



lightsout

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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THE CASE OF YOUNG DRIVERS

Last month, hundreds of teenagers dressed in black and pink filled St Francis of Assisi Church in Mill Park, 23 km north-east from Melbourne's central business district to say goodbye to Anthony Iannetta, 18, one of

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BOY BOARDERS

When I commenced caring for boarders in 1985 there were very few computers in the School, blackboards were still black and the time between a boy getting himself into trouble and being subject to severe

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MY SCHOOL & LEAGUE TABLES

Given that boarding staff help directly or indirectly with the academic advancement of their students, it is good that they should understand something of the debate surrounding the recent activation of the My

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ABSA NATIONAL BOARDING CONFERENCE

POINT OF DIFFERENCE
26 SEPTEMBER - 29 SEPTEMBER 2010



Relationships, Manners & Behaviour

By John Hendry,
Geelong Grammar School

I have worked to marry Restorative Justice, Positive Psychology and the universal moral (human) Values of Kindness and Forgiveness into the management and resolution of mistake. "To err is to be human." The lot of mistake is that of the child and adolescent. They will make mistakes. They will learn from mistake. BUT more importantly they will learn from how such mistake is managed. The true exercise of learning from mistakes is associated to the consequence of the mistake and how 'others' or 'authority' deals with this consequence in relation to the stakeholders (including the mistake maker). Mismanagement of mistakes renders only a negative long term result for all stakeholders and an abuse in the end of fairness or 'natural justice'. Natural justice is the achievement of a just, dignified and honest (transparent) resolution underpinned by equal treatment to enable a positive future. No advantage should accrue to any stakeholder (for should such accrue that stakeholder by benefitting distorts the dignity of the resolution).

The essence of any approach is aimed to change how all difference (dispute) leading to the exploitation of others, the promotion of self-advantage at the expense of others is understood, worked through and managed by each stakeholder. At its core my approach is to establish a life "living regime" (practice) where self advantage does not steer action (or thought). Rather all stakeholders benefit through comparable contribution constructed from individual contribution.

This is, of course, replacing competition, which promotes the concept of self (egotistic behaviour) advantage seeking through manipulation and deception (justified by the advocates of competition – "all is fair in love

and war") and the promotion of dishonesty and a distorting acknowledgement system of awards, rewards, accolade (public), self-satisfaction (ego place self first), all of which promote, in the end, activities that disposition, disrespect and ultimately harm another (others), with co-operation. Co-operation promotes positive emotion, is a sustainable and uplifting regime with a purpose based upon contribution to others (something bigger than self) rather than pitting one against another in what eventuates into a competition based upon a distorted ranking concept/system. These ranking systems are represented by public displays of wealth, power and so judged success. This breeds envy, a major negative emotion which leads to a competitive activity (survival justification – "of the fittest"?) to promote self (at the expense of others) with no regard for others except for that regard which may work to promote self further.

The fundamental 'learning' from mistake is found in the humane, constructive and kind management process of mistake. This 'classroom' recognises all damage, all stakeholders, all consequences to stakeholders promotes an understanding of each and every consequence, stakeholder and explores the fundamental resolution based upon a positive future for all stakeholders, including the perpetrators. Engagement by all stakeholders in this 'classroom' is essential learning, learning is essential, and such developed understanding underpins 'the way forward'. Kindness and Forgiveness must exist in the 'classroom', must underpin the 'intention' of the process and must direct the positive future (for all stakeholders) resolution.

We must believe in goodness. The above co-operative approach is honourable, has dignity for, and respect of, each stakeholder (including the community), will possess fairness, be transparent, not involve deception or abuse/manipulation, will be honest to all and will build trust. Anything less will cause harm. "I can support all this with the promotion of health and welfare of individuals and communities."

First, do no harm. - Hippocrates

John Hendry is Director of Student Welfare at Geelong Grammar School

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Would You Like Your Boarding School Featured in Lights Out?

We plan to feature two schools each edition. All you need to do, is write a brief article and send us some high resolution photos.

For further information, go to page 24 of this newsletter or contact ABSA.

The Fringe Benefits

Tax Issue

by Dr Tim Hawkes

Most readers will be aware that ABSA has been campaigning for boarding schools to be exempt from the obligation to pay FBT, even those boarding schools in metropolitan areas. Some encouraging progress has been made, but it is slow going.

The reaction of the Treasury and the Tax Office to a request for a “class ruling” on the matter of FBT being payable by Heads and staff of boarding schools, has taken an interesting turn over the last four months. The ATO have refused to give a class ruling.

Instead, the Tax Office wants to treat each boarding school individually and consider only private rulings. This will bury schools in paperwork and, I suspect, the ATO as well. However, the ATO would seem to prefer this rather than give a class ruling.

I will wade through the forms needed to obtain a private ruling. This could be useful as it should help to establish a “blue-print” to help other ABSA schools in their applications for private rulings. Stay tuned, but remember that we march at the pace of the Government on this matter, so do not ring me next week to find out progress!

In describing the intended way forward via private rulings, I have not given up on obtaining a class ruling. Indeed, I question the ethics of the ATO not giving a class ruling, when it has been requested. I remain certain that a number of our elected representatives in Parliament would not be happy at this request being given the “brush off” by the ATO. Therefore, ABSA will continue with this case and will advise members of any further news as it comes to hand.

Tim Hawkes

So Much to Learn

by Pete Upham

(Reprinted from the TABS Director’s Cut – Enewsletter)

Working at a boarding school was the second most humbling job I’ve ever had. I say second most, because I’m a parent. Parenting is my first calling. In a sense, I just moonlight at TABS. I’ve been a father for seventeen years. Some might consider that sufficient practice. Yet with three kids and a fourth due in February, I confess there are some nights I lay my head down convinced I’m no better at parenting than I was the day my oldest was born.

As we all know, the family is a little school. In the academy where I live and work, the original “home-school,” I play Head (at times), and by turns, Dean of Students, Algebra teacher, soccer coach, RA, chaplain, cook, housekeeper, accountant, and school nurse. Triple threat, indeed. More like ten-fold peril. Can you imagine the premiums if parents had to carry the same liability insurance as schools?

Not everywhere, and not for all, but for many of our schools, it’s been an uncertain, challenging, even difficult year—a year of reappraisals, reorganizations, reforms, and in some cases, reductions. All this doing over and overdoing was added to the not inconsiderable demand of simply being a good school for the students in your care. A good school: a dream daunting, inspiring, and sometimes as elusive as the desire to be a good parent.

For despite all of our science and quasi-science, our laws, our best practices, our bowing shelf of expert manuals and management tomes, there is something about your work that, terrifying as it may seem, survives on something like sheer nerve and improbable faith. The faith is not always religious, per se, but it is the faith in a future one cannot reliably forecast or even reasonably hope to expect. Things unseen. We are trying to teach people

who know everything—teenagers—things they naturally find it superfluous to learn. Now in seriousness, I was a teenager who was determined to learn everything the hard way.

If we’re honest, weren’t many of us just so constituted? In any event, my brief stint in the classroom as a teacher, and my somewhat longer stints in administration and residential life, have convinced me that what we aim to instruct in economics is quickly forgotten, in English literature frequently unattended, and in personal ethics, well, simply disregarded. Meanwhile and moreover, if your students are anything like my children, they possess an unsettling capacity to identify and probe the failures, deficits, and inadequacies of the adults in their lives. Teenagers are incredible hypocrisy detectors.

In my bleaker moments, I think what we teach we teach not to produce learning now, or even to prevent the inevitable errors, poor decisions, and moral lapses that seem intrinsic to human nature, but rather to give students a vocabulary they can use in the future to begin to make sense of their imminent—one hopes not-too crippling or colossal—mistakes.

Then again, somehow, against all odds, transformation happens every day—through our schools, at our schools, and more profoundly in many cases, after our schools. Perhaps “schools” is the wrong word, because have any of you been transformed by an institution? Not just influenced, but truly transformed? I doubt it. More likely, you’ve been transformed by people who knew you and loved you—knew you and loved you anyway. That’s my boarding school story: how three teachers took an interest in me for really no reason at all—and under, not the guise (that would suggest deception) but rather under the necessary sign of a discipline (in my case, history, philosophy and poetry; in your case, it might be Spanish, soccer, or sculpture) began to help me discover the world and myself, and to make the crucial distinction between the two. Only later, after many of the usual detours and heartbreaks, did I come to accept the equally crucial, sometimes painful, and ultimately liberating truth of which of the two was at the center.

Our schools are schools of things—buildings and landscapes and smart boards and laptops. They are schools of ideas—replete with often-brilliant dialogues and impressive designs. But most of all, they are schools of people. I believe that’s the secret sauce of your schools: not the new, green, science



Give students a vocabulary they can use in the future to begin to make sense of their imminent—one hopes not-too crippling or colossal—mistakes.

buildings; not the computerized elliptical machines; not even the curricula as carefully measured, fertilized, and manicured as the irrigated athletic fields so perfect they make me want to give up lawn care forever and trade in my mower for apartment life.

At the TABS Conference, I sat on a panel entitled Twenty Questions for 2020. Well, today, I have just one question for you: How do your schools, which I would describe as the formal expression of those things and ideas and, above all, people most likely to encourage transformation, how do your schools survive and flourish in a world that seems ever more transactional? A world that asks: I pay my money: what do I get? what do I get now?

In truth, boarding schools cannot entirely adapt to this world. We can only hope, once again unreasonably, to transform it. That’s right: having reluctantly acknowledged to yourself and your colleagues that your livelihood is built on a wildly speculative premise, and that the final results of your individual effort and sacrifice are generally unseen and largely unverifiable, you are now called to persuade—educate, if you prefer—others outside our small network of communities.

Our work at boarding schools can be assisted by but should never be reduced to protocols,

procedures, and policies—or even “value propositions,” unless we’re using a capital “V.” To do so is to wreck the conditions for transformation. Otherwise, “assessment” of students begin to stand in for knowledge of them. [Let’s not forget, our assessments for how well we prepare kids for college and for life are measured across decades and generations, not weeks or months.] Programs and facilities substitute for mentoring. Technique replaces love.

You know and love students. Some will be transformed, at uncertain times, in unexpected ways. That’s about all you can count on. As my mother used to say, “You have some nerve.” Your work, like a parent’s, is humbling, and I believe for that very reason, exalted. Nervy, faithful, humbled, exalted: it’s the life you’ve chosen for yourself. It’s the bed you’ve made. I would say “Rest assured,” but in my experience, boarding school folks get little rest, so such advice might be as discordant as it is premature. Instead, know that when that long day of your life is done, you can, in fact, rest well.

Until next time,

Pete Upham
Executive Director, The Association
of Boarding Schools, USA



The Case of Young Drivers

by Michael Carr-Gregg

Last month, hundreds of teenagers dressed in black and pink filled St Francis of Assisi Church in Mill Park, 23 km north-east from Melbourne's central business district to say goodbye to Anthony Iannetta, 18, one of five young men killed when a speeding car driven by Steven Johnstone, 19, hit a tree at 140 km/h in the early hours of the morning of 18th January. Many boarding school communities have been rocked by such events over the years and sadly, on the balance of probabilities, this year will be no exception.

Of the major risk factors associated with teenage road deaths, many were tragically present in Mill Park, namely the driver was male, he was speeding, had a blood alcohol level of .19, it was early morning, there was passenger overcrowding, and of course, driver inexperience.

Despite the fact that the national road toll has halved since 1989 and the number of young people 18- 25 year old drivers injured, has gradually declined each year, the horrific car smash has predictably reignited debate about penalties for hoon drivers and the Victorian Opposition and State Government began

trading blows in the media over who has the toughest anti-hoon policy.

It was Nelson Mandela, who said that there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its young people. Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released in September 2009 showed motor vehicle accidents are by far and away the leading cause of death in adolescent males (32%) and female (26%) behind suicide, so addressing the issue sensibly should go way beyond party politics and is of vital importance to those working in schools across Australia. Making it longer and harder to get a license, passenger restrictions, zero blood alcohol for P platers, and restrictions on in-car mobile phone use have all contributed to this result. But clearly as a society, we cannot rest on our laurels and ignore the leading cause of death in Australia for our young people. More needs to be done.

As it stands now, as a result of the deaths of these five young men, hoon drivers face having their cars crushed, whoever wins this year's Victorian election, which is curious given there

have been no peer reviewed studies showing the car crushing is an effective deterrent to young people. It transpires that Victoria will be in a position to run the world's first proper scientific study of whether this works.

So what does the research show? Evaluation studies in the United States concluded that vehicle impoundment/ immobilization is associated with declines in crashes and moving violations that are both statistically and practically significant. The experiences from New Zealand and elsewhere suggest that vehicle impoundment and confiscation are effective in reducing the road safety risks posed by sub-groups of drivers who have proved otherwise difficult to influence.

Currently, many states have impoundment for extreme speeding, currently 45km/h + over the limit, with increasing severity in consequences if there is re-offending. (48 hours first time, up to 3 months second time, and potential forfeiture third time).

Psychologists who study the behaviour of road users focus, amongst other things, on speeding. Victoria's 'Arrive Alive' road safety strategy document states speeding is involved in 25-30% of road deaths and injuries.

Speeding is one of the key ways in which adolescent risk taking is expressed, and increases crash risk dramatically. The research shows that every additional 5 km/h over the speed limit doubles the risk of crashing.

Doing 20km/h over a 60km/h speed limit increases the risk of a casualty crash by 31 times - the same as driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.2 (4 times the legal limit)!

The problem is that in many States and Territories the current penalty for travelling 20km/h over the limit is 3 demerit points and a fine. The authorities are much tougher and stronger on drink driving - the risk of a casualty crash at 0.2 BAC (4 times the legal limit of 0.05) increases by 30 times too, but

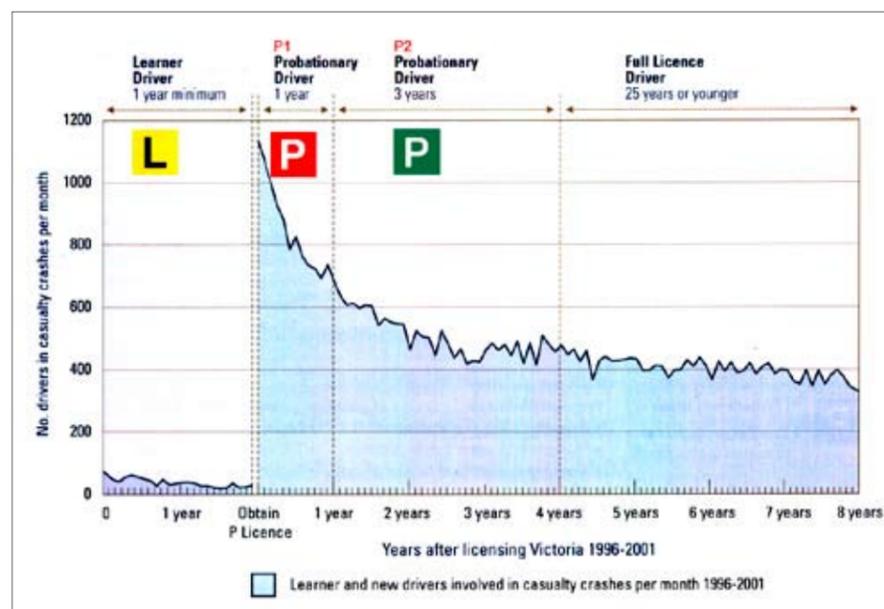


the penalty for this tends to be long periods of licence cancellation and P platers needing to start their P licence all over again and when they return to driving they have to put a device in their car (an ignition interlock) which stops them from driving if they have been drinking. Many Australians who care about the health and welfare of the next generation need to ask themselves why was it so easy for Steven Johnstone's car to be driven over the legal speed limit early on Monday morning? Most of us drive a car with a speedometer that goes up to 240 Km/h - a design feature that could only encourage the very speeding behaviour that contributed to the deaths of five young men early on that Sunday morning.

Vehicles are also becoming increasingly powerful and are readily available to young people who are tempted to use vehicles

beyond legal speed limits. The problem is that there are no physical barriers to speeding in the way vehicles are currently designed. External limits on behaviour are much more effective than education alone. Speed limiting technology is still in embryo and it is gratifying to know that Australian trials are underway. In the meantime if State Premiers want to take evidence based action to prevent the carnage on the road, then effective and appropriate consequences for such dangerous high risk speeding behaviour is needed and with respect, 3 demerit points and a fine just doesn't cut it.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is the author of "When to really Worry" (Penguin 2010) an Adolescent Psychologist and sits on the Victorian Minister of Roads Psychology Advisory Group.



The table shows how inexperience combined with a sudden cessation of supervision increases the likelihood of motor vehicle accidents.



International students bring global perspective to Prince Alfred College

by Dr Linda Vining



Above: Head of Boarding at Prince Alfred College in Adelaide Tim Agnew, Deputy Head of Boarding Phil McLaughlin with Captain of International Students Chawis (Boom) Chamnarnkit.

A tall, well-spoken young man from Thailand carries the responsibility of School Prefect, Boarding Prefect and Captain of International Students at Prince Alfred College in Adelaide. Chawis (Boom) Chamnarnkit has only been in Australia for one year but already teachers and students have recognized his outstanding qualities of leadership. Manager of Admissions, Suzanne Moorhead, says that Boom embodies the qualities of a 'Princes Man' - compassionate, caring, hard working and a good all-rounder. "He gives his best to everything he tries and he is a fine role model for all boys," said Suzanne.

In a city that counts the education of international students (across both school

and tertiary sectors) as its fourth largest export earner, it is no surprise that one of Adelaide's oldest and largest schools is an educational hub for overseas students. Prince Alfred College started accepting international students in 1959. Today five percent of its student population of 1050 enrolments comes from China, Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

Headmaster Kevin Tutt says that overseas students enrich the culture of the school. "We appreciate the different perspectives they contribute and the way they support our global vision for the school. They remain very loyal to their school when they leave, and the school has one of the largest alumni databases in the world. Our Old Collegians Association provides an extensive and wide-reaching base for global business," he said with pride.

Overseas students enrich the culture of the school. We appreciate the different perspectives they contribute and the way they support our global vision for the school



Above: Manager of the Education Expo Elizabeth Christie, with PAC Headmaster Kevin Tutt and Manager of Admissions Suzanne Moorhead.

Right: Prince Alfred College celebrated its 140th Anniversary in 2009

The Reception to Year 12 School is affiliated with the Uniting Church and educates boys from early childhood through the preparatory, middle and senior schools. It offers the International Baccalaureate curriculum throughout, along with the South Australian Certificate of Education. As well, it provides vocational training for students who want to move directly into the workforce or industry based training. Each student learns a second language, starting with Chinese in Reception. In 2010, the boarding school will welcome 120 boys from around the country and around the world. There are three boarding houses on campus. Homestay accommodation is also available for international students.

Director of Boarding, Tim Agnew believes that being close to the CBD is a great aid to integration. "Senior boys can go into town to the city markets or Chinatown and eat multicultural foods, go to church, mix with university students and enjoy a happy social life. This helps build a feeling of identity and connectedness," he said. Suzanne Moorhead says that international students integrate quickly through a variety

of support groups, including the International Students Transition Program (ISTP), specialized staff and the pastoral care team, language lessons and excursions. But that does not stop overseas boarders suffering homesickness, says Boom. "I tell boarders that the best way to overcome sadness for their family and friends is to throw themselves into everything, including sport, study, social events and meeting girls!"

Over 90 percent of PAC international students go on to university, many of them in Australia. When I asked Boom, what he planned to do when he finished school in 2010 he said, "I was thinking of going to London to study economics, but I have fallen in love with Australia - its people, its environment and its lifestyle, so I'm planning to stay here to do a degree at an Adelaide university instead."

Suzanne Moorhead and the PAC marketing team will be at the 2010 Education Expo in March at Adelaide Showground to showcase the many different opportunities the school offers students from Reception to Year 12.

About the author
Dr Linda Vining is the Director of the Education Expo™ to be held in Adelaide on 20 and 21 March and Sydney on 26 and 27 June. For details go to www.edexpo.info



Happiness

NOTICE BOARD MATERIAL

Curiously enough, those that seek after happiness by seeking to indulge themselves in as many pleasurable experiences as possible, are often the ones for whom happiness is difficult to find.

Long-term happiness is not always found in owning a fabulous dress, winning the Grand Final, or having millions of dollars in the bank. Soon you will get bored by the dress. Soon you will have to start training for next year's competition. Soon you will realise that money does not buy happiness.

The Sydney Happiness Institute suggests a number of strategies to enhance happiness including:

- 1. Design the life you want and set your-self goals.**
Failure to do this can result in an aimless life driven by the whim of fate, and it is worth remembering that fate is not always kind.
- 2. Look after your health.**
Teenagers need to sleep 9-10 hours a night, have a healthy diet and get regular exercise.
- 3. Be optimistic.**
Positive people live longer than pessimistic people. An optimist sees a bad event as short term and being suffered largely by others. A pessimist sees a bad event as long term and as being suffered only by themselves! They are dominated by negative thoughts.
- 4. Enjoy good company.**
Make friends and look after your friends. Avoid bad company and people who "put you down".
- 5. Practice assertiveness but not aggressiveness.**
Understand your unique strengths and abilities. Develop resilience and a positive self-image.
- 6. Learn to be happy now...**
even without that dress or that Grand Final win. Learn to see the magic in the moment. Learn to enjoy the journey.
- 7. Do something about it.**
Happiness does not arrive by doing nothing except feeling sorry for your-self. We need to do something which is going to contribute to our well-being. Say something kind. Help someone. Go for a jog. Switch off the TV and go outside and look at a tree. Put on some great music and get into a place and a mood where you can process the day and think of ways to improve for tomorrow



Depression

Depression is one of the fastest growing ailments in teenagers. Most people have periods of unhappiness, but when the "sadness" becomes too frequent or too long, it is important to:

- talk to someone, and
- seek professional help.

Some numbers that might be useful are:

- 1. Kids Helpline - 1800 551 800**
- 2. Lifeline - 131 114**
- 3. Salvo Youth Line - 9360 3000**

It is worth remembering that you are a miracle of creation that has been miraculously born on a fantastic planet. It is a planet which would be poorer for you not being a part of it, for you have much to offer this world...and the world has much to offer you.

Reprinted from The Kings Herald

A few simple tips to start off the year

By Professor Tim Sharp

Get going with a positive approach to 2010 with the following tips from our very own Professor Tim Sharp (aka Dr. Happy)



- Set yourself some clear goals for the year *what would you like to do this year that will bring you happiness and success?*
- Make sure you get your year off to a good start with an appropriate health routine
- Focus on all the great things that are going to happen this year *(and write them down to ensure they're tangible and clear)*
- Ask yourself which relationships you already have in your life, and which new ones you could form to boost your sense of connectedness this year
- Make this the year you really focus on your strengths
- And throughout it all...*don't forget to have fun, play, laugh and dance!*

Dr Tim Sharp

Do you have **GAP's** in your boarding roster?

Letz Live specialise in the recruitment of GAP / Residential assistants from around the world.

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Letz Live

ABSA Research Article:

Understanding Boarding School from Residential and Experiential Education Perspectives

by Brad Papworth (ABSA), Andrew Martin (University of Sydney), and Paul Ginns (University of Sydney)

Proponents of boarding school attest that boarding offers something unique through the experience of living in community in a residential setting. However, this perspective is often based on the assumption that boarding offers something significantly different from day school education and that the distinction can have positive implications for boarding school students. To explore this assumption, in this article we look at residential and experiential education as two factors that differentiate boarding from day school experience. We then examine the potential impact of these two factors on young people's academic and non-academic outcomes and link this back to implications for boarding school.

Residential Education

Residential education is broadly defined as education provided in an environment where students reside and learn outside of their home. It usually refers to the care and education of young people. Typical forms of residential education include boarding schools, preparatory schools, foster care or orphanages. At times, however, the term residential education is used to describe some forms of outdoor education or specially designed education programs where participants live in residence (e.g., American 'charter' schools, elite sports programs, gifted and talented programs, environmental education programs). In the Australian context, the goal of residential education programs is the development of young people and is generally a broadly-based educational program that occurs through living in a group setting at a school.

The residential education perspective suggests that through living in residence away from home, there is unique potential to address young people's academic and non-academic outcomes. However, there is generally no theoretical basis for this assertion, signalling a strong need for generative theory and research on this issue. What literature does exist tends to be descriptive or narrowly empirical. The descriptive literature on residential education typically describes the types of programs conducted. The empirical literature tends to be narrowly focused on relatively few outcomes of specific residential programs. This limited research suggests that residential education can positively impact children's emotional and behavioural development – and in the case of specialized (e.g., clinical) populations

has been found to improve self-esteem and interpersonal relationships for children with emotional and behavioural problems.

Experiential Education

Experiential education tends to be an umbrella term encompassing outdoor and adventure education, environmental education, gap year programs, and other educational practices such as active learning, co-operative learning, and service learning (Fig. 1) which utilise 'experience' as the vehicle for change. This perspective emphasises the personal experiences of the learner in their

environment and the changes in the individual that result from that experience – somewhat different from the more conventional, didactic approach to learning where the learner more passively receives information. Fundamentally, the experiential education perspective takes into consideration the interaction of students with the experience and teachers involved, with a view to generating new learning which can be applied and integrated for the future.

Experiential education is very much akin to the boarding school experience as both contexts are based around an experience in which students are challenged intellectually,

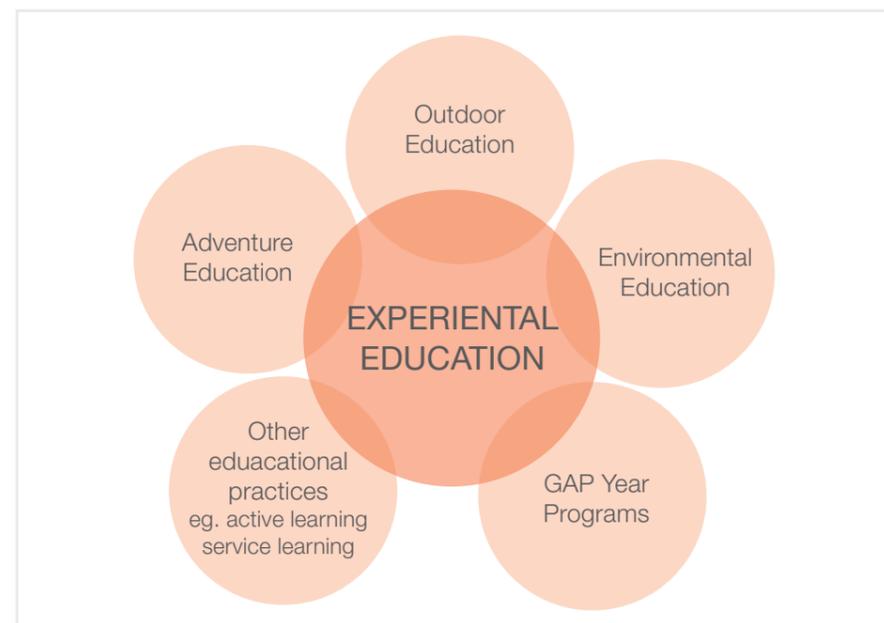


Fig 1: Relationship between experiential education and other related programs or philosophies of education which use this as a basis.

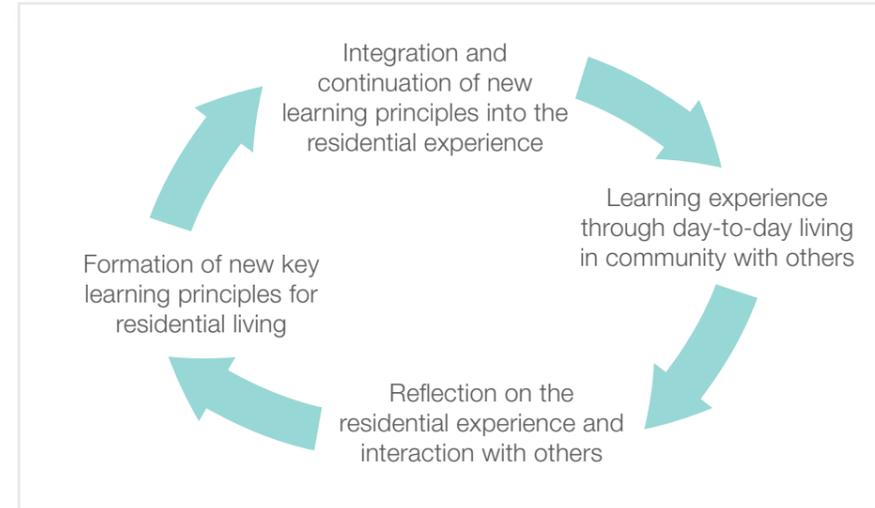


Figure 2. – Adaptation of the Experiential Learning model proposed by Kolb (1983) and Gass (2003) to the residential experience of attending boarding school.

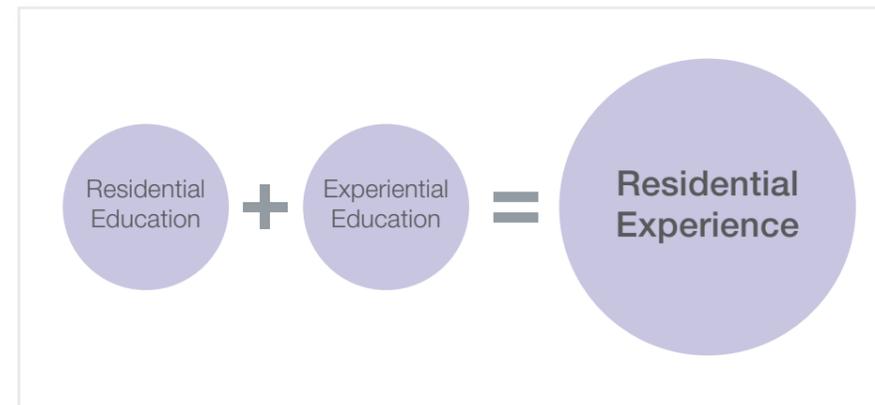


Figure 3. – Does residential education and experiential education combine to form the residential experience?

emotionally, socially, politically, spiritually, and physically in an environment away from home and one in which the student may experience success, failure, adventure and risk taking. Similarly, students are engaging and interacting with the environment and with other students and teachers through this experience. This perspective would suggest that through the immersion in the boarding experience, students explore issues of values, relationships, diversity, inclusion, and community. This can be seen in the adaptation of the Experiential Learning model (Fig. 2) proposed by David Kolb (1983) and Michael Gass (2003) to the residential experience. This illustrates the interaction of the learner with concrete learning experiences, reflecting on those experiences, thinking on this experience and forming a new understanding, followed by active experimentation, application and integration of this learning to how to live in the boarding environment.

As with residential education, limited research

has been conducted in the area of experiential education, in part because of the diverse range of programs. Notably, however, one substantial meta-analysis was conducted by Hattie, Marsh, Neill and Richards (1997) demonstrating that some aspects of adventure education were successful, particularly in the area of self-esteem. Importantly, effects due to adventure education programs improved and were sustained after the conclusion of the program and improved as the length of the program and ages of participants increased. Other studies with an empirical basis are worth noting and suggest that residential education and experiential education have positive effects on academic and non-academic outcomes; however, this tends to be more indicative of the therapy or program involved, rather than the residential experience per se. Hence, there is significant scope for further exploration of the impact of residential education and experiential education (Fig. 3) and how these perspectives explain effects attributable to boarding school.

Boarding School: Integrating Residential and Experiential Perspectives

We suggest that residential and experiential perspectives provide a basis for better understanding current understanding of the academic and non-academic effects of boarding school. In identifying the key elements of residential and experiential education (above), it is evident that boarding offers a unique combination of living in residence (residential education) and experience (experiential education). This results in a 'residential experience' (see Fig. 3) in which:

1. students from different backgrounds
2. are immersed in community
3. interact with other students and boarding staff,
4. on numerous levels (intellectually, emotionally, socially, politically, spiritually, and physically),
5. in an environment away from home, with a view to
6. generating new learning not possible through other modes of education.

Importantly, however, these contentions must be tested before they can be said to accurately explain the boarding experience. One means of testing them is to investigate the extent to which boarding school is different from other forms of education (e.g., boarding school vs. day school). Accordingly, with particular focus on boarding and day students, we seek to do just this through a large-scale research project funded by the Australian Research Council in a partnership between the University of Sydney and the Australian Boarding Schools Association.

Boy Boarders same but *different?*

by David Anderson



Boys still respond very favourably to the friendships and routines of a boarding school and on a sunny winter's afternoon love to kick a ball around an oval

When I commenced caring for boarders in 1985 there were very few computers in the School, blackboards were still black and the time between a boy getting himself into trouble and being subject to severe punishment may have only been a minute in time!

Things have changed noticeably, computer costs are now a considerable percentage of a school's annual budget, blackboards have turned into smart boards and there is significant consideration about why a boy initiated troublesome behaviour and what outcomes should take place.

On the other hand boys still respond very favourably to the friendships and routines of a boarding school and on a sunny winter's afternoon, love to kick a ball around an oval.

In 1996 I travelled to the United States and visited a number of boarding schools. The experience gave me some insight into

the future of boarding that may influence Australian boarding schools in the twenty-first century, changing the behavioural and social habits of boarders.

In the boarding schools I visited in 1996 many boarders were not included in organised weekend activities. Unlike many Australian independent schools, very few of the boarders participated in school sporting teams as there were not many school teams and the single 'elite' sporting team in each age group consisted of specially selected talented athletes. This caused boarders to spend a good deal of each weekend isolated in single accommodation glued to the Internet or DVD on days when the sun shone brightly outside the boarding house on beautiful ovals devoid of students. I immediately realised why the basic structure and character of boarding schools had followed a similar purpose and design for many decades before the advent of new technologies.



Some of my observations caused me to reflect upon:

1. The need for junior boarders to continue to be accommodated in modern unit modules where they have the company of their peers.

Smaller dormitories today can offer improved privacy for the individual boarder yet still provide some social contact with other boys in their first years of boarding.

2. The computer may not always be used for educational purposes by adolescents and could be an opportunity for some undesirable research which would be difficult for boarding staff (or parents) to monitor.

How much have we learnt since 1998?

3. Adolescent boys remaining most of the weekend in a confined darkened space without physical exercise and isolated from their peers transfixed to a computer may not be the healthy environment for a boarder.

Childhood obesity was not a recognised universal term in 1996.

Since my visit to the boarding schools in the United States in 1996 I have used that experience as a benchmark of many decisions we have made or not made at Shore School. Although I have returned to the United States on a yearly basis since 1996 I do not think any personal observation visiting schools since

The recent prospective parent to visit boarding houses who are considering a boarding education for their child are aware of the pitfalls of over dependency by adolescents on the computer

that time has been so profound. Today at Shore the junior boarders remain in modern shared dormitories and only the senior boarders are provided single rooms. Computers are permitted for academic work in the boarding houses but the boarding houses have no connection to the Internet. Internet access is provided in computer laboratories adjacent to the boarding houses which are supervised by campus staff for five hours after school six days a week.

It is compulsory for boarders to play two school sports each year and they are also encouraged to have plenty of recreational time exercising on the School ovals and in the gymnasium.

Boarders are also inspired by staff and other boarders to participate fully in other co-curricular activities such as the school music, drama and debating activities. In the classroom they are encouraged to write, spell and use adaptive expression and language, something still highly rewarded in the Higher School Certificate examination.

The reaction of boarding parents has been interesting since 1996. When computers became a household item a decade ago some

parents believed that computers were the ultimate source of knowledge and access to the machines would be necessary 24/7. The recent prospective parent to visit boarding houses who are considering a boarding education for their child are aware of the pitfalls of over dependency by adolescents on the computer. The younger parents sending children to boarding schools in the future, who have been using computers for at least half their life, understand the limitations of computers and also the dangers. They also understand that computers are tools of entertainment and not specifically designed for academic learning.

Campus staff must have the confidence to resist every aspect of 'change' and trust their own professional experience to introduce modern trends carefully into the boarding program. What is important to consider is that many pressures on schools today to 'change' do not come from staff or students but from outside the educational learning environment.

David Anderson
Shore School



Resilience:

Maintaining happiness through difficult times

By Professor Tim Sharp

Life is not always smooth sailing and even the luckiest and best of us face hardships at times. At The Happiness Institute we strongly believe everyone can experience more happiness but we're also realistic enough to know that no one will be 100% happy 100% of the time.

With this in mind we recognise that as humans, even as happy humans, we'll experience a range of emotions (both positive and negative). Accordingly, we also believe that happiness is not just about enjoying the

good times (although this is an important part of happiness) but in addition, happiness is also about working through the difficulties we all face from time to time.

Happy people tend to face these challenges more effectively; they're more resilient...and not surprisingly, resilience breeds happiness. So next time you're experiencing difficulties or facing adversity or struggling with challenges, try the following resilience tips tested and recommended by The Happiness Institute.

Tried and tested tips to keep you happy:



- Reach out and utilise your support network (happy & resilient people don't necessarily cope with everything on their own but rather, they reach out and appropriately ask for help)
- When and where appropriate, use humour and laughter to see things differently and to remain positive
- By all means, learn from your experiences, but don't dwell on the past (especially on or about things that can't be changed)
- Practice helpful thinking strategies and do whatever you

- can to remain hopeful & optimistic about the future
- Don't catastrophise and keep things in perspective
- Look after your (physical) health including making sure you get plenty of sleep and rest
- Accept the reality that the world, and the people in it, are not perfect, and accept the inevitability of change
- Don't lose sight of your purpose, direction and goals, nor of your dreams and ambitions

- Don't stop working towards your goals
- Try to learn more about yourself and focus on the positives within yourself
- Focus on all the positives in the world

Remember, happiness is not something you should only experience when things are going well. If you practise these resilience strategies then you should also experience happiness during times of difficulty.



Stressed? Depressed? Worried about your future?

You don't have to do it all on your own. Remember, one of the cornerstones of resilience is appropriately reaching out and utilising supports. As such, check out the following resources:

www.depressionmanuals.com

www.makingchanges.com.au

Bonus Tip:

And just for good measure, I thought you might like the following tip I recently came across in a mailing from the International Positive Psychology Association (and thanks to Marty Seligman). Although it's a bit "American" the principles are just as relevant no matter where you live and are particularly salient at this time of year.

Fifty years ago the average American family lived in a 1200 square foot house, there was one car per family, and one out of five family members went to college. Today the average American family lives in a 2500 square foot house, there is more than one car per licensed driver, and one out of two people go college. If you had told my parents this (living in our 1200 square foot house), they would have said, "that will be paradise!"

But America 2005 is not paradise. In spite of the tripling of real purchasing power in the last fifty years, life satisfaction has not budged and depression is ten times more common now. Ten times! The only tenfold change in mental illness of the twentieth century. This is called the "Easterbrook paradox," after Gregg Easterbrook's revealing book, *The Progress Paradox*.

What is the solution to the Easterbrook paradox? I believe we have squandered our wealth on the wrong sort of stuff, that we have engaged as a nation in "bad consumerism." We have used our wealth to buy more positive emotion. Positive emotion is like French Vanilla

ice cream. The very first bite is great but by the sixth bite it tastes like cardboard (and we keep eating anyway). Positive emotion habituates and shows tolerance (smoking more now but enjoying it less?). So the attempt to purchase positive emotion fails in the medium and long run because the pleasures evaporate (and the only emotion left is discontent when the new gizmo breaks). Purchasing Positive Emotion can only succeed in the short-run and it then requires frequent, new and more expensive purchases to keep any increment in Positive Emotion going.

The Pleasant Life cannot be successfully purchased in the long run. But flow and meaning do not have the fading properties of positive emotion. The Engaged Life (eudaimonia) and the Meaningful Life are the two alternate forms of happy lives. Can they be bought? Can we spend our funds on getting more flow and more meaning? Yes and this is your assignment for the holidays

Assignment

For the holidays give as many gifts for people you care about that will add to the amount of flow or to the amount of meaning in their lives. Doing this will add meaning and engagement to your own life, particularly if you avoid shortcuts. In general the key to this is giving activities not things. And for maintenance, follow the effects of your gifts and write them down to use next holiday season. A few examples

- Give a bridge line (an inexpensive telephone conference call) for a once a month call for the next six months to your widely scattered family.
- Fund a visit for a friend to see someone she loves but has not seen in years
- Adopt a family you know to be in need and give them Safeway and Target gift certificates.
- Donate bees, goats, llamas to friends through the Heifer Project (<http://www.heiferproject.org/>).
- Make a "treasure chest" for your child, with coupons redeemable for one reading hour with you, one trip to a ball game with Dad, two games of Monopoly with Mom.
- Give a bird feeder to a friend and mount it in a place that will brighten her day every day. Giving pots of herbs and berries or hundreds of daffodil bulbs works well also
- Give your child a complex Lego set that requires building over weeks with you.
- Give dance lessons or musical instrument lessons to people you love who do not dance or play music.
- Tape a Harry Potter volume in your own voice and give it to a young child to listen to (or tape a radio show from a 1940's script for someone who loves drama).
- Make the gifts yourself (e.g., cookies) and make the cards yourself. It's time consuming, personal, and it gives the people you care about the most precious gift of all—your time.

© 2004. Martin E. P. Seligman.

My School & League Tables

Dr. Tim Hawkes

ABSA Chairman



Given that boarding staff help directly or indirectly with the academic advancement of their students, it is good that they should understand something of the debate surrounding the recent activation of the My School website and its progeny of academic league tables.

With the activation of the Federal Government's My School website, the public is now able to compare the academic performance of Australia's 10,000 schools. General information about Australia's Government and Non-government schools is available in one place, together with a measure of student performance in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy.

This initiative has been described as a disaster by many educators and has led to threats of industrial action by teachers and school principals. The main concern is that the information given is but a simplistic representation of a school's performance and that the My School website is in danger of presenting misinformation rather than information. A further worry is that schools will retreat from a broad educational curriculum to one which is limited to preparing for the tests reported on by the My School website. Educators have every right to be concerned.

Evidence from overseas, particularly from Great Britain, indicates that this sort of public information about schools is quickly turned into "school league tables" to the detriment of many schools that may not rank well despite doing many wonderful things in education. The Federal Government was quick to deny that it was supporting the generation of scholastic league tables. This denial was, at best, naive, with it taking only 24 hours for league tables to be published in most of our daily newspapers when the My School web-site was activated.

How outraged should educators be? The answer is, quite a lot. However, this outrage should be tempered by a balanced understanding of the pros and cons of the My School initiative. Without wanting to trivialise the very real concerns that educators have, I present the following points to calm the tidal waves in the common-room tea-cups.

1. We already have scholastic "league tables" in Australia. For example, the end of the year in NSW and Victoria sees the ranking of schools by the media, according to Year 12 results. The concept of league tables is not new.
2. The concept of accountability is not new. Non-government schools are scrutinised by parents when they go

to choose a school. The investment of many thousands of dollars concentrates the mind wonderfully, with the result that schools are compared with each other very carefully. It is acknowledged that this careful comparison may not currently be as possible among some Government schools. Perhaps it should be.

3. Very few people like the shadow of accountability falling over them, however, experience shows that those who shun accountability often have something to hide. Schools need to be transparent. They need to give both to the Government and to the general public, an indication of how well they are using tax-payers' money.
4. The information given on the My School web-site is not limited to literacy and numeracy. Details are given on many other things such as the percentage of indigenous students, size, number of teachers, vocational education, Year 12 results and a statement written by the school about itself. Furthermore, by comparing a school's performance over a number of years, a "value added" indication can be ascertained.
5. More than one set of comparative data is given. There is a comparison

against the Australian average AND there is a comparison against statistically similar schools. The latter makes the understanding of a school's performance much more meaningful.

6. By looking at the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, a school is able to track individual student performance in these key competencies.
7. The information on the My School website is being supported by some very exciting software such as the "NAPLAN - Smart Package". This is a useful tool that allows schools to analyse individual student performance as well as that of classes and year groups. Furthermore, the program suggests teaching strategies to rectify the weaknesses. From an educational perspective, this information is gold-dust.

Having noted the points above, it is still fair to say that the public will have to be reminded that the quality of education given by a school is not easily reduced to a set of numbers. If they should want to find out about a school and its boarding community, they should visit the school and speak to its principal and boarding staff. The My School material should only be part of the information used

when evaluating a school. There are boarding schools that run dynamic leadership courses, that set out to train character and who offer life-enriching courses, all of which may not be reported on in the My School website.

The Federal Government also needs to improve the presentation of information on the My School website. Putting selective schools in the same mix as non-selective schools is absurd. Clarity also needs to be improved. If the Government wants to promote transparency, then let it reveal exactly how the index used to group 'like' schools, namely the 'Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage', is calculated.

To fellow educators, may I suggest that, whatever our views about the My School website, the information which is given to teachers about the individual strengths and weaknesses of students, can be very useful in trying to improve student performance, and in the end, this is what we should be trying to do.

I wonder what would happen if league tables were to be published on boarding houses in our schools. What would the measures be? Opinion on this will be divided, but I would suggest that one measure might be an indication of student/parent happiness, based on a suitable survey. Interestingly, the Federal Government is planning to do something like this for schools in the future, with the results

also placed on the My School website.

This intended initiative is a timely reminder that the quality of boarding care given to students is going to impact on a school's public profile in some way or other. The quality of care we give to our boarders will affect not only academic results, but also the reported levels of well-being. For this reason, all boarding staff should see themselves as playing a key role in shaping the public profile of their boarding schools.

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Q&A

The Times are Changing

by David Pyman



Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'.

Bob Dylan, From the album The times they are a-changin', Columbia Records, 1964

In 1964, folk singer Bob Dylan sung these immortal words, and in doing so managed to eloquently sum up the feelings of a generation. He tapped in to the generational divide that separated the 1950's style parents and the new generation that was about to embark on the hedonism of the 1970's.

Today, in 2010, we, the staff of Australia's Boarding Houses have seen that indeed the times they have a changed!

It was no so long ago, that before the infiltration of desktop computers in every room, or the ability of laptops to remotely access the internet, that one of the great challenges facing Boarding staff was in getting the students to stay inside the Boarding House!

In those P.F. days (Pre-Facebook that is), it was not uncommon for the students to spend hours outside, playing sports such as basketball, netball, cricket, tennis, football, rugby or any range of outdoor activities that

was the flavour of the month. The challenge for most staff was to get the students back inside, for events such as dinner, or heaven help us, study!

It is upon reflection of this that we can see just how much has changed. Today's students are almost permanently connected to each other. Social networking is the norm and it is an almost 24 hour obsession.

Our students also have a wide range of 'life' experiences that we could have barely imagined. In just one afternoon, they can enjoy a realistic experience on an alien planet, be part of the D-Day landings, spend time as a low-life thug or as part of a crack assault team. In doing so, these students would be happy to go days without ever seeing sunshine! Amongst the many issues this presents, is the emerging understanding of the effect a lack of sunshine can have.

It has been suggested in some journals that a lack of sunshine can affect the production of melatonin in the body which may lead to side-effects such as depression, weak bones and muscles, obesity and even Ricketts in young children. (Is it any wonder then that the stereotypical view of the computer nerd is one of an over-weight and somewhat pasty looking person?)

At St. Peter's College, we have used the introduction of new web-filtering software to assist in tackling this problem head on. The new software, Websense, gives us a great deal of control as to what and when students are able to access different parts of the internet.

In reviewing the students use, we decided on creating two different web filtering profiles. These two profiles have been listed as Social and Study.

The Social profile allows students access to social networking, youtube, messenger, iTunes store and many other sites that are considered to be for leisure purposes. During these times students are free to surf the internet within the constraints of the usual protective practices applied to internet access.

The Study profile allows students access to only those websites which are considered useful for study purposes. As such the websites that seem to have the ability to make several hours disappear at a time, such as social networking, youtube etc... are completely blocked.

Once the two profiles were established and the wide range of possible websites accounted for, the major challenge of implementing the profiles at appropriate times began.

For the Monday – Thursday schedule we have implemented the following schedule (note 1st homework runs from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm, supper begins at 8:30 pm and Year's 7, 8 & 9 head to bed at 9 pm):

Start Time	End Time	Access Filter
0:00	06:00 am	No Internet access
6:00 am	3:30 pm	Senior Student Filter as per school
3:30 pm	7:00 pm	Social Filter
7:00 pm	8:30 pm	Study Filter
8:30 pm	9:25 pm	Social Filter
9:25 pm	12:00 am	Study Filter
12:00 am		No Internet access

Friday nights are obviously different and thus allow a significant amount of social time.

Start Time	End Time	Access Filter
0:00	06:00 am	No Internet access
6:00 am	3:30 pm	Senior Student Filter as per school
3:30 pm	22:30 pm	Social Filter
22:30 pm	12:00 am	Study Filter
12:00 am		No Internet access

On the weekends, we have made two conscious, if unpopular decisions.

- The first is to limit the amount of time gaming is allowed. In doing this we are trying to achieve two aims; the first is to ensure we don't refuse our Boarding students the same enjoyments their day student friends enjoy.
- The second is to ensure the health of our students, by limiting the time cooped up inside on games. This balancing act has been conducted in consultation with our parents, student body and in particular our student leaders.

Start Time	End Time	Category/ Access Filter
0:00	8:30 am	No internet access
8:30	10:30 am	Study Filter
10:30 am	12:30 pm	Social Filter
12:30 pm	3:30 pm	Study Filter
3:30 pm	5:30 pm	Social Filter (Gaming Allowed)
5:30 pm	10:30 pm	Social Filter
10:30 pm	12:00 am	Study Filter
11:30 pm	12:00 am	No internet access

The result is a gaming ban and use of study filter from lunch time until mid-afternoon.

This block-out of time wasters and gaming has certainly proven to be successful (if initially unpopular with our Junior students)! It has been most noticeable during this time that instead of disappearing into the abyss of facebook, myspace, youtube or Call of Duty 4, our students have used the afternoon to get out and about in the sunshine. Suddenly, the students that were struggling to see sunshine on a weekend are out riding bikes, kicking balls around and generally getting the sunshine health professionals recommend.

Whilst there is no doubt the times they have a changed, with careful consideration, discussion and implementation, procedures can be put in place to 'encourage' your students to venture out from their caves and in doing so, turn back the clock in one small but vital way.

David Pyman
Assistant Head of Boarding
St. Peter's College

Please email all responses to drk@twgs.qld.edu.au I look forward to your correspondence.

Coming Events

Australia

26 to 29 September 2010

ABSA National Boarding Conference:
POINT OF DIFFERENCE
Recognising Diversity in Our Communities
Hotel Realm, Canberra

UK

13 April 2010 - 15 April 2010

Easter Course (Residential)
Dauntsey's School, Wiltshire

04 May 2010 - 06 May 2010

Annual Conference for Headteachers
Barcelo Torquay Imperial Hotel, Torquay

12 July 2010 - 14 July 2010

Annual Conference for Matrons
and Medical Staff
Britannia Hotel, Coventry

USA

23 - 29 June 2010

TABS Risk Management Seminar
Wilmington, Delaware

20 - 23 July 2010

TABS Residential Life Academy
and TABS Admission Academy
Boston, Massachusetts

2 - 4 December 2010

TABS Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois

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