

A photograph of a young child with curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, climbing a wooden play structure. The child is seen from behind, reaching up with their right arm. The structure is made of dark wood and features several bright orange, curved handholds. The background shows a lush green landscape with trees and a small building, suggesting a park or outdoor play area. The lighting is warm, indicating it might be late afternoon or early morning.

Australia





# From Crisis to Confidence: The Development of Social and Emotional Education in Australia

Jennifer M. Gidley

## Abstract

This paper seeks to offer a broad, Australian perspective on innovative approaches to education that may facilitate the social and emotional education of children. The paper begins with a brief overview of the unique history of education in Australia including insights into the strong passion and commitment of Australians for freedom of choice and diversity of educational approaches. This is followed by a discussion of the youth mental health crisis during the 1990s, which it is argued, has precipitated the Australian government's current strong commitment to social and emotional education. The paper then traces several phases of development of social and emotional education in Australia, before providing an overview of many kinds of approaches, including both explicit, curricular programmes and implicit, contextual and whole system approaches. Three case studies are then discussed: a whole system approach (Steiner education system), a whole population approach (all Australian five-year olds) and a targeted programme (for those experiencing grief and loss). The first is a national project to develop an Australian National Steiner Curriculum, which attempts to include the important feature of social and emotional education as part of its broader philosophy within the larger project of the development of the first Australian National Curriculum. The second case is the Australian Early Development Index—a whole population project to monitor the social and emotional wellbeing of all Australian five year old children; Thirdly, *Seasons for Growth* is specifically aimed at children and young people experiencing grief and loss.

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## 1. Historical Context for Social and Emotional Education in Australia

### 1.1 Australian Education. A relatively short history of formal schooling

*If you lived in the country in the 1800s, you might be lucky enough to have a small, one room school house on land donated by a local farmer. In the city, if you could not afford to attend one of the schools set up by the various churches, you would most probably be tutored by the wife of the local doctor, lawyer, magistrate or other professional. No standard for education existed. Education was only available to the wealthier middle and upper classes, who could afford to pay tuition.*

Marion McCreadie (2006)<sup>1</sup>

Australia has a rather unique history, compared to other Anglo-European countries, when it comes to the development of formal schooling. A brief illustration follows because the history provides important background context for understanding the diversity of Australian schooling today. Notwithstanding Australia's long indigenous history of 40,000 years or more, when it comes to the history of formal education, one needs to keep in mind that Australia has only existed as a nation for just over a century. Prior to 1901, when it became the Commonwealth of Australia, the large island/continent was made up of six colonies operating relatively independently of each other. Little formal schooling existed during the first century of European settlement in Australia. As noted in the opening quotation, what did exist was a potted mixture of Church schools and small isolated country schools on donated land with limited resources. The Catholic Church was quite prominent in those early years as an education provider and the ten Catholic schools in Australia by 1833<sup>2</sup> received some government support, as did other church schools. By

1848 government and non-government schools both existed.<sup>3</sup> However, by the 1860s, "legislation was passed in each of the Australian colonies, which effectively abolished State assistance to schools that were not under government control" (Wilkinson, Caldwell, Selleck, Harris, & Dettman, 2007).

In 1901 the six independent colonies became six states and two territories federated under the Commonwealth of Australia.<sup>4</sup> From 1901 until 1964 the only funding non-government schools received came from State and Territory Governments. Until very recently, the states and territories were also largely responsible for establishing and running public schools and determining curricula and policies, albeit with some financial support from the Commonwealth government.<sup>5</sup> In 1964 the Australian government began to also provide some capital funding for non-government schools. This was followed in 1970 by the introduction of additional recurrent funding, which, by 1973, was set at the rate of 20 per cent of the cost of educating a child in a government school.<sup>6</sup> Based on the latest data available (2006): "81.1 per cent of total expenditure on Australian schools was from government sources, compared to the OECD average of 90.3 per cent. Australia ranked the fourth lowest of the 25 OECD countries for which data was available."<sup>7</sup>

### 1.2 Diversity of Schooling in Australia

Australians have continued to express their strong commitment to freedom of choice in schooling as evidenced by the gradual growth of the (only partially funded) non-government schooling systems in addition to the (fully funded) government schooling system. Furthermore, over the last few decades the non-government schooling system, which previously had largely consisted of Catholic schools and a few other religious schools, began to diversify. The early 1970s was a crucial point in the furthering of these developments. Coincid-

ing with the introduction of some Commonwealth government recurrent funding<sup>8</sup> to non-government schools, the National Council of Independent Schools (NCIS) was established in 1970, significantly changing Australia's educational landscape. This organization, which is now named the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) has been consistently committed to the core values of "independence, autonomy and the provision of choice and diversity in schooling" for forty years.<sup>9</sup> During that forty year period, the independent sector—that is, schools that were neither government schools nor part of the Catholic schooling system—has grown from "400 schools and 114,000 students, four per cent of total school enrolments" to "1,100 schools and over half a million students... 16 per cent of total school enrolments" in Australia.<sup>10</sup>

In a somewhat parallel development the Australian Bishops Commission for Catholic Education held a conference in 1974 to establish the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC).<sup>11</sup> At that time, there were 1,730 schools, which made up 18% of all Australian schools. Of interest is that the number of Catholic schools has remained fairly constant in the intervening years. As of 2010, "there are approximately 1,700 Catholic schools in Australia, with an enrolment of almost 704,000 students – that's 20% of all Australian school students."<sup>12</sup>

In summary, the proportion of students attending government schools in Australia has been gradually falling. Even since 1995, the proportion of students attending government schools has fallen from 71% to 66% in 2010. Over the same period independent schools have gradually increased their share of the students. Between 1995 and 2005 "the number of students enrolled in Independent schools has increased by 46% (or 135,300 students) compared with Catholic schools (11% or 65,200 students) and government schools (2% or 38,200 students)."<sup>13</sup>

In terms of overall number of schools, the proportion of government schools has also been steadily falling for almost fifty years. In 1962, government schools made up 79% of all schools in Australia, with Catholic schools making up 18% and other non-government schools less than 4 %. As of writing this chapter, the proportion of students attending the three sectors of Australian schools comprise of government schools (66%), Catholic schools (20%) and independent schools (14%).

The significance of this shift towards greater diversity and philosophical independence will be discussed further below for its relevance to social and emotional education.

## 2. Why Social and Emotional Education in Australia?

*While most young people in Australia are doing well, there are areas where further gains in health and wellbeing could be achieved, particularly among young Indigenous Australians, young people in regional and remote areas and young people suffering socioeconomic disadvantage.*

(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p. x)

The most important driver behind the introduction of social and emotional education in Australia has arguably been the revelation a couple of decades ago that a major mental health crisis had arisen among Australian young people. In the intervening period there has been a gradual shift from focusing on the crisis itself to working with protective factors and prevention. This development is described in the next two sections.

### 2.1 The Crisis of Youth Mental Illness in Australia

Young people who become depressed, suicidal or fatigued in response to the hopeless-

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ness that confronts the world are living symbolic lives. Their struggles with meaning are not just personal struggles. They are trying to sort out the problems of society, and their sufferings, deaths and ruptures are not just personal tragedies but contributions to the spiritual dilemmas of the world. (Tacey, 2003, p. 176)

Australians were shocked during the 1990s when national figures were released showing that Australia had one of the highest rates of male youth suicide in the western world. The high and apparently growing rates of youth suicide, particularly affected young males aged 15 to 24. Research began in earnest and numerous interventions were developed across the health, education and community sectors, from help-lines, to professional development of doctors and teachers, to community awareness, to national school programmes. A series of reports have been produced since the late 90s, providing crucial data on the mental health and well-being of young Australians to provide a firm base from which to develop policies, interventions, and educational programmes.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has produced a series of national statistical reports on young people aged 12–24 years (1999, 2003 and 2007). In their most recent report *Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2007* a major area of concern with respect to my interests in this chapter was the finding that:

Mental disorders were the leading contributor to the burden of disease and injury (49%) among young Australians aged 15–24 years in 2003, with anxiety and depression being the leading specific cause for both males and females. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p. 23)

Based on levels of psychological distress as measured using the Kessler 10 (K10) scale—“a 10 item questionnaire asking about feelings such as nervousness, hopelessness, restlessness, depression and worthlessness”—it was found:

In 2004–05, the proportions of young males and females aged 18–24 years reporting high or very high levels of distress were 12% and 19% respectively, an increase from 1997 when the corresponding proportions were 7% and 13% respectively. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p. 24)

From within this broad picture, the report notes: “Depression, anxiety and substance use disorders are the most common mental disorders, accounting for 75% of the burden generated by all mental disorders” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p. 25) (citing Andrews & Wilkinson 2002). Unfortunately, there are no current figures for incidence of these or any other of the more specific psychological disorders, the most recent data being from 1997. What the 1997 figures showed was disturbing but also instrumental

in the shift to a more positive focus on promoting social and emotional wellbeing in Australia in more recent years. It is reported:

In 1997, just over one in four young people aged 18–24 years (an estimated 481,600 young people) experienced anxiety, affective or substance use disorders. Rates were similar for males and females—27% for males and 26% for females. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p. 26)

Other concerning and interrelated findings included the following:

- Over 47,000 hospital admissions for mental disorders in 2004–05. Over half of these were for psychoactive substance use, schizophrenia and depression;
- Over 7,000 hospital admissions in 2004–05 for an injury caused by assault among young people aged 12–24 years—a rate of 203 per 100,000;
- Injury (including poisoning) continues to be the leading cause of death for young people, accounting for two-thirds of all deaths of young people in 2004. Intentional self-harm (suicide) accounted for 27% of all injury deaths;
- 25% of young people in 2004–05 were overweight or obese;
- Almost one-third (31%) of young people drank alcohol in amounts that put them at risk or high risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term, and 11% at risk of long-term harm;
- Young adults (those aged 18–24 years) accounted for 20% of the total prison population in 2006, and there were over 9,000 12–17 year olds under juvenile justice supervision in 2003–04;
- One in three (34%) clients of agencies... providing assistance to homeless people were aged 12–24 years in 2004–05. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007, p. xi–xii, 32)

In 2008, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Report Card<sup>14</sup> on the wellbeing of young Australians was published. It provided a comprehensive picture of the health and wellbeing of young people, revealing that Australia lags behind many other developed nations. With respect to its broad overall measure of the mental health of young Australians, the ARACY Report found that Australia ranked 13<sup>th</sup> of 23 OECD countries. However, with respect to young indigenous Australians, the rank dropped to 23<sup>rd</sup> of 24 OECD countries (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2008, p. 4). With respect to a more subtle measure of social and emotional wellbeing, such as sense of belonging, one of the indicators found that nine out of every 100,000 young people “feel awkward and out of place at school” compared with only five out of 100,000 in Sweden—the best international result. Indigenous Australians fared even worse with 17 in 100,00 feeling out of place at school (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2008, p. 9).

It is perhaps not surprising that when young Australians were surveyed in 2010 about what they most valued, they placed *family relationships* and *friendships* as the top two items. This was the case for both genders and all age groups. About three quarters of respondents highly valued *family relationships* and about 60% valued *friendships* (Mission Australia, 2010).

Although the rates of youth suicide in Australia have stopped increasing and leveled out, the number of young Australians who “die from intentional self-injury” is still one of the highest among OECD countries. The ARACY Report Card (2008) reported that the “intentional self-injury death rate for young people aged 15–24 years (not counting indigenous young people who are counted separately)” is 10 in 100,000. Of interest, from the perspective of this project, as it is funded

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by the Foundation Botin, a Spanish Foundation, is that according to these figures Spain has the lowest rate among OECD countries (4 in 100,000). Given that there is also a contribution from Finland in this volume it is interesting to note that: “Indigenous Australians have a rate of death from self-injury (18 in 100,000) that is second only to Finland.”

While the likely causative factors and the potential preventative factors for psychological distress, self-harm and violence among young people are complex and multi-faceted, the ARACY Report cites school context as potentially being either a risk factor or a protective factor. It is the recognition of the importance of protective factors that led to the positive turn to social and emotional wellbeing research, policy and practice in Australia.

## **2.2 The Positive Turn to Social and Emotional Wellbeing**

*The main (negative) focus of research into (Social and Emotional Wellbeing) SEWB is on mental illness, depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and so on. The development of positive psychology has attempted to remedy this with a focus on personal strengths, and the enhance-*

*ment of a person's quality of life, given understanding of her social context. (p. viii)<sup>15</sup>*

In 2006 Australian government ministers from several departments concerned with health, education, and community and disability services, undertook a major feat of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration. They developed and endorsed what they called a “Headline Indicator<sup>16</sup> priority area for social and emotional wellbeing.” The term *wellbeing* has become the new buzzword for a broad based, more holistic conceptualisation of human health, following in the footsteps of the shift in psychology from clinical models to positive psychology approaches. Because of the multi-dimensional nature of social and emotional wellbeing, further work was commissioned. *The Social Policy Research Centre* (The University of New South Wales) was selected to undertake this research “to conceptualise and identify the most important aspects for children’s health, development and wellbeing.” An extensive research report has been compiled comprising two major parts: the conceptualization of social and emotional wellbeing, and the development of indicators to appropriately monitor its development.<sup>17</sup>



**Hamilton and Redmund point out that in addition to the more static notions of wellbeing of applied researchers, there are also the more dynamic theories of well-becoming—which tend to arise from the more philosophical and theoretical literature that regards wellbeing as a culturally defined and ever-changing relational process  
(Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, pp. 23-24)**

While this major social research project attempted to focus on both these aspects, this chapter will primarily draw from the former. The two critical components the authors emphasised with respect to this conceptualization of social and emotional wellbeing were the importance of linking it to wider concepts of wellbeing and the need to address concern that any monitoring will take into account broader issues about society such as creating “the good life.”

The researchers and authors of the report, Myra Hamilton and Gerry Redmund, drew from several approaches to “philosophy and social theory (proposed by Martha Nussbaum, Len Doyal and Ian Gough, and Sarah White) to elaborate on the key components of what Aristotle called ‘the good life’ – the search for human wellbeing” (Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, p. viii). The researchers note that these theories are all consistent with ‘whole child’ approaches and also point to “the social essence in humanity – that wellbeing is not an individual statement, but is solidly situated in a social context” (p. viii). Furthermore they also prioritise three important issues: the principles of positivity, an aim toward universality, and finding ways to pay attention to the views of children and young people as part of their con-

ceptualisation (Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, p. x). In an attempt to cohere the philosophical and theoretical work they considered, Hamilton and Redmund conclude with the following conceptualisation:

(W)hereas for younger children issues of competency and dependency raise questions about who is qualified to speak for them, and to what extent their own voices should be heard, for older children and young people, issues of identity through significant transitions can raise questions about how a state of wellbeing can be captured in a fast-moving dynamic environment. For both children and young people, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model speaks to the importance of the whole child, and supports to some extent the interdependence of different dimensions of wellbeing... (Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, p. 18).

With respect to the more applied approach to social and emotional wellbeing, it is noted –as discussed above– that there are both “negative” and “positive” approaches. While the negative approaches focus on mental ill health, risky behaviours and underachievement, they list the positive features of social

and emotional wellbeing in children and young people as including: “resilience, attentiveness, confidence and social skills, and positive affect and self-concept including happiness, self-worth, sense of belonging, and enjoyment of school” (Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, p. 21). They also add that for young people, the following factors may also be seen to contribute: “civic action and engagement, trust in and tolerance of others, social competence, and life satisfaction” (p. 21).

Several issues remain contestable in the conceptualisation of social and emotional wellbeing in children and young people. Notably, Hamilton and Redmund point out that in addition to the more *static* notions of wellbeing of applied researchers, there are also the more *dynamic* theories of well-becoming—which tend to arise from the more philosophical and theoretical literature that regards wellbeing as a culturally defined and ever-changing *relational* process (Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, pp. 23–24).

Finally, in a manoeuvre that places the notion of social and emotional wellbeing within the realms of both developmental psychology and education—when developmentally conceived—they note: “the terms social and emotional wellbeing and social and emotional development are sometimes used interchangeably” (Hamilton & Redmund, 2010, p. 16).

### 2.3 Current Understanding of Social and Emotional Education in Australia

As Christopher Clouder pointed out in the introduction to the first report in this series, social and emotional education can be viewed as both a curricular intervention or in a broader, more contextual way that involves the whole school and even the parents and wider community (Clouder, 2008, p. 37). With respect to the curricular aspect, the main approach to conceptualization of social and emotional education in Australia has

arisen from the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) project, co-founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman and others (Goleman, 1997). This approach is strongly skills-based with the primary emphasis on children learning and acquiring several core competencies identified by CASEL researchers and practitioners. These core competencies include: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness. They have been adopted as essential components in both the Australian government education projects: *MindMatters: Leading Mental Health and Wellbeing*—initiated in 2000 and serving Australia’s high schools; and *KidsMatter: Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative*—piloted in 2007 and currently being expanded.<sup>18</sup>

It is important however not to be restricted to the prescriptive, curriculum based approaches to “social and emotional learning” of CASEL and other programmes which focus only on learning particular skills. In the broader contextual territory of “social and emotional education” that includes family and community enculturation, the work of the Botin Foundation in Santander, Spain, can provide some important guiding parameters.<sup>19</sup>

The development of theories, policies and practices related to social and emotional wellbeing of young Australians appears to have followed several phases. From the late 90s there was a lot of discussion focused on the mental illness and at risk behaviours of young people. Much of this discourse was about ringing alarm bells. This was followed by a gradual shift towards focusing on the positive view—of identifying *protective* factors as well as *risk* factors. This led on to the recognition of the need to conceptualise what social and emotional wellbeing might actually look like. Arising from this positive turn some very significant educational programmes were developed and implemented in schools to deal with

the issues of mental illness—especially by promoting protective factors. Programmes such as *MindMatters* grew out of the realisation that the issues are too complex and multi-faceted to be dealt with only by specific targeted programmes and shifted the emphasis further to more holistic conceptualizations (e.g. whole child, whole school). Very recently, particularly over the last two to three years, various policy documents have emerged from a range of Australian government departments, focusing on the importance of social and emotional wellbeing in whole education systems—not just as curricular add-ons.

New Australian government educational policies focusing on social and emotional wellbeing, include:

- *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)*, which promotes the idea that children and young people should be successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens; and also that children's and young people's social, economic, ethnic or indigenous backgrounds should not be seen as determining their future place in society.
- *The National Education Agreement* (Council of Australian Governments 2008), which emphasises the importance of social inclusion for all young Australians.
- *Investing in the Early Years (2009)*, which prioritises: “a focus on the whole child, across cognitive, learning, physical, social, emotional and cultural dimensions and learning throughout life” (Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p.4). In a surprising and innovative move—given the context of a “high-achievement oriented” society—the new Early Years framework which “has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children's learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development.” The Framework also recog-

nizes the importance of “social and emotional development.”<sup>20</sup>

- The *Australian National Curriculum* is part of the Australian government's national agenda for school reform begun in 2007. This new curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 is the responsibility of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). It will be discussed in more detail under case studies.

### 3. Overview of Social and Emotional Education in Australia

This section provides a broad overview of some of the key social and emotional education initiatives that are operating in Australia. The first sub-section describes major curricular and whole school initiatives developed and implemented by the Australian government that explicitly identify and include social and emotional education theories and practice. The remainder of this section offers a broad sample of several other initiatives that are less curriculum-based and prescriptive but nevertheless fall into the broad social and emotional education domain—including some family and community initiatives.

#### 3.1 Explicit SEE Approaches: Curricular and Whole School Interventions

By “explicit SEE approaches” I am referring to the prescriptive, curriculum based approaches to “social and emotional learning” of CASEL and other programmes which focus primarily on learning particular skills.

##### 3.1.1 *MindMatters: Leading Mental Health and Wellbeing (2000 – current)*

As mentioned above the Australian government has developed a number of school-based initiatives in response to the significant mental health issues of young Australians. The most established and probably best known is *MindMatters*, which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and is in its tenth year of implementation in Australian Secondary Schools.



*MindMatters* was developed as a primary prevention strategy aimed at promoting and protecting the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the school community. It takes a whole school approach.

*MindMatters* is a resource package that advocates a comprehensive whole-school approach including professional development of teachers. Throughout Australia, over 80% of schools with secondary enrolments have sent staff to the free *MindMatters* training. *MindMatters* provides curriculum resources for use in the classroom, as well as materials to help schools create a caring and supportive environment and develop productive partnerships with their community, including families and the health sector. One of its aims is to enhance the development of school environments where young people feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful.

This is extended, where necessary, to help school communities to develop strategies to enable a continuum of support for students with additional needs in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

Among other items, the kit includes modules on bullying, suicide prevention, enhancing resilience, loss and grief, and diversity. Of particular interest to my focus in this chapter is that one of the aims of *MindMatters* is to “develop the social and emotional skills required to meet life’s challenges.” Drawing from the five core competencies identified by CASEL, *MindMatters* uses a slightly adapted framework of three “social and emotional learnings”:

- Self-awareness and self-management;
- Social awareness and relationship skills; and
- Responsible decision-making.

They also note the importance of “spiritual understandings”, illustrating the *MindMatters* “whole student approach.”

*MindMatters* Professional Development.

Over 120,000 school-based or school-related participants have attended *MindMatters* professional development sessions since 2000. Sessions have been attended by staff from:

- 86.8% of state schools nationally
- 73.3% of independent schools nationally
- 88.9% of Catholic schools nationally.

*MindMatters* has been extensively evaluated over ten years since its introduction in 2000.<sup>21</sup> A multi-faceted evaluation over several years showed that *MindMatters* can be a powerful catalyst for positive change in schools.

### 3.1.2 KidsMatter: Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative (2007 – current)

Following on from the established success of *MindMatters* in Australian secondary schools, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing developed a parallel initiative for implementation in Primary Schools around Australia. This second major initiative, *KidsMatter*, was developed in partnership with several other key organizations: *beyondblue*: the national depression initiative, the *Australian Psychological Society* and *Principals Australia* and is supported by the *Australian Rotary Health*. *KidsMatter Primary* began as a pilot project from 2007–2008 with 101 participant schools nationally. Approximately 300 additional schools became involved during the 2010 school year. Partnerships are currently underway with school systems in every state and territory to support the rollout of *KidsMatter Primary* to more schools across the country. The Australian government has recently committed an additional \$18 million to enable *KidsMatter Primary* to be expanded to a further 1700 primary schools by June 2014.

The rationale for the development and implementation of *KidsMatter* is firmly based in

**There is a solid body of evidence indicating that helping children develop social and emotional skills, including resilience, leads to better mental health. In addition, if children experiencing mental health difficulties are identified early and supported, they will be less likely to have poor mental health outcomes as adults (KidsMatter)**

the analysis presented above with respect to the high incidence of mental health issues among young Australians.

“It is estimated that one in seven children of primary school age have a mental health difficulty, the most common difficulties being depression, anxiety, hyperactivity and aggression. There is a solid body of evidence indicating that helping children develop social and emotional skills, including resilience, leads to better mental health. In addition, if children experiencing mental health difficulties are identified early and supported, they will be less likely to have poor mental health outcomes as adults.”<sup>22</sup>

Of particular relevance is that one of the four key components of the programme is social and emotional education. The four core components of *KidsMatter* are:

- Component 1: A positive school community
- Component 2: Social and emotional learning (SEL) for students
- Component 3: Parenting support and education
- Component 4: Early intervention for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

A closer look at Component 2: Social and Emotional Learning indicates that it draws heavily on the five core competencies identified by CASEL.

- Self-awareness,
- Self-management,
- Responsible decision-making,
- Relationship skills, and
- Social awareness.

It has imported the SEL Framework from CASEL as a basis for its programmes.

### **3.1.3: Social and Emotional Learning<sup>23</sup> in Queensland Government State Schools**

The Queensland State Government Department of Education and Training also has a strong focus on social and emotional learning. Unlike the Federal government whole school programmes, *MindMatters* and *KidsMatter*, the Queensland Government does not provide any particular programmes. Rather it offers an introduction on its website to social and emotional learning, again based on the CASEL approach. However, it also makes an additional valuable contribution to the Australian resource pool by providing a guide to social and emotional learning. This document includes a comprehensive listing of commercially available programmes for social and

emotional learning being operated in Australia. In addition to *MindMatters* and *Kids-Matter*, there are numerous other commercially available programmes that can be accessed from the Queensland government website.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.2 Implicit Approaches to Whole School, Family and Community Contexts

By implicit SEE approaches I mean the broader contextual territory of “social and emotional education” that includes holistic educational styles, and family and community enculturation.

#### 3.2.1 Broader Cultural Pedagogical practices that facilitate Social and Emotional education in the broader community

**Beyond Blue. National Depression Initiative:** *beyondblue* is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related substance misuse disorders in Australia. <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx>

**The Inspire Foundation:** The Inspire Foundation was established in 1996 in direct response to Australia’s then escalating rates of youth suicide. It combines technology with the direct involvement of young people to deliver innovative and practical online programmes that prevent youth suicide and improve young people’s mental health and wellbeing. Their mission is to help millions of young people lead happier lives. <http://www.inspire.org.au/about-inspire.html>

**Reach Out, Australia:** Reach Out is a web-based service that aims to inspire young people to help themselves through tough times, and find ways to boost their own mental health and wellbeing. Their aim is to improve young people’s mental health and wellbeing by building skills and providing information, support and referrals in ways that work for

young people. Reach Out is run by the Inspire Foundation. <http://au.reachout.com/>

**National Advisory Group on Body Image:** The Advisory Group will help to develop a new Voluntary Industry Code of Conduct on Body Image and provide advice to the Government on young Australians’ concerns about negative body image and the impact that it has on them, their friends and the community. Seven out of ten high school girls consistently choose an ideal figure that is thinner than their own, and only 16 per cent of young women say they are happy with their body weight. <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/Pages/NationalAdvisoryGrouponBodyImage.aspx>

**Social Inclusion Board:** The Australian Social Inclusion Board was established in May 2008. It is the main advisory body to the government on ways to achieve better outcomes for the most disadvantaged in our community and to improve social inclusion in society as a whole. <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Partnerships/Board/Pages/default.aspx>

**Parenting Australia:** Parenting Australia is an online support community for pregnant women and families with babies and children under five. <http://parentingaustralia.com.au/>

**Raising Children Network:** The Australian parenting website: comprehensive, practical, expert child health and parenting information and activities covering children aged 0-15 years. <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

### 3.2.2 Social and Emotional Education at the Margins of Society

**Indigenous Cultural Festivals and Wellbeing<sup>25</sup>** In recognition of the disadvantage and alienation experienced by a high proportion of Indigenous youth, many of whom may aspire to be university students, RMIT University Global Cities Research Institute has initiated a project called “Globalizing Indigeneity: Indigenous



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## Cultural festivals are one of the few consistently positive spaces for indigenous communities to assert a more constructive view of themselves both intergenerationally, and as part of their struggle for respect as distinct cultures in the broader national community

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Cultural Festivals and Wellbeing in Australia and the Asia-Pacific”, which aims to work at the deeper levels of empowerment that are often invisible. The project received Australian Research Council linkage grant funding in 2008 to partner with the Telstra Foundation Limited. The project examines the relationship between Indigenous Australian Festivals and the health and wellbeing of indigenous youth and community.

The rationale for such a project is that Indigenous communities in Australia (and elsewhere) suffer from extreme disadvantage. Northern Australia and many other places in the region, face a demographic time bomb of alienated, self destructive and culturally disoriented youth. This manifests as violence in places like Wadeye, Palm Island and Port Moresby. Cultural festivals are one of the few consistently positive spaces for indigenous communities to assert a more constructive view of themselves both intergenerationally, and as part of their struggle for respect as distinct cultures in the broader national community. Cultural festivals also provide a rare space for novel intercultural accommodations to be negotiated on indigenous terrain, for example, the Croc Festival, held in multiple sites around Australia, the Dreaming Festival, held annually in Woodford, Southern Queensland; and the Garma Festival, North East Arnhem Land.

As a brief case example, the Croc Festival “is a sister event of the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge, a subsidiary of the Global Rock Challenge, which engages young people in countries around the world in drug-free performing arts events” (Phipps & Slater, 2010). The first Croc festival, initially called Croc Eisteddfod Festival, was held in Weipa, West Cape York, Far North Queensland, in July 1998, involving 350 students from seventeen schools from across Cape York and the Torres Strait (Croc Festival). By 2007, there were seven sites around the country with an estimated 19,000 students participating. It aimed to inspire and encourage Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and communities to celebrate youth and culture and in particular to celebrate indigenous forms of culture and the diversity among them (Phipps & Slater, 2010). It is claimed that the festival built self-esteem and social skills and a sense of identity and belonging among indigenous young people, thus contributing to their social and emotional development.

This RMIT indigenous festival project thereby goes beyond the neoliberal rationale of providing mere access to Indigenous students in order to increase Indigenous participation in the national economy, and beyond mere social justice issues of equity and participation. Rather it has the potential to

empower and indeed transform Indigenous students and their relationship with RMIT University by deeply honouring their particular ways of knowing as expressed in their own cultural festivals. More details of how these festivals operate as a collaborative event between indigenous communities and the university can be found in the full report of this project.<sup>26</sup>

In summary the report found that “Festivals are important to Indigenous communities for their contribution (to) Indigenous community wellbeing, resilience and capacity. They increase individual and community self-esteem and cultural confidence, develop local leadership, social, cultural and economic initiatives, open creative spaces of individual and collective opportunity, and provide a focus for governments and other service providers to better engage community needs and aspirations.” (Phipps & Slater, 2010, p. 86).

### ***Refugees and Asylum seekers. Hope Project in South Australia***

The project “Doing social sustainability: the utopian imagination of youth on the margins” aimed to find out how young people on the margins of society imagine the future and what hope means to them. The premise of the project was that the utopian imagination of marginalised young people can contribute to the development of two key themes for social sustainability: hope and the future. The project conducted research in alternative education schools in South Australia in late 2006 and early 2007. The schools cater for males and females that may be ‘at risk’, unable to cope in mainstream education, and have problems with violence, substance abuse or with the juvenile justice system. The young people were aged between 14 and 17. The researchers talked with students in class, encouraged them to draw, interviewed them and gave them a camera to take some photographs of places, people and things that

they associate with hopefulness and ‘the future’. The results of these activities and interviews were the basis for an exhibition at the Migration Museum, South Australia. The exhibition, entitled Hope, was part of the 2008 Adelaide Festival of Arts. The project was undertaken at the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies and was an Australian Research Council funded Linkage Project 2006–2008.<sup>27</sup> The importance of hope in the prevention of youth suicide has been well-documented and it is consequently an important key feature to be cultivated in contextual approaches to social and emotional education.

### ***STREAT. Social Enterprise for Homeless Young People, Melbourne***

STREAT = Street youth + street food + street culture. Inspired by their concern for the 100 million young people who live or work on the world’s streets, STREAT is a social enterprise providing homeless youth with a supported pathway to long-term careers in the hospitality industry. They run street cafes in Melbourne where the young people get their hospitality training. The food is inspired by street hawker food from around the world. STREAT believes large intractable social problems like youth homelessness and disadvantage are not acceptable and work towards a creative, large-scale response. Their food service social enterprise is dedicated to providing a supported pathway to long term employment for young people who have been living on the street or at risk of being on the street. They combine wrap-around social support with industry training and employment opportunities in their street cafes. As a social enterprise all of their commercial activities are dedicated to generating funds to address areas of acute social need. As such, they model a different way of doing business: innovative and responsible market engagement that resolves large-scale issues while meeting a known consumer need.

## The importance of hope in the prevention of youth suicide has been well-documented and it is consequently an important key feature to be cultivated in contextual approaches to social and emotional education

STREAT social enterprise<sup>28</sup> is based on the following five values:

- **Discover.** We believe in lifelong learning
- **Create.** We tackle problems with imagination and passion
- **Nourish.** Our meals nourish customers and youth
- **Connect.** We bring ideas, individuals and communities together
- **Sustain.** We strive for sustainability in all our activities

In summary, this project is a very good example of how young people how can be encouraged to learn important social and emotional skills they clearly did not have, through a naturalistic, contextual setting, rather than through the contrivance of social skills programmes, which would be unlikely to be effective in these cases.

### 3.2.3 Postformal Pedagogies

As noted in the earlier section on the history of education, Australian people have always prized freedom of choice and diversity in education. This has led to the large and growing proportion of independent schools in Australia, many of which operate from a specific philosophy, approach or niche orientation. In addition to the explicit social and emotional education initiatives discussed above, several educational approaches deal implicitly with social and emotional education in a broader, more contextual manner.

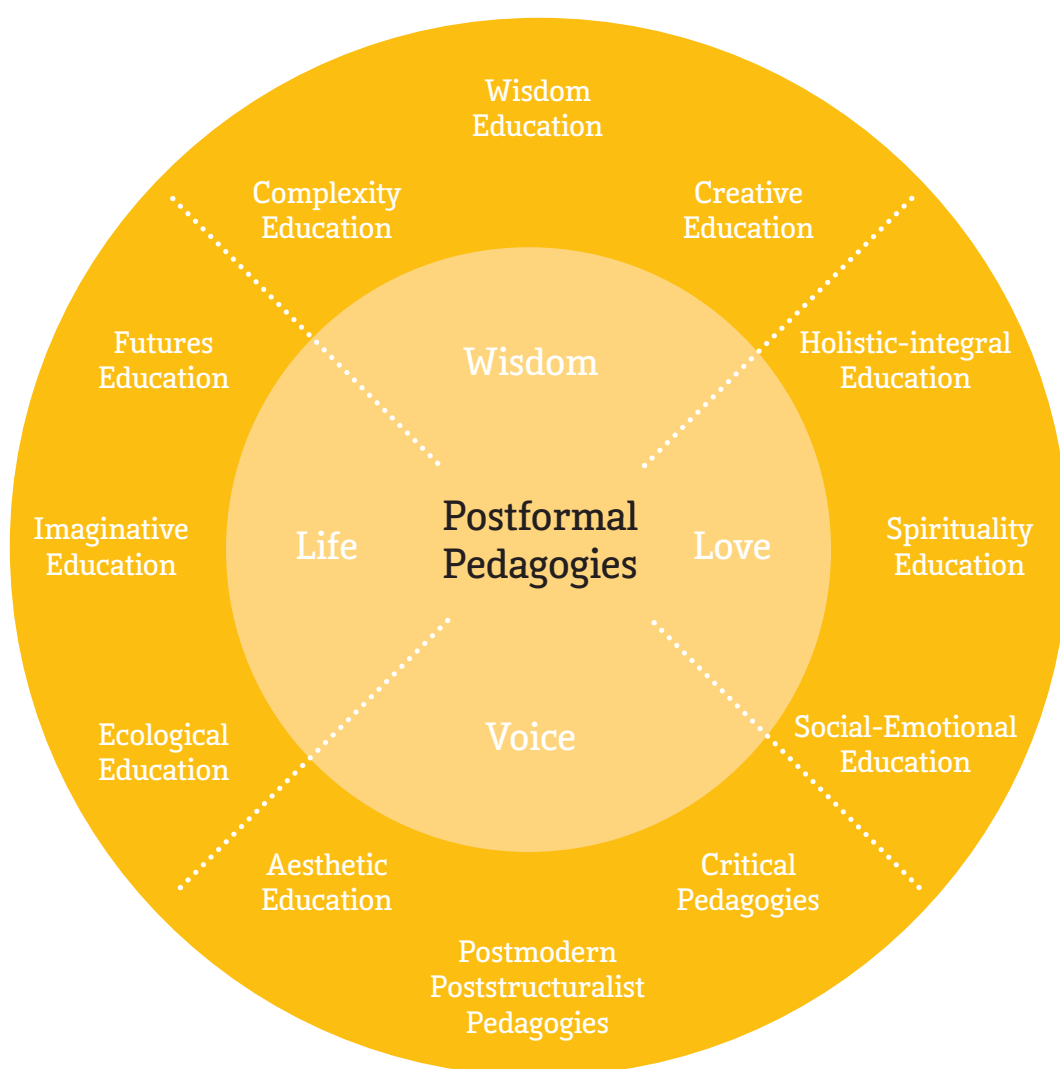
Following on from my research on the evolution of consciousness and educational approaches that support it, I have identified a dozen or more postformal educational approaches—or *postformal pedagogies*—which although not explicitly focusing on social and emotional education, are contributing to the broader, more holistic education of the child that is so necessary in the fragmented world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Somewhat paradoxically, many of these alternative approaches to education are quite independent of each other, and often seemingly unaware of other quite similar approaches. My interest is to map these different approaches, explore relationships among them, and reflect this back to them.

In previous research I identified the theoretical relationships between several themes arising from the evolution of consciousness discourse and a diversity of postformal educational discourses (Gidley, 2007, 2009). Four core pedagogical values emerged from the intersection between these two clusters: pedagogies of love, life, wisdom and voice. Although there is considerable overlap and interpenetration between and among the core pedagogical values and the postformal educational approaches, the latter have been clustered under the pedagogical value that they appear to most strongly support (See Table 1). This clustering can be viewed as a type of *delicate theorising*<sup>29</sup> to be distinguished from *formal categorisation* into discrete territories



**Table 1.** Postformal Pedagogies Supporting four Core Pedagogical Values

Postformal educational approaches supporting the <i>Pedagogy of Love</i> (Educational styles that emphasise care, contemplation, empathy, love and reverence)	
Holistic and integral education	Includes broad, eclectic holistic education and also specific integral/integrative approaches (Bronson & Gangadean, 2006; Miller, 2000; Stack, 2006).
Social and emotional education	There are primarily two types: explicit, conceptual, curricular approaches and implicit, contextual, relational (Refer to chapters in this volume).
Spiritual and transformative education	Diversity in spiritual values, non-denominational, and also contemplative and other transformative approaches to learning (Glazer, 1994; Hart, 2001a).
Postformal educational approaches supporting the <i>Pedagogy of Life</i> (Educational styles that support shifts from static concepts to living thinking)	
Imaginative education	Imagination is an important dimension in bringing concepts to life, and thus supporting the development of vitality in thinking (Egan, 1997; Nielsen, 2006).
Ecological education and sustainability	Approaches grounded in ecological perspectives, environmental awareness, respect for natural surroundings and sustainability (Jardine, 1998; Orr, 1994).
Futures and foresight education	Encouraging foresight, long-term thinking, and imaginative visioning of preferred futures, not merely perpetuating the past (Gidley, Bateman, & Smith, 2004; Hicks, 2002).
Postformal educational approaches supporting the <i>Pedagogy of Wisdom</i> (Educational styles that stimulate creativity, complexity and multiperspectivity)	
Wisdom in education	There are specific educational theories addressed to the cultivation of wisdom (Hart, 2001b; Sternberg, 2001).
Complexity in education	Educational approaches that draw from and embrace the science and philosophy of complexity (Davis, 2004; Morin, 2001).
Creativity in education	Beyond creativity as an “add-on” in education, and recognizing creativity as a fundamental educational underpinning (Neville, 1989; Sloan, 1992).
Postformal educational approaches supporting the <i>Pedagogy of Voice/Language</i> (Encouragement of sensitivity to linguistic, cultural and paradigmatic contexts.)	
Aesthetic and artistic education	Approaches that cultivate aesthetic sensibility through exposure to and participation in a wide range of artistic activities (Abbs, 2003; Read, 1943; Rose & Kincheloe, 2003).
Postmodern and poststructuralist pedagogies	Integrating the contributions of continental, especially French, philosophy in identifying the politics of voice and marginality (Elkind, 1998; Peters, 1998).
Critical, postcolonial and global pedagogies	Further enhancing awareness of dominant political voices and the rights of marginal cultures and sub-cultures to have a voice (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1992).



**Figure 1.** Postformal Pedagogies and the Core Pedagogical Values of Love, Life, Wisdom and Voice

as one might see in formal analysis (See also Figure 1).

More information about these approaches can be found elsewhere (Gidley, 2007a, 2008, 2009). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these approaches in detail, the first case study below is based on the holistic, integral approach of Steiner education.

#### **4. Case Study 1: Social-Emotional Education within a Whole System**

##### *4.1 The Australian National Steiner Curriculum Initiative*

*The Australian Curriculum recognises the entitlement of each student to knowledge, understanding and skills that provide a foundation for successful and lifelong learning and partici-*

*pation in the Australian community.*<sup>30</sup>  
(p. 9)

As a foundation for the new Australian National Curriculum, recent strategic policy documents emphasise the importance of the whole child. As a major goal for education it has been clearly stated that: “children and young people should be successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.”<sup>31</sup> The Australian National Curriculum allows for four possible alternatives:

- National Steiner Curriculum
- National Montessori Curriculum
- International Baccalaureate Curriculum
- University of Cambridge International Examinations<sup>32</sup>

The remainder of this sub-section will focus on the recent process of development of the National Steiner Curriculum, in particular how it works within the national curriculum guidelines to bring through the important emphasis on social and emotional education. It should be noted here that information on these alternative curricular approaches is not yet widely available.

#### 4.2 Holistic education integrating social and emotional needs

Originally developed in Germany in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925), there are now some 1,000 autonomous, non-systemic and non-denominational schools and around 1,600 kindergartens in the world today. In keeping with other holistic approaches Steiner education cultivates and integrates the cognitive-intellectual, physiological, psycho-emotional and ethical-spiritual dimensions of the developing child. The nurturing of each child’s individual potential is therefore valued within the ‘whole’ context of society and in relation to the ever wider local, national and global spheres of activity. It provides an implicit social and emotional education of children

through nurturing a sense of reverence for life, feelings of wonder and awe, and a love of learning (Gidley, 2009; Nielsen, 2004).

A social and emotional dimension is implicit across the approach: the students *know* and understand the content, but as their feelings have been touched by the learning process, they also *care* about the phenomenon under observation and are more likely to awaken to the ethical dimension of the learning experience. Guided by the perspectives that Nel Noddings (2003, 2008) emphasizes in her writings on the pedagogies of care and happiness, Steiner education promotes the practice of ‘looping’ whereby ideally one teacher stays with the same class through the middle period of childhood (7 to 14 years). The continuing relationship between the child and the class teacher, as well as the regular communications with parents, enables the teacher to continuously assess the child’s work in a discrete yet accurate way, and to understand individual strengths and weaknesses. The teacher is able to monitor the child’s progress along a continuum, covering academic, developmental and social aspects, rather than relying heavily on formal testing. The Steiner approach recognises the spiritual dimension of the child, and draws on the diverse literary traditions associated with the leading religions of the world to inform the festival celebrations and the rich narrative elements of the curriculum. Daily learning experiences also include teamwork, collaboration and conflict resolution to encourage citizenship.

#### 4.3 Relevance of Steiner Pedagogy for the 21st Century

Steiner education in Australia is part of a diverse and active international movement that has an implicit global orientation. Respect for differing linguistic, religious and cultural groupings is embedded in the educational perspectives. In Australia curriculum content includes Indigenous and Asian material as aspects of cultural inclusion, which is an important part of social and emotional education.

## Some of the characteristic features of the changing educational landscape that resonate with the Steiner educational approach include attention to creativity, complexity, imagination and spiritual awareness

Building on experiential, phenomenological, and evidence-based research in the areas of imaginative education and social and emotional education Steiner educators are now working alongside mainstream researchers in these and other related fields. Some of the characteristic features of the changing educational landscape that resonate with the Steiner educational approach include attention to creativity, complexity, imagination and spiritual awareness. There is also an expanding interest among educators in theories of holism, pluralism, multiculturalism and humanism (Gidley 2009; Slaughter, 2004).

Over the last twenty years, educational futures researchers have identified key components of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education that will better prepare young people for the complexities and uncertainties of the future. Australian research with Steiner-educated students demonstrated that many of these features form core aspects of Steiner education (Gidley, 1998, 2002).

The Steiner educational approach identifies developmental change at work in both psychological processes and cultural life. A core feature of the Steiner approach rests on the understanding that the course of growth of each child into adulthood recapitulates aspects of the developmental pathway of humanity through history (Steiner, 1923/1996; Gidley, 2009). This philosophical orientation provides a framework for integrating curriculum content from Kinder-

garten to Class Twelve (ages 5 to 17 approximately) and also informs the method by which the curriculum is delivered to different age groups. Three main stages of childhood development are identified (Steiner 1907/1996) based on observations and research relating to the physiological, social and emotional and cognitive growth changes that take place in the life of the child. A core aspect of the pedagogy aligns the areas of cognitive (thinking), emotional (feeling-affect) and physical/behavioural (willing) development to the three main stages of childhood: adolescence (14–21 years old), childhood (7–14 years old) and early childhood (0–7 years old).<sup>33</sup> The introduction of skills and knowledge is therefore based on a concept of child-readiness (see Elkind (1981, 1998) and age-appropriate education.

As a pioneering, yet well-established, developmental pedagogical approach Steiner education equips students to meet the complex needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A range of recent research articles can be found on the websites of the Waldorf Research Educators Network (WREN [www.ecswe.org](http://www.ecswe.org)), Steiner Education Australia (SEA [www.steinerroz.com](http://www.steinerroz.com)), and the academic journal Research on Steiner Education (RoSE [www.rosejournal.com](http://www.rosejournal.com)).<sup>34</sup> The design of the new National Steiner Curriculum incorporates relevant elements of the identified developmental stages of thinking and learning into the educational framework (Mazzone, 1993; Nielsen, 2004, Gidley, 2007, 2008, 2009). In meeting this objective the education



**Table 2.** Alignment of Australian National Curriculum with Steiner Education

Australian National Curriculum Guidelines	Australian Steiner Curriculum Guidelines	Core Pedagogical Principles of Steiner Education
<b>SKILLS</b> Translating theory into practical application	<b>HANDS -SKILLS, HEART-</b> Knowledge transformed into experience.	<b>LIFE (VITALITY). Pedagogy of Life</b> Process, discovery, movement, ecological awareness. Bringing learning to life imaginatively.
<b>UNDERSTANDING</b> Confident and creative individuals	<b>UNDERSTANDING -HEAD-</b> Confident and creative individuals	<b>LOVE (WARMTH). Pedagogy of Love</b> Warmth, care, relationships, community, sense of belonging, reverence, connectedness.
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> Successful Learners	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> Powerful Learners	<b>WISDOM (LIGHT). Pedagogy of Wisdom</b> Multi-modal learning modes, multiple intelligences, versatility, creativity and complexity.
<b>ACTIVE and INFORMED CITIZENS</b>	<b>MORAL CAPACITY</b> Active and Informed Citizens	<b>BALANCE (EMBODIED VOICE) Pedagogy of Voice</b> Students finding their own authentic voice, integration, balance through deep knowing.

encompasses a deep ‘understanding and acknowledgment of the changing nature of young people as learners and the challenges and demands that will continue to shape their learning in the future’ (*The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, May 2009, p.6).

#### 4.4 Alignment of Steiner Educational Guidelines with the Australian National Curriculum

Since its origins in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Steiner pedagogy continues to strive towards the building of a conceptual bridge to connect the fields of science, art and the humanities, morality and spirituality (1923/2004). Steiner educational philosophy resonates strongly with research in the areas of imaginative education (Egan, 2007; Nielsen, 2004) and social and emotional learning (Clouder, 2008), and with contemporary educational theories that emphasise care and happiness (Noddings, 1992, 2003), the role of the arts in learning (Eisner, 2003; 2008), the importance of spirituality (Glazer, 1999; de Sousa,

2009) and values education (Lovat et al., 2009). My own educational futures research identifies educational approaches that support the development of higher stages of thinking and learning (Gidley, 2009) through four core pedagogical values: love, life, wisdom and voice (See Table 1 and Figure 1). These four core values have been utilised in the framing of the National Steiner Curriculum to provide conceptual bridges between Steiner education and the Australian National Curriculum Guidelines.

The table below illustrates the alignment between the four main categories of the national curriculum guidelines (skills, understanding, knowledge and active and informed citizens) and their application in the context of the Steiner curriculum, via hands (skills), heart (understanding), head (knowledge) and moral capacity (active and informed citizens). These interrelated categories are used in the National Steiner Curriculum design as templates for content description and subject curricula.

### 5. Case Study 2: Social and Emotional Development within a Whole Population: Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a whole population measure of young children's development, funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The AEDI is conducted by the Centre for Community and Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and a key research centre of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, in partnership with the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth.<sup>35</sup>

In 2009, for the first time, the AEDI was completed nationwide, with as many as 98% of five-year olds having been assessed by their teachers, using the index. This has provided a unique snapshot of the early childhood development outcomes of Australian children. Between 1 May and 31 July, information was collected on 261,203 children (97.5 per cent of the estimated national five-year-old population). This involved 15,528 teachers from 7423 Government, Catholic and Independent schools around Australia. Although the development index was first trialled in British Columbia, Canada, Australia is the first nation in the world to undertake such a massive project.

The AEDI involves collecting information to help create a snapshot of children's development in communities across Australia. Teachers complete a 95-item checklist for each child in their first year of full-time schooling (five-year olds). The checklist measures five key areas, or domains, of early childhood development:

- Physical health and wellbeing;
- Social competence;
- Emotional maturity;
- Language and cognitive skills (school-based);

- Communication skills and general knowledge.

It is noteworthy for this research that two of the five measures (*social competence* and *emotional maturity*) relate to social and emotional wellbeing. However, all five domains are regarded as being closely linked to the predictors of good adult health, education and social outcomes.

For the purposes of this chapter, I will briefly expand on the two most relevant domains, how they are measured, and what the overall population sample indicated.

*Editor's note: Results of the Canadian EDI (Early Development Index) are discussed in the chapter "Social and Emotional Education in the Canadian Context" in this International Analysis.*

#### 5.1 Social Competence Domain

This domain measures children's overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approaches to learning and readiness to explore new things (See Table 3). Bear in mind that these criteria are designed to evaluate five-year-olds.

#### 5.2 Emotional Maturity Domain

This domain measures children's pro-social and helping behaviour, anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention.

A brief summary of the findings for the overall evaluation suggest that approximately 75% of all Australian five year-olds are 'on track' with their development in these two domains. However, almost 10% are in the developmentally vulnerable range and a further 15% are developmentally at risk (See Table 5).

As a population measure, the AEDI places the focus on all children in the community, examining early childhood development across the whole community. It is argued that

**Table 3:** Adapted from AEDI Social Competence Domain<sup>36</sup>

	Children developmentally vulnerable	Children on track
<b>Overall social competence</b>	Have average to poor overall social skills, low self-confidence, and are rarely able to play with various children and interact cooperatively.	Have excellent or good overall social development, very good ability to get along with other children and play with various children, usually cooperative and self-confident.
<b>Responsibility and respect</b>	Only sometimes or never accept responsibility for actions, show respect for others and for property, demonstrate self-control, and are rarely able to follow rules and take care of materials.	Always or most of the time show respect for others, and for property, follow rules and take care of materials, accept responsibility for actions, and show self-control.
<b>Approaches to learning</b>	Only sometimes or never work neatly and independently, are rarely able to solve problems, follow class routines and do not easily adjust to changes in routines.	Always or most of the time work neatly, independently, and solve problems, follow instructions and class routines, easily adjust to changes.
<b>Readiness to explore new things</b>	Only sometimes or never show curiosity about the world, and are rarely eager to explore new books, toys or unfamiliar objects and games.	Are curious about the surrounding world, and are eager to explore new books, toys or unfamiliar objects and games.

**Table 4:** Adapted from AEDI Emotional Maturity Domain

	Children developmentally vulnerable	Children on track
<b>Pro-social and helping behaviour</b>	Never or almost never show most of the helping behaviours including helping someone hurt, sick or upset, offering to help spontaneously, and inviting others to join in.	Often show helping behaviours including helping someone hurt, sick or upset, offering to help spontaneously, and inviting others to join in.
<b>Anxious and fearful behaviour</b>	Often show most of the anxious behaviours; they could be worried, unhappy, nervous, sad or excessively shy, indecisive; and they can be upset when left at school.	Rarely or never show anxious behaviours, are happy, and able to enjoy school, and are comfortable being left at school.
<b>Aggressive behaviour</b>	Often show most of the aggressive behaviours; they get into physical fights, kick or bite others, take other people's things, are disobedient or have temper tantrums.	Rarely or never show aggressive behaviours and do not use aggression as a means of solving a conflict, do not have temper tantrums, and are not mean to others.
<b>Hyperactivity and inattention</b>	Often show most of the hyperactive behaviours; they could be restless, distractible, impulsive; they fidget and have difficulty settling to activities.	Never show hyperactive behaviours and are able to concentrate, settle to chosen activities, wait their turn, and most of the time think before doing something.

**Table 5: AEDI Results for Social Competence and Emotional Maturity**

	Number of children*	Average score# 0 – 10	Developmentally vulnerable	Developmentally at risk	On track	
			Below the 10th percentile	Between the 10th and 25th percentile	Between the 25th and 50th percentile	Above the 50th percentile
			%	%	%	%
<b>Social Competence</b>	245,356	9.2	9.5	15.2	22.8	52.6
<b>Emotional Maturity</b>	244,363	8.7	8.9	15.5	25.4	50.2

by moving the focus of effort from the individual child to all children in the community a bigger difference can be made in supporting efforts to support optimal early childhood development.

### 6. Case Study 3: Social and Emotional Education as a Targeted Programme: Seasons for Growth for Children experiencing Grief and Loss<sup>37</sup>

*Experiences of loss and grief (separation, divorce, death, illness, disability, migration, adoption, etc.) feature significantly in the lives of many children and young people. In Australia, for example, 24% of 18–24 year olds report that their parents had divorced or separated before they turned 18 years of age and 5% experienced the death of a parent during their childhood (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008)... Common emotional responses such as sadness, anxiety, anger, resentment, confusion, guilt and loyalty tensions (Graham, 2004; Worden, 1991; Worden, 1996) need to be heard, acknowledged and respected.*

The *Seasons for Growth* (SfG) programme is a research based Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum intervention that aims to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people (aged 6–18 years) who have experienced significant change in their lives, usually as a result of death, separation or divorce. It was developed in re-

sponse to community concerns about the implications of a burgeoning divorce rate on children in Australia, but also to redress the lack of support available to children adjusting to death in their families (Graham, 1996a; Graham, 1996b; Graham, 2002a; Graham, 2002b). The SfG programme involves small group, like-to-like peer learning processes (facilitated by an adult), creating a space for children to ‘have a say’ and providing an invitation to learn and practise new ways of thinking and responding to changes in their families. The emphasis is on understanding the effects of change, loss and grief, whilst developing skills in communication, decision-making and problem-solving through a peer support network so as to help restore self confidence and self-esteem.

SfG is an eight-week group programme (usually 4–7 children with an adult ‘Companion’), with a ninth ‘Celebration’ and two subsequent ‘Reconnector’ sessions (ranging from 40–60 minutes each). There are five SfG ‘Levels’: three for primary school-aged children (6–8 years, 9–10 years and 11–12 years) and two for secondary school-aged young people (13–15 years and 16–18 years). Each SfG Level has a sound curriculum structure and incorporates a wide range of age-appropriate creative learning activities including art, mime, role-play, stories, discussion, playdough, music and journaling. Children’s learning is generated through respectful conversations, facilitated (but not dominated) by an appropriately



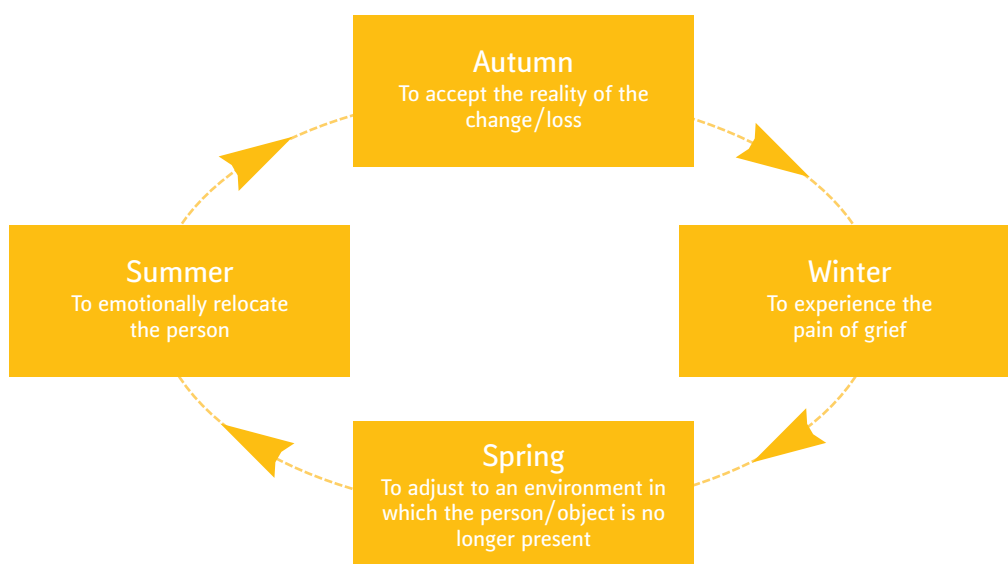
## As the name of the programme (Seasons for Growth) suggests, it uses the imagery of the four seasons to illustrate that grief is cyclical, and is not a linear journey with a clear end

trained adult ‘Companion’, whose role requires them to have the skills to listen to children and hear their voices but also to support them to discover and negotiate who they are and their place in the world.

The grief theory underpinning the programme is based on Worden’s ‘tasks’ (Worden, 1991; Worden, 1996), a conceptualisation of grief which is significant in that it signals a shift from passivity to action/responsibility in managing one’s experience, hence more closely reflecting notions of children’s competence and agency—or self-direction. In acknowledging the complex interplay between children’s agency and

vulnerability, the programme assists them not only in understanding what happens when significant change and loss occurs in their lives but, importantly, how they might best respond to this.

As the name of the programme suggests, it uses the imagery of the four seasons to illustrate that grief is cyclical, and is not a linear journey with a clear end. Each of the eight weekly sessions explores a concept theme such as “I am Special”, “Life Changes like the Seasons” and “My Story is Special”. Each theme interweaves the imagery of one of the seasons and one of Worden’s four ‘tasks’ of grief:



**Figure 2.** Seasons for Growth and Worden’s Four ‘Tasks’ of Grief

The *Seasons for Growth* programme was designed and first implemented fifteen years ago and has gone through several research-based iterations and developments. Although SfG is primarily used in schools, it can also be used with adults. Since its launch in 1996, the programme has reached over 150,000 children and young people across five countries.

The core aims of *Seasons for Growth* are the development of resilience and emotional literacy to promote social and emotional well-being.<sup>38</sup> However, it should not be regarded as providing (or substituting for) therapy in circumstances of grief and loss. Multiple independent evaluations have consistently concluded that the SfG programme has a strong, positive effect on children and young people.<sup>39</sup>

### 7. Teacher Education relating to Social and Emotional Education

In addition to the many school-based mental health and wellbeing approaches, the *Response Ability*<sup>40</sup> initiative supports the pre-service education of teachers. *Response Ability* is another initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, and is implemented by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health in partnership with universities and tertiary educators around Australia. *Response Ability* provides free multi-media teacher education resources to higher education institutions and offers on-going practical support to teacher educators. The project team also distributes information through meetings, conferences and publications. The multi-media *Response Ability* materials use problem-based learning to help teachers develop practical skills. Topics include promoting resilience and identifying young people who need additional support. The existing resources focus on secondary teacher education and are used at around 90% of Australian campuses offering relevant programmes. Evaluation data show that the *Response Ability* materials are effective in

raising pre-service teachers' self-reported understanding and confidence. Plans are underway to develop material for primary and early childhood teacher education.

In addition to such pre-packaged professional development it is important to remember our own personal social and emotional development.

### 8. Concluding Reflections

In conclusion, I would like to briefly draw attention to the big picture context of why it is today that social and emotional education needs to be “added” to most existing educational approaches. Why is it not part of education already? How did education become so fragmented? My research over the last decade has indicated that the initial impulse for mass public education in, for instance, Germany over two hundred years ago was actually quite holistic. It was initiated by Humboldt, in collaboration with German idealists and romantics such as Goethe, Hegel, Schelling and Novalis. These 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher-poets were inspired by the notion of the holistic development of the human being and the on-going evolution of consciousness. However, after the deaths of these leading German philosophers, by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the idealist-romantic educational project was largely hijacked by the gradual influence of the British Industrial Revolution, so that schools increasingly became training grounds to provide fodder for the factories. While it is acknowledged that England, like Germany, had its share of romantic poets such as Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, to name a few, their presence did not seem to influence educational thought in the way that the German romantics influenced the shaping of educational philosophy in continental Europe. The educational thought that developed in England from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by concerns about “practical problems of the curriculum, teaching methods and school or-

ganisation” (Curtis and Boltwood, 1953) in contrast to the more idealistic educational philosophy of German and Swiss educators who were pre-eminently concerned with the development of the whole human being, ‘*bildung*’. The more pragmatic, utilitarian model of school education that developed in England was picked up in the USA. Notwithstanding the different philosophies, theories and methods within mainstream formal education, there is a tacit industrial era template on which most contemporary educational institutions are based that has been the main influence on mass education for at least one hundred and fifty years (Dator, 2000).

The modernist phase of formal school education is trapped within industrial, mechanistic and technicist<sup>41</sup> metaphors. Its entrenchment hinders the development of the whole person and the appropriate development of new ways of thinking suitable for the complexity of our times. Industrial era educational practices limit cultivation of other ways of knowing, such as social and emotional, in several ways:

- They fragment and compartmentalise knowledge in ways that many young people find meaningless (Eckersley, Cahill, Wierenga, & Wyn, 2007; Gidley, 2005).
- They privilege one way of knowing (cognitive) over significant others, such as aesthetic, contemplative, emotional, imaginative, intuitive, kinaesthetic, musical, inter- and intra-personal and social (Egan, 1997; Gardner, 1996; Nielsen, 2006; Noddings, 2005).
- They privilege the neoliberal business model of education as commodity over all other orientations (Giroux, 2001; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004).
- They encourage the transmission of deadening, stale concepts rather than evoking a process of awakening mobile, living thinking (Deleuze & Conley, 1992; Whitehead, 1916/1967).
- They educate for the past, for forms of understanding that are becoming outmoded and are no longer adequate for the complexity of 21<sup>st</sup> century life on a fragile planet (Gidley, 2007b; Morin, 2001);
- They support the status quo: valuing science over literature, maths over art, intellect over emotion, materialism over spirituality, order over creativity (Finser, 2001; Glazer, 1994).

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, which embedded these modernist ideas into the socio-cultural fabric of Western society, education for children was not a formal process, even in the Western world. Children were enculturated by their extended families and cultures and only the children of the wealthy—who could afford private tutors—or who wished to become clerics, had any ‘formal’ education. Thus, education of children has undergone two phases, roughly aligned with macro-phases of socio-cultural development (see Table 6 below):

- An informal phase which lasted from the beginnings of early human culture to the Industrial Revolution,
- A formal phase of mass education of children in schools, modelled on factories.

By contrast, early 20<sup>th</sup> century educational contributions of Steiner (1909/1965) and Montessori (1916/1964) in Europe, followed by Sri Aurobindo<sup>42</sup> in India, pointed to the educational possibilities that support the development of the whole child. A driving force underlying their educational approaches was the idea of the evolution of consciousness that embraces more spiritual perspectives.

A plurality of educational alternatives to the factory model has arisen since then and has been discussed elsewhere (Gidley, 2007a, 2008). I refer to these as *postformal pedagogies* drawing from 1) the idea of “postformal reasoning” put forward in the

**Table 6:** Socio-Cultural, Political and Educational Phases

	Prehistory to 18 <sup>th</sup> Century	18 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	20 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond
<b>Socio-Cultural Phases</b>	Pre-modern	Modern	Post-modern
<b>Political Phases</b>	City-states	Nation-states	Global-planetary
<b>Education Phases</b>	<i>Informal family/tribal enculturation, or elite tutoring</i>	<i>Formal schooling, mass education, factory-model</i>	<i>Pluralism of postformal pedagogies, integral, planetary sensibility</i>

last few decades by adult developmental psychologists who identify one or more stages of reasoning beyond Piaget's formal operations; 2) the educational research building on critical theory and postmodernism which is referred to as post-formal education or post-formality; and 3) my own transdisciplinary postformal approach in which I bring these two discourses together via the term "post-formal pedagogies." Postformal pedagogies will be further discussed in a later section.

Based on these insights, I suggest that education—at least in much of the Anglophone<sup>43</sup> world—is in a transition from formal to post-formal (see Table 6). Social and emotional education is an essential component of this important transition.

Finally, to speculate on the long-term futures of social and emotional education, I believe that the movement towards more holistic, ecological education approaches will continue, thus reducing the need in the longer term for specific curricular programmes.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Education in Australia* by Marion McCreadie (2006). <http://www.historyaustralia.org.au/ifhaa/schools/evolutio.htm>
- <sup>2</sup> (History of) Catholic schools. <http://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/page.php?pg=austchurch-history>
- <sup>3</sup> "Government and Non-government Schooling." Australian Social Trends, 2006. Australian Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/9FA90AEC587590EDCA2571B00014B9B3?opendocument>
- <sup>4</sup> The Australian States are Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, while the Territories are Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.
- <sup>5</sup> This would be similar to what might be referred to as central government funding in other national contexts.
- <sup>6</sup> Australian Government Funding for Schools Explained. Parliament of Australia. 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2010. P. 3. <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bn/sp/SchoolsFunding.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 24.
- <sup>8</sup> See note 8 above.
- <sup>9</sup> "1970-2010: Forty Years in Review." Independent Schools Council of Australia (2010). [http://www.isca.edu.au/html/PDF/Year\\_in\\_Review/Year%20in%20Review%201970-2010%2040%20Years%20in%20Review.pdf](http://www.isca.edu.au/html/PDF/Year_in_Review/Year%20in%20Review%201970-2010%2040%20Years%20in%20Review.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> National Catholic Education Commission. About NCEC. [http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=64&Itemid=56](http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=64&Itemid=56)
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid. Insight: Catholic Education in Australia, 2010.
- <sup>13</sup> "Government and Non-government Schooling." Op. cit.
- <sup>14</sup> The ARACY Report Card was developed with the support of UNICEF Australia and the Allen Consulting Group. ARACY is chaired by child health expert Professor Fiona Stanley. [http://www.aracy.org.au/publicationDocuments/REP\\_report\\_card\\_the\\_wellbeing\\_of\\_young\\_Australians\\_A5.pdf](http://www.aracy.org.au/publicationDocuments/REP_report_card_the_wellbeing_of_young_Australians_A5.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> [http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsdocuments/SEWB%2007\\_071%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsdocuments/SEWB%2007_071%20(2).pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> Children's Headline Indicators are nationally agreed measures for children's health, development and wellbeing. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/childyouth/>
- <sup>17</sup> The report on the 'Conceptualisation of social and emotional wellbeing for children and young people, and policy implications' is available at the following link. [http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?page-Name=Social\\_and\\_emotional\\_wellbeing\\_indi](http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?page-Name=Social_and_emotional_wellbeing_indi)
- <sup>18</sup> For more information about *KidsMatter*, see the following link: <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/social-and-emotional-learning/>
- <sup>19</sup> More information about these parameters can be found at: [http://www.fundacionmbotin.org/educacion-responsable\\_educacion.htm](http://www.fundacionmbotin.org/educacion-responsable_educacion.htm)
- <sup>20</sup> For more information on the Early Years Learning Framework of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, see [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Early-childhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Early-childhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx)
- <sup>21</sup> Reports are available for reading at the *MindMatters* website. [http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/about/evaluation/evaluation\\_-\\_landing.html](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/about/evaluation/evaluation_-_landing.html)
- <sup>22</sup> For more information about *KidsMatter*, see the official website: <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/faqs/>
- <sup>23</sup> By Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) I am specifically referring to skills taught according to the approach developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) project, co-founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman and others (Goleman, 1997). This is in contrast to what I refer to as Social and Emotional Education (SEE) in this paper, which both includes the teaching of social and emotional learning skills and goes beyond it to include broader, contextual and holistic approaches referred to above as *implicit* approaches.
- <sup>24</sup> <http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/protection/sel/commercial-programs.html>
- <sup>25</sup> For more information on the current situation with respect to social and emotional wellbeing of indigenous young people in Australia, please see the following link: <http://healthbulletin.org.au/category/topics/health/social-and-emotional-wellbeing/>
- <sup>26</sup> <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/ufwg124fk6adz.pdf>
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/research/utopia/default.asp>
- <sup>28</sup> <http://www.streat.com.au/about>
- <sup>29</sup> I coin the term *delicate theorising* in reference to Goethe's *delicate empiricism* (Holdrege, 2005; Robbins, 2006).
- <sup>30</sup> For more information on new Australian National Curriculum, please see: <http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/curriculum.html> and/or [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/\\_NationalCurriculum.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/_NationalCurriculum.aspx)
- <sup>31</sup> See Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. This declaration was launched by the Australian Education Ministers in 2008. [http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)
- <sup>32</sup> For more information, see ACARA, Annual Report 2008-2009. [http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/ACARA\\_AnnualReport\\_08-09.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/ACARA_AnnualReport_08-09.pdf)
- <sup>33</sup> While not regarded as hard and fast rules or categories, these developmental stages are well supported by research.
- <sup>34</sup> Waldorf Research Educators Network (WREN) research papers on Steiner pedagogy can be found at: [http://www.ecswe.org/wren/researchpapers\\_ped](http://www.ecswe.org/wren/researchpapers_ped)



- agogy.html Steiner Education Australia (SEA) research section: <http://www.steineroz.com/articles/328> Research on Steiner Education (RoSE) journal: <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose>
- <sup>35</sup> The AEDI is also endorsed as a national progress measure of early childhood development in Australia by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).
- <sup>36</sup> [http://video.wch.org.au/aedi/National\\_Report\\_March\\_2011\\_Reissue\\_final.pdf](http://video.wch.org.au/aedi/National_Report_March_2011_Reissue_final.pdf)
- <sup>37</sup> This section is largely extracted from a recent evaluation of the programme by researchers at the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP), Southern Cross University (SCU), Lismore, Australia. <http://ccyp.scu.edu.au/index.php/99/?hl=Seasons+for+Growth>
- <sup>38</sup> More information about the Seasons for Growth programme can be found at *Good Grief*: <http://www.goodgrief.org.au/SeasonsforGrowth/ChildrenYoungPeoplesProgram/tabid/65/Default.aspx>
- <sup>39</sup> See Evaluating the Seasons for Growth Program: <http://ccyp.scu.edu.au/index.php/99/?hl=Seasons+for+Growth>
- <sup>40</sup> <http://www.responseability.org/site/index.cfm?display=183492>
- <sup>41</sup> Technicism is an over reliance or overconfidence in technology as a benefactor of society. Taken to the extreme it is the belief that humanity will ultimately be able to control the entirety of existence using technology.
- <sup>42</sup> Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy was developed through his spiritual collaborator, *The Mother*.
- <sup>43</sup> I am not sufficiently informed to comment on the trends in European and other non-Anglo nations, except that in the so-called developing world, there is a strong, modernist, political and economic movement to transplant the formal factory-model of schooling into these diverse cultures. There is also a postcolonial critique of this neo-colonialist agenda (Gidley, 2001; Inayatullah, 2002; Jain & Jain, 2003; Jain, Miller, & Jain, 2001; Visser, 2000).

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