Learning from Finland's education system

For two decades Finland has been a world leader in education. International test results tell us that after starting school two years later Finnish students are two years ahead of most other countries at 15 years of age.

The high quality of the Finnish school system is based on a clear national ethos that people are the nation's most important asset. They have the right to receive excellent education, which will help maximise their potential to be who and what they want to be.

Education in Finland stresses learning through insight and encouragement in assessing performance. It is not based on continuous assessment, the grading of performance or competition between pupils. Instead, teaching focuses on finding learning methods that best serve each pupil and on supporting those who have challenges in learning.

HEI Schools Early Education Centres in Waurn Ponds and Lara take the best that Finland has to offer and combine it with other best practices in our progressive, emerging curriculum.

Play is considered a basic right of the child in Finland which every kindergarten must protect.

"Play motivates children and brings joy while allowing them to learn new skills and create meanings about themselves and the surrounding world. Children's social relationships are supported and everyone's opportunities to take part in play and shared activities are ensured." (Finnish National Agency for Education)

A child's capacity to pick up language, culture, social norms, emotional capacity and self-regulation, creative thinking, self-preservation, and a healthy sense of self takes place in the first five years of their life. These vital early years are also when the stress regulating systems for children are laid down and formed. So many of today's children struggle due to a chaotic, busy modern society that forgets that young children need time, endless hours of caring connection with significant adults — and even more endless hours being an explorer and an adventurer working out how the world works — to build a brain that allows them to grow into being an independent, capable, resilient caring human being in adulthood.

To relieve the pressure, HEI Schools Early Education Centres in Waurn Ponds and Lara adopt a research-based model developed with the University of Helsinki and a child-focused approach with play-based learning. With a vision of building essential life skills through real-life experiences based on the Finnish national early education curriculum, on-going teacher training and development will be offered to passionate and dedicated teachers and educators in their services.

ILO Norlane EEC, and HEI Schools Lara ELC. (Pictures: Supplied)

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(closed public holidays)
Inquiries: 5292 2179;
Facebook / Instagram @ilonorlane; Website: www.iloeec.com.au

HEI Schools Lara Early Learning Centre,
69-71 Buckingham Street, Lara 3212
Opens 6.30am-6.30pm Monday-Friday
(closed public holidays)
Inquiries: 5282 2575;
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Website: www.heischools.com.au

It's important for VCE students to properly manage their stress during exams. (iStock)

Fighting feelings of stress during exams

As VCE students would be well aware, exams are a time of stress, uncertainty and hard work. It is important to balance this stress with relief, uncertainty with predictability and hard work with relaxation.

Studies show that small, regular breaks between study sessions can improve mood and productivity.

As you approach your exam period, remember that it is not maintainable to be constantly anxious. You should have time to destress and think about something other than exams and study for a while.

Here are some ways to combat feelings of stress during exam time:

Positive self-talk: Using negative language with yourself is neither beneficial nor deserved. Make an effort to recognise how much work you're putting in and allow yourself to see how well you're doing. You have worked hard to get this far, and a few weeks of study and exams won't undo all of it.

Try to think of five things that you're proud of yourself for doing either in or outside of your school life and reiterate that you're capable of what you want to achieve. Visualise yourself doing well in your exams and receiving positive news when results are released.

Use some tangible grounding tools: Have a cup of tea, play with your pet or scribble in an adult colouring book. It's okay to forget about exams for a while. In fact, it's beneficial to spend some time after you study to allow the information to consolidate in your brain, so pick up a book or make yourself a snack and keep your mind occupied for a moment.

Move your body: Get the blood flowing! Whether you put on your favourite dance playlist and boogie around your room for a while, do some yoga or go for a stroll with a friend, getting active will refresh your body and mind. It will also assist in creating and releasing endorphins to improve your mood and relieve feelings of stress.

It's likely that you've heard it plenty of times, but VCE exams are not the be-all and end-all of life. Despite the ATAR you receive, there are always a variety of ways for you to get into your desired career. Life will go on after high school and is there to be lived, so make sure you make the most of it. Best of luck to all VCE students!