



lights out

AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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OPTIMISM FROM THE CHALKFACE

You would be surprised at how often secondary school teachers like myself hear the words, "I couldn't do that," in conversations about career choices. From these merlot-soaked discussions it would seem that...

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The Chief Executive of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF), Andrew Penfold, is delivering a key note address on Indigenous boarding school scholarships at the ABSA Conference 'Point of Difference'...

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EFFECTIVE PASTORAL CARE IN BOARDING

As educators we have a very important role in helping adolescents to achieve their potential, both academically as well as personally. Well aware of our obligations, we aim to care for...

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Fragile Cease-Fire *on School Funding*

Dr Tim Hawkes

ABSA Chairman

As I write, Australia is going to the polls again to elect a new Federal Government. The outcome of the election will impact on boarding schools because most boarding schools get some measure of funding from the Federal Government. Therefore, it is important that those within the boarding industry understand something of the background and the issues relating to the Federal funding of boarding schools.

The funding of independent schools has whitened the bones of the Labor party for well over a decade. Successive campaigns by the Labor Party to reduce the funding of independent schools culminated in Mark Latham's disastrous election bid in which he moved his heavy artillery against a "hit-list"

of leading independent schools. Latham, and the Labor team, misjudged the mood of the Australian people and they paid the price by being sent to the Siberian wasteland of opposition benches.

Then "glasnost", a period of reconciliation and openness. 2006 saw Labor abandon its class-war. Warren Mundine, the ALP National President, said the "politics of envy were over", that Labor needed to regain its educational credentials and parents who made the sacrifice to send their children to private schools should be thanked.

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"Glasnost" was followed by "perestroika", a period of restructuring. Julia Gillard embarked on a "hearts and minds" campaign to recast the conquerors of the 2007 Federal Election as kindly benefactors towards independent schools. In a speech to the Sydney Institute on 15 April 2010, Gillard said:

In the past the question of school funding has been used to divide the Australian community ... My intention is not to follow this path.

The Education Minister announced a review of school funding and stated firmly, This is not about taking money away from schools. Lest anyone be tempted to see this as only as a politician's promise, this statement was followed up with, No school will lose a dollar of funding.

However, the roses placed in the muzzles of guns may soon be removed because of a growing worry that Federal Labor may not be able to ignore the submission by the Australian Education Union to the current funding review which states:

The review cannot ... turn a blind eye to the relative exclusivity and fee structure of private schools which means they enrol a greater proportion of students from higher socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds with lower support needs.

This submission contrasts with that made by the Independent Schools Council of Australia who wrote:

The review must recognise the significant private contribution to the costs of education made by independent school parents and communities. The outcomes of the review should not operate to discourage these contributions.

There is also unease among some independent schools about a perceived lack of political balance in the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). Some fear that this body will threaten the work of David Gonski's Federal Government Review Committee on School Funding. It is worth noting that although independently educated students make up about 40% of secondary school enrolments in Australia, independent schools have no direct voice on MCEECDYA. The result is predictable. Whether rightly or

wrongly, there is reduced confidence that MCEECDYA is able to represent the interests of independent schools.

The Education Minister may need to do more to ensure that the leopard has changed not only her spots but her eating habits and become a herbivore among the tasty pickings of independent schools. This is all the more important in the light of enrolment trends. Between 2009 and 2017, it is anticipated that the number of students in government secondary schools will fall by 5%. Within the independent schools sector it is anticipated that enrolments will increase by 25%. The Labor party may well be looking at 700 new independent schools by 2050. Therefore, Labor may need to disarm its anti-independent school militias or face the risk of fighting an increasingly large enemy.

Much of the Education Minister's rhetoric is soothing and I have no problem in stating that, thus far, I think Julia Gillard has done a good job as Education Minister. Better teaching, better curriculum, better standards, better fairness, better accountability, better transparency - all admirable stuff.

However, the issue of transparency may prove tricky for the government. Does it want to reveal that the average funding of a student at a government school is \$11,874, whereas at a Catholic school it is \$6,442, and at an independent school it is \$5,810? Does the government want to reveal that the average cost of educating a student at a government school is about \$12,000 per annum, but that some government schools are funded significantly in excess of this figure in a manner which many would see as grossly unfair? Does the government want to reveal that a student at a government school in New South Wales in 2008 got \$5,352 more than a student in a non-government school, whereas a student in a Western Australian government school got \$8,945 more, and in the ACT a student at a government school got a staggering \$10,133 more? The Education Minister may face questions about the fairness of states and territories getting vastly different amounts of government funding for their students. Transparency is fine providing you are going to like what you see.

The Federal Education Minister has always been a believer in needs-based funding. Her more recent pronouncements are about allowing school assets to influence funding. This could be a worry for it threatens to return



Many school assets exist as a result of self-help initiatives. Penalise these initiatives and this will develop a welfare mentality that this country can ill afford.

Labor to the disastrous policies of the Latham era. Some of the best-resourced schools are Catholic schools. Mess with Rome and you'll be politically excommunicated.

Many school assets exist as a result of self-help initiatives. Penalise these initiatives and this will develop a welfare mentality that this country can ill afford. What about the well-resourced government schools? Will their funding be cut? I can't see this going down well in some of the heavily-financed selective schools.

If government funding becomes linked to the measure of a school's wealth as reported on the MySchool website under the Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) score, the Education Minister also has a worry. Of the hundred wealthiest school communities, as measured by the ICSEA scores, 61 were government schools, 21 were independent, and 18 were Catholic. Uh-Oh!

Hostilities in the school funding debate can only be staved off for so long by "Let's wait for the review" talk and by "Let's sit down together" talk, and "Let's play nicely" talk. At some stage, the waiting and the talking will stop. Policy will be formed and the cease-fire will be over. Already the peace is as fragile as a politician's promise. Sitting members in marginal electorates are the least protected if the Federal Government begins to add the caveats and codicils needed to reverse its promise that no independent school need fear any proposed changes to school funding.

Conflict is only going to be avoided if the Federal government is able to ensure that no school, either government, Catholic, or independent, is going to be worse off in

relation to government funding. Furthermore this insurance needs the vital qualification – IN REAL TERMS – so that a school's ability to fund its operation is not compromised by its funding being frozen, let alone reduced, in the years ahead.

Tim Hawkes
ABSA Chairman
September 2010



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Understanding Approaches to Learning

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

In a previous Lights Out article, “Powerful Answers To Important Educational Questions” (Vol 3 Issue 2 June 2010), we discussed one of the key challenges of educational research: making a strong argument that differences in one variable cause differences in another variable. We used the example of Personal Bests (PBs), an approach to learning where a student adopts goals which are (1) specific, (2) challenging, (3) competitively self-referenced, and (4) self-improvement based. Using longitudinal research methods, Martin and Liem (2010) argued that the more a student adopted a PB approach to learning at Time 1, the higher would be his/her mathematics and literacy achievement at Time 2 (one year later), holding Time 1 achievement constant.

Although widely adopted by many sports people, PBs are an approach to learning which are only just beginning to be investigated by educational researchers. However, decades of educational research have given us a firm understanding of a range of other key approaches to learning, and their relationships with educational achievement. Marsh, Hau, Artelt, Baumert, and Peschar (2006; p.313) define approaches to learning as “the way students address and handle learning tasks in school and the extent to which they are able to achieve their learning goals by applying strategies, motivating themselves, and by controlling and regulating their own learning processes.”

Recently, Marsh et al. (2006) reviewed the approaches to learning literature to develop short, self-report measures of the 14 most widely investigated self-regulated learning strategies, self-beliefs, motivational constructs, and learning preferences, using nationally representative samples of roughly 4000 15-year-old students from each of 25 OECD countries. Psychometric analyses of students’ responses found the 14 approaches to learning could be measured accurately in

all 25 countries, indicating these educational constructs are generalisable across cultures. These measures can therefore be used by educators and educational researchers to gain important insights into the dynamics of student learning. In this Lights Out article, we briefly review some of these approaches.

“the way students address and handle learning tasks in school and the extent to which they are able to achieve their learning goals by applying strategies, motivating themselves, and by controlling and regulating their own learning processes.”

SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES: MEMORIZATION AND ELABORATION

It is widely accepted by educators and educational researchers that more effective students are able to regulate their own learning, using a variety of learning activities as appropriate. Memorization refers to a group of learning strategies (e.g. learning key terms; reading material aloud multiple times; learning

to the point that material can be recited) which aim to create exact representations of to-be-learned information in long-term memory. While such strategies are sometimes derided as “drill-and-kill”, they may be useful for overlearning basic facts and terms, freeing up cognitive resources which may then be used for processing and understanding more complex topics. Students using such strategies will be likely to agree with statements such as “When I study, I try to memorize everything that might be covered” and “When I study, I practise by saying the material to myself over and over”.

While memorization strategies may be useful in achieving some learning goals, they are unlikely to generate a deeper understanding of a topic, or the ability to transfer that understanding to new situations. Deep understanding and a capacity for transfer and application are more likely to result when students use Elaboration strategies. When a student uses such strategies, he/she will attempt to relate what is to be learned to what he/she already knows, and explain to herself the real-world implications of the topic. Students using such strategies will be likely to agree with statements such as “When I study, I try to relate new material to things that I have learned in other subjects” and “When I study, I figure out how the material fits in with what I have already learned”.

COOPERATIVE & COMPETITIVE LEARNING PREFERENCES

Another facet of being a self-regulated learner is the capacity to learn effectively as both an individual and as part of a team. Some students may frame the process of learning in competitive terms; for instance, they will be likely to agree with statements such as “I like to try to be better than other students”, or “I learn faster if I’m trying to do better than the others”. While a competitive approach to learning may energise some students, it may be associated



with a range of undesirable outcomes, such as reduced intrinsic motivation for learning and failure avoidance. In contrast, students taking a cooperative approach to learning will be likely to agree with statements such as, "I learn most when I work with other students" and "It is helpful to put together everyone's ideas when working on a project"; this approach is often associated with a broad orientation towards mastery learning rather than ego fulfilment.

Increasingly, learners will learn (and work) interdependently, so an understanding of students' preferences will be important to schools in planning curriculum changes. For instance, if the majority of students at a school expect to learn independently, introducing cooperative learning activities and assessment tasks into the curriculum may challenge many students. If such changes are to improve learning, they may need to be accompanied by substantial explanations of their purpose and worth.

In previous Lights Out articles, we have introduced elements of a collaborative research project between ABSA and the University of Sydney. This project seeks to understand the effects of boarding school on academic and non-academic outcomes and includes the above measures of key approaches to learning; in concert with other demographic, motivation/engagement, and school-based variables. This study has vital scope for understanding approaches to learning of day and boarding students and the potential to provide powerful answers to important educational questions

For further information about this study, contact Brad Papworth:

b.papworth@edfac.usyd.edu.au
or (02) 9683 8490.

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Resilience: The story of Anvil!

By David Pyman

St. Peter's College, Adelaide



Man never made any material as resilient as the human spirit.

As educators it is our mission to investigate and question what it is that separates those students who are able to find success in their endeavors and those that seem to always struggle. What is it that makes the difference? Is it purely IQ? – Note that the average IQ of Nobel prize winners is only 120! Is it the all important Emotional Quotient? Is it attributable to family wealth and circumstances? – whilst a lack of wealth and disjointed family life can point towards lower achievement, we all know that not all wealthy and seemingly happy homes produce 'successful' children.

Or, is it as much research is now suggesting, a combination of IQ, EQ and the resilience of the student?

So what is resilience? How do we define it?

Resilience is not easy to define, but in a basic sense can be described as 'the ability to recover quickly from illness, change or misfortune.' When it comes to teaching resilience to teenagers of the i-generation, demonstration is much better definition. With this in mind I stumbled across a tool that can be used to both entertain and educate.

It was with some enthusiasm that I sat down to watch a peculiar little documentary film. The documentary had won rave reviews from those who had seen it and nothing but confusion from those who had the movie described to them.

Anvil! The story of Anvil is a documentary based on 1980's Heavy metal band Anvil. On the surface, the movie is about a Canadian Heavy Metal band that came close but never quite 'made it'.

Not to be discouraged however, lead singer Lips (Steve Kudlow) and best friend and drummer Robb Reiner, have not given up hope. Despite their fame vanishing more than 20 years ago, both men working menial jobs and being well into their fifties, these men are determined to have their moment in the Sun again.

As the film progresses we witness the men continue the struggle of keeping their dream alive. It is both sad and heroic, as we witness these middle aged men making demo tapes and posting them off to producers in the hope of being 'found' again.

During an ill-fated tour of Europe, the two best friends have their emotions and confidence tested to the limit. We witness them argue with each other, despair at the lack of organisation, argue over non payment of fees and play in empty pubs.

Through all of this however, two key characteristics stand out. The first is the endearing and enduring friendship of the two men. Through all of the ups and downs they have witnessed, their friendship has never changed. Yes they argue (and some of it is truly magnificent and in a manner that only aging heavy metal musicians could do), but they always put their friendship first and their differences of opinion behind them. How powerful is it to witness two middle aged heavy metal men verbally express their love for each other?

The second is the incredible sense of resilience displayed by the ever optimistic Lips. Here is a man who could be quite justified in feeling as though life has let him down.

Anvil is a band that has been quoted as an inspiration for a large number of highly successful heavy metal bands including Metallica, Anthrax, Slayer and Guns 'n' Roses. Lips could be forgiven for wondering why it is that these bands, who have copied much of Anvil's approach to music, have made their fortunes while he missed out.

Not once however do we see or hear Lips question his fate. Through more than 20 years of knock backs and disappointments, through meaningless tours playing to empty venues and even through the humiliation of having to borrow money from his family members to produce a new record that no-one wants to buy, Lips is resolute in his belief in the band.

The story of Anvil is one that should be shared with our students and colleagues. Within this story of two friends there is much to be learnt and much to be appreciative of.

Within this story, we can show our students the real meaning of friendship. We can point out that friends will disagree with each other, that times will not always be easy or fun and that real friends are able to support each other in times of difficulty. We can also promote discussion about the benefits of resilience.

In the end a quick Google search reveals that Lips and his best friend have indeed had their faith in their band rewarded. The movie has become such a cult hit that their last album was reprinted by a major record company and they have since toured with a number of major bands, played at major music festivals and finally found the fame and fortune they have long persevered for.

David Pyman
St. Peter's College, Adelaide



Optimism from the chalkface

By Cody Reynolds

St Spyridon College



If passion for learning and shaping the lives of young people is your motivation for going to work each day, how do you continue this motivation when it is met with such stony faced indifference and inconsiderate class-time discussions of 'Gossip Girl'?

You would be surprised at how often secondary school teachers like myself hear the words, "I couldn't do that," in conversations about career choices. From these merlot-soaked discussions it would seem that 'high school teacher' rates somewhere between 'garbage collector' and 'snake wrangler' on the list of must-have-jobs. It's odd; I had never really considered teaching to be one of those unmentionably challenging occupations until I had the whiteboard marker in my hand and thirty faces beaming up at me, waiting to make a snap decision about whether they would listen to my excited ramblings or completely disengage from my presence.

I'm both disappointed and impressed by how fast adolescents are able to make this decision. In a fraction of an instant they can size you up and shrewdly infer whether or not the information you have to offer is of any relevance to their life that day. If it isn't, you may as well be invisible. In assumptions of this nature teenagers

are exceptionally stubborn and freakishly accurate. They can sniff unpreparedness like a Great White sniffs blood.

The sad (and seemingly surprising) reality for these kids is that they don't yet know everything. Shocking, I know. To borrow from famed educational expert, Mary Poppins, these students can't yet "see past the end of their nose" and hence are often prone to disengage from lessons without recognising the bigger picture of their education and its impact on the broader context of their own development.

Herein lies the greatest challenge facing the dynamic, young teacher; apathy. If passion for learning and shaping the lives of young people is your motivation for going to work each day, how do you continue this motivation when it is met with such stony faced indifference and inconsiderate class-time discussions of 'Gossip Girl'? It was just this question I was pondering in class last week when a little Year

8 hand shot up with a "Sir, will you please read my poem and tell me what you think?" I looked at the work on the page and I was taken aback. Amongst the messy scrawling was absolute magnificence. This thirteen year old had written an allegory about love that would have made any bard blush in inadequacy. One side of my mouth twisted up involuntarily. "Is it good?" In this one moment I realised the power of balance that optimism had armed me with. Teachers everywhere may face lesson after lesson, day after day of apathy and unresponsiveness, and indeed this may be true of many other professions, but there will always be instants like this one that relight the glimmer of excitement - for teaching and for just being.

In so many aspects of life, the grind and crunch of obligatory tasks (the paperwork, the report writing) can become so overwhelming that it almost blinds you to your real reason for being, but in one fleeting second that reason can jump to the forefront of consciousness so powerfully that it seems to have never faded. Such is the power of optimism. Even when the light is slight and fleeting, it still has the power to cast out the entirety of the darkness.

"Yes. It's good."

Taken from The Happiness Institute
Monday Morning Tips

Truly 'Of Service'

The Timbertop Service Programme

Scott Stevens

Deputy Head of Timbertop





Face the days that lie ahead with a spirit of adventure, compassion honesty and confidence. Brave the stormy seas that are bound to confront you, determined to sail your ship on to the quiet waters that lie ahead. Help those whom you may find in trouble and steer clear of the whirlpools of destruction which you will meet on your voyage through life.

Be not afraid of who you are, what you are or where you are but cling implicitly to the Truth as taught in the religion of your following.

If you do all of these things, you will be “of service”. If you are “of service” you will make others happy and you will be happy too.

Dr Kurt Hahn- German Educator and founder of Gordonstoun School, Outward Bound, Duke of Edinburgh Scheme



Above: Timbertop students been ‘Of Service’ in the Victorian High Country

These words of Dr Kurt Hahn very much resonate with me not only because it encapsulates and underpins many facets of the Timbertop programme but because it articulates so wonderfully what it means to lead a meaningful and engaged life.

During Term Two at Geelong Grammar School's Timbertop Campus one of the major themes governing students' lives is that of service. Through participation in School and Community Service weekends throughout the term it is hoped that students not only have a great time, meet some new people from our district but also gain an understanding of what it means to be truly ‘of service’. The provision of compassionate service is also one of the four pillars of educating youth established by Dr Kurt Hahn. Many of Dr Hahn's ideas are central to the Timbertop way and, as best we can, we attempt to hold true to his principles. Every week from Wednesday afternoon through to Friday evening our students spend time at the home of a family from our district or at our campus in the Victorian High Country which is essentially a working property of some 1000 acres. Students are provided with the means to be completely self sufficient and go out into the community with the expectation of camping in backyards and cooking their own meals on camping stoves. Although on most occasions our students' hosts allow them to sleep in a barn or a back room and cook them lovely meals. We ask the host families to, for the most part; uphold the aforementioned

notion of service. The students work incredibly hard and in many instances save the host family considerable time and labour on a given project. Tasks range from fencing to working at the local kindergarten whilst been hosted by the teacher. Almost without fail students return on Friday tired but glowing as a result of the weekends activities. Indeed the trip home (staff go and collect the students) with students is one of my favourite times in a Timbertop week.

When introducing the service programme to students I take some time and go to great lengths to explain why we have a service programme and explore the notion of being ‘of’ service. In a society where the notion of service is so easily linked to some form of transaction – financial or otherwise, I explain to students that the aim of the Timbertop service programme is to provide them with the opportunity to be ‘of service’ through provision of time, labour, efforts etc for others (some who they will never meet again) without expecting anything in return. Indeed the only thing that they should be expecting is the knowledge that they have done something for others and contributed willingly to a greater cause.

A bonus outcome for the school community is that as the service term progresses the students organically begin to adopt the lessons learnt to their own pastoral environment. Acts of kindness and a willingness to put others before themselves begin to become more common place and occur without staff

encouragement. It is during this term that the boarding units begin to get a buzz about them and the students develop a sense of belonging to their own small community where service to others is not just a nice thing to do but an essential part of their co-existence. Additionally the lessons learnt through involvement in the service programme both at school and in the community help foster and nourish the development of a boarding community based on kindness and empathy. The hope and the aim of our service programme is that a seed is planted within in each student and as they develop into the leaders of tomorrow they have at the core of their life philosophy the notion that contributing to society through acts of kindness and nobility without seeking individual gain is paramount in their development as global citizens.

Through engaging and facilitating student involvement in service activities it is also hoped that students begin to understand how integral acts of service of any magnitude are in leading a meaningful and engaged life. The “meaningful life” is one the three life pathways that students become familiar with through their exploration of Positive Education principles at Geelong Grammar School. Ultimately the students recognise that through provision of service they are not only helping others but helping themselves to become grounded and effective members of the wider community.

Introducing *Andrew Penfold*



The Chief Executive of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF), Andrew Penfold, is delivering a key note address on Indigenous boarding school scholarships at the ABSA Conference 'Point of Difference: Recognising and Embracing Diversity in Our Community' on Monday 27 September. In this edition we trace his involvement in the field of Indigenous education over the past seven years - which has been shaped by his own life experiences and tracks back to his own childhood experiences at boarding school.

AIEF is a non-profit organisation that provides boarding school scholarships and career pathways to empower Indigenous children to build a future through quality education and careers. It was established in 2007 to replicate and scale the work Andrew had been doing in this field at St Joseph's College since 2004.

Andrew's father was a young doctor who died at the age of 28 when Andrew was six years old and his mother, a former university

student, was 27 with no career and no money. But a trust fund from his father's life insurance provided financial assistance for Andrew's education. By the time he was 13 years old and in Year 8 at school he was a rebellious teenager, lacking a father to counsel and guide him in these crucial teenage years and with a young mother running a restaurant in Glebe. He knocked about with many kids from the local Housing Commission flats in Glebe and Redfern and around Railway Square in Sydney and came across many local Aboriginal kids - seeing first hand their disadvantage and alienation and the differences between his life and theirs. This gave Andrew his first insight into Aboriginal Australia.

By the time he was 15 he had lived in 12 different houses and been to five different schools. He had a lot of freedom and was largely disengaged from studying, rarely scoring more than 30% in any of his school exams and was a disruptive influence on other kids at school. Seeing a crisis looming, Andrew's mother and grandmother intervened and begged the Headmaster at St Joseph's College to accept Andrew as a boarder into Joeys in Year 9.

In his first year at St Joseph's College Andrew remained rebellious. He jumped the walls and ran away several times. He was suspended twice in his first six months and spent many Sundays in detention when other boys went out for the day. He was also in constant fights and obtained poor results in his school exams and reports, lingering at the bottom of his classes. However, things started to turn around in Year 10 with some intervention from his Boarding Master and the coach of the 15As rugby team, Br Anthony Boyd. After playing in the 14Es in Year 9, Br Anthony promoted Andrew to the 15As in Year 10. His confidence and self esteem grew and his life started changing. He stopped rebelling and started working, and became good mates with the boys he had been fighting. In Year 10 he was awarded a prize for Most Improved in Mathematics. In Year 11 he was awarded a prize for First Place in Mathematics, and in Year 12 he was awarded a prize for First Place in each of Mathematics, History and Economics.

After St Joseph's, Andrew went on to University and received a Bachelor of Laws with Honours and had a successful career as a finance lawyer



and investment banker over nearly 20 years with some of the biggest and most successful global firms in Sydney, London and Hong Kong. Andrew's successful career in law and investment banking enabled him to have the capacity to dedicate five years of his life to Indigenous education work on a voluntary basis which led to the work of AIEF today.

the cornerstone of the AIEF model is that schools are empowered with the autonomy to select, enrol, educate and provide pastoral care for Indigenous students and have direct relationships with their families and communities without a middleman.

The final catalyst came a decade later from the Bali bombings in 2002. Andrew's entire rugby team from the Hong Kong Football Club were killed in the Sari Club bombing whilst on a rugby tour to Bali, which Andrew missed due to a family holiday. These were 12 blokes that Andrew played rugby with every Saturday, socialised with every Friday and Saturday night, had lunches with their families on Sundays, and trained with a couple of nights a week. All of them gone in one senseless act of carnage which devastated their families and the broader Hong Kong community.

From this gut wrenching traumatic experience something great emerged and it changed his life again. Along with a couple of other mates in Hong Kong, Andrew drew upon his previous experience in law and banking to establish a charitable fund called the Hong Kong Rugby Bali Fund. He became a trustee and company secretary of the fund, and chaired the fundraising committee that raised over \$2

million and distributed the funds to the widows and orphans of his team mates, as well as supporting the education for 100 children in Bali whose parents had been killed or injured.

Instead of living in forlorn grief over the traumatic devastation of Bali, he now felt inspired and empowered in seeing that by giving his time and energy and drawing on his business experience in law and banking to help raise a substantial amount of money, he had helped to change the lives of people going through hell.

In 2003, at a Sunday BBQ with family and friends whilst visiting Sydney from Hong Kong, Andrew heard from his uncle Tom Drake-Brockman, a Riverview Old Boy, that St Joseph's College had started enrolling a small number of Indigenous boys. Andrew was intrigued and he, his wife Michelle and Tom went to see the Headmaster at St Joseph's College. The Headmaster explained what the College was doing and Andrew was so inspired he offered to raise several million dollars on a voluntary basis so that the programme could be expanded and sustained at the College.

At this time, Andrew was still living in Hong Kong but soon after, in August 2004 at the age of 38, he left the banking and finance world and 'retired', moving back to Sydney with his wife Michelle (who he met at a Joeys school dance) and their three children. In September 2004 Andrew put a formal proposal to the College to establish the St Joseph's College Indigenous Fund and the work began.

Andrew worked on a fulltime but voluntary basis establishing and running the St Joseph's College Indigenous Fund for approximately five years and by mid-2010 that fund had raised approximately \$6 million – at no cost to its contributors – and helps to support 40 Indigenous boys in perpetuity at the College. The dedication of five years of Andrew's life, working around the clock on a voluntary basis, was the culmination of these three personal experiences that still drive Andrew's determination in this work:

1. His own experience seeing first hand how a great boarding school with great teachers, facilities and support could change the trajectory of someone as disengaged and rebellious as he was into a successful educational outcome and career - his first hand experience of the transformational power of quality education;

2. His exposure to disadvantaged Aboriginal kids from his teenage days knocking about in Glebe and Redfern; and
3. His experience in Hong Kong from the Bali bombings – seeing how he could use his own skills and experience to do something positive and constructive to help others rebuild their shattered lives.

In the seven years that have passed since Andrew embarked on this journey, he has witnessed first hand the stunningly successful and unambiguous proven results being achieved by the Indigenous students and schools he works with, making him increasingly determined to keep working hard to provide these opportunities for thousands of marginalised Indigenous children. This resolve led to the establishment of AIEF in 2007, to replicate and scale the work commenced at St Joseph's College on a larger national basis.

After 18 months of detailed discussions with the Australian Government, in mid-2009, AIEF signed an agreement for the Government to contribute \$20 million to the AIEF Scholarship Programme, with AIEF undertaking to raise an additional \$20 million from individual, corporate and philanthropic investors. This \$40 million joint venture underpins AIEF's target of educating 2,000 marginalised Indigenous children in financial need through a sustainable and robust 20-year business model, and supporting them in their transition from Year 12 to tertiary education and meaningful, productive careers.

From a boarding school perspective, the cornerstone of the AIEF model is that schools are empowered with the autonomy to select, enrol, educate and provide pastoral care for Indigenous students and have direct relationships with their families and communities without a middleman. AIEF provides scholarship funding directly to the school for the maximum number of boarding places the school is able to offer, and AIEF underwrites this funding on a long-term sustainable basis so the school can have certainty in developing and growing their Indigenous education programme, without unwieldy bureaucracy and process. This is a completely unique scholarship funding model that leading boarding schools have been waiting for, and it empowers leading boarding schools with autonomy to do what they do best.

Effective Pastoral Care *in Boarding*

By Hannah Wise



As educators we have a very important role in helping adolescents to achieve their potential, both academically as well as personally. Well aware of our obligations, we aim to care for students whilst they are in our subjects and tutor rooms before we release them at 3.15 into the care of their families. But what do we do when students do not return to the family nest at the end of the day, but instead go 'home' to a sprawling house that accommodates ninety four other people and sees them interact with ten or more 'parents' in one week?

I talk of course of boarding school, no longer the archaic and gruesome experience portrayed in literature and film. Boarding is now a dynamic and exciting time that gives many students the opportunity to experience an education that is not available to them otherwise, while developing independence and

friendships that will last a life time. Caulfield Grammar School is in the unique position of providing a co-educational boarding setting in the inner city to a range of students from a vast array of backgrounds and cultures. This requires that not only are the students provided for in regards to accommodation and the vast amounts of food that growing adolescents require, but that their diverse pastoral needs are also adequately and appropriately met.

On a recent Professional Development Seminar conducted at AISV, "Providing Effective Pastoral Care in Boarding", I met with a range of people who come from a diverse sphere of schools which provide varying levels of boarding for students across Victoria. This meeting gave us the opportunity to share our experiences as well as our strategies, when dealing with issues that face students who also call school their home.

As a collective we decided that the main issues facing our students are homesickness, academic and personal transition, stress and sleep management. Putting yourself in the position of a boarder for only a minute allows us to understand the difficult transition they are often faced with:

- Being away from family and friends and establishing a new and different relationship with those close to you.
- Often coming from a school where you are the top student, then transitioning to somewhere in the middle during what is a tough academic adjustment.
- Moving from a smaller school where you know everyone, to a campus with over 1200 other students.
- Finding the demands of a new routine overwhelming and experiencing difficulty adjusting to this new schedule.
- Learning to deal with the stress of starting exams and SACs for the first time.
- Having to find a new peer group, not only within the boarding house but in the day school as well.
- Sharing rooms with others and being told when to eat, sleep and go to school.
- For others it is not only these changes but the massive cultural shift that comes with living in a new country, a life that is overall distinctly unlike that of home.

The good news is that most students are very resilient and adaptable, and within a few weeks, sometimes a couple of terms, they are settled into boarding life.

After long discussions regarding the needs of boarders, the conference looked at how to best deal with the transition of students as well as how to give them ongoing support during



their time away from family. Walking away from the conference, I realised just how lucky we are in Morcom House, as the Head of Boarding Tim Gallop and Assistant of Boarding Darren Lowe have effectively put in place a range of structures that best support students and parents in their transition to boarding school.

The good news is that most students are very resilient and adaptable, and within a few weeks, sometimes a couple of terms, they are settled into boarding life.

The first and most important pastoral tools are the Boarder's Orientation and the first weekend of boarding, which ensure that the beginning of a student's time in the house is positive. Before beginning the school year, most new boarders have been shown around the house and therefore have some idea of what to expect upon their arrival. To help ease into Morcom House, the Boarder's Orientation gives both the family and the new boarder a chance to explore the Caulfield grounds and experience staying in the houses without having too many other people around. Parents, guardians and siblings stay with the new boarder for the first night, and during this time there are also various tours and meetings

to explain some of what to expect in the initial days and weeks. Boarders are introduced to key people within both the day and boarding school, and parents are given an indication as to what is 'normal' behaviour to expect from their child during their transition. Whilst this may seem a basic and somewhat obvious practise, many would be surprised to know that not all boarding houses are so inclusive of families and guardians in these early stages and other schools were envious of Caulfield's established tradition in regards to this. This has shown over the years to be an effective means of helping students settle into their new environment. Parents have found that even assisting their son or daughter with simple things such as setting up their room can really help to make them feel more at home.

The next important pastoral challenge is to ensure that the school year starts on a positive note, with new and returning boarders mixing and getting to know each other. Setting the 'tone' of the house depends on two main components – the first being that each student takes it upon himself or herself to be supportive and respectful of all other boarders, the other relies on the staff to foster an environment where one hundred teenagers can live harmoniously together, (at least most of the time). These areas have been a particular focus for Morcom House as we endeavour to continue improving the high level of support and pastoral care we provide for each and every one of our students.

The first way of doing this is the ever important and much anticipated Boarders' Closed Weekend. Whilst it may sound draconian not to allow students leave from the boarding house on the first weekend of the term, it is actually an excellent way for new and old students to mix in

a non-threatening way, as well as start to build and develop skills that students will need for their life in boarding. This weekend has a range of fun activities including self-defence, sport, games, trips around the local area, eating competitions and the ever anticipated 'Iron Gut'; A traditional obstacle course initiation for new boarders that sees students developing friendships and creating a new boarding community for the year ahead. This is an incredibly powerful means of facilitating conversation, fostering new friendships and encouraging students to step out of their comfort zone, whilst doing so in a supportive environment. Having such a dynamic and friendly start to the year not only distracts from the initial pangs of homesickness but is a key tool in creating a sense of community within Morcom which in turn ensures the house runs effectively. Bonding events such as these are continued throughout the year and it is plain to see the resulting enhanced House spirit Morcom House enjoys during any inter-house activity. These strategic, yet enjoyable events are a very effective way of building a strong system of pastoral care within the boarding setting.

The next tool in building a supportive pastoral network is to develop an atmosphere which is both caring and structured so that all students are given an equal opportunities to achieve their own personal bests in a range of activities and pursuits. As discussed at the seminar, there needs to be a clear mix of friendliness and approachability, coupled with clear boundaries and the effective use of routine and consequences. This is where it is very important to instill clearly stated policies in regards to expectations, rights and responsibilities for all parties involved – students, staff and parents. It is imperative that routines begin early, are enforced and regulated by all involved. For example,



Our students have proven that although they are incredibly resilient, it is the times that reach out to help one other to solve problems or act as a supportive 'family' that really make the difference.

although it is sometimes difficult to make one hundred students do homework on a Sunday night, the expectation is that this will happen, regardless of who is on duty. Some of these routines may seem restrictive to outsiders, but it is the predictability and stable nature of the house which helps many borders to settle in during those first few weeks.

With these routines firmly in place, it is then the job of the adults involved to not only enforce these rules, but also create an open and clear dialogue with the students. One of the most effective pastoral tools of our boarding school is the strong emphasis on the importance of open communication. Communicating when a student is experiencing trouble with their roommate or finding it difficult to settle during homework time allows tutors to work together to support students, as well as preventing or minimising more serious issues from developing. As tutors, we can play an integral role by sharing our observations and interactions with the appropriate people, hence allowing students to feel safe and supported, without having to explain themselves to every new person on duty. This goes hand in hand with establishing open communication channels with parents, encouraging students to call their parents about issues as well as parents calling the school with any concerns. This ensures that many issues are settled with the minimum of fuss, or able to be sorted

out with the parties involved, promptly and effectively, with the student's welfare being the highest priority.

Additionally, the vast and diverse network of people who work with Morcom House, also provide opportunities for every border to mix with a wide range of people, and hopefully find at least one person, but most likely several people, they can turn to in times of need. This could sometimes be as inconsequential as a conversation about the footy or sport, or as significant as a shoulder to cry on when struggling with a major issue like homesickness. Furthermore, with such a vast community comes the responsibility of looking after each other and this is something that is often underestimated. Our students have proven that although they are incredibly resilient, it is the times that reach out to help one other to solve problems or act as a supportive 'family' that really make the difference. It is heartening to see big strapping footballers take a little Year 9 under their wing, showing real empathy and understanding about the homesickness that develops at the most surprising of times.

The most important thing about boarding is that even as a subject teacher, you have a key role in providing effective pastoral care to boarders. Being aware of their situation does not mean offering special treatment or

feeling sorry that their parents are hours away, because 99% of the boarders that I know would resent that type of attitude. Instead, it is important to acknowledge that they have a different lifestyle to many other students in their class, and doing this by asking questions and being interested in their real home is a great way to do this. As a class room teacher you also have the opportunity to provide another avenue of communication and an alternative person for boarders to turn to in times of need. Sometimes you being *outside* the boarding house will be the reason a student may need to turn to you. If you make the effort to make these connections with boarders I promise you that you will be exponentially rewarded. The warm, friendly and inviting community that is Morcom will embrace you, and when they do, I am living proof that once you are in, you will never want to leave.

Hannah Wise is the Boarding Supervisor at Morcom Boarding House and Day School teacher Caulfield Campus, Caulfield Grammar School, Melbourne, Victoria.



Striving for **Best Practice:** *A Process for Continuous Improvement*

by Marie Wood

Senior Education Adviser: Catholic Education SA

The commitment of school leadership and boarding staff to provide quality care for their students combined with the demands of an increasingly litigious society has been the driving force behind Catholic Education SA's introduction of its 'Continuous Improvement Program' (CIP) for boarding schools.

The program is based on a quality assurance model and is designed to assist schools in evaluating and improving the service they offer to families and students in their communities. Its focus is a formative one; identifying needs within each setting's context, high-lighting good practice and providing recommendations to assist in improving outcomes.

Initiated in 2006, the CIP program has been developed as a response to issues raised by boarding house staff and principals. The wide-ranging challenges they face have become evident through the relationship developed between the Catholic Education Office and schools over many years as they receive support in areas of staff training, legal/industrial advice and marketing directions.

The need for consistency in standards of practice across Catholic Education SA's boarding schools was the initial driver for the process. Discussions with heads of boarding, principals and an external residential care consultant led to an understanding that more than a checklist of standards was needed. While boarding house staff required an objective benchmark exercise it was clear that they also wanted to be affirmed and



supported in their work and to gain advice on areas for improvement.

An emphasis on interaction with staff is at the heart of the program both during the visit to the boarding house to conduct the audit and in follow up support and training offered.

EMPHASIS ON PROCESS

CIP is based on the adoption of a shared continuous improvement approach to be used in applicable areas as a checklist or blueprint to identify specific requisites. It offers opportunity to share areas of excellence and

to highlight gaps or areas where improvement can be achieved through a team approach.

The Continuous Improvement Program looks at the manner in which each boarding house:

- markets, promotes and communicates its availability and services.
- fulfils its commitment/s to parents/guardians and students.
- manages its operational aspects.
- provides services to students
- maintains the comfort, safety and standard of each facility.

An emphasis on interaction with staff is at the heart of the program both during the visit to the boarding house to conduct the audit and in follow up support and training offered.

These key areas form the basis of a checklist distributed prior to the external consultant's visit and identifying the details of day-to-day practical considerations for best practice standards. This tool then becomes the focus for a discussion with the head of boarding to expand upon areas of special interest or concern. Other opportunities for the consultant to gauge the 'life' of the community are gained through a walk around the buildings and grounds, dining with the students, and interviews with a sample of staff and students.

As constructive feedback is at the heart of the program, a 'top line report' is prepared on the day of the visit and outlined in a meeting with the principal and head of boarding at the end of the day. Following the visit a comprehensive final report is prepared reflecting the energy and vitality of each boarding house. It

responds to each of the checklist items providing a comment on the boarding house's capacity to meet the requirement and in turn it is these standards that inform the action plan discussed at a further meeting with the head of boarding and principal.

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The program fosters a partnership approach by working through the framework with boarding schools followed by training, mentoring and support. It aims to be a collaborative process using the Continuous Improvement Program as a tool for engaging in quality and organisational development activities as well as building the capacity of Catholic boarding facilities.

Follow up support has included visits to the schools, responses to legal and industrial issues and mentoring heads of boarding as well as the sharing of instances of best practice with other schools.

The findings from the overall program have informed professional development topics. Catholic Education SA provides an annual program of training for boarding school staff including an introduction for those new to boarding and another program for existing staff offered in city and country locations.

The opinions of parents/carers on the quality of CESA's boarding offerings are also shaping each boarding school's direction. A longitudinal study consisting of surveys

and phone interviews covering hundreds of Catholic boarding families reveals high satisfaction levels as well as opening up areas of further development.

Feedback on the process from boarding staff and principals has been extremely positive, to the extent that Catholic Education SA is now considering the possibility of extending the offering nationally. Given that the establishment of national guidelines for boarding standards is on the agenda, the program may well offer a foundation for schools to evaluate their practices in a collaborative process that offers support, affirmation and future direction.

Marie Wood
Senior Education Adviser:
Catholic Education SA

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Boarder, Boarder – *How does your garden grow?*

St Hilda's School – Boarders' Herb & Vegetable Garden

Kim Kiepe, Head of Boarding



THE IDEA STAGE (GERMINATION)

At a Boarder Student Council Meeting in Term 1, the Year 12 representatives lodged a discussion item for a proposal to have a Boarders' Herb & Vegetable Garden. The Senior Boarders were inspired by the Year 6 Flower and Fairy Garden. Support was gathered from fellow boarders, so the idea was put forward to our Head of School. Mr Crawley encouraged the boarders in developing a garden within the middle of the boarding precinct.

THE DESIGN STAGE

Ideas were sought from all sectors of our boarding community. Girls from different year levels submitted garden design layouts. Practical advice was offered by our Maintenance Staff. Rural parents were consulted for their vegetable growing tips. Mothers with green thumbs were able to offer ideas for easy herb harvesting.

THE PLANTING STAGE

One Sunny Saturday afternoon, a group of Junior and Senior boarders visited the local garden section of Bunnings. Interesting conversations and discussions took place as we did mathematical calculations of garden bed width and plant spacing. Eventually, we loaded up the mini-bus with our seedling selection. Back to St Hilda's, via the obligatory McFlurry stopover, was a nice outing on a Saturday

THE HARVESTING STAGE

Planting out the garden beds was a learning curve on the Sunday afternoon. It has been such a worthwhile experience for the younger and older boarders to be involved in caring for the garden. A watering and fertilising schedule has been devised. Our Catering and Hospitality Kitchens have been invited to make use of the harvest. Our vegetarian boarding students have particularly enjoyed the lettuce varieties. Our garden is thriving with baby carrots, baby spinach, tomatoes, lettuce, strawberries, rhubarb, broccoli, oregano, chilli, mint, chives, basil, parsley and coriander. Leilani (pictured with the hose), reflects "it is great to have a Boarders' Veggie Garden, because it is really fun to tend and weed and water and it provides delicious tasting veggies of course. All of the veggies are growing really well, particularly the mint – it's almost overflowing from the pot that it is growing in!"



Yes – you can say *no!*

By David Anderson

Children today live through exciting and remarkably rapidly changing times. The age of communication and advanced technologies allow children at our schools and in the home to keep abreast with many new global developments and innovations.

Students in our schools no longer have to wait until Christmas for new gifts! Personal connections with satellite broadband, mobile broadband, dialup internet, web hosting and access to home phone products is common place. All the available digital services provide children with innovative information and suitable social networks and appropriate entertainment.

Parallel with new technologies, students and their teachers are striving for higher levels of performance in the classroom, art, drama and music and in sporting endeavours. Children also have a significant understanding and appreciation of environment issues on a local, regional and global scale. Parents at home and educators in schools are constantly acquainting students with new facilities and pedagogies to improve children's learning from an early age.

New amenities, learning techniques and improved teaching methods support students in their constant effort to achieve success as they pass through stages of development prepared to enter a highly competitive world. Teachers today are also enthusiastic to embrace their own learning and professional development throughout their careers. In June I was greatly encourage at the annual conference of the International Boys' School Coalition in Philadelphia USA noting that many of the keynote speakers, workshop presenters and delegates working cooperatively across the world on educational action research projects had already spent over thirty years in

the classroom and were still highly motivated teachers continuing to learn.

Yes these are exciting times for students and teachers in schools. The only dilemma confronting those that make decisions on behalf of the lives of students at school is maintaining some balance in the child's (and parents) expectations. Opportunities in today's world abound and are reinforced by sophisticated media backing that promotes a society confirming that children will need to succeed and earn a substantial amount of money to enjoy a satisfactory life style.

If the child is subject to too many expectations or pressures at school the experience of a healthy education can become counter productive. Although some children become disheartened when they think they are failing to keep up with peers other children can suffer from depression when they feel there is too much pressure to succeed in their lives. This can be manifested by sleep deprivation, lack of resilience, anxiety, bullying, drug abuse and suicide.

The role of parents, teachers and boarding staff who have the student's interest at heart have to be prepared to monitor the workload of the children in their care. Those concerned for children must be constantly examining a student's management of time in regard to the daily school schedule, examinations, homework and involvement in co curricular activities.

A climate of care and protection including the social and emotional needs of students must be maintained as the array of attractive choices in the lives of the children accelerates and grows.

Parents who demonstrate the most sensible and reasonable expectations of their children

The role of parents, teachers and boarding staff who have the student's interest at heart have to be prepared to monitor the workload of the children in their care.

have the most comfortable and balanced off springs. Parents who have expectations exceeding their child's ability are likely to have children exhibiting signs of depression or lacking in confidence to face the appropriate daily program at school. Unfortunately children who are under extreme external pressures can even revert to cheating at school to achieve results above their own ability. Senior students suffering from pressures of over achieving can drift into a world influenced by alcohol or drugs.

Parents and teachers must be vigilant always gauging the total performance of their children or students. It is not uncommon for primary school age children to commence the school day by attending a 7.00am tennis lesson and conclude the afternoon program with additional academic and the completion of homework tasks. Add travel time to school into this equation it results in little time for the appropriate social interactions with family and peers or for the child to experience informal activities designed for fun.

A recent study in Florida actually discounted the involvement of children in additional early age educational programs due to the



possibility of failure or burn-out. This can happen to young learners more quickly compared to children experiencing a more relaxed start and less structured approach to their life of learning .

No - is a disappointing word but a word still necessary in the education of children. When dealing with the lives of children adults must be prepared to use this response to maintain balance in the lives of the young.

The provision of time must be offered to children to allow them the necessary opportunities to interact socially with each other and with members of their close and extended families. Time to play, free of competition, has become an precious commodity.

Staff working in boarding houses have a superior opportunity to monitor the performance of boarders. Residential staff can check the emotional behaviour and academic

progress of the boarders by comparing what is appropriate across age groups and between individuals of the same age. It might be as important for residential staff to suggest a student takes a more relaxed approach to some of his or her responsibilities as the more common practice of teachers promoting a stronger worth ethic in their students.

Finally the growing child or adolescent has many needs however one of the basic requirements is for the adolescent to have nine hours sleep each night. This is a necessary for students to maintain the motivation and energy to remain healthy to cope with personal, school and parental expectations.

Staff who care for boarders should be aware of many of these modern twenty-first century pressures on the students in our schools today.

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IBSC 17th Annual Conference June 2010
Based on a keynote address by Denise Pope who founded SOS: Stressed Out Students project, a research and intervention effort to work with K-12 schools to counter the causes of academic stress.

Coming Events

Australia

26 – 29 September 2010

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

USA

2 – 4 December 2010

TABS Annual Conference
Baltimore, Maryland

3 & 4 February 2011

Residential Life Workshop
Saint Andrews School
Boca Raton, Florida

UK

2 – 4 January 2011

Annual Conference for Housemasters
& Housemistresses
Forest of Arden, Coventry

16 – 17 January 2011

State Boarding Schools' Association
Annual Conference
Maidstone

27 – 29 January 2011

Annual Conference For Deputy Heads
Cheshire

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