



Public submission made to the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools

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Summary

1. Professional development of Teachers in a “Behaviour and Communication” methodology in conjunction with age appropriate, congruent material into the National curriculum to then educate children ... starting as young as 6 years of age, or earlier, right through to Grade 10, but not limited to just “Behaviour and Communication”. Other curriculum addressing self-development might include - character, identity, resilience, self-regard/respect/self-respect, assertiveness, independence, interdependence, values and beliefs, and self-brand management. This knowledge is desperately required, especially for the lower performing students (non-academic) who require such skills and competencies for workforce success and in society generally
2. Capture of the 4 core subjects (Maths, Humanities, Science and English) by Behavioural/Communication style (as in idea one), available 24 x 7 through the WWW for students and Teachers to access, coupled with a 180 degree rethink of homework/Teaching – from grade 6 through to grade 12
3. Streaming of low academic students into a completely different environment from the end of grade 8, with a focus to transition them to the workforce and a shift to independent living (life skills), the ultimate goal to buy a micro business from a retiring owner (single person mum and dad business)
4. Professional dress for Teachers and Administrators – designed to take into consideration gender, season, subject and type of school – to lift the professionalism of Teaching

Main submission

Idea 1 - Behaviour and Communication

Emotional Intelligence/Quotient or EQ is a critical part of a child's cognitive development and by default, success today – at school, in sport, the workforce, within a family or indeed on the street.

EQ can be learnt at any time and is not dependent on IQ.

Establishing Behaviour and Communication early provides the foundation for improved learning.

Excellence in Schools can be stimulated by establishing a stable, predictable and consistent environment that is measured, nurtured and developed using a Behaviour and Communication methodology – for both Teachers and Students.

The current National Curriculum pays little attention to developing the knowledge, skills and competencies of students in this critical area of education. There is an over emphasis on academic competency with an almost blind eye to self-development of the mind. Unfortunately with the current education system, there is a clear bias on “fixing” society issues (equality, political correctness, global warming etc...) over self-development, a massive mistake that will be reflected on in the future.

Most Teachers do not understand behavioural science, either from their perspective or from the perspective of others. Behaviour and Communication models date back several decades (Moulton Marston, DiSC), acknowledging that more recent research has surfaced since the 1980's (R. BarOn, D. Goldman) of which has been commercialised in the Corporate world through companies such as RocheMartin (ECi, developed by Dr. Martyn Newman, Monash) or the Flippen Group (FlipSide). Myers-Briggs, Margerison-McCann etc ... other examples of models used in the business world.

EQ for low achieving students (academically) is poorly addressed/not taught/nor practiced and certainly not measured.

For high achieving students, EQ is crucial for future workforce success, in particular, career progression.

EQ in the workforce now outweighs IQ. What you do (the task) today is expected (“hygiene”). HOW tasks are approached is the critical factor (practicing emotional intelligence).

For career progression into leadership and management roles, strong EQ and strong IQ are required.

In most jobs today, the key differentiator is the person and how they approach the work. This is a marked shift when compared to previous generations where weightings were the opposite.

Successful people know how to go about “it” ... as compared to those that do not and by default often struggle with their life, especially in relationships and in achieving their goals and objectives, whatever they maybe.

This deficiency needs to be addressed quickly so that success is available to more students; especially as they leave the Education system. The transition right now in many cases is brutal as there is little evidence of such knowledge, understanding and competency.

There are many determinants/elements involved in establishing and practicing EQ, for example a tight school culture (with flexible boundaries), getting beliefs right, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-worth, taking responsibility, demonstrating respect and self-respect, understanding change and how to manage it and so on.

Fact is, students are disengaging in higher numbers from the current academically driven mantra, resulting in more young people playing the victim as rejection/failure sets in, blaming and finding excuses, expecting rights and entitlements over taking responsibility for their circumstances – the “snowflake” generation as it is now being branded.

EQ skills and competencies for Teachers should be “hygiene” in the delivery of education, specifically, Communication and Behaviour.

Practicing the right communications and behaviours is a key part of the foundation for effective learning to proceed – for both Teachers and students.

Educational delivery must be predictable and consistent.

Current styles of educational delivery are actually confusing and damaging developing minds as students are exposed to many variations from Teachers who believe that they have their own unique style and “it works”.

In High schools, students are regularly exposed to 6 different styles each day.

Inconsistencies kill businesses and that includes the business of Education.

It is rare to find more than a handful of Teachers who leave impressionable memories on students – perhaps 1 in 20 (or less) when students are prompted after leaving school - “how many Teachers truly engaged and influenced their thinking/enjoyment of learning?”. Why????

The answer lies in the variations/fluctuations of delivery – very much restricted to a Teacher’s natural behavioural style ... most of the time (worse still, Teacher disengagement from the system, of which is a completely different topic).

It is acknowledged that the selection of future Teachers will include psychometric checks as a part of Tertiary entrance. This will deliver Teachers with better behavioural matches and by default more consistent and successful provision of

education. It is of course an admission of the importance of behavioural and communication.

In summary, to improve student engagement, one of the most important considerations is in the professional development of Teachers to understand an appropriate behaviour and communication methodology and then practice it and be measured on it by their subject heads against a established Teacher standard (by subject and grade).

There are many models available in the marketplace – one for Primary schools and then one for Secondary schools need to be researched and selected. Most models have scientifically proven tools that establish the required behaviours and communications as well as strategies to address presented challenges.

Teachers initially need to understand their own behaviour and communication (natural and adapted) – their strengths and weaknesses. Whichever model and methodology is adopted, the most critical aspect is in not just understanding one's own style – but that of the rest of the population to be able to work out what to do and what not to do when communicating. In effect, adjusting to situations presented, not just bestowing a default/natural style of behaviour in the majority of situations of which is so often the current mantra.

Required Communications and Behaviours has been common work practice in Executive roles in most large Businesses, Corporations and Government for 20 years.

Expected Behaviours and Communication for Teachers need to be established by subject then by grade – 80% most likely common. Job descriptions need to include the relevant Behaviours and Communications so that the standard is understood and improvements made over time.

The teaching, learning and practising of expected/required Behaviours and Communications by students is also a critical success factor in educational delivery – feedback must be included in report cards with set goals to address areas of development. A recognised model that both students and parents can both understand is critical.

To achieve this, the National Curriculum needs to urgently deliver age specific knowledge to students so that they can understand their own behaviour and communication, and that of others, including strategies to improve their skills and competencies. Assessment must be made against a set standard that is documented and understood – by year group.

Communication and Behavioural models generally group the population into 4 groups that covers 95% of the population. This level of understanding/competency would be more than adequate for the majority of children in the classroom by Teachers.

Grade Coordinators might break those categories into 8 groups and operate at a higher level of understanding to that of Teachers – noting that just about all issues that land on a Grade Coordinators desk are indeed behavioural.

Importantly as students are taken through the standard corrective processes with Grade Co-ordinators, identification of poor behaviours and communications need to be agreed to, documented with appropriate restorative goals to understand and practice.

Principals and Vice Principals would be expected to understand the 8 groupings with Grade Coordinators, School Counsellors or Psychologists.

Fact is ... at least 8 in 10 issues are behavioural – at home, in sporting clubs, at school, in the workplace and in society.

Note:

In Primary schools the best formula may well be to group children as early as possible into the 4 primary behavioural types and group them matched to a Teacher's natural behavioural style. The objective to engage more children as early as possible, before mixing behavioural styles.

Idea 2 – On-line Core Curriculum

Capture the 4 core subjects on line – broken down by grade by units of curriculum, packaged into 20 to 30 minute sessions. Each subject delivered 4 ways – using the primary Behavioural styles so that students can watch lessons delivered in any or all of those styles, tuning delivery to their preferred style.

The benefits of such capture and delivery (access) are massive – lessons reviewed, lessons recovered, accelerated learning and the list goes on, taking enormous pressure off Teachers especially when students are struggling or missing school/classroom time for various reasons.

The question has to be asked – why should core curriculum be different from school to school, State to State? The National Curriculum is set and has to be delivered, right? Today, the same lesson is delivered multiple times every day of the year across schools and State. Why?

This idea is a classic example of leverage – do it once and use it multiple times, accessed anywhere, anytime.

The other great benefit of capturing core curriculum is in addressing another massive issue (in the learning process) – homework. The majority of students despise homework and do not attempt it.

Homework today requires self-driven motivation – a poorly developed competency for the majority. By capturing core subjects on line, “homework” could be replaced by on-line Teaching (from the best of the best) using the recorded material.

Class time could then be focussed on the application of those learnings ... to support/coach/teach the gaps, establish the finer learnings, plus respond to feedback and questioning by students from their on-line learning Teaching experience the night before.

A Teacher could use a combination of delivery techniques, mixing it up.

The most important benefit of this idea is to free up the Teacher’s time “in class” to check and confirm learnings, and then adjust delivery to the situation presented – right now there is simply not enough time for a Teacher to “Teach” and then interact/coach and support to consolidate the learnings, especially one on one.

Those without the internet would have to be provided with access to the school’s network to cover the content straight after school ... or as a back-up, between 6pm and 9pm should social and/or sporting commitments conflict. All that is needed for the streaming of lessons is a mobile phone. Of course mobile phone chargers would need to be present and charged. Any internet enabled device would suffice – mobiles, tablets, desktops or laptops.

In summary, address “equality of access” to the best Education, and in the process, take pressure off Teachers. Lift the management and development of students to higher levels of learning whereby they can be coached, supported and delegated work in the classroom depending on their stage of development.

The NBN has arrived, now is the time to use it.

Idea 3 – Streaming of low academic students from grade 8

Not streaming students who have not engaged into the school environment by the end of grade 8 presents a massive challenge – not just to them, but to others. Today they are failed forward.

Providing a purpose for these students is critical, to re-engage them.

It is suggested that the focus for these students be on the practical aspects of their education and their impending lives ahead.

For example:

Self-development - Behavioural and Communication, Identity, Getting the beliefs right, Understanding change and how it works, taking responsibility/accountability, Leadership

Social media and its application

Technology and the workforce

Sales and the sale process basics

Research and Marketing basics

Administration basics

Understanding productivity – systems and processes

Nutrition, including how to eat well/cooking meals

Law and order, drugs and alcohol

Application and use of technology – building a web site, using and managing social media

Basic financial ability/management of running a business

Physical well-being/management of the body/sport/adventure/general health

Work experience in areas of genuine and appropriate interest

Opening potential opportunity to jobs/owning a business or potential reintegration into the main stream with a focus on VCAL entrance/completion (using idea 2)

Australia has an ageing population built on small and medium business, a stark contrast from the USA where big business rules. The number of micro businesses in Australia (per capita) is staggering. Hundreds of thousands, probably well over half a million, with 80% of them run by just the owner.

The average age of those single person businesses is at least 50 – many of these people believe that they can sell their business and retire. Unfortunately they are sadly mistaken. They don't realise they have a business to sell – as they are indeed the business, it will not work without them!

A similar argument can be mounted for 2 person businesses – especially mum and dad businesses.

These business owners are destined to join the Welfare and Health queues for up to 25 years, asset rich, cash flow poor.

Even worse, their customers will find another supplier, a larger business, destroying entrepreneurship in this country for future generations.

Many of these businesses are basic businesses, providing key opportunities for students to learn from. Mowing lawns, cleaning, driving a truck, running a stall in a Farmer's market, producing food, distributing product, graffiti removal, providing basic services to the elderly, contract driver, Traffic Management, building bars for the ultimate man's cave as they retire or have a mid-life crisis, and the list goes on and on and on. These businesses can and will survive long term.

Of course, how the business is run is the critical factor – how it is marketed, how the sales process works, how the books are managed, how the invoicing and payments work, managing margins, managing cashflow, leading and managing oneself and the list goes on.

Interestingly, coaching and mentoring from the Business Owner would confirm and reinforce the importance of EQ in running a successful business.

Technology and productivity are the major drivers of a successful business today (net profit), noting that the HOW they are run (behaviour and communication specifically) is the major difference – these attributes cannot be outsourced to another country!! EQ will indeed become even more valuable in the jobs of the future – how things are done. The actual work is usually straightforward.

The National Curriculum does not deliver the necessary skills and competencies required for running a small business or indeed even being a valued and effective employee of a small/micro business.

The benefits of streaming dis-engaged students into a separate channel are numerous. For starters, it provides an opportunity for re-engagement of disengaged students, a student who has no hope of ever closing the gap that has opened up academically.

Instead of failing students forward creating further problems, disengaged students are granted a pathway that has a purpose – practical reading, writing and arithmetic infused into their learning experience, a curriculum that is driven by a real-world approach.

The objective of this pathway is to contract a job and in some instances buy a business or in most situations work from a job into ownership as a career path. The bonus being that the business owner may well offer vendor finance to the emerging entrepreneur to buy/finance the purchase and coach/mentor students to a successful business life. Importantly, setting up their retirement/super in return. A true win/win.

The number and diverse nature of small business is not well understood by the Education system. Changing the approach for these students offers a golden opportunity to re-engage disengaging students, but also to stem the rot for inevitable dependency by many on the welfare system, and in a small number of cases the predictable crimes and use of drugs/alcohol that will destroy their lives and affect so many in the community as a result.

I suspect there are many studies that have identified the economic benefit of such a pathway, even if it is measured from the other end as a cost reduction to society in rehabilitation, possible imprisonment and a life of welfare dependency.

Fact is, these students are not going to meet IQ/academic levels expected in mainstream Educational delivery from the age of 14 (even earlier for some).

Assessment and measurements would need to be applied in the learning process – including assessments by the business owners themselves – in return for the labour provided by/experience delivered to the student.

Note:

Births increased into the mid 1960's when the pill was introduced defining the start of X Gen, when the birth rate dropped. On the assumption that people retire at 67 years of age (it maybe later for single person businesses), then 1965 plus 67 – 2032 presents an increasing number of businesses for students to pursue. There is at least 15 years of exponential opportunity ahead before X Gen starts retiring, in reducing numbers.

Idea 4 – Dress Standard

It is nothing short of hypocritical to have students smartly dressed for school to then witness Teachers arrive in fancy dress. The first rule in any sales book is to dress appropriately.

Fact is, Teaching is first and foremost a sales job – selling Education (managing students' buying process) ... current dress standards are a disaster.

Dress standard establishes congruency with students, another key element in student engagement for the professional delivery of Education and for representation in the community in the broader context.

A smart, appropriate wardrobe broken down by gender, subject, management, administration, season and type of school is vital if the profession wants to be taken seriously.

Regarding cost, the same argument would be applied for student uniform costs ... by the individual, but tax deductible.

From sporting clubs to societies to Corporations to Government Departments, identification and presence in the work environment or in the community is part of "work hygiene" today – Teaching is no different.

Dress is the first and most visible reflection of any person's identity – right now it is a shambles in the Education Department.

Interestingly, there would be a high correlation between the best Teachers and the standard/appropriateness of their dress sense ...