



Australian Council of State School Organisations

The National Voice of Parents of Children in Australia's Public Schools and Their School Communities

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION DIGEST

Values in Education Special

13 May 2010

- [HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: \(4 items\)](#)
- [THE VALUES OF NATIONAL INTEGRITY: Welcome to country](#)
- [INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: UNESCO says Inclusive Education Key](#)
- [RELIGION & ETHICS: \(3 items\)](#)
- [CRITICAL THINKING: \(2 items\)](#)
- [OUTDOOR EDUCATION: \(2 items\)](#)
- [CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP: \(3 items\)](#)
- [HUMANE EDUCATION: World of Animal Welfare](#)
- [SERVICE LEARNING: \(2 items\)](#)
- [NEWS FROM HERE & THERE: \(3 items\)](#)
- [REMINDERS](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Enhancing Human Rights Education

Hon Julia Gillard MP & Hon Robert McClelland MP, Media Release, 21 April 2010

Minister for Education Julia Gillard and Attorney-General Robert McClelland today outlined a comprehensive suite of education initiatives to ensure all Australians have access to information about human rights.

These measures form the centrepiece of Australia's Human Rights Framework and reflect the key recommendation of the report by the National Human Rights Consultation Committee that education must be 'the highest priority for improving and promoting human rights in Australia.'

"Enhancing our efforts to improve human rights education is critical as too many Australians are not informed about what human rights are or how they are currently protected," Mr McClelland said.

The Framework outlines a number of practical, positive initiatives, to enhance human rights education including:

- greater support for human rights education across the community, including primary and secondary schools;
- investing \$6.6 million to expand the community education role of the Australian Human Rights Commission;
- investing \$3.8 million to improve human rights awareness in the Commonwealth public sector, including through the development of a human rights toolkit and guidance materials for policy development and implementation of Government programs; and
- investing \$2 million for the development and delivery of community education and engagement programs to promote a greater understanding of human rights by non-government organisations (NGOs).

Read entire release: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100421_141010.aspx

[< top >](#)

Australia's Human Rights Framework

Attorney General's Department, 21 April 2010

The Framework is based on five key principles and focuses on:

- reaffirming a commitment to our human rights obligations;
- the importance of human rights education;
- enhancing our domestic and international engagement on human rights issues;
- improving human rights protections including greater parliamentary scrutiny; and
- achieving greater respect for human rights principles within the community.

Specifically, the Framework demonstrates the Government's commitment to positive and practical action in relation to human rights through a number of key commitments, including:

- investing over \$12 million in a comprehensive suite of education initiatives to promote a greater understanding of human rights across the community;
- establishing a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to provide greater scrutiny of legislation for compliance with our international human rights obligations;
- requiring that each new Bill introduced into Parliament is accompanied by a statement of compatibility with our international human rights obligations;
- combining federal anti-discrimination laws into a single Act to remove unnecessary regulatory overlap and make the system more user-friendly; and
- creating an annual NGO Human Rights Forum to enable comprehensive engagement with non-government organisations on human rights matters.

Further information: <http://www.ag.gov.au/humanrightsframework>

[< top >](#)

Human rights framework only a start

Frank Brennan, Eureka Street, 23 April 2010

The Rudd Government's Human Rights Framework announced this week by Attorney General Robert McClelland is a welcome though incomplete addition to protection of human rights in Australia.

The key elements including legislation setting up a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, funds for human rights education, and a progressive audit of existing legislation including discrimination laws and national security laws should be uncontroversial even in an election year.

After all they are measures fully consistent with the submission put to the National Human Rights Consultation by the Federal Coalition.

The Labor government has baulked at the recommendation for an Australian Human Rights Act which would allow judges to assess Commonwealth laws, policies and practices for human rights compliance.

Mr McClelland told the National Press Club that 'a legislative charter of rights is not included in the Framework as the Government believes that the enhancement of human rights should be done in a way that, as far as possible, unites rather than divides our community'.

Read entire article: <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=20848>

Fr Frank Brennan SJ is professor of law at the Australian Catholic University's Public Policy Institute and Adjunct Professor at the Australian National University. He chaired the National Human Rights Consultation Committee in 2009.

[< top >](#)

Proposed Children's Commissioner - Greens move legislation to protect children's rights

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, media release, 13 May 2010

The Australian Greens have today moved to protect young Australians by introducing a bill into the Senate to establish a Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Senator Hanson-Young, Greens spokesperson on Youth and Human Rights, says legislation is needed to protect the rights of young Australians.

"From children who are bullied at school, to the babies, infants and kids who are victims of abuse or neglect, to the thousands of children and young people who are homeless on our streets every night, we have a vulnerable generation of young Australians and we need to do more to help them," Senator Hanson-Young said.

"There is no national figure whose sole role is to stand up for children's rights - but there should be. That's why I am introducing a bill today to establish a Commissioner who would provide a voice for children, a means of communication with government, and a simple way to register complaints about how they are treated."

Read entire release: <http://sarah-hanson-young.greensmps.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

THE VALUES OF NATIONAL INTEGRITY

Why 'welcome to country' is more than formality

Tony Smith, Eureka Street, 31 March 2010

For several reasons, specific religious recognition at public meetings cannot have the same importance as an acknowledgement of country. First, not all Australians claim allegiance to a Christian deity. Indeed, the analogy is relevant only because Australia's Indigenous peoples have a genuinely spiritual association with the land. By recognising this link, all Australians can all be united in a non-denominational spirituality that fosters our spirits.

Second, justice demands that we make this acknowledgement. Over the last fifty years, dating from at least the 1967 referenda that removed discriminatory mentions of Indigenous people from the Constitution, we have struggled to find appropriate ways of acknowledging the forced alienation of the land. Judicial decisions, legislative responses and administrative programs have been mostly sincere, but clearly imperfect, attempts to redress the wrongs inflicted on the Indigenous peoples. Despite the conservative suspicion of symbolic actions such as treaties and apologies, these are far from being mere tokens. Symbolic actions have the advantage of avoiding legalistic impediments and they express a genuine aspiration for a fairer Australia.

Third, Indigenous stewardship of the land sets an important example for environmental sustainability. Although Europeans have occupied Australia for some 230 years, Aboriginal occupancy stretches back 40,000 years. As a nation, we have much to learn from the special relationship between the people and the land, provided we care to listen. For most Australians, hearing an acknowledgement of country might be one of the few times we are prompted to think about Aboriginal issues. Indigenous people are under-represented in parliament and the media and in socio-economic elites. It is all too easy for those with reactionary views to present them as 'other', and even as a pampered minority favoured by political correctness.

Most baby-boomers remember standing for the English national anthem at the cinema. As a consequence of national maturity, Australia has abandoned that practice. It is also a sign of maturity that we value the reconciliation process. When Indigenous peoples travelled through the lands of neighbours, they understood that it was customary to acknowledge the people of those lands. When we show that we are learning from the traditional custodians of our land, it is important evidence that Australian society has a commitment to becoming more civilised. We should proudly maintain acknowledgement of country as a simple expression of a desire to live with integrity in this physically and socially unique land.

Read entire article at: <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=20228>

Tony Smith has taught political science at several universities, most recently at the University of Sydney.

[< top >](#)

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

UNESCO Global Monitoring Report says Inclusive Education Key

Australian Disability & Development Consortium Newsletter, March 2010

UNESCO's annual Global Monitoring Report on Education for All, "Reaching the Marginalized", warns that the global economic downturn risks creating a generation of children whose lives have been irreparably damaged by being denied their right to education and identifies children with disabilities as amongst the most vulnerable.

The report describes an "inclusive education triangle" consisting of the learning environment, accessibility and affordability and entitlements and opportunities and recognizes that for quality education governments need to revise their approaches to teaching, learning and curriculum development.

It also points out that "ability groupings", or streaming students according to academic achievement seldom help the marginalized. Several of the recommendations in this 2010 report are consistent with recommendations contained in Inclusion International's recent global report on inclusive education "Better Education for All When We're Included Too" published by the University of Salamanca Spain and released last November.

These include setting equity targets for all EFA goals; gathering better data on those children who are not in school or who leave school early and why; mobilizing international cooperation; and improving cooperation amongst ministries.

Read entire article at: <http://www.addc.org.au/2010/03/addc-newsletter-13th-edition-march-2010/>

[< top >](#)

RELIGION & ETHICS

Evangelical Ethics?

Meg Wallace, Online Opinion, 27 April 2010

It is a commonplace that religious groups strive to evangelise and recruit members. That is why they seek to intervene in the schoolroom and preach their message. Now non-religious groups seek to do the same by promoting their views for students not attending religious instruction in government schools. While those advocating such a course state that it is not a kind of ersatz religious alternative to religion, it will be seen as such by students. The issue is one of evangelism by yet another group that wishes to enter a war of beliefs in schools.

The James Ethics Centre, which has helped develop an alternative course to religious instruction as a secular "ethics" course says it is aimed at helping children "to learn to bring evidence to bear in their thinking about ethical matters". Surely this is something from which all students can benefit were the content of such a new course to be part of the approved national curriculum.

Such a course could complement the values that are already taught to all children through their general education: they learn cultural and moral values through, for example, history, English and drama, civics instruction and even sport. From the point of view of good citizenship, these values are well established in our political heritage (for example in the international human rights documents).

Archbishop Jensen is concerned children may be attracted to the new ethics classes and abandon faith-based acceptance of what is right. Why, because they make more sense?

This is a turf war being fought in schools. The feigned innocence of the ethics course proponents is not helpful. The problem arises from the fact that religion in any form is being taught in our government schools: a political sop to religious groups when government schools were required to be secular.

Rather than participating in a system of discriminatory, faith-based exclusionary practices by introducing secular ethics classes as an alternative to religious instruction, proponents should be agitating for all students to be exposed to the benefits of the evidence-based reasoning they espouse.

Read entire article: <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=10334>

Meg Wallace is a PhD student researching the right to freedom of belief at Macquarie University.

[< top >](#)

Ethics in the classroom: an alternative to scripture and non-scripture classes?

Alan Saunders, Philosophers' Zone, ABC Radio National, 1 May 2010

Philip Cam, Associate Professor, School of History and Philosophy, University of NSW
Neil Ormerod, Professor of Theology, Australian Catholic University

Should children taking non-scripture classes in primary school be offered an ethics course instead? In NSW, ten schools have just begun a ten week trial of ethics for children not taking religious education. We're joined by one of the creators of the ethics course as well as a Professor of Theology at the Australian Catholic University.

Neil Ormerod: I think if we view ourselves as simply autonomous and disincarnate moral agents, without history, without context, then it seems to all to boil down to me. And what I was pleased in hearing Philip talking about the course is this discussion and listening to others, placing myself within a moral context which means I have to actually listen to other people and develop my moral reasoning through that dialogical process, and not see myself simply as an autonomous moral agent operating in some sort of vacuum, and that sort of disconnectedness seems to then reduce ethics to a series of personal preferences that I express without reason. Then I might operate reasonably within that set of personal preferences. But those personal preferences are taken as sacrosanct.

Philip Cam: If I could make a rather bold general kind of claim, it seems to me that the kind of problematic that you just raised for us is one of the central problems of our age. We have on the one side a kind of fundamentalism about values, about beliefs, and we have on the other side a kind of wishy-washy relativism where anything goes. And what we need to do is to find our way between these two rocks, and I think that the way forward - this is how I see it - the way between these two things is actually the business of learning to be more reasonable in our lives and in our public institutions, and frankly, rather than dogmatically clinging to things without wanting to consider them, or saying Well it's whatever you think, we need to be able to appeal to reason and evidence in order to find our way forward, and that's very much embedded in the pilot program that these kids are undertaking.

Listen to the discussion or read the transcript at: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/philosopherszone/stories/2010/2883655.htm>

[< top >](#)

Ethics petition launched in support of Scripture classes

CathNews, May 13 2010

Before the trial commenced, religious leaders were assured that ethics classes would only be offered to students who have already "opted out" of SRE. Unfortunately, this guarantee was breached and all students were invited to participate, including those who were previously in SRE classes, he said.

The Government has apologised for this error, but the damage was significant, the statement said.

The petition does not oppose ethics classes, but asks that the New South Wales Government does not run these classes during Scripture time as it creates an unnecessary dilemma for Catholic parents whose sons and daughters will not be able to attend both SRE and ethics classes. They will be forced to choose between the two.

The petition also affirms that New South Wales has a proud tradition of recognizing the valuable contribution religious education makes to society, and should therefore remain a key part of the curriculum under legislation.

It recognizes that additional material on ethics is a welcome addition to the New South Wales education curriculum and it should therefore also be available to students who want to participate in Scripture classes.

Read entire article at: <http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aeid=21280>

[< top >](#)

CRITICAL THINKING

Teaching Critical Thinking

Jessica Oman, 24 April 2010

Transferring knowledge to students is one thing - teaching them to question what they've just learned is a wholly different challenge.

Being the teacher or professor whose students consistently score high on standardized tests is an honor for some instructors. These teachers successfully transfer knowledge and test-taking skills to their students to ensure their success on the end-of-semester test. But there exists a completely different realm of teaching, which is teaching critical thinking. The goal of showing students how to question, how to break down stereotypes, and how to analyze their own thinking is a difficult one to achieve. Here are some ideas on how to stimulate critical thinking with students of any age.

Teaching Critical Thinking through Role Play: Role playing activities are some of the most effective ways to get students to question their assumptions about the world they live in. For older students and adults, one idea is to hold a mock business networking event, where students are assigned different cards representing their status in a pretend company. Students don't know their own status but other students can see it on the card. Students with higher status cards will quickly realize their prestigious position, as will the students with very low status cards.

Immediately the students will grow uneasy about being treated differently than they would normally expect, and teachers can use this feeling as an opportunity to talk about status-based stereotypes, how they are formed and why we hold on to them as adults.

Read entire article at: <http://teaching-strategies-mentorship.suite101.com/article.cfm/teaching-critical-thinking>

Jessica Oman is a qualified teacher, consultant and freelance researcher and writer.

[< top >](#)

Reason to live

Linda Elder, Times Higher Education (UK), 18 February 2010

There has never been a more important time in human history for the pursuit of Socrates' vision.

As the world becomes smaller and smaller, with more and more people vying for fewer and fewer resources, the importance of working towards the critical societies conceived by Socrates becomes increasingly more apparent.

Socrates was hoping for something better than the narrow pursuit of vested interests so common among human groups today.

He thought that people could and should participate in the creation of reasonable, just societies, and that the development of the individual mind was essential to the rational pursuit of knowledge.

He thought the goal of education should be to teach so that students learn to value the importance of living an examined life. He believed that education inherently entails the seeking of truth, wherever that truth might lead you.

And he was especially concerned with the problem of sophistic thinking - skilled thinking designed to serve selfish or vested interest, or in other words unethical critical thinking.

Read entire article: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=410393&c=1>

Linda Elder is an educational psychologist, and president and fellow of the Foundation for Critical Thinking, a non-profit organisation that seeks to foster critical societies through education and social reform. Read about the Foundation for Critical Thinking at: <http://www.criticalthinking.org/>.

[< top >](#)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Nature Deficit Disorder: Re-Connecting Suburban Kids with Nature

Geoffrey Woolcock & Prue Walsh, *Online Opinion*, 21 April 2010

We seem to be inundated with so many fears for our children's wellbeing that it can all get a bit tiresome and overwhelming. But perhaps the most durable and widespread source of anxiety over the past decade is how many children have lost meaningful contact with nature, and the well-documented negative consequences that result.

A leading advocate for addressing this disconnection – or "nature deficit disorder" as he coined the term - is Richard Louv, the American author of the award-winning book *Last Child in the Woods*.

Louv's book has compiled research from around the world, arguing forcefully for children to be reintroduced to the wilderness. It suggests social and developmental benefits from exposure to nature and highlights research claiming that a range of psychological symptoms could be reduced, at least partially, by spending more time in the great outdoors.

Australian research concurs with a 2007 state government investigation into playground spaces in Victoria finding that young children "need exposure" to natural environments to appreciate the "complex variations of texture, sound, light, smell, colour and temperature". The subsequent government report - *The Good Play Space Guide* - highlighted the creative impulses that can be fostered by play with the "loose parts" of nature - the leaves, twigs and gumnuts.

But how realistic is it to expect today's kids to get out in the bush? Perhaps the most pragmatic response in Australia is to critically examine our urban and suburban environments where the vast majority of Australian children are still raised.

Read entire article: <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=10328>

Associate Professor Geoff Woolcock heads up the child-friendly communities area of Griffith University's Urban Research Program and is especially interested in the factors that contribute to building child and youth-friendly communities. Prue Walsh has designed play spaces in early childhood facilities, schools and public parks all over Australia with further work overseas.

Read the *The Good Play Space Guide* at:

[http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/web9/rwpgslib.nsf/GraphicFiles/Good+Play+Space+Guide+2007/\\$file/The+Good+Play+Space+Guide.pdf](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/web9/rwpgslib.nsf/GraphicFiles/Good+Play+Space+Guide+2007/$file/The+Good+Play+Space+Guide.pdf)

[< top >](#)

Children respond to call of the wild

Ainslie MacGibbon, Sydney Morning Herald, May 10, 2010

A child's contact with nature will influence health in adulthood as well as having many other long-term gains.

Australians relish their reputation as lovers of the great outdoors - all beach and bush - with an intimate relationship with the natural environment. But as parents' working lives become busier, cities become more crowded and technology takes more of a grip on our lives, many people - particularly children - are spending more and more time indoors.

Now the wisdom of this is being challenged by parents and by schools which are becoming concerned that children may be losing more than bush skills and suntans as they cut back on their time outside. Some Australian schools are implementing outdoor education programs to help redress the balance.

Outdoor education is often mistakenly confused with physical education or development, which is the care and development of the body. Outdoor education takes a more holistic approach to education, encompassing leadership, risk management, problem solving and personal development.

Read entire article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/children-respond-to-call-of-the-wild-20100509-ulqv.html>

[< top >](#)

National Assessment Program in Civics and Citizenship – October 2010

National assessment in Civics and Citizenship commenced in 2004 as part of a rolling three-yearly cycle of sample assessments that also includes science literacy and information and communication technology literacy.

Every three years samples of Year 6 and Year 10 students from across Australia are tested on their civic knowledge and understanding and the skills and values needed for active citizenship.

In October 2010 a sample of about 5% of Year 6 primary students and a similar sample of Year 10 secondary students from across Australia will take part in a national assessment of civics and citizenship education. The assessment will include multiple choice, short response and extended response items. It will also include a short survey collecting information about attitudes and beliefs, as well as participation in civics and citizenship activities. In total, the assessment and survey will take no more than two hours. No prior study of civics and citizenship is required.

The purpose is to inform schools, education ministers and the community about the levels of understanding of Australia's students. It is part of a national plan to monitor and report student achievement in the areas identified in the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century, which were agreed to by all state, territory and federal education ministers in 1999.

Further information: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/nap_civics_and_citizenship,12182.html

[< top >](#)

Catalogue of Learning Resources in Civics & Citizenship

The Learning Federation, March 2010

This catalogue contains details about the Civics and Citizenship digital curriculum content available from The [Le@rning](#) Federation (TLF) to all schools in Australia and New Zealand.

The digital content includes:

- hundreds of interactive learning and assessment objects
- a large and diverse range of digitised items such as images, film clips, maps, songs, posters and documents.

The learning objects developed for Civics and Citizenship help students to develop the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of active and informed citizenship. This includes knowledge and understanding of Australia's democratic heritage and traditions, its political and legal institutions and the shared values of freedom, tolerance, respect, responsibility and inclusion. They encourage students to analyse and synthesise information, think critically, solve problems and make decisions.

Access the catalogue online: http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au/verve/_resources/civ_cit_march10.pdf

[< top >](#)

Australian Government: Online Resources in Civics & Citizenship

This website contains resources, information, activities and links for teachers, students and parents involved in civics and citizenship education.

Civics and citizenship education promotes students' participation in Australia's democracy by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of active and informed citizenship.

It entails knowledge and understanding of Australia's democratic heritage and traditions, its political and legal institutions and the shared values of freedom, tolerance, respect, responsibility and inclusion.

The Civics and Citizenship Education website is sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and maintained by Curriculum Corporation.

Find out more: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/cce/>

[< top >](#)

HUMANE EDUCATION

World of Animal Welfare (WOAW):

RSPCA's resources portal for teachers, parents & students

Whether you're a student, a teacher or someone who just loves animals there will be something here for you.

Presenting animal welfare in a fun and educational way online, the RSPCA World of Animal Welfare (WOAW) is an exciting and educational website for people of all ages focusing on humane educational practices and learning resources. Humane Education is about fostering kindness, respect and empathy for animals, people and the environment.

A key feature of the site is a database of quality teaching resources for educators across Australia to access and make available to their students.

Our website is unique in that when a user visits the World Of Animal Welfare they will log on to an age appropriate interface. This ensures that the content that the user sees and interacts with is relevant and useful to them.

Furthermore, learning resources will be available in three versions, based on the users access to technology. This ensures that regardless of teaching style or technology limitations there will be an ideal version of lessons and resources available.

Find out more: <http://www.woaw.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

SERVICE LEARNING

About Service-Learning

Service-Learning is a curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities. The service should:

- be organised in relation to an academic course or curriculum,
- have clearly stated learning objectives,
- address real community needs in a sustained manner over a period of time and
- assist students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organised reflection or critical analysis activities, such as classroom discussions, presentations, or directed writing.

An example of a service-learning activity might be a middle school science class studying the environment of a local waterway in order to help preserve the natural habitat of animals. Through classroom studies, the students learn about the environment before applying their knowledge on site by posting signs, studying the soil and water and investigating the impact of industrial development. They then write about their experiences in journals and participate in class discussions about the project and its effect on their lives and the local community.

Some units of work planned as part of Civics Education incorporate community service activities. Schools will interpret the definition of service learning more loosely than as stated. In addition, some states, school districts, and schools supporting service-learning have established definitions different from the ones used here. In Australia, the most established examples of service-learning are Christian Service Learning programs delivered by a number of Catholic Colleges in the Perth Diocese of Western Australia.

Find out more: <http://www.service-learning.com.au/>

[< top >](#)

Service Learning Australia

In 2001, Service-Learning Australia (then known as Empower) introduced service-learning to the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Schools Office.

It is a teaching method in which students achieve academic outcomes while solving real community problems, and reflect on the experience. Since then, we have provided resources and support to educators and their community partners.

Now that a small but committed group of Australian service-learning practitioners exists, we have developed this web site to provide teachers, students and community organizations with resources, support and networking opportunities. Service-Learning Australia is fully funded by its founders – Margaret and Ian Richmond. Consulting work is conducted on a pro-bono basis.

You can contact Service-Learning Australia by emailing Margaret on: margaret.richmond@servicelearning.org.au .

Find out more: <http://www.servicelearning.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Indonesia: 'Teacher-parent collaboration needed' in building values

UCAN News.com, March 29, 2010

A Jesuit priest is urging parents to take a more active role in instilling values into their children instead of just leaving the task to teachers. "To improve values, continual collaboration between teachers and parents is important so they can determine what kinds of values, models and formations are needed," said Jesuit Father Paulus Suparno, former rector of the Yogyakarta-based Catholic University of Sanata Dharma.

He was addressing 400 people, mostly parents of students studying at schools run by Ursuline nuns, at a seminar titled: Family and School: Partner of Values Education for Children.

In general, said the priest, values have not been taught well. "It is because parents still think that the whole education process is solely a teacher's responsibility. Parents believe the teaching of values is adequate enough and that their input is not needed," he added.

Read entire article: <http://www.ucanews.com/2010/03/29/teaching-values-%E2%80%98needs-teacher-parent-collaboration%E2%80%99/>

[< top >](#)

USA: The Examined Life, Age 8

Abby Goodnough, New York Times, 8 April 2010

A few times each month, second graders at a charter school in Springfield, Mass., take time from math and reading to engage in philosophical debate. There is no mention of Hegel or Descartes, no study of syllogism or solipsism. Instead, Prof. Thomas E. Wartenberg and his undergraduate students from nearby Mount Holyoke College use classic children's books to raise philosophical questions, which the young students then dissect with the vigour of the ancient Greeks.

"A lot of people try to make philosophy into an elitist discipline," says Professor Wartenberg, who has been visiting the school, the Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School of Excellence, since 2007. "But everyone is interested in basic philosophical ideas; they're the most basic questions we have about the world."

Professor Lipman's view opposed that of the child-development theorist Jean Piaget, who asserted that children under 12 were not capable of abstract reasoning. He and others, including Gareth Matthews, a professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, concluded that their curiosity and sense of wonder make children ripe for philosophic inquiry.

"The world is new to them and they want to figure things out," says Professor Matthews, who has written extensively about children and philosophy.

Read entire article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/18/education/edlife/18philosophy-t.html>

Professor Wartenberg has written a book, "Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy Through Children's Literature" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), to spread his experiment to more elementary schools.

[< top >](#)

Canada: New rules all about making students better people

Jennifer Dunville, Daily Gleaner, 14 April 2010

Students and staff at Garden Creek Elementary School are participating in a program called Essential 45, which helps students become more polite and attentive. The Essential 45 includes rules such as: always say thank you; hold the door; make eye contact; if asked a question, ask one in return; and take only your fair share.

The concept came from an American teacher named Ron Clark. Clark spent his career working with disadvantaged students in rural North Carolina and Harlem, N.Y. "The Essential 55: An Award-Winning Educator's Rules for Discovering the Successful Student in Every Child" was Clark's first publication. It has been published in 25 countries and is used at the Ron Clark Academy, a private school in Atlanta, Ga.

After Garden Creek teacher Mark Slack and his colleague Jacqueline Fortner read the book, they were inspired to learn more.

"I had won an award, but hadn't used the money for anything yet, so I suggested to Mark that we use the cash to attend a workshop in Georgia about the Essential 55 and visit the Ron Clark Academy," Fortner said.

"We learned so much and were very impressed with the response from the students. As soon as we came back, Mark developed our Essential 45, a whittled down version of the Essential 55."

Read entire article: <http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/front/article/1016762>

[< top >](#)

REMINDERS

14 May - Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria Annual Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.mltav.asn.au>

16-22 May - Parents Victoria Annual Online Conference - <http://www.cybertext.net.au/pv/>

17 May - Tackling Underachievement: Engaging Boys and Girls - Sydney, NSW - <http://conferences2010.schoolevent.org>

17 May - The Tender Bridge, ACER - Adelaide, SA - <http://www.acer.edu.au/1/index.php/seminar/the-tender-bridge/>

18 May - Tackling Underachievement: Engaging Boys and Girls - Melbourne, VIC - <http://conferences2010.schoolevent.org>

21 May - National Mathematics Day - <http://www.aamt.edu.au/AAMT-in-action/Annual-activities/National-Maths-Day>

23 May - Public consultation closes - draft K-10 Australian Curriculum English, mathematics, science and history - <http://www.acara.edu.au/consultation.html>

25-28 May - Inclusive Learning Technologies Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/conference/>

26 May - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Melbourne, VIC - http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13500

26-28 May - Council of Educational Facility Planners International Conference - Perth, WA - <http://australasia.cefpi.org/>

27 May - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Brisbane, QLD - http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13507

31 May - Costa's Garden Odyssey Competition closes - <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/costa/about/page/i/2/h/Competition/>

3 June - Dare to Lead National Indigenous Education Conference - Brisbane, QLD - <http://www.daretolead.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=169694&action=downloadResource&resourceID=71060324>

3 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Perth, WA - http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13530

4 June - School Law Professional Development Seminar - Sydney, NSW - http://www.legalwiseseminars.com.au/product_details.asp?prodID=13521

4-5 June - Early Childhood Education Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/2010registration.html>

9-11 June - International Conference on Learning and Teaching - Singapore - <http://www.tp.edu.sg/events/intlconference/>

17-18 June - National Conference of Australian Special Education Principals' Association & Australian Association of Special Education - Darwin, NT - <http://www.gemsevents.com.au/aase2010/>

23-25 June - International Conference on New Horizons in Education - Famagusta, Cyprus - <http://www.int-e.net/index.php>

2 July - Victorian Mathematics and Statistics Students' Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.2010vmssc.ms.unimelb.edu.au/>

2-3 July - State Conference of Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland - Brisbane, QLD - <http://mltag.asn.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=27>

4-7 July - National Conference for Teachers of English & Literacy - Perth, WA - <http://www.englishliteracyconference.com.au/index.php?id=46&year=10>

4-7 July - Australian Science Teachers Association Annual Conference - Sydney, NSW - <http://guest.cvent.com/EVENTS/Info/Summary.aspx?e=1a4004e5-1cf4-4df0-931f-94d23111a400>

6-9 July - 17th International Conference on Learning - Hong Kong - <http://thelearner.com/Conference-2010/>

7-9 July - Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference - Melbourne, VIC - <http://www.aifs.gov.au/conference>

7-10 July - Redefining TESOL for the 21st Century - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.astmanagement.com.au/ACTA10/Default.htm>

21-24 July - Second Paris International Conference on Education, Economy & Society - Paris, France - <http://education-conferences.org/default.aspx>

29-31 July - International Conference on Teacher Education - Quezon City, Philippines - <http://www.ictedphilippines.org/>

14-22 August - National Science Week - <http://www.scienceweek.gov.au/Pages/index.aspx>

15-17 August - ACER Research Conference - Melbourne, VIC - http://www.acer.edu.au/research_conferences/

19-27 August - International Conference of Mathematicians - Hyderabad, India - <http://www.icm2010.org.in/>

26-27 August - Annual School Leaders' Conference - Gold Coast, QLD - <http://www.griffith.edu.au/pdn-leadership-conference-2010>

3-4 September - Future Directions in Literacy Conference - Sydney, NSW - http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/professional_learning/teachers/2010/future_directions_literacy.shtml

6 September - International Middle Years of Schooling Conference - Adelaide, SA - <http://sapmea.asn.au/conventions/middleschool2010/>

6-8 September - London International Conference on Education - London, UK - <http://www.liceducation.org/>

15-17 September - SPERA Conference, University of Sunshine Coast, Queensland - http://www.spera.asn.au/articles.php?req=list&root_id=13&sub_id=65

22 September - Language and Culture and Social Connectedness in Our Diverse Landscape Symposium - Toowoomba, QLD - <http://www.usq.edu.au/lcdl>

27-30 September - National Australian Association for Environmental Education Conference - Canberra, ACT - <https://www.conferenceco.com.au/aaee>

27-30 September - Australian Mathematical Society 54th Meeting - Brisbane, QLD - <http://www.smp.uq.edu.au/austms2010/>

27 September-1 October - International Association of School Librarianship Conference - Brisbane QLD - <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/conf/2010/>

October - International School Library Month - <http://www.iasl-online.org/events/ism/>

[< top >](#)

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- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian-education-digest/> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup/> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : <http://www.familyschool.org.au/news/> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/public-education-voice> (quarterly)

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