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AUSTRALIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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OUR FIRST CONFERENCE

The first National Conference of the Australian Boarding Schools' Association was a great success, with over 220 delegates enjoying the charm of Canberra in its beautiful spring livery.



TEENAGE GANGS - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg delves into this controversial issue.

THE MALICIOUS NATURE OF SPAM ON YOUR COMPUTER

Bradley Smith provides advice on how to beat SPAM.



The Use Of The Boarding Experience To Help Schools Balance Their Curriculum

Dr. Tim Hawkes
ABSA Chairman

Despite being a headmaster for nearly 20 years, I am just developing a conviction that I have been manifestly unfaithful as an educator because I have been teaching an inadequate curriculum. The fact that this inadequacy in curriculum delivery is probably to be found in most western schools, brings me no comfort at all.

When the philosopher, Aristippus of Cyrene, was asked, some 400 years BC, what students should be taught, he replied:

Those things which they will use when adults¹

What then, are the things our students will use as adults? The only real certainties are well known...death and taxes! Do we teach death in our schools? Do we teach financial literacy?

Too many schools have lost sight of those things which will be used by our students when they become adults. The relevance of contemporary school education is compromised by many things, not least by examination systems designed not so much to prepare students for life, but to assist with selection into the tertiary education system or to get jobs.

What are the things that a student will use when they are grown up? Responses will vary to this question, but it is unlikely that a serious response is going to omit things like:

1. The ability to live in community

Rather too often the contemporary child is the isolated doughy blob entertained by a range of expensive electronic equipment which

limits their interaction to "e-relationships" and these relationships are often transient, disposable and lacking in authenticity. The exercise of social skills can also be under-exercised in some families. This can lead to a child becoming self-centred and unable to take within the orbit of their thinking, the needs of others. In short, they become a social liability in a group larger than one!

What some children need is a compulsory experience of living in community, not just for six hours a day within the choreographed setting of a school, but for 24 hours a day within the chaos of a bickering and restless community. They need to learn to live with people who are different so that they can operate in a world where annoying people stubbornly remain and there is no "delete" button to remove them.

2. The ability to communicate well

A renewed urgency in helping students, particularly boys, to communicate better is important. The Neanderthal grunt might work well on the football ground but not necessarily in the workplace or the home.

¹ Diogenes Laertius "Aristippus".

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Our First Conference

By Dr Tim Hawkes
Chairman



The first National Conference of the Australian Boarding Schools' Association was a great success, with over 220 delegates enjoying the charm of Canberra in its beautiful spring livery.



Hotel Realm provided an efficient, comfortable and modern venue for the Conference and the Great Hall of Parliament House was our venue for the conference dinner, an occasion which will long be remembered for its graciousness and the extraordinary singing by The Three Waiters. We also had an excellent night at the Australian Institute of Sport where we enjoyed warm fellowship and a fine meal. There were also visits to Canberra Girls' Grammar, who were delightful hosts and showed us around their boarding facilities.

Our keynote speakers did not disappoint with Andrew Gaze, Michael Carr-Gregg, Tim Sharp and Robyn Pearce joining me in guiding thinking on cybersafety, developing excellence in boarding, managing our time properly, being happy and setting goals.

There was valuable contribution from our equivalent organisations in New Zealand and Great Britain with Cara Ferris and Hilary Moriarty sharing thoughts on the boarding situation in both their respective countries. By so doing, the Conference was reminded of the imperative of having a national boarding organisation like ABSA.

Our AGM saw us farewelling Rachel Bartolo, Nick Bates, Rosie Broderick, Norrie Cannon, Liz Crowhurst, Marilynn Freitag and Stan Klan and welcoming Tim Browning, Sam Sapuppo and Simon Shepherd to the ABSA Board. The gratitude of ABSA was extended to those leaving the Board, all of whom were invaluable in helping to establish ABSA.

As with most conferences, the true worth, for many, lay in the informal conversations and discussion groups. It is with the establishing of friendships and networks within the industry that the real strength of ABSA lies. This was augmented by the agreement, in principle, to establish "divisions" of ABSA in all states and territories.

In closing, I thank Richard Stokes and his team for the huge amount of work done in order to make our first conference such a rewarding event.





Teenage Gangs – Who Is Responsible?

By Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

Warrington is a large city in Cheshire, famous for having England's first IKEA store. Up until recently, it was the home of father of three Garry Newlove. He was taken to hospital but died on a Sunday afternoon a few months ago, after suffering trauma to his head.

He was attacked after confronting a gang of more than 15 teenagers who were throwing stones at his car outside his home. An onlooker said Mr Newlove was forced into his car for protection and that the youths threw bricks at the windscreen. A post mortem examination showed he died as a result of a hemorrhage caused by a hard blow near his left ear. Mr Newlove, who worked as a sales manager at a plastics company based in Manchester, had been trying to set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the area.

Three teenagers, two aged 15 and one aged 16, have appeared in court, charged with his murder and Mr Newlove's death prompted the man leading the investigation, Cheshire's Chief Constable Peter Fahy to say that parents who did not look after their teenagers, should have them taken off them.

Mr Fahy is no stranger to controversy, as just a few weeks earlier, he called for the legal drinking age in the UK to be raised to 21, along with a ban on public alcohol consumption. That suggestion was rejected by the Home Office and his latest suggestion also received a luke warm reception. The Department for Children, Schools and Families said that laws enabling children to be removed from their parents already exist.

Nonetheless, Peter Fahy's latest statement has triggered a national blame game on who should be held responsible for the death of Garry Newlove? While Chief Constable Peter Fahey put the boy's parents at the top of the list, boarding staff of all people, know that they are only part of the problem which is immensely complex. Also on my list would be the boys themselves for making a succession of bad choices, not to mention the British education system that failed to engage them, (they had all dropped out of school).

Then comes the liquor outlet, pub or bottle store that sold the underage youth the grog in the first place, not to mention the transnational



alcohol industry, who in Australia alone, spend over a million dollars a day advertising and marketing the product to teenagers. We can't forget the entertainment industry (especially TV, who for years have presented violence as entertainment with the average Australian young person seeing over 200,000 violent acts and 16,000 murders before reaching the age of 18. Finally the British Government, who like the Australian Federal Government, take millions in alcohol tax, but puts precious little back in to education and treatment programs.

In the wake of Garry Newlove's tragic death, there was always going to be the predictable round of handwringing and finger pointing around the seemingly insoluble dilemma of teenage alcohol abuse and the violence that seems to go with it. But the truth is that, while understanding Chief Constable Peter Fahey's sense of frustration, there is no magic bullet, no one single factor responsible for Garry Newlove's sad demise.

Part of the answer lies in the work of Dr. J. David Hawkins, Dr. Richard F. Catalano and their colleagues at the University of Washington who have reviewed more than 30 years of existing work on risk factors from various fields and have completed extensive work of their own to identify risk factors for youth problem behaviours.

They have concluded that many of the problem behaviours faced by young people which may have led to Garry Newlove's death, such as delinquency, substance abuse, violence and school dropout actually share many common risk factors. The researchers found that these

factors exist in all areas of young people's lives including the community in which they live, the school they go to, their family and even within the individual themselves.

The more risk factors present in a young person's life, the greater the risk of developing problems. The experts argue that reducing those common risk factors will have the benefit of reducing the problem behaviours. Among the many risk factors identified, poor family management, poor discipline, family conflict, academic failure and low commitment to school are often mentioned.

As the Warrington community gathered just a few days after Garry's death, The Daily Telegraph published a letter that Amy Newlove, 12, wrote to her father as he lay dying in hospital from head injuries.

The letter, written just before her father died, says: "I can't get across how much I will miss you and I don't know what I would do without you." It ends saying: "We will deeply miss you and want you to know you are the best dad anyone can wish for." "I love you, from your darling daughter who loves you so much and from the whole family."

With the passage of time, the Warrington community will hopefully realize that reducing the risk factors for youth delinquency in Cheshire - will be a little like assembling IKEA furniture, it will require lots of time and patience.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is an adolescent psychologist, and is honorary psychologist to the Australian Boarding Schools Association

Handling Parents' Complaints

By Dr Linda Vining

We tend to think of parents who never complain as perfect customers - people who are easy to get along with. In fact these quiet customers can be a serious threat to your school.

You all know me. I'm the nicest parent in the world. I'm the one who never complains, no matter what kind of service I get. I'll go into a restaurant and sit quietly while the waiters gossip and never interject to ask for a menu. I'll just wait. I'm as polite as can be. I don't believe that rudeness achieves anything. And I wouldn't dream of making a scene as I see other people doing . No, I'm the perfect customer. And I'll

tell you who else I am. I'm the customer who never returns!

Schools are full of parents like this and here's a typical example . . .

A mother who was encouraged by the rhetoric of parent/school partnerships made an appointment to see the Director of Boarding to discuss her anxiety over an incident in her daughter's dormitory. The director listened to only half her story before saying, "girls of this age often lie to their parents." She then gave the mother a school-centred lecture and dismissed

the parent's concerns. The mother maintained her composure throughout and said little more.

The Boarding Head considered the mother's visit a minor matter and forgot about it, but the mother left the school feeling misunderstood and put down. She didn't return to the school with any other concerns, but she certainly told other parents about them. At the end of the year, without a murmur of explanation or a single ruffle, the family changed schools.

How Customers Handle Dissatisfaction

People handle problems in different ways. Some take the passive approach like the parent in the example above. They don't want to make a fuss because they are afraid of rejection or recrimination or they may feel intimidated. Market research provides the alarming statistic that 86% of customers don't complain to the service provider, yet each unhappy customer tells at least six other people.

Others take an active approach. They express their dissatisfaction and want a resolution. They seek assurances, solutions and changes to accommodate their needs. These are valuable customers. Treat them well and they can become your best supporters. However, if their complaints are poorly handled, they may progress to the next stage.

Some parents with a problem become emotional, provocative and threatening. This is the aggressive approach. It is a dangerous state for your customers to be in. They voice their concerns loudly and broadcast their dissatisfaction widely. Their negativism can be contagious. They may rally supporters and ignite others. They may take their grievance to a court of law or they may attract the undesirable attention of the media. Unless they are skilfully handled, they can become a nightmare.

Do You Appreciate The Value Of A Complaint?

How do you respond to a complaint? Do you encourage parents to bring their concerns to you, or are you missing out on opportunities to strengthen your relationship with your customers?

One dissatisfied parent observed that the Boarding Coordinator of her son's school was





so threatened by complaints that he wouldn't even entertain the smallest negative comment about any aspect of the boarding house.

"We don't talk to him, we just talk amongst ourselves," she the parent.

In interviews with a wide cross section of parents CMS market research reveals that the following barriers prevent parents from telling the school their concerns:

- They believe nothing will come of it.
- It takes too much time and effort.
- The staff get too defensive.
- Parents fear the school will brand them a whinger.
- They don't know how to register a complaint.
- Memories of their own authoritarian school days inhibit them.

If you want to strengthen the loyalty of your parents you must first eradicate the real or the perceived "stoppers" that inhibit parents from coming to you.

Methods For Handling Complaints

Handling complaints is a skilled management procedure. Often, if a complaint is well handled in the initial stages, usually in the Coordinator's office, it will not escalate to dangerous proportions. Consider the following guidelines for complaint handling in terms of the mother who left the office of the Director of Boarding in a state of anxiety:

Listen

Listen fully to the complaint without interrupting. Customers may use a threatening voice, they may exaggerate or have only half of the story. Don't deny anything at this point, don't argue or blame or use defensive "fight" words. Just listen. Write down the main points and use reflective language.

Express Empathy

Show understanding for the customer's position. Once customers realise that their problem is appreciated they will feel calmer and more willing to find a solution.

Find Out What They Want?

Ask the parent/s what they want done concerning their complaint. Complaints are a barometer that tell you that your customer needs reassurance. In some cases they may be satisfied with "just letting the school know". If the customer wants a specific action you may be able to accommodate it. Build customer confidence by discussing as fully as you can at this point when, where and how action will be taken. If you cannot take the action suggested, go to the next step.

Explain What You Can And Cannot Do

There are many ways of saying "no" without making the customer lose face. Try finding alternative actions to settle the problem. Avoid telling customers all the reasons why their proposal won't work and don't hide behind the rule book. It only makes you look powerless

to help them. Instead, tell them what you can do for them. Gauge their response by asking, "would this be a solution to the problem?"

Follow Up

Make contact with the customers (personally, if you can) to make sure that the solution to the problem was satisfactory. Invite them to contact you again. Show them that you value their loyalty as a customer. Thank them for bringing the matter to your attention.

You may be afraid that if you are too willing to listen to complaints you will be swamped with hundreds of callers. Think of it this way. You don't have problems when your customers are talking to you. You have major unreconcilable problems when your customers stay silent and talk to everybody else.

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Delivering the Message

By Brad Papworth

There are many great things that happen in the boarding house each term; sometimes too many to remember and recount in detail. We all get busy, whether checking leave arrangements, academic progress of boarders, may be remembering a birthday card. But how do we communicate with our staff and students and how well do we do it? We all have goals for our boarding institutions each year, but how do we tell others about them and how do we motivate others to achieve these goals? The premise of this article is, that if we want our organisations to achieve the little things and the big things, then as leaders we need to deliver the message to each level of the organisation.

These points were highlighted in a recent article I read describing how a large, international company, such as FedEx, communicates its' message to staff and other stakeholders. The article described the accomplishments and challenges FedEx Canada faces communicating with a workforce where 85 percent of 5,000 employees are primarily on-road couriers, without regular intranet or e-mail access. Their belief was that the success of FedEx has been largely due to every employee in the company understanding the corporate goals and that the company's business results were due to the "people first" culture of FedEx. In our boarding houses, we need to have clear statements of how we expect each person is to conduct themselves and our success will be the result of everyone understanding our goals.

This is where leadership and communication have a direct role in influencing each member to support and achieve the goals of the boarding school. We will need to prioritize which messages are extremely important and then look at how to best communicate these messages. FedEx's strategy is to look at communicating what makes sense and what makes a difference, then look at the best method of communicating the information.

To get a better understanding, the FedEx Canada President swapped jobs with a frontline courier. This swap did two things for him. One, it gave him a firsthand understanding of the



way communication actually happens when FedEx and customers interact. The second thing it did was build instant rapport with front line staff. In our boarding schools, every one of us needs to put ourselves in other people's positions to understand their viewpoints and to understand why they may behave in a certain way. Importantly, this simple act will allow us a better understanding of how to communicate with them and how to influence them to achieve for themselves and for the organisation.

When asked about how they dealt with the challenges of cultural diversity on a global scale, FedEx reflected on one of their core philosophies: making sure that every employee, or potential employee, has a level playing field to apply for any job in the company, then letting the best person win. Importantly, the company believes that cultural diversity provides diversity of thought which is invaluable to a large scale organisation that wants to be a leader in the market.

In our boarding schools, we need to have the same approach in our dealings with others and again the core values of our institutions should come through. If you want others to understand you, try understanding them first. This may be someone from the city, country or overseas. It may be someone who likes a different sport. The important message we can take from FedEx is to place as much value in other people as we would want others to place in us. This is probably best summed up by the words of the

great Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, "A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its' people. No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive."

The article summarised the link between leadership and communication by suggesting that many of the problems that occur in an organisation are the direct result of people failing to communicate. It leads to confusion and can cause a good plan to fail. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. For us to be a successful boarding house or boarding school, effective communication needs to happen at each level down the line to pass on the organisation's goals for us to achieve the goals we set each year. This should be a central part of our charter as leaders of ourselves and others; we should aim to deliver the important messages one person at a time.

Sourced from Delivering the Message One Person at a Time, Natasha Spring, Communication World, September 2006.

Brad Papworth
Housemaster – Hake Harris House
The King's School



PR Skills & Time Management Go A Long Way!

By David L Anderson

In the frantic life of a Director of Boarding or in the daily performance of assistant boarding staff, personal strategies adopted to improve the effectiveness of communication of staff between boarders and the parent body will benefit the boarding community and promote confidence in the program.

At the recent Australian Boarding Schools Association Conference in Canberra keynote speaker Robyn Pearce provided knowledgeable hints on how to beat the challenges of time in the workplace. Effective timing and public relation techniques of boarding staff will enhance the cementing of relationships on campus and will reassure the aims and objectives of the boarding program to other staff members, parents and boarders.

A member of the boarding staff with strong public relation abilities will keep the wider community well informed and help to produce a feeling of recognition and inclusion to the boarders as important members of the wider boarding family.

Time management by leaders in the boarding community is critical but even with the best intentions there is never enough time to cope with the hundreds of important and trivial demands of campus life. Unlike other professions a single incident by a pupil or parent can ambush the best intended plans for the day. Therefore careful management and strategies to ensure best exposure of a leader's time across the boarding population will allow all boarders to have greater awareness that staff is taking good

care of them. The boarding staff will always be distracted due to the demands of the position however subtle effective personal techniques by house leaders can come in very handy to ensure that the staff, parents and boarders feel a sense of recognition and inclusion by those in charge.

The boarders will be much more settled on campus if they feel that there is a constant interest by those responsible for their care. This is not suggesting staff follow boarders around on campus suspicious of their next move, however the presence of staff that move freely among the boarders offering friendship and assistance, results in a happy and trusting environment.

Instead of the Head of Boarding leading from the seclusion of an office it is much more beneficial for leaders to be obvious and helpful about the school, especially at important times of the day and night. A common criticism by students and clients is that staff is not available or visible around the boarding campus. A boarding house group should have a combined meeting each evening after dinner to review events of the day and discuss future activities. A good leader will make sure that when an important combined House meeting is scheduled he or she is present. If a significant message is conveyed to boarders, senior staff should be present. Major announcements and discipline directed to the boarders should not be delivered by junior staff as the importance of the message, in the minds of the students, will be of higher meaning if it is delivered by the leader.

The distribution of meals to the boarders in the Dining Hall is another opportunity for useful exchange in communication between student and teacher. Many minor matters can be conveyed to the students and in addition staff can observe the eating habits and grooming of some students that may affect their general health. The appearance around the campus of senior boarding staff should not be kept to a strict daily routine or habit by staff. Senior staff should appear in many different locations and activities at a variety of times to keep everyone on their toes.



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When boarders depart the boarding house before morning class or when they return after school their movement presents further opportunity for exchange and observations by boarding staff. Boarding staff that are well acquainted with the boarders in their charge can very quickly identify any alteration in their normal behaviour or attitude. The regular sighting between staff and student enforces a strong sense of supervision and care. Such opportunities present moments for simple routine enquiries between boarders and campus staff which may clarify a concern before the matter becomes a larger problem for the student.

To maintain the confidence of the parents of boarders the same strategies can be implemented. A boarding Housemaster should not make an appointment to see a parent at a time when large numbers of other parents may be visiting the school. This is a useful time to acknowledge many parents living in isolated regions in the state or overseas that may not be visiting the school frequently. A good example of poor timing for a housemaster to conduct a parent interview would be at the conclusion of class on Friday when a number of parents are usually about to collect boarders for weekend leave. Private interviews should be scheduled later in the afternoon when full attention can then be given to the interview by the Housemaster when the other parents and boarders have departed.

In regard to ongoing communication with parents it is wise and prudent that a campus leader contact parents about important incidents concerning their son or daughter before the parent contacts the school. Over time the parent will gain confidence in the boarding program knowing from previous experience that the campus staff will always be proactive especially in times of crisis.

Long periods of time can quickly pass between contact of Housemaster and parents. The Housemaster therefore must have a few devices to become catalysts for contact. If a student

becomes ill and is admitted to the School Medical Centre the parent should be contacted immediately. The early intervention by house staff prevents parents panicking if they were to hear from another source that their child is in the school hospital. The contact is one that causes important news to parents at a time when extra assistance is required. The contact will build a parent's confidence in communication and care from the school.

The application for 'weekend leave' requested by the boarders must be accompanied by an e-mail or fax from the parent confirming details boarder's host. This exchange of a brief e-mail or fax provides other opportunities for housemaster and parents to keep in contact which helps to build constant and a more informal dialogue between parent and carer.

Elaborate boarding newsletters to parents become difficult and time consuming to prepare and publish, however group e-mails sent to boarding parents can now be used as a very useful communication tool. By nature of e-mail, the receiver of Internet messages understands the style of the message to be short and to the point. A regular group e-mail to parents from the Housemaster can provide a very short outline of the progress of the boarding group plus suggest information about coming events such as exams or boarding functions. Although this information may have already been provided on a school calendar, the e-mail reminder is appreciated and provides just one more contact.

In recent years boarding staff have been out in the field to promote the enrolment of boarders. Boarding numbers in most states of Australia continue to be competitive and it has become an extra and important requirement for boarding staff to attend boarding expositions to secure enrolments for future years.

Prospective parents attending the boarding promotions prefer to meet staff directly involved in the life of boarders which is advantageous compared to personnel employed to market the

school who are not fully conversant with all the intricacies of the day to day routine of boarding. The experience of boarding staff promoting a boarding school can be turned into a positive event and learning experience for staff. Staff introducing and promoting their school and boarding program at exhibitions quickly learn what prospective parents want and expect from a modern boarding establishment.

At such boarding exhibitions boarding staff have to stand committed behind the policies, aims and objectives of their school and any difference in opinion by prospective parents will be carefully thought through by boarding staff and possibly can become the catalyst for change. Motivated and enthusiast boarding staff will enjoy representing the school and their dedication to boarding will be evident to the prospective parent. I think the whole promotion process adds a great deal of accountability to the boarding program and sincerity of care. It is a wonderful experience for staff to witness parent decision making at the grass roots level.

A knowledgeable representative of the school will influence the decision of prospective parents to the school influencing them where to send their board their child. The boarding representative will also be delighted to know that their contribution has allowed the school to enjoy another very important boarding enrolment.

In conclusion the parents of boarders and the boarders will gain confidence from boarding staff that are open, friendly and keen to communicate. These characteristics will also be a lesson to the students in role models of positive personalities and strong attitudes. Parents will be comfortable leaving their children in the trust of confident, forthright individuals who represent the school in an impressive approach.

David L Anderson
Shore School



Boarding Staff & Family Visits To **Country Areas** To Promote Boarding And **Boost Enrolments**

By John Wallace

Why

It is a commonly known fact that country boarding numbers have declined due to many factors in the last 20 years. As a Housemaster, 7 years ago I wondered what I could do to increase the number of country boarders in my boarding house. These down to earth boys and girls are a great asset to any city boarding school.

How

In my first year as a boarding house master I decided, with the assistance and financial support of senior management, to visit families out west with my family and House Matron. In the first year we stayed in motels but in the next 6 years we have always stayed with families of boys from our boarding house. A function financed by the school has always been organized by one of the parents inviting past, present and prospective families. Visiting prospective families with the Housemaster's family and matron is less intimidating to country families. Less formality is a bonus and country families see more of the "human" side of the Housemaster and his family. The school

provides a hire vehicle and living costs for the promotion.

The Country Visit

The visit is usually in the first or second week of the mid-term vacation. Existing country families of boys in my boarding house are contacted well before hand and accommodation is organized as are function details. Existing country families contact prospective parents to gauge interest. Assistance is given from Admissions with relevant marketing materials. Matron is a great bonus as she is able to comfort anxious mothers who are concerned with the day to day welfare of their sons. The Housemaster's wife and children are equally supportive. The matron and housemaster's wife reduces the anxiety for mothers who find it difficult facing the prospect of being separated from their sons.

The Results Of 7 Years Of Country Visits

The numbers of country boys has increased in my boarding house. Many parents on first meeting were in no way committed and further visits showed a genuineness they appreciated and eventually they selected TSS for their son.

Our sister school St Hilda's also benefited from the out west visits as many of the families had daughters who went to Southport instead of Brisbane schools. Housemaster family visits are another dimension to marketing. It is far less expensive than most marketing operations and uses first hand personnel in the boarding houses to sell the school to new parents. Parents want to know who is looking after their son and what type of person they are. Boarding houses promote family living and prospective parents can be swayed in their decision making by this form of promotion. Any parents will have already made up their mind which school their sons will be attending. This type of promotion can sway the "floating" parent who is undecided on their choice of school.



There are several boys in my boarding house whose parents never intended sending them to The Southport School. My family visits out west every year helped change their minds as they appreciated the hands on approach and visibility. I know the school has also appreciated the initiatives of these annual visits.

John Wallace
Director of Boarding
The Southport School, Queensland

A Change of Boarding Structure for Current Times

St Joseph's Nudgee College, Brisbane

By John Bussenschutt

"One of our senior Boarding Houses held their final formal dinner recently, the main focus of which was to farewell the Year 12 Senior Boarders. It epitomized the outstanding effort and focus we have worked for in Boarding for the past two and a half years at Nudgee. There was an atmosphere of happiness, belonging, community and friendship – between all people involved in the evening, the boarders, guests, male and female senior and junior staff."

Nudgee was proudly established as a Catholic Boarding School in 1891. The Charism of Edmund Ignatius Rice is the basis for what was to be many boarding and day schools established by the Christian Brothers to foster and develop young men into fine and outstanding adults who would in turn continue the work to become "signs of faith" (signum fidei).

"A Catholic School in the Edmund Rice tradition is characterized by the quality of its personal relationships" The Charter- EREA.

St. Joseph's Nudgee College is set upon a property of 136 hectares, 12 kilometres north of Brisbane, close to the Brisbane Entertainment Centre, the Airport and the Boondall Wetlands – on the land of the traditional indigenous Turrbal and Jagera people. The magnificent Spanish architecture of the main buildings stands out as do the fantastic sporting facilities.

Nudgee is a Catholic Boys boarding and day school in its present guise. Boarding at Nudgee is considered to be a cornerstone of the College. At one time 550 to 600 strong in terms of boarding; today it is home to over 300 boarders in a school of approximately 1300 students. As such it is one of Australia's largest and most preferred boarding schools and is also the home of 60 staff including the families of Senior Staff.

The student background is diverse. Nudgee is a beautiful place with enjoys great spirit. It is a family, and home, to boys from diverse backgrounds including remote and rural areas of Queensland, north coast, south coast and metropolitan Brisbane, NT, NSW and other states as well as Indigenous Australia, Papua New Guinea and other overseas countries.



Nudgee Boarding has a strong academic, sporting, spiritual and community focus.

Activities abound with heated swimming pools, gym, full sized synthetic running track, golf course, small bore shooting club and a cattle club all catering to a wide range of tastes. After hours activities are organized by our Boarding Recreation Coordinator.

Nudgee is a well known rugby school but it offers a diverse range of sports and activities for the boys including soccer, cricket, swimming, rowing, basketball and track and field in the GPS (Greater Public School) competition and AFL in the non-GPS season.

At the beginning of the new century there were 5 Boarding Houses which were rationalized to 3 with 100 plus boys in each. By 2005 the 3 Boarding Houses consisted of Hodda with all the Year 12s and half of the Year 11s and O'Neill with all of the Year 10s and the other half of the Year 11s. Then there was the "Middle School House" which housed Year 8 and 9s plus a handful of Year 7s who attended nearby St. Patrick's College.

As plans were being developed for a new Boarding Facility in the future, O'Neill was to be

converted into a new teaching facility for our Year 5, 6 and 7s and therefore lost to boarding. The Murphy building which was attached to Hodda was refurbished to provide single rooms with high quality fixtures to match its neighbor. This cost was justified until a new complex was built. Another old boarding house was to be gutted and turned into new facilities in the main Treacy Building. All of this meant that the time was ripe to implement some positive change, ahead of the intended move to a new boarding precinct.

The establishment of 4 Boarding Houses in 2007 combined with the change of structure to a more vertical form that year has greatly enhanced the culture and feel of boarding at Nudgee. Each Boarding House was to now have approximately 75 students each and take on their own identity with House crests/colours but be linked both vertically and horizontally.

The four Boarding Houses now consist of two senior houses, Hodda and Murphy in which both Year 11 and 12 boarders live. Linked to these Houses but some distance away in the main building, O'Brien and Cotter both house Years 8, 9 and 10. Cotter has a small "pod" of Year 6 and 7 students who are now part of Nudgee's new primary school cohort. The clo-



sure of the extra houses and the refurbishment of another enabled us to move more quickly with the change to vertical boarding.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both vertical and horizontal boarding. It is up to each boarding school to work out what best suits their situation. For Nudgee it gave us the opportunity to meet the goal of developing the best possible relationships and to align ourselves with the day school. It also gave us the opportunity to alter some “mob” culture amongst the boys and gave the boarding house staff a greater opportunity to work more closely together between senior houses and junior houses. There has also been a programme developed between the senior and junior houses to foster a peer support network and mentoring opportunity. It is exciting and satisfying to see leadership opportunities and role modelling from older boys for the younger ones and a more family-like atmosphere.

A real advantage to the vertical grouping has been more flexibility for movement between houses if the need arises. For example, a Year 10 student who has outgrown a junior house both physically and mentally can move up to a senior house after all things are taken into consideration.

One concern that is raised about vertical grouping occasionally is bedtime. Within the Nudgee Boarding Community settling of the houses at bed time has been improved dramatically due to a sense of family obligation to allow the younger ones to go to bed early and for the older ones to continue with later individual studying in their rooms. The quiet and respect for this to happen

has been a natural development.

Study is another area that has been advantaged by vertical boarding, by having older boys mentor younger boys with schoolwork. When groups of boys need to combine in year levels this can be easily put into place with cooperation between the houses.

For staff there has been greater clarity and partnership in strategies to reach those common goals. The team approach has been enhanced with the shared vision.

The Boarding Houses, even though vertical in nature, are able to be horizontal at times to allow the year levels to mix socially. The “wall” between the two senior houses, for example, is opened daily so that the Year 12’s and the Year 11’s can mix freely with their counterparts.

The planned recruitment of female boarding staff for each boarding house, to compliment the work of the males and house mothers, has been an excellent decision. Nudgee, whilst a single sex school, has been proactive in developing positive relationships and respect for women. It is a fundamental component of Nudgee’s Catholic faith and recognition of Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. The boys appreciate the conversations with and the support of the female staff. This aspect also compliments the high percentage of female teaching staff in the day school.

The link between the junior and senior boarders is evident at many levels including sport, study/mentoring and student formations such as the Boarding Representative Council and “Older

Brothers” program. The vertical structure of the boarding houses compliments the vertical structure of the day houses.

Schools continually change and develop. Edmund Rice had a vision for Catholic boys in his time. Nudgee and like boarding schools develop a great sense of tradition and common purpose – enabling and developing children in their care to fulfill their potential. The “new” boarding structure at Nudgee has assisted us greatly with this goal. However this could not have been realized without the determination and effort put in by the staff at Nudgee. Their support of the boys in their care is outstanding. If there is excellence in boarding – it can be found in this aspect at Nudgee.

John Bussenschutt
Director of Boarding
St. Joseph’s Nudgee College - Brisbane

Don't Fudge it, Budget...

By Ben Gelton

SAME CHICKEN...



Have you ever given your boarding house budget a health check. Maybe it is time to ask the question how does your boarding house budget stack up in terms of breaking even or making a profit?

To achieve break even or a profit a boarding house needs to control its costs. To set its students fees it must be able to rely on those costs remaining fixed. Student fees must be calculated by taking costs and adding a desired profit. Costs must be figured out as carefully as possible in advance.

Problems arise when costs increase but student fees do not. It is often not possible to increase a students fees especially during the year and parents don't expect this. Boarding house budgets that succeed are built on predictability of costs and the addition of a fair profit.

Costs that change often are usually called variable costs. So what is an example of one?

The food bill the boarding house kitchen faces each month is an example of a variable cost. It can swing wildly depending on the season that supplies are purchase in.

If costs are variable but student fees are fixed then all boarding houses run the risk of eating into their profits (pardon the pun), or at worst using up all their fees to cover their costs.

Boarding houses need a way to fix costs as well as fees. A simple way to do this is to use what is called a "Fixed Price Contract" (FPC). This works a lot like a fixed interest rate on a mortgage. It is highly likely that your boarding

house already has these in place but it is still worth checking.

Fixed Price Contracts involve getting as many suppliers as possible to agree to supply the goods and services the boarding house requires at a fixed price.

This lets the suppliers take the risk of variable costs, most are happy to do this because a FPC also guarantees them a fixed amount of business.



A simple contract could be that they will guarantee to supply all the chickens the kitchen requires at \$5 each regardless of the market rate.

The principle of using a FPC can be applied to everything the hostel needs, for example things like electricity, maintenance services and laundry.

FPC are great but there is another even simpler principle. Responsibility, It is still very important for everybody to be aware of their own individual effects on costs and to help reduce them by taking responsibility for them. This is the practical side of running a budget.

Responsibility can mean turning off the lights when they leave a room. Fixing costs, reducing your costs through practical measures all help. Small things like this soon add up to greater savings.

For those that are interested in working out where their boarding house budget sits healthwise I have created a spread-sheet wizard that collects boarding house costs together and will help calculate if boarding house fees combined with boarding house costs are going to result in a profit or just break even. Go to: www.softwamarketing.co.nz/downloads.asp and you will be able download "BudgetWizard.xls".

Improving your boarding house finances is about planning and execution it's as simple as that!



Developing a Plan for Life

By Dr Tim Sharp

Some of you reading this might fall into the category I often refer to as “the lucky few”. If you’re one of them then you’re very well positioned to live a great life because by “the lucky few” I’m referring to those of you who find happiness comes easily and naturally. No matter what’s going on around you you’re likely to still be able to keep things in perspective and see the positives. As well as enjoying the wonderful experience positive emotions themselves bring, you’ll also probably live longer, maintain better relationships and even be more successful in your vocational pursuits.

Most of you, however, won’t fall into this very small group but the good news is that’s OK; because you can still experience happiness and you can still create more happiness if you do the right sorts of things. Regardless of whether or not you’re a natural optimist you can still learn to apply many of the proven principles of positive psychology and as a result, enjoy happiness more often.

Now obviously I have, in previous columns, and I will, in future columns, summarise and describe many of these strategies in what I

hope is an accessible manner; and as I do so I encourage every one of you to not just read my words but also to put them into practice. But today’s words do not present a simple strategy but rather, an over-arching approach which I’ve used with wonderful effect in my coaching and consulting, in all sorts of different contexts, over the years. And it’s based on the simple but vitally important notion that to achieve anything in life we have to plan for it.

Most people understand that to be fitter and healthier we need to develop relevant plans – for exercise and diet. Well, the same is true for happiness but unfortunately, most people spend more time planning their annual holidays than they do planning their lives; I have nothing against annual holidays but I can guarantee that if you take even just a fraction of the time you spend thinking about holidays and spend that contemplating your life goals then you will, definitely, realise some benefits.

Now regular readers of my work may well have worked out by now that I’m quite fond of acronyms; it’s true, because I find that they help me remember key concepts and/or important

themes. So it might not come as a surprise, therefore, when I point out that PLAN is not just a word but that it’s also an acronym. Let me quickly explain The Happiness Institute’s PLAN model:

P represents a Positive image of the future
L is for Leveraging off what you already have
A is for the Action plan you need to develop
N is a reminder to focus on your most immediate Next steps.

In summary, then, this simple but (and I can vouch for this personally) very powerful model can help you determine your destination for life and set your course for the future. If you imagine what a great life would look like, consider what you already have (in the way of strengths, attributes, characteristics and resources) that will help you get there, determine exactly what you need to do, and take it one step at a time then I’m confident you’ll go on to live a happier and more successful life. And when you do, feel free to tell me your story; I love hearing about the positive outcomes of others!

2008 ABSA Conference Photos





What Happened To My Son?

By Richard Stokes

One of the hidden downsides of boarding is the mixture of independence and dependence that boarders are taught while they are away at school. Parents often despair about the person who comes home to live, saying "This is not the son who I sent away to boarding school".

Many a boy who leaves home at the age of 12 returns to live at home full time when they are in the throws of adulthood - having pushed the boundaries through adolescence and worked out how to stand on their own two feet. For them to face Mum telling them to keep their room tidy (even though they have done it for the last five years because it was part of the boarding house routine), or having Mum or Dad asking questions about their private life, is sometimes just too much, and can cause a great rift between those who were once good friends - parents and son. Boarding schools produce very independent young men. They have had to stand up for themselves both amongst a large number of their peers as well as a mixture of experienced and inexperienced staff, some of whom, at least in the boys' minds, had no idea of dealing with adolescents in a living situation. They have experienced the embarrassment of showering in a group, of

sharing a bedroom with strangers, of not being able to be by themselves as they discover a newly found sexuality or grieve over a death in the family, of being pressured to dress and behave in certain manners dictated by the group and which sometimes conflict not only with those in authority but their own thoughts as well. Each of these experiences builds a certain character in a boarder which makes those who work in boarding schools both sad and proud - sad because the aim is certainly not to turn out clones, but proud because we can often say we have had a huge and positive impact upon their lives and their growing up. And all through this time, the mothers and fathers sit at home missing out on all the fun - the challenges of an adolescent arguing just for the sake of the argument, of boys trying the limits to see how far they will be allowed to go, of watching relationships with girls develop healthily. Boarding staff who take their jobs seriously, as most do, can look back at the young men who leave them with a pride that most others in an occupation can never experience.

But parents receive home someone they do not know. The few weeks spent at home during school holidays are just that - holidays

to enjoy their company again, to spoil them (boarding school food is never as good as Mum's cooking), to go away. But when the reality of living together hits it can cause great heartache. Firstly the boys often miss having their friends around them - they get lonely and miss the camaraderie of the group. While at school they have not had such a close input from an adult - in boarding school the ratio was always 1:30 while at home it can be 1:1. And to top it all off, they are adults themselves and the last dealing their mums and dads had with them were when they were boys.

So when you son returns after five years of boarding (or even one) don't expect him to be the same person you sent away - he will very much have become a 'man' - hopefully an independent thinker who shows manners and self acceptance, but certainly one who can stand on his own two feet and look after himself.

Richard Stokes
Executive Director
Australian Boarding Schools Association



The Malicious Nature Of Spam On Your Computer

By Bradley N Smith

Spam is malicious. It is not just annoying, but it can wreak havoc on your computer (not to mention your nerves) as long as you are connected to the internet. The fact is that spam does more than just send a few emails here and there. It actually can do a lot of destructive work, too.

There are plenty of ways that spam can hurt your computer and even your business. Take a look at these dangers that are imposed on your computer regularly.

Security:

No matter if you are in business or a personal user, spam can cause numbers of problems with security. Not only do they often contain viruses including Trojan viruses, but they also can contain spyware.

Some forms of spyware can actually track the keystrokes you make on your computer, allowing others to assess pass codes and key pieces of information that could later be used to steal your identity or your money.

Confidentiality:

Many of today's employees are setting up outside email sources that they use so that they can avoid being caught by security programs set up by the computer system.

Using Hotmail or Yahoo! will allow them to get past that security but also puts them at risk for a loss in confidentiality of the information they are passing along. This can be portal for malicious spam to get in.

Costs:

If you were to mistakenly click through spam emails and did have adware, malware, or even spyware downloaded onto your computer, a simple program may not sweep it clean. In fact, many people will allow these to pile up so much so that the cleaning process is difficult, often too difficult to actually allow them to restore full use to their computer.

The downtime of your computer, especially in business related avenues, is high. Spam could be the cause of this downtime and loss of funds.



Legally:

Did you know that email users are responsible for the email that comes out of their email box? Many ISP regulate this, but the problem lies in spam.

If a spam email contains a Trojan or other virus that invades your address book and sends emails from your account to others, it can be later marked as spam and reported. That means you are legally responsible for those emails even though you had nothing to do with sending them.

Even more so, spam is annoying and a time waster. If you don't realize just how much it can cost you and your business, you are putting yourself at risk for potential problems.

Spam truly can block the benefits your online connection can provide to you.

Beware: Spam is malicious, as malicious as anything you can get.

A Pro-Active Positive Education Approach To Resilience

By John Hendry

“What every parent wants desperately is for their children to transcend whatever difficulties they will inevitably confront in life and thrive.” To thrive one must generate a positive to negative emotion ratio of at least three to one (for individuals).

Problems will be faced in every aspect of life by children, young adults and adults. To move from being dependent on others (usually adults) to partial dependence, to independence to interdependence as the child grows to adulthood requires an equivalent resilient set development. The capacity to move confidently from the dependent stage of human and social existence through to the “complex to manage” interdependent stage is established intrinsically by each individual. Extrinsic influences exist; however, the capacity to cope is very much a personal (intrinsic) thing. The establishment of this confidence to make positive decisions is really what resilience is about. There are times when survival is an essential and important goal for such ‘survival skills’ present as the base for the positive beliefs tied essentially and eventually to thriving. Reflection, living in the moment rather than trying today to live tomorrow, is an important realisation in establishing the wherewithal to lead a positive and empowered future. The search for identity is at the essence of being human, and it is within this search that the true skills parents want their children to possess (to manage the tribulations life presents) are discovered, considered, learned, developed and woven into a ‘life strategy’ to do better than cope, to thrive. Ancient and learned cultures describe, and recognise one important aspect of this maturation process as ‘a rite of passage’ and have constructed ‘markers’ on this passage where public celebration and recognition is given to boost the confidence of the learner. These events mark for each individual a step in confidence. This confidence establishes a positive belief in capacity, a positive mental attitude nurtured by supporters through acknowledgement of effort and progress towards interdependence, the end goal. It is necessary, in this journey, to recognise and appreciate the darker sides of life, the more challenging aspects of this progress path. The main negative emotions of fear and anxiety focus attention on discovering

the nuances and complexities of the challenges; however, once these are acknowledged and understood it is then necessary to establish a positive and strategic approach (a resilient approach) to these challenges, to leave ‘the negative emotions’ behind.

The way forward to a positive future where one can take charge in the context as it presents, and thrive, is directly tied to character strengths and the positive emotions which inform the individual that all is possible to manage and it is possible to thrive. One critical element to this is ‘to keep all in perspective’, to live in the real rather than the fanciful world. The real living context must be understood and it is this understanding that provides opportunity to develop skills and strategies to take one beyond the existing context to what may be a more desired context, if such is the want.

The aim is to become interdependent, to move from the “I” to the “We”. Humans live in families and these are found in the family, in the School, in the workplace, in clubs and in social settings. ‘Families’ are defined by belonging. The sense of belonging, or attachment, to a family or a number of families is essential. Such attachments are based upon trust. Trust is based upon respect, kindness, forgiveness and an unconditional purpose of giving to others. The worth of the contribution is critical for the “We” rather than “I” determines the honour of the relationship and the security found therein. Trust in others and their trust in you underpins positive human existence. The actual universal values found

in each person’s character strengths should guarantee a confident and positive journey through dependence, independence and on into interdependence.

The ability to think flexibly and accurately, to understand oneself emotionally and one’s emotional profile, to cultivate the capacity to change one’s emotional reactions, and to reach out to others every step of the way is essential. The skills needed to successfully navigate the journey from dependence to interdependence can be learned and developed through practice. Those (children) who demonstrate resilience often demonstrate five descriptors: Strong cognitive abilities; Self-efficacy; Faith and a sense of meaning; Talents that are valued by self and others; and Sense of humour.

The actual skills possessed by resilient individuals are: Emotional awareness and regulation; Impulse control; Optimism (a sense of hope); Flexible and accurate thinking; Empathy; Self-efficacy; and Connection to others.

The teaching of these skills and the strategic and honourable deployment of these skills is possible through the scaffolding framework of Positive Psychology supplemented by further self discovery through meditation. The study and application of character strengths, positive

CHARACTER STRENGTHS:

1.	Wisdom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curiosity • Love of learning • Judgement • Ingenuity • Emotional intelligence • Perspective 	3.	Humanity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindness • Loving 	6.	Transcendence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation of beauty and excellence • Gratitude • Hope • Spirituality • Forgiveness • Humor • Zest
2.	Courage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valor • Perseverance • Integrity 	4.	Justice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Fairness • Leadership 		
		5.	Temperance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Control • Prudence • Humility 		



and negative emotions, the allied and promoting processes of reflection found in meditation (and allied activities), the understanding of the power of altruism, of the fundamentals associated with the values found in all world faiths all combine to present a quality 'life curriculum' to enable all to progress through life challenges from being dependent on others to being alone or independent of others (an essential stage of knowing the self) to interdependence where others jointly work with you to enable life to flourish. (How we treat others determines how others treat us.)

The inoculation against the negative emotions ruling life is possible. Such inoculation does mean that each will have acquired the skills needed to employ strategically, and appropriately, the character strengths (moment to moment, in life). This then will enable all to navigate to interdependence, to understand, appreciate and contribute to being human, to cooperate, to not seek advantage in relationships and to give unconditionally to others. This does lead to contentment where pleasure, engagement and meaning in life come together to establish a more peaceful repose where flourishing is possible.

Geelong Grammar School is doing this by teaching resilience and the tenets of positive psychology through the study of emotion and character strength plus developing in each student the capacity to adopt positive resilient life strategies, ie. the appropriate applications of strength to life challenges in the moment. It has asked the real question (of schooling), perhaps found in the opening paragraph, of every parent, what do you want for your child? The response is "a good well managed and happy life where a sense of contentment abides". John Keats, a leading English religious educator, in a lecture titled 'Clever Devils and How to Avoid Them' referred to a conference that took place on 20th January 1942 when a group of fifteen men gathered at Wansee in Berlin. They were to plan the "final solution"; we now know this as the Holocaust. Amongst them were several PhD's and a theology graduate. A number of these were products of Christian Schools; some were the sons of clergymen. Here is a letter from a holocaust survivor:

Dear Teacher,
 I am a survivor of the concentration camp.
 My eyes saw what no man should witness:
 gas chambers built by engineers;
 children poisoned by educated physicians;
 Infants killed by trained nurses;
 Women and babies shot and burned by

high school graduates;
 So, I am suspicious of your education.
 My request is: help your students become human.
 Your efforts must never produce learned monsters,
 Skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.
 Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.

The real purpose of education is to enable each and every person grow to an understanding of self within the context of family, (in every sense) to be humane, to be able to positively deal with life's tribulations in a moral and positive (resilient)

way, and to live with meaning a peaceful life. This is achieved by living the life journey from dependence, through independence to interdependence with confidence, dignity and with respect for all other humans (and living things), to move from the "I" to the "We" with kindness and forgiveness of and to others. This can be taught.

John Hendry is Director of Student Welfare at Geelong Grammar School
 October 2008

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In addition to articulacy, there is the need to be able to communicate well in writing. In fairness to schools, this challenge is being met reasonably faithfully. However, schools must also recognise that content governs only about 7% of the impact of speech. The remaining 93% of the impact of a speech is controlled by the appearance of the speaker (57%) and the sound of the speaker (36%).² The science of voice projection, articulation, accent, modulation, pitch and pace needs to be taught, together with the most appropriate posture, grooming and appearance for someone giving a speech.

All students need to be taught to read body language, to sense mood, to interpret the unspoken feelings of another. They need to improve their ability to send and receive unspoken messages, other than the raised middle finger.

3. The ability to know yourself and what you believe

An essential requirement for any student is that they eventually take "ownership" of what they believe in. They may mimic a political opinion from friends, a faith from parents and a cause from a teacher, but somewhere along the line, the student needs to stop the mimicking and find their own voice.

The religious reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1595), once stood before his critics and said:

Here I stand, I can do no other.

Rather too many young do not where they stand or what they believe. An alarming number appear happy to progress through life:

- Without a cause.
- Without a creed.
- Without a conviction.

Even worse, some of our students do not even know themselves. They have no understanding of their unique gifts or abilities.

4. The ability to handle intimacy

The western world generally does a poor job in preparing its students to be intimate. There are always exceptions, but in general, a student is required to navigate their way through the sexual swamp with minimal direction. Such signposts that are afforded

can be vague and contradictory. The parents say this, and the school says that, but the porn site says something completely different.

The proper people to educate students about sex are parents. Some parents are wonderful at giving their children guidelines on sex, whereas other parents are delinquent at giving their children guidelines on sex. Schools can also fail their students. Classes will do pencilled drawings of reproductive organs, and become experts on how "tadpoles" swim up-stream and how babies grow in the womb. They will be introduced to the horrors of sexually transmitted diseases in that theoretical, antiseptic kind of way. The mind is fed but not the heart. The questions a student wants to ask, they are not allowed to ask, for it is not in the syllabus. So answers must be looked for on the net, in magazines and on the back of toilet doors.

We must do a better job at teaching our children about sex and intimacy. They have little need to hear more about the biology of sex, for this is generally done well in schools. Neither do they need to hear about the morality of sex from adults with dehydrated loins who have absolutely no connection with the virility of a teenager. They no longer need to know how they measure up inside an environment of unconditional love, they need to know how they measure up outside, in the swamp of life where love, like and lust churn dangerously. It is not just smut and titillation that a student wants, for they can get these sorts of thing quite easily these days. What they want is something more elusive, something which is rare, and that is wholesome advice on how to be a man, how to be a woman.

5. The ability to control emotion and impulses

Prisons are typically full of men, and in particular, men who would not be in there if they had mastered the art of counting to ten before acting. Acting impulsively usually means that only the reptilian part of the brain is being exercised. Other parts of the brain need to be activated if a student wishes to avoid making poor decisions and enlarging our prison populations.

The "fight or flight" behaviours are genetically useful when hunting mammoths or defending a cave from intruders. It is slightly less useful in contemporary suburbia or in seeking acceptance as a mature and mea-

sured member of modern society.

6. The ability to manage financial matters

The level of ignorance in students about financial matters can be frightening. This is revealed in the number of young adults and students who get into financial trouble through an inability to budget, a failure to understand the traps associated with credit cards and incapacity to retire debt.

Persistently living beyond their means, over relying on parental assistance, making unwise choices when selecting hire-purchase options, telephone plans and leasing arrangements, are just some of the problems resulting from students not being taught about financial matters. In a society increasingly riven with debt, the science of wealth generation and wealth management also needs to be taught. The rudiments of saving, and the traps to avoid when borrowing or when getting involved in "get-rich-quick" schemes, need to be shared with our students if we are ever going to expect them to manage their financial affairs appropriately.

7. The ability to do practical things

More than one discussion over the absence of life-skills in the young has been laced with horrified tales of fungal growth in their bathrooms, kitchen benches piled high with unwashed dishes, ovens blackened by neglect, and bedroom carpets disappearing under a rising tide of discarded clothes. To this domestic dyslexia must be added the fact that some students have never been taught to cook. If they have, they have probably not been taught to clean up properly afterwards

There are a range of home maintenance skills that are frequently missing in our students. How to maintain the lawn mower, change a washer on a tap, put in a new fly-screen on a door, turn off the water if there is a leak, recycle waste, conserve water, and reduce the power bill.

8. The ability to be good mannered and to know etiquette

It is probably all right for a child to eat like a pig, but they must know they are eating like a pig and be able to cease eating like a pig when the situation demands it. There is a whole raft of other social behaviours, which if not learnt, can result in our students being disadvantaged. The simple act of sending a

² Taylor, D (2002). *The Naked Leader*. Capstone Publishing, Oxford. P.208.



“thank you” message for a present, shaking hands in an appropriate manner, knowing what bit of cutlery to use, addressing a letter correctly, understanding what “formal” means, and knowing the art of good conversation, are just some of the skills at risk of extinction in the lives of rather too many of our young.

9. The ability to accept responsibility

Many students live lives that are voyeuristic. Quite simply, they like to watch. Watching is safe. You bear no responsibility, you accept no accountability. “Spectatoritis” is rife. Many of today’s teenagers are screenagers. They look, comment and criticise from the comfort of the couch. The child then becomes an adult who finds it difficult to do much other than to watch and excuse themselves from accepting any responsibility. Students need to be taught how to take ownership of their own behaviours, how to be leaders, how to make appropriate decisions, and how to serve others responsibly and well.

10. The ability to be resilient and to deal with grief and loss

Life cannot be expected to provide a constant stream of undiluted fun, praise and success. If a student is going to crumple because they do not get their hourly fix of praise, they may not last long. Self-esteem needs to be built up but never to a stage that ordinary performance is exalted as extraordinary. “Warm fuzzies” are good but so too are words of correction if they are shared with wisdom and understanding. Students should not depend on a constant diet of praise. Disappointment happens, discouragement happens, distress happens and thus some inner courage is required. It might be as well to remind some that if the world didn’t “suck”, they would fall off and that some resilience is needed against “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.”

OTHER AREAS

Describing the list of educational inadequacy is problematic for there are inevitably things that have been omitted and that probably need to be added to the list. For example, instruction in morality might need to be added to the list for within the dark corners of a school, a moral blindness can hinder the recognition of that which is right. Within this shadowy world, ethics writhe into convenient distortions of the

truth. Values melt and slump to a level that accommodates desire.

Thomas Moore in his book *Care of the Soul* suggests that a great malady in the 21st. Century is our neglect of the soul. This is revealed in shallowness, loss of meaning and a failure to recognise the sacredness of ordinary things. It is significant that many of the Amazon tribes are not so much afraid of the white man’s world, but rather they are horrified by its toxicity to their soul. Perhaps western schools should also be horrified and seek to counter the soullessness within. A student’s soul needs to be kept healthy by a diet of noble action, moving and aesthetic experiences, love, wisdom and the opportunity to engage in reflection.

CONCLUSION

I believe boarding schools to be enormously well placed to work on many of these forgotten skills, and would encourage Heads of Boarding Schools and Directors of Boarding to work with colleagues to put in place a life-skills program within their boarding house which has the effect of preparing their students not just for an exam, but for life...and perhaps even beyond.

A FULL-DAY WORKSHOP WITH PROF. TIMOTHY SHARP

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Positive psychology is one of the most exciting new developments in psychological theory and practice. In short, it encourages psychologists to ask not just what’s wrong with people but also, what’s right with them. It aims not just to reduce distress and dysfunction but also, to promote health, wellbeing and happiness.

This workshop is designed for the many psychologists, coaches, teachers and counsellors who are interested in incorporating the principles of positive psychology into their work and/or shifting the focus of their clinical and counselling activities to provide services aimed more at people who’re currently functioning reasonably well, but want to do even better.

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2. Positive psychology strategies such as • optimism • positive relationships • utilising strengths
3. Opportunities for incorporating positive psychology into various lines of work

WHY YOU SHOULD COME

1. Because Positive Psychology is “hot”
2. The practical skills and strategies you learn will revolutionise your practice
3. You’ll learn from one of the best and have some fun in the process

WHERE AND WHEN

Sydney – Friday March 20, 2009
Melbourne – Wednesday March 18, 2009

REGISTRATION

\$630 per person (plus GST)

OR REGISTER BEFORE DEC 31 TO RECEIVE THE EARLY-BIRD RATE OF \$500 PER PERSON (PLUS GST)

To register go to :<http://www.thehappinessinstitute.com/events/training.aspx>

YOUR WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Prof. Timothy Sharp has three degrees in psychology (including a Ph.D.) and an impressive record as an academic, clinician and coach. He runs a clinical psychology private practice, an Executive Coaching practice, and is the founder & Chief Happiness Officer of The Happiness Institute, Australia’s first organisation devoted solely to promoting the principles of positive psychology (<http://www.thehappinessinstitute.com>). He’s taught at all the major universities in NSW and is currently an Adjunct Professor (in Positive Psychology) within the School of Management, Faculty of Business at UTS as well as RMIT University’s School of Health Sciences.

Prof. Sharp is also a best selling author (of, among other things, “The Happiness Handbook” and “100 Ways to Happiness: a guide for busy people”), a sought after public speaker, and he makes frequent appearances in the local and international media including being read and heard by millions of people every week in a syndicated newspaper column and radio spot (<http://www.drhappy.com.au>).

“ Dr Sharp captivated the audience with his experience, knowledge and contemporary strategies for living life “happily”. We have been overwhelmed with people wanting Dr Sharp to return to SA and we hope to see him sharing his wisdom again in the very near future. ”

Kiara Garrard (SA Divisions Network Committee)

Coming Events

Australia

January, 2009
Positive Education Training Conference
at Geelong Grammar School
(2 x 5 day programs)

Sydney – Friday March 20, 2009
Melbourne – Wednesday March 18, 2009
Positive Psychology Workshop
with Prof Tim Sharp

Semester 1, 2009 (dates to be advised)
ABSA Leadership Program
for Heads of Boarding

Semester 1, 2009 (dates to be advised)
ABSA State based workshops

UK

Annual Conference for Housemasters and
Housemistresses
Date: 02 - 04 Jan 2009

State Boarding Schools' Association
Annual Conference 2009
Date: 18 - 19 Jan 2009

Annual Conference for Deputy Heads
Date: 19 - 31 Jan 2009

BSA Annual Conference for
Headteachers 2009
Date: 05 - 07 May 2009

USA

Leading Schools
2008 TABS Conference
Date: 03 - 07 Dec 2008

2009 Midwinter Residential Life
Date: 05 - 06 Feb 2009
Location: Saint Andrew's
School, Boca Raton, FL

2009 Residential Life Workshop
Date: 20 - 23 July 2009
Location: Boston University,
Boston, Massachusetts

2009 Admission Academy
Date: 20 - 23 July 2009
Location: Boston University,
Boston, Massachusetts

NZ

Annual BSA conference
Date: 26 - 29 May 2009
Location: Queenstown

LetzLive ~ Gap Placement: Letz Live would like to welcome you to explore our new website at www.letzlive.org. We are pleased to confirm that we are now recruiting GAP tutors and residential assistants from Canada and the United Kingdom for boarding schools throughout Australia.

For a copy of our prospectus please email Mr Nicholas Hare on 0404 128 558 or via email director@letzlive.org We look forward to hearing from you.

E: director@letzlive.org
M: +61 (0) 404 128 558
W: www.letzlive.org

Nicholas Hare B.Bus, Dip.Com
Founder & Director
LETZ LIVE PTY LTD

Software Marketing: Software Marketing Ltd, Run and owned by Ben Gelton. Ben worked for three years in a boarding school in New Zealand in the mid 1990's. With this background and his experience in the computer industry he saw an opportunity to apply his understanding to improving its operation. This resulted in LeaveRegister™ ASSIST a software system for managing the real-time leave requirements of up to 1000 students simultaneously while also enabling vastly superior flows of information between boarding school decision makers, the catering staff and the students themselves. Visit: www.softwaremarketing.co.nz

ARTSPEC - Proud Graphic Designers for ABSA. Prospectus, Yearbooks, Term Magazines and other publications for Schools. Scots College, Joeyes, Knox. Visit: www.artspec.com.au

- Do you enjoy reading 'Lights Out'?
- Do you find some things worth trying in your boarding house?
- Do you enjoy sharing your good ideas with others?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions - then you need to consider writing a piece for this newsletter.

We struggle from time to time to get enough information to publish the next edition, so this plea is aimed at YOU - spend ten minutes and write about something that is happening at your school so that we can keep publishing a top quality newsletter!

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 (400 to 600 words) and send us some high definition photos.

Send all files to; lightsout@boarding.org.au by the first week in February, May, August or October.



AUSTRALIAN
BOARDING
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION