



"Engage Me or Enrage Me", screamed a recent headline to an American newspaper article commenting on the difficulties increasing numbers of young people seem to experience while at school.

While there are no simple answers to this challenge, there are some practices effective schools use to subdue student enragement.

Teachers have the capacity to change lives by being present to their students in ways that demonstrate a relationship of love, understanding and kindness, and this generates a message of life. The search for ways to assist students to become optimistic, hopeful, creative and persevering is fundamental. Add to this the fuel of enthusiasm and achievement occurs.

Once students have a passion for what they are doing, they develop grit and resilience, which light fires in their spirit. Once an individual understands something, they become enlivened by it.

Students who are at schools which engender hope, optimism and encouragement will create student achievement which is engaged and less inclined to be enraged.

Student motivation is not rocket science. Young people can see that if they are to contribute to solving the problems their world faces they need all the personal attributes possible to make a difference for good in the world.

Our Catholic school ethos where we regard each individual as a loved child of God can help students to become engaged with their education, and enable them to feel that they are valued and their work is valued.

We ought not to back away from encouraging every student to believe that the highest levels of excellence are worth striving for, since all excellence is at the heart of the Christian message.

We need to walk the fine line between firmness and respect for the dignity of the individual student, but we can never entertain the notion that failure is an option for any student.

Greetings to you all

Ngā mihi nui ki a koe me tō whānau.

We trust that you had a restful vacation time. Preparations for the 2006 National Catholic Education Convention are well under way – we hope you are coming!

Catholic Education Convention 31 August – 2 September 2006 Reminders

- Schools are invited to contribute an A2 or A3 sized poster showcasing their school community. Please send to NZCEO in the week of 14-22 August (heavy paper, not cardboard).
- Thank you to those principals who have offered a creative presentation from senior secondary students, and principals in the Wellington region who have offered student musical performances. Late offers would still be welcome.

Australian Catholic Education Conference – Among the Many Voices Catholic Education Speaks Now Sydney 27-29 Sept 2006

Information on this conference, run by the Australian National Catholic Education Commission, is available at www.ncec.catholic.edu.au.

Congratulations to Principals New to Catholic Schools

Steve Bryan, Sacred Heart College, Napier

Bernie Murfitt, St Francis Xavier School, Tawa, Wellington

"Talent is never enough. With a few exceptions, the best players are the hardest workers." 'MAGIC' JOHNSON

Congratulations

Mitch Dieudonne, Principal of St Joseph's School, Lyttleton, was awarded an Asia New Zealand Foundation language teachers' programme field trip to Japan.

Bishop Viard College, Porirua, teacher Patsy Madigan has received a Papal Award, the Benemerenti Medal for her 31 years of outstanding teaching at the college.

The whānau whānui of St Joseph's Māori Girls' College has taken a proactive stance on hostel refurbishment, and raised over \$36,000 gross, a record amount.

De La Salle College, Mangere has produced a magnificent set of posters promoting the importance of reading for success in later life. The posters depict former students as role models.

The following schools achieved awards in the ASB Polyfest, Manukau. Niue Stage: De La Salle College. Samoan Stage: McAuley High School, De La Salle College, St Paul's College, St Peter's College. Tongan Stage: McAuley High School, De La Salle College, Carmel College, Sacred Heart College. Over 9000 performers representing 62 schools took part in this event, which is the largest Māori and Polynesian Festival in the world. More than 85,000 people attended the event.

Carmel College Auckland Jubilee

Carmel College, Milford, Auckland celebrates its 50th Jubilee in 2007. For further information email croche@xtra.co.nz.

Strategies to Promote the Enrolment of Catholic Primary School Graduates at Local Catholic Secondary Schools

An increasing number of Catholic secondary school principals and senior teachers are establishing strong links with their colleague principals in contributing primary schools, to facilitate the movement of primary school graduates from Catholic primary schools to local Catholic secondary schools. This is done in a variety of ways, targeting students in the last two years of primary school by arranging visits to the secondary school for performances or sporting activities, providing retreats at the college, offering the use of the college's technology facilities occasionally or on a regular basis and so on. Some schools also ensure that secondary students who are graduates of the target school are on hand to talk to the primary school students.

Given that the majority of young people make their own decision about what secondary school they will go to, we need to get in early and seek to persuade them to stay within the Catholic school system.

On the Way to Life Launched by UK Catholic Education Service

A major analysis of contemporary culture and the current 'crisis of transmission' of Catholicism, produced by the Heythrop Institute in London, shows the complexity of the decline in religious belief, and presents material needing discussion by Catholic schools and the Church. The key proposition is that a new language of 'sacramental imagination' needs to be developed. The complete document is available for downloading at www.cesew.org.uk.

Schools Asked to Pass on Values

Emeritus Professor Brian Hill, from Perth's Murdoch University, believes that schools are spending too much time teaching students to earn a living and too little time exploring beliefs and values that shape their lives. The fragmentation of the secondary school day means that there is no one teacher to care for the 'whole' student, so students surrender to the dominant value system. He has called for state schools to introduce religious education into their curriculum, with an emphasis on understanding the legacy of Christianity as the main source of values that have shaped Australian culture, but appraising the role of all religions. He considers that ethics-based education stripped of moral underpinning and global context and 'taken one value at a time' has its limitations.

Two Good Ideas

In some Catholic schools, whenever students gather to pray three candles are lit, to represent the home, the school and the parish working together.

The parish of St Ignatius in Richmond, Melbourne invites celebrities to give a talk at the monthly Sunday evening youth Mass. The parish website contains an archive of the talks. Recently a young lawyer spoke of the robust, pragmatic Catholicism taught him by the Jesuits. "It is forgiving of frailty and weakness, but it abhors apathy and urges action."



Useful Resources

Stay With Us Lord is a new DVD made in New Zealand. Celebrating the Year of the Eucharist, it provides reflection and education on the Mass. It will appeal to all age groups. Order from New Dawn Wellington, 75 Gorrie Rd, Mangaroa, RD, Upper Hutt, enclosing \$20 per copy.

Travelling Light, Daniel O'Leary, Columba. This book was recommended by a group of busy principals recently, as an excellent collection of short daily spiritual reflections and practical suggestions.

www.bc.edu/church21/resources/webcast/ is a site from Boston College, a Jesuit University. It includes webcasts from well known theologians and religious educators. It is a great resource for staff inservice or personal updating.

A word on Compassion from Pope Benedict

In his recent encyclical the Pope reminds us that all human kind is our neighbour. "Anyone who needs me and whom I can help is my neighbour", whether in my own family or in a refugee camp on the other side of the world.

An Interesting Action

Some private Catholic secondary schools in Perth have taken a stand over the ball season, warning parents about over-indulging their children by paying too much for gowns, and ball-associated expenses. Gowns are viewed in advance, and girls whose ball dresses are considered to be too revealing are asked to have them altered, or to change them.



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