

Principal Matters

ISSN 1322-2481

EXCELLENCE THROUGH EXCHANGE

Summer 2015

How to build your reputation as an effective school leader

Helping students build strong, positive relationships

The role of the principal in brand and culture-building

Australian winner of the Zayed Future Energy Prize

Do we need a major revision of Australian education?

Practical advice on building a positive school culture

Teacher success: three management phases

PHOTO: In January 2015, a student representing Melbourne Girls' College, in Victoria, accepted the Zayed Future Energy Prize Oceania Global High Schools award, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Principal Matters

Journal for Secondary School Leaders in Australia

Features

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>2 Inviting student involvement</p> <p>WA principal JOHN YOUNG provides practical advice on building a positive school culture and thereby improving student retention.</p> <p>6 Teacher success: the three phases of management</p> <p>HARRY LONDON explains the three inter-related phases of management that allow teachers to succeed.</p> <p>10 How to win raving fans</p> <p>Using the paradigm of customer and provider, ARTIE LYNNWORTH provides some useful advice on how to build your reputation in the community as an effective school leader.</p> <p>14 The AVID program: extending our top students</p> <p>Victorian principal GENEVIEVE SIMSON shares information about the AVID Program, which targets the top 40% of Australian students, who are underperforming in comparison to the top 40% of students in other PISA countries.</p> <p>16 Engaged, resilient and successful</p> <p>Clinical psychologist LYN WORSLEY explains the Resilience Doughnut program, which helps students build strong, positive relationships.</p> <p>18 Successful brand and culture-building</p> <p>LAWRIE DRYSDALE examines the role of the school principal in brand and culture-building.</p> | <p>26 Prestigious award for Melbourne Girls' College</p> <p>Melbourne Girls' College was the first Australian winner of the Zayed Future Energy Prize, reports ANDREW VANCE.</p> <p>30 Australian schools: no equity of access and outcomes</p> <p>A major revision of national educational provision is long overdue, argues ROSS MILLIKAN.</p> <p>38 The power of many</p> <p>Leading quality learning in schools is a collective responsibility, advises PATRICK DUGNAN, who quotes Woodrow Wilson: 'We should not only use the brains we have but all that we can borrow.'</p> <p>43 The nine 'i's of modern learning</p> <p>TED McCAIN, IAN JUKES and NICKY MOHAN provide a brief introduction to the nine 'i's of modern learning.</p> <p>50 Nurturing leadership</p> <p>School improvement specialist, CHARLOTTE CARTER-WALL, from the UK, discusses the importance of nurturing leadership practice and securing systemic improvement through heedful interaction.</p> |
|---|---|

Updates

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| <p>22</p> | <p>Australian Principals Update</p> <p>News from principals' associations across Australia</p> |
| <p>35</p> | <p>Global Education News</p> <p>News from around the globe</p> |

PRINCIPAL MATTERS is published four times a year by VASSP. It is intended as a forum for the professional interests of the principals of secondary schools. While reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all statements neither the Editorial Board, the Executive Editor, Debra Crouch, nor the VASSP accept responsibility for any loss or damages caused by statements or opinions expressed by contributors or advertisers. Copyright VASSP 2015. This publication is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review no part may be reproduced by any process without the prior permission of the publishers. Individual authors retain copyright on their articles and their permission must be sought in writing before republishing.

Inviting student involvement

WA principal JOHN YOUNG provides practical advice on building a positive school culture and thereby improving student retention.

A fundamental issue of equity of contemporary Australian education is the challenge for teachers in optimising students' engagement with the education process and mediating school compositional effects. Invitational Education, developed by William Purkey, with John Novak and Betty Siegel, has focused school improvement at Clarkson Community High School in Perth, Western Australia for the past five years. Invitational Education is a theory of practice that helps us understand influences about what we believe to be true about ourselves, thus creating a positive or negative self-concept.

Self-concept influences students' perceptions and in turn, their behaviours. Our positive school climate appears to be causally linked to improving student retention and participation. Our effort to build an inviting school culture at Clarkson Community High School correlates positively with continuing success. At this early stage, research findings are tentative and subject to revision, but show clear signs of improvement.

Invitational Education foundations

Invitational Education is a theory of practice designed to create a total school environment that intentionally summons people to realise their potential. The purpose of Invitational Education is to make schooling a more exciting, satisfying and enriching experience for everyone involved in the educative process. At its core, Invitational Education is based on three successive foundations:

Perceptual tradition: A belief that people do what they do because of how they perceive the world at the moment of behaving. Perceptual tradition maintains that each person is a conscious agent who considers, constructs, interprets, and then acts and ultimately each person is responsible for his or her actions.

Self-concept theory: Essentially, a good self-concept is a memory of inviting acts, which are accepted, extended, and successfully acted on. Self-concept is each individual's perception of his or her personal world and includes the following characteristics:

- strives for stability by seeking orderliness and harmony;
- functions to maintain, protect, and enhance itself;
- seeks consistency by assimilating or rejecting perceptions that do or do not fit preconceptions;
- allows change when desire is high and risk is low;
- learns and develops as a result of inviting or disinviting experiences; and
- constructs and reconstructs experience throughout life, layer by layer, experience by experience.

Democratic Practice: The idea that everyone in an organisation has a perspective that is valuable and needs to be tapped.

Five assumptions of Invitational Education

The fundamentals of Invitational Education are encompassed by assumptions that:

- people are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly
- education should be a collaborative and cooperative activity
- the process is the product in the making.
- people possess untapped potential in all areas of human development
- human potential can best be realised by places, policies, programs and processes that are intentionally designed to invite development, and by people who consistently seek to realise this potential in themselves and others, personally and professionally.

Translating theory into practice

The transformation of a WA secondary school.

Clarkson Community High School is a secondary school in the northern suburbs of Perth, Western Australia. Our students, like any others in Australia, are digitally immersed 24/7 in an online world where engagement and interest may be only a few clicks away. Like other schools, we face a continuing challenge to be relevant to our students' needs while engaging and interesting students who have instant access to a world-wide web of knowledge at any time in almost any place.

In this context, mindful of the complexity surrounding *school processes to mediate school compositional effects*¹, we sought a different vision of the role of schools. Our investigations led us to Invitational Education and the power of its simple unifying concepts for driving school improvement. The work of Professor John Hattie, in his book *Visible Learning*, was seminal in the shift in systems thinking at Clarkson CHS. Hattie's work is strongly supportive of the research of William Purkey, who stated in correspondence in 2015:

Visible Learning is a major advance in our thinking about teaching and learning. It is a learning theory. Invitational Education is a theory that encompasses the total gestalt of education, including people, places, programs, policies, and processes. An example might be a Christmas tree. You can place many valuable things on the tree, but you must have a tree to place them on. Invitational Education is the tree.'

One of the first steps on our journey was to develop a shared language for change in our school. To support this goal, we adopted the starfish motif of Invitational Education, representing the unity of the five systems-thinking elements we would use to drive change in our school.

The starfish provides a simple motif that is easy to remember and depicts the inter-relationships of people, places, processes, programs and policies in our change processes. In the same way that a starfish can exert force, we can create change by employing different combinations of our five planning elements. The starfish motif represents in a simple form the complexity of options at any given time.

Employing "simple complexity" to transform systems has a history of success in addressing problems of practice associated with better systems-thinking, as posited by Senge.



Michael Fullan extended Senge's work on systems-thinking to systems-learning and refers to this concept as *simplexity*. The concept of simplexity recognises that Invitational Education leadership strategy is, of necessity:

'Complex, in that it has to operate across a number of social, organisational, cultural and technical dimensions simultaneously; simple, in that it has to embody a clear storyline; and narrative, that everyone in the system can understand and use to give purpose to their work.'

Such simplexity as the starfish motif, where complex underlying processes are easily communicated through a unifying simple representation, makes it very easy to create a shared planning language and shared systems thinking.

The ideas underpinning Invitational Education are not new. They are the sort of fundamental common sense that drives good education. What is new, however, is the synergy of the simplexity that is provided by the five Ps of people, places, programs, processes and policies and how this simplexity supports simple communication of complex issues in a school planning context. Which other complex interaction of theory of practice, purpose, methods, propositions, foundations and levels of functioning can be represented and communicated across an entire school by five words and a simple graphic?

Student engagement through Invitational Education increases participation. Henry Levin, an American economist of education, has posited that the greatest predictor of health, wealth and happiness in adult life is not achievement at school but is the number of years engaged in schooling. Similarly, Hattie stated in correspondence in 2015:

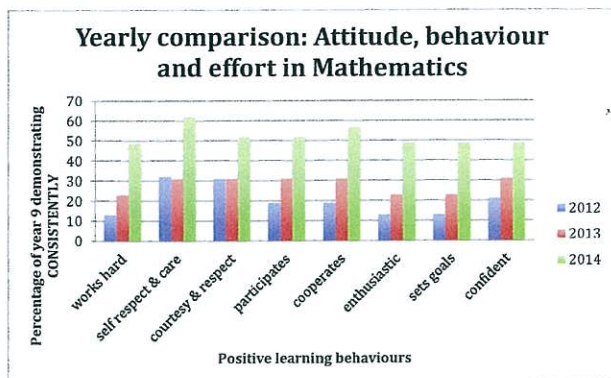
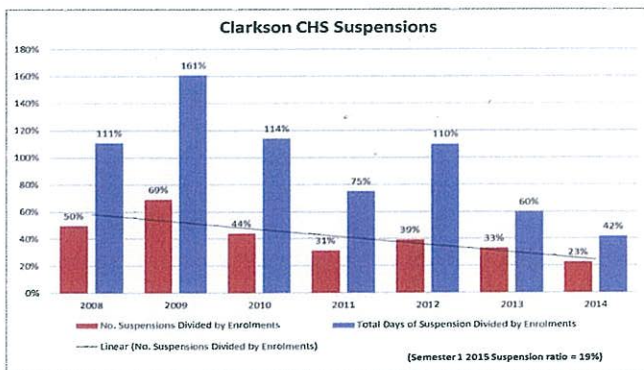
'We could simply raise the school beginning and leaving ages, but that would trap many students who do not

want to be there in a cycle of proving to them why schools are not inviting places. Or, we could start our debates about how to make schools inviting places to be - and that involves the fundamentals of Invitational Learning.'

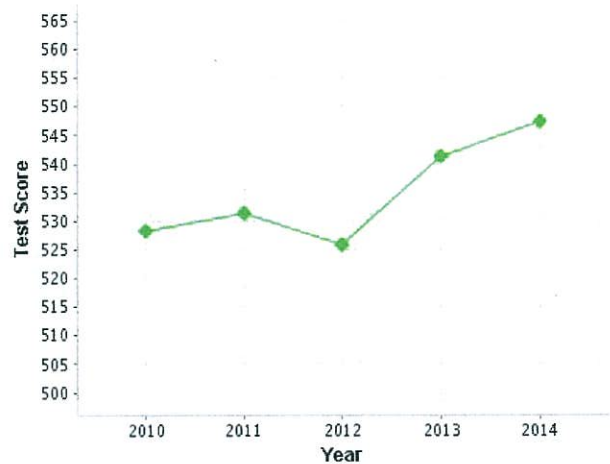
In their book, *Inviting school success*, Purkey and Novak articulated four types of teacher behaviours toward students, summarised as: intentionally disinventing; unintentionally disinventing; unintentionally inventing; and intentionally inventing. Everyone functions at each level from time to time, but it is the level at which one typically functions that determines one's approach to life and one's success in personal and professional living. Invitational Education practice is centred on awareness of teachers being inviting to students at all times and embodying the five propositions trust, respect, optimism, care and intentionality.

As a consequence of embedding of Invitational Education principles into school policies at Clarkson CHS in 2012, there is a clear upward trend in student engagement and a corresponding consistent downward trend in student suspensions.

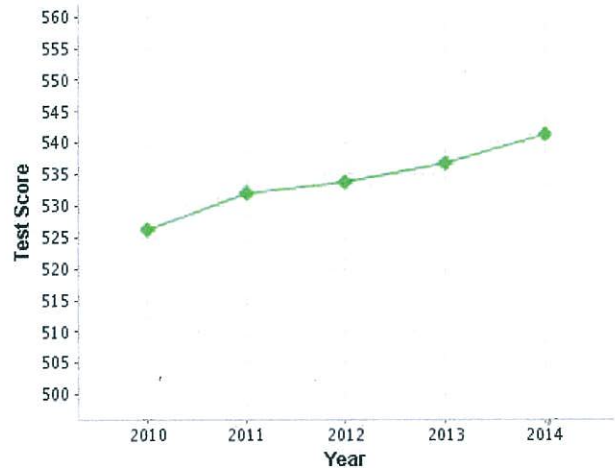
School disciplinary climate is an essential aspect when it comes to mediating school compositional effects. This graph is showing the length and number of suspensions and how our school has progressed. Red shows the number of students suspended and blue shows the



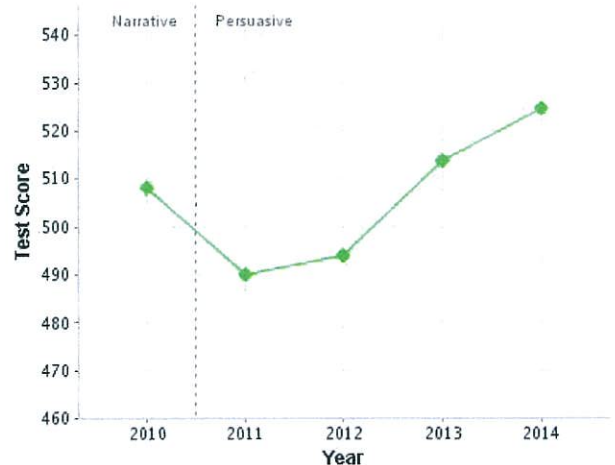
Year 9 Numeracy Average Test Score



Year 9 Reading Average Test Score



Year 9 Writing Average Test Score



number of suspension days. If each suspension was only one day, the blue and red would be equal. The line indicates a trend. This is calculated by Excel to show the pattern of averages.

Improvement in numeracy and literacy

A key focus at Clarkson has been to improve student interest and engagement in numeracy skills to foster improved academic outcomes. Changes have been made in the way students have been taught literacy and numeracy skills and there has been a much greater emphasis on Invitational Education practices. As part of reporting processes, teachers report on eight attributes of student behaviour, effort, achievement and attitude. In 2014 data, there are significantly more students consistently displaying positive learning behaviour in numeracy activities and this improvement in engagement is a direct result of Invitational Education practices at Clarkson CHS. Improvement in engagement and interest by students in class activities has fostered improvement in academic performance in state-wide numeracy testing over the same period, demonstrating that increased engagement in class results in improved academic outcomes.

Similar trends of engagement and consequent improvement in academic results are evident in the data for state-wide literacy testing over the same period.

It is clear that Invitational Education practices are fostering academic improvement at Clarkson CHS. Our next challenge is to refine and focus the ways we employ our starfish elements to drive school improvement and further support the needs our students.

Intentionality

A simplified common planning language for everyone in a school has never really been addressed as *intentionally* as it is in an Invitational Education framework. The simplicity of Invitational Education assists educators to become more skilful in their words and actions for the purpose of influencing a student's self-concept in positive ways. Invitational Education recognises that when people feel able, valuable, and responsible they take charge of their learning, put forth great effort, persevere, and make positive behavioural choices. This applies to everyone in the school, teachers and learners alike. William Purkey stated in correspondence in 2015:

'There is only one kind of motivation that exists in all life: to maintain, protect and enhance itself. Every human being is motivated. There is no such thing as an unmotivated person. The role of education is to determine in which direction the basic drive will take. The vehicle is running, we set out the stop and go signs and direct traffic. This is tremendously freeing, it saves us from trying to be gods...'

We at Clarkson CHS are not alone in our intention to drive school improvement. In recent times in Australia there have been significant supports provided for educators to refine their practice. Examples include the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL); National Professional Standards (NPS); the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER); National School Improvement Tool (NSIT); and introduction of the Australian Curriculum.

What makes Clarkson CHS different is the intentionality of the way we have made meaning of these frameworks by viewing them through the lens of Invitational Leadership theory and in this way we have been able to see a coherent theory of practice and, simultaneously, a language of transformation that centres on inviting students to learn. In reference to the intentionality of Invitational Education as a guiding theory, a common language of improvement, and a practical means to accomplish its stated purpose, Executive Director Joan Fretz, Chair of the International Alliance for Invitational Education (IAIE) stated in correspondence in 2015:

'While it appears simple at first glance, it is really quite profound in its foundations and impact on school success. Invitational Education is the only approach to transforming schools that focuses on the nurturing of self-concept. It helps school adults become more skilful in their words and actions, for the purpose of influencing self-concept in positive ways.'

Future directions

We at Clarkson CHS are still at an early stage in implementing Invitational Education and are still refining our methodology. What is clear at this implementation stage, however, is that the underlying concepts and practices of Invitational Education are very effective in driving school improvement. Data analysis supports our observations that students are more engaged and more interested in learning in an Invitational Education environment. As a result of his innovative work developing and implementing Invitational Education in Western Australia, John Young, Principal of Clarkson CHS, has been invited to participate in an international Invitational Education conference in New York in 2015 and we are looking forward to sharing the experiences and successes of other schools around the world to continue to develop our Invitational Education practices.

** The full set of references provided with this article is available from the author.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr John Young is principal of Clarkson Community High School, in Perth, WA. He can be contacted by email at: John.Young@education.wa.edu.au.