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Dear Friend,

Welcome to *TEC Connects*. Your monthly newsletter! You will find that it filled with educational information, helpful hints and tips, events, news and even some product offerings. Our focus is *connection* and we want to bring value to your passion for Christian Education so please, please share your feedback and suggestions with us. Perhaps you have a great event, photo, story or quote you would like to share with us... please do send them in. We also love to hear your questions and comments, so stay in touch.

We hope you enjoy this month's *Connects*!

[info@theexcellencecentre.org](mailto:info@theexcellencecentre.org)

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## LEARNING THROUGH CREATIVITY

by Tina Lamont

Recently, a team from TEC had the privilege of attending the Visible Learning Seminar with special guest, John Hattie. It was a fabulous event with much thought provoking content. It got me thinking about how these concepts of learning can be looked at in a Christian context and what my thoughts around learning are.



Creativity is very clearly at the heart of our Creator God and fundamental to the definition of a successful learner. As Christian Educators, it is imperative that we:

- Enable children and young people to develop creative skills that help them to take a greater responsibility for planning and managing their own learning.
- Establish open-ended approaches to learning, where learners and teachers work together to explore themes.
- Use external partnerships and our community (where possible) to broaden and enhance the learning experience which promotes creativity in all areas of learning.

***Creativity*** is a process that generates ideas that have value for the individual. It involves looking at familiar things with a fresh eye, examining problems with an open mind, making connections, learning from mistakes and using imagination to explore new possibilities.

We also want to *Build Learning Power* (Claxton, 2011) and *Make Learning More Visible* (Hattie, 2009). To that end, we want our teachers and learners to understand and discuss the learning process by having a “**language of building learning power**”. The concepts of **Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflectiveness and Reciprocity** focuses the classroom talk on the process and experience of learning.

If we want young people to turn out to be robust and confident learners, we have to talk to them in terms of a **growth mindset**. We want to encourage learners to find ways to try harder and differently, and to learn smarter (Dweck, 2014).

I hope to share more of this with you in the coming months, so watch this space!

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**RESEARCH**

**FAITH FORMATION IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**



**Scholarly Christian Educators Gathering, St Andrew's Cathedral School,  
March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

What do you think should be the heart of our apologetics? Can you imagine it being like falling in love? Do you think you understand others of a different opinion well, or is your thought-life caught in a bubble of some kind? And can the Gospel speak naturally and well into the topic of the treatment of women in our commercialised West?



These were some of the key questions considered at the Scholars and Christian Educators Gathering, held at St Andrews Cathedral School on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March. Dr Justine Toh from the Centre for Public Christianity gave a clear and engaging session on the apologetics of attraction – and the title of her session set the tone: *Why apologetics is little (or a lot) like falling in love*.

Dr Amy Orr-Ewing (from the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics) followed up in similar form with her session on *Postmodern challenges to the Gospel*. Her theme of us living in 'echo-bubbles' helped set the conceptual tone for the rest of the day. Her consideration of the objectification of women in Western society, and the contrast of the understanding of women in the Bible, was winsomely, creatively and intelligently presented, in the style of Dorothy Sayers, whom she has studied extensively.

Here is a link to another 'Dr Amy' presentation – the site is at the Centre for Public Christianity: [Click here](#).

If you are interested in reading some summary notes from these speakers, and the others who presented on the day, go to our [website](#).

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Why not check out some of Stephen's other writings in our weekly ['Care Conversation' Newsletter](#).

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The next Gathering will be on **October 20th**, so put that in your diary now.



Do you want to give your staff a meaningful learning opportunity in the middle of the year? Are you and they interested in questions such as:

- How do I maximise my teaching time in my classes?
- What do I do with the growing number of students from different faith backgrounds?
- How can I help students learn more?
- Is there a way of responding to the different needs in my classroom?
- Can I improve how I manage challenging behaviours from the students?

There is good news if this interests you! Simply contact us at [The Excellence Centre](#) for one of our Learning Guides to see how you can have a NESA endorsed course run about these kind of critical professional development questions. The course that addresses these issues are (in the order of the questions above):

- Routines in the Classroom
- Responding to Religious and Cultural Backgrounds
- Feedback for Students
- Differentiation for Students (ASD)
- Managing Challenging Behaviours in the Classroom

Talk to TEC soon about delivering one or more of these courses for your team in the mid-year break.

**WHAT'S HAPPENING**

# DIFFERENTIATION FOR ASD STUDENTS



## Full Day Course:

May 2, Pacific Coast Christian School, Tweed Heads.

Even though this course has a focus on ASD students, the principles of differentiation that are covered can be applied to any student situation requiring differentiation. This course is 4.5 hrs NESA registered PD addressing 1.5.2 & 6.2.2 from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers maintaining Proficient Teacher Accreditation in NSW.

If you would like more information about this or similar courses contact us at [info@theexcellencecentre.org](mailto:info@theexcellencecentre.org).



## BETH GREEN

Dr Beth Green, hosted by TEC, will be special guest speaker at the SLT Seminar on **Wednesday 17th May**. This is a not to be missed event.

Dr Beth Green is a Cardus Team Member and the Program Director from Education Canada. Beth will be sharing on *Contemporary Research within Christian Education; The Cardus Survey*.

The seminar will begin at 3.30 pm, in the Staff Room of Pacific Hills Christian School, Dural, Sydney.

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUG

SEPT

OCT

NOV

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Forum, Canberra

**15 – 16 June**

TEC Executive Principals Gathering,  
Sydney

**21 & 28 June**

NESA Accredited Course: Religious  
Backgrounds

**23 - 24 June**

Mentoring for the Mentors Retreat  
with Peter Hudson (MET), Tweed  
Heads

**3 – 7 July**

Hillsong Conference

**11 - 12 August**

Aspiring Leaders Retreat, Sydney

**17 - 19 August**

Australian Christian Higher  
Education Alliance (ACHEA)  
Conference, Sydney

**23 August**

Schools Learning Together Seminar:  
Dr David Smith, Sydney

**25 - 26 August**

Equipping Leaders Retreat, Sydney

**25 October**

Schools Learning Together Seminar:  
Dr Don Roy, Sydney

**17 - 18 November**

Mentor the Principals, Sydney

There is much happening in the life of TEC so keep a watch on our  
website

[www.theexcellencecentre.org](http://www.theexcellencecentre.org)

**CONNECT WITH TEC**



**Blog posts by Dr Ted Boyce:**

[Three Great Surprises](#)

[Need For Self Acceptance](#)

[Ambassadors For Christ](#)

[How To Exercise Authority Wisely](#)

[The Key To Christian Living](#)



We're building a global community and sharing the Gospel through Social Media.

- Motivation Monday
- Verse of the Day
- News & Info
- Quotes
- Upcoming Events
- Much More

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