During the school holidays, I spent some time reading through a book titled ‘What Teachers need to know about Teaching Methods’. This book was written by Peter Westwood, an experienced educator, and published in 2008 by the Australian Council for Educational Research which is an independent organisation that does extensive research into education in Australia (visit www.acer.edu.au). I found this book very interesting on several levels.

The first thing that struck me was the book’s treatment of Constructivism. Westwood says: “Constructivism is a theory about human learning, not specifically about a method of teaching” and “it is certainly the major influence on the content presented in university methodology courses for trainee teachers at this time.”

Constructivist methods of teaching are generally characterised as “student-centred” approaches and include the following methods; inquiry-based, problem-based, project-based and also discovery learning methods.

“Constructivists believe that traditional didactic teaching represents a largely unsuccessful attempt to transmit knowledge in a pre-digested form to learners. They believe that learners must construct knowledge from their own activities.”

The surprise to me was that Westwood began questioning the “efficacy” of constructivism early in the book. In answering the question, “Are constructivist approaches compatible with human cognitive processing?”

He responds by saying: “There is a growing body of information from research on ‘cognitive load theory’ that raises doubts about the efficacy of unstructured and unguided discovery-type activities. Cognitive load theory research is particularly concerned with tasks where learners are often overwhelmed by the amount and diversity of information that needs to be processed and remembered simultaneously - as can easily happen with discovery or problem-based learning situations.”

Westwood quotes from research that says: “... performance degrades at the cognitive load extremes of either excessively low load (underload) or excessively high load (overload) [and] under conditions of both underload and overload, learners may cease to learn.”

I was certainly very interested in what Westwood had to say in this area as one of the goals of the A.C.E. program is to place students at a level where they are able to perform or rather, at a level where they are neither underloaded nor overloaded.

Westwood also focuses on instructivist perspectives. “Instructivists” he says, “believe firmly in the value and efficacy of direct and explicit teaching” and that “it is not only possible but also highly desirable that learners follow a structured course in which important information and skills are presented in an orderly and sequential manner, practised, assessed and reviewed regularly.”

Teaching methods based on instructivist principles are also known as direct instruction, active teaching and teacher directed approaches. What Westwood says matches very well with the approach of the A.C.E. program including the six major components of effective instruction identified by Rosenshine’s (1986) research which were daily review, clear presentation of new material, guided practice by students, immediate correction and feedback from teacher, independent practice, weekly/monthly reviews.

Those of you that have looked closely at the PACE program will recognise these six components in the provision of clearly presented material which students work through on a daily basis along with plenty of opportunity for
In our last SCEElerator I shared something of the developing vision of the ministry of Southern Cross Educational Enterprises.

Commensurate with these new directions, which we called Training, Protecting and Rescuing, the Board of Directors of SCEE has reconsidered the Vision of the ministry and decided upon a revised Vision Statement. Our original vision was:

To equip people for their God ordained role in life by providing high quality, Biblically based curricula and services.

In reviewing this Vision, the board was mindful that it did not encapsulate the areas of protecting and rescuing and so have developed the Vision Statement of SCEE to become:

A Biblically based ministry equipping people to fulfil their God ordained role in life.

It was important for us to maintain the focus of the ministry of SCEE on a Biblical worldview. This is the foundation for all of life and hence ought rightly be the foundation of education. We consider that the work of SCEE is, indeed, a ministry and it was important this be reflected in our Vision. The concept of “equipping” has been maintained in that it carries the concepts of mending and restoring and this is an emerging focus of the ministry, along with training. In focusing on these three areas of training, protecting and rescuing, the leadership of SCEE believes the Lord is calling this to be a force for good and for God in the world, providing the opportunities that not only children need, but in many cases adults as well, to achieve the very best of which they are capable in life and to learn to follow Him in the way He wants to lead them, enabling them to inherit the life He has prepared for them. That life, His purpose and His call is very real and very present. It is not “pie in the sky when we die, bye and bye,” it is, literally, “steak on the plate while we wait, mate!”

We are often prone, however, to miss His call because of interference from the enemy of our souls. One of the ways the devil has successfully robbed people of their God given inheritance (or at least, delayed their reception of it) is through the quagmire of an emerging evil in our societies - the internet. Not that the World Wide Web itself is evil however, just as with so many other potentially good avenues, the devil has turned it to his own purposes and flooded it with information that is not only distracting for those who use it, but it is downright destructive.

Responsible parents have attempted to do the right thing and loaded Internet Filtering Software on their home computers. The sad reality is that, within 24 hours of filtering software being produced, a “workaround” appears on YouTube or a similar platform and kids can simply circumvent it! Let’s not fall into the trap of thinking that “my child would never do that!” Really? You know, sometimes we might be right when we say that. The tragedy is that sometimes, we are not and those are the times our young people are most at risk.

Since partnering with CyberSafe247 to help protect young people on the internet, I have become aware of more of the known statistics of what is happening out there in the cyber world. Suffice to say that now, more than ever before, we need as responsible educators, parents and adults, to ensure we do all we can to protect our young people in this emerging arena which will, whether we like it or not, fill an increasing proportion of the time of our young people.

SCEE is proud to be associated with CyberSafe247 and we commend it to you as the world’s first personal (home) modem firewall, giving parents (and educators in schools) the ability to control content permitted through their wi-fi networks, thus ensuring that not only computers attached to the network but smartphones, tablets, games machines, etc (for which there is no filtering software) are protected as well.

As part of the launch of this new initiative, we are offering a Cybersafe247 modem as a gift to every full time, paid up delegate to the South Pacific Educators’ Conference being held in Brisbane 19 - 21 June.

May the Lord bless you in all your endeavours for Him.

Bob Gregory
Managing Director & CEO
As you are all very aware, 2012 is an Olympic year. I have been very conscious lately of the immense amount of training that the Olympic Athletes put into their sport. I was again reminded of this recently, when we went to New Zealand to the Preparation for Convention seminars that were organised by Mrs. Vicki McGeorge from Home Schooling New Zealand. We spent two days with folk there doing training for convention as we have done in other places as well.

On one hand we sometimes think about the quick fix to an issue. The judging at Student Convention is inconsistent...let’s run a seminar and address that problem. Good idea but maybe a wrong thinking process. Maybe a more correct thinking process is to realise the need for training like an athlete or football player.

People involved in professional sport have an ongoing training schedule that is designed to bring them to a point of excellence, continue to maintain that excellence and be constantly at their peak performance. If this is appropriate for a human endeavour like sport, which the Bible indicates only profits a little, how much more do we need consistency in an ongoing training schedule for the training of staff that are practically involved in the education of children which has eternal consequences?

When considering staff professional development, I think we need to have a similar attitude. There needs to be an ongoing commitment to the things we have learned. (2 Tim 3:14). When The Apostle Paul wrote his first epistle to young Timothy, he said to “give attendance to” (1 Tim 4:13), “neglect not” v14, “meditate upon” v15, “take heed” and “continue in”, v16. All of these expressions give rise to an understanding of the need for an ongoing program of training whether we call it professional development or in-service training. The athlete is likely to be training everyday or at least 6 days a week. The football team is also likely to have multiple training sessions between games. Sometimes I think that we are only ever reactive in Christian Education. We only consider the need for staff training when a problem arises. If we had a predetermined schedule of training/professional development at the beginning of each year would there be fewer crises to deal with during the year? A local Educators’ Conference is a great addition to any professional development program and Southern Cross Educational Enterprises is committed to offering such support to schools and home school families throughout the South Pacific and Indonesia. It would be our prayer that every educator in every school was able to attend at least one A.C.E. Educators’ Conference per school year.

We have just returned from Papua New Guinea where their A.C.E. Educators’ Conference in Lae was attended by over 280 delegates from all around that nation. Dr. George Sears was there to minister to the delegates from God’s Word and take charge of the official PNG Curriculum launch. Ten new Social Studies “PACES” and six new Mathematics “PACES” have been completed and were officially launched at Mega Conference with great celebration. We praise God for what he has accomplished through local Curriculum Development. These “PACES” will now be trialled by chosen schools in PNG. Once this final editorial task is complete they will be published and made available for sale. My recommendation to all schools in the South Pacific and Indonesia is that once these PACES are on the shelf they would be a great resource for any school to use to help your students learn about PNG.

A.C.E. Educators’ Conferences are provided by Southern Cross Educational Enterprises in New Zealand, PNG, Fiji, Indonesia, Vanuatu and this year in September we will be taking conference into Honiara in the Solomon Islands. We are also looking at the possibility of an extra conference in Papua New Guinea next year maybe in Rabaul and we still need to look into what we do in the Cook Islands and how we might be able to minister to the new school in Tonga. The Educational Services Department have established state networking groups who, I believe, are organising conference in various states in Australia. All of these regional Educators’ Conferences are in addition to our South Pacific Educators’ Conference which is aimed more specifically at School Executives and Senior Staff and is held on an annual basis in Brisbane. The Schools’ Services Department is looking forward to serving our overseas clients better and any suggestions you have for conference topics and local presenters will help in our development of better services. You can send any suggestion to roysavage@scee.edu.au
What a year it’s been already! We now have 147 people who have completed the Convention Training Seminars, having completed the New Zealand training in April. If your school or homeschool group is interested in Convention Training let me know as soon as you can so we can confirm a date even for 2013. This training is not only to help with consistency in judging (although we hope that this will be one of the major outcomes), but also to renew the passion for Convention amongst your staff and parents. I hope to hear from your school/homeschool group to arrange training for next year.

Dr George Sears, Roy and I have just returned from PNG where we had 281 attendees registered for the 3 day Conference, but I’m sure that we had a few ‘just observing’ there as well! It is always such a blessing to be with these lovely folk and to see their eagerness to learn and improve in whatever way they can. It was exciting to be there for the launch of the new National Curriculum which was greeted with much joy! New Math and Social Studies PACEs are being trialled in PNG prior to being released onto the general market. Dr Sears and Mike Spence have spent many hours and a number of trips to PNG to complete the PACEs and their work was very much appreciated.

On May 16 I fly out to the US to participate in International Student Convention. This year the South Pacific Region is represented by just 2 students, Natasha Maciejewski from Australian Christian College: Moreton and Jeremiah Lee from Nadi Christian Community School in Fiji. We also have 3 South Pacific representatives on the His Servants 24/7 Squad: David Poole, (Australian Christian Home Schooling Victoria) Christopher and Josiah Lee (Nadi Christian Community School, Fiji). I will once again be Squad Captain to 25 young people from around the world. Please remember to keep us all in your prayers.

Registrations for the South Pacific Educator’s Conference are still coming in, so if you forgot yours make sure you register today. Dr Greg Mutsch from A.C.E USA will be our keynote speaker. Many of you will remember Dr Mutsch from South Pacific Student Convention in Toowoomba, where he was the guest preacher. Dr Mutsch is an excellent speaker with a wealth of experience and will be well worth hearing.

In our next issue I am hoping to be able to give you some very exciting news about our guest preacher/s for South Pacific A.C.E. Student Convention. Preparations for South Pac are chugging along at a great rate and we are very excited to be working with our Fijian Organising Committee, who are doing lots of leg work for us and making lots of plans and arrangements to make this South Pac the best one yet. So keep preparing and making your plans and watch this space for more news!

By now you should have your South Pac Registration Kits, if not they are available for download at www.scee.edu.au – did you find the neat cartoons in the Kit written and illustrated by Isikeli Savu from Fiji? Make sure that you get the next issue in this copy of the Sceelerator and colour this to add to your collection and to bring to Fiji for the colouring competition.

Before our next issue, Regional Conventions will have begun, with PNG Convention in July. Please make sure that you are using the latest version of the Guidelines available on the web at www.scee.edu.au. Affidavits are no longer required for ANY events, but there is a new Student Event Registration Form that MUST be signed by both the student and the Supervisor. Using old judges forms can seriously disadvantage your students, so please make sure that you have the current judges forms from the web site as above.

We will be doing a Student Convention Guidelines review this year, if you have any ideas, suggestions or things that need to be altered or improved in the Guidelines please send these to me in writing at kathyfisher@scee.edu.au. In order to complete this review all submissions must be received by May 30th.

Kathy Fisher
Convention Coordinator
Schools’ Services Department
practice and also immediate correction and feedback through the scoring strips which require students to score small sections of work before moving on to the next section. Checkups, Self Tests and PACE Tests provide opportunity for regular review.

Westwood tells us that: “Rosenshine’s (1986) original description of explicit instruction indicated that the approach was particularly effective for teaching mathematical procedures and computation, word recognition and decoding, strategies, science facts and concepts, social science facts and concepts, and foreign language vocabulary.”

He also says: “The recommended use of direct instructions has now been extended beyond mastery of basic information and skills to the explicit teaching of cognitive strategies; for example, students are taught strategies for comprehending and summarising text, planning and composing written assignments, and solving mathematical and other problems.”

Westwood says it is important that teaching methods are chosen to suit the subject being taught and that: “direct instruction is, of course, much less appropriate for achieving affective and social goals in education, such as those covering emotions, beliefs, values and attitudes. Other approaches are also necessary for fostering students’ creativity, initiative and critical thinking.”

This clearly supports the approach taken by schools using the A.C.E. program which have part of their day using PACES based on instructivist principles and a further portion of their school time where a variety of other teaching methods are used to foster students’ creativity, initiative, and critical thinking along with their beliefs, values and attitudes. Good teaching is obviously not just one thing, but a balance of many things!

Westwood is not afraid to move into contentious ground when he says: “Many teachers, particularly in Australia where constructivist influences are strong, react very negatively towards any extreme form of direct teaching, claiming that it is much too prescriptive, too highly structured, too rapidly paced, and with too much emphasis on basic skills.”

He goes on to say: “…part of the problem is that much of the hard evidence from educational research is not read by teachers…” and “…even when teachers are presented with evidence from research, many of them seem inclined to reject it. It is almost as if teachers are saying, ‘OK, You say that research shows method X is more effective than any other, but we just don’t like that method, and we won’t use it’.”

Westwood claims that the reason many teachers are using methods that are not particularly effective is that: “State education authorities over the past 30 years have tended to support progressive methods that have some sort of intrinsic humanistic appeal, not necessarily methods that have been rigorously evaluated.”

It is little wonder then that the A.C.E. approach to learning has often been criticised as it is strongly influenced by instructivist principles, despite the fact that research supports this approach as being very effective.

There were more surprises for me in this book; surprises in that the writer was so strongly supportive of certain teaching methods. Westwood says:

“It has already been noted that many teachers tend to reject the more extreme forms of teacher-directed instruction. But there are other examples of proven methods that are not adopted. One example is mastery learning. In mastery learning, students work to achieve a given set of objectives for the course - there is no differentiation of goals or content - but the time taken for individuals to accomplish this is allowed to vary. In another words, under mastery learning the only significant difference among learners is the time it takes the learner to learn. Courses are divided into teachable and learnable units, and delivered by any appropriate method of instruction. After each unit, all students are tested and those who can attain at least 80 percent are deemed ready to move to the next unit.”

What a surprise! This is a direct affirmation of the fundamental principles upon which the A.C.E. program is built. But there was more!

Westwood goes on to say: “Another excellent system that is totally ignored in teacher education courses and rarely used in schools is precision teaching based on the ideas of Lindsley (1992).” “As with mastery learning, clear objectives are set and learners are taken through each lesson’s content with abundant guided and independent practice.

Progress is determined quantitatively each day (e.g. number of pages read; number of words with correct spelling; number of lines written, etc). The results are recorded on a daily progress chart.

A further description of principles that underpin the A.C.E. approach! Earlier Westwood said of mastery learning that:

Continued on page 6
From NZ...

It is hard to believe that one quarter of a century has passed since I started the Christian school in Maungaturoto. I was pastoring the Congregational Church there and when our three children went off to the local state school, Lynelle and I started to look for a better way, and we found it when we started 14 students using A.C.E PACEs. Numbers doubled in the first year and since then has usually hovered around about 40 students. Maungaturoto is a small village of less than a thousand people. Otamatea is the name of the predominately dairy farming district. Before the school opened on 22nd April 1987 I took all the staff to stay a week in Whangarei to attend training under Ken Francis, the principal of the Kamo Christian school.

At the anniversary is was great to meet up again with students who now, of course, are grown up with their own children they were running around after. Ex pupils and staff mixed with present pupils and staff along with parents around lunch, a BBQ dinner and a Sunday church service. Through the speeches and sharing there were many memories recalled along with much mirth as “other” stories were told. For me the weekend was of special significance as this was the first church I had pastored and the first school that I started. As I preached on Sunday morning I recalled that it was Christmas 1976 that I first delivered a sermon in the lovely church building. My message this time was entitled “The Importance of Christian Education” and in it I shared the two main reasons for starting the school.

Two of the original children with their children. On the right Angelene Goodman (nee Steedman) and Tamara (nee Rietfeld).

REFERENCE

WESTWOOD, Peter (2008) What teachers need to know about Teaching Methods. ACER Press, Victoria, Australia

Otameata Christian School
25th Anniversary

2. A growing awareness of the subtle and dangerous influence of humanism.

The second point opened the door to talk about the importance of a Christian worldview with an emphasis on how the influence of our Western culture has given us such a secular outlook on life that we are no longer Biblical in our thinking in so many areas. I concluded with a call to hold on to these two points as it is probably more urgent that God’s people see these issues clearly today than it was 25 years ago.

Two other schools in New Zealand will reach a 20 year milestone soon - Living Way later this year and Lake Taupo next year.

“it requires a high degree of planning and implementation that may be too daunting for most teachers.”

He also says: “Perhaps mastery learning and precision teaching are not used because they are incompatible with the fairly unstructured lessons that are typical of child-centred constructivist approaches.”

It is clear, then, that if teachers are to implement mastery learning and precision teaching methods they will need to have a different approach to the classroom.

To implement mastery learning and precision teaching the classroom must look and operate differently and at a school using the A.C.E. program we see this difference. Never forget the PACE program is a part of what we do and represents some of the teaching methods the staff use. Welcome to the future!
The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual test for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in all Australian schools. All students in these grades levels are assessed on the same days using national tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy.

These tests have recently been conducted (May 14-16) but prior to this year’s test, on Saturday May 5 an article appeared in the Courier Mail in Queensland extolling the improvement in NAPLAN results at Jubilee Christian College.

Jubilee Christian College has a day campus located at Atherton, on the tablelands west of Carins in north Queensland as well as hundreds of students in a D.E. provision. Jubilee has been a faithful user the A.C.E. program for many years. Mr Matthew Baker, Principal of Jubilee Christian College indicated that when new students came from other schools and settled into the more structured environment of the A.C.E. Learning Centre, their academic performance in all areas was significantly improved. Mr Baker and his staff recognise that the scope and sequence of the A.C.E. program and that of state education do not match. They examined what was expected of students at the assigned state school grade levels. Once the difference was identified the staff then dealt with these differences in their Non PACE lessons without altering their use of the A.C.E. program.

It has been reported that many other schools suspend their regular curriculum delivery leading up to the NAPLAN test and focus their class time on coaching and training the children specifically to perform better on the NAPLAN test. Jubilee’s results are therefore even more impressive when you realise that the performance of their students is the result of their regular learning activities and not a false training regime. Congratulations Matthew and the staff of Jubilee. We always knew you were doing a good job and now everyone knows.

Soli Deo Gloria.

ACTS Community School, using the A.C.E. program, was birthed at the end of January 2012 in the middle of a cyclone warning and knee deep in flood waters! As we dried out our training PACEs on a make shift washing line in the hall we kick started our year. I am sure Mr. Steedman had wished he had brought his togs or at least a pair of Jandels!

Next up 11 students perilously sat their diagnostic tests and anxiously awaited the arrival of the PACEs.

With the help of Miss Fuikefu our beautiful supervisor and Miss Middleton our studious monitor missionary, the students set about the business of learning!

They eased into the procedures by working through the wisdom PACEs, as the rest of the work arrived they started one subject at a time, depending on their capability. It is awesome to see all students now working on 5 subjects concurrently.

Meanwhile behind the scenes Miss Fuikefu and Miss Middleton worked furiously to set up filing systems, score tables, scoring boxes and keep the offices in order.

Miss Middleton spent time training a local parent to be our monitor and after being told she speaks too fast and uses too hard words they have formed a great relationship!

They are constantly surprised and amazed as the students continue to set goals and challenge themselves. The students have shown definite improvement in following procedures and processes.

It has been awesome to see the smiles on the students’ faces as they reach their goals and pass their tests. Who would’ve thought High school students would get excited about stars and certificates!

As we pause over the next week to take part in the mourning traditions and customs of our late King’s passing the students wait in anticipation to complete the last of their PACEs before the term ends.

Mrs. Kathryn Smith Tupou

CONGRATULATIONS JUBILEE

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

ACTS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

TONGA
CORRECTION
PNG ACE Student Convention Dates
16th-20th July

Bible Bowl Book 2012

4th edition changeover

ALL PACEs in Social Studies 1001-1048 are now being supplied in 4th edition with the exception of the following:

1005; 1041; 1044 and all national units

ALL Paces in Science 1001-1048 are now being supplied in 4th edition with the exception of the following:

1032; 1046 and 1047
All new PACEs will require new keys.

2012 Student Convention Guidelines

Please be advised that there have been a number of major updates to the Student Convention Guidelines for 2012.

The new guidelines are now available for download from www.scee.edu.au

These Guidelines MUST be used for all Student Conventions in the South Pacific Region in 2012.

Please destroy, delete, dispose of any old copies you may have floating around your school or home.

PRAYER & PRAISE POINTS

• Pray for all those attending International Student Convention.
• Pray for the South Pacific Educators’ Conference that it will be a time of great ministry and fellowship.
• Praise God for ACTS Community School in Tonga. Pray for them as they minister to the students and families in their community.
• Pray especially for preparations for the South Pacific Student Convention to be held in December 2012
• Praise God for the safe travel that the SCEE staff have enjoyed so far this year, pray for this to continue, as they travel to each Student Convention and Conference.
• Praise God that we have the privilege of working in ministries using the ACE program

SOUTH PACIFIC STUDENT CONVENTION

PNG: July 16-20, Okari Campus, Lae
QLD: August 20-24, Watson Park, Dakabin
NZ: September 17-21, Rotorua
TAS: October 1-5, Camp Clayton, Ulverstone
VIC: October 15-19, Rawson Convention Centre
NSW: October 22-26, Yarramundi

SOUTH PACIFIC STUDENT CONVENTION
December 9-14, Suva, Fiji
FOLLOW THE JOURNEY OF IKABULA AND HIS FRIENDS AS THEY INVITE A.C.E. STUDENTS TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC A.C.E. STUDENT CONVENTION IN SUVA, FIJI!

DRAWN AND WRITTEN BY ISIKELI SAVU, A NEW ISSUE WILL COME WITH EACH SCEELERATOR. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PHOTOCOPY THEM FOR EACH OF YOUR STUDENTS TO COLOUR IN AS THEY SAVE AND PREPARE FOR SOUTH PAC 2012.

COLLECT AND COLOUR THE COMPLETE SET! SUBMIT AT CHECK-IN AT SOUTH PAC 2012, AND MR. SAVAGE WILL CHOOSE THE BEST ONE FOR A PRIZE!

ONLY ONE ENTRY PER PERSON. PLEASE MAKE SURE EACH SET INCLUDES THE ENTRANT’S NAME. ONLY COMPLETE SETS ACCEPTED.

South Pacific A.C.E. Student Convention
Episode 2

Ikabula's Escapades

After swimming for days, Morolevu approaches his destination, Vanuatu.

But as he makes his way, his leg gets trapped amongst the coral.

Oh no! How did I manage that? I have to get out of this mess! I need to deliver this important invitation: Help... I... somebody!

Luckily there was someone nearby who could help.

Help me somebody!

As Morolevu cries for help, Coconut Crab leaps in to rescue him.

Hold on, I'm coming!

Help!

Hey Mister! I'm Morolevu from Fiji. Please help me!

Hold on there! My friends, I'm Coconut Crab and with my strong, sharp claws I'll get you free!

Welcome to Vanuatu! Morolevu! How's that leg doing?

Oh so much better thanks.

What brings you to our shores?

I bring greetings from Fiji and to invite you a C.E. Student to the South Pacific Student Convention to be held in Java.

That's great news! I'll do my utmost to encourage students to attend the Student Convention.

Why to go pau?

Next issue: Dilio's arrival in New Zealand