

in alliance



in this issue

Communication: Strategies that work

Tracy Nowri and students

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of Girls' Schools**

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**in Alliance 2006
Editorial Deadlines**

VOLUME 34

Friday 7 April 2006
Developing Financial Literacy

VOLUME 35

Friday 28 July 2006
Educating Girls for their Future

VOLUME 36

Friday 20 October 2006
Girls and Sport

The Editor would be grateful for any articles or photographs for forthcoming editions. Please forward these to Jan Butler at jan.butler@internode.on.net

From the President...

Beth Blackwood



Saturday morning and the luxury of a few hours to read the paper. My state of equilibrium is, however, quickly disturbed by headlines proclaiming that women lack the evolutionary genetic intelligence to master the highest strata of mathematics and hard sciences. The article drew my attention, but not the verbal outrage or hostility anticipated by my husband who thinks that age must have either mellowed or wearied me!

It was the age-old nature versus nurture debate reignited by Charles Murray. Murray's argument, based on evolutionary biology is that men have developed elevated 3D visuospatial skills that account for their supremacy in scientific and mathematical endeavours. "In primitive societies, men did the hunting, which often took them far from home. Males with the ability to recognise landscapes from different orientations... had a survival advantage."

The calm with which I approached the article reflects, in part, that I have moved beyond the heady days of my youth and the "anything you can do I can do better" mantra of my early feminist days. I am much more accepting of the assumption that there are innate differences between genders. The field of neuroscience, and particularly magnetic-resonance imaging has provided interesting insights into gender pre-dispositions and educationalists such as Dr JoAnn Deak have written much on the implications of such research for the classroom.

Inevitably the nature versus nurture debate concludes with the reality that we are a complex interaction of both factors and that opportunities, motivations and other environmental factors will moderate significantly any genetic potential we may be given. We probably all have young girls in our Schools with significant achievements at the highest levels in Science and Mathematics and of course

there are as many differences within each gender as across genders.

Murray also concedes that women have their own cognitive advantages over men. As gatherers in primitive societies "women gained an elevated ability for verbal fluency and interpersonal skills". I'm happy to accept that women seem to have a predisposition for language and communication! However as we know, having that advantage and "using our voice" are very different matters. (See article *Finding her voice* on page 9.)

Other articles in this edition of *in Alliance* reflect on the changing nature of communication in our contemporary society. I wonder what impact MSN, e-mail, text messaging and Internet will have on our communication and interpersonal strengths? Are there gender biases in the use of such technologies? Having sons with flexible fingers suggests not!

I wonder what Murray's evolutionary theory would predict for womankind in the future? My optimism is that such technologies will transform and increase communication across a global network, strengthening our inter-connectedness and common humanity.

However, I'm not waiting to find out. I'm too engaged in educating girls to be leaders in whatever field they choose, be that communication, motherhood, mathematics and/or science!

Beth Blackwood
Beth Blackwood

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- Herrnstein, R. J. and Murray, C., (1994). *The Bell Curve*. New York. The Free Press.
- Lusetch, R. *Sex and the Brain*. The Australian. 1 October 2005
- Murray, C. *The Inequality Taboo*. Commentary Magazine, New York. September 2005.

Australian Research on Mobile Phones

The *Kids are calling* section of the *McNair Ingenuity Research Australian Kids Consumer Insights* (April 2003) reported on children's use of mobile phones. The summary results of the survey were that:

- One in four children aged from six to 13 now have a mobile phone.
- More than 90 per cent of children aged from six to nine have used a mobile phone, usually one belonging to their parents.
- As children get older more of their friends have mobile phones which the children sometimes use, and over a third of children aged from 10 to 13 have their own mobile phone.
- Young girls are more likely to use a mobile phone than boys of the same age, and are significantly more likely to have their own mobile phone.

http://www.dcita.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/25202/Social_Impact_MPs-info_sourcesApril1205.doc

From the Editor...

Jan Butler



The theme of this edition of *in Alliance* is *Communication: Strategies that work*. Our lives have changed dramatically over the last few short years, as we now use the internet to make travel bookings, plan a wedding, organise a conference or a host of other activities. We also use it to communicate with friends and colleagues, using email and online discussion groups. We can keep in close touch with our colleagues in other countries, sharing news and ideas.

We still seem, however, to have many problems making sure that the chain of communication is working effectively. As someone whose job is to communicate regularly with people in different states and countries, I grapple with how to make sure that those who need the information I have are the ones who receive it. Email makes it easy to forward a message on to the appropriate person, but do we always know who that person is? We need good systems in place to ensure that messages are forwarded to the people who need them without creating email overload. As usual, the technology is brilliant but needs good people strategies to make it work.

Mobile phones, now owned by a large percentage of our students, are also helping us to be more connected, but at the same time are changing our whole language of communication. Perhaps one of the most challenging tasks for us as educators is to help our students understand how to use these new communication tools effectively, safely and appropriately.

In this issue, we profile two students from **Epsom Girls Grammar School** who have shown outstanding ability to communicate their interests and goals for the future. An article on **using online groups** may help you start to use the Internet in new and different ways with your classes and the groups of people with whom you communicate. Lynn Broadway, Director of Learning at **Melbourne Girls Grammar School** has written about an innovative program for Year 9 students linking with a school in England. This sets the scene for global communication between the two schools and provides 'the basis for a rich tapestry of cross-cultural learning and understanding'. In an article by Linda Evans, Head of Senior School, **Fairholme College**, we are reminded of the importance of 'listening to hear'. Flo Kearney of **Ipswich Girls' Grammar School** has given us some insights into their crisis communications after their devastating school fire and Timmee Grinham from **Ruyton Girls' School** shares their very successful day with scenario learning for Year 10 and Year 11 Humanities students. Another article relating to public speaking describes a visit by Tracy Nowri who highlights a dilemma experienced by many girls and suggests some ways to solve it.

Jan Butler
Jan Butler

MEMBER SURVEY – Some Early Comments and a new Communication Group

The Alliance now has 119 member schools. Thank you to those who have renewed your membership promptly, and also to those 28 members who have returned the Member Survey. We need this information to ensure that we are meeting your needs. We also welcome new members: All Hallows' School in Queensland, Kelston Girls' College in New Zealand, Mitcham Girls' High School in South Australia and Frensham in New South Wales. We hope you will find your membership of the Alliance rewarding.

Some early analysis of the survey responses indicates that many value the role of the Alliance in publicising research about girls' education. Another aspect which was often cited as being important was the ability of the Alliance to act as a lobby for girls schools, particularly in the light of current activity on the part of some co-ed schools. Some have suggested improving communication between the members by initiating discussion groups, and what better time to begin this than in a magazine whose theme is Communication!

An online forum is now available on the EdNA groups web site, called 'AGSA Members'. This will be available to any of you who wish to register. Just go to www.edna.edu.au, click on Go to EdNA Groups in the drop down box under EdNA Groups and Communities. In the top right hand corner you will need to click on **Register** and enter your details in the form. You will then be able to login and find the group called 'AGSA Members'. To join this group you will first need to enter the key which is *agsamembers*.

If you haven't participated in an online discussion before, now is a good time to start. There will be different topics of discussion which you can read and respond to or you can simply follow the discussion without becoming involved. You can even have the replies sent to your email box so you don't need to access the web site to follow a particular discussion thread. You may also start your own discussion topic if you wish.

If you have any problems accessing or using the forum, please don't hesitate to contact the editor, Jan Butler, on 07 3488 2686 or jan.butler@internode.on.net. Let's make this communication work!

FOR YOUR DIARY

18-22 January 2006 The Alliance of Girls' Schools Annual Student Leadership Conference, Melbourne Girls Grammar School and St Catherine's School, Toorak, Victoria, Australia (registrations have now closed)

9-11 June 2006 The Alliance of Girls' Schools Annual Conference, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia (email jan.butler@internode.on.net if you wish to be added to the email list for information about this conference)

25-28 June 2006 NCGS Annual Conference, Winsor School, Boston, Massachusetts, US (www.ngcs.org)

FOR YOUR DIARY

Communication in a crisis

Flo Kearney, Principal, Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, Ipswich Junior Grammar School



It seemed ironic – a week after a fire burned down our senior classroom block and three of our science labs earlier this year, our Marketing and Communications Manager was still fielding media calls during an AISQ seminar on crisis communication and reputation management.

It was interesting to combine our first hand experience with the information provided at the Seminar, and to reflect on the actions we had taken in communicating with our stakeholders.

Our School is fortunate to have an experienced team who worked collaboratively to manage the situation with which we were faced. In my role as Head of Senior School at Clayfield College and in other executive positions I have held I had gained considerable knowledge about, and appreciation for, the communication channels that needed to be activated in a crisis but I had not expected to put them into practice in my first year as Principal at Ipswich Girls' Grammar School and Ipswich Junior Grammar School. I acknowledge the advice and actions of my colleagues with whom I have worked in the past, and from whom I have learned so much about managing communication in a crisis.

We have received positive feedback from our School community and beyond, complimenting us on how we have handled the fire crisis, including how we have communicated the facts and our feelings about what happened. In our Senior Executive and general staff debriefing sessions we have identified where we were effective, where we could have done it better, and the issues that need to be addressed so that we can be better prepared should we face another major unexpected event.

Here are some of the factors that worked for us and/or we believe we need to strengthen to ensure that communication is effective and efficient in such circumstances.

1. Crisis communication plan

This is not the same as an evacuation plan or a fire drill plan, although these plans should include a media and parent communication process within them. This includes what needs to be communicated, to whom and which channels to employ.

2. Staff contact numbers

In a crisis, key people have to be contacted and with today's technology this should be easy. It is a good idea to have all the contact numbers of key personnel stored in the mobile phone directories of the Senior Executive team.

3. Managing the media

Many Principals and other senior staff undertake media training, but while you are speaking on camera, other capable staff are needed to undertake such responsibilities as scouting for and coordinating the other media representatives; keeping the media informed, placated and away from unsuspecting students; developing, typing up and updating the factual statements for release to ensure the School's image and integrity are not compromised. For us, protecting the privacy and dignity of students and staff was paramount.

“We found ways to turn the crisis into an opportunity to highlight our strongest attributes – school spirit, community involvement, staff dedication and professionalism, counselling and support – to counteract any negativity that might have stemmed from being sensationalised by the media.”

4. Website

In the five days including and following the fire, there were 1,048 hits on our website home page. 630 went on to visit our News & Events section. The increase of 85% for views of the News & Events page indicates that internet communication was highly utilised to seek information about the fire.

Because we manage our website content in-house we were able to post information immediately and provide regular updates. We sent a letter home to parents on the first school day after the fire and provided updates in the School Bulletin. Paper communication is important but it cannot

compare with the speed and convenience of today's internet services. Our School might be 113 years old, but members of our School community expect us to use contemporary modes of communication, especially when something major is happening.

5. Stick to the facts

When a crisis involves a crime scene it is especially important that only appropriate spokespersons have the authority to speak on behalf of the school. Three juvenile males were charged with arson in relation to the fire at our School. That is a fact. Who they were and why they did it is speculation. We have had to be extremely careful about any comments made by staff and students so that we cannot be accused of trying to influence a miscarriage of justice. In all our communications we have kept to the consistent facts of the matter to reduce the risk of compromising the School in any way.

6. Promote the positives

In a crisis, we can be victims or we can be champions in the face of adversity. When the school and local community are reeling from the shock of the physical events, hope and comfort can be offered in the form of leadership, a forward focus, and decisive action. We found ways to turn the crisis into an opportunity to

highlight our strongest attributes – school spirit, community involvement, staff dedication and professionalism, counselling and support – to counteract any negativity that might have stemmed from being sensationalised by the media.

Until 27 August this year, nothing like the Block 9 fire had happened to our School community before. Nothing, it seems, could have prepared us adequately for what we had to deal with over that weekend and the past few months. However, with this experience we now have some idea of what needs to be done and how well we might respond in similar circumstances. Our communication plan played a significant part in managing this crisis.

I am very proud of how our School community has coped with this 'setback'. I am especially proud of our staff who unconditionally contributed to a team effort that ensured our communication was accessible and appropriate on every level to every one of our stakeholders.

Have you tried to communicate by blogging yet?

A web log ('blog') has been created for those interested in the Alliance Conference to share ideas and comments leading up to and after the conference. It can be found at www.agsconfbne2006.blogspot.com. Regular posts will provide updated information about the conference as it comes to hand.

Students who are registered for the Student Leadership Conference will also find a blog for them at www.agsa-student-leadership-conference.blogspot.com. This will enable the girls to communicate before and after the conference. Also those who missed the deadline to register and have not been able to be accommodated will be able to exchange comments with their colleagues in other schools.

More about Mobile Phones...

In a school for the deaf in Bangkok

In Bangkok, at a school for the deaf, the students are encouraged to bring their mobile phones to school and they can use SMS text messages to communicate.

"In this strikingly silent school, where bells don't ring and students chat with their hands in the hallways, students are to be seen busily using their thumbs to speak to friends, teachers and their families."

Without mobile phones, they could not communicate unless they were standing right in front of each other. In the classroom, the mobile phones are less important, because they are standing face to face, and they can communicate in sign language. But outside the classroom, the phones facilitate other communication between teachers and students.

Students send text messages to teachers to discuss their homework, or to ask what they should bring for school activities. Text messaging has also proved an effective

substitute for calling out someone's name. It has also been useful for finding a student in the school: instead of walking through the whole school to find someone, a teacher can just send a text message.

Thanaporn Promyamyai, Bangkok. June 10, 2005, AFP.
<http://www.theage.com.au/news/Technology/Mobiles-ring-at-school-for-the-deaf/2005/06/09/1118123949262.html>

At University

Louise Horstmanshof of the Griffith Institute for Higher Education at Griffith University, in *Using SMS as a way of providing connection and community for first year students*, showed that mobile phones offer one means of meeting the challenge of providing for frequent and meaningful interaction amongst students and staff in an environment where students and casual academic staff are spending less time on campus as a result of busy and complex lives.

<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/perth04/procs/horstmanshof.html>
(viewed March 2005)



Using online groups to enhance communication

Jan Butler, Executive Officer, The Alliance of Girls' Schools

Online groups provide an opportunity for anyone who is involved in a committee or working with a group of students to use free facilities to

- store their files eg minutes of meetings, assignments or photos
- set up a calendar
- arrange chat sessions which are only accessible to the members of the group
- use online discussion groups
- create hyperlinks to web sites of interest to the group

There are many groups available on the internet, and each offers different features, but the ones I have made use of are **EdNA Groups** and **Yahoo Groups**.

The advantage of **EdNA Groups** is that it is available free to education groups and has no advertising. It does not, however, have the sophistication of **Yahoo Groups** with respect to its calendar and files, where it is possible to upload files and add events to the calendar and at the same time set an automatic message to the members of the group. In the case of the Calendar, it is possible to have messages sent at intervals, eg a week before the event and the day before the event, and whenever a file is uploaded, a message can be sent notifying the members that this has happened and providing a link in the email to the file. **EdNA Groups** provides a discussion forum which is not available on the **Yahoo Groups** site.

Some examples of how one might use an online group follow.

A Prefect Group

All the prefects are subscribed to the group. They can give it any name they like which uniquely identifies the group eg **MySchoolPrefects**. Any email message sent to **MySchoolPrefects@yahoo.com** will go to all members of the group, unless they have requested to receive only daily or weekly digests, or they may even reject email and visit the web site to read the messages which appear there under Messages. This option is not to be recommended, however, as it is easy to forget to visit the site, and communication is more likely to happen if members are encouraged to check their emails regularly.

Their meetings are entered in the calendar, with details of time, venue, agenda. Each prefect receives the reminder emails before

the meeting. After the meeting, the minutes are uploaded to the Files. An email is automatically sent to each girl notifying them that the minutes are there, and providing a link to the file in the email.

They want to have a meeting to decide on the date for the Formal, but it is impossible to get everyone together at once because some have debating, some have sport, others... you know what it is like. So the prefect designated as the web person creates a Poll on **Yahoo Groups**, giving a selection of possible dates for the prefects to choose from and a deadline for voting. The girls go online in their own time and choose a date, and the results are automatically counted and sent to each member of the group.

After the Formal and after any function they have organised, they upload their pictures, so they can all choose which ones will go in the school yearbook. Any member of the group can be given access to the uploading of files and pictures, or not, as desired.

A group of language teachers from different schools around Australia (or around the world)

Each member can add useful links on the group site, and can share their resources by uploading them to the files section. The email discussion list can be invaluable for sharing ideas and asking questions.

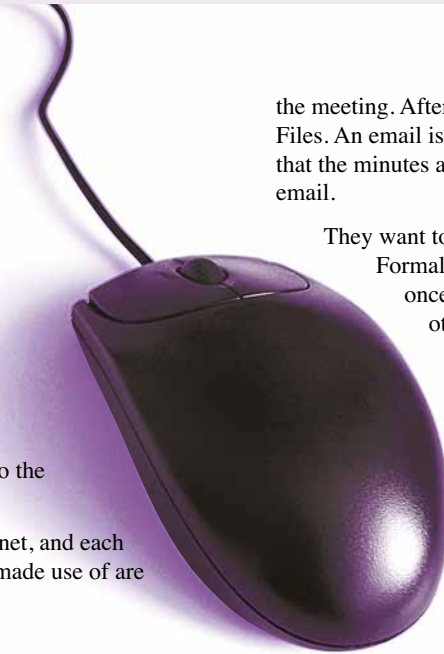
A Class Group

All the assignments can be uploaded as they are created by the teacher. Deadlines can be entered in the calendar. When a student is away, they can go to the site and download any work they have missed. They can even do this at home on their sick bed! In fact they can even chat online to their classmates and the teacher from home.

A Conference Planning Committee

All minutes of meetings can be stored and therefore all decisions made can be easily retrieved. The Calendar reminds members of their meeting dates and other deadlines. All email communication is always available on the site so that the information is able to be used by the committee for the next conference as it is all in one place rather than in odd folders in someone's office. Importantly, the most current version of a document is stored on the website, able to be accessed at any time and anywhere (even while on leave) by members of the group.

"...to be able to upload documents and store them in one place means they are always backed up, and everyone has access to the latest versions of the documents. No more tedious printing, copying, and putting in multiple pigeonholes."



Why communicate online? How can this help communication? What's wrong with actually talking to each other face to face?

Discussions can be archived and stored for future reference; the group discussion can take place over a longer period of time and participants can contribute at a time that suits them. Many people prefer the opportunity to write down their thoughts after due consideration rather than having to speak up quickly in a face to face conversation. The chat facility allows synchronous communication (all participants being there at the same time) but has the advantage that the comments can be stored if required. With a web cam and a microphone, it is even possible to add audio and video to the online chats.

If the group members are in different places, then it is obviously an advantage and better than posting or telephoning, both for speed and for the facility of one place storage of documents and accessibility to all.

Even within a school, though, to be able to upload documents and store them in one place means they are always backed up, and everyone has access to the latest versions of the documents. No more tedious printing, copying, and putting in multiple pigeonholes.

In the class situation, some students appreciate the value of being able to have access to the teacher, to be able to email them with questions at any time and to get individual feedback. For the teacher to have all documents online means no more photocopying just one more assignment that a student has lost, or missed due to absence. And it is a record of the entire course that is there for the next year, to be easily updated.

Of course talking face to face is important, and it is good if there are many opportunities for this to happen, but it is not always easy to find meeting times which suit everyone. For those separated by distance - different schools, different states, different countries - online groups can be a valuable tool for communication.

Check out some groups and see how they work



Here are some that are public and will allow you to browse to see what a group can offer.

2005 Networks Community Forum

<http://www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/index.php>
(accessed by clicking on Vocational Education and Training)

Learning Through Fun & Games in Higher Education

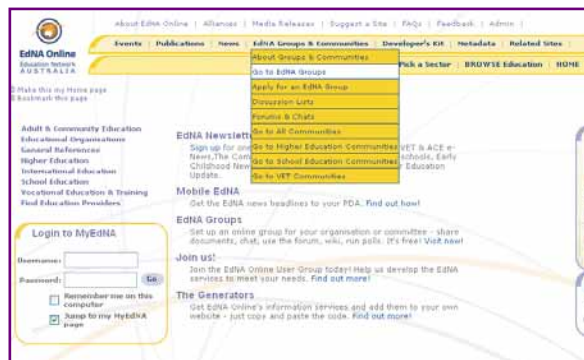
<http://www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/view.php?id=175>
(accessed by clicking on Higher Education)



If you want to try creating a group, use **Yahoo Groups** to do one first for your family or friends – share your photos or create an online discussion about a topic of interest to you all. Find out how easy it is. Then you can progress to one with your class or your colleagues. It's a fun way of communicating!



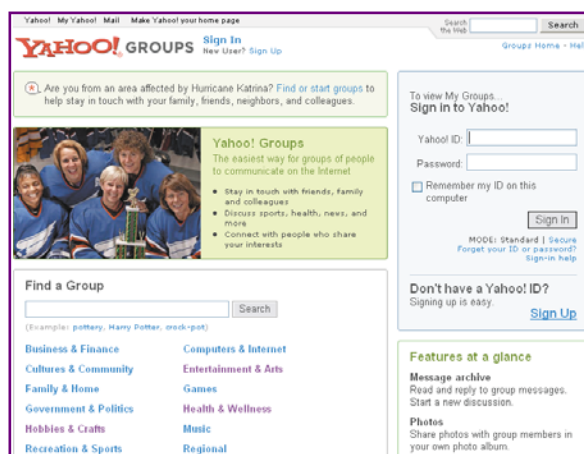
To visit **EdNA Groups** go to www.edna.edu.au and click on the **EdNA Groups and Communities** tag.



Click on **Login** and follow the instructions to register as a new user:



To visit **Yahoo Groups**, go to www.yahogroups.com



In each case it is necessary to register. It is a little more complex to do this on **Yahoo Groups** as one has to create a yahoo ID and follow instructions to link the yahoo ID with an email address and the group. If you are a new yahoo user, click on **New User? Sign Up** and follow the instructions to register.

To create and participate in an **EdNA group**, one must apply before being accepted, but this happens quite quickly. It is possible to go to each of these sites and browse the groups that are there, although only those that have made themselves public will be accessible.

Building links across the miles

Lynn Broadway, Director of Learning, Melbourne Girls Grammar

The Concept

The world looks different when you have seen it from Stonehenge... or from anywhere else that is not your home...

In 2002, Melbourne Girls Grammar (MGGS) set out to establish a link with an English school with a view to commencing an exchange program for a small number of students in Year 9. It was felt that at Year 9, many students are looking for new challenges and opportunities to develop skills in independence and decision making, and all are fascinated by the lure of travel. Although these students are only 14 or 15 years of age, we felt that students would relish the chance to venture to another English-speaking country and make new friends 'across the miles'. We felt that a single-sex school for girls would be most appropriate to minimise the adjustments necessary to feel comfortable quickly in a new environment. With this in mind, a reconnaissance tour of several possible schools was arranged.

After a careful tour of a number of independent boarding schools in England, The Godolphin School in Salisbury, a single-sex school of around 450 pupils was selected because it was deemed to be the most like MGGS in both atmosphere and culture.

Salisbury is a Norman walled city with a 13th Century cathedral and is a 30 minute drive from Stonehenge. The Godolphin School is nearly 300 years old and has a fine reputation in the education of girls from Salisbury and the surrounding region. The Principal was most willing to explore the concept of an exchange and the planning began. Our discussions led to the conclusion that the UK students should travel to Melbourne for our first (summer) term for a 10 week stay and then the Australian girls would go to Salisbury during the second term (or final UK term) for another dose of summer.

Year 8 students in both countries were briefed about the opportunity for the exchange and invited to apply. This was not to be a scholarship but an arrangement to allow the exchange of two students at a time between one school and the other. The schools undertook to supply the requisite uniforms and books, but all other expenses for travel would be the responsibility of the students' parents. Following the submission of written applications, there was a series of interviews with the student applicants and then a short list was created.

As the exchange process involved hosting a student from the other

Stonehenge



The Godolphin School



country as well as allowing one's daughter to travel away from home for 10 weeks, we sought to interview the parents of the students to discuss the finer details and responsibilities of the exchange program. Feedback was also sought from the teaching staff to ensure that the students we sent were considered able to cope with the challenges of a disruption to their courses as well as the emotional challenges of an exchange.

In our selection process, we sought to select mature students with sound social skills and a good work ethic, as well as girls who have not had opportunities for extensive travel or numerous trips to England. The support of the parents is crucial in allowing the girls to be independent and take risks in a safe and structured way.

We have just completed our third year of this exchange program and we have been delighted with its success. The length of

the visit has enabled students to take a full role in school productions and sporting teams at school, as well as travel with their host families for extended weekends and Easter holidays. They have travelled as "unaccompanied minors", handled their own packing, banking, laundry and managed their workloads. MGGS has benefited greatly from welcoming the English students into the school and they have made many friends and connections beyond their host families. MGGS students return with greater self-confidence, a wonderful appreciation of the rich culture and history of England and many fond memories of friendships. Students have continued to travel in both directions as a result of the acquaintances made.

Communications between our two schools are largely via email and telephone. Time differences make it difficult to link up in 'real time' but there are windows of opportunity at the beginning and end of each day. However, these organisational communications are miniscule compared to the number of emails, letters and calls; not to mention visits and return visits that have been generated between students in the wider communities of both schools since the program commenced.

Our links with The Godolphin School also include the exchange of GAP students at the end of their school years and we are looking to broaden the relationship further by exploring the opportunities for staff exchanges as well. Such a relationship has provided the basis for a rich tapestry of cross-cultural learning and understanding and we look forward to watching this flourish as the years roll by.



LEFT: Godolphin, MGGS and GAP students with Godolphin School Coordinator, Sarah Eggleton

Finding her voice

A review of Tracy Nowski's contribution to this year's National Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference in Nashville, Tennessee

Tracy Nowski was a speaker and facilitator of the Youth Forum at this year's National Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. A graduate of St Clement's School, Toronto, she is currently an undergraduate student at Harvard University focusing on Women, Gender and Sexuality. An accomplished public speaker and debater with three World Championships to prove it, she is committed to increasing women's proficiency in oration by teaching girls public speaking in a manner that is specifically geared to the needs of female speakers.

Nowski has just spent her summer vacation in Australia in a GAP style placement at Pymble Ladies' College, Sydney. That fortuitous arrangement permitted others who had heard her speak in Nashville to access her time whilst in Australia. She came to Perth for a week, spending time speaking and conducting workshops for girls and staff of a number of Alliance schools on public speaking. The following extracts are taken from some of the material she used in her workshops as well as from a booklet, *Finding Her Voice: Teaching Girls Effective Public Speaking Skills* written for the Department of English at Pymble Ladies' College.

"Like most things in life, public speaking is a gendered experience – that is, something that is experienced differently depending on your gender; as such, girls have a particular and unique relationship to public speaking that usually goes unacknowledged and is generally misunderstood. The charismatic speakers who command large audiences, who deliver important messages to the nation and the world, are rarely women. Oration continues to be a male domain and in assuming the role of speaker men are given a degree of credibility and power. As a result, women and men alike do not have a framework within which to understand woman as commanding, authoritative speakers. This generates a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts where-in girls do not internalise 'public speaker' as one of their gender roles, and as such go on to speak in public at highly infrequent rates". This, states Nowski, is highly ironic given girls' propensity for language skills in early years. "Study after study has found that it's not just that more women than men report anxiety associated with public speaking, but that the anxiety women experience is considerably more intense."

RIGHT: PLC Junior School students with Tracy Nowski



"Schools need to provide all girls with proper instruction in public speaking if they are to graduate with the skill to speak up and the confidence to speak out."

The Risky Nature of Public Speaking

The anxiety that men and women experience to varying degrees in relation to public speaking is by no means irrational. Public speaking inherently requires risk-taking because...

- You must make yourself vulnerable to an audience.
- Mental composition does not translate perfectly into oral articulation.
- It's like jumping out of an airplane and constructing your parachute on the way down.

The literature indicates that a disproportionate number of girls have an intense dislike for the ambiguity and uncertainty involved in risk-taking, which may serve to explain why women experience considerably more anxiety associated with public speaking.

The Problem

The vast majority of girls are not taught public speaking skills in a way that specifically addresses their needs as female speakers. This is compounded by:

- a) the gendered nature of public speaking – society has no context in which to understand and accept women as speakers
- b) the risk-aversion that prevails among women and girls.

The Consequence

Girls do not develop the skill to speak up and the confidence to speak out in their personal and professional lives, much to their own detriment and the detriment of society at large.

Best Practice

When public speaking is considered to be in the realm of the school's extracurricular program, it is taken to be "...a pursuit that provides an additional set of skills and experiences above and beyond the expectations of the core curriculum required of each student. Considering that all girls need to have proficient public speaking skills, these skills cannot be fostered only by those girls who choose to pursue them outside the classroom, so some girls are the specialised 'public

FINDING HER VOICE continues overleaf...

FINDING HER VOICE *continued...*



LEFT: Grace Edwards of PLC winning the WA Rostrum Voice of Youth Speaking Competition

speakers' or 'debaters' in the school and the rest are not. This is a dangerous dichotomy, as it leads to the majority of girls classifying themselves as people who don't speak in public.

Successful oratory education means that no student should be able to avoid it. Public speaking should be thought of

in the same vein as reading and writing. Schools need to provide all girls with proper instruction in public speaking if they are to graduate with the skill to speak up and the confidence to speak out.

Two steps in this process are:

- 1) Develop a 'culture of speaking' and
- 2) Tailor oratory instruction to address girls' risk aversion.

For the majority of girls and women, it is a fear of audience judgment that tends to paralyse them in front of an audience. Girls have a heightened awareness of the fact that when you're speaking to an audience, not everyone is agreeing with you and enjoying your talk. Girls internalise this as hurtful and humiliating criticism, leaving them frightened to stand and speak again. The potential for public rejection overwhelms many girls and women".

Nowski's response to this dilemma is to conduct all public speaking instruction within a framework that teaches girls to consider the audience a source of feedback that is constructive criticism about their skills as public speakers, not about them as people.

Was my introduction engaging? Did my rhetoric effectively persuade the audience? As opposed to: Did the audience like me?

Nowski also recommends strategies for anxiety management. "It is essential for educators to work with girls to encourage them to accommodate, accept and work with the unanticipated. Girls can be taught to conquer their anxiety by understanding the nervous energy they experience before speaking as excitement they can harness and use to their advantage – not apprehension that defeats them.

By addressing the specific issues that surround public speaking for girls – namely a fear of audience judgment and anxiety around risk-taking – and doing so starting as early as possible and with great consistency – girls will see public speaking as an exciting challenge with great potential to help them to have an impact on people and succeed in accomplishing their goals.

This is certainly not about teaching women to speak like men. Rather, it's about fostering girls who are confident speaking in their own unique voices. Girls' schools are an ideal place to start making the necessary pedagogical and social changes so we don't live in a world where men are the ones who speak, and women do little more than listen."

"Girls outshine boys in NCEA

School National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results released earlier this year by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>) show that girls have out-performed boys in every school subject and indicate a growing gap between girls' and boys' achievements.

In an article in the *Press* on 13 May 2005, it was suggested that children might be better off in single-sex schools because girls-only schools lead the way at all NCEA levels, gaining far higher pass rates than the national average. At level three, 66 percent of students at single-sex girls' schools passed, while only 49 percent of boys at boys-only schools passed.

Archana Selvakumar and Lara Rapson are two of a number of students the New Zealand Qualifications Authority is profiling to show how NCEA is working for secondary school students around New Zealand.

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/about/profiles/>



Archana Selvakumar

Archana is a Year 13 student at Epsom Girls Grammar in Auckland. She is headed towards a career in medicine and has chosen subjects over her last three years at secondary school that support this goal.

Having grown up with two doctors as parents I've grown to admire what they are capable of doing for people, the relationships they have with their patients, the amount of trust and faith involved and their sheer amount of knowledge. I can't even imagine how fulfilling it would be to be able to help another person to that extent. If six years of devotion and study can enable me to do that then that's what I want to do with my life.

What I'm studying

This year I'm taking biology, chemistry, physics, English and mathematics with calculus all at level 3. In year 11 I took the same subjects but I also took history, and Latin up to Year 12. I achieved highly in both years, gaining mostly excellences. In Year 11 I also ranked 12th nationwide in NCEA level 1. At present I am planning to sit Scholarship in biology, chemistry and English.

When I leave school I want to do either biomedical or health science with the intention of entering medical school to pursue a career as a doctor.

at every level”

What I love to study and what I don't

Biology is probably my favourite subject. It combines the hard facts of the other sciences and maths with the ambiguity of my other favourite subject, English. And besides that is the strong relationship between what we learn in bio and us as people and everything around us. My close second is English - I love language and the power of words, and then chemistry. If I had to choose a least favourite subject it would probably be maths. It is the opposite of biology in that it's so much more lofty and idealistic.

Preparing for internal and external assessments

Internal assessments are so much calmer and easier to concentrate on because you can focus on the one assessment and what you need to achieve for it. I normally go over what the assessment requires a while before and then practise writing it or doing questions close to it. If it's English or a biology report I almost always write it out fully beforehand to get used to the timing - if I'm organised, that is.

With external exams there's always a wide range of skills, topics and information you have to be on top of all at the same time. This means it's hard to devote your attention to a particular area without it being detrimental to another. However an upside of externals is that you often get more practice within school for them in the form of end-of-topic tests and school conducted mock exams.

When I'm not studying

I am a reciprocal reading tutor in a school learning support program, an avid debater and have been involved in speech competitions and Latin reading competitions over the years. This year I am the debating leader at Epsom Girls Grammar and coach a team as well. I'm on the Arts and Cultural Committee and am a student representative for the Ministry of Youth Development. Out of school I nurture a passion for South Indian classical dancing. I also play the Veena, a South Indian string instrument.



Lara Rapson

Lara is a Year 13 student at Epsom Girls Grammar in Auckland, studying for her level 3 NCEA. An award-winning student, Lara doesn't yet know what direction she wants to take once she leaves school, so she is keeping her NCEA programme broad to give herself as many options as possible.

I have thought long and hard about my future and what I plan to study at university but so far I have not found an 'ideal' career. Therefore my subject choices for this year are reasonably broad,

enabling me to keep my options open. Medicine, marketing and interior design are all paths that have captured my interest.

Whichever career I choose to pursue I only hope I succeed in it to the best of my abilities. Next year I have been accepted to go on a gap year to Brazil. This will give me more time to think before I jump into a degree I might regret doing.

What I'm studying

This year at level 3 NCEA, I am taking maths with calculus, chemistry, physics, modern art history and art painting, with a total of 114 credits available.

At NCEA level 1 I sat exams in English, maths, chemistry, physics, practical art, graphics, Japanese and physical health. In year 12, I studied graphics, art painting, English, chemistry, physics, physical health at NCEA level 2 and took Bursary maths. In year 11, I received the Gae Griffiths Prize for all-round excellence. I am planning to sit Scholarship exams in maths with calculus, chemistry and possibly physics.

What I love to study and what I don't

My favourite subject at school is art history. My teacher is really enthusiastic about the subject and I also find the material fascinating.

Art painting would probably be my least favourite subject this year, whereas last year it was one of my favourites. In Year 13 we have a lot more responsibilities in the school and I don't seem to have time to do the work up to excellence standard. It is a labour-intensive course, which has always required more effort from me than other subjects.

Preparing for internal and external assessment

I am prone to stress. When an internal assessment is coming up I always become more uptight. How I tackle it depends upon the subject. For art history, which I picked up this year, I made sure that I planned my time and did at least four drafts for an essay that was due. I always make sure I check my work over to avoid making silly mistakes. For exams I will normally start studying weeks in advance, at approximately the beginning of term 4. I find internals easier to cope with than exams. In exams there are too many subjects jostling for attention.

When I'm not studying

I enjoy jazz ballet and contemporary dance as well as squash outside of school. Within school I am the squash captain, Student Welfare Committee leader and part of the Challenge committee where another student and I run the reciprocal reading programme. As well as these leadership responsibilities, I am a member of the Green group, participated in Peer Tutoring last year and have recently completed my silver Duke of Edinburgh award.

In defence of scenario learning: Reflections on *Justicecountry*

In the current pedagogical orthodoxy, 'real world' and 'big questions' are phrases often heard. Recognition of these approaches has been accompanied by a proliferation of teaching that takes students into the community, getting them involved in practical activities as part of a real world experience.

My own belief is that, whether it is undertaking a letter writing or publicity campaign or taking students on an excursion to investigate their home city, attempts to make learning practical, catch the imagination and attention of students, provides an understanding and experience that endures.

A recent experience reminded me, however, of the benefits of a different approach, that of scenario learning. I believe that scenario learning can be a useful tool to enhance students' critical thinking processes, not least because it allows the teacher (or instructor) to tailor the parameters of the experience to fit the context, including time limits and abilities of students. It allows students to experience real-life decision-making using the efficiency of the classroom, and has more immediate outcomes than are often available when students engage in real world learning.

In August 2005, educational consultant, Leo Keegan conducted his all day Social Justice scenario, *Justicecountry*, with a group of Year 10 and 11 Humanities students at Ruyton Girls' School. He commenced the day with a presentation on the disparities in the distribution of income and wealth, globally and within Australia, asking students to reflect on the sustainability of such an uneven distribution. He informed them that, for the remainder of the day, they would be given the opportunity to run a simulated version of Australia, called *Justicecountry*. Working within the limitations of the parliamentary system, they would make their own decisions about income and wealth distribution. At the conclusion of the day, the state of *Justicecountry* would be entirely the product of their own efforts.

Students were allocated randomly to electorates, based not on geographic areas but income distribution, each electorate representing one tenth (one decile) of Australia's population according to income distribution. Those students allocated to the electorate containing the bottom ten percent of Australia's income distribution were asked to imagine what life might be like for this group that receives one percent of the nation's income, an average of \$77 per person per week. Students allocated to the other end of the income distribution scale were asked to reflect on the lives of those in the top ten percent of Australia's

income distribution, who receive thirty-two percent of the nation's income and control fifty percent of the nation's wealth.

Students formed political parties or coalitions according to what they thought would be the shared interest of their allocated electorates. Elections were held, with students taking seats in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Using parliamentary rules and a Constitution resembling Australia's own, students were asked to "run the country", proposing and voting on bills.

The result was one of which every teacher dreams. Students took charge of proceedings, demonstrated a capacity for empathy and leadership and passionately argued their own position. Several students willingly sacrificed their lunchbreak to "horse trade" with their opponents to try and strike a better deal. During a party 'caucus' discussing plans for a new income distribution bill, a student exclaimed, "This is so exciting!" There were walkouts, accusations and frustration at the limitations of the political process; while one group felt they were offering a 'fair compromise', their opponents were deeply offended by the apparent 'tokenism' of the offer. As many of the supervising teachers observed, it closely resembled the real world of political decision-making!

Since the event I have had time to reflect on what it was about the experience of *Justicecountry*, and more generally scenario learning itself, that could lead to such an outcome.

The benefits of scenario learning

The ability of the teacher or instructor to set the parameters of activity is a particular strength of scenario learning. Scenario learning allows the 'condensing' and 'chunking' of concepts that enhances student understanding by allowing them to engage with a real world problem in a way that is manageable and digestible at their level. In *Justicecountry*, this meant that students learnt about the Constitution and parliamentary process in a way that was applicable to the task at hand. And it seems to have had an effect. One participant observed that "I learn through thinking about actual experiences, watching and doing. I can now actually **visualise** how government works."

In addition, the limited time frame of *Justicecountry* meant that students could see actual outcomes at the conclusion of the day. This element makes the experience fundamentally different to other 'real world' learning where the available resources and material may be above the level of students,

"The result was one of which every teacher dreams. Students took charge of proceedings, demonstrated a capacity for empathy and leadership and passionately argued their own position."



Members, including the Prime Minister, being inducted into the House of Representatives.

Justicecountry at Ruyton Girls' School

Timmee Grinham, Humanities teacher, Ruyton Girls' School



and long delays may occur before outcomes are known.

Similarly, the immediacy of the experience, including the allocation of students to electorates with a vested interest in the outcome, enhanced the authenticity of the experience. The *Justicecountry* scenario allowed for significant student autonomy; the outcome was theirs and theirs alone. As one student observed, "I think that everyone who was involved had the opportunity to become really passionate about the issues we were facing, and it was great to feel that personal and group decisions could have a definite impact on the outcome of the day."

For any student, being asked to take on and represent a position outside their own experience is a challenge, often requiring extensive imagination and empathy. For students at a school like Ruyton, being assigned to the lowest two or three deciles was a radical departure from their own experience. When asked "What have you learnt about yourself", one student answered, "I am very privileged. Having been placed in the poorest electorate I now understand how easy I have had it and how hard others do."

The use of scenario learning, like *Justicecountry*, provides an activity that can engage students who have limited understanding of or interest in politics or academics. One supervising teacher observed that a student he had taught for much of the year had said more in the day than during the whole year to date in class!

Civics and Citizenship

Justicecountry in particular, and scenario learning in general, is an excellent way to promote Civics and Citizenship in schools. One of my favourite pieces of feedback from the day was an unsolicited letter that arrived in my pigeonhole several days after the event. Included with the enthusiastic praise for the event was the following statement:

"I think some people may see AC/DC (our middle school civics subject) as a compulsory chore, so it was invaluable to have similar information presented in an interesting and interactive format."

In response to the question, "What have you learnt about Australian society?" one student also observed: "Society is unfair but we can use the **democratic** system to change it."

Since Civics involves students learning about our political system, about rights and responsibilities as citizens and the working of



Members of the Liberty Party Caucus discussing a proposed bill

"In response to the question: 'What sort of society do you want to live in?' one student answered: 'One where help is given to the needy and the underprivileged; one which is more equal than the current one.'"

government, along with decision-making and leadership, and Citizenship involves participation in and awareness of the benefits, privileges and responsibilities of community life, this example of scenario learning seems to

exemplify the effective teaching of these objectives.

The scenario in *Justicecountry* could take the place of any formal lessons on Australia's political system and quite a good deal of any civics and citizenship subject. In a staff debriefing following the activity, Mr Keegan explained that he had initially developed *Justicecountry* as part of his regular teaching program, in the hope of inspiring interest in civic issues in a disengaged class of middle school students.

Values

In the light of the current media debate about values in education, reading the student reflections I was reminded of the crucial link between values education and *Justicecountry*. The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, released in May by Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson, sets out nine values for Australian schooling: care and compassion; doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility; and understanding, tolerance and inclusion.

While these values may seem uncontroversial, debate has arisen about attempts to impose values from above. A particular contribution of *Justicecountry* was its role in allowing students to come to their own conclusions about the values they hold as important. In response to the question: "What sort of society do you want to live in?" one student answered: "One where help is given to the needy and the underprivileged; one which is more equal than the current one."

As a teacher, what I appreciated most about the day was the level of energy, enthusiasm and engagement. The benefits of this style of learning are encapsulated in a simple, yet inspiring, observation of a student who was asked what she had learnt about herself. She replied, "I am more passionate than I thought." I felt this student had been given insight into herself that will stay with her for the rest of her life; that she may in fact be more passionate about issues than she ever knew was possible.

Communication strategies that work: Listening to hear

Linda Evans, Head of Senior School, Fairholme College

The newest computer can merely compound, at speed, the oldest problem in the relations between human beings, and in the end the communicator will be confronted with the old problem, of what to say and how to say it.

Edward Morrow

“What we say and how we say it” (and how effectively we listen to what is said and how it is delivered) reflects a great deal about what we value and how we view communication. The adage “good schools are based upon good relationships” is an easy one to endorse, philosophically. How that philosophy looks in practice is at the heart of school business. Without doubt good relationships are formed, maintained, and enhanced through quality communication. Susan Scott, author of *Fierce Conversations* states simply, “the conversation is the relationship”.

The first time I read these words I had to re-read them several times to appreciate the essence of the meaning. I interpreted them, rightly or wrongly, as indicating that the quality of our conversation determines the quality of our relationship. Good conversation requires one to listen, another to speak. If we never say more to colleagues than “How are you going?” never venture beyond, “Have you done your homework?” with students in our classrooms, or never manage more than “She’s doing well this year, isn’t she?” to our parents, then we are denying ourselves the possibility of deeper relationships. Furthermore, if we never listen, then we deny ourselves understanding and insight into the lives of others and in doing so, we devalue the relationship and we fail to communicate at a deeper level.

After all, fundamental to the ‘real’ conversation is its structure as a two-way enterprise involving both listening as well as speaking. Ernest Hemingway asserts, “When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.” Reflect on the way many conversations occur – the angry parent, the staff room chat, the discussion with a student who has lost her way ... how well do you listen? Are you merely not speaking out loud but speaking in your head, constructing a response? Are you just waiting your turn to speak? Or are you listening with ‘soft ears’, suspending judgment, focusing on the words, feelings and taking the time to hear? Do you listen to hear, or listen to tell? It’s an interesting distinction, but an important one if you wish to be an effective communicator. After all, it is as much about what you hear as it is about what you say. This notion is encapsulated in the words of Robert Greenleaf: “Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much.”

Of course you can ‘hear’ from many different positions. In simple terms you can adopt a first, second or third person approach and filter information through each of these perceptual positions. Each has its moment or place within a conversation. When a conflict needs to be resolved, then movement between perceptual positions increases the

likelihood of this. Non reconcilable conflicts occur when neither party will move beyond first person and thus never experience the conflict from the position of another (second position). Or, they refuse to look at the full picture from the ‘helicopter’ view afforded through third position.

It is not difficult to conjure up a scenario where the conflicting parties have become stuck in first person, fixated in their own despair, unwilling to imagine that anyone else has been affected, or certainly not as dramatically as they have. Inevitably, in such a scenario there is no effective resolution. Practise the skill of changing perceptual positions. Next time you find yourself in conflict, however minor, step back, even a little, from your own vantage point and experience things from another place. Restorative approaches to conflict resolution are built upon shifting perceptual positions. First person allows the victim and the perpetrator to express their feelings, second person requires that they see things through the eyes of another and finally, in reaching agreement or reparation, a third person holistic approach is adopted. These are skills for life and skills for healthy school communities.

These are skills that we would all do well to practise. As leaders within our schools, we have a responsibility to not only provide professional development activities that build these techniques but, more importantly to model these approaches in our daily practice. To truly listen, to abandon whatever else is holding our attention and to take time is one of the greatest gifts we can give another. When

was the last time you really listened to hear? Practise today. Real conversations involve both speaking and listening! The relationship is indeed strengthened by the nature of the conversation. It is a privilege to listen to hear, rather than to listen to tell.

A friend of mine recently received a text message, “I love your ears.” It wasn’t an anatomical compliment, rather a comment on her ability to listen, to suspend judgement, to shift perceptual positions and, I suspect, to communicate effectively through listening rather than speaking. Quite a skill!

“Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals.”

J. Ischam

A final note: Susan Scott’s book *Fierce Conversations* is recommended reading for any who need to step beyond the comfortable, to abandon platitudes and superficial niceties and move into the realm of the real conversation! (Don’t be put off by the title).

Reference

Scott, S. *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time*. Paperback, 2004



Guest speaker: Stephanie Dowrick

Maree Herrett, Head of Senior School, MLC School, Burwood

Alliance of Girls' Schools Meeting, NSW – 16 September 2005

Stephanie Dowrick, well-known writer and psychotherapist, was guest speaker at our last Alliance of Girls' Schools meeting, held at MLC School, on 16 September. Rather than follow our traditional format of such evenings where the guest speaker does a 'solo' presentation, followed by questions from the audience, this evening was essentially an extended conversation with Stephanie Dowrick, ably facilitated by Kate McKenzie, Head of Secondary School, Meriden.

We learnt a little about Stephanie's background and the formative influences on her, including the death of her mother when she was just eight years old. This understanding of the fragility of life, compounded by her own experience of breast cancer, has been pivotal in forming her priorities. She spoke to us about what is at the heart of our profession – nurturing our students through respect, support and honouring them for the complex individuals that they are.

School should be a place where students feel connected – not just with their peers but also with the adults in their environment.

Stephanie reminded us, through her own family anecdotes, about the difference that teachers can make in the lives of students. This is not restricted to academic achievement. When students really believe that a teacher knows them, they comment on it and remember it. This might simply be a matter of a teacher asking them about their interests, the latest game of sport they played or just remembering their name. It is the quality of relationships that matter and these are not reducible to the methods of the accountant so dominant in current educational discourse.

In a context where discussion of values in school is so politically charged, it was refreshing to hear Stephanie Dowrick re-frame the discussion rather than be limited by the existing parameters. In place of flagpoles and Simpson's Donkey, she spoke about the way we might understand family values in our age of diverse family types or what being Australian means in an age when multiculturalism is seen as unfashionable. She spoke about the dangers of using values as a political weapon to produce an enforced conformity. She stressed that respect means nothing unless intention leads to action.

The respect that Stephanie feels for the teaching profession was evident throughout the entire conversation. The dialogue between Stephanie, Kate and members of the audience also revealed the tensions we can feel between meeting the needs of our students and imposed political agendas. This sense of shared concern and critique is vital to our role as educators of young women and our session with Stephanie Dowrick provided us with a very special opportunity to sustain each other in our important work.

"School should be a place where students feel connected – not just with their peers but also with the adults in their environment."



Kitty Guerin (Principal of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta), Stephanie Dowrick, Barbara Stone (Principal of MLC School), Kate McKenzie (Head of Senior School, Meriden)



Stephanie Dowrick and Kate McKenzie

More Mobile Phone Stats...

From a survey for the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) in September 2005

"In 2004-05, the mobile phone penetration rate was 81% (or 16.2 million subscribers). It is estimated to exceed 94% (or almost 19 million subscribers) in 2005-06. Prepaid mobile customers are mainly driving the growth in subscriber numbers. About 70% of the growth in subscribers in 2004-05 came from customers who are choosing prepaids."

http://www.amta.org.au/amta/site/amta/downloads/pdfs_2005/AMTA%20Industry%20Report%20%20Exec%20Summary%202005.pdf

News from our US and UK colleagues

One of the benefits of being a member of the Alliance is that we have a close affiliation with our counterparts in the US and in the UK and can benefit from their research and resources on girls' education and expertise in the marketing of girls' schools.

News from the United States

www.ncgs.org

THE NATIONAL COALITION OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS

Alumnae Survey

The National Coalition of Girls' Schools, our US counterpart, has recently completed an Alumnae survey which collected information from 1018 girls (representing 61 schools) who graduated from an NCGS member school in 2004.

Although the data are not from Australia, the findings are of interest. Here is just one of the five points from the publication *At Girls' Schools*, produced as a result of the survey.

Girls enjoy not just equal opportunity, but every opportunity.

All the speakers, players, writers, singers and athletes are girls. All the doers and leaders are girls. Female mentors abound, whether faculty or fellow classmates. And that's the key to real achievement: positive role models, abundant opportunities, personal practice and real-life experience.

DATA: 85% of recent girls' school graduates say going to a girls' school *definitely* inspires a can-do attitude. Source: 2005 NCGS Alumnae Survey.

If you are interested in purchasing copies of this glossy publication, please email the Executive Officer of the Alliance for an order form.

From the NCGS Web site (www.ncgs.org)

**NCGS 2006 Annual Conference
Boston, Massachusetts, June 25th-28th, 2006**

Make plans to join us in Boston as the Winsor School hosts our next Annual Conference. This year's theme will be *The Right Stuff: Girls and Women as Pioneers and Pacesetters*. We're busy assembling a line-up of presenters, and will have more programming details to share with you in the weeks ahead.

Strategic Leadership Institute for Experienced Women Educators, October 2006, Location TBA

NCGS is proud to offer once again an innovative professional development opportunity in conjunction with the Simmons School of Management. This intensive, interactive program will help you strengthen your leadership practices, to think and act strategically, and position your school for success in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The Institute was offered first in November 2004. It will be offered again in the Fall of 2006. If you would like to receive program and application materials when they become available, enter your details in the online form at <http://www.ncgs.org/contact.php>.

News from the United Kingdom

www.gsa.uk.com



International Conference on Educating Girls

By the time you receive your copy of *in Alliance*, the first **International Conference on Educating Girls** will have been held in London, and some of you may have had the opportunity to attend.

From the conference publicity:

"Over the last half-century the increasingly prominent role of women in business, the professions, and politics has led to a questioning of old beliefs and ways of working. Our world will change as a result of more women being appointed to positions of leadership. The conference will explore how girls can be prepared to play their full part in shaping this new world.

The conference will focus on four key themes: Leadership and global citizenship; Finance, business and philanthropy; Science and technology; Health and well-being."

We will bring you news of this important conference in the next issue of *in Alliance*.