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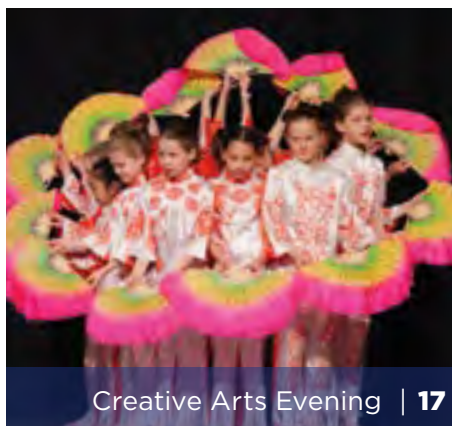
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It tells you that there is even more information available online for your desktop or mobile device at:

www.saintkentigern.com



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From the Head of Saint Kentigern

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom. It was the age of foolishness

Charles Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities

Charles Dicken's 1859 rumination about the French Revolution seems equally apt to the challenges facing us today as we strive to provide the best possible education for this generation of young people. There are so many complex educational dilemmas we need to understand and try to reconcile. These dilemmas include:

- This is the most intensely stimulating time in history to be a student, but this is the most confusing time to understand what is worth studying.
- Students need choice about what they learn and to be able to explore the things they are passionate about, but it has never been more important that they are given the opportunity to be interested in things they have no knowledge of.
- It has never been more important to educate students so they can be successful in future employment, but there has never been a time when the nature of the economy and jobs are changing so fast.

- Young people need to develop qualities of hard work, perseverance and resilience, but this 'App generation' is given the impression that everything should be easy.

- Students without a disciplined mind will not be able to succeed in a demanding workplace, but students who do not also have creative capacities will find their jobs will be replaced by computers.

- The importance of gaining high levels of education has never been greater, but this is the first time in history in which having a higher education did not guarantee you a (good) job.

- It is very important for students to have a strong understanding of their own cultural identity, but it is never been more important to understand and value other cultural identities.

- Learning to communicate expertly in English through a wide range of media is essential to success, but learning languages other than English has never been more valuable.

- Students need to be experts in a chosen field,

but never has it been more important to be able to synthesise information from differing bodies of knowledge.

- Students need to be able to use digital technology to their advantage, but some of the technology is designed to addict them to mindless games.
- Having a strong ethical foundation with which to navigate the internet and social media is critically important, but it is difficult for us to predict in what form those challenges to values will come.

One of the ways the Ministry of Education has responded to these dilemmas is to encourage schools to create 'Modern Learning Environments' in which they state that there needs to be a shift from 'teaching' to 'learning.' Students are to be empowered to 'explore their own learning, working at their own pace.' Students will 'co-construct' their own learning pathways. Some go as far as to say, Modern Learning 'is impossible in a teacher directed classroom.' 'Young children need to be able to regulate their own learning and become less reliant on the teacher to regulate the pace and goals of learning.'

This is a great theoretical concept but fundamentally flawed in practice. Fortunately, we, in the Independent School sector, are not pressurised to conform to these unproven ideas. In a time of great uncertainty, perhaps the first thing we should do is remember the things we know to be true. In terms of student learning and a 'Modern Learning Environment' we know:

- Young people do not have the life experience to possess any skill in salient determinacy. They are not good at working out what is important 'in life' let alone having the ability to 'regulate their own learning'. Adults need to advise and guide them.
- Getting taught something is a far more effective way of learning than having your learning 'facilitated.' Education expert, John Hattie gives 'Direct instruction' an effect rating of 0.8 - second only to effective feedback.
- There is a body of knowledge that you must have. This enables you to learn important stuff later on. Put simply: the more you know, the more you are able to learn (and the reverse is true). To leave the design of what is important base knowledge up to children is simply foolish.
- 'To think outside the box you need to have the box to start with.' David Perkins - Harvard University. You have to have in-depth knowledge before you can apply it to problem solving and synthesis. This in-depth knowledge is best taught (and in many cases can only be learnt through direct instruction).
- A 'student's own pace' will not reflect their learning potential. We are all intellectually lazy or like our 'cognitive ease.' We need to

‘This is the most intensely stimulating time in history to be a student, but this is the most confusing time to understand what is worth studying.’

develop intellectual discipline, but until we do, this needs to be supported and structured.

- Our ability to exercise self-control, while very important, is limited. As any parent will attest, these limitations are even greater in children and teenagers. To do things that are hard takes a lot of self-control. The role of the teacher in providing additional discipline and motivation for students is essential if they are to reach their potential.
- The ‘personalised learning’ pedagogy says that we should teach students only how to access material, not to learn it, and that this will aid critical thinking and creativity. However, the brain ‘thinks’ better if there is embedded factual knowledge that can be used to ‘think’ with. As any ‘smart’ person will tell you, prior knowledge and memorisation are actually a good basis for creative problem solving.
- A third to half the population are, by nature, introverts. The type of M.L.E. learning spaces and the pedagogy that sits in behind them can be distressing for introverts. Introverts are as good at problem solving and creativity as the extroverts in our society. They need to be respected.
- Students face a fast changing society that can seem to lack stability and order. Both at home and school, they need and respond best to routine, clear lines of authority and to a clear set of external expectations. The reality, for most, is that they do not cope well with ‘taking responsibility for their own learning and developing a personalised co-constructed learning pathway.’

I do not pretend to have any easy answers to solve all the challenges of what a modern education should be like to prepare students for their future. What I do know is that there is no ‘silver bullet’ or ‘Education App’. I also know that too many of the initiatives tried in the nation’s schools have not only failed to raise standards but resulted in New Zealand’s steady fall down the International rankings in both Reading and Mathematics. We need to concentrate on perfecting proven educational practices and to innovate by encouraging our teachers – our education experts – to work through the issues with clarity, intelligence and a constant review of what the actual educational outcomes for students are. With a careful, proven ‘best practice’ approach we can ensure that the children at Saint Kentigern get a world class, and world leading, education.

Mr David Hodge
Head of Saint Kentigern

¹ John Hattie and Gregory Yates, *Visible Learning and the Science of How we Learn*. Pg 73

Saint Kentigern Raised \$149,125 for World Vision!

During the 40 Hour Famine this year, Saint Kentigern students across all three schools raised a record amount of \$149,125.04 for World Vision. Our schools have had a long-standing relationship with World Vision, with the College being one of the top fundraising schools in the country for many years. This year, the College raised a very substantial \$102,252. The Boys’ School increased their total from last year, raising a whopping 38,416.84, becoming one of the top fundraising schools in the upper North Island based on roll, with the Girls’ School almost doubling their previous amount with \$8,456.20.

The funds raised by the College will go towards our continued support of Chigodi Village in Malawi. Since our relationship began, the improvements to the village have been significant. Their students now have desks, ‘female friendly’ toilets, orchards and gardens, a new library and administration block. Service Co-ordinator at the College, Mr Mark Robinson, will lead a group of students next year to Malawi, the second time students have made the trip.

Our two primary schools joined the wider World Vision focus on providing child-friendly spaces in refugee camps for children from Syria. This project is helping to provide safe, supportive places where children have access to arts, sports, education and counselling so they can start to recover from the trauma of war. Charities cannot stop this war but they can help to improve the living conditions, particularly for the children.

Each campus received awards at the 40 Hour Famine Awards night. The Boys’ School received three awards - one for the Highest Fundraising School (based on roll size) in the upper North Island, an Outstanding Fundraising Effort award, and teacher, Mrs Gaye Pilkington received an award for ‘Outstanding Famine Organiser’ a role she has undertaken for more than 20 years. The College received the award for ‘Top Fundraising School,’ Bella Conyngham received one for ‘Top Individual Fundraiser’ and the Girls’ School received an Excellence Award.

