Annual Report

Parents As Video Producers

Parent Involvement goes beyond the Tuck Shop and Working Bees

This year the weekly parents discussion groups took on a special challenge to each produce a video segment for a mock parenting lifestyle program ‘Better Parents and Kids’.

Some parents took on the role of scriptwriters and directors while others became producers, camera people and of course performers. The result was an entertaining and informative take on some very different aspects of parenting.

One of the great spin-offs from this activity was that parents got to know each other in a different situation to the regular small group discussion format.

EUROPE DAY ILLUSTRATES SOTE’S COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

A special day is held every two years which brings together the whole school in a particular area of interest. This year it was Europe Day.

Each class, primary and secondary, took up some aspect of Europe for extended study. For primary classes it was a study of a particular country. Secondary subject areas included Art, Drama, Music and English.

In Art, it was the construction of a Viking Ship. In Citizenship, it was the structure of the European Union.

These studies culminated in a special day in which older students ran activities for the younger children and parents came together in the evening sharing food from many countries. Out of it all we hoped the students gained a greater understanding of other cultures.

Vijayadev Yogendra

As I write this report highlighting the achievements of the students, parents and teachers of SOTE over the past year, I am reminded again of the debt of gratitude we owe to the School’s Founder Vijayadev Yogendra.

His concept of a school that valued each child as an individual and which would work at bringing out the best in each person through the application of the teacher’s love and care is unique.

The Parents’ Program, the Teacher Development Program and the central place given to Character Development were all far-sighted ideas which built an educational culture that goes well beyond the professional.

Richard Waters, Principal
Distinctive Curriculum

New Media

New Media classes are compulsory for Year 8 and 9. These aim at student proficiency in information and communication technologies plus mastery of the software they will need to use at secondary level.

School Meals

Students sit with their teachers for their meals.

There has been a lot of attention in the media on the problem of obesity in children and the need for healthy eating programs in Schools. For 25 years SOTE has provided a cooked lunch for students several times a week.

This year the menu was reviewed by a nutritionist and parents were given special information on Lunch Box Ideas through the Parents’ Program. Even on days where lunch is not provided, students sit with their teachers in the school dining rooms and share their meal together. This ensures that teachers know that every child has a good meal in the middle of the day.

Film and Television

Film and Television is offered at Years 10, 11 and 12 and involves students in designing, shooting and editing their own digital productions and learning to critique all screen media.

Year 12 student, Tim York, produced an outstanding documentary film entitled ‘One Drop at a Time’ based on his class group’s visit to India in 2005. Many hours went into meticulous editing of the extensive footage he had shot on the trip to the International Water Conference in Varanasi.

Quiet Time

Quiet Time is for primary children and emphasises the value of spending time settling and finding a sense of quietude. Stories involving positive values are used to settle the children and are told rather than read. They then spend a few minutes with their eyes closed listening to music or ambient sounds.

Daily Physical Education

All students from Grade 1 to Year 12 participate in a Daily Physical Education Program. For students in Grades 1 to 3 this focuses on the Movement for Learning Program which includes cross-patterning exercises and co-ordination activities which stimulate brain development.

Yoga Classes

Yoga Classes were introduced on a voluntary basis for secondary students. There was a good take-up of classes by senior secondary students.

Vegetable Garden and Chicken Coop

Year 10 students adopted a project of creating a vegetable garden which would supply the school kitchen. Year 9 students constructed a chicken coop so they could supply fresh eggs for school meals.

Year 10 Businesses

Year 10 students devoted a term of their Citizenship studies to planning and running their own business. They have to run at a profit to pass the term’s work! Students put in many hours outside school in their businesses and came up with a variety of entrepreneurial ideas.
Extra-Curricular Activities

Europe Day

Students from Year 1 to 12 participated in activities such as Fox and Hound, European Painters, Giant Chalk Mural, Le Mans Racing, Maze and Minotaur and Welcome to Scotland. A Greek duo from Brisbane performed a large repertoire of songs, followed by a Primary costume parade.

Cast members from Theseus.

Senior Play

This year’s Senior Play was Shakespeare’s Love’s Labor’s Lost. It was a big challenge for Year 11 and 12 Drama students. Audiences really appreciated the performances and both nights played to packed houses.

Female cast of Love’s Labor’s Lost.

Work Experience

Year 10 students had a week’s Work Experience during May in a variety of settings in Warwick, Toowoomba and Brisbane. Reports from employers indicated a high level of satisfaction with the work ethic of SOTE students.

Mighty Murray Muster

Students in Year 10 took part in the Mighty Murray Muster in Canberra which was a forum for students highlighting the problems of the Murray-Darling System. This trip was building on the work the students had done in monitoring water quality in the Condamine, one of the main tributaries for the system, as part of their science studies in Year 9.

Year 10 students in Canberra

Athletics Day

All secondary students participated in the Athletics Day in May. Students enjoyed the opportunity just to take part in the activities. There was a wonderful atmosphere and very little concern about the overall outcome.

Spotlight on SOTE

A special performance event organised by music teacher Colin Alley was the Spotlight on SOTE concert held at Warwick Town Hall. Both primary and secondary students performed music and drama items which entertained a capacity crowd.

Science Display

A successful Science Display was held in July with secondary and primary students displaying their science activities to parents.

Drug Forum

Year 12 students organised a panel of guest speakers to contribute to forum on drug and alcohol related issues. The students chaired the meeting and some contributed a youth perspective on the panel.

Outdoor Education Program

In 2006, the School conducted a comprehensive Outdoor Education Program from Years 5 to 12 which included bushwalking at Binna Burra (Year 6), high ropes courses at Meebun-bia (Time Out Year) canoeing on the Cooloola River (Year 8) and Marine Biology at Hastings Point (Year 10). Year 11 students participated in a very challenging 10-day Outward Bound Camp in the Northern Rivers area of NSW.

Clearly, these extra-curricular activities depend on the support of a teaching staff who are happy to put in the many extra hours involved in these events.
Use of Computers to Assist Learning

Students at SOTE are able to use computers to assist their learning in virtually every subject area.

**Student Access to Computers**

There are primary and secondary computer laboratories for general computer use and a special lab for secondary students who study Film and Television and New Media. There is also a small lab for Time Out use and there are individual computers in all primary classrooms. Computers are available for specialist areas such as science, music and art. All computers are connected to the network physically or via a wireless system. The school hosts its own web-based email.

**Teacher Access to Computers**

Every teacher has an iBook laptop computer. These are used for class preparation, research on the internet and reporting to parents. Teachers have access to data projectors and are also able to use digital video cameras to record oral presentations and edit these on their computers.

**Computer Network**

Teachers can access the school network from anywhere in the school through a wireless system on their laptops. This means they could use a data projector to display an internet site live. Teachers are able to provide handouts and homework sheets through the network and students can hand in work through a drop box system.

The purpose is to train students so that they are not dependent on computers but are able to utilise information technology to assist and enhance their learning.

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**Art**

Art students access artwork and research artists on the internet. They use Word to write essays and visual diaries. Photoshop is used to manipulate pictures to create artwork.

**Drama**

Drama students use the internet to access information about playwrights and texts in their assignments as well as for poster design.

**Primary**

Primary students work on projects with their teachers through supervised internet access on their classroom computers.

**New Media**

New Media students learn word processing, spreadsheet, presentation skills and web page design as well as to use vector based graphic design programs.

**Film & TV**

Film & TV students create short films and documentaries using digital video equipment and video editing software with the final products being burnt to DVD.

**Maths**

Maths: Spreadsheets are used extensively for statistical and financial analysis including graphical representation of the results.

**Science**

Science: Internet research is conducted on projects and Word or Power Point are used to present the results. Virtual dissections are conducted on-line for Biology.

**All Year 8 & 9 students take a semester of New Media studies to give them the computer literacy needed for senior studies.**

**This access to computer technology has made a big difference to teachers’ confidence and competence with Information Technology.**
Social Climate

Individual Student Care

The low Student-Teacher Ratio of 1 to 13 (maximum) throughout primary and secondary levels facilitates a personal relationship between students and teachers. Every child is valued and no one goes unnoticed.

Secondary Home Groups

The Home Group system at secondary level means that each year level has at least one teacher who maintains an overview of each student's progress and well-being. Primary and Secondary teachers assist each other with student welfare.

Teacher Care

Teacher concerns are catered for with a weekly meeting which encourages open-ended discussion on practical issues in teachers' experiences. This is also an opportunity to raise concerns with the leadership of the school.

Family Counsellor

A Family Counsellor, Clive Duffy, visits the school twice each term to provide support for students, teachers and families. Clive also meets with the teachers to assist with stress and adjustment issues. Support is also available from psychologists at the Centre For Healthy Living.

Older Students and Younger Students

Senior students are much admired by younger students and they provide leadership in a number of formal and informal ways. This a function partly of the school size (150 students from Prep to 12) and also of the school culture where all age groups interact in an open and relaxed way.

Parent Involvement

Parents' Program

All parents attend regular small group discussions on parenting issues. Groups are facilitated by parents with longer term experience. Training and support is provided through Group Leaders' Meetings.

Combined Meetings are held at least once each term. The most highly rated sessions were: presentations on Plans for the Future, Nutritionist Elia Faa's talk on Children & Nutrition and Prof. Peter Demerath on Competition in American Schools.

Parent-Teacher Interviews

Parent-teacher interviews were held at the start of Term 3 for all class levels. Many parents reported they would prefer the Grade Meetings system run previously because teachers were available on request anyway.

Parent Feedback

In November, parents write reports on their children's progress over the year which are given to primary class and secondary Home Group teachers.

This year for the first time parents were surveyed on their satisfaction with various aspects of the School's functioning. All areas were rated over 80% satisfaction (see chart).

Most Enjoyed

Parents ranked the Senior Play the School Activity Most Enjoyed, followed by Europe Day, Spotlight on SOTE, Primary Plays and the Junior Drama Festival all ranked highly.
Progress of the School Towards its Goals

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS IS THE MAJOR FOCUS

Maintenance of Key Principles and Values

This area had two main objectives. One was the opportunity for teachers, students and parents to study Yoga which would provide the basis for understanding the key philosophy of the school.

The other objective was to articulate the approach of the school through documentation. The first project is a Teachers’ Handbook which would be a reference point for all teachers but especially new teachers on ethos, policy and culture of Total Education. This has been started. The second project was to write a History of SOTE to provide teachers, parents with the background that underpinned the development of the school. Both projects require more funding to allow the people with this institutional knowledge to have dedicated time to record it.

Development of Teachers

As the original teachers continue to mature in age, there needs to be a focus on the understanding of the School’s core principles and values and how these can be translated into practice. The teacher development section of the next part of this report demonstrates how this is being implemented. As well as this there has been more emphasis on mentoring pre-service teachers as a basis for recruitment of suitable young people as future teachers.

The other goal in this area was to update the professional knowledge of current teachers through increased participation in professional development activities. This is also being pursued through the involvement of SOTE teachers in the development of new work programs in many subject areas.

Development of Parents

The area of parent involvement is one of the key distinctions of the SOTE philosophy. The goals in the Strategic Plan reflect this focus. Strengthening the Parents Program through the training of new group leaders and the mentoring of parents who are new to the school has been part of this. Parent Seminar topics have also reflected the need to refresh parents’ understanding of the school’s ethos (see Parent Involvement section).

Development of Students

In the light of the strategic emphasis on new areas, it is important not to lose sight of our core business, the development of students through the aspects of academic, health & physical and of course character development. This focus is clear from the satisfaction of parents (previous section).

External Relations

Creating links with universities and government were the key goals in this part of the strategic plan. Contact was made with the then Education Minister in 2005 and more recently with Education Queensland Director-General, Rachel Hunter and invitations made to them to visit the school. The Cyclical Review also provided opportunity for connecting with the Office of Non-State Schools.

Sustainability of the School

This area takes in not only the financial sustainability and viability of the school but also the sustainability of teachers and leadership personnel who are interested in and can live the SOTE philosophy. The further development of the building program to meet expanding enrollments has been followed up.

A Review of the enrollment process has also been conducted to try to ensure the matching of families with the key goals of the School so that we are all going in the same direction in relation to the education of the children.
Professional Development

Staff Stability
The School has a high level of staff stability with 96% of the teaching staff being retained from the previous year. Judy Currie was appointed Deputy Principal and Stephen Clark continued as Primary Co-ordinator.

Curriculum Afternoons
Instead of ‘Pupil-Free Days’ teaching staff spend two afternoons each term on curriculum issues. This year the focus was on: New Reporting Formats, The Y1-10 English Program, Mandatory A-E Reporting for Years 1-12, Sexuality and Drug Education, Literacy Across the Curriculum and Development of the Prep Curriculum for implementation in 2007.

Professional Development
Teachers (19 of 21) attended a variety of Professional Development Programs. These programs are usually subsidised by either the Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) or the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA).

Activities attended by SOTE teachers this year included:
- Syllabus workshops in Senior Biology, Music, Film, TV & New Media and Chemistry.
- Other workshops in German, Year 1 to 10 English, P-10 Arts, Geography, Physical Education, Preparatory Year, Junior Music, Drug Education and Child Protection.

A number of pre-service teachers were also mentored by SOTE teachers in 2006. Two of these teachers were appointed to the teaching staff for 2007.

Teacher Development
Teacher Development Programs on the principles of Total Education were organised by the School. These included five half-day seminars, held in the school holidays. These included:
- Beyond Professionalism,
- Film: ‘To Be and To Have’,
- Sustaining the Principles of Total Education,
- Coming From the Heart and

These programs are considered to be very important in the sustainability of the School’s distinctive ethos.

Open Book Scenarios Project
Principal, Richard Waters, was invited to participate in the workshops developing the Open Book Scenarios Project. This project was organised by Teaching Australia and Neville Freeman Associates to encourage the teaching profession to look at possible futures.

Richard Waters attended three workshops in Melbourne over the year and participated in the development of the four scenarios with 50 other teachers and principals from all around Australia. These are to be launched as part of an extensive professional development program in September 2007.

Teachers’ Qualifications

Leadership
Richard Waters
BA, Dip. Ed., M.Ed (Leadership)
Judy Currie
BSc., Dip. Ed.

Secondary Teachers
Matthew Bradshaw
BA, B Ed.
Lua Johnson
BA Drama, Dip Ed (Secondary)
Alan Isaacs
BSc (Hons), D Ed, D Lib (Tchr Lib)
Ronda Mattarollo
BA, BEd (Secondary)
Roy Fox
BSc, Dip Ed
Neil Rasmussen
Dip Fine Arts, TSTC.
Nigel Sullivan
BEng, (Hons), DipEd

Primary Teachers
Emily Turkalj
BEd (Primary)
Bronnie Snow
BA, Dip Ed, B of S. Wk
Patrice Jubb
Dip Teaching
Stephen Clark
Grad. Dip Ed (Early Childhood)
John Cosgrove
BEd (Primary)
Jeremy Sullivan
BSc, Dip Ed
Cathy Petrasinius
BA, Dip Ed
Grant Tilbrook
Dip of Tch Prim.

Part-Time Teachers
Colin Alley
Dip Teach., M.Ed Admin
Bernadine Bradshaw
BA (Hons), Dip Ed
Pam Isaacs
BA (Hons), MA Dip Ed
Claire Waters
BA, T.S.T.C.
Karen Leech
Dip. Teaching
Beryl Rasmussen
Sec. Arts & Crafts, 4th Yr
**Required Statistics**

**System Affiliation**
Independent, non-systemic, non-denominational.
Member, Independent Schools of Queensland.

**Address**
2 Freestone Road, Warwick, Queensland 4370
Telephone: 61 7 4661 2666
Facsimile: 61 7 4661 4894
Email: admin@sote.qld.edu.au
Website: www.sote.qld.edu.au

**Enrollments**
136 students
67 primary and
69 secondary students
92% Average attendance

**Year Levels Offered**
Grade 1 to Year 12.
Single stream at each level.

**Gender**
Co-Educational at all levels.
62 girls and 74 boys.

**Retention Rates**
90% Apparent Retention Rate
90% Actual Retention Rate

**Staff Statistics**
96% Staff Retention from 2005.
96% Staff Attendance Rate.
$295 Staff Development costs (per teacher per annum)
18/22 Teachers attending staff development activities in 2005.

**Teachers and Students**
Ratio of 1 teacher to 13 students

**School Comment**
These statistics and the adjacent tables are part of Commonwealth and State Government requirements and need to be read with some caution given the small student numbers at SOTE. Percentages can be affected a great deal by one or two students, for example, falling below the benchmarks in classes of 10 to 13 children.

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<th>Aspects of Numeracy</th>
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<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Score for the School</td>
<td>477 458 567</td>
<td>594 597</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Score for Queensland</td>
<td>533 522 535</td>
<td>526 536</td>
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| % above National Benchmark (2006) | 82% 100% |          |          |
| % above National Benchmark (2005) | 43% 86%  |          |          |

**The School of Total Education Grade 3 Test 2006 (12 students)**

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<td>587 654 630</td>
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<td>Average Score for Queensland</td>
<td>618 627 608</td>
<td>601 602</td>
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| % above National Benchmark (2006) | 100% 88%  |          |          |
| % above the National Benchmark (2005) | 88% 75%  |          |          |

**The School of Total Education Grade 5 Test 2006 (9 students)**

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<td>Average Score for Queensland</td>
<td>684 696 679</td>
<td>656 654</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| % above National Benchmark (2006) | 100% 92%  |          |          |
| % above National Benchmark (2005) | 100% 92%  |          |          |

**The School of Total Education Grade 7 Test 2006 (13 students)**

**Year 12 OP Scores 2006**

**Year 12 Outcomes 2006**
Total number of students completing Year 12 | 9
Senior Certificates awarded | 9
Percentage of OP-eligible students with OP 1 to 15 | 100%
Percentage of students awarded a Senior Certificate and a VET qualification | 0%
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificate with OP-eligibility or a VET qualification | 100%
Percentage of QTAC applicants receiving an offer | 100%