



Known and yet

L o v e d

by Ed Noot

Christian school boards and leaders rightly focus a good deal of time and energy on strategic planning, policy development and procedural competence. Without careful attention in these areas our schools lack the order and structure they need to flourish, so continued focus remains a high priority.

Order in and of itself, however, is not enough for our schools to flourish. As Andy Crouch reminds us in his book *Strong and Weak*, a flourishing organization finds the mysterious balance between order and abundance.

Foundational to the success of any Christian school is culture. What is the tone of the organization – does the culture make people feel accepted, safe and loved? How is morale among staff? Is there a healthy sense of organizational trust? These are key indicators of our cultural health – and cultural health is a necessary condition for a flourishing school.

I was recently reminded of the importance of school culture when I attended the retirement celebration for a long serving Christian school leader, Curt Tuininga. This event was unique

because of the circumstances of Curt's retirement. He was diagnosed with cancer for the second time in 20 years and was on a palliative treatment plan. In an abstract sense we all know we are going to die, but for Curt this reality was imminent and very real.

Curt approached his disease and impending death with openness, integrity and even humour. He used this event to point everyone he knew to God's overwhelming goodness and love.

As such, his retirement celebration followed the same theme. We honoured and celebrated Curt, thanking God for his leadership and we roasted Curt for his unique character traits and leadership foibles – from doing donuts with a school bus full of pre-schoolers to body checking students off the ice rink into the snowbanks to playing king of the hill where the only rule is 'if you cry, you can't play!' We laughed heartily with Curt and his family and we shed some tears as we toasted and roasted the night away.

Curt was deeply moved by this event and by the number of people who came to share this evening with him. When it was his chance to speak he

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framed his comments around the theme, 'known and still loved'. Curt reflected:

“Not only was the evening a laugh out loud riot, but it was also a celebration of life, a ‘living eulogy’ if you will, due to the fact that I have stage four cancer and my ‘retirement’ comes about as a result of a diagnosis of impending death. My love language is words of praise and compliments and I received many of those too and was touched beyond belief – I may have wept a little (or a lot). I know most of my faults very well and I even enumerated several of them in my comments, but the amazing thing is that none of them matter. The people that came that night know me very well and they still love me – I am known and still loved. The people who spoke know me to the core of my being and they don’t care that I am judgemental, sarcastic, selfish, lazy and a glutton, they still love me and that is the greatest blessing of being part of a grace filled Christian community. My sins, and they are many and some egregious, have been forgiven and I have been, for fifty four wonderful years, surrounded by people who offer grace, kindness, and love to me who is so underserving. They model what they have been shown by our Saviour and Lord.”

Curt then spoke of those who knew him best; five close colleagues, his children and his wife. These are the ones who really knew him – including his faults and shortcomings, yet they are the ones who loved him the most. Curt marveled at this mystery and gave thanks.

Being known well and still being loved – what an incredible gift that comes from the grace of our great God who knows all of us and still sent His son to die for us because He loved us. His grace is his great gift to us and it can only be found in Christian community. I implore you all to continue to share His love and grace with all those



you know and love. There is far too much ungrace in the world – be ambassadors of his love and grace now and forevermore and you too will be known and still loved!

Curt’s leadership was shaped by this mantra of grace – to know and love. He worked hard with his boards and staff to establish a school culture saturated in a strong ethos of being known and yet loved. He related with staff and students in meaningful engagement, coming to know not only the public veneer that we all show to others, but the story behind the veneer – the hopes, expectations and achievements along with the failures, struggles and heartbreak of unrealized dreams. Only when we are known deeply and fully are we truly known, and schools ought to be intentional about creating a culture where each member is truly known.

Only when we have a culture of belonging and being known does the gospel message of unbridled grace make sense.

If the shining public persona is what we are known by, then few of us need grace. Only when we are deeply and fully known can we share God’s grace with one another by loving despite what we know about each other. Curt’s heartfelt words at his retirement event resonated with the audience and it is my hope and prayer that they resonate with you and that we take up the challenge of creating cultures of deep belonging, authentic knowing and profound grace – places where all students and staff are known and yet loved.

After reviewing a draft of this article, Curtis enjoyed the Christmas holidays with his family and close friends. On January 15th, 2019 Curtis succumbed to his cancer. His family, friends and colleagues mourn his loss even while we celebrate a life well lived in faith, hope and love.

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FULLY ALIVE IN GOD’S STORY

by Amber Watson

We know that International Programs can generate revenue and fill enrollment gaps for Christian schools, but can an International Program actually help fulfill your schools’ mission? Can International Programs glorify God, educate for wholeness, and shape God’s world?

Most schools have had challenging, even frustrating, experiences with International students – students who come with behavioural and learning difficulties and who do not integrate well into our school communities. Some experiences are positive, but perhaps you are left wondering if there is any lasting impact.

Allow me to share with you the stories of two students who attended SCSBC schools.

When I first met Allen, he was an awkward grade 9 student with limited English communication skills. To be honest, my first impression of him was that he would not make it to graduation. He struggled in his classes, his homestay, and his friendships. Before coming to Canada, Allen describes his life as being “chaotic and utterly hopeless. Chaotic because I was physically and emotionally abused which led to my dysfunctional behaviour. Hopeless because the path I was traversing was always a dead-end.”

Over the course of four years, many people impacted Allen’s life, helping him to see his identity in Christ. Allen says, “My host family and instructors have influenced my life significantly by valuing the importance of forgiveness, diligence, and respect for others and have taught me what it means to live a life of integrity.” The relationships he built helped reshape his purpose in life, which he now believes is to serve God and others.

Reflecting on the transformation in his life, Allen says, “My life would certainly be different if I had not gone to a Christian school, in that it would be a world of confusion, doubts, hopelessness and frustration.” Allen believes his life now can be encapsulated in one biblical verse, paraphrased from Jeremiah 29:11:

**“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS GOD HAS FOR ME,
PLANS TO PROSPER AND NOT TO HARM ME,
PLANS TO GIVE ME HOPE AND A FUTURE.”**

Before coming to Canada, Tsubasa attended a Buddhist school in Japan which offered a year abroad program for students wishing to improve their English and have a new cultural experience. Tsubasa agreed to attend a Christian school, despite having no interest in Christianity and a negative perception of religion in general. Wanting to make the most of his one year at a Canadian school, Tsubasa worked hard in his classes, was intentional in developing his English skills, and got involved in as many extra-curricular activities as he could.

Tsubasa quickly realized that there were many challenges with studying abroad and building relationships due to cultural differences. Tsubasa says that when he was feeling overwhelmed by these challenges, his teachers gave him advice, not only for his academics but also for life, and influenced him to believe that studying isn’t everything in life. Tsubasa was also greatly impacted by his Christian host family. He says “My host family is undoubtedly one of the best families in the world and in my entire life. They treated me as actually one of their family members and taught me anything I asked them. My deepened understanding of Christianity and English skills comes from them.”

Tsubasa’s perception of Christianity completely changed during his time at a Christian school. He says, “As I kept learning about Christianity and getting to know my Christian host family, I was extremely amazed at their wonderful kindness and the way they live their lives. Because I could learn and know God in Christian school, I now thank God that I can live this wonderful life every day.”

Tsubasa currently attends a Christian university in Tokyo.

If your school welcomes International Students, I’m sure you have stories like Allen’s and Tsubasa’s as well; stories of lives transformed by the good news of Christ; stories of teachers and homestay families who took the time to get to know these students, encourage them, and speak truth into their lives.

Your school’s International Program is one amazing way to fulfill your schools’ mission. Through your staff and students, your program will glorify God, educate for wholeness, and shape God’s world. I encourage you to speak to those involved in your International Program- your ELL Instructors, your Homestay Coordinators, your EAs – and listen to these stories from your own community. If you are encouraged by their stories, I would love to hear them as well!

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The Joyful Expectation of Giving

Legacy

by Cathy Kits

When it comes to developing a culture of giving in your school, Zach Clark would say that “there are many things you are doing, and many things you could do, but are you focusing on the most impactful things you must do?”¹ Unfortunately the thing that may have the most profound effect on your school’s long term sustainability is the one that most often gets put on the back burner: the establishment of a legacy giving program. Schools need a plan that brings your givers and your school’s story together in a shared purpose. It is time to make decisions in the present that will shape the future of your school.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNbSgMEZ_Tw

Have you ever given a gift and wondered what about its impact? There is a powerful story here, one of expectancy and expectation, of faith and hope. And love.²



It’s Christmas and an old man gently plays a few notes on a piano as he reflects back on his life. He is a legend now—he is Elton John after all—and at first the video seems to be yet another celebration of his life and music. But as you approach the end (which is really the beginning) you realize the video is not about the piano player.

It is about a legacy gift and a legacy giver. It is about the gift-wrapped piano that transformed that little boy dressed in pyjamas on Christmas morning into the legendary entertainer. It is about the mother whose gift of a piano inspired a legend. Some gifts really are more than just gifts.

The piano was not given because of a present need. It was given because of future hope— of a mother for her son. In the same way legacy giving is not about a school’s present need. It is about a future hope for the school and for the world. Legacy givers are giving out of faith, planting a seed rooted in yearning and in joyful expectation for the future. Do you see the yearning in the mother’s eyes? The young boy didn’t understand the hope. It was hers. Such is true with legacy giving as well. Those who will benefit in the future from a legacy gift may not realize its source, but the giver lives in expectation of its significance. He or she is investing in someone or something he or she believes in, cracking the door open to the possibility of this future hope realized.

As image bearers of Christ we all have capacity for such hope-filled and meaningful action. But such “action does not just come from nowhere...it takes place in the midst of a story that matters.”³ It requires encouragement.



It thrives on inspiration. “Action is generated more by visions than maxims, more by a telos than a rule. This intuition is captured in a saying attributed to Antoine de Saint-Exupery, the author of *The Little Prince*. If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.”⁴

The piano player video is just an ad by a British department store to encourage Christmas giving (and buying of course!). But it became more than just an ad, it became more powerful than its marketing purpose, because it set out to tell a story.



Ad makers know that story has moved mankind for thousands of years. At the dawn of civilization, story was the most powerful communication tool, enabling survival and growth. Story has preserved history, entertained and motivated people to take meaningful action.

My questions to you are: Are you telling your story in such a way that it will encourage legacy giving? Are you finding ways to communicate your mission in such a way that it will encourage your community to invest in the long-term future of your school?

It does not have to be novel-length communication. “The imaginative expanse of a story does not depend on the quantity of words. Rather, there can be a feel among the words, resonances, and assonances that carry an aesthetic power disproportionate to their length. Short stories and poetry are often examples of such compressed narrative power, (inviting) us into— a whole world.”⁵ Consider this short sentence: “The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” (Isaiah 9:2 NIV) We may not have the piano player’s story to tell but we do have the story of the greatest Gift as our guiding light! “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16 NIV) We are witnesses to what He has done.

Start there, with that great overarching narrative.

But also tell your particular story. Your school has a story— a past story, a present story and a future story— that matters. You are witnesses to how lives are being changed through the living out of your school’s mission. What is your narrative?

REFERENCES

- ¹ Zach Clark, Positive Planned Giving
- ² John Lewis & Partners Christmas Ad 2018 ([viewable in link](#))
- ³ Andy Crouch, *Strong and Weak: Embracing a Life of Love, Risk and True Flourishing*
- ^{4,5} James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*

How can you use it to invite givers into a space where they are known as authentic partners and as valued characters within your particular story and within the grand story of redemption and restoration of all of creation? When someone makes a legacy gift to your school it reflects a desire to see you fulfilling an expectation to faithfully live out the mission and vision of your school...and people and organizations rise to the expectations set before them. You need to deliberately and carefully create a longing for that envisioned future- for the endless immensity of the sea.

A legacy gift to your school is the most precious of gifts because it speaks to an eternal hope for abundance, an expectation of the transformational flourishing of future generations of children and a vision that the world will be positively changed through the education of these future Christian leaders. The greatest gift you can give people is the opportunity to become part of such a story, just as the piano player’s mother became part of his story.

Some gifts are more than just gifts. Did you notice that the piano the old man closes at the end of the video is the same one he unwrapped on Christmas so many years before? The gift has not stopped giving. Now it has come full circle and he is giving back: “My gift is my song...and this one’s for you”.

It is time to encourage these kinds of gifts. It is time to put legacy giving on the front burner — if you haven’t yet established a legacy giving program at your school there is no better time to start than the present.

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THE CREATIVITY QUESTION

by Greg Gerber

I've been thinking.

Have you ever had one of those moments where, in what seems to present itself as a sudden flash of insight, you recognize that something you had previously considered unequivocally true ...might not hold up quite so strongly? I have, and I'm still thinking about it, so I'd like to invite you on my journey up to this point.

Among other things, schools should foster creativity, and there are very few people who would assert otherwise. Education reform speakers call for increased focus on creativity development, and the BC curriculum places creative thinking as an essential target for core competency development. Yet in the last two decades it has often been suggested that schools, unfortunately, have precisely the opposite effect – succinctly stated, that schools kill creativity.

Sir Ken Robinson made this idea popular in his viral TED talk "Do schools kill creativity" (Films Media, 2009). Citing research which sought to measure creativity in populations of people, Robinson projects a wonderfully impactful chart which illustrates the percentage of people who score at the genius level by age group. The trend is staggeringly clear; a straight down-angled line connects the data points between 5-year-olds who score in the genius range for divergent thinking (at 95%), 10-year-olds (32%), and 15-year-olds (10%). "There is something happening to our children," Sir Ken remarks, "schools kill creativity, and that has to change."

I have often marvelled at the profundity of the 'school kills creativity' proclamation. While its polemical nature is effective for instilling a passion for change and better serving students, it also causes me to wonder... Are schools, in fact, the *raison d'être* for the proposed trend in the decline of student's creativity as they proceed through the education system?

Or, is it possible that we are asking the wrong question?

Think back to when you were young, in the primary years or even younger, as far back as your memory allows. I recall afternoons of running about the house with a towel adorning my shoulders convinced, unequivocally, that

human flight was in my immediate future. One more push, a stronger thrust of my arms, or jumping a little higher ... I knew it was only a matter of when and not if I would fly like Superman. I'm guessing that you can also quickly recall examples which exhibit your creative genius as a child. I can't imagine that our God-given abilities are so easily lost as a result of our education system.

There are some things other than schooling that took place during those years of aging that, I believe, may be a better explanation of our diminishing creativity. Something less sinister and something more sinister – let's consider these in turn.

First, as we age we grow in our ability to think, or to ratiocinate, which literally means to process and



consider rationally and logically. When I was a child I believed that a hero-esque endowment of

flight was imminent and I acted in manners consistent with that belief. I jumped. I leapt. I bounded into the air off flights of stairs, couches, and bookshelves. Over time, and thankfully not too much time, the bruises, sprained ankles, and sore legs taught me that my unfettered belief might not reign within reasonable expectation. And as I think of this,

I recognize something profound – reason tempers creative expression. In fact, I wonder, is it possible that Sir Ken's measurement of creativity, exemplified by how many uses an individual can think of for a paper clip, favours quantity and not quality of divergent thinking?

As one's ability to think and reason increases, we should expect that many creative inclinations are filtered. I have had yet creative ideas frequently, but I don't act on or share them because I recognize that those ideas don't merit having an audience. Older people will presumably not think of as many uses for a paper clip because they know what a paper clip can do, and thus discard possibilities that seem to lack value. The expression of creative ideation (Fig 1 Fluency) is reduced as a natural consequence of growth, development, and maturation of logical thinking, not simply a sign of being choked out by the hands of schooling. In fact, as a student's Fluency scores decrease as they progress through the grade levels, we would do well to also consider the ability to elaborate on ideas, diversify areas of consideration (Fig 1 Abstractness of Titles), and propensity to stick with and develop ideas (Fig 1 Resistance to Premature Closure) increase over the same timeframes (Kim, 2011).

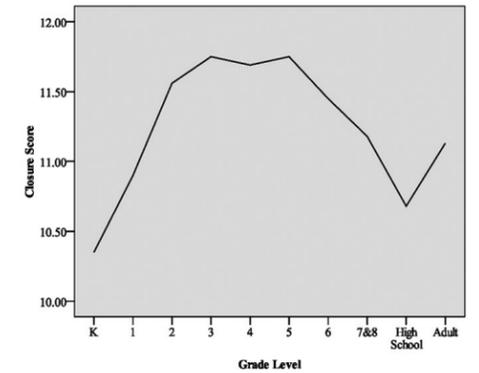
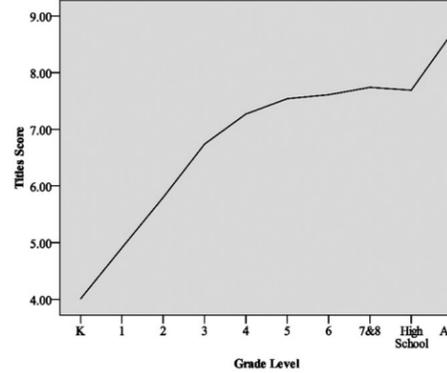
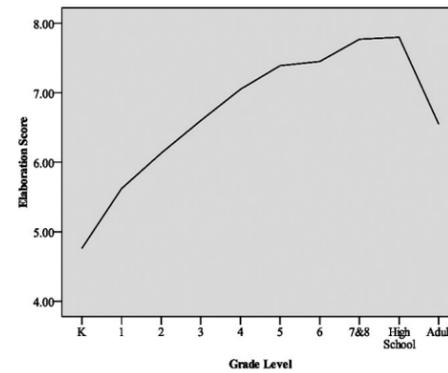
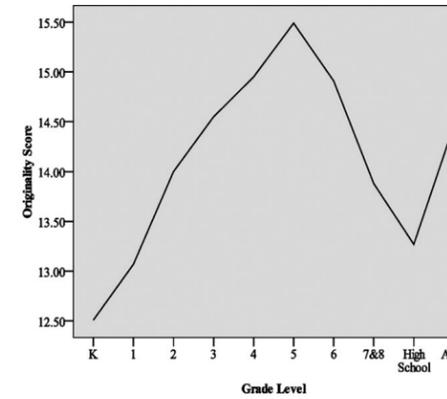
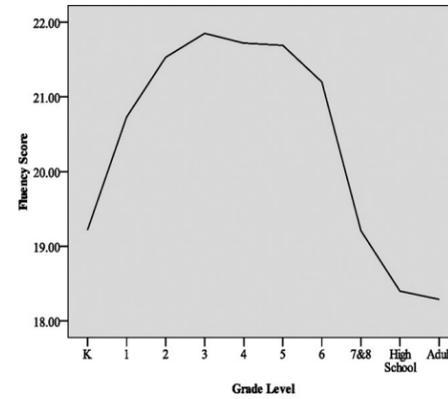


Figure 1 – p288 Kim, 2011. Total Fluency, Originality, Elaboration, Abstractness of Titles, and Resistance to Premature Closure scores for Years 1966, 1974, 1984, 1990, 1998, and 2008 by grade level.

There is also something more sinister which comes into play, something which begins as a small weed and often grows over the years potentially muting one's willingness to engage their innate creativity. As many of us grew older, we stopped believing in possibility, an essential ingredient fueling curiosity, the desire to explore (NAP, 2018, p149), and investment in creativity. It is, then, the role of the teacher to continue to foster seeing possibility by reframing failure, to take time to consider whimsy, to teach students how what might first be regarded as a bad or weak idea can often be reworked into a good one.

Failure left uncelebrated feeds into new conceptualizations of limitation. My dream of human flight died on the floor with my final plop to the floor accompanied by the laughter and ridicule of siblings. What might have become of my passion if I had been encouraged to rework the idea, to trade in the towel-cape and seek out increasingly reasoned approaches (perhaps the Wright brothers had similar beginnings)? Creativity empowered breeds revision.

It is fostered through an attitude to try, recognizing that an idea only dies when we accept our last failure as final

(Beghetto, 2018). Life teaches us lessons when we act on poorly constructed ideas, but there is always more we can learn through the experience.

Possibility is something to live into, not an expectation. Teachers strive to recognize possibility within the landscape of every student's individual giftedness and then work to nurture their unique complement of talents.

How do we do this?

Spend time dreaming. Dream on your own. Dream with your students. Acknowledge that sometimes the dreams which seem crazy may just be the seed of the next idea that changes the world, then empower an attitude to try. Shakespeare said it well, "our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt" (p. 288). If we give up on something, it is finished. Where we continue to believe in possibility, creativity knows very few limits.

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Missional Flourishing

An Integrated Approach

BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

We are pleased to invite you to the annual SCSBC Business and Development Conference at Harrison Hot Springs Resort on April 8-9, 2019.

This event is an excellent professional development opportunity for business and development staff, administrators and board members. The conference offers rich interaction with other professionals who also work in Christian schools. Comments from participants in previous years speak to the value this conference brings in enhancing their skills and providing new insights into their work in their schools. Our plenary speaker, Janet Stump, will engage and encourage all of us in integrating our efforts to ensure flourishing in our Christian schools.

We look forward to connecting with and encouraging each of you throughout the conference.

April 8-9, 2019

SCSBC Business & Development Conference at Harrison Hot Springs

Keynote Speaker:

Janet Stump

Information & Registration at busdev2019.scsbc.net

SCSBC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING: MARCH 7-8, 2019 (Members only)

Location: Lower Mainland – for registration info check the SCSBC portal

All administrations who may potentially be in the position of leading during an emergency should attend both days.

DAY 1: RAPID DAMAGE ASSESSMENT – Thursday, March 7th

Time: 1:00 – 5:00 pm

Cost: \$70 plus taxes per person (includes manual)

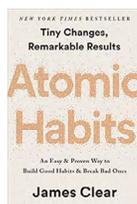
DAY 2: EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOLS & INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM – Friday, March 8th

Time: 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Cost: Free

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

ATOMIC HABITS by James Clear



No matter your goals, *Atomic Habits* offers a proven framework for improving every day. James Clear, one of the world's leading experts on habit formation, reveals practical strategies that will teach you exactly how to form good habits, break bad ones, and master the tiny behaviors that lead to remarkable results.

OPEN TO THINK by Dan Pontefract



Based on organizational and societal data, academic research, historical studies, and a wide range of interviews, *Open to Think* is an appeal for a world of better thinking. Pontefract introduces tangible, actionable strategies to improve the way we think as organizations and individuals.



WELCOME RON PETTIGREW!

The SCSBC would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member:

Ron Pettigrew Christian School (RPCS) is an accredited, K-12 Christian school in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. The school is named after Ron Pettigrew, formerly the principal of Bethel Christian School. Feel free to reach out to their principal, Leanie Jacobs – ljacobs@rpschool.ca

The addition of Ron Pettigrew increases our presence in Northern BC. We look forward to serving them and being blessed through them.

RON PETTIGREW
CHRISTIAN
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