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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Pasi Sahlberg (cited in Munro, 2016) predicts a big tobacco or sugar-style marketing war over whether more technology in the classroom is beneficial or harmful to children. Linking screen technology to the progressive decline in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores of Australian 15-year-olds, as compared to other countries in the OECD, the Finnish educational consultant foresees an argument that reacts to shared perceptions of a decline in educational effectiveness across all western countries.

Sahlberg claims support from Harvard associated research in Alberta (McRae, 2016, paras. 6-10), with teacher responses asserting computers, phones and other devices were helping students research their own questions (76%) and educators communicate better with parents (79%). However, 56% of Alberta teachers said more students are telling them they've been bullied or harassed online, 67% said technology is a growing distraction in class for students, more than 50% of teachers feel distracted, too. As well 76% say children are having more difficulty focusing in school and 66% observe more kids are coming to school sleepy. Most teachers also said they've seen a dramatic change in emotional, social, behavioural and cognitive challenges in students during the last three to five years (McRae, 2016, para.8).

Researchers hope this and future extended studies will provide evidence to help schools, parents, health-care workers and other stakeholders make good decisions about how technology should or shouldn't be used at home, but also in schools. A useful media planning tool for families (AAP, n.d.), is a potential resource for assisting school/parent interaction about 'tired' or distracted students.

Kilgour, Fitzsimmons, Baywood and Merriman, in this TEACH issue, unpack the context and impact of the 'STEM revolution' on two schools. Ambivalence, confusion and enthusiastic adoption are noted as staff responses. Thompson models the application of a transformative whole of school use of 21st century technology in producing Toronto Campus News (TCN).

MacRae (2016) further noted "increased: anxiety disorders (85%), Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (75%), and mood disorders such as depression (73%)" (paras.9-10).

Reacting to potential challenges for Australian student wellbeing, Brown proactively proposes "cultural architects" within a school response—the

Invictus Wellbeing Program— to assure student 'flourishing'. Fyson challenges indulgent western individualism and self-sufficiency by asserting important character development through a service orientation.

While Pasi Sahlberg (cited in Munro, 2016) debunked suggestions that Finland had 'the answer' to effective education, he affirmed right approaches as: "its child-focused approach, with an emphasis on play, a later school starting age (7), and letting each child develop at their own pace" (para. 13).

Current issue authors advocating child-focused approaches include: Lewis in "coaching learning" through goal setting, Sutton and Shields supporting dyslexia by empathetic strategies, Efstratiou and Cruz using child friendly posters to ensure understanding of whole school culture change; while play as learning in pre-school is part of Oliva's reflection on pre-schools.

Own pace development is the intended reaction to knowing the impact of caffeine on school performance (Beamish et al.) and integral to Making Jesus Real for students—Ogle's advocated passion for you and me to adopt,

Errata:

The editor apologises for the misspelling of Delvin's surname as an author of 'making thinking visible' in the last issue. TEACH online includes the correction.

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[Photography: Nikolai Agafonov]