



THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

JUNIOR PREP

15 July 2016

Dear Parents,

FROM THE RECTOR

During the mid-term break I attended the **European Education Conference**, hosted by the International Academic Forum in Brighton, where the weather was similar to the South African cold snap. Over 150 presentations addressed various aspects of the conference theme: Education and Social Justice.

Globally, education systems are becoming increasingly socially, ethnically and culturally diverse. Very few of the 45 countries represented were not grappling with the need to teach second and even third languages, owing to economic immigration or refugee influx. As with SA, they too have to solve the problem of providing education in mother tongues not necessarily that of the country. I was consequently able to gather valuable and up-to-date research on cognition in language acquisition and the most effective methodologies. This information is invaluable to us as we seek to improve language education at St Peter's in a multi-cultural milieu.

Other themes included the use of IT to teach language, inequalities in language systems world-wide, e.g. urban vs rural and the effects of political and economic decisions on education quality, a trend not confined to our own country.

The British media was consumed by the Brexit issue and the consequent political manoeuvring. Three unrelated items caught my eye:

- Research has recently identified *Fleeces* as one of the most toxic contributors to micro-plastic pollution. Approximately 2000 micro-fibres are released after each wash, most ending up in the sea. These are then ingested by small organisms and later fish and birds, blocking the gut and often entering the bloodstream.
- 12% of the 16-24 year old age group has been identified as 'Neets' (*not in education, employment or training*). The impact on the UK economy was the equivalent of five years of EU immigration.
- Scouts were introducing an "anti-fat" badge for the youngest recruits (6-8 year olds), in order to combat the challenge of child obesity.

Advent Term Mid-Term Break

I have been reminded by a number of staff that we are still due a Bishop's holiday, awarded last year. In recognition of the outstanding number of scholarships, we have allocated this to **Tuesday, 25 October**, combining with the day customarily awarded for an exceptional number of scholarships won. Both Boys and Girls Prep Schools certainly deserve this with their tallies this year.

The new dates are as follows:

Break-up: Thursday, 20 October 2016

Return: Wednesday, 26 October 2016

Questions for the Rector:

If anyone wishes any further information on any topic, please feel free to contact me at school or at sheald@stpeters.co.za)

Greg Royce

FROM THE HEADMASTER

As we return from, what I hope was a restful mid-term break for you, I would like to share a thought regarding family time. Michelle and I were fortunate enough to spend some time at "The Cavern" in the Drakensberg last week. It has been quite some time since we have spent a holiday at a family resort and I had forgotten how special it is to be in a relaxed environment with one's family. We watched with delight as the families challenged each other to tennis, croquet, bowls, Monopoly and all manner of games. In addition, family groups walked in the mountains or went on horse

rides together. I found it particularly interesting to listen to the advanced vocabulary used by even young children as a result of their regular interaction with adults, be they parents, grandparents or family friends. There was not much evidence of digital devices and the face to face interaction between people of all ages resulted in wonderful lunchtime and dinner conversations. While Michelle and I were mainly observers of this, we were able to delight in the joy of families spending special time together. We should never underestimate the importance of family in our daily lives.

In a broader family sense, the school enjoyed the celebration of St Peter's Day as we broke up for the mid-term holidays. People often ask me what is so special about St Peter's School and as I read the Headmaster's Prayer during the service, my attention was drawn to a section where we thank God for the vision of Mr Stanley Dodson, his wife and family in establishing the school. A brief look at the history of the school will show the important role that families have played, both on the staff and amongst the boys and their parents as the school grew to where we stand today. I believe that this is the core of the school; we are a Christian family, who support, love and nurture the growth of all. In this light, we welcome Mr Mangaliso Vuso to the St Peter's family. Mr Vuso holds a B.Ed. degree from UJ and will be working in both the Boys and Girls Prep Schools, largely in the Science departments, but also in Mathematics and IsiZulu. We look forward to Mr Vuso's contribution in all areas of school life well into the future and wish him a very happy stay at the school.

Enjoy the second part of the term.

Rob Macaulay

FROM THE JUNIOR PREP

I have found this article very inspiring. Victoria argues that it is us, the parents, who need to change. I don't think that children are getting worse every year, as some teachers proclaim, but that they are different – and therefore need a different approach too. With a school system that is changing and parents who are busier and more permissive than ever, it's not surprising that we have created a generation that won't mould to our expectations and rules any more.

Here's the article:

"I am an Occupational Therapist with ten years of experience working with children, parents, and teachers. I completely agree with the message that our children are getting worse and worse in many aspects. I hear the same consistent message from every teacher I meet. Clearly, throughout my ten years as an Occupational Therapist, I have seen and continue to see a decline in kids' social, emotional, academic functioning, as well as a sharp increase in learning disabilities and other diagnoses.

Today's children come to school emotionally unavailable for learning and there are many factors in our modern lifestyle that contribute to this. As we know, the brain is malleable. Through environment we can make the brain "stronger" or make it "weaker." I truly believe that with all our greatest intentions, we unfortunately remould our children's brains in the wrong direction. Here is why...

1. Technology

"Free babysitting service... the payment is waiting for you just around the corner". We pay with our kids' nervous system, with their attention and ability for delayed gratification. Compared to virtual reality, everyday life is boring. When kids come to the classroom, they are exposed to human voices and adequate visual stimulation as opposed to being bombarded with graphic explosions and special effects that they are used to seeing on the screens. After hours of virtual reality, processing information in a classroom becomes increasingly challenging for our kids because their brains are getting used to the high levels of stimulation that video games provide. The inability to process lower levels of stimulation leaves kids vulnerable to academic challenges. Technology also disconnects us emotionally from our children and our families. Parental emotional availability is the main nutrient for child's brain. Unfortunately, we are gradually depriving our children from that nutrient.

2. Kids get everything they want the moment they want

"I am Hungry!" "In a second I will stop at drive through" "I am Thirsty!" "Here is a vending machine." "I am bored!" "Use my phone!" The ability to delay gratification is one of the key factors for future success. We have all the greatest intention in mind to make our children happy, but unfortunately, we make them happy at the moment but miserable in a long term. To be able to delay gratification means to be able to function under stress. Our children are gradually becoming less equipped to deal with even minor stressors which eventually become huge obstacles to their success in life.

The inability to delay gratification is often seen in classrooms, malls, restaurants, and toy stores the moment the child hears "No" because parents have taught their "child's brain" to get what it wants right away

3. Kids rule the world

"My son doesn't like vegetables" "She doesn't like going to bed early" "He doesn't like to eat breakfast" "She doesn't like toys, but she is very good at her IPAD" "He doesn't want to get dressed on his own" "She is too lazy to eat on her own." This is what I hear from parents all the time. Since when do children dictate to us how to parent them? If we leave it all up to them, all they are going to do is eat macaroni and cheese, bagel with cream cheese, watch TV, play on their tablets, and never go to bed. What good are we doing them by giving them what they WANT when we know that it is not GOOD for them? Without proper nutrition and a good night's sleep, our kids come to school irritable, anxious, and inattentive. In addition, we send them the wrong message. They learn they can do

what they want and not do what they don't want. The concept of "need to do" is absent. Unfortunately, in order to achieve our goals in our lives, we have to do what's necessary which may not always be what we want to do. For example, if a child wants to be an A student, he needs to study hard. If he wants to be a successful soccer player, he needs to practice every day. Our children know very well what they want but have a very hard time to do what is necessary to achieve that goal. This results in unattainable goals and leaves the kids disappointed.

4. Endless Fun

We created an artificial fun world for our children. There are no dull moments. The moment it becomes quiet, we run to entertain them again because otherwise we feel that we are not doing our parenting duty. We live in two separate worlds. They have their "fun world" and we have our "work" world. Why aren't children helping us in the kitchen or with laundry? Why don't they tidy up their toys? This is basic monotonous work that trains the brain to be workable and function under "boredom" which is the same "muscle" that is required to be eventually teachable at school. When they come to school and it is time for printing, their answer is "I can't. It is too hard. Too boring." Why? Because the workable "muscle" is not getting trained through endless fun. It gets trained through work.

5. Limited social interaction

We are all busy, so we give our kids digital gadgets and make them "busy" too. Kids used to play outside, where in unstructured natural environments, they learned and practiced their social skills. Unfortunately, technology replaced the outdoor time. Also, technology made the parents less available to socially interact with their kids. Obviously, our kids fall behind...the babysitting gadget is not equipped for social skill development. Most successful people are the ones who have great social skills. This is the priority! The brain is just like a muscle that is trainable and re-trainable. If you want your child to be able to bike, you teach him biking skills. If you want your child to be able to wait, you need to teach him patience. If you want your child to be able to socialize, you need to teach him social skills. The same applies to all the other skills. There is no difference!!

You can make a difference though in your child's life by training your child's brain so that your child will successfully function on social, emotional, and academic levels. Here is how:

1. Limit technology, and instead re-connect with your kids emotionally

- Surprise them with flowers, share a smile, tickle them, put a love note in their backpack or under their pillow, surprise them by taking them out for lunch on a school day, dance together, crawl together, have pillow fights.
- Have family dinners, board game nights, go biking, go on outdoor walks with a flashlight in the evening.

2. Train delay gratification

- Make them wait!!! It is ok to have "I am bored time" – this is the first step to creativity.
- Gradually increase the waiting time between "I want" and "I get."
- Avoid technology use in cars and restaurants, and instead teach them waiting while talking and playing games.
- Limit constant snacking.

3. Don't be afraid to set the limits. Kids need limits to grow happy and healthy!!

- Make a schedule for meal times, sleep times, technology time.
- Think of what is GOOD for them- not what they WANT/DON'T WANT. They are going to thank you for that later on in life. Parenting is a hard job. You need to be creative to make them do what is good for them because most of the time that is the exact opposite of what they want
- Kids need breakfast and nutritious food. They need to spend time outdoors and go to bed at a consistent time in order to come to school available for learning the next day!
- Convert things that they don't like doing/trying into fun, emotionally stimulating games.

4. Teach your child to do monotonous work from early years as it is the foundation for future "workability."

- Folding laundry, tidying up toys, hanging clothes, unpacking groceries, setting the table, making lunch, unpacking their lunch box, making their bed.
- Be creative. Initially make it stimulating and fun so that their brain associates it with something positive.

5. Teach social skills

- Teach them turn taking, sharing, losing/winning, compromising, complimenting others, using "please and thank you."

From my experience as an Occupational Therapist, children change the moment parents change their perspective on parenting. Help your kids succeed in life by training and strengthening their brain sooner than later!!!"

Victoria Prooday

GRADE 2 FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

The Grade 2 boys play in their first football tournament this afternoon. They have been extremely excited all week and I would like to wish them good sportsmanship and lots of fun.

MANDELA DAY SERVICE – 18 July

The Junior Prep Boys Mandela Day Service will take place in our JP Hall on Monday at 7:45 and not at 9:00 as per the calendar. This short service will celebrate Madiba's life, with an emphasis on an "Attitude of Gratitude." Please do support the Mandela Day drive for old clothes, toys and sports equipment to give to those less privileged.

COFFEE MORNING – 21 July: Raising Boys

On Thursday morning there is a delightful presentation by Natalie Holmes on **Raising Boys**. She gives some humorous and insightful advice on how to raise boys in today's world.

Date: Thursday, 21 July
Time: 7:30-8:30
Venue: Boys JP Hall

PARENT CONSULTATIONS – 26 July

Booking sheets are outside the classrooms; please ensure you book a time to meet your son's teacher. These interviews are short to give you an overview of the term. Should you wish to book a longer time to meet your son's teacher, please ask her about alternative days and times.

GOLDEN MOMENT

At Cooking Club a boy had to mix jungle oats into a cookie batter. When asked to roll the dough into balls his response was: "This is very strange porridge!"

The week ahead is extremely busy, please take careful note of the calendar.

Warm regards,

Kenda Melvill-Smith

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 18 July

7:45 Mandela Day Service – Boys JP Hall
 13:10-14:00 Grade 1 Clubs
 13:00-13:45 Grade 2 Sport

Tuesday 19 July

8:30 DCS lessons start
 8:30 Olympics Puppet Show for JP boys
 13:00-13:45 Grade 1 Sport
 13:10-14:00 Grade 2 Clubs

Wednesday 20 July

8:00 Chapel (birthdays 18 - 24 July)
 13:00-13:30 Grade 2 Choir
 13:00-13:45 Grade 1 optional Sport

Thursday 21 July

7:30-8:30 Coffee Morning: Raising Boys
 13:00-14:00 Grade 2 Sport
 18:30for19:00 My South African Story, Mvukuzane Pavilion

Friday 22 July

8:15 "The Face in the Mirror – Respect" production for JP Boys (Royce Hall)
 13:00 Grade 2 Football tournament vs St John's away

MANDELA DAY 2016 COLLECTION



Mandela Day 2016: "it's not about us and them, but all of us"

As part of our Mandela Day Drive, we appeal to all our families to donate their unwanted and unused items.
 We would like to support:

- Touch Africa and our community schools: **BOOKS and TOYS**
- Diepsloot Combined and Sefikeng Primary: **SPORT KIT and TAKKIES**
- Our community: **SECOND HAND CLOTHING**

We are collecting in the following areas until 22 July:

SP Boys: Chapel and lower car parks

SP Girls: Girls reception

JP Boys: Reception area

JP Girls: Reception area

We look forward to your support!

PA NEWS

ST PETER'S CYCLE CHALLENGE



MY SOUTH AFRICAN STORY – THURSDAY, 21 JULY

The Transformation Committee invites you to an informal discussion forum where parents will have an opportunity to share personal stories about how growing up and living in South Africa has shaped us. We invite you to think about your own story and to consider sharing it:

Please join us for a warm bowl of soup and some good conversation:

When: Thursday, 21 July 18:30 for 19:00 until 20:30

Where: Mvukuzane Pavilion

ST PETER'S GOLF DAY

