



# in Alliance

THE ALLIANCE OF GIRLS' SCHOOLS (AUSTRALASIA) LTD  
PO Box 296, MALVERN, VICTORIA 3144 AUSTRALIA

VOLUME 20  
AUGUST 2001

## *in Alliance*

*The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Ltd*

### **Executive Director:**

Edwina Sear

Tel: 03 9813 8916

Fax: 03 9886 9542

### **President:**

Ros Otzen

Korowa AGS, Vic

### **Executive:**

Beth Blackwood  
PLC, WA

Lesley Boston  
The MacRobertson  
Girls' High School, Vic

Carolyn Hauff  
Clayfield College, Qld

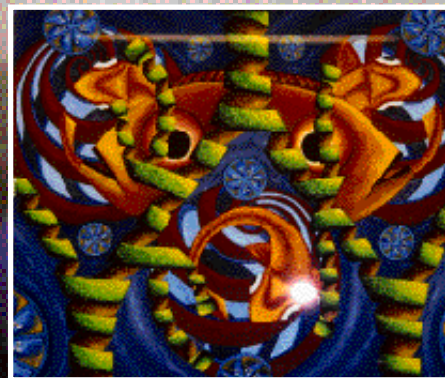
Nancy Hillier  
Annesley College, SA

Suzanne McChesney  
Seymour College, SA

Barbara Stone  
MLC, NSW

## *in this issue*

- *The Arts*
- *The Joint Conference  
'Equal and Different?'*



*Santa Maria College: visual arts journey*



*Clayfield College: Artbox Program*



*Queen Margaret College: designing dances*



*Seymour College: a balancing act*



## In Alliance Editorial Deadline 2001

Volume 21  
"The Sciences"  
Monday 15 October, 2001

Copy on the above  
topic for the relevant  
Volume is welcome  
and must be submitted  
to Dr Nancy Hillier  
at Annesley College or  
through  
principal@annesley.sa.edu.au  
by the above date.



## MR GRAHAM HILDER 24/8/1948 - 13/7/2001

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the untimely death of Graham Hilder of Calrossy School, Tamworth, NSW. Our sympathies to his wife Wendy and his family in their loss. Graham and Wendy were sadly missed at the Joint Conference which they were both to attend.

Mrs Elizabeth Jackson is currently guiding Calrossy through this difficult time as Acting Principal.

## FROM THE EDITOR...

... Alliance progress.



Since our last edition of *In Alliance*, there has been much activity.

The number of Alliance members has grown from 78 when Edwina took over in November 2000 to 88 today. We are looking forward to our membership growing further.

Negotiations are slowly being concluded for both the new website and for the research with The University of Melbourne and we look forward to further activity in these two fields.

As is stated later in this Edition, we were all saddened by the sudden death of Graham Hilder, a member of AGSA for many years and a strong proponent of girls' education. He will be sadly missed.

The Joint Conference has been held at The Southport School in conjunction with the International Boys' Schools Coalition (Australian Hub). I would like to thank Bruce Cook for hosting the conference in what can only be described as a magnificent campus. As the IBSC has no secretariat the running of this conference rested entirely with The Alliance. I would like to thank Carolyn Anderson, Principal of Ruyton Girls' School, for her leadership of the Steering Group Committee and for her many hours of preparation for the conference. Carolyn was assisted by the Steering Group Committee (Ms Lesley Boston, Mr Bruce Cook, Dr Ros Otzen, Dr Heather Schnagl, Mr Richard Tudor, Mr Michael Urwin and Mrs Sylvia Walton) together with our Executive Director, Edwina Sear. I am told that the email system from our AGSA office to Ruyton was almost deemed dedicated.

We were fortunate in the venue and support for the Joint Conference and to this was added an array of thought provoking and stimulating keynote speakers. You will find a synopsis of each of the presentations later in this Edition. I would like to thank Dr Ken Rowe,

Dr Jeannette Vos and Dr Paula Barrett for their roles in offering this inaugural Joint Conference topics which allowed both the boys' and girls' schools the opportunity to muse the topic 'Equal and Different?' together.

As a single gender education conference, bringing together boys' and girls' schools, we believe this is a world first, making the success of the conference more significant.

Our Discussion Forum presentations were equally thought provoking, catering for everyone.

With a combination of learning, stimulated discussion, fun and camaraderie an unforgettable and worthwhile conference was established.

As our year marches on, ever more quickly it would seem, we look to the Student Leadership Conference for 2002. I urge you all to move quickly in your registrations for this conference as reports continue to be received of the exceptional qualities and offerings of this particular conference.

We are all able to enjoy various aspects of The Arts programmes offered by our member schools in this edition of *In Alliance*. From painting and sculpture to costume design, dance, theatre and 'whodoneit' mysteries and theatre, we acclaim the offerings available to girls in their education today. Thank you to all those who have contributed to this 'Arts' Edition of *In Alliance*.

Our next edition will cover 'The Sciences'. Please note the date for submissions on this page.

To all I wish a healthy and serene conclusion to Term 3 and commencement of Term 4 and examinations.

Nancy Hillier



## EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENT

The Alliance has much pleasure in announcing the appointment of Mrs Carolyn Hauff, Principal of Clayfield College, to the Executive of the

Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Limited.

Carolyn Hauff is widely renowned for setting precedents and standards in education. As the first educator in the world to graduate from Harvard Business School's prestigious Owner/President Management Program, to building a multi-million dollar gymnasium through a joint venture with a

private company, Carolyn's enthusiasm and practical business sense is a touchstone to the entire learning environment at Clayfield College, where, among other firsts, students as young as four are being taught Edward de Bono's "six thinking hats" method of lateral thinking. By establishing a Senior Residential College (a first in Queensland) for senior girls to ensure their smooth transition from school life to university life to providing weekly boarding for local students, Carolyn has ensured that each student is developed to her full potential.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Stan Klan of Fairholme College for his service to The Alliance, serving on the Executive since 1998 and wish him well in his future endeavours of service to girls' education.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

... a multitude of thanks.



As our Editor has given a very thorough overview of the status of activity at the Joint Conference, 'Equal and Different?', I would like to focus on the background of the Conference.

My sincere thanks to Mrs Carolyn Anderson for her tireless role as Chair of the Steering Group Committee. It is true the servers at Korowa and Ruyton were busy sending and receiving many messages each day.

Our thanks also to the Committee Members (all named by Dr Hillier). It has been said that it is often not the mammoth items which make or break a conference but rather the simplest things, such as whether an extension cord is long enough. To have received the support we did from those who were in the background was the sum total of the success we all enjoyed.

The Southport School staff were both amenable and helpful. Special thanks must go to Mr Bruce Cook, Headmaster of The Southport School, to Mrs Noelle Cook, who sat for hours at the Registration desk and answered any and every question pertaining to The Southport School, to James Clark, always at the end of a mobile, who forever tweaked our requirements and to Elizabeth Logan, with whom I corresponded regularly prior to the conference and who was my liaison with The Southport School for all requests and necessities.

It is said an army marches on its stomach. Let me assure you that the delegates at the Joint Conference were thus. Breaks became glorious food explorations, thanks to the superb catering provided by SSL Education Services. SSL (which you will all know as Spotless) were generous to a fault with the provision of both the food and presentation at the conference. Who will ever forget the The Southport School Dining Hall, transformed from its magnificent but male oriented long tables and benches to the scene we enjoyed for our Opening Dinner? Our guest speaker Dr Frederick Sargent (alter ego Campbell McComas) was ably provided with a worthy venue. Having, as he did, delegates wiping away tears of laughter, Campbell finally unveiled his true self to a hugely appreciative audience. The tone and standard of our conference was set.

To the staff of SSL Education Services I wish to publicly thank them for magnificent service, generous sponsorship and their ability to carry out any request both efficiently and happily.

As the keynote speakers presented, delegates were keen to have copies of their notes. This was possible thanks to Océ Printers who also, along with SSL Education Services, produced our programme.

Following their arrival at the conference, many delegates were seen enjoying bags of chips and other 'wicked' delicacies as well as taking notes in ample notebooks. We thank LapTop Land for these and other items in the delegates' 'showbags'.

The Southport School provided much music for our entertainment, at the Opening, on the Clocktower lawns with pre dinner drinks and at the Chapel Service. Barry Walmsley, who is the Director of Music at The Southport School, is also the National Manager (Australia) of Trinity College London and we received sponsorship from Trinity also.

A little excitement was raised with a raffle draw for those who had registered prior to 20 July. The prize was a night's accommodation at The Gold Coast International Hotel which the hotel had given us. They also provided the red wine for the St Hilda's Seafood Smorgasbord on Saturday 4 August. Delegates who stayed at The Gold Coast International Hotel all enjoyed the hospitality and service this hotel provided.

When it is up and running (shortly) you will all enjoy more intimately the wonders of the Aussie Schools website for The Alliance. Aussie Schools gave a very worthwhile presentation at the conference with

some 60-70% of the delegates attending.

St Hilda's Anglican Girls' School was our host for our Saturday night Seafood smorgasbord. Mrs Stella Auchter liaised with me at length prior to this event and we were all delighted with the ambiance and gastronomic delights. Mrs Josie James welcomed us to her school and delegates enjoyed the variety this opportunity offered.

St Alban's Chapel was the setting for our Sunday morning service. Mr Rick Tudor, Headmaster of Trinity Grammar, Kew had kindly compiled and printed the Order of Service sheets and the milieu of the Chapel allowed a singular experience. The sun shone brightly on exiting the Chapel as all revelled in their surroundings.

For those who attended this inaugural Joint Conference, there would be much desire to hold another. Joining together with boys' schools to explore educational topics of joint interest in single gender education is not to deny the role of the Alliance as a group of all girls' schools. Rather it is a strengthening process whereby the uniqueness of the Alliance is consolidated and is able to stand up and be seen for its strengths. From feedback received, it would seem that the Alliance is more aware than ever of its strengths and on this we must continue to build.

The Annual General Meeting was well attended and our congratulations to Mrs Carolyn Hauff, our new Executive Member, on her appointment to the Executive. Our farewell and thanks to Mr Stan Klan for his service to girls' education with The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Limited.

*Edwina Sear, Executive Director*

*Diligent, hard working,  
with a flair for producing  
great study tours...  
Excellent 2/20*



### Experts in student/group travel

Reho Travel's report card shows over 10 years experience  
arranging University & Secondary school study tours.  
Including RMIT, Monash, Swinburne,  
Melbourne High and Haileybury.

Please contact Karsten Horne for more information.

Phone: 03 9823 5222 email: karsten@reho.com

www.reho.com

Australian Travel Agency of the Year 1998

*Let our experience add to yours...*



## ART CLASSES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM – THE ARTBOX PROGRAM

*...exposure to successful practice.*

Young women of the 21st century will value flexible and confident visual skills requiring an inventive approach to visual expression and creative challenge. We believe that the expression of the imagination needs to be valued and nurtured in all children and at all ages. This process can't start early enough.

In 1991 it became evident that we were satisfying the artistic needs of a limited number of students and we could do so much more. Visual Arts had taken off with seemingly endless possibilities. Art is no longer pigeon holed as a leisure time pursuit, but is an integral part of learning and a viable and lucrative way of life – a real career option in every sense. We wanted to make sure that our students were at the forefront of this new wave.

An exciting element of Artbox is the ability to expose successful practice of young professionals in Visual Arts. Ari Athans and Adele Arkell were fundamental in the inception (and naming) of Artbox. Their jewellery practice Straight A's afforded us the opportunities to appreciate a successful design practice in the hands of two astute young businesswomen. Their careers are internationally acclaimed enriching our girls in their association.

One of our greatest resources is our past students who believe in the philosophy of Artbox and consider it an opportunity to, not only foster the artistic needs of young people, but also to contribute to Clayfield College.

During 2001 Artbox has been enriched by the involvement of Early Childhood Pre-Service teachers from QUT. With the encouragement of lecturer Dr Barbara Piscitelli, five enthusiastic volunteers have observed and contributed to our classes. Collaborating with the Tertiary system has added another dimension to a diverse program and I believe that we have only just begun to explore the potential of this relationship with our Tertiary neighbour.

Initially, Artbox was born of a perceived need to expose the Secondary students to a wider variety of skills and media than we were able to offer at our school. Approximately a quarter of all Secondary students study Art as part of their academic program, yet we were constantly looking for opportunities to broaden our students' exposure to the work of professional artists. Ten years later we find ourselves not in a settled position but in a dynamic artistic environment that in some senses drives itself. Artbox has a momentum that is sometimes difficult to reign in. The steering committee vibrates with possibilities that appear limitless.

So what exactly is Artbox?

Five classes offer a range of experiences to all students in the College. The goals of each of the classes are specific to their developmental needs.

The newest group, Iddy Biddy Artbox is for children in Prep and Year 1. Their class emphasizes familiarity



and confidence with media and work is mostly as colourful and large as possible. We value the skills of intuition and reflection. We are currently designing a unit for Seniors to learn from these little people whose immediacy endows their application of paint a brilliance that is sometimes lost in later years.

The atmosphere in the large Beginners Artbox class is loud and dynamic. The development of positive and cooperative relationships is integral to this class of six to eight year olds. Senior students act as paid assistants to the teacher. It is a joy to see the children so full of enthusiasm and spontaneity, encouraging each other to express their ideas and describe their experiences. In a well-designed and provisioned art space students are liberated by an abundance of materials and no fear of mess. They are also taught how to talk about their art and to value the process as well as the finished product.

Graduating from the secure learning environments of the younger groups, nine to twelve year olds of Junior Artbox begin to work on more extended and independent projects with professional artists, learning a more patient and planned approach.

Students new to the Secondary school have quite specific needs met by Year 8 Artbox. The artbox program forges new friendships and introduces students to the Department. Exposure to a variety of professional artists sometimes reveals concepts of contemporary art styles and ideas, surprisingly bold and provocative. Last year's group made quite an impact with their installation piece comprising hundreds of balloons containing minuscule messages.

Senior Artbox, the original group, normally comprises Art students passionate about art who understand visual expression is instinctive and compelling. Many will pursue careers, directly or indirectly, dependant on visual literacy and expression. The dynamics of a voluntary class such as this are clearly different from those defined by demands of curriculum and assessment.

The priority for Senior Artbox is exposure to successful practice of professional artists. Jewellers, photographers, graphic designers, glass artists, fine artists, film and documentary makers are employed and studios, galleries and suppliers are visited. Senior Artbox students coordinate the annual combined Artbox exhibition integrating work from all age groups.

Secure in its role as a permanent and valued part of the extra-curricular program, Artbox supports the College's commitment to vertical social interaction asserting the centrality of creative expression in our lives as human beings and providing a stimulating environment to learn cooperatively.

*[We acknowledge and thank Clayfield College for this article]*

*From top: 1. Senior Artbox - Nina Maliszewski, special effects with photography. 2. Digital manipulation of photography. 3. Beginners Artbox - David Kershaw. 4. Junior Artbox - hand-coloured studio portraits.*

## VISUAL ARTS JOURNEY

*...journey of personal development and fulfilment through Visual Arts.*

The Arts contribute to the life of the community, communicate and express ideas through the unique perspective of any individual and they also confirm existing values whilst providing the opportunities and incentives to bring about change. Santa Maria College has struck a good balance in delivering Visual Arts to their students and would like to share their programs with others.

We are passionate advocates for the way the Visual Arts can engage and shape young minds in their journey of personal development and fulfilment throughout their whole lives. Because the Arts contribute to all dimensions of human experience, we must never underestimate their value in the education of the whole person. I view all the Arts as important, however place greater emphasis on my own area of expertise, the Visual Arts.

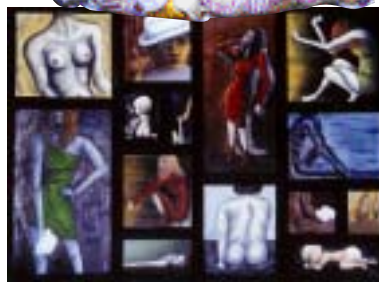
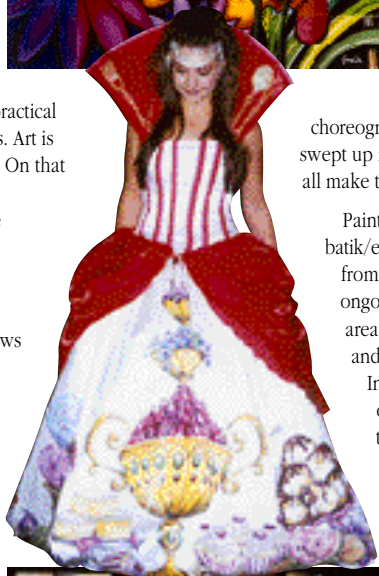
As a secondary Art teacher, we have developed a really practical and positive approach to Visual Arts education over the years. Art is one of the subjects that offers unlimited ideas to the teacher. On that premise, we design Visual Arts programs that are going to be successful, provide worthwhile outcomes and send a positive message to our college community.

The design and development of positive and thought provoking projects is essential because this encourages the students to move away from a stereotypical viewpoint. It allows them to develop and strengthen their critical thinking and analyse the images expressed in the media. The impact the mass media has on the way our students' view the world can definitely be balanced if they are engaged in challenges which expose new concepts, materials, contexts and themes. We remind the students that they are unique and that what they have to say has validity. Therefore they should produce original, expressive artwork.

With that in mind, we are concerned with the way the college community perceives and values the work the students create. Regular exhibitions around the campus, displays in the windows of local businesses and mounting the annual Art exhibition (which comprises a broad ranging guest list) are some ways we promote our students' work. Artworks are always entered in high profile community exhibitions where there is a student category. We stress to the students that they should be proud to display their achievements for others to view.

Essentially we work on the basis that what our students do is of such a creative and innovative nature, that it will be of interest to everyone! This affirmation encourages them to be confident, to continue to work hard and create Art that expresses ideas from their own particular perspective.

What is so amazing about this, you might say! Well it is the very recognition that it is not amazing that allows us to develop a workable strategy, and to take others along with us in the journey. This is the way we set about our programming: As soon as our annual Art exhibition is over in November, our Art staff sit down to plan 'our vision' for the next one! The feedback we have



just received is invaluable in this process and helps fire us up for the next year. Aspects of the exhibition are discussed with the students; we take note of their constructive criticism whilst enhancing their understanding of the many facets of exhibiting work for a large audience. This helps to give them greater ownership in the process and motivates them to look forward to the next year. We also help them enrich their own perceptions of 'how the public values' their work and that of their colleagues.

Within the textile program Year 9s have produced 'Funky Fairy' costumes and will parade their own designs. Other projects such as Japanese kimonos, Surrealist garments, expressed in innovative/recyclable materials and other mature student individual works add to the exciting 'collection' modeled by students. Parents assist with the parade commentary and supper, students choreograph routines and select appropriate music while others are swept up in the preparation excitement. The catwalk, lights and supper all make the evening.

Paintings, prints, graphics, papier mache mirrors, ceramics, batik/embroidered footstools, drawings etc. produced by students from Years 8 to 12 throughout the year are displayed. There is an ongoing ceramic tile project where the walls of the outdoor seating area are decorated with the work of the incoming Year 8 students and they take their family and friends to view their contribution. In addition, we invite feeder primary schools, students from other secondary schools, contact the local papers and do 'floor talks' and image analysis on selected works in the display.

Never far from our mind is the relevance of learning life skills, and we design projects which give insight into the way Visual Arts can lead to a diverse range of career choices. We know this generation of students will be faced with many challenges, both within and outside the workforce, and it is essential we give them as many 'tools' to take with them as possible. The integration of contemporary technologies into the Arts curriculum is essential, in order to provide the 'multi-sensory' and 'multiple intelligence' experiences our students need to access.

We feel our approach helps to do these things and we have worked very hard to give the Visual Arts a high profile in our college community. Everyone wins in a rich cultural environment where the Arts create new experiences for the sensory and intellectual needs of all. We see each other in a different light and learn to value the strengths of others, and even – dare I say it – envisage ourselves being able to push our boundaries of creative thinking and practice!

As educators, we want to see our students exit our care with as much confidence, independence and self worth as possible; it is essential therefore, to promote the Arts as one of the key areas of learning to facilitate these characteristics.

*[We acknowledge and thank Santa Maria College for this article]*

*From top: 1. Year 12 painting. 2. Year 12 Textiles "Food Glorious Food". 3. Year 12 painting. 4. Year 12 Textiles "WA motifs".*



## EMBRACING ALL FORMS OF THE ARTS

*...enriching the life of every student with a range of experiences.*

### THE PERFORMING ARTS

The MacRobertson Girls' High School has a thriving performing arts program involving every student.

Drama is a popular elective from Year 9 through to VCE level. Through Drama, girls are given the opportunity to participate in school presentations of a high standard in the school's Theatre. Each student is encouraged to develop her imagination, flexibility and self-discipline to perform, both independently and as part of an ensemble, with skill and confidence.



in the highly successful overseas tour of our Chamber Ensemble and Chamber Voices and the production of two CDs. Our chamber musicians are frequently invited to perform at community functions such as the presentation of VCE Premier's Awards at Government House.

Students are encouraged to learn a musical instrument either individually or in small groups. All orchestral and band instruments are taught on a weekly basis as well as piano, singing and orchestral percussion. Many students achieve high results in the



Highlights of the Drama program are the House Drama Festival, various Drama presentations and the combined drama with Melbourne High School.

Students find that their time at the school is enhanced by exposure to and participation in the music program which forms a highlight of life at MGHS.

Music is a core study in Years 9 and 10. Massed singing plays an integral role in the ceremonial tradition of the school, including Speech Night. School assemblies feature a solo or group musical item which again develops appreciation and enjoyment.

Many MacRobertson Girls' High School students continue with music at a tertiary level and have established successful careers in music and in the Arts. The school is recognised by The University of Melbourne as one of its top ten providers of students for music courses. In 2000 six of our students gained admission, through the audition process, to the music course at The University of Melbourne.

The richness of the program ensures that the student musician is constantly challenged and given the opportunity to involve herself in a diverse range of musical experiences. Participation in music making is open to all students. A variety of ensembles is offered which extend and enrich students' musical experience. They cater for all levels of students. These groups of musicians perform within the school and in the wider community. Groups include Concert Choir, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Voices, String Orchestra, Brass Ensemble, Cello Ensemble, Flute Ensemble, Chamber Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Stage Band and String Quartets. School Council employs a chamber music ensemble director who is responsible for providing extension work for our most talented musicians. This culminated



examinations held by the Australian Music Examinations Board. Studies in theory complement music practice.

The House Chorals is an annual event where initiative is fostered as students produce, direct, arrange and perform every aspect of this musical presentation. Competition between House orchestras and choirs is keen, with the House Conductor's Award a much sought-after prize.

Major musical productions offer all students the opportunity to participate as soloists, or members of the chorus or orchestra. Intensive rehearsals and the high standard of performances make these events unforgettable.

### THE VISUAL ARTS

Individual students at all year levels are able to develop their drawing, design, digital imaging and darkroom skills within a stimulating environment.

Students are involved in the design processes and production of art works in Art, Digital Arts, Photography and Visual Communication and Design. Innovative approaches and practices are encouraged, resulting in high levels of achievement in Year 12.

In particular, the work of two VCE Visual Communication and Design students was selected for inclusion in this year's Top Designs, a statewide exhibition of the best VCE Visual Communication folios from 2000.

*[We acknowledge and thank The MacRobertson Girls' High School for this article]*

*From top L-R: 1. Year 10 VCE Music Performance Class. 2. Speech Night at Melbourne Town Hall. 3. Musical Production - My Fair Lady. 4. Chamber Voices and Ensemble performing at Wells Cathedral as part of the UK Performance Tour. 5. Year 10 Digital Arts. 6. Year 10 Visual Communication.*

## DESIGNING THEIR OWN DANCE FORM

Year 12 students at Queen Margaret College (Wellington, New Zealand) have designed and choreographed their own dance with the help of top New Zealand dance teacher and former Queen Margaret College pupil, Deirdre Tarrant.

Deirdre's work with the students, over a six-week period, was part of a new look recreation module designed by Head of Physical Education, Barbara Beable.

"The amended module has been designed to meet the needs of modern young women," Barbara says.

"In the past, the recreation module was restricted to ballroom dancing. The new module is much more creative. While learning the vocabulary and conforming to the discipline of previously created dances is important, we want to give our students the chance to develop their own dance forms, expressing what is important to them."

After performing their dance in front of their peers, the girls enjoyed a performance by members of Deirdre's nationally acclaimed modern dance troupe, Footnote Dance Company.

"It is interesting to revisit my old school and see the fabulous changes in the facilities there," Deirdre says. "Dance is so much a part of youth culture and movement is what young people do best. The students of today are much freer and



*Year 12 students shaping up for a performance*

are unafraid of expressing their ideas. It is a delight to work with them."

*[We acknowledge and thank Queen Margaret College for this article]*

## A BALANCING ACT

In a world that focuses more and more on technology and the expectation to remain abreast of changes in that field, providing students with opportunities to express themselves in performing arts ensures a balance in their educational experience and personal development.

Girls at Seymour College, together with the boys of Prince Alfred College, have just completed performances of "Fiddler on the Roof" to the delight of enthusiastic audiences. This collaboration allows the students to expand their performance horizons and for those with a preference to be back stage, students also serve as technical and stage crew.

Middle School girls can participate in the Rock Eisteddfod annually and this is another pursuit that



*Students bring pre revolution Russia to life in "Fiddler on the Roof"*

is very popular with the students. Many months of planning and rehearsals culminate in a glittering performance. The lessons learnt about dance, choreography, music, drama and teamwork are invaluable and applied in many

other areas by the girls.

The College Music program encourages girls to continue learning and improving and provides many opportunities to perform, both within the College and in the community.

Drama productions are always eagerly anticipated by the school community as a new way to view friends and see the extent of otherwise hidden talents.

The ability to involve students in a pursuit that stretches them is seen as a valuable part of their growth and passage to young adulthood. It is always fulfilling to witness the confidence that springs from young people giving their best effort in pursuit of performing excellence.

*[We acknowledge and thank Seymour College for this article]*

## ARTISTIC ENDEAVOURS

The study of Art provides unique experiences for all students, which are essential for their total development. Through creative expression, the personal and intellectual growth of each student is fostered and students have opportunities to make individual artistic statements about the world and the way it is experienced. Students also appreciate and respond to the diversity, richness and dynamic nature of their cultural heritage.

An effective Art program should offer challenge with new techniques, technologies, materials and skills as well as encouraging individuality and originality. Personal expression and creativity should be stimulated and this is best served when a core program and an elective enrichment program is available to those wishing to pursue Art at higher levels.

The structured and sequential Art program at St Margaret's School focuses on practical experiences

and investigates creative problem solving and aesthetic appreciation. From Years 7-10 students rotate through courses in Pure and Applied Design, Painting, Drawing, Ceramics, Sculpture, Printmaking, Photography, Digital Imaging and Threads and Textiles requiring increased levels of technical and conceptual development.

VCE Studio Arts and VCE Art at SMS provide students with the opportunity to specialise in any of the studio disciplines that they commenced in earlier years.

Students need to be provided with the opportunity to think and act in imaginative, analytical, critical and reflective ways. Their manipulative and technical skills should be encouraged as well as their intellectual and analytical thinking. To complement the skill development, students also need to enjoy and learn the importance of intuitive, emotional and individual responses to challenges.



*St Margaret's VCE Studio Arts student Amy Hailes*

Individuality is the hallmark of the St Margaret's Art program. The developed folios of students are displayed in regular exhibitions at the school and emphasize the unique gifts of every student. With careers in the Arts booming, a strong school Art program equips each student with the confidence and solid foundation required for future success.

*[We acknowledge and thank St Margaret's School, Berwick for this article]*



Dining Hall TSS – transformed



Ken Gilmour & Margaret Hadley



Carolyn Anderson & Prof. John Hay



Dr Frederick Sargent



Dinner TSS



Judith Wbeeldon whirlygigging



Eager delegates await opening



Beth Blackwood enjoying St Hilda's dinner



Sylvia Walton at breakfast



Dr Jeannette Vos



Light lunch – another SSL creation



Campbell McComas (unmasked) & Dr Ken Rowe



Sue Danckert, Bruce Cook, Jeff Burn & Ili Pelletier

JOINT CONFERENCE  
'EQUAL AND DIFFERENT?'  
3-5 AUGUST 2001



Lesley Boston, Joy Sheperd & Beth Blackwood



Noelle and Bruce Cook



Paul Sheaban whirlygigging



Bruce Cook, Graham Dillon, Ken Rowe, Ros Otzen & John Hay



Jeannette Vos in action



Barbara Stone, Judith Wbeeldon, Ann-Margarete and Michael Smee & Barbara Rumble



Carolyn Grantskalis, Rosa Storelli, Susan Stevens, Rosemary McLoughlin & Christine Briggs



Karen Spiller



Dinner St Hilda's



Carolyn Anderson & Ros Otzen



Tim Hawkes, Michael Norris, Stan & Kerrie Klan



...and to conclude, Bruce Cook, Amanda Swaney & Nancy Hillier

# JOINT CONFERENCE SUMMATION: DIFFERENT AND EQUAL?

Vicki Waters and David Scott

## V. WATERS

It is a pleasure to join with David to attempt to summarise this conference. A warning to you. Given the high correlation between using technology and anxiety, we will only be addressing auditory learners. This conference we knew from the opening ceremony was going to be different. Not only because we were meeting our colleagues in a new context – as Heads of single sex boys and girls schools for the first time but also because of our welcome – music, dance, mime – definitely more lively than your average conference opening.

## V. WATERS – OPENING

Then Professor John Hay – a speaker prepared to speak about himself and family dropping many pearls along the way for later reflection. One of his interesting comments was that doing Math, Math Physics and Chemistry was something that you're either good at it or you're not. This topic was explored by Dr Ken Rowe in his session.

Professor Hay made a point that we should not lose sight of... that construction of gender should be overlaid with the concept that we are all people and generational. It was however, interesting to note the use of language and imagery throughout the conference. At times we talk single sex and at others a common language and experience. Bruce in his introduction of Professor Hay compared his leadership of two universities recognised as Universities of the Year with a Headmaster winning a Rugby Grand final. Is that similar to winning the Open Netball premiership?

But back to the big picture which Professor Hay drew our attention to – the importance for our collective future to not only utilise but encourage the intellectual capacity of both men and women – an economic and social imperative.

And his concluding comment – a challenge to us all – a challenge to take joint responsibility to promote teaching as a worthy profession – a profession where the quality of teaching and learning makes not just a difference but THE difference. But first to dinner.

## D. SCOTT – DINNER

Dinner and guest speaker

- Dinner placement of different states and types of schools on the same table enhanced the opportunity to discuss the similarities and differences of our schools and professional lives
- Dr Frederick Sargent (aka Campbell McComas) then challenged our visual acuity with his exceptional hair style - well and truly setting the scene for his "distillery" performance of 'equal and different'. His presentation provided a humorous and somewhat different approach to "research" and the potential outcomes.

## D. SCOTT – SATURDAY MORNING

Dr Ken Rowe took us on a journey that each of us intrinsically was drawn to. His "Evidence Based" presentation supported our professional sense, that intuitive feel that comes from years of seeing the outcomes of quality teachers. The key issues to which he drew our attention included:

- The outcomes from student learning are primarily related to teacher quality, with this factor having at least 5 times greater impact than attending single sex schools / classes.
- The significant shift in boys versus girls performance over the last 10 years (in particular) can be attributed to the greater skills in verbal reasoning and written communication skills that are required to perform in the educational context. Boys see this style of curriculum as "feminine" and so become disengaged.
- Professional development for teachers is critical to enhance the connection and relevance for boys. The need to engender peer support amongst teachers and particularly to have them work in congruence with school goals, to ensure it works effectively, can offset the disadvantages of a negative home background.

We were left to ponder the issues of "pre conditions" which might underpin these outcomes as well as to think through the "style" of teaching – and particularly the "sea of Blah!" Ken suggested that structural changes only impact on the preconditions rather than what happens in the classroom and we should focus much more attention to this area. We were left with both ideas and questions as to how we might improve the learning of boys and girls.

## D. SCOTT – DR JEANNETTE VOS – SESSION 1

Dr Jeannette Vos continued the background on quality teaching and learning. Whilst several of us worried that a few of our colleagues were seeking to suffer their 1st (or 2nd or 3rd) heart attacks from exercise or laughter we took on board the 10 lessons of brain research. As we ducked right crosses, shuffled, boogied and oxygenated our brains we also enlarged our understanding of brain development (and regeneration) I suspect many of us were pleased to find that there is still some hope of brain cell regeneration!

Lesson 7 – boys and girls learn differently – provided a special interest for me. It follows a presentation of similar commentary and research provided by Christina Hoff-Somers at the International Boys School Conference in San Francisco in 2000, as well as outcomes presented by Bill and Sue Moir in their book "Why Men Don't Iron". In particular, the summary provided in the table on P7, of Jeannette's paper, gives a simple guideline for the classroom practitioner to consider in creating a positive learning environment for boys and girls.

The striking quotes, which challenge us as educators, were provided in the introductory slide, via Winston Churchill:



David Scott & Vicki Waters work on the Summation

Continues on page 10...



Continued from page 9...

“The empires of the future will be empires of the mind”,  
and Jeannette’s second last paragraph:

“The first country to marry together the worlds best information and communications technology with the worlds best brain based teaching and learning methods will lead the world in education.”

## V. WATERS - DR JEANNETTE VOS – SESSION 2

Dr Vos then invigorated us with a variety of applications of learning techniques. Some words of advice to you or should I say – this is a HOT tip - when energizing, ask what would the students think if they could see me now and more importantly, close the curtains and lock your door just in case the Chair of your school board decides to pay you a surprise visit. I’m not sure that risk assessment of classroom activities as required by the Health and Safety Committee will convince him or her of your continued suitability to lead the school.

Perhaps Dr Vos’ comment of “It’s not how smart you are but it’s how you are smart” is the adage to adopt.

Time was of the essence towards the conclusion of Dr Vos’ workshop but we did appreciate the ‘whirlygig’ activity. For all of us, one way or another, the WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME question was satisfactorily answered.

And then on to the discussion forums.

## D. SCOTT - WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Ms Sue Bell from Melbourne High School spoke of how this school motivates and excites boys through high expectations in the realms of academia, cultural studies and social activities. Some of the excitement comes from different activities (PIG Club – Political Interest Group). Role modelling (leaders are selected for their special expertise ) comes not only from staff but also old boys who speak, mentor, guide and advise

Dr Tim Hawkes followed a similar theme – drawing on the research which he had undertaken for his book “Boy oh Boy” to suggest practical ways by which teachers could help boys engage with learning. In this sense the workshop built on the thesis of Dr Ken Rowe that the quality of teaching is the most crucial variable to student academic performance. The workshop also supported the practical initiatives suggested by Dr Jeannette Vos.

Dr Warren Phillips talked through the issue of boys “Making the most of sensuality / sexuality” and argued the central importance of the hormone “testosterone” in the changes that boys face. Warren provided important, practical ideas of how to deal with the questions that boys need to answer during the age range 11-16. As well, he stressed the importance of privacy for boys in the provision of boarding facilities.

## V. WATERS - WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Thank you to Jo Marshall and Ros Bird for assisting in providing some comments and perceptions on these.

Three forums focused on strategies for classroom application – Preferred Futures Program, Creating a Community of Thoughtful Learners and the Development of Thinking. A shift from difference to the commonality of teaching and learning. Ros McKenzie shared the Preferred Futures program operating at St Margaret’s School at Berwick highlighting the need for students to focus beyond the present and look to the future. Dr Peter Lennox’s dimensions of the learning framework identified the kinds of thinking involved in the learning process – critical and creative thinking and self-regulation and reflection.

Peter’s forum left participants with at least part of the answer to the question – are we meeting the needs of our students and our society as we move into the 21st century?

Similarly Ann Mildenhall’s forum on the development of thinking. Ann was a most entertaining presenter who shared the ‘warts and all’ version of developing a thinking skills program in her school. It again reinforced for us the importance of the ‘the right person’ for the job and the need to plan for change over a realistic time frame. Some of us showed some discomfort with the mathematical question but thank you Ann - our mathematical thinking was certainly broadened.

And a discussion forum on how two single sex schools can work together. Rick Tudor and Philip Antony from Trinity and Carolyn Anderson and Amanda Swaney from Ruyton, shared with us their independent togetherness through the co-ordinate program they have developed. The concept of equal particularly at the decision making level from both Heads I am sure provides the key to the success of their program. Perhaps equal could be defined as ‘without ego’.

What you have created is what we all in single sex schools attempt – to provide the best of both worlds for our students.

Our final session day, a keynote address by Dr Paula Barrett brought together our shared concern for the health and well-being of our reason for being – our students, providing a greater understanding of anxiety and depression based on research.

She stressed the need for intervention to enhance coping skills and provided an overview of a program to support students. The Friends programs for Children and Youth are undoubtedly resources that can make a difference.



Jeannette Vos session



Creation and Dance performed by the Nabri Dancers



Our venue... the Southport School

## D. SCOTT – SUMMARY

The theme “Equal and Different” for this first, joint conference of the Alliance and Coalition has brought with it a high standard of presenters, workshop leaders, venue and professional interaction. There is no doubt that we came together as equals, shared a great deal of professional insights and I trust we return to our schools with the ideas to do it differently. Thank you to the convenors for the vision and energy to create this opportunity.

## V. WATERS – SUMMARY

So to answer the question “Equal and different? – a distillation?” No. Our collective solutions must be to provide the best of both worlds for our students.

## OPENING ADDRESS

*Professor John Hay (Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Queensland)*



Professor Hay opened the conference with an informal autobiographical narrative, beginning with his father's use of educational opportunities to transcend his early life in a London orphanage and achieve distinction as a teacher and headmaster to his own scholarship opportunities that opened a succession of academic doors for him in Australia, England and elsewhere. A passion for teaching shaped both lives, the only difficulties being those of choosing one field or another.

Appointed first to a lectureship in English at the University of Western Australia in 1967 and then to the Headship of the Department and the Professorial Chair there, he then moved to Monash as, briefly, Dean of Arts and then Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In 1992, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor and President of Victoria's Deakin University and, in 1996, as Vice-Chancellor of The University of Queensland, leading both to be named University of the Year by the Good Universities Guide.

Professor Hay emphasised the vital importance of making

space for the different strengths of students to emerge and for encouraging them to follow areas of intellectual inquiry that they were passionate about rather than prematurely orientating them to career decisions. He expressed a strong preference for the American university system in which students did a wide-ranging first degree before embarking upon professionally-orientated programs, all of which were offered at graduate level. Such a system places a premium upon teaching excellence and encourages the development in the first instance of high-level generic skills such as communication, problem-solving, collaboration and the passionate pursuit of knowledge.

Describing himself as an agent of strategic change and universities as having a vital role in the creation of a knowledge-based future, Professor Hay noted that when one of his four children expressed an interest in becoming a teacher he was immediately disabused of such an idea by his teachers.

## EQUAL AND DIFFERENT? YES, BUT WHAT REALLY MATTERS?

*Dr Ken Rowe (Principal Research Fellow, Australian Council for Educational Research)*



The Federal Government recently called for an *Inquiry Into the Education of Boys* in order to explore concerns about the relative underachievement of boys (compared with girls) and their poorer attitudes, behaviours, and experiences of schooling. Much of the public discussion of these issues has relied on myth, anecdote, opinion and uninformed comment. *Equal and Different* is an attempt to provide evidential support for informed debate in this context.

The focus of the *Inquiry* was 'the social, cultural and educational factors affecting the education of boys in Australian schools, particularly in relation to their literacy needs and socialization skills in the early and middle years of schooling', and successful 'strategies which schools have adopted to help address these factors'. This submission submits that the real question is – what are the major sources of variation in students' achievements, in terms of academic outcomes, attitudes and behaviours? There is undisputed and universal evidence that boys, on average, achieve at significantly lower levels than girls on ALL areas of the assessed *cognitive* curriculum at primary and secondary schools. This gap applies in Australia as well as in English-speaking countries world-wide. Further, emerging evidence-based research indicates:

- Boys are significantly 'disengaged' with schooling and more likely to be at 'risk' of academic underachievement – especially in literacy;
- Boys exhibit significantly greater externalizing behaviour problems in the classroom and at home – often anti-social, restless, and *inattentive* (particularly the latter);
- 50% of consultations to pediatricians at tertiary referral hospitals relate to behavioural problems, such as ADD, with a 9:1 ratio of boys to girls. 20% of referrals relate to learning difficulties, predominantly

boys with literacy problems;

- Boys make up 75-85% of children in early years of school identified 'at-risk' of poor achievement progress in literacy, requiring intervention programs such as *Reading Recovery*;
- Boys have a higher prevalence of auditory processing problems;
- Boys report significantly less positive experiences of schooling in terms of enjoyment of school, perceived curriculum usefulness, and teacher responsiveness;
- Boys are more likely to 'drop out' of schooling prematurely; and
- Boys are subject to more disciplinary actions during schooling, are more likely to participate in subsequent delinquent behaviours (drugs and alcohol), and are 4-5 times more likely than girls to suffer during adolescence from depression and commit suicide.

The empirical evidence is supported by interview data, such as this typical response from a 15 year-old boy: *'This is girl stuff! This school is run by girls for girls. I can't wait to get out!'*

In the last 25 years, educational performance of the genders has also shifted notably. Until recently, males were over-represented at the top and bottom of Tertiary Entrance Ranks (TERs), females in the middle. Now, females are over-represented in all high TER ranges, and males even more over-represented at the bottom. Staff at co-educational secondary schools are acutely aware that a greater female/male ratio manifests in higher average 'results'. Several former all-boys schools in Victoria have chosen to become co-educational.

*Continues on page 12...*

Continued from page 11...

**However, it is important not to over-interpret the 'importance' of these gender effects, since they pale into insignificance compared with class/teacher effects – regardless of student gender.**

A key reason for the observed gender differences in performance, attitudes and behaviours since the early 1990s lies with *a notable increase in the demand for higher levels of operational literacy and, especially, verbal reasoning and written communication skills* in school education – areas in which girls, on average, have distinct maturational and socialisation advantages. In mathematics, for example, pedagogical emphasis has shifted to 'numeracy', requiring sophisticated levels of both verbal reasoning and written communication skills. The move away from short answer activities to tasks requiring higher levels of these skills have clearly placed a greater premium on attentiveness for which girls have distinct maturational advantages. Indeed, **attentiveness** is the most salient predictor of literacy achievement. All curriculum design, content and assessment, at all levels of schooling, has changed in this way.

Literacy underachievement in boys may also be linked to their reluctance to read (compared with girls). The social lives of girls are more likely to revolve around verbal discussion and communication; boys' around play – particular of solitary computer games. The link works both ways – boys' inattentive behaviours hamper their literacy progress; but literacy achievement itself even more strongly reduces inattentive behaviours.

## IMPLICATIONS – QUALITY LITERACY TEACHING IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE

1. The demand for enhanced operational literacy and other skills is essential, and curricula should NOT be 'dumbed down', simply to meet the differential needs of boys. Rather, the provision of quality teaching and learning in literacy, supported by on-going teacher professional development, must be given the highest priority.
2. The literacy skills of ALL students must be maximised, as failure has a high likelihood of becoming health problems later.

In order for such 'literacy priority' to be more than mere rhetoric, resources must be directed at targeted professional development (PD) programs for teachers. With the 'informed' support of parents and health professionals, sustained improvement can be achieved by programs which maximise teachers' behavioural management and teaching skills in the classroom, and enable them to become the empowered agents and purveyors of change.

## THE MAJOR SOURCES OF VARIATION IN STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the recurring and most compelling findings within the corpus of production function research is the demonstration that how much a student learns depends on the identity of the classroom to which that student is assigned. Not only is the magnitude of class/teacher effects on students' experiences and outcomes significant, these effects are not limited to academic achievement. Fundamentally, *a reliance on curriculum standards and state-wide assessment strategies without paying due attention to teacher quality appears to be insufficient to gain the improvements in student outcomes sought... the quality of teacher education and teaching appear to be more strongly related to student achievement than class sizes, overall*

*spending levels or teacher salaries.*

The effect of poor quality teaching on student outcomes is debilitating and cumulative. Ineffective teaching and learning practices, such as the typical 'teacher-talk-dominated' classroom experience, exacerbate the problem of inattentiveness. Once a student has missed a piece of information, he or she can't simply rewind the lesson and replay it. That information, and any subsequent teaching which depends on it, is gone, and the frustrated student tunes out.

The *VCE Data Project* found that there was significantly more variation in students' outcomes *within-schools* than *between-schools*, indicating that the quality of teaching and learning provision was by far the most salient factor accounting for variation in students' achievements at Year 12. Differences in student background and ability produce a variation of between 9 and 15%; whereas variation associated with class/teacher membership is far more significant at 30-60%. Regardless of student gender, intake or other background characteristics, differences in teaching quality are the most significant in explaining different academic outcomes.

## BARRIERS TO REFORM

There continues to be several barriers to reform that generate misinformed and misdirected rationalisations of students' differential educational outcomes. Four are noted here:

1. There is a tendency to place undue credence on outmoded forms of biological and social determinism, suggesting that individual children do poorly or well at school because of their intelligence or their backgrounds. These 'cop-outs' have little substantive justification in the emerging research-based evidence.
2. National and Statewide curricula tend to treat learning as continuous and cumulative rather than recognising the different interest and learning needs of students for both girls and boys (particularly Years 5-10). Largely untested intervention techniques, based on untested assumptions about the educational interests and needs of boys, may be helpful, but their effect is often little more than aspirational.
3. Schools and teachers lack information regarding the magnitude of their relative contributions to performance and effectiveness. Fortunately, this is changing.
4. Many improvement reforms are directed at **preconditions** for learning – such as structural ones (single-sex classes/schools, or transition programs) rather than at influencing teaching and learning behaviours within the classroom. Effective improvement initiatives such as strategic teacher PD are instead concerned with making teaching and learning more effective. **Real reform in improving outcomes for both boys and girls calls for substantial change in teaching and learning strategies.**

**Equal and different?** Yes, but what *really* matters is *quality teaching and learning, supported by strategic teacher professional development!*

This article is a brief summary of key points from:

Rowe, K.J. (2001). *Equal and different? Yes, but what REALLY matters?* Background paper to keynote address presented at the Joint Conference of The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Limited and The International Boys' Schools Coalition (Australian Hub). The Southport School, Gold Coast, Queensland, August 3-5, 2001.



*Jeanette Vos session*

# BRAIN RESEARCH AND LEARNING

Dr Jeannette Vos



In the past ten years, scientists have learned more about the human brain than in the rest of recorded history. We have learned ten significant lessons from this:

**1. Music and movement stimulate the brain and creates a powerful “state change”.**

Music reduces stress, relieves anxiety, increases energy and improves recall. Exercise energises the body and brain. Music makes people smarter. Classes should combine these.

**2. We can stimulate the two sides of the brain to work in harmony: the left “academic” or analytical brain and the right “creative” or global brain.**

The left-handed side of the brain, which controls the right side of the body, plays a major part in processing logic, words, mathematics and sequence – the so-called academic parts of learning. The right-hand side, which controls the left side of the body, deals with rhythm, rhyme, music, pictures and daydreaming – the so-called creative activities. In order to get the two sides working together more efficiently, it is possible integrate the brain by crossing the midline of the body.

**3. The brain has four distinct brains in one: the instinctive brain, the emotional brain, the thinking cortex and the balancing brain.**

Breathing, heart rate and many basic instincts are controlled by the first. The second-tier brain, which is associated with memory storage, is also its emotional and sexual centre – so memories like a first love affair are better recalled. The two-sided cerebrum and its cortex has six layers, each with distinct “lobes”, to process input from the senses – it is this part which makes humans unique. Finally, the cerebellum is responsible for coordination, balance and muscle memory. It can grow neurons, so the best way to learn something is to “do” the learning with the body. Recent research suggests that it is also activated through speech and the harmony part of music.

**4. We are all potentially gifted.**

With a trillion brain cells at birth, including 100 billion active neurons, each capable of growing up to 20,000 branches, humans can go on learning as long as they live, provided that they take good care of their brains. The “gifted” are those who go through life believing that learning is fun and the only game worth playing.

**5. The brain is regenerative.**

Recent research indicates that we keep building brain cell connections throughout life – that actual neuron growth is possible within the cerebellum. Like muscles, the brain works best if used regularly, such as by: thinking, movement and exercise, eating foods which put more potassium than sodium in the brain (like banana and fish oils), drinking plenty of water, getting proper rest, “play” which uses all the senses, spinning, and novelty.

**6. We have multiple intelligences.**

According to Harvard’s Dr Gardner, there are nine intelligences: linguistic, logical mathematical, musical, spatial, visual, “bodily kinesthetic”, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and “naturalist intelligence”. The first two are the only ones measured by traditional IQ tests. Others may include “inventive intelligence”, “emotional intelligence”, and possibly intelligences related to the heart and stomach. The stomach, for example, may be the source for unconscious decisions which the main brain later claims as conscious decisions of its own. An individual person’s intelligence may be able to be increased by working with people who have different strengths.

**7. Boys and girls learn differently.**

Specifically:

GIRL	BOY
Responds to the personal	Responds to objects
Verbal processing	Visual processing
Prefers popularity over winning	Prefers to “be first”
Remembers landmarks	Remembers distances and directions
Solves math tasks as a story	Solves math tasks as a challenge
Needs role models to inspire her and show her how to balance work and family.	Needs role models to help him socialise appropriately and learn to organise his time and energy.

**8. We all have a personal learning and thinking style as individual as our fingerprints.**

One way of addressing learning styles is through perceptual styles – the visual learner, the auditory learner, and the bodily-kinesthetic learner (tactile person – tends to fidget) all perceive information in different ways. Education systems tend to cater primarily for the first group; the latter two have the most difficulty at school. There are also distinct thinking styles – “concrete sequential thinkers” (based in reality, process information in an ordered, sequential, linear way), “concrete random thinkers” (experimenters), “abstract random thinkers” (live in the world of feelings and emotions), and “abstract sequential thinkers” (think in concepts).

**9. The brain operates on at least four separate wavelengths: beta, alpha, theta and delta.**

Beta is the waking state and consciousness. Alpha is the ideal learning state and the state of relaxed alertness. Theta is the most creative state and also the state for hypnosis. Delta is sleep. Humans learn through all of these states – during REM in particular, a person practices what he or she has learned throughout the day. The implication for traditional education is that if it focuses only on the conscious mind, students will spend more time not learning than learning.

**10. Early childhood is important.**

During early childhood the main pathways in the brain are laid down – and even very young children can learn anything much faster, better and easier in a multi-sensory environment. The implications for language learning are tremendous, as is the potential for learning any subject very young – especially learning to read, write, compute, and do math. Most importantly, the child needs to move her or his body in order to build the brain. The traditional classroom with straight rows and sitting down all day is simply not the best way for children to learn.

This article is a brief summary of key points from:

Vos, J. (2001) *Brain Research and Learning*. Background paper and slide presentation by Dr Jeannette Vos presented at the Joint Conference presented of The Alliance of Girls’ Schools (Australasia) Limited and the International Boys’ Schools Coalition (Australian Hub) held at The Southport School, Gold Coast, Queensland, August 3-5, 2001.

This paper is based on *The Learning Revolution* by Gordon Dryden and Dr. Jeannette Vos and other research as cited within the complete presentation.



## CHILDHOOD ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Dr Paula Barrett (Senior Lecturer in Clinical Program, School of Applied Psychology, Mt Gravatt Campus, Griffith University, Qld)



Historically, educational and mental health professionals have helped adults with anxiety (worrying about future events) and depression (negative memory bias about past experience) and neglected the fact that children also experience worries, sadness and grief. 1 in 3 children will experience a significant degree of impairment as a result of anxiety. Anxiety, substance and depressive disorders are strongly linked with suicide attempts. Nonetheless, few intervention programs for the prevention of childhood anxiety and depression have been implemented and evaluated in Australia and overseas. We are trying to expand these by involving family, peers and the school community in general. This should involve universal (including all children regardless of risk states – the peer support model), selective (screening to select children at risk)

and treatment programs (targeting children with a diagnosed condition).

In family discussions, parents of anxious children tend not to agree with or listen to their children, discuss positive consequences, or reinforce proactive plans. Instead, they tend to display more reciprocation of avoidant plans. After participating in Parent Workshops for Family Members, they learn to understand and identify children's worries, sadness and stress, to model positive coping behaviour to their children during difficult situations, and to help their children approach challenges in a gradual manner, rather than helping them avoid those challenges. Adding a Family Component enhances family positive/helpful thinking, and further reinforces a policy of ignoring complaining but rewarding brave behaviours.

The FRIENDS Program (**F**eelings, **R**elax and feel good, **I**nnner thoughts, **E**xplore plans, **N**ice work – reward yourself, **D**on't forget to practice, **S**tay calm) can assist parents to develop strategies to enhance resilience and coping in their children.

This article is a brief summary of key points from:

Barrett, P. (2001). *Friends*. Background paper to keynote address presented at the Joint Conference of The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Limited and The International Boys' Schools Coalition (Australian Hub). The Southport School, Gold Coast, Queensland, August 3-5, 2001.

*[We acknowledge and thank Jeremy Sear for his preparation of these three synopses]*

### CREATION AND DANCE PERFORMED BY THE NAHRI DANCERS FOLLOWING THE WELCOME TO THE COUNTRY BY KOMBUMERRI ELDER GRAHAM DILLON, OAM.



we were proud to sponsor the 2001 Equal and Different Conference,

a joint venture of

The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Ltd and

The International Boys' Schools Coalition (Australian Hub)

For further information please contact George Michaelides on 03 9269 7600

## JOINT CONFERENCE PERSPECTIVES...

### ...a Tasmanian viewpoint.

Delegates from all states of Australia and Australasia met for what is possibly a world first, a joint conference of girls' and boys' schools.

During three days members of the Alliance and the Coalition met together to be received by an Elder of the Kombumerri Community who welcomed us to his country; to hear the official opening by Professor John Hay, Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Queensland; to be entertained by Dr. Frederick Sargent (aka Campbell McComas) and to listen and take part in a very active way to three excellent keynote addresses given by Dr. Ken Rowe, Principal Research Fellow at the Australian College for Educational Research; Dr. Jeannette Vos, Co-author of *The Learning Revolution* and author of *The Music Revolution*; and currently living in San Diego and Dr. Paula Barrett, Senior Lecturer in the Clinical Programme School of Applied Psychology, Griffith University, Queensland.

Between the keynote speakers discussion forums were conducted by our own members. Interspersed with these excellent addresses there was time for members to meet together, reflect on what they had heard and to share concerns and visions. The wonderful hospitality provided by Bruce and Noelle Cook at the Southport School and Josie James at St Hilda's School and the time for reflection in the beautiful Chapel of St Alban at the Southport School rounded off an excellent weekend.

As a first it set an extremely high standard and coming away from a conference where feeling refreshed and that the whole venture was worthwhile is not a common occurrence. Congratulations to the organisers who showed great thought and planning ability in making this weekend such a memorable one.

*Daniel W. McNeill,  
St Michael's Collegiate School, Hobart*



*Whirlygigs - Richard Burchnall & Michael Urwin*

But the majority of the Conference focussed appropriately on issues of common interest and concern – quality teaching, the lessons from recent brain research, anxiety and depression in young people – and reminded us that despite gender differences it is the shared experience of our schools and our students that is of such importance.

We left on the final day with our minds better integrated (thanks to Jeannette Vos' aerobics exercises), having enjoyed excellent hospitality and camaraderie, relished the opportunity to discuss both formally and informally matters of professional interest, and affirmed in our conviction that single gender schools are uniquely placed to meet the needs of students successfully in the 21st century.

*Richard Burchnall, St Peter's College, Adelaide*

### ...from a Kiwi perspective.

It is minus 4°C on a foggy Christchurch morning – one of those mornings when one wonders why one lives in such a climate!

A mere few hours later I am sitting in brilliant sunshine overlooking the gentle surf on the Gold Coast of Australia. It is 24°C and I know that many of the couples and families walking past clad in summer gear and enjoying the warmth and feeling of an everlasting summer are New Zealanders (probably South Islanders) escaping the 'winter blues'!

However attendance at the 2001 Joint Conference, 'Equal and Different?' was not a 'junker' to escape freezing temperatures and grey days. It was a very serious endeavour to share with one's Australian colleagues and some excellent, provocative and well researched speakers, a question that underpins the vocation to which we are committed and which many of us feel passionate about – Why girls' schools and why boys' schools? Are each equal while clearly

being different? Is this the best environment to bring up these impressionable teenagers entrusted to our care? Can we really justify our conviction and the articulate arguments that we have for prospective parents who are exploring the value of a single sex education?

The Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) Limited and the International Boys' School Coalition (Australian Hub) showed a real spirit of innovation and exploration in joining together for this conference. I am not going to give an account of the challenging addresses by the many speakers rather I would like to point to some highlights through Kiwi eyes.

There is no doubt that the opening ceremony in the Annand Theatre of the beautiful Southport School was a highlight. The music provided by the Southport School was excellent and encouraged, even a Kiwi, to sing *Advance Australia Fair* with great enthusiasm! But no doubt the welcome to the country by Kombumerri Elder, Mr Graham Dillon was a most moving experience as was the music and dance performed by the Nahri dances. In this way as New Zealanders we came to appreciate something of the Aboriginal culture. We are so used to our Maori culture with our Powhiri and traditional welcomes that it was both moving and thrilling to experience

### ...and from a boys' school perspective.

What a stroke of inspiration it was from the organisers of the 'Equal and Different?' Conference to bring together the Heads and senior staff of both girls' and boys' schools from around Australia – and to set this gathering in the delightful surrounds of The Southport School on the Gold Coast.

From a boys' school perspective there was much of particular relevance and interest in Ken Rowe's comments on boys' educational needs and learning styles, in Tim Hawkes' own research (Boy oh Boy, where does he get his energy from?) and in exploring together 'The Testosterone Agenda.'

The comparative academic performance of girls and boys was intelligently explored, free from the generalisations and sensationalism that so often cloud rational debate. The benefits to boys of structure, variety and hands on involvement were underlined, as was the need for encouragement. And many of us men – with our higher degree of auditory processing problems – could identify with boys in class 'bobbing up and down in a sea of blah!'

*Continues on page 16...*



Continued from page 15...

the similarities and yet the strong differences between these two Indigenous peoples. Like many of our Maori Elders, Mr Dillon spoke with a gentle warmth and a strong gratitude to his forebears for the opportunities that he had been given.

The excellent address by Professor John Hay, Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Queensland served to challenge us as to the real reason that we were here at Southport and to remind us that our real mission was to take the time to try to make a difference for young people and for their future, to acknowledge the shape of their lives and to bring them forward towards the possibility that their future holds for them.

Throughout the conference we enjoyed the warm hospitality of The Southport School and St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls. We were well nourished and wonderfully entertained, especially by our dinner speaker Dr Frederick Sargent! This friendship extended by the Australian participants to their New Zealand members made the conference a most enjoyable one.

On reflection I don't believe that any of the speakers proved to us that single sex education is imperative for our young people. Professor Ken Rowe convincingly demonstrated the importance of the quality of teaching and his thesis that providing a single sex environment is not the reason for boys or girls success but the quality of teaching remains indisputable. Certainly as one listened to his excellent presentation one came to value more and more the amazing staff who determine the quality of our schools. The old adage "the school is as good as its staff" was clearly demonstrated by the extensive research undertaken by both Dr Ken Rowe and his wife to whom he referred throughout his address.

I often think that if our students can see us when we are out of the school they may be surprised. If they had seen the invigorating participation in Dr Jeannette Vos's varying activities to ensure our alertness and readiness for learning, they would be totally amazed. We probably amazed ourselves with our agility but again one could say "What has this got to do with the advantage of single sex education?" Again, Dr Vos's emphasis was on good learning and preparedness for it and excellent teaching which understands the different ways in which our students learn. Her comment "It is not how smart you are but it is how you are smart" is certainly something worth reflecting and reminding our students of.

The final excellent keynote speaker Dr Paula Barrett whom we enjoyed on Sunday morning spoke of childhood anxiety and depression and highlighted for us facts we all know about but need reminding of, that one in five children will experience a significant degree of impairment as a result of anxiety and that anxiety can be reinforced by parental response. She spoke of ways in which we can help our young people to a healthy mental attitude.



Opening ceremony: The Southport School Brass Ensemble



Carolyn Grantskalms, Christine Briggs & Nancy Hillier

The workshops in which we all participated probably did more to highlight ways in which single sex schools can benefit from each other. However, again, the emphasis was on learning and thinking. The excellent presentation which I attended by Dr Peter Lennox *Creating a Community of Thoughtful Learners* synthesised for me a great deal of my thinking and some of the planning that I have done to introduce change and to encourage more reflection on our teaching and learning here at St Margaret's.

So one may ask Why a conference entitled "Equal and Different"? What did we learn about the value of single sex education? For me, and this is a personal view, I came away stimulated and excited by the range of excellent speakers that we had but more than ever convinced that it is the quality of our staff and the professional development that we give them that makes the difference. Single sex or co-education is a parental choice. For some boys and girls they thrive and grow in a single sex environment. For others the presence of the opposite sex in a co-ed school is of greatest benefit to them. The important thing is that no one school is right for every child, so choice exists that serves the varying needs of our present and future young people.

No doubt because we have chosen to work in single sex schools we are truly committed to them and I will always believe that a single sex school makes a huge difference to a young woman. I see it day by day and I witness its benefits by the success of our past students at University and in their chosen careers. The fact is these two days of conference stimulated us anew to go on striving to give the very best in quality to the young people in our care.

As a New Zealander I find it more and more necessary, particularly in the Independent School sector and in the single sex sector too to look across the Tasman for professional development and stimulation. I greatly enjoy the friendship and warmth of my Australian colleagues. The exchanges that our school has now been able to set up with similar schools in Australia and the future opportunities that I am sure exists are a great enrichment. While the Alliance is an Australasian organisation, it is great to see that New Zealand now has an important part in this very worthwhile organisation from which I can receive the support, challenge and the networking to ensure that this school is able to constantly improve the quality of what it offers its young women.

Thank you to those who had the courage to conceive of a Joint Conference. Thank you to all the organisers and thank you to everyone for the great hospitality and collegiality that I enjoyed during these two days. The summertime boost helped me as we flew into Christchurch when the Pilot announced that it was 4°C. In spite of the weather I still felt invigorated and enthused and glad to be back to put some of the ideas I gleaned into practice.

*Claudia Wysocki, St Margaret's College, Christchurch, New Zealand*