



ST PETER'S BOYS PREP SCHOOL

SERVING THE FAITH FOR 70 YEARS

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

DATE 25 June 2020

JUNIOR PREP



Dear Parents,

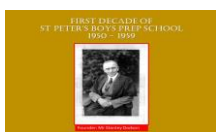
FROM THE HEADMASTER

This week should have been one of the highlights of our 70th birthday celebrations. We had diarised the Old Boys' Evensong and Gala Dinner for 19 June, the Community Sport and Fellowship Day for 20 June and our St Peter's Day for the Schools and Staff is traditionally held on the Friday before we break up for our winter mid-term break. Unfortunately, we have had to postpone these events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but rest assured we will reschedule celebratory events as soon as we are able to do so.

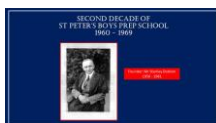
Nonetheless, it is good that we take time to celebrate the achievements of the past. 70 years of history has formed St Peter's Prep Schools and our community has expanded into both a Girls School and a co-educational Pre-Prep. Change is already there to see. Two recent historic events have also served as catalysts for change and in many ways 2020 is destined to become yet another watershed year for our school. The lessons we have learnt from the COVID-19 response and the enormous benefits that we have seen in aspects of online learning will, I have no doubt, influence the way in which we teach in future. Our commitment to a holistic and values based education has also been reaffirmed and the joy that has been apparent on so many boys faces with the return to classroom-based education (and socialisation) is indicative of just what social creatures we all are. The second historic event that is impacting the school and our future is the #blacklivesmatter movement. This has motivated school management to relook at our transformation and inclusion journey and to take stock of our own institutional bias. Discussions and planning for future anti-racism interventions at all levels have been both robust and energetic. There is no doubt that this will be another area for growth and change as we take our school forward into a new and more inclusive era.

Schools are, by their very nature, dynamic institutions and I invite you to watch the three historical PowerPoint videos of the 1950s, 60s and 70s to see how things grew and changed over these first three decades of our school. We have, throughout the years, remained true to our Anglican ethos and values and I am positive that these will continue to guide us into a new era post-COVID and in a world of new opportunities.

Here are the links to the 3 video's, enjoy.



1950s – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSknyJ8Sfio>



1960s - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLCUZehKtaU>



1970s - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBnQhJegSHA>

Enjoy the mid-term break!
Rob Macaulay

FROM THE RECTOR
PART 2

St Peter's – the Difference ...

The enormous effect of environment on intelligence in the early years is one of the main drivers for the opening of our own St Peter's Pre-Prep. Early Childhood Development (ECD) encompasses physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and motor development between 0 to 8 years of age.

The uninformed often view ECD facilities or Pre-Prep school as glorified Daycare Centres with some structure to a programme which provides the children with simple activities to keep them occupied. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Abecedarian Project, conducted in the 1970s, remains one of the most promising pieces of evidence for ECD. It differed from more current research in that it provided intensive intervention from birth to age 5 and then tracked the students into adulthood. The participants in the intervention programme did amazingly better than the control group, including being four times likelier to graduate from university, five times less likely to have received government welfare, significantly reduced chances of being arrested or charged with a crime and significant improvements in adult maths and reading ability.

Numerous subsequent studies have confirmed these findings. The return on investment on ECD has been quantified by the distinguished economist and Nobel laureate, James Heckman. Heckman's research shows a return on investment of between \$7 for every dollar invested in ECD, over double the return on an investment in post-school job training and tertiary education.

Advances in neuroscience, molecular biology, and genomics now give us a much better understanding of how early experiences are built into our bodies and brains, for better or worse.

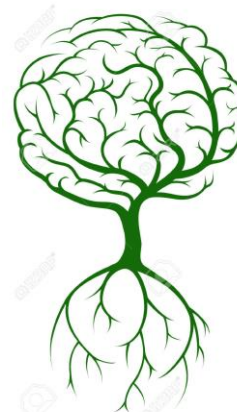
The basic [architecture of the brain](#) is constructed through a process that begins early in life and continues into adulthood. Simpler circuits come first and more complex brain circuits build on them later. Genes provide the basic blueprint, but experiences influence how or whether genes are expressed. Together, they shape the quality of brain architecture and establish either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all of the learning, health, and behaviour that follow. Plasticity, or the ability for the brain to reorganise and adapt, is greatest in the first years of life and decreases with age.

St Peter's pupils are taught how the brain works. We believe that once they understand this, they can increase their intelligence and ability by trying harder at mental tasks.

This is how we explain it:

1. The brain comprises billions of nerve endings called neurons.
2. The neurons communicate with electro-chemical impulses.
3. These impulses travel along links between the neurons. The links are called synapses.
4. The more we think and use a particular set of neurons, the greater the growth of the synapses.
5. The more synapses we have the cleverer we become.

Explaining this process helps them to understand that intelligence is not fixed. When faced with a mental problem, they should not stop thinking. We liken the process to fitness training: the more one runs, the fitter one becomes.



Schools as we know them

The schooling system with which we are familiar, was developed by Frederick the Great, in the 18th Century. The invention of machines which could do the work of many men required a more sophisticated labour force than that which had serviced what was a largely agrarian economy. The German chancellor, Bismarck, designed a schooling system which set out to produce such a labour force for the owners of the factories. The owners of the factories were educated in the 'Classics' e.g. the long established 'public' schools such as Eton and Harrow in the United Kingdom. The system reflects its Prussian and industrial origins with children grouped according to:

- age (not ability)
- desks ordered in neat rows
- communication between pupils strictly forbidden
- a curriculum which must be 'covered' irrespective of whether or not all the children have grasped it
- subjects taught according to a timetable which takes no account whether or not children are receptive to learning,

all culminating in the transmission of 'knowledge' (facts) from the teacher (the *sage*) to the students.

Moreover, the method used to assess the progress of students largely comprises questions demanding the recall of the facts taught. Thus, to a large extent, only one component of intelligence was tested: memory.

In large part, therefore, those able to recall the facts correctly were rewarded with high marks and a reputation for being clever. Little recognition was bestowed on those who displayed reasoning power, logic, problem-solving ability, creativity, analytic ability, perceptual speed and other factors constituting intelligence in the many theories describing intellectual ability.

History is peppered with examples of highly successful people who struggled at school or university including Richard Branson, Steven Spielberg, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Whoopi Goldberg and our own Bonang Matheba, Charlize Theron, Priven Reddy and Max Lichaba.

The above individuals succeeded despite their schools and universities where they received messages suggesting that they were without ability. How many others simply accept the same messages, shrink their self-image and confidence to fit the latter and just proceed through life accepting what fate dishes out?

The St Peter's definition of success is not restricted to financial achievement. For us it includes many more aspects of human fulfilment, including the ability to be a great parent, spouse, friend, citizen, as well as accomplishment in sport, the arts and all similar fields. Most importantly, we include the ability to make the world a better place, if only for one other person.

To achieve such success, the traditional school system is almost wholly ineffective. Let's start with a central concept: the teacher as the font of knowledge transferring it to the child as the receptacle, who then repeats from memory the 'facts' what the teacher has taught.

In the first place, the method tests only memory and in the second, one has to ask which facts should be taught in order to contribute to the future successful performance of the child? In 1982, futurist and inventor, R Buckminster Fuller estimated that up until 1900, human knowledge doubled approximately every century, but by 1945 it was doubling every 25 years. By 1982, it was doubling every 12 to 13 months. Experts now estimate that in 2020, human knowledge is doubling every hour. Moreover, we need also to consider the 'Knowledge Half-Life' concept introduced 50 years ago by the former president of the International Economic Association, Fritz Machlup. Knowledge Half-Life is the amount of time it takes before half the knowledge or facts in a particular area are made obsolete or superseded by new facts. As complexity scientist and Harvard fellow, Samuel Arbesman, points out, facts change all the time: The earth was flat, smoking was once doctor-recommended and Pluto was a planet. (CIO Africa, 2019).

Many parents continue to want the comfort of a written list of facts which their children can memorise and reproduce in an exam. The question is, how useful are the facts to the child's future performance and what if the child does not have a good memory? One of the most oft-mentioned skills required for success in the 21st Century is the ability to work collaboratively. This recognises that human beings learn from the environment and from one another. Sharing of ideas leads to better solutions, more refined concepts, and improved creativity. The traditional school system discourages this crucial element.

Hope it's not too much to digest, enjoy the mid-term break.

Greg Royce

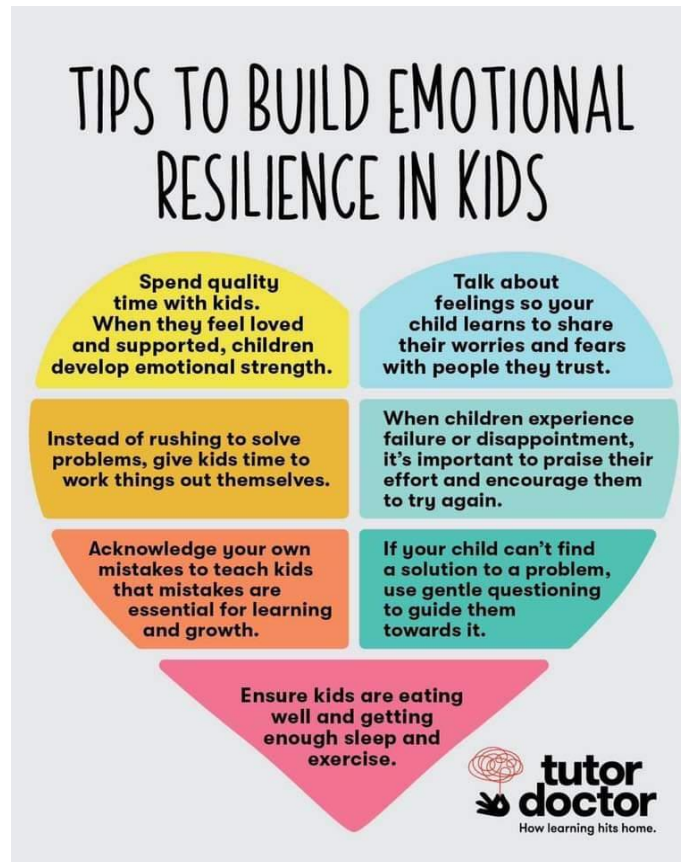
#blacklivesmatter

**SUPPORTING
BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

Please click on this link to read a thought provoking article written by Robin DiAngelo called White Fragility: [View Article Here](#).

This led to a book of the same title, exploring why it can be so hard for white people to talk about race.

FROM THE JUNIOR PREP



During these uncertain times our children need to be emotionally resilient to manage the different situations and adaptations they face. I just loved how well the above diagram pulled these requirements together and I am sure that you will find it beneficial as you prepare your children, especially Grade 0 and 1, for their return to school.

Children also need structure and routine to assist them during times of transition. Parents who remain positive and who model a belief in the decision made as to whether their child should return to school or not have the acceptance of their children who make the required adaptations with ease.

This being said the return of the Grade 2 boys has been most successful with positive feedback from our boys. They have maintained the required protocol with ease and many new games are being invented that involve social distancing. They have enjoyed the opportunity of interacting with their peers and having input from their teachers.

HALF TERM

Whether your child comes back to school or continues with remote learning for the remainder of the second term, I am hoping you will make the most of the Half Term break. Many of our boys are tired and the ongoing change they have faced has had an impact on their emotional wellbeing. I think a time of rest before the return to school of many of our boys will assist them with managing a new environment and allow their bodies time to build on their immunity.

I certainly know that the teachers need some time to recharge their batteries as they have not stopped working since the last Half Term. April holidays were spent upskilling their IT and preparing for a remote learning. The hours have been long and demanding. I am sure you will join me in wishing all our JP Staff a well-deserved rest before they take on the hybrid model required to reach all our boys during the course of July. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for taking on roles no teachers have ever had to take on before, while making new discoveries, they have also managed to maintain a high standard of education and reach out to the boys in their classes.

It would be great if our boys and teachers could spend the next ten days “cocooning,” resting and relaxing.

BACK TO SCHOOL

On **Monday, 06 July** we will welcome Grade 0 and 1 boys back to school for the first time since March. This week they would have watched various video clips about the changes and had the chance today to visit the Sanitisation Station and their classroom. The videos will remain available on their learning platform over the Half Term break should you wish to review any of them as you prepare for the transition.

For the first week back at school parents of Grades 0-2 boys who are not returning will be able to collect work packs from the Chapel Car park as a drive through on **Saturday, 04 July**. Work will be posted on the learning platform on **Friday, 03 July**, as usual. There will, however, not be class Zoom sessions for Grades 0 and 1 boys who remain at home from **06 to 09 July** while we organise classes and returns. The social Zoom will continue on **Friday, 10 July** but times may be changed. During this week we will communicate the times and Zoom address with parents from each class for both group and individual sessions.

Homework will not be sent home during this time of hybrid learning, but we would like Grade 1 and 2 boys to continue with both the Reading Eggs and Mathletics Programmes at home. Grade 0 boys can continue with Reading Eggs should they wish to.

I would like to wish our Junior Prep families a wonderful Half Term and I look forward to welcoming many of boys and teachers back on **06 July**.

Warm regards,
Kenda Melvill-Smith

COMMUNITY SHARING



For the past few months we have been compiling a register of the professions and businesses of St Peter's Prep Schools parents in order to provide business opportunities for our community.

Participation is entirely voluntary. The objective of the following form is to help connect people in business to hopefully assist with additional revenue streams and expand business networks during this unexpected pandemic.

<https://forms.gle/j92Bn5mSd4HQSUp67>

If you wish to share your details, please complete the google form by 13 July. St Peter's Prep Schools will

then share the information via email to all parents at St Peter's on 17 July. If you have already submitted your details, there is no need to resubmit as the list builds from the previous submissions.

Diane Fraser (Marketer)

70th CELEBRATIONS

We know that there must be so many stories and memories of your time spent at St Peter's Boys Prep, whether a parent, a pupil, an old boy or a member of staff, past or present.

Whether your story or memory is from fifty years ago or last week, we would love you to share them with us! We have created an email address for you to send your story and a photo to. We will, in due course, share these on our Website and social media pages.

We would love to hear from you as sharing our stories is what makes us part of the St Peter's Family.

Please send photos, stories and memories to:

70yearsofmemories@stpeters.co.za

Diane Fraser (Marketer)

FOOD DRIVE

Thank You to all our families!

We are feeding children in the crèches, little minds that need a daily good meal, we are making a difference to their day.

LET'S INVEST IN OUR FUTURE!



To Help:

1. Any non-perishable food item: cans of food and staples
2. Cash donations: please deposit into: St Peter's Foundation; Standard Bank; Acc: 422 057 533 (Section A18 tax certificates can be issued).

Collection points:

Chapel car park

Boys JP: entrance to reception

Boys SP: collection field for Grade 4 and 3's

Girls JP: entrance to reception

Girls SP: Grade 7 drop off zone

Second hand clothing for our St Peter's community can be dropped off next to the bins at the same collection points.

Blessings

Monica Sloane and Father Richard