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A tribute to Eric Alfred Magnusson (1933–2009)

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BOOK REVIEW

Inside I’m hurting: Practical strategies for supporting children with attachment difficulties in schools

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One size fits all is often the catch cry you hear in schools. The students won’t think it’s fair if I treat one student in my class differently, is the other common fallacy in education today. As both a teacher and therapist, Louise Bomber writes for busy teachers who want to make a difference in their students’ lives and make inclusion a reality for their students with attachment difficulties.

Each chapter gives practical strategies in bullet point lists for easy reference and useful chapter summaries. The book is loaded with examples, which are indicated in italics to make it easy to locate what you need as a teacher.

Inside I’m hurting re-affirms teachers of the good teaching practises they are already engaged in, and strengthens these strategies for the best possible outcomes for children who are hurting on the inside. She answers the hard questions like, How do I treat one student differently to the rest? and Why won’t my program work for everyone, all the time?. Bomber explains how to support the hurting child in both recovery and learning adaptive responses to trauma. The author emphasises that small steps are taken but are intentionally planned for by collaborative, supportive teams.

Bomber quotes Bowlby (1951, p. 114) as saying, “Children are not slates from which the past can be rubbed by a duster or sponge, but human beings who carry their previous experiences with them and whose behaviour in the present is profoundly affected by what has gone before.” Children are not unlike you and I. Our personalities and experiences are all different. We expect to be treated according to our talents and fears, and children are no different. They deserve for themselves, what we expect for ourselves! TEACH

Reference

A tribute to Eric Alfred Magnusson (1933–2009)
Lynden Rogers
Dean of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Avondale College, NSW

It was Principal, W G C Murdoch, who in 1950 encouraged the young Eric Magnusson to study at the Australasian Missionary College, now Avondale, and arranged for him to take the external BSc degree from London University. This was at a time when it was otherwise impossible in Australia to obtain a recognised degree outside a university.

Eric took his BSc in June 1953. Within a few years he was back at Avondale with two PhDs, providing pivotal leadership in the new Science Department from 1961–1970, after which he became Principal.

Both as scientist and principal, Eric pursued a long-held dream—the academic advancement of Avondale. The initial challenges he faced included recruiting staff and upgrading their academic qualifications. When access to London science degrees closed, Eric used his strategic connections to set Avondale on its first tentative steps toward the official recognition of its courses. The large range of fully accredited degrees which Avondale offers today’s students has grown out of his vision.

After 10 years as Avondale College Principal, Eric returned to full-time science, firstly at the ANU Research School of Chemistry and later at the Defence Force Academy, where he retired as Associate Professor, and with which he was still associated as a Visiting Fellow at the time of his death.

Over this period of time Eric took a keen interest in the comprehension of forensic science by criminal court jurors, not only publishing in this area but supervising research students. He also participated strongly in the children’s drug education magazine, One Jump Ahead, published over 12 years by his wife Nainie, for which she was awarded a medal of the Order of Australia. It was for such contributions to society that he was honoured in the Peoplescape display on the lawns of Parliament House.

Over four decades Eric also tried to help his Christian community face difficult issues relating to faith and science, an area in which he held a keen interest.

In what can only euphemistically be called retirement, Eric maintained research in theoretical chemistry in addition to his forensic work, as well as working as an industrial consultant. He also continued to serve Avondale College: as chairman of various Accreditation Committees, standing Academic Vice-President and as visiting science lecturer. Students quickly became aware of Eric’s vast conceptual grasp of quantum physics and chemistry.

He was physically active, completing a number of Sydney City to Surf races. He also insisted on taking up new challenges, such walking through Cradle Mountain in winter in his mid 70s!

One of Eric’s most endearing legacies was his ability to mix comfortably with all ages. His friends ranged from College contemporaries right down to current students, truly a rare achievement. TEACH