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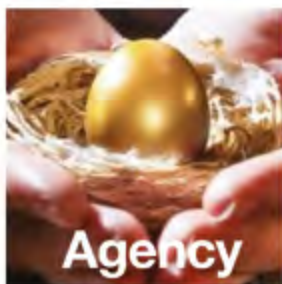
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“We are living in unprecedented times.” This statement is something that seems to be heard on a near daily basis over the last months. We have been asked to stay in our homes, other than for absolute necessities. Our schools have been forced to close their doors, but truly, school has not ended. As an educator and a parent, I am beyond impressed with the tiring, endless work that our teachers are stepping up to do in order to make this time successful for our students. We must remember that for so many students, teachers are the safe place - the calm, the support. I know that even when I am exhausted from teaching all four of my own children, (which includes relearning higher maths that I haven't studied for years!) it is so important to schedule face-to-face chats and lessons with my students. My face and smile may be what gets the students through the day. No matter how overwhelmed we may feel, we must push on, and become stronger for it.

In this issue, be sure to check out Karen Tui Boyes' article, “Setting Up a Learning and Study Environment at Home,” on how to create the right home learning environment for your type of learning. This is a great set of tips that support your thinking on how and when to study. Is your teenager not a morning person? It is okay to let them sleep in and study when their brain is awake and ready to soak up the learning.

Right along those same lines, be sure to read our newest contributor, Cat Coluccio's article, “Clear the Clutter and Reduce your Stress.” She offers simple tips to help us really examine our spaces and how to make them simplified and functional. This is incredibly important in this time we are living in - especially when there may be multiple learners and ages of students in your house!

Lastly, read Ryan Martin's article, “Let's Get Committed.” In it, he outlines ways to set and keep SMART goals. Not only are these goals a good idea during the school year in a “normal” year, they are applicable even now amidst homeschooling! How might you set goals for yourself where learning and home projects are concerned?

Stay Safe to all of our wonderful readers and contributors!

Yours in Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. S. Neal'.



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Thanks to the educators, speakers and authors who contributed interviews, articles, photographs and letters.

Teachers Matter magazine is registered with the National Library:
ISSN 1178-6825

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The opinions expressed in Teachers Matter are those of the contributors and we love them!

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Why We Should Trade in Our Education Biases

Finding a Balance Between University and Trade School

If you rose through the grades of the schooling system in the last forty years or so, it is almost certain that at some point you were encouraged toward university. With its lures of prestige and its promises of the expansion of the mind, as well as a cap, gown and certificate waiting at the end, it has kept young people captivated by the hope of their own future.

Inversely, vocational training, apprenticeships and industry work have been negatively affected by people's prejudices against them. Presenting as paths of education with fewer prospects, less prestige and less purpose, numbers within them have dropped dramatically compared to tertiary education, and society is feeling the burden of this imbalance.

The last five years in Australia have seen the number of people completing apprenticeships halve. In both Australia and the US, there are national shortages in industries like construction and manufacturing. The demand for skilled workers is simply not being met by the numbers of those gaining the necessary qualifications.

There are many factors that may have led to this but one of them must undeniably be the underlying, and often blatant, bias that schools, parents and media often have against work in a trade. Among school students themselves, there is a negative stigma around 'dropping out' before the final year of secondary school, the term itself implying some kind of failure. Those who complete their higher school leaving certificate are rewarded with graduation ceremonies and formals and parties, while those who leave to go into apprenticeships or vocational training at the age of 15 or 16 seem to slip out of school unnoticed.

The teaching and resources in schools are often geared towards tertiary education. While this is very important, it disregards a large sector of the population who also need preparation for their vocations. Information sessions and resources are primarily centred around universities, but the students who are looking at other options are often expected to seek out their own information and opportunities.



Attending university has become the default position, unless a student has specific other plans. The challenge with this is that many of the highly practical, entrepreneurial and human capabilities the future workforce will need in an age of AI are capabilities taught very effectively, perhaps most effectively, in a vocational context.

Our educational prejudices are not benefitting anyone. Trade industries, and the society and economy they affect, are suffering. But, ironically, universities themselves are also suffering. In fact, thirty-seven percent of students entering tertiary education require remedial courses and half of all employers feel that their potential workers lack the essential traits for workforce success such as creativity, planning and relationship skills.

Young people who have felt pressured into tertiary education by their schools and families have arrived only to be overwhelmed by the style and structure of learning, unhappy with their degrees and confused about their own interests and hopes for their future vocation.

Dropout rates are higher than ever in Australia, with one in three students dropping out without finishing their degree within six years. Within the universities, students are finding the structure and content of the institutions to be increasingly irrelevant. This is unsurprising considering the education model has evolved to a minimal extent over the last century. The aging system of lectures, tutorials, written papers, grades, graduation and the subject matter within this is not serving its students well. Only sixty-seven percent are gaining full-time employment within four months, this rate being the lowest on record.

As the system ages, costs rise and job prospects fall, the real value of a degree is coming into serious question.

Many institutions are moving towards different teaching formats in order to change with the times, replacing the physical university experience with online teaching. In the future, this online learning will be supplemented by hands-on industry learning and experience. Sounds a lot like a trade, doesn't it? So, it seems there is no group that is content with its experience of the current state of education.

California has been acting on this. By investing millions into campaigning, the state has been attempting to change the stigmas against vocational training and apprenticeships and re-establish them as viable industries with respectable reputations.

Marketing the programs to be more attractive to prospective students and simplifying the process of applying for, completing and using their qualifications have been some of the more practical efforts within this campaign. However, many experts say that much of the responsibility lies with the industries themselves to invest in training the next generation of their workers. This has been taking place with companies increasingly contributing funds and resources to their associated training institutions.




This collaborative effort is exactly the kind of action society needs to see. Schools, industries, training institutions, universities and media need to be collectively encouraging and equipping students for their vocational interests.

“Schools, industries, training institutions, universities and media need to be collectively encouraging and equipping students for their vocational interests.”



If schools provide balanced resources, industries invest in their future workforce, training institutions attract more students and universities change with the times, then we have a much better chance of creating a well-equipped, robust and lasting workforce among future generations.

But, perhaps the first and most important thing that needs to change is our prejudice against these other forms of education. Vocational training and apprenticeships are essential and highly viable for the future of our society – without them, we all suffer. Exchanging our biased favour of university for a more balanced and inclusive approach to education is guaranteed to be a profitable, effective and successful trade. 



Michael McQueen

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4 Habits of Mind to the Upstairs Brain

Teaching Students to Regulate Their Emotion

So often, we find students over stimulated. The most telltale signs show up via inappropriate behaviours, outbursts, negative comments and anxiety-ridden features, such as fidgety body movements, leg shaking or fist clenching. These visuals should raise immediate concern, putting educators in a position to act. The goal needs to be getting the student to a self-regulated mindset. But, how?

The upstairs and downstairs brain are analogies to connect the actions and behaviours of children. Visualise the brain as a house. In the downstairs, chaos tends to always take place in this sector, and often at a rapid pace. In children, this is where the basic functions like breathing and blinking occur as well as impulses and emotions like anger and fear. Often, children in the downstairs brain present loss of control with impulses, which leads to poor decision-making and an inability to think with clarity. As for the upstairs, more positive and optimal thinking presides, but often at a slower pace. This area of the brain is responsible for intricate mental processes, like planning, decision-making, self-awareness, empathy, problem solving and decision making.

The reasons vary as to why children suffer from being in the downstairs brain. Everything from distractibility, troubling incidents with a peer or even reacting to a poor grade. For instance,

imagine a student enters the classroom after just receiving a failing grade on a test. This student storms into the room, throws their bag on the ground, rips the test and punches the desk. They need a strategy to get them upstairs.

A strategic approach for guiding students from downstairs to upstairs is through the Habits of Mind. The Habits of Mind, developed by Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick, are a set of 16 dispositions that serve as a pathway to finding a solution when one is not apparent. These habits can be utilised within the classroom as a way to build culture, curriculum, behaviour and structure within completing assignments. Moreover, these dispositions are centred on providing mindful approaches toward developing productive behaviours in thinking and processing.

Why Habits of Mind and the Brain?

As teachers, one of the most neglected topics is “how” the brain functions and “why” it affects our behaviours. In other words, the more we get to know our thinking patterns, triggers, and behaviours, the more inclined we will be to understanding the actions we unconsciously sometimes display.



One of the hallmarks of Habits of Mind is that students can learn through modelling, discussion, and practice with what they are, feel like and look like when trying to calm themselves.

“One of the hallmarks of Habits of Mind is that students can learn through modelling, discussion, and practice with what they are, feel like and look like when trying to calm themselves.”

Below is a technique using four Habits of Mind to decrease negative impulses and emotions. The goal is to lead students to a more positive state of mind where they will be more regulated for thinking and learning.

Process for De-escalation with 4 Habits of Mind

In this 5-step process, I will provide a definition for each Habit of Mind, explain the procedure at each step, and give a scenario/prompt to follow. Depending on the situation, this process should take anywhere between 3-5 minutes.

- 1. Managing Impulsivity:** Take your time! Think before acting and remain calm. At the sign of arousal stop the student in their present state and instruct them to remain calm and take a deep breath. Get the student to manage their impulses.

“I notice you are really upset. Let’s work together on breathing slowly for one minute in order to manage your impulses.”

- 2. Thinking About Your Thinking (Metacognition):** Being aware of your own thoughts, feelings and actions. Once the student is calm, lead them into the practice of recognising how they feel, what they are thinking about, and how they can get to a point of understanding their thoughts.

“What is going on in your brain right now? Are you in the downstairs? Tell me how you feel, what you’re thinking and if you are ready to move on to getting upstairs?”

- 3. Gather Data Through all Senses:** Observe through sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing. Envision a love or passion - the beach, a sport, flowers, puppies - anything that will calm their thoughts. Have the students close their eyes and visualise the smell, taste, touch, sound and sight of the item - build the senses!

“Take a minute, close your eyes, breathe slowly, and think about something that makes you happy. I know you told me how much you love your grandma’s fresh-baked cookies. Think about walking to the upstairs brain, in a calm state of mind, as you smell the cookies, taste the cookies and feel the warmth of them right out of the oven.”

- 4. Responding With Wonderment and Awe:** Intrigued by what you are able to do to move yourself upstairs: Observing the world’s beauty. Open your eyes, and say congratulations! Praise their ability in working through feelings and getting to a better state of mind.

“Now, open your eyes. How are you feeling? Are you upstairs? If not, are you almost there? You should feel so happy and excited about your work in calming down.”

- 5. Setting a Goal for the Future:** Thinking Ahead

“The next time you are feeling (upset, angry, frustrated, disappointed) but I am not with you, what can you tell yourself to move from the downstairs to the upstairs brain and to take charge of your own thinking and behaviour?”

Through using these Habits of Mind to encourage meditative practice, children will hopefully acquire a mechanism for regulating themselves and that will lead them to a more productive, mindful and effective self. 🎯



Dan Vollrath, Ed.D.

Daniel Vollrath, Ed.D. (@HabitsofMindInc) is a special education teacher at Hunterdon Central Regional High School in New Jersey, and a United States Professional Development Trainer for the Habits of Mind Institute. As a current educational leader within the classroom, Daniel’s best practices, strategies, goals, classroom culture and interactions with students with a learning disability are centered around the Habits of Mind.

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Mapping Learning

Metaphors Make the Journey Visible

The learning journey is a complex trail, where students will easily get lost without the tools to navigate it. Michael Absolum, author of *Clarity in the Classroom*, cleverly relays the importance of students articulating where they are in their learning, where they are going and why it is relevant. While many teachers are tempted to jump into the deep end of Trevor Mackenzie's Student Inquiry model, where students have the free choice to guide their own learning journeys, we need to be asking if they really are equipped with the skills to float by themselves.

Motivated to include student agency and personalisation, teachers across the globe have excitedly embraced the idea of passion projects or genius hours in their classrooms. We relish in student's dedication to immersing themselves in their personal interests and encourage them to take control. Within this teaching paradigm though, the changing role of the teacher is paramount. An honest reflection of what and how we are teaching as well as what the students are learning is pertinent.

Setting students up for success in managing their own learning journey should begin in the first years of school and be gradually built upon in the same manner we build on curriculum knowledge and skills. This means explicitly teaching what learning looks like in a range of contexts, involving the students in decisions as much as they are capable, as well as asking them to articulate their location and progress along the way. What this can look like in schools is wide and varied. I have personally seen immense value in creating a metaphor to make that learning journey simplistically visual and easily relatable.

Naturally, a learning journey or reaching deeper thinking is most closely related to analogies of growth, covering distance, getting deeper or higher, inflating, completing a cycle, maturing or metamorphosis. Often, schools incorporate their own personalised symbolism, relevant culture or significant environmental features into their learning metaphor. Stonefields School in Auckland, built on the site of an old quarry, illustrates their learning principles in stones representing the building of knowledge, collaboration, making meaning and breaking through. College Street Normal School in Palmerston North ignite, inquire, interpret and inspire as they journey across a bridge. Gems Wellington Academy in Dubai ride the ebbs and flows of waves as they wonder, discover and apply. At One School Global, we unite campuses globally with an analogy of a mountain journey where students and teachers orientate, navigate and explore to reach the summit. Of course, embracing the hard learning which occurs in a crevice, similar to James Nottingham's Learning Pit, is an expected part of the mountain journey.

Regardless of the metaphor, the value of a visual concept helps to externalise the learning process: educating students to learn how to learn. In a school where we have been unpacking the stages of learning from building knowledge in the orientation phase, adding our own thinking in the navigation phase, through to synthesizing and creating with self-constructed knowledge in the exploration phase, I have not only seen students articulate how to logically attack a big question, but have heard teachers drawing parallels to mastering new goals in their own personal and professional lives. It has even naturally extended to the structuring of staff professional development in the same way we do for our students. It really



becomes a key signature pedagogy for a learning framework that is relatable to life-long learning in the real world. Back at the classroom level, the mountain metaphor allows us to map out the learning journey ahead. Students learn which questions help us to recall and locate information from primary and secondary sources in order to understand the key concepts in a big question or context. They distinguish these basic questions from those that require their own thinking, decision making or opinion. Furthermore, they associate the relevance of all smaller questions to the synthesis required in answering the big question. These categorised questions are placed on the mountain in the three phases to illustrate a logical learning path. When students learn how to complete this process for themselves, they are not only engaging with the content and purpose of the learning but the process of how to do that successfully. It is easy to imagine how this skill will transform the student agency, self-direction and intentional thinking during genius hour or passion project approaches.

Although the prospect of students mapping their own learning is enticing and exciting, it would be naive to think they can just because the metaphor provides the framework. There is a lot of distance to be covered before the language of the metaphor becomes a meaningful part of your school fabric. This is what you are aiming for. You can begin with a shared understanding, bringing all stakeholders on board the same page. Include the parent body who we would expect to be having learning conversations with their children. Celebrate the visual component with impacting symbolism in every place that learning and sharing takes place.



Let the learning analogy be clear to even the postie who drops off the mail. Let it hit visitors square in the face as it shouts out, **“This is the way we do things around here!”**

When the shared understanding exists and the references are in abundance, you will find it easier to weave into the actual learning contexts. Just like anything, the more contexts we see it and connections we have to it, the more we will know it. Do just that. It can become the basis of your learning conversations.

“What part of the learning journey are you in?”

“How do you know?”

“What skills might help you achieve that?”

“Are there any thinking tools that have helped you with that type of learning?”


“Why are you learning about that?”

“What previous learning will help you to make that decision?”

Every new term and year, I marvel at the progress students have made in mapping and articulating their learning journeys. From year three students identifying basic questions and thinking questions, to year 5 students recognising questions that compare and connect, to year 7 students mapping their entire learning journey and high school students being able to adapt and edit questions along the way. Consistency has been key in this success. With each successive year, we have added a layer of what it means to be learning in each stage of the learning journey. Imagine layering overhead transparencies upon the journey illustration to match up appropriate thinking tools, question types, verbs, digital tools or thinking frameworks such as Bloom’s Taxonomy. Depth of knowledge around how we can learn in a variety of ways is easily built up by drawing a new connection to the learning journey each year.

Our evidence shows, with the support of a learning metaphor, students gain ownership of the learning process that is consistent and progressive across a school. The natural progression of students utilising this framework becomes glaringly obvious when your feedback to students at each level becomes patterned with common tangible teaching points for the following inquiry.

“Our evidence shows, with the support of a learning metaphor, students gain ownership of the learning process that is consistent and progressive across a school.”

These patterns create a rubric which allows students to see how capable they are at directing their own learning. Until students gain these self-directing skills and an awareness of the learning process, they should be supported in each stage. Map out what genius hours could look like within a personalised inquiry through small guided groups, one on one conferences or whole class wonderings. Begin with modelling and teaching the learning process before throwing them in the deep end. 



Zaana Cooper

Zaana is a leader of innovative and integrated inquiry learning in a global learning institution. Based in a self-designed Makerspace, she models the explicit teaching of future skills through making and doing. Working with Year 3 – 10 students, as well as primary and senior teachers, her experiences are vast and varied. Follow her social learning networks for ideas and inspiration on Twitter @zaanacooper and Instagram @mrszaanacooper.

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Building a Culture of Connectedness

Using the Make it Right Formula

In the same way that the soil has to be rich and fertile to grow into strong, healthy plants, so do the relationships in students' lives need to be fertile to raise strong, contributing human beings in society.

It is critical to have relationships that work inside and outside of school. Administrators and teachers, caretakers and teachers, caretakers and students, parents and staff are all critical for nurturing young minds and setting examples.

Mirror neurons, in working the minds of our students, are noticing all interactions and mimicking what they see. Children do not just mimic what they see on the media or on their devices but what they see adults doing and saying. They also mimic our way of being. We are their role models. As adults inside a school, most children see more of us than of their families in the run of a day. So, our **role modelling is critical!**

Children are also inventing what they don't see, but need to see modelled such as restoring hard feelings. We all have experienced hard feelings inside a relationship. And we need to model for children how we restore those relationships, such as making things right with a colleague.

The time teachers spend problem solving recess feuds would be a lot less if the students used a few simple but life-changing tools, such as the Make it Right Formula.



"Make it Right Formula"

So many adults are insisting students apologise, and when they do, it is very inauthentic. The Make it Right Formula works much better. It is best for these social and emotional skills to be learned in a workshop. For example, in our workshops, with the, "Make it Right Formula," participants learn four steps to powerfully restore relationships that are not working as well as they would like. Whether they are caused from a simple misunderstanding, an intentional or unintentional comment, a slight or something more severe such as public humiliation, this formula works.

For students, this might involve bullying, humiliating, alienating, fighting, tattling and more. Recently, a year three student learning the, "Make it Right Formula," said, "You mean we can be friends again after making a mistake?" This is revolutionary work both for children and adults!

Since it is critically important to nurture relationships both inside and outside of school, to support student growth, we need a way to make things right after a misunderstanding, breakdown in communication or anything else we do to sabotage relationships as humans. The "Make it Right Formula" helps restore relationships. Role modelling the formula is essential so students learn how to restore relationships and move forward.

What is the one critical thing we need to do before problem solving with someone? Before we can start problem solving, we must lower the emotions to a state of relative calm. Here is a strategy that will do just that.



Through Your Lenses

Perspective training allows people to understand and reflect back upon someone's emotional state so they feel heard and understood. With the exercise, "Through Your Lenses," participants learn how to respond rather than react. When one can genuinely see a situation from another point of view and express that through language, the emotional temperature in the listener drops. Then a space is created for the speaker to state his/her point of view. From there, solutions can be created.

For example, when an upset teacher approaches another teacher with a problem they want solved, the listener needs to view the request through the lens of the upset person and reflect back what they hear and their feelings about it. This can include their concern and/or their commitment. Do this until they feel understood and are able to calm down. That creates a space for the listener/reflector to communicate their point of view. Only then can problem solving begin.

Just like in a very hot classroom on a summer day, at a point where the teacher and students can't think anymore because of the heat, when the emotional temperature is too high, people can't problem solve. When people are emotionally upset the thinking part of the brain, the frontal cortex, is out of commission. This is because the survival part of the brain, the amygdala, is in full gear. **Bring the emotional temperature down first and then seek to solve the problem.**

Adults must learn simple but radical ways to restore relationships and bring down emotional states. We must also **teach our students essential social and emotional skills.** Nurture the soil (relationships) at your school. Make the soil rich for raising strong, healthy students so they can reach their potential and soar! 🌱

"Make the soil rich for raising strong, healthy students so they can reach their potential and soar!"



Margaret Boersma

Margaret Boersma, OCT is a teacher trainer, speaker, and educational consultant. Her career in teaching, combined with her expertise in social/emotional learning, allows her to assimilate the affective domain with academic curriculum goals. Having trained extensively in the arts, and with Dr. Eric Jensen in brain compatible pedagogy, Margaret's heart is to transform classroom practice to enable students and teachers to thrive. Her innovative training programs result in students gaining leadership and communication skills while becoming compassionate citizens. She works with school districts, schools, and faculties of education in Canada, the U.S., and Europe.

You Don't Have to Do It All

Student Ownership Achieves Balance


Many of the teachers I coach are tired. Their jobs are multifaceted and demanding. They design and facilitate lessons, monitor student progress, collect student data, provide feedback and assess student work. They also carry the burden of communicating with parents about student progress. It should not surprise anyone that most teachers are exhausted and struggle to find balance in their teaching practice.

Teachers are doing the lion's share of the work in the classroom. That is a problem. The person doing the work is the person doing the learning. We must find ways to shift the ownership of learning from the teacher to the learners.

In my book, *Balance with Blended Learning*, I encourage teachers to embrace a partnership model and view their students as real partners in the learning process. Students can no longer be passive participants in the classroom. However, to actively engage in the learning process, students must learn how to think about their learning, assess their skill development and communicate their progress with parents or guardians.

#1 Metacognition

The teacher cannot be the only person in a classroom thinking about student learning. Too often, students receive information, learning objectives, instructions and grades without ever being asked to think about their learning or evaluate the development of their skills. Teachers who help students develop metacognitive skills promote active engagement in the learning process. Students must practice flexing their metacognitive muscles by regularly reflecting on their work. They must understand what they are learning, how they are learning, and where they need to focus energy to improve.

A straightforward strategy for teaching kids to slow down and think about their learning is to end the week with an exit ticket, like the one pictured to the right. 

An exit ticket focused on metacognitive skills helps students to appreciate what they are learning, while also giving them an avenue to advocate for themselves as learners. They must articulate what they are learning, how they are learning and how they might help someone else to develop a specific skill or learn a concept. They also have the opportunity to identify skills and concepts that are challenging or unclear and ask for additional support. This student feedback can be a powerful guide as teachers plan their next week of instruction.

#2 Self-Assessment

The teacher cannot be the only person in the classroom thinking critically about and assessing student work. Students must practice evaluating the quality of their work and reflecting on what that work reveals about their skills and content knowledge.

End of the Week Exit Ticket: Flex Your Metacognitive Muscles

* Required

What academic goal are you focused on this week? *

Your answer _____

Identify one skill or concept you learned this week. *

Your answer _____

How did you learn this skill or concept? Describe your process. *

Your answer _____

Which skills you are struggling with and need to spend more time practicing next week? *

Your answer _____

Would you like teacher support in a small group skill station to help you with this skill? *

Yes

No

Are there any concepts from this week that are unclear? If so, which ones? *

Your answer _____

If you could design an activity to help a classmate to develop the skill or understand the concept you learned this week, what would you have them do? *

Your answer _____

If you have any other questions or feedback about the week, please include that below.

Your answer _____

[Submit](#)

One routine that teachers can implement to teach these skills is asking students to regularly reflect in a self-assessment document. Teachers begin by identifying key standards and skills for a particular unit. Then they give students time each week to select a piece of work, align it to a target standard or skill and reflect on what that work reveals about their journey toward mastering that skill.

Ongoing Self Assessment Document

Think about the work you have completed this week. Select a specific piece of work to analyse and reflect on in depth. Identify the skill or standard to which this particular piece of work aligns. What is the title of the assignment you are assessing? Provide a link to online work or insert a photo of offline work. Evaluate your work and give yourself a score based on where you think you are in relation to mastering this skill/standard Explain your self-evaluation score.


Standard/ Skill	Title of the assignment and documentation (Include a link or insert an image)	Self Assessment Score (1-4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1= Beginning (I still need support) • 2= Developing (I'm getting the hang of this) • 3= Proficient (I got this) • 4= Mastery (I'm ready for the next challenge). 	Explanation/Reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you give yourself a particular score? • What details in your work support your self evaluation score you assigned to this piece? • What does this piece show about your strength as a student? • What aspect of this skill/standard are you still working on or struggling with? • What specific support would help you to continue this skill?

Not only does the ongoing self-assessment form require that students think critically about their skills, it helps them to understand the value of the work they are doing in class. Teachers also gain invaluable data from this form that they can use to move toward personalising instruction, supports and scaffolds for students as they work on mastering specific skills and content knowledge.

#3 Communicate Progress

Teachers cannot communicate regularly with 30-150 families about each student's progress. It simply isn't possible. Instead, I believe students of all ages should own the conversation about their progress. They should have a strong sense of how they are doing in a particular class and practice articulating their progress to parents or guardians. When students communicate directly with parents and guardians, it encourages conversations about academic progress, keeps parents and guardian's in the loop and requires that students take responsibility for their learning.

When I coach teachers, I encourage them to dedicate time every other week to having students communicate their progress with their parents. In the older grades, this takes the form of an email. In younger grades, students can write a short script and record an audio update using an app like Remind or Class Dojo. If students are developing their metacognitive muscles and regularly engaging in self-assessment, then communicating their progress to parents will be exponentially easier.

The teacher profession needs to be sustainable and rewarding if schools are going to attract and retain high-quality teachers. Unfortunately, traditional approaches to lesson design, facilitation and assessment put the burden on teachers to do the work. It's time to flip the script and get students doing the heavy lifting in the classroom. 

"It's time to flip the script and get students doing the heavy lifting in the classroom."



Catlin Tucker

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The Curious Habit of Blame

How to Move On From Blame to Resolution

Every Saturday morning I try to leave home by 7:30 am, so that I arrive at the gym in plenty of time to score a car park. Experience has taught me that leaving after 7:30 significantly reduces my chances of getting a car park.

On a recent Saturday, as I backed out of the garage, I glanced at the clock on my dashboard and saw that it was 7:35 a.m., meaning I would need a quick trip to the gym if I was going to get a carpark.

At the end of our street, I had to wait for a scooter to go ahead of me before I could turn. With a sinking feeling about my already late state, I began to follow the scooter down the hill.

“Come on,” I silently encouraged the rider. “Surely that scooter can do 50 km going downhill!!!!” Apparently not and as we slowly made our way down to the traffic lights at the bottom of the hill (which we missed!) I observed myself getting angrier

and more frustrated, focusing my blame for the situation in which I now found myself on the slow scooter rider.

But then I forced my angry thoughts to stop in their tracks. It wasn't the scooter rider's fault that I had left late for the gym. In fact, the only person to blame for this was myself. And in fact, if I was running early, instead of late, I might well have enjoyed the enforced slower pace of descent and maybe even had time to take in the stunning views of Wellington Harbour as we made our way to the lights at the bottom of the hill.

I reflected on how often in life my first response is to blame an innocent party for my own short-comings.

“When you blame and criticise others, you are avoiding some truth about yourself.”

I'm guessing (well, actually, I'm blaming if I was to be really honest!) our strong human survival trait that immediately looks to self-protect by finding others to blame, rather than confronting a truth about ourselves.

“When you blame and criticise others, you are avoiding some truth about yourself.”



It is an important lesson for both children and adults that even though our first response might be to blame others, our second response needs to be, “How have I contributed to what has happened?” and then thirdly, “What responsibility do I now need to take to rectify this situation?”

Most of my life I have been involved in the education sector, firstly as a teacher, then a senior leader and now as a facilitator, coaching leaders around change. One of the things I am noticing is the increased number of stories about unreasonable expectations being directed towards those who have committed their lives to the education of our nation's children.

The stories I am hearing are about parents blaming teachers for their child's under-performance, unacceptable behaviour or unmet unrealistic expectations about what a teacher, who is often responsible for 25 or more students, will do for their child.

I'm not for one moment suggesting that every teacher is perfect, or that every decision a teacher makes is the best one. What I am wondering though, is how much of this 'teacher-blame' has its root in parents who are too busy juggling careers

and/or the constant state of 'on' caused by digital technologies to give their children the parenting required for a successful upbringing. Fun fact: Did you know that a child only spends 21% of their 'awake' time in a classroom?

“What uncomfortable truth are parents avoiding when they go into blame mode at their child's school?”

Often in our jobs, especially if you are a leader, you have to deal with people unreasonably blaming you for things over which you have little control. What is the best thing to do in this situation? First and foremost, the worst thing you can do is to be defensive or argue back. This goes nowhere and results in everybody losing. Instead, if at all possible, listen sincerely to deeply understand the situation from their point of view and then ask clarifying questions to help the person broaden their perspective of where the blame lies.

Another trick that is worth having up your sleeve is a strategy called a Contributions Chart. This works well when people are in problem-solving mode but will back-fire on you if you try to use it while people are angry.

Draw a circle on a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper and in it, write a short description of the issue or incident. Then draw a second circle around the first and in this circle begin to write down everything that has contributed to the issue. You'll notice that the blame-fuelled contributions will come out first. Write them down and calmly ask, “And what else?” As if by magic, many more contributions will surface (Pro Tip: Let silence do the heavy lifting.) as will the realisation that there are many things contributing to an issue. Sometimes, just getting the contributions out is enough, but if you want to take action, then draw a third circle around the second. Cross out all of the contributors that people in the room can't control. Then in the third circle, get people to suggest actions that can be taken to deal with the contributing factors. The final step is to then agree on future actions.

I am pleased to report that I was able to eventually pass the slow scooter and was fortunate enough to get the last carpark at the gym. Lesson learnt! I promise from now on to set my alarm five minutes earlier on a Saturday! 🚗



Carolyn Stuart

Carolyn Stuart is a weaver of futures, helping people and organisations with their 'now' so that they are ready for their 'next.' Carolyn's varied career in education has included 13 years as a principal, 5½ years in a senior system-level education role and now as the founder of Weaving Futures, a company that combines the latest design strategies with sound leadership practices to help people unlock an abundant and enjoyable future.

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Inquiry Into Effective Feedback

Does Yours Help or Hinder Learning?

“We all need people who will give us feedback. That’s how we improve.”

-Bill Gates talking to business leaders

Initial Thoughts

There are two basic forms of feedback: Numerical or letter grades rank a student’s relative standing among classmates. The student feels good with a high grade or poorly with a low grade, but it has nothing to do with consciously improving the learning. Written or spoken comments relating to the student’s performance provides information about their performance, and are thus aimed at improving the student’s ability to learn.

According to Bloom and associates, in order for feedback to be positively received and acted upon by the mentee (the receiving student), it must possess the following characteristics: it must be paraphrased as having a positive class culture; it must be feedback that is short and specific; it must highlight the student positives; and it must be indicating specific changes that will lead to mastery. Avoid overkill. Look at my point in Teachers Matter number 45 and identify one core idea at a time. Implied

here is the teacher being both aware of the student’s past knowledge and aware of how feedback comments encourage students to be creative, imaginative and innovative, as two basics of becoming a continuous learner.

Developing a Nurturing Culture

Big ideas are fine, but unless they have a classroom and school culture in which to grow, they will wither and die, perhaps even be stillborn. A nurturing culture is one that is open to many ideas and possibilities but not in the sense of “anything goes.” Teachers must still be in charge, still take responsibility for the quality of curriculum delivery, and for providing a physically and emotionally safe and disciplined work environment. But they must do this more as a collegial facilitator than an autocratic dictator. Teachers need to be *doing with* rather than *dealing to* their students. They also need to overtly project the belief that every student in the class is important to them. Managing impulsive students will be an important part of this. Slow thinking is required. Avoid impulsive responses.

Two and a half decades ago, Daniel Goleman drew our attention to the importance of emotional intelligence. “Know yourself,” he said. For a teacher, this means being aware of how they react to their students, such as being aware of the voice they use. Is it conversational and friendly or commanding and cold? Likewise, with body language. Do you wear a kindly face, or “one of cold command?” The ultimate sin is to change the language or change a face for different students. Never underestimate the importance of a teacher’s actions on the class culture.

Feedback is more complicated than one might think. Stone and Heen in their book, *Thanks for the Feedback*, bluntly state, “When we give feedback, we notice the receiver isn’t good at receiving it. When we receive feedback, we notice the giver isn’t good at giving it.”

Do the teacher’s actions change when they give feedback, giving the impression of doing to? Does the way that feedback is given encourage acceptance and attitude, or a reaction, such as, “The teacher is picking on me again?” If the teacher perceives the student ignoring the feedback, the teacher reflection needs to be on how to alter the presentation of

the feedback in a manner palatable to that student. The teacher, even an experienced teacher, is as much a learner as the student and is to some extent a novice – maybe even unconsciously incompetent. However, the teacher is responsible for making the learning environment safe: a nurturing collegial one.

Such a culture needs to signify order and security, but it also needs to signify a relaxed flexibility that encourages experimentation, creation, innovation and an openness to continuous learning. Such an approach likely removes the opportunity to see feedback as a threat, and therefore, to shut the feedback out as the fight, flee or freeze kicks in.

Teachers, too, need feedback as Gates implies in the quotation above, and it needs to be in the moment, not for assessment purposes occasionally. Who better to provide the teachers with feedback than their students?

“Who better to provide the teachers with feedback than their students?”

This needs careful planning, perhaps using the model described briefly in my article, *After the Conference*, in *Teachers Matter* number 39. Start small, but do start immediately, at least once a week with an organising question that gives the feedback clarity and precision.

This teacher modelling is highly visible and helps the students understand the relevance of written feedback in an authentic concrete way. The students may not always hear what the teacher says but they will remember what you do: your actions.

PRACTICAL IDEAS

Some years back I featured in a video prepared for the first module of a Six Seconds course designed to train 25,000 teachers round the world in emotional intelligence. The guy on the top left of the video, is Joshua Freedman, the CEO of Six Seconds. The big picture is the implications of the Fight, Flee or Freeze physiological reaction in the classroom. Those familiar with this will find the video as a useful refresher. Those who are unaware of it will find the video gold. Note Joshua talking about stress in the classroom and how teachers are often unaware of how they are responsible for this. When this happens, the student is not going to accept even the best designed feedback, and the teacher will most likely wrongly think the student is at fault.

You can view the video at this site:

<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/admin.6seconds.org/media/alan-cooper.mp4>

In 2007, I gave a presentation to the 13th International Conference on Thinking in Sweden.

It uses authentic classroom incidents and practices, which can be applied at any school, class level or subject. In the section on **Being There**, the fifth para down Cate’s story, illustrates how the teacher working with an individual student illustrates how thinking interdependently can be done as a pair as well as with a group. Further how a simple teacher behaviour, sitting beside the student, (doing with) is both peer tutoring and differentiating the learning. When this happens, not only is successful feedback going to be given, but the student is more likely to act on it.

This is the link to the full paper on the Thinking Conference website:

<http://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/021/vol2/005/ecp2107v2005.pdf>

Homework

Silver and McTighe, in their recent webinar on teaching for deeper learning, recommend the proforma shown below as one note making visual format that encapsulates the elements of deep learning. Do a reflective audit of how one aspect of this article, when implemented, will increase the value of the feedback you give. Great teachers reflect, too! Keep it brief and to the point. The best is not the biggest number of notes, but the **quality of a few**. Do not overload. Start with one small aspect that appeals to you, thus making it personal. 📌

Facts	Feelings & Reactions
Questions	Connections



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One of a Kind Kind of Making

How Making can Make a Difference

The Maker Movement is often associated with laser cutters, 3-D printers, walking robots, dynamic spaces and state-of-the-art technology. However, there's an entirely different facet to making – one that values the uniqueness of the human hand and traditional knowledge. I like to call it the, “one of a kind kind of making,” because it cannot be replicated in form or value with technology alone. My grandmother, a farmer in rural Kentucky, was perhaps the most soulful and skillful maker I have known. She sewed most of the clothes we wore, designed our Halloween costumes, made quilts, fixed items, made homemade glue and paint for us, and everything in between. I have no doubt she could have built a house with her bare hands if she had to.

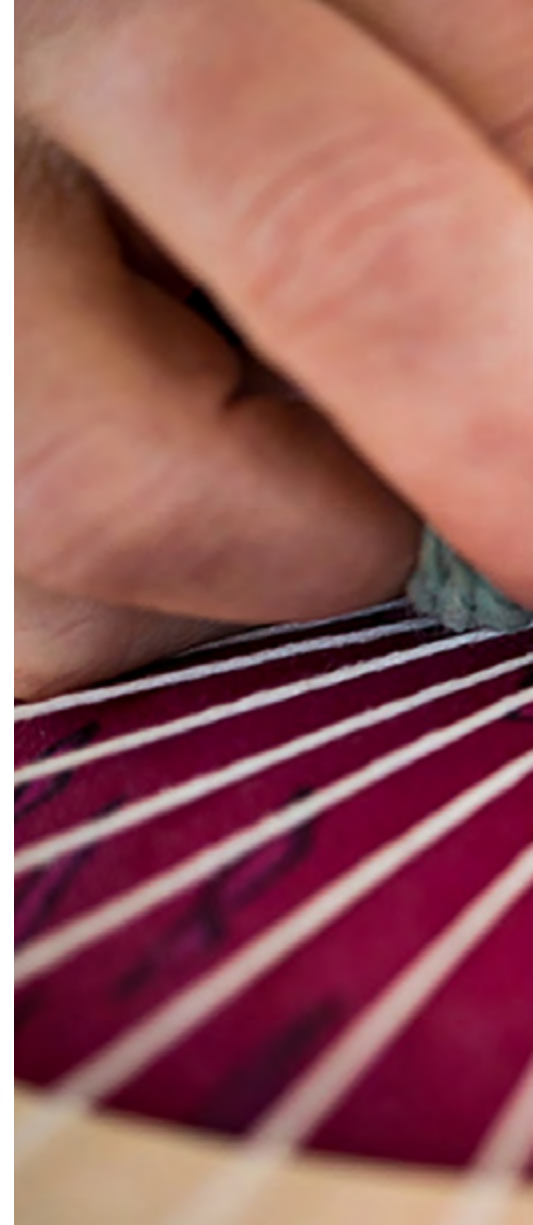
The first time I went to a fabric shop was with her. Surrounded by stashes of widely different types of fabric, she encouraged my sister and me to choose the ones we liked the most. Once we did and returned to the farm, her working hands spent hours, days, sometimes weeks creating every imaginable request we had for our stuffed animals and dolls. From outfits to small pillows, my grandmother could make it all. My sister and I would often join her. She gave us permission to explore and take risks, which occasionally led to poking ourselves with a needle.

We were fascinated by her creative and imaginative capacity. At the end of each summer at the farm, we returned home knowing that what we brought with us in our little blue suitcase was “one of a kind.” FAO Schwarz, Toys ‘R’ Us, you name it— these stores could not offer in any of their

aisles what our grandmother’s hands could make for us.

Like my grandmother, my sister and I, there are many girls and women who are makers – all around the world. Throughout history, making has thrived in the hands of women. Women have made objects out of necessity. Women have made things for pleasure. And women have made items as a way of amplifying their social and political force. In the 1920s, women in Gee’s Bend, Alabama (US) made quilts from scraps to keep their families warm in unheated shacks. In San Marcos Tlapazola, Oaxaca (MEX), the 300 or so potters (all women) who live there have made pottery their way of life. In the village of Sisokhe, in Kenya (AF), women build, repair, and maintain rainwater harvesting tanks. Yet somehow we never seem to hear or learn about these women.

“Making is about identity, self- sufficient communities, sustainability and empowerment.”



The kind of making described above is about identity, self-sufficient communities, sustainability and empowerment. It’s also about stories and the abundance of knowledge these women and communities carry. From an educator’s perspective, sure – we can learn a lot about geography, social sciences, physics, the arts and math from these makers and their contexts. But far beyond that, we can learn about traditional knowledge systems, ourselves and the rich history of making. It also prompts us to question who is included and who is left out in conversations about making, and why? This is a question we should ask ourselves relentlessly as artists, crafters, makers and educators.


Despite many initiatives, there are still tensions within the Maker Movement. Research reveals that women continue to lack representation and that there is still prejudice towards what is handmade. As the movement continues to expand in education, serious attention must be given to young girls, women and artisanal grassroots movements. Only then will the



Maker Movement get closer to achieving its ultimate goal as the leading force behind the, “democratization of design, engineering fabrication, and education” (Artisans Asylum, 2014).

More recently, while reading about the collaboration between a cardiologist and the Aymara women of Bolivia, who are applying ancient knitting and weaving techniques to develop devices that help repair heart defects, I found myself incredibly inspired and hopeful that

stories like theirs will highlight the beauty and strength of intersecting the arts, craft, technology and cultural heritage in making and spaces of making.

The long history of makers that came before us is filled with knowledge and “one of a kind kind of making.” We must remind ourselves and others, that yes – the artifact is of immense value – but more important than the artifact are the people making them, the stories they carry and the meaning of their making. 



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Why Are Difficult Texts So Necessary?

“Manageable Gaps” and Why They are Important as Hooks

Jacqueline Wilson gives her number one tip for writers as, “*Read lots, because it teaches you how to create.*” By ‘lots,’ she implies a wide range of texts, from simple to challenging. However, some teachers deny that their students would ever ‘get into’ the great works, because these texts are so far removed from their disadvantaged real lives. Others question why some writing is thought to be ‘better’ than others and what the point was of students starting books that they didn’t or might not yet understand.

To address these concerns head on, there is no requirement that students have to understand texts the first time that they read them. **They don’t have to ‘get it’.** Not yet. In fact, there is a strong argument that not getting it may be the very incentive that drives further investigation and exploration. The additional depth and variety that other minds, through their writing, can bring to the customisation of meaning for students is vital. There have been numerous studies, most notably perhaps the Bristol Study of Language Development, to support the idea that children’s vocabularies increase in domains that are rarely the

subject of everyday talk and that children learn that books are sources of interest and enjoyment that can introduce them to real as well as imaginary objects, and places and events that they do not encounter in their immediate environment.

Words as Possessions

The language that we use, the words we have at our disposal don’t just reveal our identity. They actually influence how we think and even what we may become. Our words shape our ideas and alter how we see our world and voice our insights. Our perceptions and our communications are all expressed through our language.

As Stephen Fry commented, “*We may be what we eat, but we most certainly are what we say... It seems most certainly to place us in the world like no other property or quality we possess.*” Words that we learn become our possessions, and literally become a part of the way we piece the world together. They have been called a fantastic filament that stretches between all of our minds and that connects us not

just to each other but also to our own past and future. They matter. Fitzgerald noted, “*That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you’re not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.*”

Yet, how rarely are our students taught which words and which texts matter most? Which ones punch well above their weight and why? And even more rarely, are they given the opportunity to play with words, doodle with language and discover that meaning is a highly negotiable process? What makes meaning meaningful? What brings our words alive? What do we need our words to do for us?

Words need to help students as they start on the lifelong process of defining how they see the world, ideas and most importantly, themselves. Words should *require* them to understand concepts that matter now or will matter soon to them and to put them in a position where they need to take a viewpoint. They need to see wild words in action for, as Keynes noted, “*They are the assaults of thoughts on the unthinking.*” We live in a world of stories and we are surrounded by learners who are often mesmerised not just by plots, uncertainties, problems and a longing to know how it all turns out in the end, but also (if we let them) *by the way the writer writes.*

Great Texts Withhold Immediate Meaning

Stories are a key tool of education. They incite a desire to know more, to turn the page and of course, to learn. Curiosity is at the heart of learning.

“Curiosity is at the heart of learning.”

It’s what drives people to want to learn more about something. William James (1890) pointed out that the *brain responds to an inconsistency or a gap in its knowledge.* This is supported, slightly more recently, by Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development theory – that we need to push students slightly out of their comfort zone for them to learn. Once





that initial spark of curiosity happens, the next step is to investigate more thoroughly. That investigation then leads to wanting to wholly understand it – to *unravel the mystery* of it. And of course, that's where learning comes into action. The blurred boundaries within a text are an invitation to explore the unknown or the untested. They are an open, rather than a closed door. The haziness allows for the possibility of finding something unexpected and even unlooked for. We might uncover new possibilities within that misty ambiguity.

Great texts withhold immediate meaning. They have to be worked on. Students of all ages get too few chances to pick on them, examine them, stick sharpened matches between their pages, interrogate them and question them about what they are for. They are difficult. Puzzling over them *requires engagement*. When students have to immerse themselves in a text (such as when they are asked to write a parody or rewrite key passages in the style of a particular writer) they are required to think and explore new perspectives, to look skeptically at approaches and devices and to examine their own craft and intuitions.

If they are asked to try to write like Austen, Angelou or Amis, Faulkner, Frame or Fitzgerald, they are effectively hooked into authorial intention and impact through their empathy. They begin to

hear the music in other writers' words and are encouraged to find their own. Jeanette Winterson pointed out that if we want to explore what a writer is saying and what we understand that writer to be saying, then the links aren't telepathy, they are language: "*Learn from everything you read and understand how to learn from everything you read.*"

It's too safe for students to spend much of their time in just one world; it's our job to make them take a look at other worlds and to introduce them to the possibilities and excitement of alternative existences. One easy way to do this is through reading diverse, challenging texts with them. In our encounters with such a text, we might begin with an exercise involving *becoming* one of the characters and then go on to talk about how we would feel facing similar problems or experiences. So what begins as an exercise designed to uncover a text's implications (why does that character feel and act as they do?) leads to a deepening of the students own understanding of their own values and emotions.

In truth, opening our minds to these other worlds, to their incongruities and ambiguities, often leads to *more mess than mastery*. But it is how we help them handle the mess that helps to encourage further exploration, and thereby, development. If on that messy journey we can also offer our students some inside

track on informative and transformative insights on language, and get them prying into everything, we will have succeeded. We all need to escape from the prison of ourselves. 📖



Ian Warwick

Ian Warwick founded London Gifted & Talented as part of the groundbreaking London Challenge, which has transformed education across the capital city since 2003. He has co-written 'Educating the More Able Student' and 'World Class' in 2016 and has two new books on 'Redefining More Able Education'. He has recently completed a book on learning called *Unfinished Perfection*, which focuses on Da Vinci and explores strategies for improving creativity and innovation.

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Using Music in the Classroom

How Different Types of Music Benefit Students Throughout the Day

Music can be a powerful learning tool in the classroom. Here are some ideas to get you started...

Firstly, it is important to note that some of your students will prefer to work in silence. It can be relatively difficult to find quiet spaces in our busy world. One of the easiest ways to achieve complete silence is to wear a pair of earmuffs – the ones you mow the lawn with such as ear plugs, or use some old headphones from the listening post. This is a very effective and rather unique way of finding a quiet place. If you have the space, you might also have a quiet room students can work in. Some schools allow students to work in the staffroom as a quiet space.

For the students who prefer music in the background of their learning, the type you play can make a difference. First, music without words is best. The brain is designed to learn and will always focus on the words of a song rather than the content you are teaching.

Secondly, baroque music will enhance your students' learning and memory. This is because it has approximately sixty beats per minute, which is equivalent to the average resting heart rate.

“Baroque music enhances your students' learning and memory.”

The music, therefore, helps relax the student into a calmer state for learning. It has a predictability about it, as opposed to the classical and romantic eras of music which tend to be unpredictable and more stimulating for the mind and body.



Baroque music slows down brain waves from Beta waves, where the mind and body is very active and very busy, to Alpha waves, where the mind and body is calm and relaxed, allowing for the long term memory to be activated. Learning then becomes easy and rapid. Baroque composers include Pachelbel, Vivaldi, Handel, Bach, Corelli and Telemann. Baroque music played softly is best used in the background when your students are working quietly at tasks such as writing and reading. A study was conducted at Stanford University, USA, to determine the effect music has on plants. Three identical rooms were set up with plants. All plants were treated equally during the three month study.

In the first room there was complete silence. The second room had loud rock music pumped in, and the third had quiet Baroque music playing. At the end of the three months the plants were compared.

In the room with silence the plants were normal and healthy. The plants in the rock music room were shrivelling and dying. Finally, the plants in the Baroque music room had flourished beyond expectations. But more than this. Researchers noticed an unusual phenomenon. The plants were growing towards the speakers. Now, I know students' brains are not like plants... or are they??

Music in the Classroom:

There are many times you can add music to your classroom routine. Here are a few ideas...

Discussion: Playing music while students are talking can enhance their discussion. Play it softly in the background so it doesn't intrude on the discussion.

Examples: Kenny G, Gato Babien, light jazz or instrumental versions of popular songs.

Call-In Song: A song to let students know it's time to get ready to start the class. Very useful after morning tea and lunch, and especially good for between classes as a guide for children to know how long they have to get to the next class. I tend to prefer music with positive words and an upbeat tune.

Examples: Simply the Best, Tina Turner; Surfin' Safari, Beach Boys; No Limits, Hits Unlimited S2; Joy to the World, Three Dog Night; Life, Haddaway; Hello, Martin Solveig; Everybody Everybody, Old School Players; Uptown Funk, Mark Ronson; Happy, Pharrell Williams.

Special Effects: To add more fun into your programme.

Examples: Twilight Zone Theme; Chariots of Fire, Vangelis; Eye of the Tiger, Survivor; I'm So Excited, Pointer Sisters.



Pack Up: A track of music that you can use at pack up time so students know when to start packing up and how long they have. This music has a fast beat which indicates to pack up quickly.


Examples: William Tell Overture, Rossini; Heigh Ho Heigh Ho, 7 Dwarves; 1812 Overture, Tchaikovsky; Grease Lightning, Grease Soundtrack.

Reflection: Useful to calm students and for stimulating creativity.

Examples: The Mariner, Tony O'Connor; The Butterfly, Jeff Clarkson; Espresso Guitar, Martin Winch.

Baroque: Great for opening the brain to a receptive state of learning and accessing long term memory. This music is recommended for studying.

Examples: Pachelbel, Correlli, Vivaldi, Telemann, Handel, Scarletti, Bach.

Remember to provide a time when your students can play their own music – maybe two or three minutes before the lunch bell. I do advise, however, that you screen their music first – some is not appropriate for the classroom. 



Karen Tui Boyes

Karen Tui Boyes is a champion for Life Long Learning across nations, industries and organisations. As founder and head facilitator of Spectrum Education, Karen leads a team which is determined to transform education globally, with a focus on ensuring teachers, students and parents have a passion for learning, understand the learning process and know how to maximise it. A sought after speaker who continually gets rave reviews from audiences around the world, Karen turns the latest educational research into easy-to-implement strategies and techniques.

For more information, please visit:
www.spectrumeducation.com

Chores in the Classroom?

The Positive Role Chores Provides

How can you build children's capacity to be competent, emotionally intelligent people?

The world is changing all the time and there are fewer opportunities in young people's lives to build life skill competencies. However, you can use that lack in the world to the advantage of your students, your classroom, parents, the school and the overall community.

How, you ask? We well know that there are so many pressures on teachers' time and energy these days to cover all the areas of the curriculum during the day, the after-hours communication with parents, not to mention the extra- curricular activities that great teachers engage with.

What about the children and how they can help with everyday, small tasks so teachers and parents are not seen as the servants of these budding learners?

Firstly, think about the value of chores:

- They teach life skills – patience, caring for others, being responsible for something.
- They teach skills of responsibility and self-reliance.
- Chores can help kids learn about teamwork.
- Doing chores helps people learn about respect for self, property and other people.
- Chores also teaches how to break down tasks and problem solving
- They are also great for experiencing real satisfaction for having done something well.
- Chores enable kids to learn about planning and time management.
- They can also be an opportunity to learn maths, chemistry and language.
- Chores can help us to learn that we are all human beings with equal value.
- The importance of maintenance is taught through completing chores.



If you now think that giving tasks to build a happier and healthier classroom is for you, carry on reading. What tasks you do, that if the students helped, would make your classroom a better place to be in?

Step 1:

Make a list of all the routine tasks

For example:

- Tidying the class-room
- Checking for rotten food in school bags
- Preparing for the end of the school day
- Managing books and resources
- Paper dispenser
- Paper collector
- Buddy
- Floor monitor
- Tap monitor
- Media turner on-er, media turner off-er
- Rubbish monitor
- Lights monitor

“Chores teach life skills – patience, caring for others, being responsible for something.”

Step 2:

Consider how jobs can be given out. What skills are needed and who needs to learn and develop that skill? How you might buddy students into a more responsible chore? How long will the jobs be held? What happens if the job is not done or not done well?

Step 3:

Think about how you will make sure that you support your students to take on these roles. You may want to think about developing, “chores in the classroom” over time so it is not too much for you at once or too confusing for the students as they get used to a new way of doing things.

Step 4:

Build feedback into reports back to parents about how competent the student is becoming.

Step 5:

Notice the difference in your students’ levels of confidence, competence and how this also can radiate out to other spheres of well being. 📺



Madeleine Taylor

Madeleine Taylor is a parent of three grown sons and works as a People Skills Consultant. Madeleine is an accomplished workshop facilitator and long-time trainer of negotiation, influencing skills and managing difficult conversations. Madeleine is a parent educator exploring how to grow resilient children in this complex world.

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C is for Circle

Teaching Inclusivity and Diversity

“Diversity is the one thing that we all have in common.”

C is for circle - what an oxymoron and oh the irony!

Groupings of people in circles are closed. It feels great to be part of one but it can have the opposite effect when you are not part of it. Circles form a physical barrier of those who are included and those who are excluded. Group circles are therefore unwelcoming by their physicality. They make a statement of backs to the outside world. If you're on the outside, the physical barrier can cause people to feel rejected, isolated, alone.

I spent many years in classrooms and on duty in the playground and I saw circles of people everywhere. I also saw children isolated and the picture did not 'speak' inclusivity nor diversity. It 'spoke' of the exact opposite.

At a course many years ago I learned that up to 30% of school children are not spoken to in the course of their day at school. I could imagine this more in a secondary school level but I am more than suspicious that it happens at the primary school level also.

The physical barrier of a circle makes it more difficult to join in and it speaks exclusivity in a profound way - more powerful than words. It can be damaging and confronting for those on the outside.

Am I cool enough to join in? Should I stand on the outside showing an interest in wanting to join in? Why wasn't I invited in? Do I fit in? Why not? What do I need to do to get into the circle?

In a world where we have a growing number of anxious, depressed and lonely people we need to be teaching children how to include, be open minded and diverse. We should do this until it becomes the natural way of thinking and being.

In a world where there is less 'real life' conversation, less listening face to face, less togetherness, the need has become greater. We are lonelier and more stressed than we should be.

"In a world where there is less 'real life' conversation, less listening face to face, less togetherness, the need has become greater."

The need for human connection is a basic need but we are falling short on providing it. This can be fixed.

Here's a very simple way:

C is for circle but a 'C' shape does what an 'O' cannot do - it leaves the door open to new ideas and new people. C is inclusive. C is open. C is for Connection.

A 'C', however is a completely different scenario. There's room, a place, a physical welcoming place for someone new, someone different, someone else. Why is this so important? If we implement this physical representation, it is going to help open minds and form the habit of inclusivity and diversity.

Inclusivity and diversity are key to us having better solutions. Inclusivity and diversity are key to meaningfulness. Inclusivity and diversity are key to innovation and implementation.

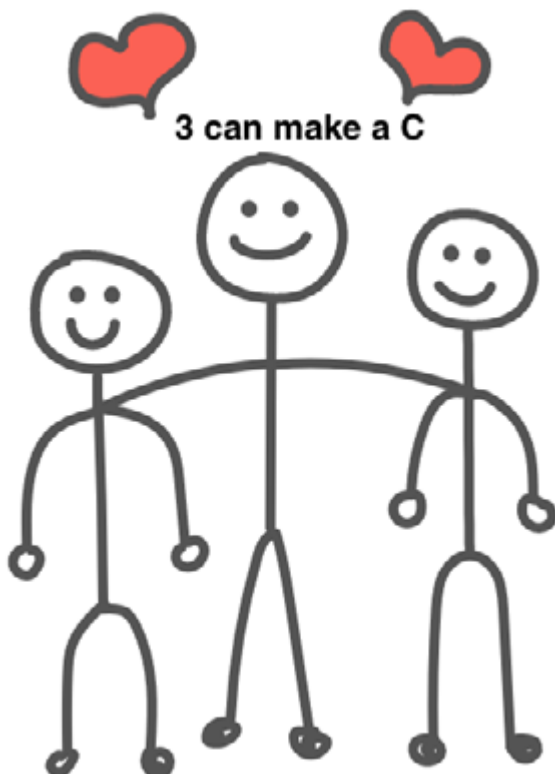
HOW?

Here's some examples:

Children get into groups of C shapes for all discussions. Give them something to discuss. For example, "Today we are going to discuss something that is very important to you." Get into 5 C shapes with five people in each Connection Group.

Where possible, have the students stand up. People are less likely to talk too much and more likely to keep to the point in a standing situation.

When someone speaks they enter the centre of the C and share something that is important. Everyone needs to listen and then give one short statement of feedback before moving onto the next person to move into the middle.





Take turns.

Once everyone has spoken, one group disperses and each person joins another group. They are welcomed into the ‘C’ because it’s an open and exclusive shape!


The new group member shares what happened in their group that day.

I have no doubt that you will add your own ideas to make the C groupings work for you.

HOWEVER...

If you are going to continue as adults role modelling your own circle groupings as adults, then the teaching and the learning will not be nearly half as effective. “Do as I do,” is far more powerful than, “Do as I say.”

SO.... I’d strongly recommend working in C groupings in staff meetings and shoulder tap the Senior Leaders in your schools into having C group meetings themselves where they invite other staff into their C meetings as guests.

These changes will have a huge benefit to staff relationships. The dynamics of your school WILL change simply by ditching the O groups for C groups and thinking about who you have in your C groupings. Replace your Circles with some C for Connection groupings for openness to diversity. 



Monica Moore

Monica worked in many facets of education for more than 30 years and was privileged to teach 5-18 year olds.

She has also run her own business writing and selling school musicals all over the world for the last 24 years. She works as a speaker, facilitator and presenter.

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Therapeutic Drumming in Schools

Ripple Effects Beyond the Classroom

When you think about it, we have all experienced the power of rhythmic beats even before we were born. That's right, it's the mother's heartbeat that helps comfort the growing fetus through pregnancy.

It's little wonder then, that cultures around the world have used drumming to bring people together for centuries. In the modern era, therapeutic drumming draws on this ancient wisdom and the latest research to break down communication barriers and to enhance social emotional learning.

Therapeutic drumming has been proven to work effectively, particularly in schools. Research indicates that it has resulted in a 50% decrease in discipline incidents and a 30% increase in school attendance.

Beyond just statistics, case studies show how therapeutic drumming can help change student behaviour. A year 5 student was known for being physically violent expressed her anger by hitting things daily – walls, her desk, sometimes other students. On the first day of a drumming session, she got up in her facilitator's face and said, "Miss! This year I'm gonna hit drums instead of people!" And to her credit, she did just that.

Teachers and senior leaders explain that therapeutic drumming has a 'ripple effect' across the school. As the negative behaviour incidents decrease and positive behaviour increases, teachers can spend more quality time teaching, feel less stressed and as a result, are more engaged in their teaching.

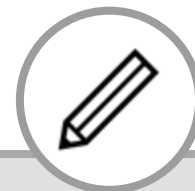
"As the negative behaviour incidents decrease and positive behaviour increases, teachers can spend more quality time teaching, feel less stressed and as a result, are more engaged in their teaching."

Children experience a less disruptive class, affording greater opportunities for learning. Parents respond positively, noticing positive behavioural change. Academically, participants are reported as having greater focus and increased self-directed learning.



The 'ripple' effect on the community continues. It is the music making process and reflection as the conduit for social and emotional intelligence, increasing students' competency in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. All these skills are critical to positive community engagement and offer 'protective' resilience factors to at-risk behaviours such as school dropout, criminal activity and susceptibility to alcohol and other drug use.

Many schools across Australia and in the USA have discovered the power of therapeutic drumming. One teacher said, "We incorporate a lot of how to use these skills in the classroom. So you know we use the drums, but we also talk about the terms and the rhythm and the harmony in everyday life. What should they do if they found themselves out of rhythm, out of beat, out of harmony with others?"



Angie Paskevicius

Holyoake is a leading provider of counselling and support services for those affected directly and indirectly by alcohol and/or other drugs. It also operates DRUMBEAT, an evidence-based therapeutic program that is making a positive impact around the world.

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Let's Get Committed

Staying on Track with SMART Goals

'Most people fail not because of lack of desire, but because of a lack of commitment.' --Vince Lombardi

On the 1st of February this year, my wife began the F45 8-week fitness challenge (She was not alone,) and as a result made a commitment to exercise like a maniac, follow a strict diet and abstain from alcohol. Over the holidays, the social butterfly that is my wife, told everyone that would listen what she was committing to and so began the fun at our house. Over the first few weeks, she cooked separately, woke early to exercise, avoided alcohol and suffered severe bouts of 'hangryness,' a scary combination of angry and hungry. Oh, what a joy she was!

Despite the initial challenges that everyone in the house faced, things have settled, and she feels great, is fitter and I think she looks great, but I always think that. The reason I share this story is because of the powerful step that my wife took before the fitness challenge. She told people (lots of them) who would hold her accountable and have her committed to the goal (like the pig) rather than just involved (like the chicken) and made a 'Commitment to Action.' This has been a powerful motivator to keep her on track because the very public declaration she made attracted both accountability and support that perhaps she might not have expected.


In a number of schools that I work with and my own, it is around this time of the year that I check in with them to see how the teaching and learning goals that they have set are going. The 'Commitment to Action' that they made was based on evidence and made early in the year. It was documented and shared among their various team members, so everyone had a role to play in ensuring that this goal was SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timely). These schools are successful because they have set up structures in the school that ensure that when goals are set, that there is a process to check the progress of these goals and make timely adjustments as required. In addition, if they achieve or surpass these goals through their focused, dedicated and committed work, they celebrate these achievements as a staff and with their students.



"Now is a great opportunity to reflect on the term and the goals that you may have set."

Now is a great opportunity to reflect on the term and the goals that you may have set. Some questions for you to consider:

- Did you achieve what you set out to?
- How do you know?
- What changes do you need to make to build on the success you have had?
- Who is going to support you to be successful?

If by chance, a few of your goals got lost in the general busyness of school this term, take a leaf out of my wife's playbook and tell your colleagues what ambitious targets you have set for you and your students. You'll be surprised how much support will come your way. 



Ryan Martin

Ryan Martin, recently awarded with the Northern Territory Principal of the Year, is an experienced school leader with a proven track record in behaviour management, leadership and coaching. He has a sharp focus on changing the trajectory of students from highly complex and disadvantaged backgrounds. Ryan has a passion for education but you might also find him surfing, skating or tinkering around with old cars.

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Those That Can Do, Teach.

And Those That can Teach, Should.

In my final year of high school, a fellow student announced that she wanted to be a teacher. And *our* teacher tried to talk her out of it.

Ten years have passed, and funnily enough, I am now a science teacher. As I start my second year in the classroom, I'm pausing to reflect on the career that almost didn't happen.

To people who don't know me well, my becoming a science teacher was a bizarre career move. Why would I waste a

tertiary education in a technical field like physics or chemistry, only to end up back at school? "Just be an engineer instead. You'll earn more."

I left school with a love of science, and an exit grade that was high enough to admit me into most university courses. I was encouraged to choose the hardest one to get into, at the most prestigious university available to me. And when I did so, I got the impression most adults we knew were relieved. It was, on paper, a good move. But after finishing the degree,

I began to miss the diversity of science as a multidisciplinary subject. I didn't want to be a specialist. I was a keen generalist at heart.

But there was something wrong with teaching, at least in my mind. It is hard to pinpoint exactly what it was or where it came from. I think it was very much to do with the message I had been hearing and believing for years – those that can't do, teach.



In my experience, many of those that can do, *can't* teach. In my early twenties, I worked in a corporate job for all of five minutes, and I still remember “learning” how to edit photos from a colleague who didn't check for understanding and who rushed through steps without letting me write anything down. “We don't have time for that. Just remember it.” After a few experiences like this, I took stock of what was important to me, and started searching for a career that would reflect those things.

Tutoring was an eye-opener. Even when I was working long days in the corporate sphere, I couldn't give tutoring up. I just loved it. I actually left my corporate job to run a tutoring business for a while. We helped hundreds of students and employed sixty tutors at peak.

Unfortunately these efforts also saw me drowning in admin, which took me out of the tutoring role I enjoyed so much.

I then spent my mid-twenties back at university studying education, tutoring on the side, and championing the broader skill that is teaching. Every industry needs people who can teach, because in every industry people need to learn things.

“Every industry needs people who can teach, because in every industry people need to learn things.”

And now, I'm a teacher. My time spent outside the classroom has only made me better in it. But it is a shame that it took me so long to get back to school. I am disappointed that the wider perception of teaching got in the way of me doing what I really enjoy. Sadly, today's school leavers aren't faring any better, because teaching is still not considered prestigious, and teachers don't get paid very much.


And if teachers are discouraging their own students from the profession, we have a serious problem.

I want my students to value the skill of teaching, even if they don't choose teaching as a career. Students who leave school knowing what it is like to have a

good teacher are more likely to recreate those experiences for others down the track.

I would also like my students to entertain the idea of a career in education in the same sentence as, “I could be a doctor, lawyer, engineer...”.

And so I tell them:

Those that can do, teach.
And those that can teach, should. 



Sarah Durack

Sarah Durack is a high school science teacher based in Sydney, Australia. Sarah started classroom teaching in 2019 after working as a private tutor for ten years. Her work in education to date has culminated in Sponge – an online tutoring training program for new and experienced tutors working all over the world.

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Anxious Parents

How to Recognise and Support Them

Twenty-first century parents seem to be an anxious group. Increasingly, they are bringing concerns about their children's school performance, behaviour and levels of happiness to the attention of teachers – issues that past generations of parents would never have considered problems.

The Impact of Parental Anxiousness

It's tempting to say that anxious, fretful parents raise anxious, fretful children but that's not entirely accurate. Anxiousness, like sensitivity, has a genetic component. Some children, like their parents, are predisposed to experiencing anxiousness, which isn't helped if they have a parent who is a worrier. In these cases, worrying and fretting becomes the new norm for a child with an anxious parent.

Anxious, fearful parents are generally very protective of their children, not wanting them to experience hardships, frustrations or difficulties. Lunches left at home are brought to school. Minor skirmishes are brought to a teacher's attention long after the children involved have moved on. Requests are made for grade arrangements that suit their child's wishes. All this interference robs children of opportunities to solve their own problems, to develop coping mechanisms for when life inevitably goes awry, and to develop the self-sufficiency and resilience that will be needed for successful living in later life.

How You Can Support Anxious Parents

Schools that experience high levels of anxiety among parents generally need to take a global approach. This might include implementing classroom programs that focus on resilience and wellbeing; undertaking parenting education that builds understanding of child development, the needs of children at different ages and the importance of resilience training at home and at school; and taking a unified approach to managing the individual concerns of parents.

On an individual level, it's helpful if teachers have a supportive attitude, a genuine concern and a willingness to communicate empathetically with parents. Here are some more ideas about how you can help when working with highly anxious parents:

Take Their Concerns Seriously

It's tempting to say that anxious parents should toughen up and stop worrying about the minutiae of their children's lives. However, while a parent's worrying that their child is struggling in maths may be considered a 'first-world problem,' it doesn't make the anxiousness about failure and fear for a child's future prospects any less real and valid than, say, a mother in a developing country worrying about whether her child even has the chance to go to school. A worry is a worry and needs to be acknowledged.

Provide Reassurance

Many parents lack both experience and benchmarks for their children's problems, behaviour or school performance. As a teacher, you may have seen hundreds of nine-year-old girls get testy with their peers, twelve-year-old boys struggle with forgetfulness through puberty, or seventeen-year-olds who apply themselves only sporadically to their studies but these are first-time experiences for most parents. You know that kids will get through most of their difficulties, however many parents don't have the benefit of your objectivity or your experience. You may need to be the person who says to a parent, "It's okay. I know you are worried, but this is normal. Your child will get through this. So will you." Reassurance and comfort are strong allies when working with anxious people.

Move Parents From Protective to Supportive

The usual reaction of anxious parents when one of their kids experiences problems and difficulties is to wrap their arms around the child and protect them. Aim to shift an anxious parent's focus and thinking away from protective and into supportive or teaching mode by asking questions such as:


- "How can you best support your child right now?"
- "What does your child need from you while things aren't going their way?"
- "How can you help them cope over the next few weeks?"
- "What can we do to make sure this doesn't happen again?"

Keep Communicating About Their Child's Successes

Maintain strong teacher relationships with parents who worry too much. Help them see that you take their concerns seriously and also help them understand that there is more to their child than the problems they see. At times, parents can only see their child's deficits, so help parents gain perspective by pointing out their child's strengths and successes.

Put Boundaries in Place

Anxious parents can be very high maintenance, taking up an inordinate amount of your time and energy as a teacher. Managing their expectations and requests while making sure you have time for all your other tasks can take considerable skill and careful management. Make it known when people can speak with you and when they can't. Look carefully at your availability and be aware that some parents who fit the 'anxious parent' category will keep coming to you with minor issues as long as you allow them to.

Remember that anxiousness is not a problem by itself. We all experience anxiousness from time to time. But when anxiousness becomes the overarching emotion that drives parent behaviour, then it needs to be recognised, taken seriously and managed in ways that minimise its impact on students and teachers. 

**Michael Grose**

As a trusted source of parenting education and support, Parenting Ideas offer memberships developed specifically for schools. Through a membership, your school can access and share a large amount of resources designed specifically to help parents with this important issue and other parenting challenges. Membership resources cover a wide variety of topics including mental health and wellbeing, resilience, digital and technology, bullying, positive parenting and more. Professional Learning modules for educators are also available, and provide a great option for whole of staff or individual professional development.

To find out more about a membership for your school
visit: parentingideas.com.au/schools

“When anxiousness becomes the overarching emotion that drives parent behaviour, then it needs to be recognised, taken seriously and managed in ways that minimise its impact on students and teachers.”



Do You Chase Your Tail?

Supporting Others While Still Protecting Your Work Time

“I thought having an open-door policy would be a good thing for the teachers, admin, children and parents. I’m happy to help but some days I feel like I’m everyone’s parent rather than their leader. I spend most of my day repeating myself.”

Have you ever caught yourself thinking or saying something like that? Ben shared this with me and continued with, “If I’ve told them once, I’ve told them a hundred times how to do it...”

He was particularly frustrated with one teacher who should know what they needed to do. They’d been in the role at the same school for years. “He keeps coming to me with the same problem and I’ve repeatedly told him what he should do to fix it.”

What Ben needed to do was to stop chasing his tail. As a school leader, it’s easy to feel the pressure to have all the answers, and to give all the answers. If Ben stops doing all the thinking for everyone, especially the one teacher who should know better, and adopt a more consultative or coaching approach, he’ll soon see a positive change. Ben adopted two strategies:

1. To be unavailable for twenty minutes each day so that he could get some planning, thinking or work done. **To do this, he**
 - Let others know he was not to be disturbed for 20 minutes,
 - used an empty office, closed the door, and
 - put a sign on the door that said, “Please do not disturb between 11:30 am and 11:50 am.”

After the first five minutes of the first time Ben did this, he was hooked. He decided to make this a regular practice. Because he managed other’s expectations about this short period of time, he found that most people simply got on with their work while he did, too.

2. Instead of chasing his own tail answering the same questions over and over he would step back from solving the problem for them and invite them to problem solve, to get them more engaged in the solution finding part of any issues.

To do this he:

- Stopped telling them his way or using phrases like, “This is what you should do.” He learned to catch himself before giving a direction.
- Took a deep breath, and
- asked questions!

As the quote goes, knowledge is having the right answer and intelligence is asking the right question! (Author unknown)


It felt a bit clunky to start but once he got into the conversation, he found it much easier to ask more questions and encourage others to engage deeper in their own problem solving.

To turn the conversation around from giving direction or repeating instructions, try these questions examples:

- a. “As this is work you’ve done before, can you recall what you did last time?”
- b. “I enjoy being a resource for you, however I’d like to see you problem solve for yourself first. I think you’ll come up with a range of options and answers, given your experience. You could trust your instinct of what to do and use the department manual to guide you. If you’re still stuck after that, come to me. Let’s make it your default that you’ll try to find the answer for yourself first.”
- c. “If you were to give advice to someone else about how to do it, what would you tell them to do?”

In interpersonal communication, we all have the capacity to delete, distort or generalise the messages we receive. Unless we work hard to be fully present and listen actively, we:

- hear what we want to hear.
- stop listening as soon as we think we have the answer.
- filter the message based on tone rather than the words.

Your day-to-day is busy enough, so anything you can do to stop chasing your tail is going to positively impact your productivity, reduce your stress, achieve more and engage others more deeply in their work and decisions. 



“If you stop doing all the thinking for everyone, and adopt a more consultative or coaching approach, you’ll soon see a positive change.”



Sally Foley-Lewis

2019 Learning Professional of the Year Finalist and named as one of the 25 LinkedIn Top Voices for Australia for 2018, Sally positively impacts results, leadership and team performance.

Obsessed with productivity and self-leadership, she’s presented to, coached and worked with 10,000+ people from Europe, the Middle East, Asia and across Australia.

An author, speaker and coach, she blends experience, extensive qualifications and a wicked sense of fun to get results.

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**“If there was ever a time
to put feedback on stage
and let grades take a
seat, THIS IS IT.”**

Erika Garcia, Educator

Beware of Cats in the Doghouse

Something to Consider

Many of us started teaching in the 60s (some even in the 50s). Remember, we thought we had problems. In the 70s, court cases made attendance in school more optional in order to pass the class. Take a test and get the credit. On one hand, learning is not the same as seat time. A colleague of mine, Jamie Crannell, used to say instead of making credits time certain, why don't we make school learning certain? He was ahead of his time.

Many students used the court rulings to skip classes, ask for all the work at the end, and get the credit. Technology has made this even more possible. The problem is that not coming to school created a habit of not being connected. Yes, educators have responsibility for engaging students, making learning relevant and creating a goal of learning transferable to real work.

As the existing system of the 60s became less relevant to a changing world, more and more kids were leaving formal education. Many options were initiated, mainly in the 80s, which helped students and parents seek alternatives. Educators caught between the Carnegie unit and relevancy were slow to change. At the same time, the 1983 Nation at Risk Report in America, gave rise to the blame game and the unintended use of test scores as the rating systems for kids and schools. See *The Manufactured Crisis* by Berliner and Biddle for more information.

Enough of history. In the early 90s, I met Michael Grinder who was training in classroom management and learning styles. One of the helpful analogies he presented was the Dog and Cat model. Let me explain.

Most of us in the earlier years were taught to teach dogs. This is not to say the students are animals but some of the characteristics apply. We are using a metaphor. Besides four legs and furry, what are the characteristics of dogs?

Usual answers are obedient, glad to see you, can't get enough attention, and want to please. Dog-like students tend to want direct connections with you, see emotions they can read and want approval. They are interested in pleasing you, the teacher. They growl when they are scared or feel threatened. If they don't growl and don't feel wanted, they may just go away.



Characteristics are:

- D** Direct Relationships
- O** Overt Emotions
- G** Grrr Means Fear
- S** Service-Oriented – Want to be Liked

When I ask, "What are the attributes of cats?" the usual answers are, "Aloof, curious, self-directed and can survive alone for long periods of time on their own." (Yes, they need food, water and their box cleaned, too.)

Cat students will be the first to leave traditional education when they see no point or lack of relevance to their life. Many won't give you a lot of time. If they can't connect the meaning to the content, they find something else to occupy their time. If you can hook their curiosity, they are intrigued. They tend not to respond to orders. **Creating options is a better plan!**

- C** Creative & Curious
- A** Aloof: Are you talking to me?
- I** Tease Intellectually to Engage Them
- S** Suggest, Rather Than Direct Them. Give options.

This is not just a school issue. Parents have got their hands full as well. Keep in mind that most of our staff and parents are operating on a 10-20 year lag. What we remember as experience in school, might

"What we remember as experience in school, might not be the reality of what students today are experiencing."

not be the reality of what students today are experiencing.

Many students today are looking for something new or different. Many are unwilling to sit there and take it. Engage them or lose them. Have a positive relationship with students or they will find a place where they feel understood and/or valued.

In the premise that Michael presented, and that I agree with, we were taught to teach dogs in college, and the cat population has been increasing at an exponential rate for a long time. Unfortunately, most schools are still trying to teach dogs. Some of this is driven by the testing culture and the limited view of management and leadership. What Ted Dintersmith, Tony Wagner and the many schools they connected with have done is to effectively teach cats (and dogs) by appealing to their strengths. As I read, 'What School Could Be,' by Dintersmith, every school had a student voice and choice and part of the attraction. Remember, if they are not connected with our school or learning site, WE HAVE WILL NOT HAVE INFLUENCE.

I want ethical educators to have an influence on our young people. As a retired senior leader, it was always difficult for parents to see a brick wall (boundaries and consequences) that wasn't working. Parents who were Jell-o (too few boundaries and no consequences) wasn't working either. Yes, I have been both as a parent, too. That is why I taught a parent class on the Goldilocks Theory of Parenting.

I am suggesting we start teaching to attract and embrace the Cats. Dogs will follow. Make learning relevant. We can do this! As I have quoted in the past, Angeles Arrien – "If your job is waking up the dead GET UP! TODAY IS A WORKDAY."

Michael Grinder shared with us years ago the following story. I must admit I do not know who Lara Adair is, but I really like the message.

When Children Turn Into Cats

Lara Adair

I just realised that while children are dogs - loyal and affectionate, teenagers are cats. It is so easy to be the owner of a dog. You feed it, train it, boss it around and it puts its head on your knee and it gazes at you as if you were a piece of art. It follows you around, chews on furniture if you stay too long at a party and jumps with enthusiasm when you call it from the yard.

Then, one day around 12-13, your little puppy turns into a big old cat. When you call it to come inside, it looks amazed, as if wondering who died and made you emperor. Instead of coming, it disappears. You don't see it again until it gets hungry. It dashes through the kitchen long enough to turn up its nose at whatever you are serving. If you reach out to touch it, it pulls away as if it has never seen you before. It may talk to you if it needs something like a ride to the mall or some new piece of clothing.

Stunned, more than a little hurt, you have two choices. First, and the one chosen by most parents, is that you continue to behave like a dog owner. After all, your heart still swells when you look at your dog, you still want its company, and you want it to obey. When you do ask for compliance, it pays no attention to you. It is now a cat. So you toss in onto the back porch saying, "Stay there and think about things, mister." It glares at you, not even replying. It wants you to recognise its independence.

You, not realising that the dog is now a cat, think there is something terribly wrong. It seems so anti-social, distant and sort of depressed. It doesn't want to go on family outings. Since you are the one who raised it, you assume that whatever is wrong is your fault. Overcome with guilt and fear, you redouble your efforts to make your pet behave.

Only now you are dealing with a cat, so everything that worked before now produces the opposite result. Call it, and it runs away. Tell it to sit, and it jumps on the countertop. The more you move toward it, the farther it moves away from you. Your second choice is to learn to behave like a cat owner. Put a food dish near the door and let it come out to get it. If you must make demands, find out what it wants and command it to do it. But remember that a cat needs affection too - and your help. Sit still and it will come seeking that warm, comforting lap it has not entirely forgotten. Be there to open the door for it.

Realise that all dog owners go through this, and few find it easy. I miss the little boy that insisted I watch sitcoms with him and who has now sealed himself into a bedroom with a TV, computer and an iPhone. I miss the little girl who wrote me love notes and is now peeling rubber in the driveway.

The only consolation is that if you do it right, let them go, be cool as a cat yourself. One day they will walk into the kitchen, give you a big hug and say, "You've been on your feet all day, let me get those dishes for you." And you will realise they are dogs again. 🐾

**Dr William A. Sommers, PhD**

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Money Doesn't Grow On Trees!

Unpacking Your Relationship With Money and Your Family

It's safe to say that as an early childhood specialist and educator in different contexts for over 35 years, that I have a special interest in the early years of development and family harmony. This has led me to unpack some of the reasons for stress in families and marriage breakdown. Relationships have always been a key focus when working with young children, university students, families and community groups. So when I discovered Money Coaching and the link to the early years, I was fascinated.

I'm a researcher, so when I read that money and financial stress have been credited as the number one reason couples divorce, (Business Insider, 2019) I wanted to know more and how it linked to young children.

I found that the biggest issues couples seem to have include:

- Different attitudes toward spending money.
- Financial priorities that don't align.
- Secret spending hidden from partners.
- Spending more than the budget allows.
- Unable to agree or compromise on spending/saving.
- Impulse buying of big items and major expenses.

- Combined bank accounts with one person spending more than the other.
- Major expenses that are unexpected.

All or any of these situations can lead to feeling out of control or on a downward spiral financially. This can impact on physical and mental health, but more importantly can be a major contributor to divorce. Approximately 49% of the population says that they are under financial stress and can't make ends meet even though they are working.

My question: How does this happen?

What is it that influences the way we spend, save, buy, sell, worry, plan, impulse



buy - whether we have a lot of money or not? How is it that we never seem to be able to get ahead? Money goes out as fast as it comes in! Why is it that we feel that we need to hold onto the purse strings tightly and have total control of the household money?

I immersed myself in learning more about this through training and research and became a Certified Money Coach[©]. Coaching and being an early childhood specialist are a good fit. I have a keen interest in development in the early years and the shaping of adult lives. The relationship we have with money impacts significantly on the relationship we have with each other and how we approach life.

Through research we know that our beliefs systems, values, thoughts and behaviours all began when we were around five years old. This is the same for money beliefs and money relationships. We watched our parents (who watched their parents) manage money. Money beliefs and values are intergenerational,



passed down with comments like “money doesn’t grow on trees”, “do you think we are made of money?”, “rich people have money because they are tight and never spend anything”.

Children who hear these sayings may have the belief system that money is hard to get, or to have money means not to share - that’s what has been modelled and said by the significant adults in our lives. These money understandings, values, beliefs and patterns learnt in childhood don’t generally serve the adult. As a young child with a developing brain and limited understanding of the adult world our beliefs are shaped by what we hear and observe. Neuroscience and child development research support this statement.

Think back to when you were young:


- Did you hear arguing about bill paying and not having enough money?
- Did you see new things coming into the house all the time?
- Did you have annual holidays?
- Did you get pocket money?
- Were you always told to save your money?
- Were you told, “We can’t afford it?”

As we get older, have our own money, navigate a job and find a partner, these belief systems and behaviour patterns become our adult default. Even when we think we have it all together, sometimes things slip financially and our energy and relationship with money and others is impacted.

My role as a Money Beliefs Educator is to take my clients back to their early childhood days and together, we work through life events to identify patterns, themes, common emotions and actions that have influenced the relationships with people and with money, then and now. The emotions, thoughts and actions in the money story point to typical patterns of behaviour that we call archetypes. By exploring the eight archetypes, clients ‘see’ themselves and can make informed decisions about their relationship with money. Clients become more mindful and in control of their money decisions which extends to relationship decisions – it’s powerful!

Using small, manageable tasks we work through misunderstandings and develop a healthier and more empowered relationship with money built on self awareness. If you are a parent, it’s a double bonus because you will become

“The relationship we have with money impacts significantly on the relationship we have with each other and how we approach life.”

more mindful of modelling positive behaviours and language for your children. Consequently, you will help to break the intergenerational attitude to money and build healthy personal and money relationships. 



Dr Kathryn Murray

Dr Kathryn Murray has been in education for 34 years and is the founder of Training and Education Services, a consultancy business that serves teachers, educators and parents to extend knowledge and skills to support the growth and learning opportunities. Kathryn also works with leaders to support the development of skills in emotional intelligence, leadership, communication and team building. She speaks locally to internationally on a range of topics.

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If you’d like to uncover default behaviours for yourself and your family then please send me a message on (+61) 0438 776 116.

Setting Up a Learning and Study Environment at Home

Making Homeschooling a Success

If you are learning from home via online teaching, doing some self-directed learning or studying for a test or exam, the environment you work in can make a big difference to your productivity and results. Here are some simple tips, ideas and strategies.

Get Organised

The 6 P's of success, **Proper Planning Prevents Pretty Poor Performance**, are extremely relevant to at home learning and study. Being organised and having a plan will certainly help keep you focused and can even half your learning time! Have you ever spent the first 30 minutes shuffling papers, looking at your notes and wondering what you are supposed to be doing? Make a daily plan of what you are going to study or learn. Create a timetable in small blocks of time and stick to it. Create mini rewards for yourself for staying on track. Knowing what you want to achieve will minimise the wasted time and help focus you.

“Knowing what you want to achieve will minimise the wasted time and help focus you.”

Create small, achievable goals. For example, practice and memorise three Maths formulas, brainstorm the outline of a Classics essay, write 200 words for my English assignment or create 20 flash cards for my French vocabulary.

Music or Silence?

Some people prefer to study in silence while others prefer to study with music in the background. If you prefer a quiet environment, and there are noise distractions at home, wear some headphones, ear plugs or earmuffs to dampen the sound.

If you prefer to study with some background music, the type you choose is very important. If you study to music with words, your brain will often focus on the words and not on what you are learning. Instrumental tracks of your favourite music may also not be useful because your brain is likely to still put the words in.

Alternatively, Baroque music is the most useful. This is because it has 50-80 beats per minute, which is equivalent to your resting heart rate and helps activate your long term memory. Some great Baroque composers include Bach, Handel, Pachelbel, Vivaldi, Telemann and Corelli.

The Myth of Multitasking

Research shows that any time, a person moves attention from one task to another one, it adds an average of 25 percent to the time it takes to complete the initial task. It also affects the quality of work people do. When people switch reactively from one task to another, they are trading depth for breadth. If you are listening to the words of the music, rather than having quiet, classical tracks in the background, it is most likely difficult to focus on the information being learned.

Minimise the Clutter

Clutter has an impact on your brain. Excess things in your surroundings can have a negative impact on your ability to focus and process information. That's exactly what neuroscientists at Princeton University found when they looked at people's task performance in an organised versus disorganised environment. The results of the study showed that physical clutter in your surroundings competes for your attention, resulting in decreased performance and increased stress. Similar

to what multitasking does to your brain, physical clutter overloads your senses, making you feel stressed, and impairs your ability to think creatively.

Ensure you have a clean and tidy study environment, which also means turning off distractions such as social media and YouTube.



Study with Low Lighting

Lighting shouldn't be too bright in your study area. Bright light reflecting off a white page can stress your eyes and make learning harder. Dr Rita Dunn's research shows that for up to 70% of students, studying with low lighting is best. Did you ever read under the bed covers when you were very young? Your parents probably told you you'd ruin your eyesight. This isn't true. For most children and teenagers, low lighting is the most effective. In fact, as we get older, into our mid-20s, our eye muscles start to weaken and we need brighter light and sometimes glasses.



If possible, avoid fluorescent lights as these flicker at a different rate than your brain and interrupt brain processing. They can also cause tiredness, lack of motivation and even headaches.

Study at Your Best Thinking Time

Are you a morning, afternoon or evening person? Study when you are most alert. If you are a morning person, get up an hour earlier than normal and study. If you prefer to stay up late at night, study during this time. Make sure you study in a place where you are not going to be disturbed. You might prefer to work at a table or desk, you might like to lie on the floor or even in your bedroom. A word of warning though, avoid lying on your bed as you are likely to fall asleep!

Changes to the circadian rhythm occur during adolescence, when most teens experience a sleep phase delay. This shift in teens' circadian rhythm causes them to naturally feel alert later at night, making it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11:00 pm. Since most teens have early school start times along with other commitments, this sleep phase delay can make it difficult to get the sleep teens need – an average of 9 1/4 hours, but at

least 8 1/2 hours. If you are learning from home and have a choice about the time you do your learning, a later start might be useful.

Study and Learn in Small Chunks

Again the research is clear, smaller chunks of time are better than long study and learning sessions. It is recommended, especially if you are learning something challenging, or are lacking in motivation, to study for 20 minutes and then take a five minute break. During the five minute break, make sure you get up and move, such as having a mini dance party! Drink some water or perhaps eat some brain food. To help with this and for more tips and ideas, download the iStudyAlarm on your smartphone or device.

Whatever your learning style, best wishes to you all who are learning at home during this time of online learning! 📺



Karen Tui Boyes

Karen Tui Boyes is a champion for Life Long Learning across nations, industries and organisations. As founder and head facilitator of Spectrum Education, Karen leads a team which is determined to transform education globally, with a focus on ensuring teachers, students and parents have a passion for learning, understand the learning process and know how to maximise it. A sought after speaker who continually gets rave reviews from audiences around the world, Karen turns the latest educational research into easy-to-implement strategies and techniques.

For more information, please visit:
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Dealing With Stress and Anxiety

Positively Overcoming Our Fears

The pressure of the Covid-19 situation is causing a great deal of distress and anxiety around the world. As human beings, we crave certainty. It's one of our fundamental human needs. As the uncertainty continues, it's not surprising that you, your family and your colleagues may be affected and feel stressed or anxious. More than ever before, we need to stand together, look out for one another and be mindful of our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing to remain calm and resilient.

1. Know That Stress can be Your Friend

First of all, it's critical to understand that **stress is not necessarily bad for you. It's your perception of stress that really matters.** Studies have shown that stress itself isn't harmful to your body, but actually the belief that stress is harmful, which is harmful. Watch Kelly McGonigal's TED talk "How to Make Stress Your Friend," which explains this brilliantly.

When you see stress as positive and helpful in times of pressure, and understand that it's your body's way of responding and performing at your peak you can actually thrive despite difficult situations. That being said, staying in fight or flight mode all the time is unhelpful. This leads me onto the next point.

2. Oscillate

Your body is designed to deal with stress. It's just not designed to stay on high alert all the time.

When your body is in fight of flight mode, it down-regulates what it deems non-essential functions, such as your digestive system and immune system. So right now, when you need to optimise your immunity, it's vital to engage your body's natural relaxation response to avoid compromising your immune function.

To cope under pressure, you simply need to oscillate from that high performance state to a recovery state and to do so regularly. The key is to engage your body's natural relaxation response.

One of the best ways to do that is by influencing the one part of your autonomic nervous system that you have some control over and that is your breathing.

3. Breathe Intentionally

Diaphragmatic breathing is a powerful tool during periods of stress. Athletes, performers and even military Special Forces use breathing techniques to shift their physiology, so they can perform at their best.

The great power of breathing is that it's the one part of your autonomic nervous system that you can influence. When you do so, it switches you out of the 'fight, flight, freeze,' sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and into the 'rest, repair, restore,' parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) where you can remain calm, perform at your best and make wise decisions.

Relax your shoulders and breathe in through your nose allowing your belly to expand like a balloon, then breathe out slowly through your mouth, allowing the belly to relax back to neutral. Keep your chest, shoulders and hips relaxed. It may feel unnatural at first, so try to relax into it.

Take five slow, deep breaths at various points throughout your day. Link this to a routine task as a trigger to remind you regularly throughout the day. For example, each time you wash your hands. The more often you come back to deep diaphragmatic breathing the more time your body will spend in that PNS state. This is important both for your mental and physical health and to improve immune function.

4. Build a Resilient Mindset

Your physical wellbeing stems from your mental wellbeing. During periods of pressure and uncertainty, it is vital to



understand common thinking traps and avoid them. Here are some keys to a resilient mindset:

a. Focus on What you can Control

There will be plenty of things outside of your control, and others that you can control or influence. Direct your thoughts to focus on the things you have some control over. For example, your response, your attitude, what you do right now in this moment, what you eat, how you move, who you talk to etc.

b. Monitor What you Feed Your Thoughts

This is especially pertinent when so many people are closely following various media throughout the day. Be selective and use quality sources of information so as not to get caught up in the fear the media can create.

c. Ask Yourself: "Is This Helpful or Harmful?"

For example, consider whether it would be beneficial to switch off the news feed and get outdoors for a walk, make a healthy snack, phone a colleague, play with your children and do the thing that is most helpful for you right now.

d. Avoid Catastrophising

Pay attention to your thoughts and notice if you are jumping from one worst possible outcome to the next. For example, thoughts such as what if I get sick, what if I lose my job, what if the economy never recovers, what if I never get a job again, what if we lose the house?

The majority of our fears are usually very unlikely to occur. The quickest antidote to catastrophising is reminding yourself of the facts. The government is putting a whole lot of support in place. The world has recovered from downturns before. The banks and IRD are being flexible with payments. Above all, choose to focus on what you are grateful for during this time.

5. Adopt and Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude is one of the most powerful ways to shift how you're feeling. Your brain cannot focus on two things at once. When you're feeling worried or anxious and you choose to focus on what you're grateful for, it instantly shifts your thoughts and as a result, your emotions.

Pause right now and think of three things you're thankful for. Aim to adopt a gratitude practise as part of your morning routine, around the dinner table or before you go to sleep at night to keep refocusing your thoughts.

6. Be Present and Mindful

Often we spend a lot of time in our own heads either replaying situations from the past or worrying about the future. This can be mentally exhausting. An antidote to spending all this time in the past or future in your thoughts, is to focus on the present moment. Fears are only future possible realities, so when you bring yourself back to the present, you overcome them.

Get in touch with how you feel physically and pay extra attention to your surroundings. Tune in to how your body feels, how you're breathing, what shapes and colours you can see and what sounds you can hear nearby and further afield.

7. Laughter

Laughter is fantastic for your body's physiology. It's never more important to add laughter to your day than right now. Share jokes, pull faces in the mirror until you laugh or watch funny videos on YouTube, such as Michael McIntyre's, "Sellotape and Scissors" or, "People Without Children Have no Idea."

Make a point of smiling at people as much as you can, even if it's via technology. We're wired with things called mirror neurons that make us want to smile back, and the more you smile, the more you send messages to your brain that you are calm and happy.

8. Shift Your Posture to Shift Your Mood

Your physiology directly affects your psychology. In other words, how you hold your body changes how you think and feel and can instantly boost your mood.

An incredibly simple, yet effective technique to feel more in control is to adopt expansive postures. Often known as power posing, stand with your feet firmly planted at hip width, chin up with your hands on your hips or arms raised in a 'V' for 1-2 minutes. Try it out, right now. This shifts your physiology and releases hormones that help you feel happy, calm and confident.

You can find out more by watching Amy Cuddy's TED talk, "How your body language may shape who you are."

One thing is certain amidst all the uncertainty: We will get through this.

"One thing is certain amidst all the uncertainty: We will get through this."

Take good care of your loved ones, colleagues and friends and most of all, take good care of you.

Kia Kaha Kia Maia, Kia Manawanui - Be Strong, Be Steadfast, Be Willing 🇹🇿



Lauren Parsons

Lauren Parsons is a New Zealand based Wellbeing Specialist, author, TEDx Speaker and Consultant who helps businesses enhance their staff's health and wellbeing, creating vibrant, energised, high-performing teams. Lauren is founder of the "Snack on Exercise" movement, host of the Thrive TV Show and author of Real Food, Less Fuss and Seven Myths to Overcome.

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Get your complimentary copy of Lauren's eBook Live Well, Work Well at:

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Clear the Clutter and Reduce your Stress

Taking control of your physical environment can help you take control of your stress!

We all agree that teaching is one of the most rewarding, yet challenging, fulfilling yet hair-pulling, wonderful yet draining jobs out there. I know that I am preaching to the choir when I say that a passionate teacher can be life changing for a student. However, that very same teacher is at risk of burn out if they don't adopt strategies that enable them to manage their own energy and stress levels. Air NZ says it best: "Put on your own oxygen mask before helping anyone else," and the teacher who neglects their own self care is the one who is likely to struggle over time.

My recent book, **21 Hacks to ROCK your Life!** is a practical guide to help people, "Stop Procrastinating, Do that Thing and Live a Life ON-Purpose!" Utilising simple, practical hacks that I have learned and used over my own varied career of working with people (high school teacher, lecturer, personal trainer and life coach) it offers easily implementable hacks that anyone can adopt to help them work towards a purpose-filled life.

One of the seven categories of hacks that I list is titled, "**Physical Environment Hacks,**" and of these, one in particular is an easily implementable hack that can reduce stress and overwhelm in your workplace and your home.

Read on as I share an excerpt from my book: Hack #4 **Clear the Clutter!**

"Clearing the clutter in your physical space will go a long way toward clearing the clutter in your mind."
- Peter Walsh

Have you ever wondered just *why* you have so many socks, when you are scrambling around in a hurry to leave the house but can't find a matching pair? Or scratched your head in bewilderment over the clutter that has accumulated overnight on your office desk? It's times like these that one finds themselves seriously considering becoming a minimalist.

Minimalism is on trend at the moment, with minimalist rock stars such as Marie Kondo becoming household names. There is much to be said about the positive effects of this movement, as clutter is often a physical representation of the state of a person's mind. Too much mental or physical clutter can lead to procrastination, depression and low productivity.

In his book *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind*, Arthur L. Costa discusses how the brain absorbs information through *all* of the senses, not just visually and aurally. We tend to forget that our senses of smell, taste and touch are also information pathways to the brain. This ability to gather information in so many different ways is an incredible gift, however, it can potentially be problematic too, as we also have a variety of sources for potential distraction and reduced productivity.

Who knows a teenager whose bedroom resembles a bomb-site?

You may even have been this teenager in days gone by (sorry Mum!). Their wardrobe has exploded over the floor, amongst which are buried schoolbooks, shoes, chocolate wrappers, bags and last week's homework. This same teen is the one who can never remember anything and has a meltdown when they can't find their favourite top to wear to a party on the weekend.

Clutter is time-consuming, distracting, overwhelming, embarrassing, frustrating and productivity-destroying. A cluttered environment and mind is not going to support someone who aspires to live a rocking, on-purpose life!

"Too much mental or physical clutter can lead to procrastination, depression and low productivity."



So what does your present-day workplace look like? Is it overflowing with post-it notes, pens and broken pencils, correspondence, planners, photos, paper clips and other stationary items, ornaments, photos, phones, iPads, laptops and associated chargers and accessories?

How's that working for you?

The minute you pause from the task that you are immersed in, you run the risk of sensory overload in a cluttered workspace. Each one of your senses will be bombarded by information from your cluttered environment and your chances of remaining focused and productive will dramatically decrease.


How about your computer? Does it have a dozen tabs open and a desktop full of items that should be deleted or filed? What does your smartphone look like? Are there pages and pages of apps that could be grouped into files so that you don't need to keep swiping away having to search every time that you want a particular app?

While we are at it, how is the rest of your home? Do you have a pantry full of out-of-date food and overflowing with plastic containers? Do you have drawers stuffed full of paperwork needing sorting? Is your linen cupboard set to explode with bedding that you don't no longer need? Every one of these scenarios will contribute to a sensory overload that can negatively affect your focus and

productivity. Even though you might work from a perfectly ordered office, coming home to a cluttered home is still going to raise your stress levels and hurt your productivity.

ACTION TASKS:

- In a nutshell – clear the clutter! Begin with your desk. Remove everything but the basics from the surface. Continue with the rest of the room. Be ruthless! You want your work zone to be clear and to create the lowest sensory stimulation possible.
- Work one zone at a time, even if only for 15 minutes a day. Then, tackle the other areas in your home or on your devices. Donate anything that you do not regularly use. It's time to clear that space in your home and in your head!
- Once you have decluttered your environment, make a commitment to yourself to recreate this clear space at the conclusion of every day. Begin this habit with your desk and extend it to your kitchen, bathroom and living spaces. Doing so will set you up for focused, productive work the next day.

Want to reduce your stress and overwhelm? Start by tackling your physical environment today and support your own wellbeing so you can be the teacher that you aspire to be. 



Cat Coluccio

Cat Coluccio is a qualified Educator, Personal Trainer and Life Coach with a passion to see people empowered to ROCK their lives. A vibrant and dynamic international communicator and the best selling author of 21 Hacks to ROCK your Life! Cat delivers presentations, workshops and programs that are both inspiring and full of practical take-aways that bring value long after she has left the stage.

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Six Top Tips to Support Headteacher Wellbeing

Taking Care of Yourself First



The press, media and study after study tells us that Principal recruitment and retention is in crisis, nevertheless there are many things school leaders can do to make sure they're not another one of those burnout statistics.

The NFER survey in 2016 showed that increasing numbers of Principals are leaving the profession before retirement age, with many articles and leaders themselves citing the intense pressures and challenges of the job, unrealistic targets, a loss of passion and a lack of support as responsible for this.

Meanwhile, in a survey undertaken by the National Governor's Association in September 2015, 43% of 4,383 respondents reported it was difficult to find good candidates when recruiting senior leaders for similar reasons. In light of this, perhaps it is no surprise that England could be facing a shortage of up to 19,000 senior teachers by 2022.

Most of us came into the profession because we had a vision of how we thought education should be, we loved children, had an enthusiasm for our subject and wanted to make a difference. Sadly, with the changes that have taken place in education, many leaders and teachers can find themselves disconnected with their original reasons for coming into education.

I often think of us climbing an education mountain where we are snowed under with never ending amounts of paperwork, ambushed by parents leaping out of prickly bushes when we least expect them and vulnerable children who sometimes

need more care and attention than time and resources allow.

On top of this, there are boulders in the form of SATs, Ofsted, budget cuts and as we climb halfway up the mountain we find the media laying in wait for us, with yet another doom and gloom story about what we haven't done and how we are failing yet again.

It can feel as though we have become buried under the government's never-ending impositions in the form of targets, exams, SAT reforms and curriculum changes to name but a few! No wonder we sometimes find it hard. The education landscape today does undoubtedly feel challenging and stressful. The workload pressures, constant changes and demands are an ever-present realities of the job.

So, how do we address these challenges?

There are many things we can do to not become a martyr of the system or undone by the stresses of the role.

The first step to doing this is recognising what stress is and what it is telling us. The word stress is often understood as meaning "pressure" or "tension," but it can also more broadly be defined as "a force which causes an object to change.

I think this definition rings true as when we suffer stresses and strains in our body, it is our physical, chemical or emotional forces that change and signal to us to adapt. They are our warning signs that change is needed.

Too often, however we do not listen to our bodies and end up with distress, which manifests physically as pain, muscle tension, injury or disease; emotionally with symptoms of jealousy, insecurity, feelings of inferiority, inability to concentrate, poor decision making, mental disorientation, depression and anxiety, etc.

So what is stress telling us to change?

I believe it is telling us to better care for ourselves. It is telling us – as I'm sure you will have heard it said in every pre-flight demonstration - to put on your own 'oxygen mask' before you help others.

Don't become so preoccupied with trying to help secure everyone else's oxygen mask that you forget to secure your own.

"Don't become so preoccupied with trying to help secure everyone else's oxygen mask that you forget to secure your own."

You are not going to be much help to anyone, let alone yourself, if you're in a pre-comatosed state!

Many of my coaching clients will tell me they have depleted themselves for the sake of others: pupils, staff, families and friends.

However, the irony is that by neglecting their basic needs and putting themselves last – they have hindered their ability to properly care for those people they long to serve.

After all, you are not really going to be much good for anyone else in your life if you are depleted, lacking energy or are in a state of constant irritability.

However, by taking the time and care to secure your oxygen mask, when the challenges of school life come hurtling towards you, you will have some foundations with which to deal with them. Having the mask will mean that you will have enough fuel to support everything and everyone else in your world.

So what does putting your own mask on first look like?

Well it starts with creating daily habits that nurture and sustain you, such as:

1. Eat a healthy, balanced diet. Cut down on all refined and processed foods, sugar, fried fatty foods, additives and all stimulants like tea, coffee and alcohol. Instead eat more wholegrains, vegetables, fruit, whole wheat pasta, seafood, free range/ organic poultry and dairy products.
2. Drink water throughout the day. By staying hydrated, you'll be taking care of your most basic needs first. Water is also essential for cleansing the body so try to drink at least 4-6 glasses a day.
3. Exercise. Start an exercise programme - walking, running, swimming, aerobics, dancing or yoga and follow it regularly two or more times a week. Medical research indicates the better shape you are the easier you will find it to handle stress.
4. Take time off from the digital screens and replace them with rituals of self-care. While screens may feel relaxing, and allow you to turn "off," try and find a screen-less activity to truly take time for yourself. Instead, skip the TV and create a rituals of self-care, like:
 - A bath
 - Legs up the Wall with eyes covered for 5-10 minutes
 - A five minute foot massage
 - Listening to relaxing music with a cup of tea
5. Unhealthy Workloads - Say 'NO!'
 - This is the hardest word for a headteacher to say! Most of us are kind and caring individuals, high achievers and hugely diligent. We lead because we want to make a difference and the word 'no' is so hard to say. But we MUST say it, if we are to survive in this culture where there are ever-increasing demands.
 - Try saying: 'Not now' and then give a future time frame.

Do not become an endless resource for everyone. Your time is precious.

6. Laugh A lot

- Take time to laugh. Watch a good comedy on television, go out to a comedy show or alternatively meet up with those amusing friends of yours.
- When it comes to stress, if you can laugh at it you can live with it. Laughter can help us see things differently, make us feel happy, inspire us. What nourishment!

No one can ever be immune to close encounters of the stressful kind.

Remember it's how you handle it that counts. 📺



Therese Hoyle

Therese is the best-selling author of 101 Playground Games and 101 Wet Playtime Games and Activities. Her latest book, 'How to be a Peaceful School,' has just been released. She runs Positive Playtime and whole school social, emotional and behavioural skills programmes nationally and internationally.

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Musicals that Support “Persisting” Habit

Students Explore Themes, Characters and Songs to Understand Persisting



The 16 Habits of Mind can impact education in numerous subjects. This article focuses on Habit of Mind Number 1: Persisting, and how it is ever present in musicals. Themes, characters and songs in musicals can beautifully illustrate persisting, while students explore the persisting habit through musicals. The process of creating stage and film musicals also involves persisting. The ideas outlined here can also be used with literary themes and characters.

Habit of Mind Number 1: Persisting

Habit Number 1: Persisting is defined as sticking to a task and not giving up. Based on several books by renowned authors Karen Tui Boyes, Graham Watts, Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, one can see how the habits of mind intertwine with musicals. We can truly embrace the persisting habit by exploring the process of creating a stage, film or TV musical. The creativity, skill and persistence involved are worth our consideration. The actors, composers, lyricists, librettists, choreographers, musicians, artists and technicians collectively bring musicals to life in a miraculous way.

For eight years, I integrated school musicals at a high school in New Jersey, U.S.A. Musical included *Carousel*, *Hello, Dolly!* and *Into the Woods*. The process from start to finish entailed the persisting habit. Because I balanced these musical integrations with my regular teaching, I had to plan carefully and with much persistence. From research and study guide creation to project and art design, students and I created tangible projects and art displays from concepts in the earliest stage of planning, all through persisting.

Musical Characters

Hundreds of interesting characters are found in musicals that can be easily used with students to see how the persisting habit is used in context. Consider these suggested characters as a start as you look into how they persisted in their own rights.
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: Caractacus Potts

- *Cinderella*: Cinderella, The Prince
- *Hamilton*: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Thomas Jefferson
- *Hello, Dolly!*: Dolly Levi, Horace Vandergelder, Cornelius Hackl, Barnaby Tucker, Irene Molloy, Minnie Fay
- *The King and I*: The King, Anna Leonowens
- *My Fair Lady*: Professor Henry Higgins, Eliza Doolittle
- *Oklahoma!*: Curly, Laurey
- *Singin' in the Rain*: Don Lockwood, Kathy Seldon, Cosmo Brown, Lina Lamont

- *The Sound of Music*: Maria, the Captain, the children
- *South Pacific*: Emile Debecque, Nellie Forbush,
- *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*: Molly Brown

Themes

Because musicals are a powerful form of storytelling, they contain many themes. Some of these themes include pursuit of dreams, following through on a plan, sticking to a task at hand and the resolution of various components of the plot. Consider the following musicals for their themes of persisting:

- *Mary Poppins Returns*: How Mary Poppins helps the Banks family during difficult times.
- *The Music Man*: How Professor Harold Hill actually transforms an Iowa town through music.
- *The Sound of Music*: How a novice nun perseveres through life outside of the convent and helps enliven the lives of a naval Captain and his children.
- *The Wizard of Oz*: How Dorothy and her new friends persist in order to see the Wizard of Oz to seek his assistance for returning home and getting a brain, a heart and courage.

Learning Scenarios: Climb Ev'ry Mountain

The inspirational song, “Climb Ev’ry Mountain,” from *The Sound of Music*, encourages people to persist and move forward, thus fulfilling their dreams. For suggested songs to utilise with students, see the appendix. Consider activities that encourage the persisting habit as outlined in the following learning scenarios. These can work in general elementary classes, language arts, music, performing arts and other subjects. Scenarios can be completed alone, in groups or as a class.

Character Analysis Working with one or more musical characters, students explain in detail how characters exhibit the persisting habit. This can be presented as an essay, oral presentation or collage. A role play activity could involve the entire class whereby students can be interviewed in character and focus on persisting.

Song and Character Students choose one character song, including an “I am” song and explain how the song lyrics illustrate the persisting habit.

Scene Summary Students choose one scene from a musical that shows persisting in one or more characters and indicate dialog and actions that support the persisting habit.

Musical Expert Students each choose one musical and become an expert on that musical, especially focusing on persisting throughout the storyline.

Creative Expression Choose one book or story in which a character exhibits the persisting habit. Students create a song that character’s ability to persist.

Creating a Musical Students learn all aspects of staging or filming a musical using the STEAM umbrella as a guide.

The Arts Connection Students create an artistic artifact such as a mural, painting, drawing or display that illustrates persisting in one or more musicals.

Summary

The habit of persisting can enhance life and learning by its integration in the curriculum. The premise of using musicals is one that offers dozens of possibilities for teachers and their students to explore themes, characters and songs to understand persisting.

"The habit of persisting can enhance life and learning by its integration in the curriculum."



Appendix: Songs to Explore Persisting

Consider the following songs for lyrics that support the persisting habit:

"Climb Ev'ry Mountain" (*The Sound of Music*)

"Corner of the Sky" (*Pippin*)

"I Have Confidence" (*The Sound of Music*)

"I Hope I Get It" (*A Chorus Line*)

"I Whistle a Happy Tune" (*The King and I*)

"I'm Flying" (*Peter Pan*)

"The Impossible Dream" (*Man of La Mancha*)

"Is Anybody There?" (1776)

"Let It Go" (*Frozen*)

"No Way to Stop It" (*The Sound of Music*)

"Optimistic Voices" (*The Wizard of Oz*)

"Putting It Together" (*Sunday in the Park with George*)

"The Roses of Success" (*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*)

"Seize the Day" (*Newsies*)

"Soliloquy" (*Carousel*)

"This Is the Moment" (*Jekyll and Hyde*)TM

"Tomorrow" (*Annie*)

"You'll Never Walk Alone" (*Carousel*)



Dr Keith Mason

Keith has been a world language educator and linguistics specialist for 37 years. He is based in New Jersey, U.S.A. Keith's teaching and research areas include musicals in the curriculum, foreign language pedagogy, Romance linguistics and curriculum.

He received eight Rising Star Awards from the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey, U.S.A., for integrating musicals in the high school curriculum. He is currently writing a book *Musicals across the Curriculum*.

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Building Confident Eaters

Seven Simple Steps to Success!

You are in a restaurant that serves food you are unfamiliar with. Your friend orders a huge bowl of daunting looking soup for you. You watch it come to the table and when it arrives, you examine it. You take your spoon and dip it in. You give it a poke, a stir and then lift the spoon towards your face. You take a sniff and then touch it to your lips.

Even as an adult, we learn to eat new foods in a specific way, much the same as a child would. Faced with an unfamiliar food that looks very different to anything we have seen before we are naturally more cautious. We often move through a series of baby steps that scaffold acceptance of the new food and bring us to the point where we are comfortable tasting it.

Knowing that we all do move through steps prior to the actual eating is a key factor in understanding how to support a child to eat more widely. It is also critically important in recognising that many of our actions are vital, even if they do not directly result in a child *eating something new, at that time.*

There are actually dozens of steps in the eating process, but we can break them down into headings that are easy to understand and evaluate. It is the culmination of all the steps that leads to a child eating.

The steps are like stones across a river. We may be able to skip one, but if we try for more than that, we're likely to end up in the water.

“Steps are like stones across a river. We may be able to skip one, but if we try for more than that, we're likely to end up in the water.”

We cannot expect a food anxious child to go from looking at a food to being comfortable eating it. There are many steps in between.

This is important to understand. Many caregivers have great routines and strategies in place but feel demoralised and give up because they are not seeing the final step, the eating occurring, even though that may be about to happen!

Eating comes once we have moved through, mastered and become confident in the steps prior. If at the end of each week, a child has been able to experience many of the steps in a low-pressure environment, we are doing valuable things and actions that lead to positive outcomes.

Although there are many steps, I use these seven as a blueprint to track progress.





Steps To Eating

1. **On the table:** For a very food anxious child, just having the foods in close proximity can be a challenge. If we move from melt-down to acceptance, then this is a big step forwards.
2. **On the plate:** This can be a big challenge for many children and may have to be done in smaller, more manageable steps. Can we start by putting on a small plate or saucer near their plate? Are they accepting of a tiny bowl on top of their plate with the new food in it?
3. **Touching a food:** Often one of the easiest steps to master away from the table, where there are no expectations to eat. Involving a child in growing, shopping, prepping or cooking food and we're taking this step in a very non-threatening way.
4. **Smelling a food:** Again, if a child is involved in the food chain for the family or the class, often smells are a natural part of the process.
5. **Licking a food:** Children may organically do this as part of the food preparation process, for example, licking a beater or the juice of a fruit from the end of the fingers.

6. **Putting something in the mouth but taking it out nicely if it's too challenging: Taking it out without censure is important.** If a child becomes more confident trying new foods, there will be times when something is unpleasant texturally or flavour-wise. Being able to remove it from the mouth supports future forays into the unknown!
7. **Eating:** Even a nano nibble would count as eating as the food is being bitten and swallowed. If we are able to manage a tiny bite, we can do volumes. It's just a matter of time and confidence.

The steps also enable us to track progress in tangible ways. We are looking at this from the point of view of an individual child, and therefore measuring from where they are *currently at*. For a child with ASD, for example, catching sight of a food could be triggering. If we move from this to acceptance on the table then valuable progress has been made.

Although there are quite distinct steps when put down in writing, there is much blurring of the lines in practice.

My recommendation is also not to work through these steps in a "therapy" style session. I would not be asking a child to sniff or lick a food, more have it happen organically as part of interacting with a food.

If our child or student is shopping, prepping, cooking or serving food they are experiencing a range of the steps and in so doing being supported to make progress and eventually be comfortable eating new foods. 🍷



Judith Yeabsley

Judith is the author of *Creating Confident Eaters, The Guide for Picky Eaters*. The guide empowers parents to support their child to eat more variety. It is not about what to eat, it's about HOW...how to gently expand the number of foods eaten in simple, practical and easy to do steps. Non-medical, applicable to all children 2 – 12, from the most selective to toddlers going through the normal fussies.

For more information, please visit:
www.theconfidenteater.com

Please, Sir! I Want Some More!

Learning to Live Happily Along the Journey

Oliver Twist wanted more food because he was starving to death and he wanted to live. What do you want more of and why do you want it? Do you want more money, more friends, more experiences, more customers, more possessions, more Twitter followers, more Facebook likes?

Why do we want MORE? Probably because we think that it will bring us happiness but is this actually true? Will getting more of the things on that list bring you long term happiness? Let's consider MONEY as an example. Several scientific studies have shown that happiness levels increase with income up to roughly \$75,000 in annual household income. After that, there tends to be little correlation between income and happiness. Despite this, every generation seems to want riches more than the last.

We equate money with happiness even though we are surrounded by wealthy public figures experiencing relationship crises, self image difficulties and mental health problems. The papers are full of stories of the rich and famous involved in domestic violence, drug addiction, drunk driving, anxiety, depression, suicide, etc. And yet, many people still assume that money will buy them immunity from their worries.

Money won't protect you from illness, but it will help you eat and drink too much. It will also help you consume drugs that will numb your pain!

Having large amounts of money won't mean that you'll like yourself any more than you would if you were poor. In fact, the reverse is often the case.

Money can't buy you the love and respect of your family, but it can help you impress those people that you don't really like!

Five Things That Will Make you HAPPY, Rich or Poor!

There have been countless studies on what makes us happy and most of them have found that happiness comes from:

- 1. Focusing on activity, not goals.** Goal obsession can be dangerous for our mental health but taking action that moves us towards the things we want will invariably make us feel good. Knowing where we are going is important but we need to love and be proud of our journey along the way. Stop seeking the fleeting satisfaction that comes from achievement.
- 2. Finding and nurturing true friends.** Having people in your life that really matter to you will make a huge difference in how much you enjoy the daily grind of life. The feeling of belonging is extremely important to our happiness so find your "tribe" and spend as much time as possible with people you care about.

- 3. Measuring happiness by what we know to be important.** Don't get caught up in external markers that others try to convince you are the measures of success. You know deep in your heart that the most important things in life are good relationships, good health and good self-worth.
- 4. Taking care of our health.** Practice health-promoting behaviours and avoid the activities that contribute to illness and disease. Get enough exercise, make healthy food choices, and avoid substances and behaviours that are potentially bad for you.
- 5. Giving to others.** As soon as you take your eyes off yourself and you start helping others improve their situation, you'll find feelings of happiness will flood through you. The act of giving will bring much more happiness to your life than receiving.

"The act of giving will bring much more happiness to your life than receiving."

On the wall of my "man cave" is a sign that helps me stay focused on these five things. 





John Shackleton

John Shackleton is one of Australasia's leading motivational speakers. With a background in Sports Psychology, he helps people improve performance in both business and personal lives. His humorous, no nonsense style won him the prestigious NSA Speaker of the Year award. He has also worked with a number of NZ Olympic athletes over the years.

For more information and some free e-books to download please do visit my website: www.johnshack.com/pause



Sharing Our Stories

Connecting Through Journeys of Understanding

Stories of refugees, forced to flee their homes, their lands and their lives as they know them, are in the news almost every day. While we may wish that our children didn't have to know about such trauma, the facts are that it's real and very present – and there are countless children actually living it.

An awareness of these stories can help children empathise with and begin to understand the back-story of many new to our communities. Stories can facilitate dialogue and promote healthy communication on this difficult topic. They may even inspire readers to take action to ensure safe and welcoming environments in their own communities. These three outstanding books bring a variety of insight allowing children to gently begin to understand what it is to be a refugee.

STEPPING STONES

A Refugee Family's Journey...forced to flee their once-peaceful village to escape the ravages of the civil war raging ever closer to their home, Rama and her family leave with only what they can carry on their backs. Rama and her mother, father, grandfather and brother, Sami, set out to walk to freedom in Europe. Nizar Ali Badr's stunning stone images illustrate the story. The story is told in both English and Arabic.

Title: Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey (Arabic and English Edition)

Author: Margriet Ruurs (Author), Falah Raheem (Translator)

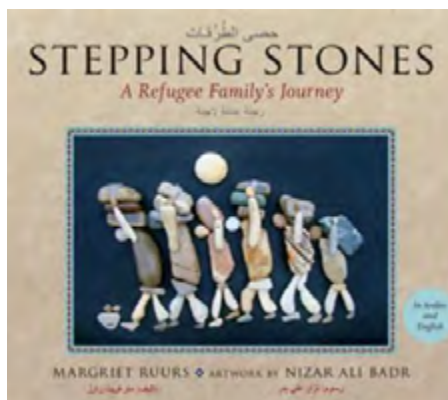
Illustrator: inspired by the stone artwork of Syrian artist Nizar Ali Badr

Publisher: Orca Book Publishers; Dual language (English & Arabic) edition (October 18, 2016)

Language: Arabic, English

ISBN-10: 9781459814905

ISBN-13: 978-1459814905



THE JOURNEY

The Journey is a simple, yet powerful illustration of the anxiety, exhaustion and heartbreak a family faces when displaced by war and conflict, as well as the courage and hope of their journey.

Title: The Journey

Author: Francesca Sanna

Publisher: Flying Eye Books

Language: Arabic, English

ISBN-10: 1909263990

ISBN-13: 9781909263994



LOST AND FOUND CAT

Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey. The sharing of love and loss, of empathy and outreach, of compassion, grace and kindness will inspire insights and discussions about what it means to be a refugee, the unexpected consequences of being displaced and the importance of empathy.

Title: Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey. Author: Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes

Illustrator: Sue Cornelison

Publisher: Crown Books for Young Reader

ISBN-13: 9781524715502



The following activities can be done with any of these stories. The repetition will allow for questioning skills to be practiced and become more complex.

Questioning:

1. In small groups, use a What, Where, When, Who, Why and How dice. Children roll the dice and using the question starter make up a question for the story.
2. For another story, use question starter cards that will prompt more complex questioning, such as How would...? Why did...? Do you think...? What if...? When could he/she/they...? What else...? What might...?, Etc
3. Role Play: The children act out a scene from the story. At any point, the 'leader' says, "freeze." Children question the characters and the actors answer the way they think their character would at that point in time.

Vocabulary:

Find words that you might not know the meaning of and use the story context, the surrounding text and illustrations to guess the meaning of the word. Check your dictionary, thesaurus and other children's ideas to list the meaning.

Word	My Guess	Meaning
Avoid	Get out of something	Keep away from

Character: Habits of Mind

1. Circle the habits you think the characters in the story had.
2. What habits would help them (why and how)?
3. What habits would the people of the community they settle in need and how would this help the migrants? 📺

Persisting	Managing Impulsivity	Listening with understanding	Thinking flexibly
Thinking about your thinking	Striving for accuracy	Questioning and problem solving	Applying past knowledge
Thinking and communication with precision	Gather data through the senses	Creating, imagining and innovating	Responding with wonderment and awe
Taking responsible risks	Finding humour	Think interdependently	Remaining open to continuous learning



Lesley Johnson

Lesley Johnson has taught for 30 years. The facilitation of an ICTPD cluster nurtured her three passions: Literacy, ICT tools and Thinking Strategies. She now runs her online business, Read Think Learn, providing online literacy resources that promote higher order thinking.

For more information, please visit:
www.readthinklearn.com

Capturing the Integration of 21st Century

Future Focused Skills in the Context of Food Technology

Irma Cooke is Leader of Learning in Food Technology and Paula Wine is Deputy Principal of Rototuna Junior High School (RJHS), a relatively new, innovative learning environment (ILE) situated in a rapidly growing area of Hamilton. RJHS opened in 2016 with a founding roll of 634. The current roll is 1331 and growing. The original vision was to create a school where our learners could be prepared for an uncertain future in a time of unprecedented change (Hood, 2015).

Our school vision was to be future-oriented, embrace emerging technologies, be innovative and to foster student agency, engagement and motivation through ownership and choice over learning. We aimed to do away with siloed, meaningless subjects by 'unbundling school' (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012) and by weaving dispositional learning through integrated, authentic contexts (Hipkins, 2017).

In 2018, after extensive consultation with staff and students, we designed our Graduate Profile to make visible what skills, dispositions and capabilities we want our students to have by the time they leave us in Year 10. Fast forward to 2020, and we are in our second year of weaving this explicit CLOAK learning into integrated learning modules using a badging system as a visible way to promote this learning.

"Our school vision was to be future-oriented, embrace emerging technologies, be innovative and to foster student agency, engagement and motivation through ownership and choice over learning."

ROTOTUNA GRADUATE PROFILE

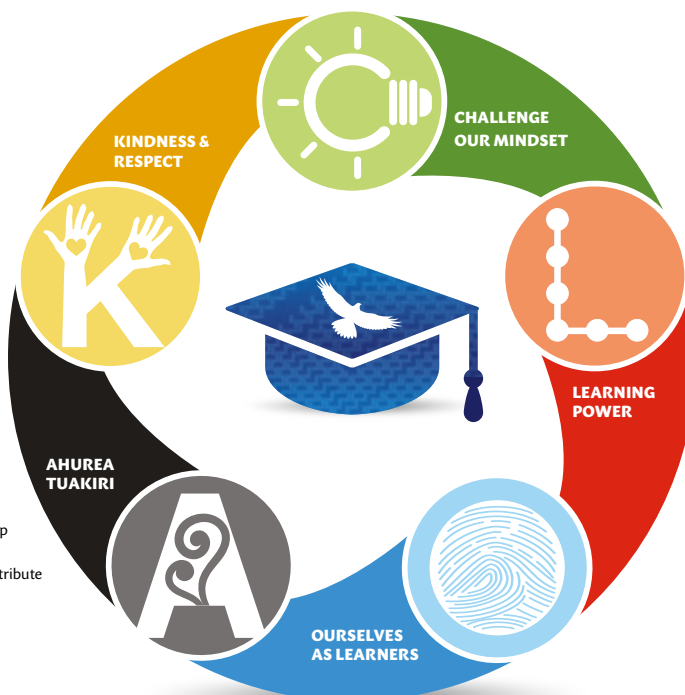
KINDNESS & RESPECT

Manaakitanga – Manaakitanga requires empathy and caring
Kaitiakitanga – We are collectively responsible for protecting and enhancing our environment
Kotahitanga – Inclusion is valuing diversity. Kia Kotahi Tatou - We are One



AHUREA TUAKIRI

Whakapapa (past) – Whakapapa shapes my identity
Tangata Whenuatanga (place) – There is significance in the relationship between identity and place
Hapori (people) – I belong to and contribute to my community



CHALLENGE OUR MINDSET

Perseverance – Overcoming challenges requires hard work
Adventurous – Taking risks helps us to grow
Mindset – We have a limitless capacity for learning



LEARNING POWER

Learn – Thinking capabilities are essential for learning in a modern world
Curious – Curiosity isn't an outcome, it's a mindset
Connect – Learning is connected and highly collaborative



OURSELVES AS LEARNERS

Meta Learning – Thinking about learning promotes learning
Engagement – Engagement requires ongoing effort
Managing Self – Learning requires ownership and responsibility



CHALLENGE OUR MINDSET

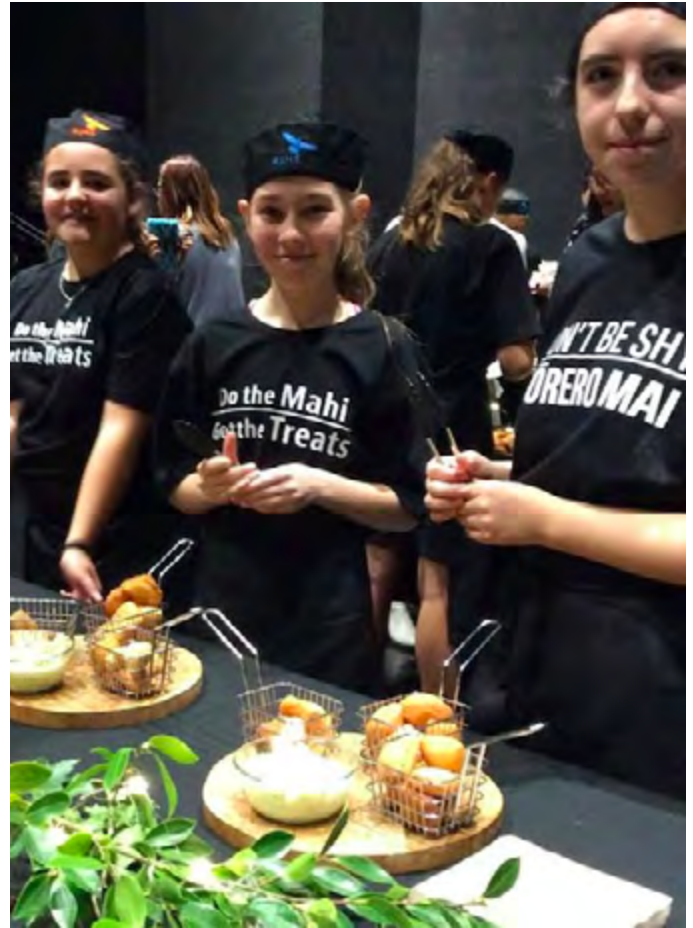


Challenge Our Mindset is about perseverance, taking risks and having a growth mindset. At the beginning of every new semester, students have the opportunity to take up the challenge of Culinary Fare, a two-day competition in which budding food technologists test, trial and design culinary dishes. The competition is fierce and there is an element of the unknown. Students come into this challenge as novice chefs and they have to persevere through the design process and face competition from rivals two years older. The competition simulates an authentic, high-pressure restaurant environment. Through hard work, our students experience the feeling of accomplishment that can only come from not giving up.



LEARNING POWER

Learning Power is about fostering different ways of thinking, learning to be a critical, creative and connected thinker. In 'Kai and Who and I?' module, an integrated Food Technology and Te Reo Māori module, learners connected their learning. Charles Royal and his wife Tania, founders of Kinaki Kai, specialising in foraging for indigenous ingredients, guided our students on a foraging experience in a local forest. Students were ultimately able to identify edible ingredients in the forest and name the medicinal properties of each. Upon returning to school, students connected their learning from this experience to apply to their own indigenous dish designs. Students' creations included hokey pokey and kawakawa fried bread, pikopiko hummus and motumotu (pork and watercress dumplings).



OURSELVES AS LEARNERS

Ourselves as Learners is about self managing, self-awareness and being motivated as a learner. Food Technology is the optimal context for learners to develop these essential skills. In 'Future Foods,' students were faced with the challenge of how food could be different in the future. Year 9 student, Emily, designed a brownie to respond to the problem of limited meat in the future. She tested and tried incorporating cricket powder as a protein substitute. Based on stakeholder feedback, Emily's design went through many iterations. Emily had to project manage by ensuring her stakeholder was involved over a significant timeframe, independently research appropriate meat/protein substitutes, stick to a timeline and be innovative in her approach to developing a prototype fit for purpose.



AHUREA TUAKIRI

Ahurea Tuakiri connects learning to our whakapapa (identity), our place and a sense of belonging to our community. In 'Kai and Who Am I,' visiting MKR celebrities Hera and Tash, inspired our tamariki by sharing their personal stories whilst demonstrating how to make Parāoa parai (fried bread), motumotu (boil up dumplings), and Ika mata (raw fish). Later, students put on a Matariki celebration for our school staff, where students and staff 'kōrero mai in te reo Māori' to order their kai. Students were able to connect to their whakapapa, our place and our tenata.



Irma Cooke

Irma Cooke, a former Chef, now teacher and specialist curriculum leader of Technology, has a passion for teaching Food Technology at Rototuna Junior High School.

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Paula Wine

Paula Wine is one of the foundation Deputy Principals of Rototuna Junior High School. She is passionate about developing future-focused capabilities and dispositions in young people. Paula enjoys cooking, fitness, and family time at the beach with her husband, two daughters and dog Charlie.



KINDNESS AND RESPECT

Kindness and respect is about manaakitanga, caring for each other and our environment. It is about valuing and including others in our community. In 'Love, From, Food,' an integrated Food Technology and English module, students developed a condiment to utilise in-season fruit or vegetables and eliminate waste. Throughout the semester, the students demonstrated their understanding of the power of kindness and respect by cooking dishes to donate to St. Vincent De Paul to feed the homeless. At our school market day, students sold their condiments and the proceeds went to St. Vincent De Paul. It was through this community event that our students helped share the message of kindness and taking care of each other. 



BE GOOD TO
PEOPLE FOR NO
REASON



Positive Home Activities With the Kids

Living to the Fullest During the Pandemic

This time in our world is unprecedented with the onset of the pandemic COVID-19. Never before have families been told to work at home, stay home and to avoid social gatherings. In addition, it is very likely in the near future in New Zealand that our children will need to stay home from school as many other countries across the world are doing. Due to these closures, parents can be at all loss as to what to do with their children.

This time, though insecure, is a fantastic opportunity to begin to connect to our children in a deeper way. Many parents have felt exhausted from the pace of life, acknowledging that we get little time with families and loved ones and that the years seem to be charging ahead full speed. Now is the time that we can have the opportunity to engage with our children and partners and invest into them.

In our modern society, we have adapted to, 'outsourced parenting.' Schools, programmes, classes and before and after school care have largely been responsible for raising our children due to financial and other pressures. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, though tragic, gives us a unique opportunity to spend time with our children and teach them the things that may have long been neglected. Our grandparents and great-grandparents found a way to live through desperate times, and we can now use our concern with survival to teach our children how to survive without the luxuries of modern life if needed.

I am passionate about teaching my children to cook. From a young age, still in nappies, they were seated on the kitchen bench learning about their senses and the processes of cooking. Yes, they made a huge mess, but they were involved every step of the way, and learnt so much from it. Now is the time where we can teach them – and ourselves if necessary – how to cook. Not to just open packets and put together, but to really cook from scratch. We can teach our children processes such as pickling, and preserving, batch cooking and freezing, growing our own food, understanding

nutritional content and recycling much of what we are used to throwing away.

We can be involved in art projects, science experiments and enjoying the solitude of a good book. If we see our isolation as a time to slow down, a time to connect with family and a time to experiment with something new, then a world of possibilities can open for us.

The honest reality is that home isolation will involve a period of adjustment where all the members of the household need to learn to cooperate for long periods of time. We are not used to being together 24 hours a day and this will bring a measure of stress. Yet, even this offers opportunities for a deeper connection with one another and a chance to work on our conflict resolution skills and ability to compromise.

Many of the traits experts are saying our children need to develop can flourish in this time. Development in resilience, in self-directed intrinsic learning, in deep attachment with other people, and in social competence. Learning new and practical every-day skills that schools often take on such as food technology, garden to table eating and sustainability projects can be experienced at home. Even simple life skills such as putting a load of washing on can teach children self-sufficiency and independence. Children are never too young to learn the tasks that will help them thrive in life, but this needs to be done in age appropriate ways.

Parents can use this time to really get to know their child's deep interests and then build their learning experiences around this. It is the support of the parent through this process that enhances the child's learning. Children should do the work the school sets, but parents can make use of other time for random questions, quirky interests and creative projects.





Parents need to be equipped with the knowledge they need so that they can connect with their families on a deeper level, supporting holistic development and inspiring learning. When children learn in the context of a safe and connected relationship, their learning is maximised both through emotional connection and a subconscious understanding that their space is safe for success and failure.

For children with specific learning difficulties and special educational needs, this is a time where your child can thrive. By being at home their sensory stimulus is reduced and you have an opportunity to work one on one with them in the areas of most need. I encourage parents of these children to use movement as much as possible to help train correct neural pathways and to gradually work on any presenting sensory issues. In addition, don't forget to give time and care to yourself and ensure you have the support you need.

Here are some ways that all families can make the most of this time:

Organise Your Days: Set loose routines so that you still wake up with a purpose and a plan. Simple things such as learning time in the morning, followed by a lunch that your child makes. After that, have some quiet time and chores and then fun afternoon games. This can make the days feel full and satisfying.


“Set loose routines so that you still wake up with a purpose and a plan.”

Find Stimulating Material: The online world is still active, so discover a new hobby or find a new learning experience online as a family and complete that together. Play boardgames or write your own play.

Think Holistic Development: Take care of your family's mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health at this time. Take notice of what their thoughts are and have conversations around positive mindsets and hopefulness. Discuss their feelings and fears and develop a greater sense of trust.

Keep Moving: Find ways to be active such as family Twister games, pilates, yoga or friendly boxing sessions together. The brain benefits when the body moves, so do this as much as possible.

Avoid Devices for Long Periods: To benefit their body and help keep them emotionally regulated and healthy, try to limit the amount of screen time everyone is getting.

We need to remember that the societal impacts of COVID-19 won't be forever, but while it is here, we can have some fun, connect deeper, maximise our time and release our children's fullest potential. 



Leanne Seniloli

Leanne Seniloli is a Neuro-Developmental Therapist, Early Childhood Lecturer and teacher, a mum of four and a prior homeschooler. In her private practice she works with families who are wanting to see lasting change in their children's learning, behaviour and coordination.

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Last Word: Teaching Online During Lockdown

Tips and Strategies for Success

We are certainly living in interesting times with COVID-19 shaking up 2020. If you are suddenly required to teach online, here are some tips and strategies to make it a little easier.

With students being required to learn from home, it is important to remember that we are not requiring parents to be teachers. You are the educational expert and while parents may play a role in encouraging their child to take part in online lessons and to do the work you have set, it is not the parents' role to instantly understand physics or be the physical education teacher. The pressure of achievement and handing work in needs to be eased and a focus on ensuring you are giving meaningful work is important. If students do it – great. If they don't - that should be fine, too. Many families are navigating huge emotions of having lost their jobs or doing their job from home, whilst parenting, home schooling, wondering how to get groceries and still doing the laundry and cooking healthy meals.

"We, as teachers, need to be providing education that is meaningful, purposeful and creates the challenge to level up and progress in small bite size pieces."

The Challenges

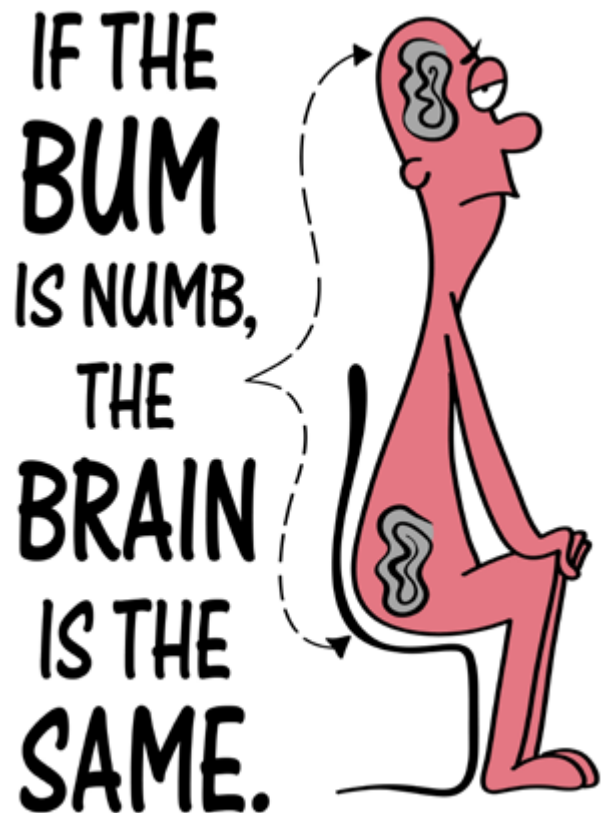
The biggest challenge for many students will be the multitude of distractions they have at home. Social media, Netflix, TV, online games, YouTube, Tik Tok, cat videos, the fridge and so on. In fact, these may also be big distractions for you suddenly working from home, too!

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of working with Sugata Mitra, best known for his "Hole in the Wall," experiment and TED talks. He has a wonderful quote which I have never forgotten:

Every classroom should have a Play Station or an X-Box in the corner and teachers need to be better than that!

This is possibly more relevant in today's time as ever before. The essence of his quote is that we, as teachers, need to be providing education that is meaningful, purposeful and creates the challenge to level up and progress in small bite size pieces – ultimately using gamification strategies. See more about this at <https://www.iste.org/explore/in-the-classroom/5-ways-to-gamify-your-classroom>. The bottom line is that our lessons need to be more exciting than the technology they have access to.

The second challenge often talked about in online learning is attention span. I have heard the statistics about how children and adults have the attention span of a goldfish. I'm not sure if this is really true as I watch children totally focused for hours on their online games, playing sports, reading a book or singing to their favourite music. I do not believe it is a challenge with attention span. I think it is about engagement.



Dr Rich Allen

The neuroscience is clear that the brain copes better with shorter sessions rather than long learning times. Dr John Medina, in his celebrated, 12 Brain Rules book, suggests taking small brain breaks often. Great junior school teachers know this. When they see students fidgeting, chatting or moving more than they usually do, they may ask them to stand up and turn around three times and sit down. This is known as a mini brain break. Teaching online will be the same. If you are providing videos for students to watch, make them between one and three minutes long. If you are teaching online classes, keep them to the point, and if needed, ask students to stand up and take a 30 second stretch and wiggle break. Older students who are working from home in a self-directed or study mode, may find the app iStudyAlarm useful. This is a free app timer which times their learning sessions for 20 minutes. It then gives them a three minute revision time and then a five minute break. I find most teenage students can focus for 20 minutes and enjoy the shorter sessions.

Structure

Online lessons will be typically shorter than face-to-face classroom lessons. This is often because you are not needing to do as much classroom management, handing out books, waiting for students to get ready or packing up.

If you have daily routines in your lessons, stick to those as much as possible. Routines create calm and can maintain order. The brain loves certainty, so routine can reduce stress and anxiety.

A great lesson, whether face-to-face or online, has a beginning, middle and end. This is probably more important online. At the beginning, tell them what they are going to learn, hook them with a provocation, story or engage with novelty. The middle of the lesson is where you teach the key points of your content. Practice using the skills or knowledge and show exemplars and examples. At the end, summarise, check students' understanding, answer questions and give their next steps.

Checking understanding and learning can be as simple as asking students to write the three main points on a piece of paper and then have them show you on the video screen. Maybe you ask questions to check understanding, perhaps you create a poll or a quizlet. There are many options online.

Give Students a Reason to Need your Content

Create an overarching task, project or work plan which involves you 'feeding' information to your learners so they can successfully complete the task. This may be an assignment that needs to be completed or a genius hour, passion project which students will work on at home.

Maintaining Relationships

If you are teaching in the morning, use your afternoons to schedule weekly one-on-one 15 minute meetings with your students to 'check in.' Firstly, check in on how they are doing personally. Being in lockdown with their parents and siblings, and away from their peer group may be a challenge for many. Remember, you are a key link to their 'outside world.' They know and trust you. Secondly, discuss how their learning is going. Answer their questions, give them some positive reinforcement and ask what they think their next learning steps are. Ensure you are the voice of calm and hope.

Run Mini Workshops

Once you have spoken to your students, you will start getting a bigger picture of what their next learning steps are. Schedule and host online workshops that students can log into. For example, how to summarise readings from a book, fractions, demonstrating an art technique, a particular social studies lesson, graphing hints and tips, etc. The possibilities are endless. Remember to invite students to join and not to make it compulsory.

Set Task Sheets

A simple idea from Ian Lillico is to set a 'homework grid.' This might be a 4x4 grid with tasks for students to complete over a week. Ensure you have a balance of academic, social and family tasks on your grid. Here is an example below. **You can download this at** www.spectrumeducation.com/free-stuff/

Weekly Activity Grid

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During the week, see how many of the activities you can do. Colour the grid square to show the activities you have completed.

Help set the table for dinner every night	Have a picnic on your lawn or lounge room floor	Read a story to a family member	Draw your family tree
Make a wind chime from recycled materials	Write a letter to someone you have not seen lately	Help clean up after dinner	Collect some fallen leaves from the garden and make a piece of art with them
Play a board game with a family member	Create a family portrait	Make an outdoors obstacle course and time yourself doing it	Have a dance party
Cook a family favourite recipe	Make your bed everyday for a week	Make a phone or video call to a family member	Change the words of a song and video yourself singing it

Make the Learning Visual

Did you know the average adult brain has about 100 billion cells? Neuroscience tells us that eleven million of these are sensory neurons, which are designed to bring in information to your brain through your senses. A staggering ten million of these are for your eyes! From your five senses, the brain picks up more from your eyes than all your other senses combined. This has big implications for how we teach, on and off line. Visual stimulus is extremely important. This includes the use of colour, video and images. (It is one of the key reasons Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube are so popular with youth.)

If you are presenting online, please avoid the 'death by powerpoint' slides that so many of us have witnessed. Small print and masses of writing is certainly going to switch most young minds off. Instead use strong visual pictures, key words, large font (50+ or more) and make your slides colourful.

Minimise words on slides



- Key words only**
- 50+ font size**
- Use colour**

Be Aware of Your Voice


Teaching online is sometimes like a theatre production. Your voice is what will be transmitted through the Internet or videos. Use expressive tones, vary your pace and differ your volume with a whisper, singing and telling stories. If you have a loud booming voice, soften and slow down online. If you have a high pitch voice, lower your tone. Talk in a conversational way rather than an instructional lecture tone. If you find it is harder to do this when you cannot see your students, place a photo of a person or group of students just beyond your camera lens and talk to that.

Keep Students Active

This quote from Dr Rich Allen says it all. "If the bum is numb, the brain is the same." Keep your students active rather than having them sit in front of a screen for long periods of time. If in your classroom you use brain breaks, do this online as well. Hold a dance party! Give students a task and let them do it. Avoid long lengthy explanations. If required, have the instructions prewritten for students to refer to rather than reading through them all in a video.

Stand Up

Stand up when you present online as this will allow you to have more energy, easier access to your props and allow for more expressive hand gestures. All important when students do not get the full body experience of being in a classroom.

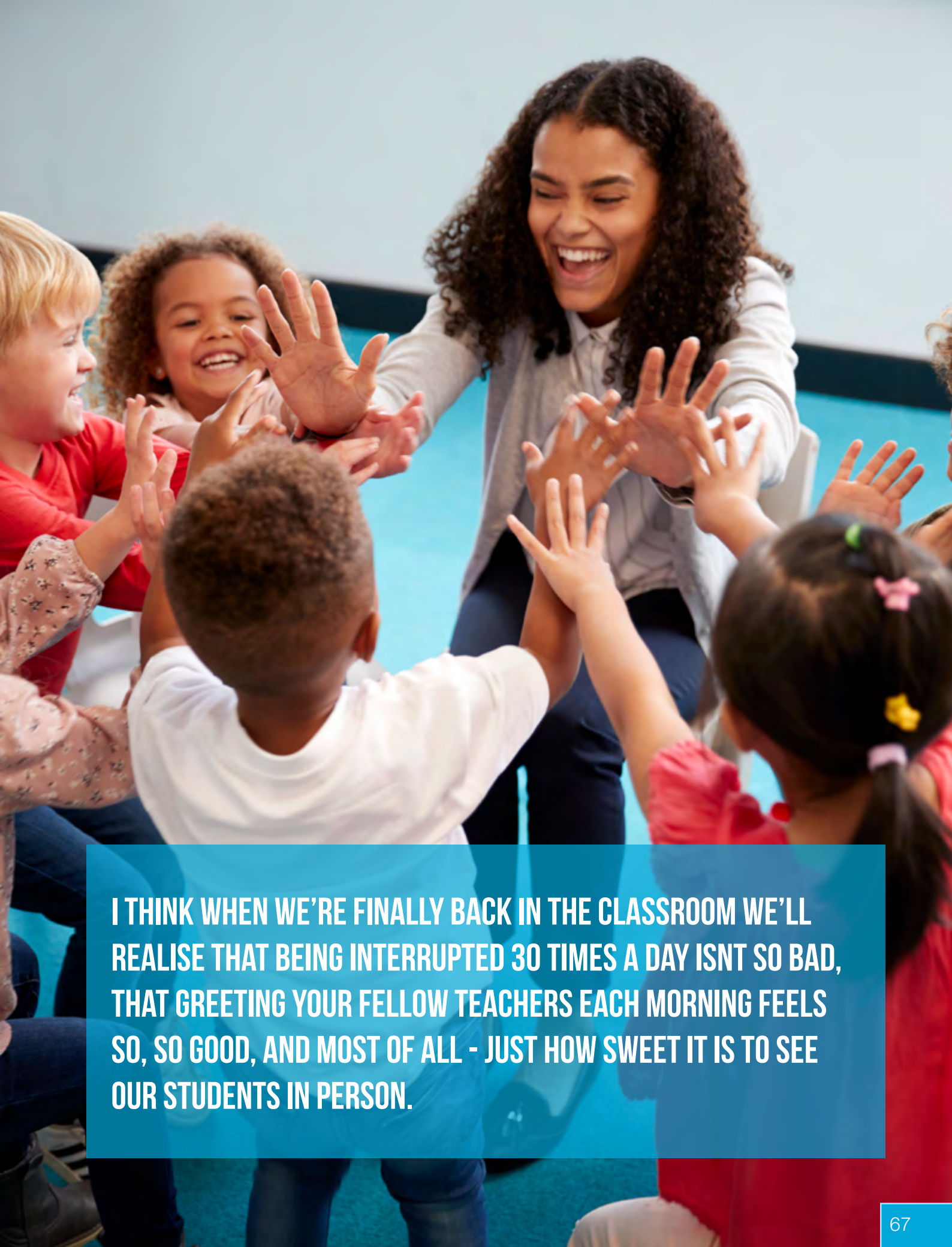
Last of all, remember you do not have to be an expert at this! Things go wrong, videos don't play. Internet connectivity is often unstable. You will make bloopers. Students will know this is all new and challenging for you. Be a role model for learning. Laugh at yourself, and... Take 2...Take 9...Take 17... Persist, have fun, be creative, learn, grow and stretch yourself! 



Karen Tui Boyes

Karen Tui Boyes is a champion for Life Long Learning across nations, industries and organisations. As founder and head facilitator of Spectrum Education, Karen leads a team which is determined to transform education globally, with a focus on ensuring teachers, students and parents have a passion for learning, understand the learning process and know how to maximise it. A sought after speaker who continually gets rave reviews from audiences around the world, Karen turns the latest educational research into easy-to-implement strategies and techniques.

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If you're having an especially tough day with your kids let them know.

As you tuck them into bed say "Today was rough, lets try again tomorrow."

Kiss them goodnight and remind them of your endless love, and give your heart a rest because not every day can be easy and we will have days that wear on us.

***Be gentle to yourself.
Be gentle to your children, and
just try again tomorrow.***

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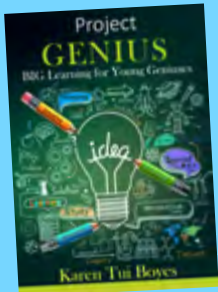


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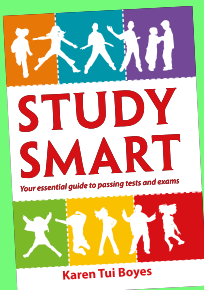
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