Australian Journal
of Middle Schooling

adolescent
success

Editorial

Although we have talked about the importance of literacy and numeracy as the enablers for learning for many years, it is now well-recognised that students' social and emotional skills are just as critical to their learning (Schonert-Reichl & Weissberg, 2014). We have all heard a variation on the play on words: "they need to Maslow before they can Bloom", referring to the importance of meeting a student's basic needs before learning can occur. In these "unprecedented times", wellbeing is one of these basic needs, an area for which we are acutely aware. Our students are dealing with the complexities of the current world that we, too, are navigating on top of the "unprecedented" time of change that is adolescence.

In this edition, we are humbled by a group of practitioners showcasing their work in student wellbeing. Amongst the turmoil, these passionate and energetic professionals are looking for ways to support their students navigate key areas of adolescent development, such as identity, relationships, sexuality, and connectedness.

The lead article provides insight into the year that has been for Adolescent Success— President Debra Evans' 2020-2021 Report

from the August AGM. The refereed article in this edition is from Whitfield, Shannon, Searle, & McMenamin. They describe their action-research project using project-based learning to help shape the learning identities of their middle years' students. The project uses photovoice to empower their students to share their thoughts on six identity-shaping keywords.

In the non-refereed section, Forrest and Tinsley share their work teaching respectful relationships through their school-based social, emotional and personal development program. Their program, built on the strong rapport between teacher and students, makes connections to the Australian Curriculum and the ShineSA program to respectfully consider a wide range of important issues. Then, Drever and Brennan share their reflections on refining and developing their wellbeing program. During their reflection, they share the critical work to pivot the program to support students during at-home learning, leading to the supportive Vi et Animo framework.

As another extraordinary year draws to a close, I wish to thank all of the contributors to the Australian Journal of Middle

Schooling. On top of navigating the ever-changing terrain, you have taken time to research and reflect on your practice and share these reflections with us. I hope that their work encourages others to share with us. Consider sharing with this community dedicated to adolescent learners. We would love to hear about your work, projects, success, challenges and reflections.

We do not learn from experience…we learn from reflecting on experience — John Dewey

Dr Emily Ross
Journal Editor
Adolescent Success

(@adolescentsuccess)

Journal Sub-committee

Dr Emily Ross   Dr Anne Coffey   Angela White

The views expressed in this journal are those of the individual contributor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Publications Sub-committee or Adolescent Success – the Association dedicated to the education, development and growth of young adolescents. For further information about Adolescent Success, refer to www.adolescentsuccess.org.au

Contact:
Adolescent Success. PO Box 140 Buderim Q 4556 Australia

Ph: +61 452 475 184

angela@adolescentsuccess.org.au

Executive Officer: Angela White
(@adolescentsuccess)

Join some of our

Online

Learning

Opportunities

www.adolescentsuccess.org.au

CONTENTS

The Association for Adolescent Success Inc.

Debra Evans
President

President's Report 2020-2021

I begin by thanking our members for their ongoing support during what continues to be a very volatile time for associations and businesses. As an Association focused on meeting the needs of young adolescents, we know that providing opportunities for high-quality Professional Learning and ways of connecting and collaborating for educators across Australia is a critical element of what we can do and remains a key priority for us.

I also thank our management committee for pulling together during this last year. Spread across Australia, they have dealt with various levels of online learning, lockdowns, and restrictions, and we have learnt a great deal from each other in that process.

The year since our last AGM – October 2020.

Our strategic priority for this year has been to ensure that we are a continuing entity, and much of our focus has been on financial stability. Therefore, offering various events for our members and teachers all over the country has been our emphasis. As such, we have facilitated a significant number of online events during the year.

The April Conference Day was successful with keynotes from the USA, Australia and Finland. We thank Phyllis Flagel, Mike Nagel, Sanna Leinonen and Dr Jandamarra Cadd, as well as those teacher practitioners who shared their expertise within their Bubbles across Australia. All practioner papers were published in our June edition of the Australian Journal of Middle Schooling,which is provided to all association members.

Webinars have been facilitated frequently during Term 3- and will continue into Term 4. Institutional members have free access to all these webinars.

Today's August Conference Day has proved to be of value, and I thank all participants for your ongoing commitment to our young adolescents and your professional learning. Whilst it is a very full day, I am sure that there will be value for all, and I hope it is a catalyst for continued attention on the middle years in your school setting.

The next few months will see further opportunities for Professional Learning, with our Executive Director facilitating several Middle Years Workshops. At present, these are all based in Queensland due to COVID restrictions and travel. Still, as an agile association, there is the facility for these to occur in an online environment and available to our members throughout Australia and beyond.

We are currently working on our Professional Learning Calendar for 2022, with events scheduled initially for the Student Free days in January followed by a variety of other opportunities. In addition, we have the capacity to work in schools around the country as required and we will meet the needs of our members.

We would also like to gauge interest in an Action Research project and the possibility of a Leader study tour, either physically or virtually.

Our state representatives on the management committee will bolster activity in the regions to ensure we provide the necessary information and support to our members.

It was important for us to contribute our feedback to ACARA in the process of the Australian Curriculum Review this year. Our Treasurer, Emily Ross, led this for Adolescent Success. We were able to submit a strong response to emphasise the need to include the voice of all middle year's educators and consider more clearly, a focus on developing a curriculum that is both aligned with The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019) and the research that calls for being more responsive to the needs of young adolescents. We thank ACARA for acknowledging our response to this.

We continue our longstanding partnership with Furnware and know that we will continue to connect with them in the coming years. We look forward to some opportunities that will be offered to our members in the coming months through this partnership. Further to this, we will have the establishment of new partnerships aimed at strengthening our association as a priority in the coming year.

We received a Government Grant to upgrade our website, which has fulfilled one of our priorities for 2021. It is an ongoing process and the first point of call for all who interact with us.

We have submitted a further application for support from the State Government as a Business impacted by COVID 19 and await approval for this.

Our eNewsletter will be up and running again from next week, and this will provide regular information and updates around all 'things' middle years.

Lastly, this year sees a change of committee, with a number leaving us and some changing roles within the committee:

Those leaving: our Vice President,

Adam Somes, Victorian General Member – Charlotte Forwood, Robyn McCarthy – Qld General Member, Simon Dray – Tasmanian General Member and Judith Nicholson – Northern Territory General Member. We thank you for your service to Adolescent Success and wish you all the best moving forward. We know that we will continue to connect with you in the future.

Those changing roles within the management committee: Emily Ross, Treasurer to Journal Editor, Kia Shaidow – Communications Manager to SA General Member, Anne Coffey – Journal Editor to WA General Member, and Rachel Koulyras – NSW General Member to Social Media Manager. We are looking forward to continued work with each of you and know that you will bring great expertise to your roles and the networks in your areas.

Those continuing in current roles – myself as President, Jenny Knowles as Secretary

I welcome our new management committee Members for the coming tenure: Darren Rackemann – Treasurer, Pascale Drever – NSW General Member, James Marsman – Qld General Member, Timothy Hadfield – Qld General Member and Rebecca Seward-Linger - Tas General Member.

Thank you again to Angela White, who continues to keep Adolescent Success moving. Without her, our Executive Officer, we would not be as successful as we currently are.

I look forward to your ongoing support of Adolescent Success in the coming years and encourage all of you to reach out to us.

I submit the President's report for 2020-2021.

How Project-Based Learning at Suncoast Christian College helped shape Learning Identities of Middle Years Students

Haley Whitfield, *Director of Teaching & Learning, Suncoast Christian College*
Lynda Shannon, Jess Searle & Tiona McMenamin, *Teachers, Suncoast Christian College*

Abstract

A positive learning identity is closely linked to a students' engagement with school-based learning. In the middle years, students are developing an individual sense of self as they find their place in both social and learning environments. The challenge for teachers is to implement a curriculum that intentionally supports middle year students to develop the social and emotional skills required to form a positive learning identity that promotes strong self-confidence in their ability to learn.

This school-based action research project at Suncoast Christian College investigates the formation of learner identity of middle year students through implementing curriculum as project-based learning. Using photovoice, Year Five, Six, and Seven students bought objects and images to focus group interviews on representing their viewpoints about keywords related to positive learning identities such as learning, failure, success, leader, belonging and freedom. As a result, throughout the PBL, student perspectives shifted as they developed stronger learning identities and reflective thinking about learning and their role as learners.

Introduction

Students are in a unique developmental time of individual identity formation in the middle years as they become more aware of themselves and their place in the social environment (Brady & Kennedy, 1999; Smith, 2005). Identity becomes a motivator socially, influencing decision making and leading young people to establish stronger notions of self and others (Perry, 2017). As young people seek to define or redefine themselves in this stage of life, their learning identity is also being developed alongside their experiences of learning (Kaplan & Flum, 2012; O'Brien, 2017).

A learning identity is how a person views learning and themselves as a learner (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). The formation of a learning identity is gradual and part of the process of becoming a learner (O'Brien, 2012). At school, middle years learners interact with people and experiences in the learning environment that shapes their sense of self-efficacy as learners (Bandura, 1999; Matthews, Deary & Whiteman, 2003). In this way, a learning identity is formed through ongoing learning interactions and is therefore contextual, transferrable, and sometimes conflicting (Matthews et al., 2003; O'Brien, 2017). A person's learning identity influences attitudes, approaches, and confidence in their learning ability (Kolb & Kolb, 2009).

For adolescents, the construction of a learning identity in middle years can impact their well-being, self-belief, learning mindset and engagement with school-based learning opportunities (Kaplan & Flum, 2012; Prosser, 2006). Development of learning identity is critical in middle years as

students are in a stage of life with an increased risk of disconnection from learning (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008; Smith, 2005). Failure to form positive learning identities in middle years is linked to alienation, negative stereotypes, disengagement, ability to succeed and consequently retention in school beyond year ten (Brady & Kennedy, 1999; Prosser, 2006). Therefore, how young people perceive learning and describe themselves as learners is essential for effectively navigating school-based learning in preparation for life beyond and their future life trajectories (Carrington, 2006).

Implementing curriculum in age-appropriate ways, utilising high-quality teaching and intentional pedagogy can influence student engagement and learning success (Smith, 2005; Kanasa et al., 2015; Pendergast & Main, 2015). More active pedagogical approaches involving students in self-directed learning have effectively engaged adolescent learners (Smith, 2005). Some of these include Project Based Learning (PBL), community-based learning, collaborative learning, higher-order thinking

and real-world contexts (Chan et al., 2015; Pendergast & Main, 2015; Wurdinger, 2016). In middle years, teachers also need to scaffold student development of social and emotional skills, resilience and self-efficacy as competencies that sustain their well-being as learners (Main & Pendergast, 2015).

This school-based research project at Suncoast Christian College aimed to address the need for students of middle years to develop positive learning identities through engaging pedagogy such as PBL. Curriculum aligned PBL in Year Five, Six, and Seven Humanities were designed for students to encounter activities that built resilience, social and emotional skills and self-efficacy as competencies that scaffold positive learning identities. Using action research and photovoice methodologies, teachers could record student reflection at key junctures to better understand how learning activities shaped learning identity formation in students. This paper will first describe the method used, then discuss findings related to the six keywords used in this study: Learning, Failure, Success, Leader, Belonging and Freedom.

Method

This qualitative study was conducted over a selected school term when teaching teams of the target student group planned relevant teaching and learning activities. Years Five and Six participated in a newly designed Societies PBL, and Year Seven students took part in the annual Humanities Earthships PBL. A constructivist, action research approach was selected to shed light on how PBL can help shape the learning identities of middle years students.

Constructivism can be described as the constructed realities of individuals and groups and involves discovering the meaning participants hold regarding phenomena (Snape & Spencer, 2003; Punch & Oancea, 2014). This study sought student perspectives on keywords related to learning identities to better understand the impact of particular pedagogical approaches on teaching and learning. The project was designed as action research as the findings would inform the learning environments they emerged from (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Action research has a long history in education as it positions the teacher as a researcher in practical, interactive and cyclic ways (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Developed from Friere's (1970) work, action research can also transform the learning environment and teacher viewpoints through the reflection of the practitioner as a researcher (Connell, 2010). At Suncoast Christian College, conducting action research on the effectiveness of PBL in relation to learning identities enabled us to reflect and refine our middle years' pedagogy based on student perspective.

Action research has increased in popularity since the 1970s, collecting a range of methods along the way (Snape & Spencer, 2003). One relatively new qualitative research method associated with action research is photovoice which requires participants to take photos or bring photos and objects that represent their viewpoint (Beazley, 2017; Falconer, 2014; Wang, 1999). Photovoice is seen as a more participatory methodology that empowers participants to share and engage in critical thinking and as such, is often used in participatory action research settings (Del Vecchio, Toomey & Tuck, 2017; Falconer, 2014; Wang, 1999).

Children need to feel safe and empowered as participants of research and given the opportunity to share their views in ways that are accessible to them (Beazley et al., 2009; Butschi & Hedderich, 2021). The immediacy of photovoice and the ability for children to safely

connect a story to photos or objects of meaning for them has been proven effective in other studies such as Harriot Beazley's (2017) work with street children in Indonesia. Using photovoice with students can effectively share power, shift ownership to the participant, and create more capacity for young people to adopt reflective and critical lens (Del Vecchio, Toomey & Tuck, 2017). The empowerment, increased participation, and ability for children to access and embrace the research process in other studies that utilised photovoice as a method was an essential component of our action research design. Although the students were not involved in the research design, their voices directly influenced the refinement of PBL as a pedagogy used in the middle years at Suncoast.

Students were asked to bring objects or photos representing six keywords; they were then asked to talk about them in structured interviews.

Students bought a range of photos and objects that had meaning for them and took turns explaining them, listening to each other. They also took a lot of interest in each other's photos and explanations, and the interviews took around an hour as we let the students talk freely without time constraints.

To arrive at the six keywords, the research team individually listed attributes of a positive learning identity within the Suncoast school environment; when compiled, there were forty-seven words in total. The team then collaboratively looked for similarities and overarching themes. The six words decided on encompassed deeper meanings. Still, they were simple enough terms that Year Five, Six and Seven students could independently interpret, evaluate and comment on through the photovoice data collection. The keywords and their associated terms or concepts are included in Table 1.

Table 1 *Key words elaborated.*

Key word	Other associated terms or concepts
Learning	growth, engagement, commitment, environment, culture, fun
Failure	growth, resilience, persistence, commitment, courage
Success	achievement, self-awareness, goal setting, self-assessment,
Leader	self-directed, collaborative, empathy, interpersonal skills, proactive
Belonging	teamwork, community, collaboration, well-being, happiness
Freedom	autonomy, independence, risk-taking, choice, creativity

Much Australian educational data is quantitative and reliant on large sample sizes. However, small, localised research at a classroom and student level can also be helpful in better understanding middle years approaches (Pendergast & Main, 2017). In this study, the choice to use fewer participants was related to constructivist methodology and the time constraints of practitioner-researcher approaches (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). A total of six participants in each of the year-levels, Years Five, Six and Seven, were randomly selected and invited with a balance of male and female students. A focus group interview for each year level was conducted by someone other than their teacher at the beginning of the term. Interviews were repeated at the end of the term when each of the PBLs was completed.
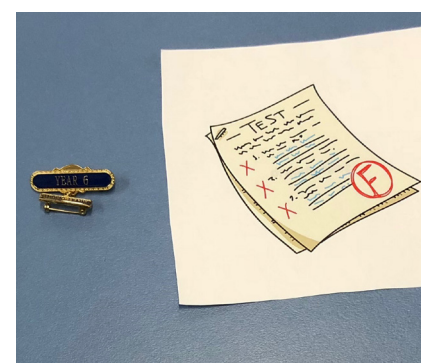
Findings

Students from all three year-levels showed some change in their perspectives of keywords. The changes were reflected in the different photos they brought to represent words and meanings. The shift in viewpoint and learning identity is outlined for each of the keywords.

1. Learning

Changes in students' perceptions of learning before and after PBL related to their use of higher order verbs, perceptions of learning rationale, transactional and experiential learning, and the personal nature of learning.

Low & High Order Verbs

Students described learning with a range of verbs across the year levels. Before PBL, participants acknowledged that learning was an active process but tended to use more lower-order verbs such as: knowing, remembering, reading, and absorbing. After PBL, students used more higher-order verbs to describe the learning process, including sharing, finding, discovering, and accepting.

Learning Rationale: New Knowledge & the Future

In the initial data collection, students often perceived the rationale of learning as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

[Learning] means to get taught new things, to be willing to take new knowledge in, from knowing nothing to knowing lots of things (7.1)

After the PBL, there was still some reference to new knowledge and skills, but the student responses had a greater emphasis on a future-focused rationale for learning.

Transactional or Experiential Learning

Before PBL, many students perceived learning as transactional often carried out individually with input from a teacher in a traditional classroom context. Students bought specific objects that represented these 'others' involved in their learning, such as a teacher, book or the internet.

I have an apple cos the typical thing for a teacher to have on their desk is an apple, and teachers teach you stuff. (7.6)

A noted difference after PBL was that learning contexts discussed moved from classroom-based education to more real-life applications.

I brought a photo from my trip to Paris of Marie Antoinette's bed because we went on a 9-hour bike tour and our tour guide was so nice and taught us the palace, the place and the people who lived in it. (7.1)

Learning can be Personal

One student told a story that demonstrated more emotional connection to the learning in the PBL, expressing feelings of anger at the intentional destruction of the group's model society during the cyclone and using stronger traits of the affective domain in both reacting to the situation and valuing it.

I brang in my societies project because that has definitely been a very big learning experience for me… once it got destroyed [by the cyclone], I was really angry, but it helped me learn that in some places colonies do get destroyed and they can't even fix it. So it made me learn that. (6.5)

For the middle year's students in this study, participation in PBL influenced their understandings of learning and their sense of identity as active participants in experiential, personal and ongoing learning.

2. Failure

The research team chose the word failure as it links to the attributes of resilience necessary in positive learning identities. In the various PBL units, students faced considerable failure in their designs, so they had to develop strategies to adapt to adversity to complete tasks.

Failure is Bad

Before PBL, most students had a negative association with failure, with many of them using words like bad, sad and mistake.

I see failure as getting something wrong…like you've done bad. (5.4)

Striving for perfection also characterised failure for some participants before PBL.

Think of whipped cream all around, berry on top, nice cake and the exact opposite. Everything crumbled! Nobody would like to eat a crumbled cake. (6.6)

Failure is Good

After PBL, many students demonstrated growth in their understanding of failure describing it as a necessary step to success or learning.

We actually need failure sometimes. Not to doubt yourself, but to learn new things. Even if you do get a terrible grade in something you're still learning something new. And failure can be part of success. (5.7)

Whilst elements of striving were evident in the responses, having hope and doing your best was aligned with failure as it was repositioned from something bad to an opportunity to progress.

Does Failure Even Exist?

Year Seven students' views on failure shifted significantly. Before PBL, Year Seven students described failure as a negative, concrete state or trait. After PBL, students expressed a different mindset towards failure as descriptions became more abstract, with some students even challenging the existence of failure.

To me, failure isn't even a thing. I bought in a chess pieces cos at the start of last term we learnt in chess you either win or you learn from the game. (7.1)

From the responses, distance travelled in learner resilience depicted in photos and descriptions of the middle years' students as they reflected on failure during the PBL.

3. Success

Along the same lines as failure, the word success was included to help represent academic achievement, achieving goals and other positive outcomes the research team associated with positive learning identities.

In the focus group interviews before and after PBL, students across all three year levels described success as requiring effort.

Success is a very hard thing to get, it just doesn't come naturally, you have to work hard for it. (6.1)

You must Fail to Succeed.

Succeeding through failure was mentioned by some students before completing PBL. Again, this was more prevalent in the second data collection, except this time, they were redefining failure as an essential aspect of success.

You need failure to succeed. (5.2)

Standard vs. Goal

Before PBL, many students referred to success as achieving an academic grade at school. After completing PBL, students placed greater emphasis on achieving personal goals in addition to academic standards. Their responses showed a more autonomous approach to goal setting and establishing their measures of success.

For success, I brang in an arrow splitting another one into a bullseye because success would be like hitting your target… if you aim to get third in cross country and you get third in

cross country, or over, it's success. (5.1)

Post PBL, whilst representations of success in activities such as surfing and gaming remained tied to effort, a broadening scope of what constitutes success was being presented. For example, Participant 6.2 identified that success could be measured on an individual standard, using Nick Vujicic as an inspiration.

I brang three things, one is a book called 'Life to the Limits' by Nick V where he just lived his life to the fullest, and also is a picture of him with his two boys, and this inspires me to no matter what, live my life to the fullest which is success. (6.2)

Applying concepts from classroom learning experiences to personal endeavours, measuring success against a personally customised standard, redefining failure as a necessary step in gaining success, and shifting from the extrinsic motivation of rewards towards the satisfaction of intrinsic motivation was evident in participant's responses.

4. Leader

The concept of leadership was selected as it underpins pillars of identity such as relationships and values (Petzold, 2012) and links to self-directed and collaborative learning. All three year-levels expressed different understandings of leadership before and after the PBL.

Year Five Leadership

Year Five students described leadership in general terms with little personal connection to the concept using pictures that showed a figure leading.

I put a bird in V formation because with birds in v formation, there's one

bird who's always in front, and that's kind of like the leader. (5.1)

After PBL, students grew their understanding of leadership, making personal connections and listing leaders in their lives or in society.

Leadership reminds me of a teacher teaching and leading a group of students like they trust their teacher. (5.5)

There was still a theme that leaders were needed and important, but the focus was more on known leaders and the actions and attributes of a good leader for Year Five students.

Year Six Leadership

Before PBL, Year Sixes had undergone leadership training, so they had strong views about leaders' motivations. For example, when thinking about the word leader, participants identified a leader as someone who leads change by example. In addition, some participants chose strong iconic representations of leaders with well-known skills: Aung San Suu Kyi (making a difference) and Kid President (inspirational speaker).

After PBL, leaders' descriptions became more self-reflective, with two students using the school leader badge to represent actions required of them in their roles as Primary School leaders. Before PBL, students drew on their own experience as leaders, including being listened to, being a role model, and not always being popular.

Year Seven Leadership

Year Seven students viewed the leader as someone who tells or shows others what to do. But, again, like the Year Five students,

there was a focus on the leader being out the front.

A leader to me is someone who first takes initiative in something. So, they'll show everyone what they need to do… So, I have a picture of a wolf cos in a wolf pack, there is always an Alpha who leads the pack. (7.6)

After PBL, Year Seven students connected responsibility with leadership.

To me, being a leader is someone who's been given a responsibility, so I bought in a badge from my old school cos I was given a responsibility to be a leader. (7.5)

Year Seven students discovered that leadership was more about helping than showing.

To me, being a leader is to help people when they need help and not to like tell people what to do. (7.1)

5. Belonging

With sociality and the opinion of others at the centre of adolescent motivation (Willis, 2021), 'belonging' implies a sense of connection and contribution, both important elements in engaged school-based learning (Ciranka & Van den Bos, 2019).

There was a strong theme of physical connection as a means of belonging.

I bought a picture of a puzzle because it has one more piece…it's like the puzzle's done except for one piece, and that's the exact place that puzzle piece belongs. And that's like your family. It's like a big puzzle, and you belong in one spot, and that's the only spot you belong. (6.3)

Before PBL, students made numerous references to belonging

being part of a collective, particularly friends and family. Belonging was linked to feelings of trust, protection, care and acceptance. In this sense, their responses were very much about their personal needs.

After PBL, there was a slight shift from 'take' to 'give' with students expressing contribution to the community and in addition, belonging shifted from being accepted to include the concept that you must also accept others to belong.

I've got some surf wax here cos it reminds me of when I go surfing just out the front of my house. And when I go out there, there's like, the people. I know everyone out there, so it's like a big community and like everyone feels like they belong. (7.6)

Students often used more non-family examples of belonging; they used verbs describing how to belong with more consideration of the need to contribute to be part of something.

6. Freedom (293)

Freedom represents notions of autonomy, independence, risk-taking, choice and creativity in learning identities.

Freedom means having no rules

Initially, freedom was viewed as an active pursuit with few rules. Students relied on using moments from their lives where they had experienced the joys of freedom.

Freedom is to me having no limits or rules and being able to do whatever and nothing like chores are holding me back. (5.1)

Freedom to me is having like your choice, like having no boundaries.

You can go where you want and do what you want. (7.4)

Freedom was closely linked with the notion of having no rules, laws, boundaries or limits and explained in a dichotomous relationship with confinement. Freedom was often associated with being outside in nature, whilst confinement was indoors.

Freedom: Escape & Constraints

Post PBL, a shift in the relationship between freedom and constraints was noted. And while there remained a resistance to rules, there was an acknowledgement that rules were useful.

[You have to] stay within the flags (6.2)

No longer did they simply link being free to having no rules. Instead, they seemed to consider that freedom needs constraints, and they began to unpack why this is.

I've got a schoolbook, and it means to me like you're free to learn whatever way you want to, but like you still need to learn a certain thing. (7.6)

Freedom, while remaining closely associated with escape, was no longer recognised as the opposite of constraint. Instead, with personal freedom to do or learn, constraints were helpful as a guide and to mitigate risk.

Conclusion

Middle years' students are in a unique stage of identity development, often placing a high value on sociality and the opinion of others (Willis, 2021). Therefore, engaging middle years students in diverse learning experiences such as PBL is vital in developing

positive learning identities that position them for success as learners at school and into the future (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Wurdinger, 2016). This action research project explored how PBL can help shape positive learning identities of middle years students at Suncoast Christian College with the goal of refining pedagogical practices.

Considering the empowerment of children through research methods such as photovoice (Beazley, 2017), the research team decided to incorporate photovoice as the data collection method for this project. Students were asked to bring photos or objects to help them share their perspectives of key learning identity terms: learning, failure, success, leadership, belonging and freedom. The research team observed that using photo voice-enabled students to consider their views, prepare, and present their ideas confidently. They were so invested that all the photovoice sharing sessions went for well over an hour, and although structured by the researchers, the students controlled the space and time with their photos and stories. This positive experience with and for student participants aligns with other studies that have found photovoice to be an effective research method with children (Beazley, 2017; Del Vecchio, Toomey & Tuck, 2017; Butschi & Hedderich, 2021).

As an action research project, data analysis focused on whether a shift had occurred for students in their views on key terms before and after the PBL indicating that PBL had a positive effect on learning identities. It was found that post PBL students demonstrated deeper understandings of themselves as learners and the process of learning itself. Views on learning moved

from descriptions of a lower order, transactional nature to higher-order, experiential, and personalised approaches. For example, failure was initially perceived as something bad, yet through PBL, students reconceptualised failure as a step to success, with some older students challenging the existence of failure itself. Similarly, most students redefined success as growth towards personal goals rather than just attaining academic grades. Learning identities reflected an increase in the value of intrinsic motivation, personalised goal setting and responsibility valuing distance travelled and a preparedness to be resilient facing failures on the road to success.

As this study drew on perspectives from three-year levels, Year Five, Six, and Seven, it was expected that there might be differences developmentally reflected in the data. Developmental differences were seen in how the students considered leadership, with Year Five's broadly speaking about leaders as being in the front. Through PBL, students used more personal examples of leaders they knew, expressing ideas about leaders' attributes. Year Six students were more confident in their belief in a good leader's attributes, listing leaders and their qualities. Year Seven students demonstrated a greater nuance in considering the interaction between followers and leaders, drawing on their personal experiences of leadership responsibility.

Belonging was discussed but returned as the term with a minor change. Students generally perceived belonging as physical connection, being in a family and the feelings this brought. Most PBL students began to consider that their contribution to belonging

expanded into groups beyond friends and family. Freedom was also spoken about less. However, their views on freedom changed considerably with initial perceptions described as limitless for many students. After PBL, students reflected on the need for boundaries and rules to have freedom and achieve goals. The change in perceptions indicated that the views underpinning their learning identities now included thoughts around the value of autonomy and self-direction balanced with boundaries, such as values enacted in engagement with others and emphasising their contribution.

Through this learning experience, students' viewpoints about learning and themselves as learners developed, demonstrating that PBL can shift a students' learning identity. As teachers and curriculum leaders in middle years, this data confirms the need to continue to design rich learning experiences and use diverse pedagogy such as PBL at Suncoast Christian College to help students develop positive learning identities. However, it would be beneficial to research this more with a greater range of PBL, longitudinal progression of the participants, and data collection in shorter time increments. This would help build a deeper understanding of how PBL impacts middle years students' learning identities and the impact on short and long-term student outcomes.

References

Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2013). *The General Capabilities*. http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/General_Capabilities_2011.pdf

Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory of personality. In L. Pervin & O.P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality* (2nd ed.) New York: Guilford.

Beazley, H. (2017). Visual methods in participatory rights-based research with children and young people in Indonesia and Vanuatu. In Ruck, M. D, Peterson-Badali, M. and Freeman, M. (Eds), *Handbook of ''children's rights: Global and multidisciplinary perspectives* (550 – 578). New York: Routledge.

Beazley, H., Bessell, S., Ennew, J. & Waterson, R. (2009). The right to be properly researched: research with children in a messy, real world. *'Children's Geographies*, 7 (4) 365-378.

Brady, L. & Kennedy, K. (1999). *Curriculum construction*. Erskineville, NSW: Prentice Hall.

Butschi, C. & Hedderich, I. (2021). How to involve young children in a photovoice project. Experiences and results. Forum: *Qualitative Social Research*, 22 (1), http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-22.1.3457

Carrington, V. (2006). Rethinking middle years: Early adolescents, schooling and digital culture. Crows Nest, NSW. Allen & Unwin.

Chan, E., Baker, A., Slee, R. & Williamson, J. (2015). Educational engagement through the middle years of schooling. Report for the In2community applied learning project. https://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/victoriainstitute/pdfs/Educational%20Engagement%20through%20the%20Middle%20Years%20of%20Schooling%20%28web-version2%29.pdf

Ciranka, S. & Van den Bos, W. (2019). Social influence in adolescent decision-making: A formal framework. Frontiers in Psychology, 10 (1915) 1 – 16. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01915

Del Vecchio, D., Toomey, N. & Tuck, E. (2017). Placing Photovoice: Participatory Action Research with undocumented migrant youth in the Hudson Valley. Critical Questions in Education, 8 (4), 358-375. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1159312.pdf

Falconer, J. (2014). Photovoice participatory-action research design and adaptations for adverse fieldwork conditions. SAGE Research Methods Cases. https://www.doi.org/10.4135/978144627305013519223

Kaplan, A. & Flum, H. (2012). Identity formation in educational settings: A critical focus for education in the 21st century. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 37, pp.171 -5.

Kolb, A. & Kolb, D. (2009). On becoming a learner: The concept of learning identity. Essays on Adult Learning Inspired by the Life and Work of David O. Justice. Learning Never Ends. CAEL Forum and News pp.5-13. https://learningfromexperience.com/downloads/research-library/on-becoming-a-learner.pdf

Main & Pendergast (2015). Student well-being and engagement. In Pendergast, D., Main, K. and Bahr, N. (Eds.), Teaching middle years. Rethinking curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (pp.47 -65). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Matthews, G., Deary, I. & Whiteman, M.C. (2003). Personality traits (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). (2008). Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians. Melbourne: Commonwealth of Australia (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs).

O'Brien, M. (2017). Positive Behaviour Management. In Pendergast, D., Main, K. and Bahr, N. (Eds.), Teaching middle years. Rethinking curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (pp.243 -264). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Pendergast, D. & Main, K. (2017). Quality teaching and learning. In Pendergast, D., Main, K. and Bahr, N. (Eds.), Teaching middle years. Rethinking curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (pp.66 -80). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Pendergast, D., Main, K., Barton, G., Kanasa, H., Geelan, D. & Dowden, T. (2015). The education change model as a vehicle for reform: Shifting year 7 and implementing junior secondary in Queensland. Australian Journal of Middle Schooling, 15 (2), 4 – 19.

Perry, M. (2017). Social networking and young people. Privileging student voice. Australian Journal of Middle Schooling, 17 (1), 4 – 13.

Prestridge, S. & Finger, G. (2015). Using information and communication technologies. In Pendergast, D., Main, K. and Bahr, N. (Eds.), *Teaching middle years. Rethinking curriculum, pedagogy and assessment* (pp.265 -285). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Prosser, B. (2006, November). *Reinvigorating the middle years: A review of middle schooling*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Adelaide.

Petzold, H.G. (2012). *Identität. Ein kernthema moderner Psychotherapie*. Springer.

Punch, K. F. & Oancea, A. (2014). *Introduction to research methods in education* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). (2015) *21st-century skills for senior education. An analysis of educational trends*. https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/publications/paper_snr_21c_skills.pdf

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Elam, G. (2003). Designing and selecting samples. In Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp.77 - 108). London: Sage.

Smith, D. A. (2008). *Middle years of schooling: A discussion paper*. http://www.generationnext.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Middle-Years-document.pdf

Snape, D. & Spencer, L. (2003). The foundations of qualitative research. In Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp.263 -286). London: Sage.

Wang, C. C. (1999). Photovoice: a participatory action research strategy applied to ''women's health. *Womens Health*, 8 (2), 185-92. https://www.doi.org/10.1089/jwh.1999.8.185

Willis, A. (2021). *Stay in the game!* https://alisonwillis.org/stay-in-the-game/

Wurdinger, S. (2016). *The power of Project Based Learning: Helping students develop important life skills*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Social, Emotional and Personal Development (SEPD) Program at Pembroke School - Teaching Respectful Relationships

Rebecca Forrest *Head of Social, Emotional and Personal Development, Pembroke School*
Chrissy Tinsley *Head of Mellor House, Pembroke School*

Pembroke School is a co-educational, non-denominational, day and boarding school offering education from ELC to Year 12. We are a vibrant and exciting school catering for a diverse community of students. Pembroke is truly independent. The school is non-selective, and we are whole-heartedly committed to the values of co-education. At Pembroke our Middle School is from Year 7 to 10.

Pembroke's Social, Emotional and Personal Development (SEPD) program features a bespoke Respectful Relationships curriculum. The SEPD program was initially developed in 2019 to complement the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education and has been implemented incrementally by including an additional year level annually from Years 10-12. For teachers of Pembroke, recent media coverage around consent, gender identity, violence against women and appropriate models of manhood has reinforced the importance of this program. The teacher team understands the need for these issues to be considered with adolescents in a contemporary setting.

At Pembroke School, our Respectful Relationships curriculum is based on strong student-teacher rapport and weekly classroom contact. Our methodology includes explicit teaching of concepts by skilled, appropriately trained teachers, using up to date, relevant, age-appropriate resources that are contemporary and resonate with students. In addition, guest speakers are used strategically to reinforce key messages and to ensure that those messages relate to a holistic curriculum. To further inspire and promote this level of student empowerment, our Principal, Luke Thomson, has initiated a Student Charter on Respectful Relationships to be constructed by students and sit alongside our School Aims.

As with any effective educational model, particularly in this critical developmental area, rapport is at the core of our program's success. We believe that essential topics are best delivered as part of an integrated and holistic Respectful Relationships model for meaningful and long-lasting learning to occur. Students learn critical relationship skills best from a teacher who they trust and respect. While Pembroke successfully engages guest speakers such as Dr Tessa Opie (an advocate for healthy and consenting relationships), our primary teaching model is based on weekly contact
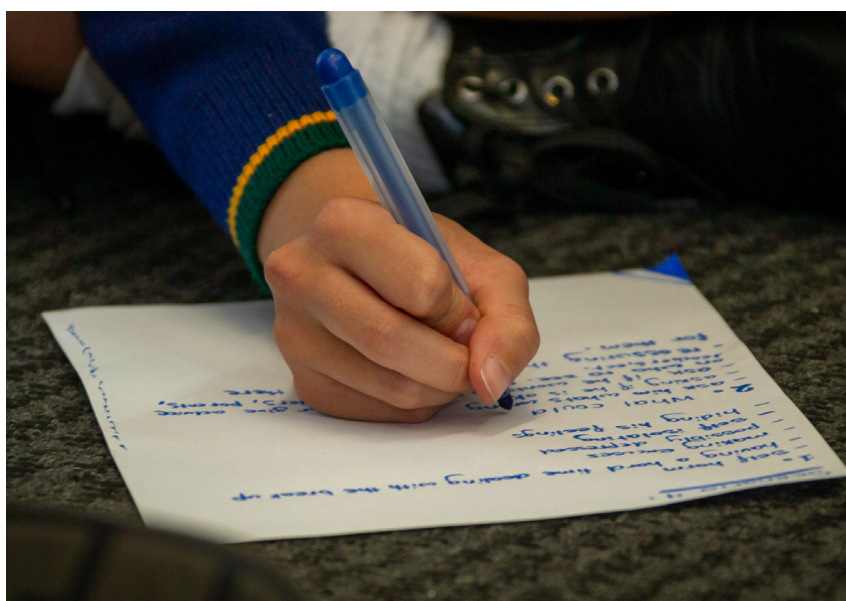
with students as we delve into a deep, engaging dialogue about many areas crucial for their development.

Teachers with appropriate training, passion and a level of comfort in unpacking sexual health and relationships topics with adolescents are critical to meeting the program's aims. Teachers need to be able to model the appropriate use of explicit language and inclusive attitudes. We see the benefit of this with our students now using appropriate terminology in the safe environment of the classroom and in their real-life interactions. We use the Shine SA Relationships and Sexual Health curriculum (2021) in Year 10. As the Shine curriculum does not extend into the final two years of school, we have constructed our own Senior courses. The broad topics we focus on are consent, respectful break-ups, pleasure for both parties, contraception, sexuality and gender.

A significant development in the way that our Respectful Relationships program is conceptualised is a deliberately sex-positive approach. This approach means that there is acknowledgement and discussion of the opportunities and beauty of intimacy within relationships. For example, in the past, curricula used images of diseased genitalia to scare young people to think twice about engaging in intimate relationships. The prevention of pregnancy and disease became the key focus. Our curriculum takes a fresh view recognising the joy that can be experienced from a physical relationship based on enthusiastic consent and mutual respect, as opposed to coercion. Naturally, the importance of contraception and protecting against disease are still covered, as is the ability to choose to abstain from sexual relationships positively.

Metaphors like the famous 'Cup of Tea' consent clip have become widely known. We encourage teachers to be bold enough to make the links between metaphorical and real-life situations unambiguous. Some young people will not understand these concepts unless they are teased out in detail through class discussion.

Discussions that teachers and students have explored include the full range of genders and sexualities. We devote time to raising awareness around LGBTQIA+ identities. Respectful Relationships education needs to be inclusive of all gender and sexual identities to emphasise that everyone deserves to feel respected and safe in their relationships while at Pembroke. Our holistic approach and responsiveness to Student Voice has seen, for example, the establishment of Pride groups in the Middle and Senior Schools to support members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Pembroke's celebration of diversity

enables investigation into gender roles, expectations, and constraints. We have a particular focus on breaking down notions of hyper-masculinity through exploration of the 'Man Box' concept. We make the links between these gender expectations and Australia's alarming domestic violence statistics clear. In a co-ed environment, this topic needs to be unpacked sensitively to empower all to act respectfully.

One of the motivations for considering Respectful Relationships holistically is the knowledge that when sexuality is not explicitly taught, pornography can become a default sex education for students. An understanding of the impact that pornography is having upon teenage sexuality, accessed with unprecedented and unregulated ease through internet-connected devices, is an important issue to tackle. Our students look critically at what pornography omits – consent, pleasure for both parties, discussion

about contraception options and STI tests. We ask students to question what pornography almost always includes – an imbalance of power, violence, and a lack of respect for women. When considering the responses, we receive from students, we are hopeful that cultural change is possible. Their learning and analysis in this program are key to minimising uncritical consumption of pornography.

Our vision for the program is to link student agency and advocacy using students' voices to bring about cultural change at and beyond the school. For the program to meet its intentions, student input is vital. The content is reinforced through assembly presentations, parent information evenings and interdisciplinary studies that reflect the SEPD curriculum's core values. Child safety in all its forms is at the heart of our desired learning outcomes.

References

Opie, T. (2021). *Relationships and Sexuality Education.* https://www.inyourskin.co/about/

Shine SA (2021). *Relationships and Sexual Health.* https://shinesa.org.au/educators-and-schools/

Swivelling Student Wellbeing: Developing the Vi et Animo Framework

***Pascale Drever**, Deputy Head of School, Ascham School*
***Laura Brennan**, Head of Wellbeing, Ascham School*

Located in Sydney's eastern suburbs, Ascham is an independent, non-selective day and boarding school. The school, which is independent of any religious affiliation, educates girls from Prep to Year 12. Ascham is the only school in Australia to use the Dalton Plan methodology which sits at the heart of our teaching and learning and was introduced to Ascham School by its headmistress, Miss Margaret Bailey in 1922.

Knowing that our teachers have strong relationships with their students through the Dalton Plan, and that student wellbeing is strongly linked to learning, we began to consider how we can support student wellbeing further. As the Deputy Head of School, I was tasked with investigating wellbeing programs and implementing one that would best fit the needs of our community.

Recognising that we have a responsibility to empower our students to understand and better maintain their wellbeing by providing evidence-informed practices and programs, at the start of 2017, we asked ourselves some key questions:

- How can we make our wellbeing programs more effective?
- How can we capitalise on the wellbeing that is already present in our classrooms?
- How can we infuse student wellbeing into our core business?

To tackle these key questions, our school launched the Visible WellbeingTM approach by Professor Lea Waters (PhD) at Ascham on 1 March 2018, under the auspices of the Ascham Institute of Learning. The Ascham Institute of Learning is a series of seminars for parents, which aims to gather speakers who are experts in their fields to share the latest thinking about raising girls. The Institute provided the forum for both staff professional development and parental education of Visible WellbeingTM . We were excited by this philosophy because it combined "the science of wellbeing with the science of learning" to make wellbeing visible in all areas of the School. Implementing this approach ensured that student wellbeing was equally relevant to all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and enabled us to enhance our culture of wellbeing across the entire School. Teachers used the SEARCH framework and the learning process itself as a delivery mechanism to build student wellbeing (Waters & Loton, 2019). The focus of our training with Professor Waters was to consider the practice and process of Visible Wellbeing, involving the 6 pathways of the SEARCH framework:

- Attention & Awareness
- Coping & Comprehension
- Emotional Management
- Habits & Goals
- Relationships
- Strengths

The VWB approach helps teachers to use the learning process itself as a delivery mechanism to build student wellbeing. VWB is not a set program, rather it is a set of flexible practices that can be applied across any subject matter, and in all contexts. The essence of the VWB philosophy is to use teaching practices and activities that assist the learning process whilst also supporting the mental health of students. The teaching practices are designed to build relationships, promote psychological safety, provide clear communication, and support positive behaviour as important ways to use teaching as a vehicle to build and support student wellbeing. Examples include the use of feedback practices such as active constructive responding, strength-based teaching and growth mindset language.

The whole-school learning process played a key role in making students wellbeing everyone's business. With the Visible WellbeingTM (VWB) approach, academic learning and wellbeing became truly integrated.

In 2018 and 2019, we began to equip our staff with the tools to make wellbeing visible in classrooms and staffrooms, across co-curricular areas and in other school contexts, through ongoing professional learning. An exciting off-shoot of implementing the VWB approach was the staff's initiative to set up a Staff Wellbeing Committee that runs parallel to the student

wellbeing work. This committee also adopted the SEARCH framework and introduced several new activities, e.g., Gratitude Box, Morning teas, RU OK Day, and support for staff members in need. Wellbeing became a focus in all our meetings, including the corporate services meetings, where Wellbeing Moments allowed staff members to share their insights, practices and thoughts. The Visible WellbeingTM approach not only provided teachers with a toolkit of strategies to enhance the wellbeing of our students but also inspired conversations on how the school can support their wellbeing.

The whole-school learning process played a key role in keeping wellbeing at the forefront of everyone's mind at the start of 2020 and wellbeing became more and more visible in many areas across the school, excitedly we appointed Ascham's first Head of Wellbeing. Staff became increasingly familiar with the concepts and language around wellbeing. Overall, as a school, we developed a greater awareness of the importance of wellbeing for both students and staff. Implementing the VWB philosophy has allowed us to lead the school wellbeing program from an informal, inconsistent set of activities to a Whole School initiative, incorporating the Visible WellbeingTM SEARCH framework.

Throughout the process of implementation, we have been open to feedback and reflection, making changes to the program and staff professional development according to the School's needs, culture and values. As a result, there is now a purposeful emphasis on a 'whole-school approach' to wellbeing from Prep to Year 12. This has had a positive impact on the students at the school, staff collegiality and

parental engagement; it has fostered a new level of commitment in pastoral wellbeing across all school sectors.

Then came Coronavirus.

With the sudden transition to remote learning, it became evident that restrictions on school activities would make it more challenging to deliver activities that could enhance student wellbeing. It soon became apparent that social and emotional learning was not an added extra to the school day. Student wellbeing was not an aspect of schooling that sits alone in a silo but is embedded in all aspects of school life. We quickly realised that wellbeing needed to be visible regardless of how and when we deliver our teaching programs. Immediately we set about developing and implementing the Wellbeing@Home Program to provide opportunities for students to engage and practise their social and emotional skills. The flexibility of the VWB approach enabled us to develop our Wellbeing@Home Program using the SEARCH Framework and to continue to prioritise the six domains of wellbeing.

The Wellbeing@Home Program had a strong focus on building strengths and connections. Parents provided students with a journal to record their character and learning strengths each week, and students were provided with tips on how to use their journal as a wellbeing tool. Students checked in with their Form Teacher each day and were asked to indicate how they felt by providing an emoji. A Student Podcast was recorded and provided insight into how students were coping emotionally during this unique time. Afternoon roll call was replaced with time to reflect on the day and write in their journals.

Physically Separated Socially Connected became our catchphrase as we developed a weekly timetable to ensure that our students felt a sense of belonging and connectedness to each other and our community. Timetabling a selection of activities brought about a sense of routine, for and structure which provided additional support during these challenging times. Students were provided regular check-ins with the community through:

- attending a Virtual School Assembly each Tuesday, which promoted connection and community.
- Wellbeing Wednesdays giving students agency to choose their morning activity dependent on their individual needs. Students had the option of selecting a teacher to check in with for an informal chat. The topics on offer included academic mentoring, goal setting, meditation and mindfulness.
- Thursday morning online Year Group meetings with Year Coordinators.
- Students worked with their peers to develop a recipe book of their favourite lockdown recipes. Students were also encouraged to have lunch with friends and coordinate their meals, for example Taco Thursday.
- Friday's usual assembly time became Friday Getaway - Let's Read. Students came together to listen to a reading by a staff member or a famous author and then escaped into their books. New Friend Friday was a Year 12 initiative that encouraged students to reach out to someone they would not usually sit with at school.

Teaching staff were supported with the gift of time to invest in their wellbeing as they were not needed online until 8:55 am, as well as encouragement to have a regular cup of tea with a colleague from a different department

A sense of belonging to the school environment is an established protective factor for child and adolescent health, education, and social wellbeing (Rowe & Stewart, 2009). Some of the initiatives that were introduced included:

- adaptation to the Houses and Sisters to allow students to participate in a Virtual Olympics across their House groups. The virtual torch relay was well received and allowed for positive collaboration and competition.

- a regular Online Meditation activity to provide students with an essential break during their remote learning lessons

- Mindful Minutes were scheduled at recess and Yoga at lunch. Students were encouraged to join in at these times to help them establish healthy habits

- Phone-a-Friend was scheduled for recess and a Mindfulness Club was offered at lunchtime.

Finally, Active@Ascham was timetabled for each day and the PDHPE Movement Matrix promoted the relationship between physical activity, mental health and improved academic performance. Be kind to your mind, move your body ensured that the physical element was at play within the Wellbeing@Home Program.

Return to Campus

The flexibility of the Wellbeing@Home Program allowed it to evolve when students returned to campus. Continuing collaboration between all departments united wellbeing under one umbrella and built on the progress made during remote learning. The success of the Wellbeing@Home Program was its holistic approach, incorporating physical and social components, achieved by including various departments across the school and articulating that the program has been developed to support learning.

New Wellbeing Framework

Now in 2021, our Wellbeing@Home program has adapted once again as we continue to provide our students with care and support throughout the lockdown period. This year, we have called it the Vi et Amino@Home program to align with our new Wellbeing Framework. Our Vi et Animo Framework consists of four domains: Heart, Soul, Strength and Courage (acknowledging the literal translation of this Latin phrase). We

Vi et animo@Home

Heart
Everything in Red on the timetable is for Heart. It is about cultivating joy and contentment. Remember to submit your form for Weds Connect and choose something that fills your heart! You can bring heart to your lessons too!

Soul
Everything in Cream is about Soul. This is about the soul of Ascham and staying connected. Make sure you check in with your Form Teacher every morning and attend all assemblies. There are lots of fun surprises!

Strength
Everything in Khaki is about strength. Use your learning strengths in lessons and the character strength of perseverance to stay focused. Look after your physical strength by attending active@ascham and try some yoga!

Courage
Everything in Navy is about Courage. Be courageous in your goal setting and planning. Attend Dalton even if you're not required to and check in with your teachers. Ask a courageous question!

have linked all our evidence-based activities back to the framework. The timetable includes opportunities for students to practise self-care and engage in activities that take them away from their screens. Opportunities for connection are offered in our Virtual Assemblies and Year Group Meetings. We have again provided physical activity options, including Active@Ascham, Yoga and a Physical Education Challenge Matrix.

Further to the timetable, we have worked as a team to ensure scheduled weekly wellbeing time has been used effectively to embed our Wellbeing Framework further, improve wellbeing literacy and ensure a meaningful program was offered, despite remote learning. This included Whole School Wellbeing Initiatives, for example, Our Walk to Tokyo. Ascham, as a collective, walked over 10,000 km. Each part of the school, including our staff, represented a different country. Students were able to post comments, evidence, and photos in SeeSaw, MSTeams, and Live House Events, enabled students to connect and work towards a common goal with healthy competition. The engagement in the whole school activity was high and created a sense of connection that was extremely valuable during such a challenging term. To build on this momentum and to maintain engagement, we developed another whole school initiative to deliver until the end of term. Both our Junior and Senior school earned leaves for our Vi et Animo Tree, which is the visual for our Wellbeing Framework.

Each time a student submitted evidence of completing the assigned wellbeing activity, they earned a leaf. The first activity is related to Heart – this is about bringing joy and contentment into daily life. An

example of a Junior School activity was students using a mindfulness technique to sit with some of their favourite items at home and describe how they felt. Our Senior School students participated in a lip sync competition against other forms. To maximise engagement, students could choose their activities. The following week we launched an activity relevant to Soul, which is about relationships and connection. Strengths were then explored, and finally Courage, where students could choose an activity that explored how courageous they had been throughout the term. The leaves were then stuck onto a wall display on campus. The tree has continued to grow, and when students return to face-to-face learning, they will see a visual representing all the wonderful ways they supported their wellbeing.

The Tree Challenge was part of our explicit teaching of Wellbeing and we continued to show creativity and

flexibility in delivering wellbeing, implicitly. We achieved this through providing extra resources and information for parents. Individual check-ins with both students and parents were prioritised and Staff were given further guidance and ideas on how to embed wellbeing into remote lessons. We used the 'Ascham Refresh', a quick 3-minute workout routine that could be used as a brain break during lessons. Care packages were sent to all students and were received with gratitude. We ensured lines of communication were open to both students and parents. Feedback was sought often, as we value student voice and we know the benefits of embracing student ideas and creativity. When we asked ourselves those very important questions back in 2017, we never imagined our wellbeing journey to take the turns it has. However, if it had not been for those bumps along the road, we would not be in the position we find ourselves in today. We have

found our wellbeing program to be flexible and adaptable enough to swivel from a face-to-face program to online delivery and back again. Through this rapid swivelling, we have found ourselves in a position of strength. We have learned that wellbeing is not just a timetabled lesson or a specific activity. It is not something that sits alone but is embedded into the fabric of school life. It is through each conversation, each lesson and each co-curricular activity that students and staff build a sense of belonging, connection and ultimately develop their wellbeing. Using the foundation of the Visible WellbeingTM approach, our Vi et Animo Wellbeing Framework provides a space for all the wonderful ways in which wellbeing can be explicitly and implicitly taught. We will continue to listen to student voice, engage our wonderful community and ensure that wellbeing, regardless of where we might find ourselves, is always a priority.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

PASSPORT

References

Rowe, F. and Stewart, D. (2009). *Promoting School Connectedness: Using a Whole-School Approach.* Lambert Academic Publishing: Germany.

Waters, L, & Loton, D. (2019). SEARCH: *A Meta-Framework and Review of the Field of Positive Education. International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology,* 4(1), 1–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-019-00017-4

For further information on Visible WellbeingTM, please visit leawaters.com

Book Review

Dr Michael Nagel, PHD

Oh Boy!
Understanding the neuroscience behind educating and raising boys

oh boy!
Understanding the neuroscience behind educating and raising boys

DR MICHAEL C. NAGEL

Angela White, *Executive Officer, Adolescent Success*

In this most recent publication, Dr Michael Nagel, USC Associate Professor in Child Development and Learning, uses recent advances in neuroscience and education as his framework to explore what these advances mean when working with and parenting boys.
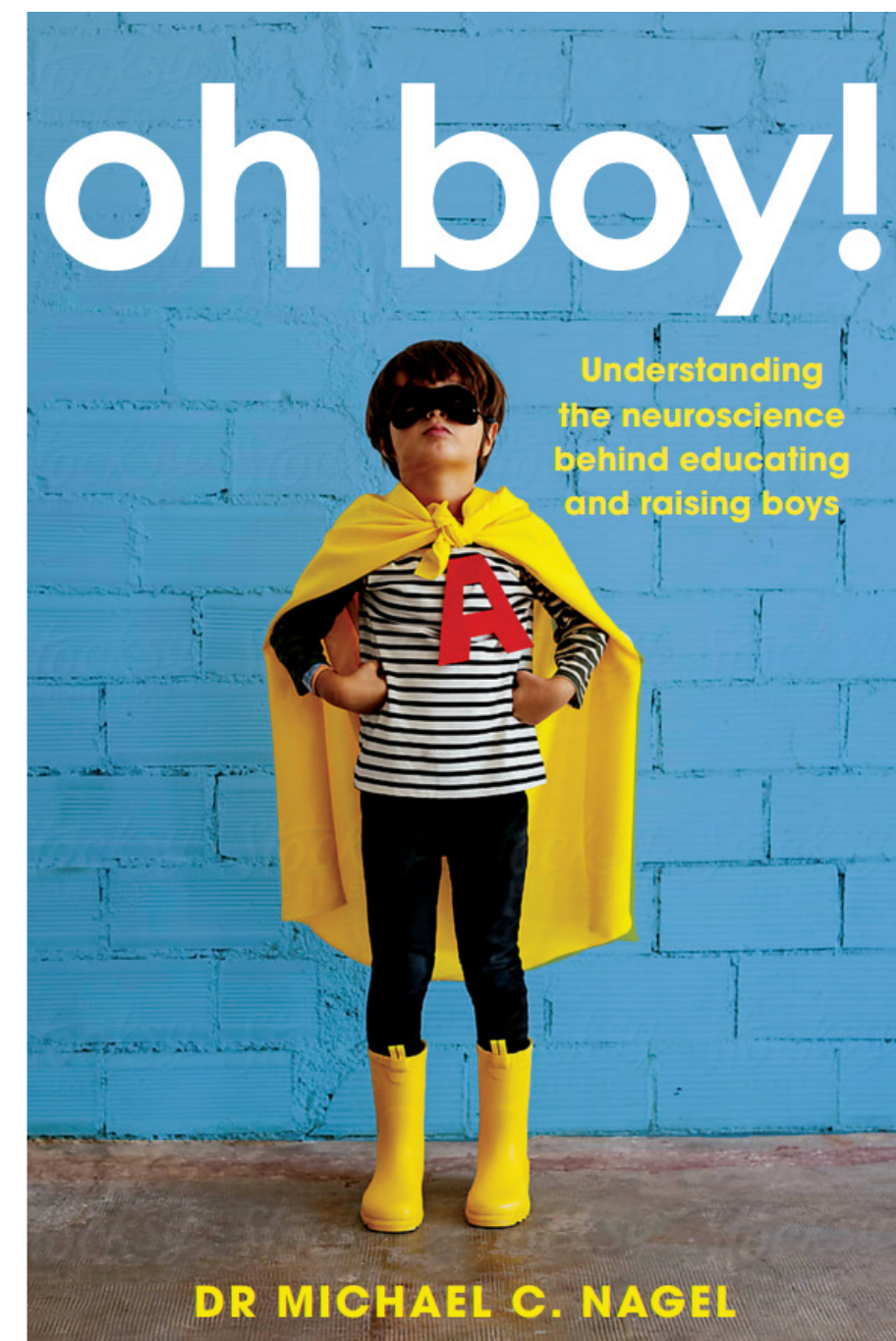
At a time when gender construction is under the microscope, this book is welcomed as a clear and thoughtful approach to the similarities and differences that can exist between boys and girls and specifically, the implications this can have on parenting and education. Dr Nagel has simplified the neuroscience and research jargon and provides a user-friendly book with a balance between theory, practice, insight and useful suggestions.

His chapter on "Sex and gender" is particularly useful as it outlines gender, its social construction and explains to the reader in simple language what each letter in the acronym LGBTQI stands for.

Dr Nagel goes into some detail explaining the adolescent developing brain and the neuroscience advancements which prove to us why boys need physical movement and why we need to understand this in order to work with them effectively. He states that "movement is not only a necessity for boys but a key component of healthy physical and mental development".

As well as explaining young adolescents developing brain, Dr Nagel is explicit in his approach to working 'with' boys. He offers insights and expertise on every aspect of boys' development including, physical, cognitive and academical, emotional and spiritual. "In the context of this book, working with boys spiritually focuses on the personal nature of boyhood at the intersection of their behaviour needs and tendencies."

This book is a wonderful update on boys and education and a must read for parents and teachers of boys.

The book is published by Hawker Brownlow Education and can be ordered through their website.

Adolescent Success 2022 Professional Development Calendar

Professional Development for Leaders and Teachers	Where to register
Term 1	
1 Feb	Adolescent Success Schools of Distinction applications due	Apply via website
20-26 Jan	Student Free Day professional development available bespoke to each school on topics such as: * The Adolescent Learner * Why Middle School is important * Engagement in the Middle Years * Transition into the Middle School/Junior Secondary	Events tab of website
20 Feb	Adolescent Success Schools of Distinction announced	Announcement made on our website
18 Feb	Teaching Middle Years Workshop - Online	Events tab of website
24-25 Feb	Middle Years Audit Tool workshop no.1 - Online	Events tab of website
4 March	Leaders School Study Tour - Online	Events tab of website
11 March	Leader Member Discussion Group - Online	Events tab of website
21 March	Online Webinar - topic TBA	Events tab of website
Term 2	
29 April	Teaching Middle Years Workshop - Face to face, Brisbane	Events tab of website
20 May	Teaching Middle Years Workshop - Online	Events tab of website
May Publication of "Australian Journal of Middle Schooling" sent to all members	
10 June	Online Webinar - topic TBA	Events tab of website
Term 3	
15 July	ASSOD Virtual webinar - 1 hour after school	MLESOD only
12 Aug	Online Webinar - topic TBA	Events tab of website
25-27 Aug	Face to face International Conference - Venue TBA, Gold Coast	Events tab of website
25-27 Aug	Audit Tool final presentations - at Conference	
Term 4	
4 Nov	Online Webinar - topic TBA	Events tab of website
November Publication of "Australian Journal of Middle Schooling" sent to all members	

www.adolescentsuccess.org.au

Information for Contributors

Adolescent Success welcomes submissions for journal inclusion that reflect the aims of the Association and address issues relevant to the middle years of schooling.

Possible topics include: the developmental needs and interests of young adolescents; family and community partnerships; varied approaches to teaching and learning integrated curriculum; authentic assessment; school leadership and organisational structures in the middle years; information and communication technologies and resources in the middle years; research findings and future developments in the middle years.

Contributions may take the form of:

- academic and research papers that make an original contribution of an empirical or theoretical nature
- literature reviews
- papers of a practical or applied nature
- reports
- viewpoints
- book reviews

Contributions

- The journal has two levels of acceptance of papers for publication: refereed and non refereed. Refereed papers will have two referees selected from relevant fields of study by the editor. Papers must clearly indicate if they wish to be considered for refereed status. Refereed articles will be included in a specific section of the journal.
- Contributions shall be submitted electronically via email to the Adolescent Success email address, as a Microsoft Word document. Articles must be doublespaced, without the use of styles, 12 point font Times New Roman. The submitted article become the property of Adolescent Success.
- All contributors need to complete an Author's agreement form to be submitted with the article.
- Papers should be between 700 and 5000 words in length.

- Each article should have a separate title page that contains the title, the names of all authors, their contact addresses, email addresses, and telephone and facsimile numbers. The names of the authors should not appear on the rest of the paper.
- An abstract of no more than 200 words must accompany each refereed article.
- All references should be placed at the end of text using APA (7th edition). For example:

Journal article
Rumble, P., & Aspland, T. (2010). The four tributes model of the middle school teacher. Australian Journal of Middle Schooling, 10(1), 4–15.

Book
Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Chapter in edited book
Ajsen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: a theory of planned behaviour. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckman (Eds), Action control. From cognition to behaviour (pp. 11–40). Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Footnotes are not to be used.
- Figures and diagrams should be professionally prepared and submitted in a form suitable for reproduction, indicating

preferred placement.
- Photographs should be submitted separately (not included within the text). All student photographs, art work, poetry etc must be accompanied by copyright release forms, which are available on the website or from the editor.
- If the material has been published elsewhere, details must be included on the author's agreement form.
- The Middle Years of Schooling Association Inc holds copyright for articles published in the Australian Journal of Middle Schooling, excluding those previously published elsewhere.
- It is the right of the editor to make minor editorial amendments without consultation.
- Upon acceptance of contributions for publication, the contributors will be advised of the likely issue and date of publication. A complimentary copy of the journal in which the article appears will be sent to contributors.

Address for communication:
Adolescent Success
PO Box 140
Buderim Q 4556 Australia