the capacity to acquire it, manage it and apply it — is the foundation of the growth industries of the future (Kinner, 2017). Entrepreneurship education, therefore, has an important and genuine part to play in Australia's story. ▲

In Danish schools, where entrepreneurship is taught across the curriculum, teachers note positive effects of students who are more motivated, more willing to learn and better able to forge stronger relationships with peers (Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, 2017).

IMAGE: STUDENTS AT ST MARGARET'S ANGLICAN GIRLS SCHOOL ARE TAUGHT ABOUT START-UPS, MARKETING AND FINANCING OPTIONS SUCH AS VENTURE CAPITAL



Child brides: It happens in suburban Australia

DR JACOBA BRASCH QC

Sarah and Bee lived in suburban Australia; Sarah was about five years older than Bee. Sarah was married at 14, and had a baby when she was just 16 years old. At the maternity hospital her obviously much older husband was at her side. No one raised any concerns about their relationship, or her youthfulness (The Feed, 2017; Craw, 2017).

The lawyers acted quickly to have the matter heard before a judge. They asked for orders that: Ms Madley be placed on the Watchlist (as it was then known) — so her passport would be flagged if she tried to exit Australia; an injunction be issued restraining her from being removed from Australia;

Not long after that, the police intervened between Sarah and her husband — not because of her age, but because of family violence. The couple separated.

When Sarah and her husband were married 300 people attended the wedding in suburban Australia. Seemingly, no one raised any concerns about their relationship. She doesn't like looking at her wedding photos. She has said "I sat there forcing a smile. No one was happy with me, because I looked miserable."

When it was Bee's turn to be married at 13 or 14, she fled her home and family to avoid her apparent destiny of becoming a child bride. That was more than a decade ago and she has been estranged from her parents since.

When Ms Madley was 16 she took one Friday off school and got herself to a Legal Aid office where she told her story. She had been moved to act by the fact that in two weeks' time she was flying overseas with her parents to marry a 17-year-old boy, let's call him Z, whom she had met once.

Ms Madley told the lawyers she had spoken to her parents telling them that she did not want to go overseas, and nor did she want to marry anyone, let alone Z. She told them that she was fearful for her personal safety, especially after her mother's reaction when her mother found out she had been to a lawyer.

and her passports be surrendered, or, if not surrendered then at least cancelled (*Madley & Madley v. Anor* 2011).

Judge Harman made orders of the kind sought. His Honour relevantly held:

I am also cognisant of the strength of conviction and opposition to the proposed wedding shown by this young woman who might be suggested to have betrayed or, at least, bucked the authority of her parents in circumstances that would create some real stress for all concerned. What has occurred is, in fact, an act of great bravery by this young woman in taking the steps this young person has taken in seeking assistance through the Legal Aid Commission.

It is not the right of any parent to cause their child to be married against their will, whether in accordance with Australian law or otherwise.

Orders were made preventing Ms Madley being taken out of the Commonwealth.

Ms Kandal was 17 when, in a rare moment she was left at home alone; she called the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and reported that her mother was taking her overseas to marry in 13 days' time. She told the AFP that if her mother came home she'd have to hang-up straight away. Ms Kandal was expected, when she was 18, to sponsor her "husband's" spouse visa so he could come to Australia. Ms Kandal asked the AFP to put her on the Watchlist, which

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suggests she had done some research to find out how she could stop her flight.

The AFP applied to the court to stop her being taken overseas. They also organised for Legal Aid for her to attend court (*Kandal & Khyatt & Ors* 2010).

In the reasons for the decision restraining her ability to leave Australia, Judge Dunkley held:

Given her age and given the means by which she has contacted the Federal Police and the intervention that she has sought, significant weight is attached to those wishes. The Child is, it goes without saying, of mature years and has shown by her actions a degree of resourcefulness so as to indicate that she has a real appreciation of what is occurring.

For 13-year-old Miss Brouker it was staff at her school who raised the alarm when she suddenly stopped attending. Teachers asked her friends about her absences, sensing something was not quite right. In response, Miss Brouker's friends told teachers that she was going overseas to be married. In turn, the school contacted Child Safety officers, who then went to the girl's home, unannounced, and interviewed her. Luckily for all, the young girl was at home, alone.

Miss Brouker told the Child Safety officers (and this was repeated in an affidavit for court by one of the case workers who interviewed her) that she was born in July 1996 and was aged nearly 14, and that she had a sister born in April 2001. Both her parents were born in 1975. The officer then swore:

[The child] told [the workers] that she was not attending school as her father had said that he did not like her going to school and because she was engaged to be married and was planning to travel overseas in two to three weeks time in order to meet her fiancée [sic] and be married in [another country]. The child also said that she had been engaged for one month to a 17-year-old man named [name]. [The child] said that she had only seen a photograph of this man. When asked by [the workers] how she felt about getting married, [the child] told us that she did not know what to say as she had not met her fiancé. [The child] then said that she had not been forced into the engagement by her parents and that if she changed her mind after meeting her fiancé, she would not have to marry him.

The case worker also told the court that they had discussed the likely expectation on the child of being made to have sex with her husband. They formed the view that she had not considered that prospect.

[The child] also said that she had not spoken of her feelings to her parents and that she was not sure what her mother's opinion was regarding the proposed marriage.

The worker's affidavit concluded:

It is my belief that it would not be in [the child's] best interests to travel to ... to be married as she is a child and she does not appear to understand the consequences of marriage. Furthermore, she would be deprived of a school education, and she may be at risk of sexual exploitation and emotional harm.

Child Safety applied to court to prevent her removal from Australia. Miss Brouker and her mother attended court, with Justice Benjamin indicating in his judgment that her mother was relieved that her daughter would be prevented from leaving the country. However, the evidence also was that Miss Brouker's father and step-father both wanted the marriage to proceed, but only one of them attended court on the first occasion, but not thereafter (*Department of Human Services & Brouker v. Anor* 2010).

Orders were made preventing Miss Brouker's removal from the Commonwealth until she turned 18 years' old.

All of these girls were in Australia.

What are the numbers?

According to the United Nations Population Fund (2012), 13.5 million girls under 18 will be married each year; that is more than half the population of Australia. Of those girls, one in nine will be married before they are 15 years old.

That said, I invite you to resist the urge to think forced marriage is a specific cultural, ethnic or religious phenomenon, or that it only happens "overseas".

It is not, and does not.

Indeed, the ground-breaking report, *End Child Marriage: Research report on the forced marriage of children in Australia* (Jelenic & Keeley, 2013) observes as follows (emphasis added):

The issue of forced child marriage exists within many different communities, and involves a range of individuals and influences. It is not useful to conceptualise it as an accepted cultural or community practice, rather it is a misuse of a cultural practice in a way that undermines children's' [sic] rights and wellbeing by subjecting them to significant harm. Indeed then, "by challenging and intervening in forced marriage, one is not attacking the cultural practice (marriage or arranged marriage) but rather the misuse of the cultural practice. Not to do so is akin to not challenging rape or violence within a marriage for the reason that to do so might undermine the institution of marriage."

Back to prevalence, the report also reveals (Jelenic & Keeley, 2013):

It is my belief that it would not be in [the child's] best interests to travel to ... to be married as she is a child and she does not appear to understand the consequences of marriage. Furthermore, she would be deprived of a school education, and she may be at risk of sexual exploitation and emotional harm.

... cases of forced child marriage were identified *in every State and Territory of Australia*, across a wide range of cultural, ethnic, religious and other societal backgrounds.

Forced child marriage [in Australia] occurs within families from all major religions, as well as in families that are not religious.

Cultural justifications for this practice are not acceptable or useful and can in fact hinder intervention to protect victims.

A survey conducted by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre for the *End Child Marriage: Research report on the forced marriage of children in Australia* (2013) indicated:

Of a total of 91 survey respondents, 50 had encountered child clients in or at risk of a forced marriage in the preceding 24 months and these experiences were estimated to have involved in excess of 250 cases. Fifteen involved a boy in or at risk of forced marriage.

A recently released report by the Australian Institute of Criminology (Lyneham & Bricknell, 2018) put it this way: "Forced marriage now represents the most commonly investigated form of human trafficking and slavery in Australia."

As at 4 June 2018, the AFP had received 232 allegations of forced marriage since it became a criminal offence in 2013 (Schliebs, 2018). This must be the tip of the iceberg. There is much cogency in what the AFP says:

Challenges for investigation of forced marriage often relates to the reluctance of people, including the victim or other key witnesses, to give evidence, particularly as family members or associates may have been involved in the offending.

Such is the concern that a criminal response may deter people from going to the police, that on 15 June 2018, when launching the Australian Institute of Criminology's report *When saying no is not an option: forced marriage in Australia and New Zealand*, the Hon Alex Hawke MP, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, announced:

The Australian Government is currently developing a proposed model for a Commonwealth Forced Marriage Protection Order scheme, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. These are based on Domestic and Family Violence orders, which are civil orders, not criminal law proceedings.

Forced Marriage Protection Orders will complement our existing criminal offences and provide a flexible civil remedy for people in, or at risk of, forced marriage.

Child marriages: the risks

Children should be children; and teenagers, should be teenagers – to discover and develop their individuality, their likes and dislikes, to test boundaries, to formulate opinions, to test those opinions, and to develop the path to informed decision making within the safe confines of adult guidance. Child marriage deprives a child of all those important developmental milestones.

Indeed, forced child marriage removes the child's right to a safe and secure passage to adulthood.

Yet, there is more to child marriage than the deprivation of decision making. More profoundly, child brides are likely to become pregnant at an early age and to also suffer from the power imbalance that often exists between a child who is married to an adult, which in many cases is a much older adult. The National Children's and Youth Law Centre (Jelenic & Keeley, 2013) reports that:

- Girls aged 10–14 are *five* times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than women aged 20–24 and girls aged 15–19 are *twice* as likely to die.
- Family violence is of significant prevalence.
- The education of the child ends.

In addition to these risks, when a child's education ends, so does the child's remaining hopes and aspirations.

With a child marriage, the child's ability to grow into their best self is at an end.

For what are you looking?

It is not for educators to find, locate, prevent and prosecute potential child marriages; that is for the AFP. However, in addition to the many responsibilities of educators, school personnel (and GPs, being the likely two permissible points of professional intersection with the child) ought to be alert to the warning signs, and then in turn alert authorities to any concerns.

Before looking at what action an educator may take,

It is in no way suggested that educators must go it alone in preventing a student being married. Instead, a multi-agency response is required, involving, usually, the AFP, Child Safety, the courts, lawyers, and specialists — such as the Salvation Army Freedom Partnership.

it is important to understand how a child can be forced to marry. In short, the child, the proposed subject of forced marriage, is placed in an invidious position with an incredible burden imposed on their shoulders through:

- emotional blackmail, where a parent might threaten self-harm, or claim that the family's or individual's reputation will be ruined if the child resists the marriage;
- isolation, such as the family severely limiting the child's social contacts or ability to leave the home, or go to school;
- social ostracism, such as telling the child they will have no friends, and no one will like them;
- economic threats, where the child is told they will not be welcomed in the home or will not be supported, if they resist the marriage;
- threats of or actual physical violence against the child, or another about whom the child cares' (*Kreet v. Sampir* 2011).

The National Children's and Youth Law Centre's *End Child Marriage Australia* report (Jelenic & Keeley, 2013) highlighted:

Withdrawal from education is commonly coincident with forced child marriage. Extended absences or holidays, significant changes in attendance or removal from education have been found to be linked to forced child marriage.

Of course, it cannot be thought that any time a child goes overseas that this means the child is to be married. That proposition only needs to be said to be dismissed. However, it remains that removal from school is a common part of a forced child marriage. It is also the case the schools (along with GPs unless the child is accompanied to all visits) offers a place where a child has an external reference point of information and may confide in friends or trusted teachers. Removal from school, or significant absences means for these at-risk children that they are quarantined from their friends and these information sources.

The same research concluded that the only reliable indicator was the child's disclosure or disclosure from the child's friends or family member. In the cases of Ms Madley and Ms Kandal, those girls made reports themselves. Miss Brouker also told the department, but this was after her teachers became concerned about her absence from school, asked her

friends, and then raised their concerns with Child Safety.

Without direct reporting, the behaviours described above could be by

dint of several reasons other than child marriage. Equally, a child's behaviours, such as disengagement with school, depression, self-harm, could be due to other reasons other than a forced marriage.

The *End Child Marriage* (Jelenic & Keeley, 2013) report, notes the following as possible indicia:

- Highly controlled patterns of social behaviour (for example always being accompanied to school and medical appointments) or extensive restrictions on socialising have been found to often be coincident with the risk or reality of forced child marriage.
- Elder siblings being married.
- Extended absences from school for overseas trips were also identified by respondents as a strong indicator. However, this indicator cannot stand on its own — the family might just have connections or heritage outside of Australia. Overseas travel is irrelevant where a domestic forced marriage is to occur, or, practices relating to "promised brides" in Indigenous communities.
- Teachers identified that many students are not allowed to do anything outside the home except school, and so for many this is the only avenue where they can seek information and help.
- It follows that schools are one of the main locations for prevention activities, since they were potentially one of the only locations for accessing help.

What to do?

It is in no way suggested that educators must go it alone in preventing a student being married. Instead, a multi-agency response is required, involving, usually, the AFP, Child Safety, the courts, lawyers, and specialists — such as the Salvation Army Freedom Partnership.

However, because schools are often the only external entity available to the child, schools are critical sources of information, first in terms of empowering children to understand their rights; and second, as ears to the ground and an information source for others, such as the AFP or DOCs, to be able to take appropriate steps.

The Australia government recently provided funding to establish Anti-Slavery Australia, a component

part of which is a website dedicated to forced marriages, with useful sections for teachers, the intended spouse, a friend worried about another, and a huge range of age-appropriate resources.²

Usefully, the site has important and highly visible safety tools, such as an immediate exit tab, and a function to delete browsing history.

This article ends where it began — with the stories of real young people. Imagine this, a young girl, a young girl at school, being forced to marry:

I won't go back to live with my parents.
I won't.
I would have no life. NO education
I would rather live with my uncle. He says no to my marriage.
My parents threatened to kill me if I went to my uncle. They said I had to get married.
What kind of parents treat their child like that?
So it makes them happy to marry me against my will?
Go ahead and marry me off. I'll kill myself—just like that.
They—my so-called parents—have killed my dreams, they have killed everything inside me.
There's nothing left.
This is no upbringing.
This is criminal.
Simply criminal.

These are the words of an 11 year old girl. Would you help her? Of course, you would. But would you even know if she is at your school? ▲

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Footnotes:

1. In *Kreet v. Sampir*, 2011, *FamCA 22* (18 January 2011), the child was told by her father, that he would have her boyfriend's mother and sisters kidnapped and raped if she did not desist the relationship with her boyfriend and not marry an "appropriate suitor".

2. Anti-slavery Australia websites:
www.mybluesky.org.au
www.mybluesky.org.au/learn-more/i-am-a-teacher-or-medical-practitioner/
www.mybluesky.org.au/support-services/

The changing gender landscape and its implications for girls' schools

Q&A WITH JULIE MENCHER

Julie Mencher, an American educational consultant, psychotherapist, and trainer with a Master of Social Work, was selected by the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia, to undertake a study of transgender policies and practices in girls' schools and how, in a practical sense, Alliance member schools are responding to the presence of transgender and gender diverse students. Increasingly, member schools are asking the Alliance for guidance in this area, yet no research exists specifically related to girls' schools apart from Julie's 2017 report into American and Canadian girls' schools. Julie was therefore ideally placed to launch a research project on behalf of the Alliance and to write a report summarising the current situation across our wide variety of member schools in the Catholic, independent and government sectors.

Julie's research will culminate in her presentation of two workshops — one each in Sydney and Auckland — which will give members a rare opportunity to discuss the findings of the Alliance survey and to explore wider issues relating to transgender policy and practice, both in the North American and Australasian contexts. In the following Q&A with Julie, she answers questions put to her by Alliance Director of Research, Jan Richardson, regarding her longstanding involvement with women's colleges and girls' schools in North America as a gender diversity consultant and trainer. Julie also outlines key issues for educators to consider in a changing gender landscape where a growing number of children and adolescents are expressing their gender in non-traditional ways, ranging from transgender children with gender dysphoria to students who are non-binary and gender fluid.

Q. You’ve been working with women’s colleges in the United States on transgender issues for over 15 years now. What was the catalyst that first caused women’s colleges to consider their transgender students?

A. It was really the loud voices of transmasculine students (assigned female at birth but no longer identifying as women) and their allies that prompted women’s colleges to take up this issue. For example, in 2000, Smith College responded to students’ demands to be heard by creating the first-ever position of Transgender Specialist (and hiring me) to provide support, advocacy, and education to the campus community and to offer policy guidance to administrators. With the benefit of witnessing the women’s college experience and the cultural changes around it, girls’ schools could then take a different path — not just responding to students but being proactive in considering these issues before particular situations arose.

Q. What lessons have American girls’ schools learned from the women’s college experience with the trans topic?

A. So many! The times were so different 15 years ago — even 5-10 years ago — when women’s colleges were dealing with this topic for the first time. Trans inclusivity was the first diversity issue to emerge in the social media era, so the pace of public awareness and acceptance has been viral. Girls’ schools were therefore given the heads-up that they needed to consider trans students, and many have taken up the challenge.

Q. But isn’t a girls’ school in a somewhat different position than a women’s college?

A. Definitely, primarily around the age of the students and the school’s accountability to the parents. Also, girls’ schools need to pay attention to multiple developmental stages in their student populations, with children and teens being very impressionable works-in-progress in terms of identity.

Q. How would you describe the overall position of girls’ schools in the United States and Canada? Or is there no such thing due to the enormous variety of girls’ schools which each have to consider their own individual circumstances?

A. Schools vary in their positions on this topic, which is understandable. There’s no one-size-fits-all option for trans inclusion at girls’ schools — each school has to consider the topic in the context of their own institution’s mission, culture, values, and stakeholders. In my study last year of girls’ schools in the US and Canada, 29 out of 33 schools reported that they’d already had trans students, and yet only eight had issued any formal policy or practice. Since then, I know of at least two which have. For those who have charted some policy direction, many were finding their way to trans inclusion in both admissions and retention, willing to admit trans girls (assigned male at birth) and to allow trans boys (assigned female at birth) to stay until graduation, but under certain circumstances. Schools tend to initially seem keen on adopting a case-by-case approach, but they also acknowledge the potential hazards of doing so. Even if it’s legal to treat each case differently, I would advise a school to pay attention to equitable treatment for all — and to the optics of what it will look like, for example, to ask one trans student to leave while allowing one to stay.

Q. From your experience working with women’s colleges and girls’ schools, what do you see as the main challenges for girls’ schools in approaching transgender policy and practice?

A. When I first started consulting with independent schools on gender diversity seven years ago, I was primarily working with co-ed schools. At that time, I had serious questions about whether it would even be possible for single-sex schools to welcome and support trans students. How could a single-sex school embrace gender diversity? As one boys’ school administrator worriedly put it, “If gender is a spectrum, then are single-sex schools 21st century dinosaurs,

soon to be extinct?!” And yet since then I’ve worked with many girls’ school administrators who’ve taken up this challenge and forged a path of trans inclusion that works for their schools. There are two primary challenges: first, how do you stay true to mission while also supporting gender-questioning and trans students at your school? Staying true to mission means remaining a girls’ school, but it also means staying true to your school’s stated values and purpose, which can often fit nicely with trans inclusion. Second, how do you tackle a policy direction that seems to be mission-challenging while also paying attention to all your stakeholders — students, families, alumnae, donors, trustees, faculty, and staff? I’ve learned that it’s actually very do-able, and with the benefit of all I’ve learned from the schools I’ve worked with and researched, I help girls’ schools to find their own way with it.

Q. There are so many different descriptions now under the “trans” umbrella, can you understand why people are confused about the difference between trans, transgender, gender fluid, agender, non-binary, and so on? As well as the separate issue of a person’s sexuality and gender expression?

A. Of course! The terminology is constantly changing, varies from one LGBTQ community to another, and is almost always botched by the media. I’m constantly revising the glossary handout for my trainings, and the font just keeps getting smaller and smaller as more terms and finer distinctions are added. In the Alliance survey, I felt it was crucial to include a glossary to get us all on the same page with the terminology. And yet still, some respondents were confused about the difference between sexual identity and gender identity. (The colloquial explanation is: sexual identity is who you go to bed **with**; gender identity is who you go to bed **as**.)

People also get confused about the difference between gender identity and gender expression. Gender identity is how you think of and identify your own gender. Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender identity to others through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact. I like **gender-expansive** and **gender-creative** as umbrella terms for gender-bending kids, with three general categories under the umbrella:

There are the kids we used to call “tomboys” or “sissies” (terms which have fallen out of favour), who are gender nonconforming in their behaviour, but still identify as the sex they were assigned at birth and are comfortable in their bodies as is. Then there are the trans kids (that the media tends to focus on exclusively) who typically express insistent, persistent, and consistent cross-gender identification from early childhood through puberty and beyond. These kids are often in acute distress from gender dysphoria — a sense of a disconnect between their own sense of their gender and their bodies or their sex assigned at birth. Finally, there are the kids who don’t feel like they’re male or female, but instead feel they’re both, neither, or fluid in gender identity — often calling themselves genderqueer, agender, non-binary, or gender-fluid.

Q. Do you feel that single-sex schools in the US and Canada have yet come to grips with the growing spectrum of gender expansive children and adolescents?

A. No, actually, and that’s unfortunate. The third category — of genderqueer, agender, nonbinary, or gender-fluid kids — is the most rapidly expanding group of trans youth, particularly among teens. And yet not one school in my study of US and Canadian schools had specifically addressed this part of the gender spectrum in their policy development.

Q. What advice would you give to schools who are unsure whether a child under their care has gender dysphoria (which may lead to medical or surgical treatment) or is gender expansive or gender creative (which may be a temporary stage when a child is young or, alternatively, continue past puberty into adulthood)?

A. Great question! I’d say this: First, count yourself lucky, since it’s not your job to determine that, and the parents who I see in my psychotherapy practice spend many a session on that question. That said, I do understand that it matters to girls’ school administrators whether they’re admitting a trans girl who might one day decide that she is a boy or whether the

gender nonconformity of a current student portends the student coming out as a boy someday soon. The truth is, there's no way to know. The best we can do is to give the most open field to our kids, so they can listen to their inner voices about who they are, without eclipsing their identity development to match the judgments and limitations from the adults around them. Kids need time to grow into themselves, and there's no way to predict where they'll end up. The other factor that informs your question is that the world is changing so fast, and this generation of youth already faces such different concepts around gender than the ones we grew up with — who knows what changes will come in the next decade and whether these kids will even feel the need for medical intervention if the world continues to become a more accepting place around gender nonconformity?

Q. Do you feel that, in many ways, adults are playing catch up with young people on these issues?

A. One hundred per cent! The kids are way ahead of the grown-ups here. We now live in a world where students can choose to identify themselves from over 50 gender categories on Facebook; where many college students introduce themselves on the first day of class with, "My name is Julie and I go by she/her/hers — or he/him/his or they/them/their — pronouns"; and where admissions applications for college and some independent schools give prospective students the option of naming a different gender identity from their legal sex. When my son was a college freshman five years ago, he didn't even know the gender of his dormitory staff member, nor did he care! Each year, I get more and more requests from schools to come in and do Gender Literacy Talks for their parents, so parents can catch up to where their kids are. As I heard from one highly-educated, professionally successful dad, "I feel like I've been living under a rock — but my daughter hasn't!" I consider playing catch-up on gender to be part of a parent's overall job of getting their child ready for the world around them.

Q. Given the high rate of distress among transgender youth (with the Telethon Kids Institute's 2017 *Trans Pathways* report finding that 75 per cent of young trans people have been diagnosed with depression, 72 per cent have been diagnosed with anxiety, 80 per cent have self-harmed, and 48 per cent have attempted suicide), what would be your key message to educators and other school-based professionals who come into contact with trans youth?

A. Get educated and pay attention! These are among the most at-risk students in your communities. The absence of clear support for trans students isn't just a risk for them, it's a risk for you. If an isolated and distressed trans or gender-questioning student is part of a school community that is silent on the topic of trans inclusion or provides no positive messaging about it, that kid is going to stay underground about their struggle. That's not just sad, it's dangerous. I worry much more about the trans students we don't know about than the ones we do. These kids are vulnerable, and yet, with the right support — most importantly from parents and schools — they often thrive. It's not question of IF you'll have trans students at your school, it's a question of WHEN, so schools need to get ready: provide trainings for your faculty, staff, and leadership; create a policy or practice direction that guides your faculty and students around gender diversity; and develop a safety net to support trans or gender-questioning students even if you don't yet have policies and practices in place. ▲

Fundraising: Bread today, jam tomorrow

DR DANIEL MCDIARMID, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, ASKRIGHT

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ohn Reid AO, business leader and philanthropist, had an expression that spoke to our shared Scottish heritage, "bread today, jam tomorrow", meaning get the ordinary things done first and the fancy things later.

This is a key lesson for fundraising at girls' schools. Do the ordinary things that are proven to raise money, before searching for the special attributes of girls' schools and women's philanthropy that might take fundraising results to a higher level.

This article looks to the foundational "Bread today" steps that all schools should take to start, or to improve, their fundraising. It then examines some special attributes of girls' schools and women's philanthropy, and points to five "Jam tomorrow" (or next steps) that schools can take once they have implemented the basics. Finally, we include a case study from Mentone Girls' Grammar School's highly successful capital fundraising campaign, which illustrates how these steps work in practice, and the vital importance of getting fundraising fundamentals right.

Bread today

Using the *Fundraising and Alumnae Relations in Girls' Schools 2018 Survey* results and our experience in girls' schools, we recommend these 10 fundamentals of fundraising.

Bread 1: Lead from the top

Principals — leading is what you do. Commit to giving to the school and ask your board chair to do likewise. The chair should then ask all other members. Once you and your governance group are giving, you will see changes. Boards of people who donate to the school make better decisions about fundraising (and allocate bigger budgets), understand that the school is a worthy

recipient of philanthropy, and are able to use a "come and join me" message.

If there is resistance at the board level, ask the school historian or archivist to make a presentation to the board on the history of philanthropy at the school. Almost certainly you will find that extraordinary philanthropy was involved in the establishment and sustaining of your school, but in recent decades this has somehow lost its emphasis.

Bread 2: Invest in fundraising

When management and staff of girls' schools wonder why they don't raise as much money as leading boys' schools they often suspect that the underlying reasons include economic disparity, sexism, and disregard for the importance of girls' education. Probably all of these are part of the picture, but the image that occupies the foreground is the lack of investment in undertaking fundraising. The disadvantages of girls' school fundraising are reasons to over-invest in comparison with boys' and co-educational schools. Yet girls' schools tend to have lower staff numbers and are less likely to invest in information management for fundraising.

How much to invest? In fundraising (excluding alumnae and community relations) try this formula: invest one per cent of the budget and expect it to return five per cent of revenue within five years (consider \$175,000 the minimum annual investment even if this is more than one per cent of your budget). Of course, achieving this objective relies on correct strategy, staff selection, and many other factors, but it is a good rule of thumb for setting



a fundraising budget to cover fundraising salaries and non-salary costs.

Bread 3: Monitor what matters

Select the right indicators of fundraising success and check progress monthly. These indicators should include: money banked and new pledges made; the number of major gift prospects currently engaged and the number of contacts made with them this month; the number of bequests notified and the number of bequest conversations being held this month. When it comes to your annual fund, the renewal rate is just as important as the amount of money received this year. High renewal rates feed future major gifts and bequest programmes.

Bread 4: Connect with former staff

This is the Ripley’s believe-it-or-not item; the person most likely to leave a gift in a will to your school is a former staff member. A lunch for all former staff and spouses is the best money you can spend in your fundraising programme. Hold up to four events a year. Attendees can pay their own way, but indicate that the programme is supported by the school’s gifts-in-wills programme, so someone from that programme gets to speak for three minutes at the event. Have bequest brochures available and a designated purpose to contact for further information.

The principal should attend once a year to speak on the achievements and plans of the school, and to thank participants for helping make the school what it is today. Otherwise, have subject specialists speak, or have a brief tour of new facilities. Open this event to all former staff, not just teaching staff.

Bread 5: Treat information as valuable

The progress made in school fundraising takes a backwards slide every time a donor meeting is held but not recorded. You will find that those employed as fundraisers move on sooner than you expect, and sometimes principals, too, but donors and other friends of the school may remain. These donors and friends expect the school to remember where they got to in recent discussions.

Therefore, everyone connected with the school who meets with donors should make a habit of providing a “contact report”, which is entered into the database after each significant meeting. This is good practice for a school

principal, but an *absolute requirement* of the fundraising professional.

Beyond notes of individual meetings, it is also good practice to capture the details of event attendance. Remember, fundraising succeeds not on a single piece of vital information but on the compilation of a range of information, which gives the school a greater understanding of its donors’ interests.

Bread 6: Seek continual improvement in your annual fund

The annual fund is the programme that raises money for the general support of the school throughout the year. Synchronise your requests for support with the natural rhythm of the school’s calendar at the start of each term. Secure pledges of regular support where you can, and continually learn what works for your school. In every appeal have a test component. For example: do you send a long letter or a short letter? Should it come from the principal or the school chair? Are there any other questions? Split the appeal 50:50 and see what works best for your school community.

Bread 7: Vow never to take the fundraiser off task

The single biggest mistake schools make in the early attempts to fundraise is to take advantage of their fundraiser’s great communication skills and to enlist their help for everything where there is an activity that needs “all hands on deck”. Of course, the fundraiser has the skills to help, but every time you ask them to help with another task you can expect to raise less money.

Give the fundraiser permission to say “No” to these requests. They need to be at many events, but they need to attend with a purpose — which is usually donor development rather than distributing programmes or setting out chairs.

Another benefit of leaving the fundraiser to do their job is that you can then have a “no excuses” conversation with them about fundraising results and their performance in the role.

Bread 8: Cover your tax-deductible opportunities

People who pay tax like to get deductions if they can, so make sure you have these arrangements in place. In New Zealand, donations to schools for any school purpose are tax deductible, but in Australia schools need different arrangements for different items; for example, buildings,

For all that people talk about old boys' networks, women often keep a wider circle of friendships and are better able to trace former classmates. These networks can also be very useful in peer-to-peer fundraising for a special project at the school.

scholarships, artworks, and sports equipment. If you don't have all these arrangements in place ensure you do so as soon as possible.

As important as tax deductions are, some people don't need or don't care about tax deductibility, and they might be the people who are prepared to help fund programmes that are not tax deductible. Ask your school community for support for the programmes that will make a difference — even if these programmes are not tax deductible.

Bread 9: Ask for donations on the fees statement

Asking for voluntary donations on the fees statement might not be the best way of growing the culture of philanthropy as it has the aura of a levy about it; however, it continues to be effective for girls' schools. You need to ensure that this is presented as a genuine voluntary donation option, but if the request is sound and the communication around it is right, it produces a steady philanthropic income.

Encourage maximum participation in the programme and be sure to inform parents what was accomplished with these funds.

Bread 10: Start asking for major gifts

The fundraising activities that provide the highest return on investment are bequests, capital campaigns, and major gifts. There is no reason why you should not have a "major gifts" programme.

Even if you can only identify a small number of major gift prospects, begin. Even if the level of "major" gift in your community is lower than in many others, still, begin.

It takes a while to build the skills, information systems, policies, recognition practices, and other elements of a major gifts programme. Don't wait until you get everything in place. Start small, be happy to receive what you can, and learn from every solicitation you make. Go in the company of your fundraiser or an experienced volunteer. You will get better with every request you make, and this will make a big difference to the history of the school.

Jam tomorrow

Once you have the basics covered, you can move to fundraising that uses the special characteristics of girls' schools and women's philanthropy.

Jam 1: The alumnae network

Yes, it is inconvenient that some alumnae change their names (sometimes more than once, and sometimes back again), but the tracking tools on social media, websites, and personal networks makes this easier than ever.

For all that people talk about old boys' networks, women often keep a wider circle of friendships and are better able to trace former classmates.

These networks can also be very useful in peer-to-peer fundraising (this is when you get your friends to sponsor you for a walk, run, triathlon, scaling Mt Everest, or whatever) for a special project at the school.

Rely on your alumnae network to help find the list, but, as in all things these days, ensure your school complies with privacy regulations.

Jam 2: Women supporting women

Women who organise their giving tend to give to organisations that support women and girls. Organised giving can include giving circles, private ancillary funds, or charitable trust arrangements. Some women with an extensive philanthropic history find it advantageous to use one or more of these giving vehicles and, if they do, they tend to donate more often and higher amounts to women's organisations and to organisations that serve women and girls.

Look at your programmes and financial needs and develop cases for support that will be attractive to this group of female donors.

Jam 3: Women and naming recognition

Female philanthropists are less likely to seek, and less likely to accept, recognition of their philanthropy in the naming of buildings or programmes. Some will see that such recognition can inspire further philanthropy and help develop role models for girls at the school, but some will still be hesitant. Some will agree to a naming when the name is that of the family, or of a parent. Some women donors acting together will agree to the naming in honour of, or in memory

of, a friend or classmate who has died.

It helps develop a culture of philanthropy if students are exposed to recognition of women's achievements and generosity.

Don't give up easily on naming opportunities for women donors. Encourage your reluctant donors to see the difference it can make for the school and for generations of students.

Jam 4: Volunteering

Women and men tend to give the same amount overall, but usually women give smaller amounts to more organisations than men, and they tend to give to organisations for which they volunteer. For many women donors, gifts follow volunteer involvement.

It therefore behoves schools to have good records of its volunteers (see information management above), and to ask them for financial support; to continue to engage women as volunteers even after their children have left the school; and to ensure that volunteering is a satisfying experience.

Follow and foster your mothers' and alumnae's interest in volunteering for the school.

Jam 5: Wills and estate planning

Women who partner with or marry men tend to outlive them and usually are the beneficiaries of their will. In these situations, your alumna may elect to distribute the couple's estate through her will. At such times there is an opportunity for the school to provide advice on estate planning, and, as a sponsor of the programme, to provide information about making a gift in the will to the school. This can be a great service to your alumnae and also financially beneficial to the school. Celebrate the women who make bequests to your school, showing they are remembered, respected, and honoured. This will encourage others when they make their will.

Provide information on making gifts in wills to your alumnae and celebrate those who do.

Remember: bread today, jam tomorrow. Invest in the fundamentals of your fundraising programme. There are unlimited opportunities to improve and expand the programme once the basic activities are in place.

Case study: Mentone Girls' Grammar School Roslyn Holloway, Advancement Manager

In June 2018, Mentone Girls' Grammar School achieved its biggest ever capital campaign result, passing its \$1 million target for the build of a wellbeing precinct, comprising a new aquatic centre and outdoor playing fields.

This was an historic achievement for our school community. Records showed that the only previous significant campaign occurred in the early 1990s, raising funds for an arts centre. Until recent years, philanthropy had been sporadic.

This achievement is the product of sufficient investment, good fundraising practice, and a great deal of hard work over several years.

I have now lived through the important experience of how a girls' school can invest properly in fundraising, how key people can apply themselves to good practice, and the disciplined execution of a campaign plan.

The leadership provided by our principal, and the involvement of our council and foundation directors, other staff, and key volunteers have all been crucial in achieving this wonderful outcome. A few years ago, our principal, Mrs Fran Reddan, invested in her own learning and understanding of philanthropy with visits to institutions in the United Kingdom. She was able to talk with key people about any aspect of their programmes and discuss these with other fundraisers and leaders who were also on the journey to improve their programmes. This gave her some perspective about the kinds of campaigns and the possibilities for our school.

I started at Mentone in my role as Advancement Manager in 2015. I worked closely with our principal, foundation directors, and a growing number of key donors to explore the potential interest in key projects that we had planned for Mentone. This work steadily built better relationships and identified a broad range of donor interests that we could consider. At the same time, I began a process of improving our annual appeal, bequest programme, and other elements of our fundraising programme. We were delighted to discover that we had a family that had the capacity and willingness to donate and we used this to build a campaign plan around their gift commitment.

This gave us a great start to secure other significant gifts and thereby to position our 2017 campaign launch as a highly motivational statement to our school community. Our principal was able to announce a target of \$1 million, and also

declare that close to \$700,000 of this had been donated or pledged in other support, leaving our community to rally and raise the remaining \$300,000 in various ways.

To be clear, this is the short version! We certainly had our fair share of challenges along the way as we educated our community about philanthropy and worked with our campaign plan.

I often hear comments about girls' schools not raising as much as boys' schools when it comes to fundraising. I still wonder whether gender plays a role in the success of fundraising. Historically, I believe it has been easier for boys' schools to fundraise; however, my experience with this campaign has proven it is possible for a girls' school to fundraise successfully. Success is a product of the investment, effort, and best practice that is pursued by key people at the school. Our success can be traced back to a number of elements, but it began with our principal's leadership and the increasing determination of a growing number of key people to develop and execute the right plan for our school.

To summarise, I think our success has had the following key ingredients:

- the principal's leadership and learning about fundraising
- the training of staff and volunteers who attended group training; I participated in training provided by EducatePlus; our school and foundation commissioned additional training, strategic advice, and coaching; and online learning (for example, webinars) was also useful
- leadership from our principal, the foundation chair, and others, who were determined to approach the task in a systematic way
- we took the time to undertake an honest appraisal of our situation and to understand our current readiness before identifying and implementing the actions steps required to move forward
- we explored a range of possibilities and did not assume to know what donors were interested in, but rather we went and spoke directly to them, identifying our best opportunities in the process
- our principal and others invested, sought advice, and put good resources into the fundraising programme and campaign
- we executed our plan with discipline and persistence, sticking to it even when there were challenging moments.

At Mentone Girls' Grammar School we have learnt so much from this project, and consequently our community has now had a very comprehensive and positive experience of a record-breaking campaign. I look forward to our future because we have a good base on which we can build, and more donor interests that we can explore. ▲

Mentone Girls' Grammar School has been a client of AskRIGHT throughout the campaign



IMAGE: CONSTRUCTION OF MENTONE GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL'S WELLBEING PRECINCT

Monitoring whole-school wellbeing and mental health promotion

DR KATHERINE L. DIX, AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

This paper considers the components necessary to address the question, are single-sex schools more effective at whole-school wellbeing and mental health promotion than co-educational schools? The apparent lack of literature in the field raises the need for studies that use a generic indicator of whole-school wellbeing promotion across diverse settings. The recent development of a brief school-based instrument designed for use in educational practice and in research, is presented as a viable generic indicator of whole-school wellbeing promotion. *The Survey of School Promotion of Emotional and Social Health (SSPESH)* differentiates states of high, moderate, and low implementation of whole-school policies and practices that promote the emotional and social health of students. The instrument nominally measures the extent to which a school has implemented policies and practices in four health-promoting domains: (a) creating a positive school community, (b) teaching social and emotional skills, (c) engaging the parent community, and (d) supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties. At a practical level, school leadership may find it useful as a brief tool to guide the identification of target areas for whole-school improvement across the four important health-promoting domains. At a system-level, researchers may find

it a useful inclusion in research that investigates school-wide mental health and wellbeing.

Whole-school wellbeing

Building school capacity to promote the social and emotional skills that underpin wellbeing has long been a priority of successive governments in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere (Frydenberg et al., 2017). Although there are now numerous good-quality whole-school initiatives, the extent to which they are implemented is still the critical factor in effecting change (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Basch, 2011).

Like the schools themselves, the process of implementing whole-school wellbeing is complex. Whole-school wellbeing involves a culture of change, at multiple

levels and sustained over a period of time — often around three years. Schools must ‘learn, live, embed, and teach’ wellbeing, and this only happens effectively when school leadership, school practices and school policies, visions and values, allocate the necessary resources and supports (Quinlan, 2017; Allen et al., 2017). Given the complexity of implementing wellbeing school-wide, some schools do this more readily than others and result in different outcomes. For example, in Australia, significant positive relationships were found between the extent of implementation of a whole-school mental health initiative and students’ mental health outcomes (Slee et al., 2009) and academic performance (Dix et al., 2012).

Despite the large number of school-based programmes that foster positive mental health, there continues to be little evidence available concerning how schools monitor the implementation of such programmes and the impact that they may have (Adelman & Taylor, 2000; Domitrovich et al., 2008). Moreover, the focus on improving student wellbeing in schools increasingly requires school leadership to be experts in ‘monitoring whole-school wellbeing’, as this excerpt from an Assistant Principal’s position description suggests: “Selection Criteria: Expertise in leading and monitoring whole school wellbeing programmes to build a positive learning culture” (SchoolBiz, 2016).

Feigenberg et al. (2010) suggested that it has been challenging to measure the impact of formal whole-school mental health interventions at the school-level due in part to the lack of assessment tools that monitor school-level characteristics. In addition to the plethora of formal programmes, schools may also engage in wellbeing activities outside the remit of a formal programme, suggesting the need for generic monitoring tools that are independent of the programmes.

A number of instruments assessing implementation have focused on the whole-school setting. These include assessments that examined cultural climate and school safety (for example., Brand et al. 2003), school-wide positive behaviour (for example, Horner et al. 2004), school mental health capacity and quality (for example, Feigenberg et al. 2010; Weist et al. 2006; Wyn et al. 2000; Graetz et al. 2008; Wells et al., 2003; Mellin et al. 2016). However, while there are toolkits and self-assessment planning guides that schools can use to improve their wellbeing policies and programmes (for example, KidsMatter 2013; Staten et al. 2005), their emphasis is not quantitative and they do not readily allow school wellbeing promotion to be monitored as an outcome in its own right. In fact, little appears to have changed since Booth and Samdal’s (1997, p.369) call for the development of robust measures that assess whole school wellbeing:

One of the most significant barriers to the systematic evaluation and monitoring of health-promoting schools in Australia is the absence of reliable, valid instruments. There is an urgent need for the development of such instruments ... so that comparable data may be collected within each of the states and territories. The use of widely accepted instruments will also allow more direct comparisons of the results of program evaluations.

There is evidence, however, that assessment of whole-school wellbeing at a school level, is associated with and reflective of the perceptions held by the community within the school. Slee et al. (2009) developed an index to rate the level of implementation-quality for a whole-school mental health promotion programme. They found that schools categorised as high-implementing were perceived as better able to meet children’s social, emotional and behavioural needs. In a subsequent analysis, Askell-Williams et al. (2013) demonstrated that the perceived advantage, translated into measured improvements in students’ social and emotional competencies in high-implementing schools. This finding was replicated in a similar evaluation conducted in early childhood services (Slee et al., 2012).

What these and other studies have not gone on to explore are system-level differences in school context, such as single-sex versus co-educational. Specifically, they have not considered whether single-sex schools are more effective at whole-school wellbeing promotion than co-educational school.

Single-sex schooling context and gender difference

In a search of the literature, no studies were found that specifically investigated the differences between whole-school wellbeing promotion in single-sex schools, compared to co-educational settings, nor the differential impact of those programmes on girls and boys. This lack of research was reflected in Cribb and Haase’s (2016) paper on the factors, such as school gender environment, that influence girls’ self-esteem. “School gender environment may influence these factors, but remains largely unexplored” (p. 107). They found that girls in co-educational environments had poorer self-esteem, and concluded that in single-sex schools, environmental protective factors attenuated negative associations between socio-cultural attitudes towards appearance and self-esteem in adolescent girls. In the recommendations for further research Rawlings (2015) and Kidger et al. (2012) raised the need for wellbeing studies within varying educational settings, including single-sex schools, stating that these educational settings were underrepresented in the extant research.

The related literature abounds with evidence that social-emotional behaviours and beliefs differ between the genders. Many studies (for example, Cantone et al., 2015;

Baldry et al., 2017) have described differences in the nature of the anti-social behaviour — where boys tend to engage more physically, while girls tend to use more relational aggression. Holmgren (2014) reported that girls in girls’ schools more frequently encounter learning environments that made them feel safer and were less likely to be bullied by classmates than girls in co-educational settings.

The New Zealand Youth Survey 2007 (Denny et al., 2009) found that perceptions of school climate varied widely between different types and sizes of schools, and that teachers and students from small-sized girls’ schools tended to give better ratings of school climate. Hart (2015) investigated the differences between middle-school girls in girls-only versus co-educational classrooms in order to understand the differences in academic attitudes and student satisfaction with school. She found that participation in single-gender programmes held higher levels of school satisfaction.

Riordan et al. (2008) examined differences in school climate and perceived benefits between single-sex and co-educational schooling. The study found, though not statistically significant, that teachers in single-sex high schools rated problems with student behaviour as less serious than teachers in co-educational schools, but the opposite was true in middle-schools. Teachers believed that girls benefited more than boys from better peer interactions, socio-emotional benefits, and safe behaviour.

Although her study did not consider the context of single-sex school, Street (2017) explored the impact of the school context on the effectiveness of school-based wellbeing and social emotional learning initiatives. She concluded that Australian schools need to implement social-emotional learning and wellbeing programmes with a far wider consideration of context than is currently evident.

Monitoring whole-school promotion

There is also evidence that monitoring the implementation of a whole-school programme is associated with improved intervention outcomes (Rojas-Andrade & Bahamondes, 2018). Smith et al. (2004) examined 84 studies on the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes and reported that those that involve systematic monitoring tended to be more effective than those without monitoring. Similar findings have been reported elsewhere (e.g. Durlak et al., 2011) that emphasise the importance of monitoring implementation quality that drives evidence-informed decision making to achieve improved outcomes.

While these studies consider programmes that focus on specific social-emotional domains, no studies were

found that focus on the implementation of overarching whole-school wellbeing frameworks, nor how system-level factors influence whole-school implementation. Some researchers cite a lack of appropriate assessment tools as a root cause, saying those available are not quantitative, are cumbersome and challenging to use, fail to capture school-level characteristics and do not allow for psychometric assessment or comparisons over time or between schools (Feigenberg et al., 2010). Accordingly, school practice stands to benefit from the development of a quantitative assessment tool that describes the extent to which whole-school wellbeing promotion policies and practices have been implemented. In this context, a new recently published tool, the *Survey of School Promotion of Emotional and Social Health (SSPESH)*, may offer the measurement solution.

The SSPESH

The SSPESH (Dix et al., 2018) was designed to measure implementation of mental health promotion at a school-wide level. It was validated using results from a 2015 online survey of almost 600 primary school principals administered as part of the New South Wales Child Development Study (NSW-CDS), an intergenerational study combining the health, education, welfare and justice records of around 90,000 children and their parents in order to identify the childhood factors that promote positive mental health and wellbeing later in life (Carr et al., 2016; Laurens et al, 2017; Green et al., 2018). The SSPESH was developed to investigate how schools factor in a child’s social-emotional development.

The result is a brief 13-item survey, completed by the school leader. It provides an overall social-emotional health promotion score used to identify where a school sits on a continuum with cut-points for high, moderate and low implementation. It is an approach that has been used successfully in whole-school evaluations before and one that acknowledges the systemic and geographical differences that exist between schools, which affect implementation.

The SSPESH can also serve as a guide for schools in identifying target areas for whole-school improvement in mental health and wellbeing in their community. By scoring subscales, indications are given of a school’s capacity within four health-promoting domains:

- creating a positive school community
- teaching social and emotional skills
- engaging the parent community
- supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties.

These domains draw on the *Health Promoting Schools Framework* (WHO, 2004), and reflect the national *KidsMatter* (Slee et al., 2009) and *MindMatters* (Wyn et al., 2000) frameworks. Assessing programme implementation in this way not only describes a school's current functioning, allowing it to better meet the social and emotional needs of its community, but it could be used to measure progress over time and against other schools.

A school's overall social and emotional health promotion score is calculated by summing the scores on the 13 items, resulting in a theoretical range for the total scale score of 0-39. Scoring thresholds for the total score at 21 and 33 demarcated low, moderate and high implementing schools. A summed score is also calculated for each of the subscales to provide an indication of current capacity in the four SSPESH domains. The theoretical range for the three-item subscales of *Positive school community*, *Student social and emotional learning* and *Engaging families* is 0-9, and for the four-item subscale *Supporting students experiencing difficulties* is 0-12.

Scoring thresholds varied across the subscales indicating that some domains were more difficult for schools to implement than others. Schools found *Engaging families* and *Supporting students experiencing difficulties* more challenging, even for the high implementing schools. The domains of *Positive school community* and *Student social and emotional learning* were easier for schools to implement. Dix et al. (2018) suggest that using the threshold scores as a guide, school leaders can use the SSPESH instrument to perform a brief assessment of their school and have some understanding of their current activities in promoting emotional and social health benchmarked against other schools. The printable SSPESH tool is available for schools to download: [SSPESH_tool.pdf](#). The full open access article is available in *School Mental Health* (Dix et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This paper has considered the components necessary to address the question, are single-sex schools more effective at whole-school wellbeing and mental health promotion than co-educational schools? The apparent lack of literature in the field reflects the lack of a generic indicator of whole-school wellbeing promotion. The newly-developed SSPESH has been presented as a viable generic indicator of whole-school wellbeing promotion. It offers the potential for fruitful new avenues of research and provides a user-friendly tool to help schools address the mental health needs of their community. At a practical level, school leadership may find it useful as a brief tool to guide the

identification of target areas for whole-school improvement across the four important health-promoting domains. At a system-level, researchers may find it a useful inclusion in research that investigates the impact of schooling contexts, generally, and single-sex and co-educational settings, more specifically. ▲

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IMAGE: THE TRANSFORMER, BOND UNIVERSITY

Fostering a culture of performance

DANIEL ABRAHAMS, TRANSFORMER DIRECTOR, BOND UNIVERSITY, QUEENSLAND

In August 1987, my father, a small business entrepreneur, arrived home after work and announced that we were moving to Australia. This announcement served as my first exposure to risk management from an entrepreneur’s perspective. My father was regarded as crazy for uprooting the family and leaving apartheid South Africa — “Why put your family at risk?” he was asked. He replied with equal conviction: “I see opportunity for a better life, a better future and equal opportunity.”

Entrepreneurs focus on opportunity and then consider risk. This mantra has formed my values in risk management, and one that I have tried to instil in all those with whom I come into contact. I have moved my career from federal government to large organisations, across financial services, energy and transport, to telecommunications in a start-up. This article outlines my observations as a risk-management practitioner, and shares insights from a career transition from chief risk officer (CRO) to chief executive officer (CEO).

Personal insights of moving from CRO to CEO

I spent a lot of my career wondering how organisations survive in changing times. I believe that some organisations don’t survive due to a lack of leadership and because of risk taking. I contend that leadership can be over complicated and lack regard for, and application of, basic human values. Unfortunately some CEOs focus on how the entity can serve them, rather than being the servant of the company, its customers and its people. I have witnessed instances where risk aversion is the norm, strategy is not understood, and boards do not fully understand the way to guide an organisation towards its stated vision. So how did I go about developing these two core capabilities — leadership and risk taking?

Leadership values

One of the most important and non-negotiable discussions I have with every one of my leaders and team members relates to ensuring that we understand each other’s “core values”. This discussion sets a foundation for building effective relationships, and, if done sincerely, is the quickest way to establish mutual respect and trust. If you listen, it also gives the truest insight into the other person. So what happens in practice? Some leaders don’t have values-based discussions, don’t demonstrate acceptable behaviours, and don’t call out inappropriate behaviours, all the while remaining in their “ivory towers” and being more concerned with salaries, travel perks and benefits rather than the wellbeing of their people. Leadership does not have to be complicated. What a team expects from a leader is aligned values, clear expectations and support. People prefer to work with those they trust and respect. The key role of the leader is to earn that trust and respect, and to set the environment for this to spread.

Risk-taking culture

I developed risk-management capability through the early adoption of the Australian Risk Management Standard, which is recognised internationally, and through its subsequent release as ISO 9001. The true innovation in risk

management came from employing risk-taking behaviours that I gleaned from talking to some of Australia's leading entrepreneurs. While I value my large corporate experience, I found the key elements of leadership and risk-management behaviour were lacking. I have spent a considerable time training people on risk management. The ISO definition of risk is the "effect of uncertainty on objectives" and I maintain that "without objectives, you have no risk".

Risk-management fundamentals

Foster a risk taking 'entrepreneurial culture' — simply get people focused on objectives that support the execution of strategy, first and foremost. Do not assess risk until commercial objectives are understood — this is the single biggest failing in risk management. Do not consider risk out of context. I have seen too many risk-management discussions that focus on risk while the objective is yet to be defined. For example, I was contacted by a senior leader at a corporate entity asking for risk-management assistance after he had secured \$10 million in seed capital for a project, and wanted to do a risk assessment although he had not yet determined the objective of the project.

Another mistake occurs when undertaking a risk workshop: the focus should be on getting the team to understand the outcome that must be delivered to create customer or shareholder value rather than asking what the risk is. Setting the context is critical before considering risk. Risk workshops are becoming "inaction sessions" where the focus is on reasons why we can't do something, versus defining clear goals, and working on options towards achieving the goal first. I encourage people to spend 70 per cent of the time defining the value case, and 30 per cent on the risk-management process.

Board-approved risk appetite

A cornerstone for effective risk management is to guide the board in articulating its risk appetite. Do boards know the organisation's risk appetite? Honest boards will acknowledge that they don't know how to define risk appetite. It requires a structured approach that extracts risk-return scenarios that reflect strategic objectives and then solicits a risk-return trade-off that directors must select. In my experience, this simple exercise consistently demonstrates that directors choose options that contradict the stated strategy, and highlights the lack of a common understanding of strategy. Strategy informs risk appetite and vice versa, so it is important that risk

appetite is revised to align with strategy formulation. I am passionate about this component and work with boards on a pro bono basis to assist.

Educate and apply

Educate and train stakeholders in risk-taking behaviours and a risk-taking mindset. A structured three-hour training programme administered by the CRO builds risk-management capability and relationships, gains business insight and intelligence, and positions the risk function to assist on a prioritised basis. Many believe they understand risk management, although what I have found across the 1,500 people with whom I have worked in my training sessions is that the overwhelming majority of people have never started with objectives. When we work through a syndicate-style case study, most people walk away with a changed mindset of how to manage risk and different behaviours. This is a key leadership capability that is not understood, nor applied, without proper training. I have run volunteer sessions for interested stakeholders to address the lack of proper training in risk management. I suggest ditching the checklist approach and software investment, and instead focus on culture. Checklists stop people thinking, and software makes risk management bureaucratic. I always say, encourage independent thinking and design systems that achieve objectives. Do not get lost in a risk-management system — something that is an all too common occurrence.

Entrepreneurial risk taking

The key difference between entrepreneurial and large institutional risk taking, in my experience, is best conveyed in the following themes:

- entrepreneurs focus on customer outcomes— objectives, and only then on risk-taking behaviours
- large institutions focus on risk management, rather than risk taking
- entrepreneurs focus on achieving objectives; institutions focus on managing risk
- entrepreneurs encourage opportunity-seeking behaviour, while institutions encourage risk-averse behaviours.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to note that start-ups represent the entrepreneurial spirit, which can be dampened by large organisational mentality; specifically, my gap analysis shows where the divide is greatest.

Checklists stop people thinking, and software makes risk management bureaucratic.

Advice I ignored and where it took me

- "You will never amount to anything based on the colour of your skin" — South African apartheid regime.
- "Without banking experience, you will never get into the financial services industry" — recruitment agent advice before I landed a job with Suncorp.
- "You are too nice to be CEO" — various colleagues who perceive that to be CEO you need to be a "bully".

I am inspired by entrepreneurs who go about providing customer solutions. I promote proper risk-management behaviours across all business people, and share my intellectual property for the benefit of the practice of risk management. Similarly, I champion merit-based ethnic diversity in leadership positions across Australia. Education has allowed me to benefit from standing in some of Australia's leading boardrooms and to be given a voice. I have worked in a volunteer capacity with CPA Australia to encourage students to consider the merits of studying a career in finance, business and accounting. The dynamic energy and enthusiasm evident in start-ups is something that I would like to see replicated in all organisations. Australia has an amazing opportunity to position itself as a hub for entrepreneurial activity.

To that end, I recommend start-ups collaborate with organisations and help them reinvent their strategy and

execution, including their leadership, risk taking and focus on customer. I believe that organisations can learn from start-ups and improve their leadership and risk management. This can be achieved through seeking mentoring support from a start-up, and even spending a day in a start-up.

My father would be proud to know that his legacy (opportunity versus risk) lives on, and resulted in me listing a start-up on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) on 4 June, 2015, his birthday.

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