

Prevention is better than a cure: *preparing our children for the world they inherit.*

Presented by
Ben Sacco

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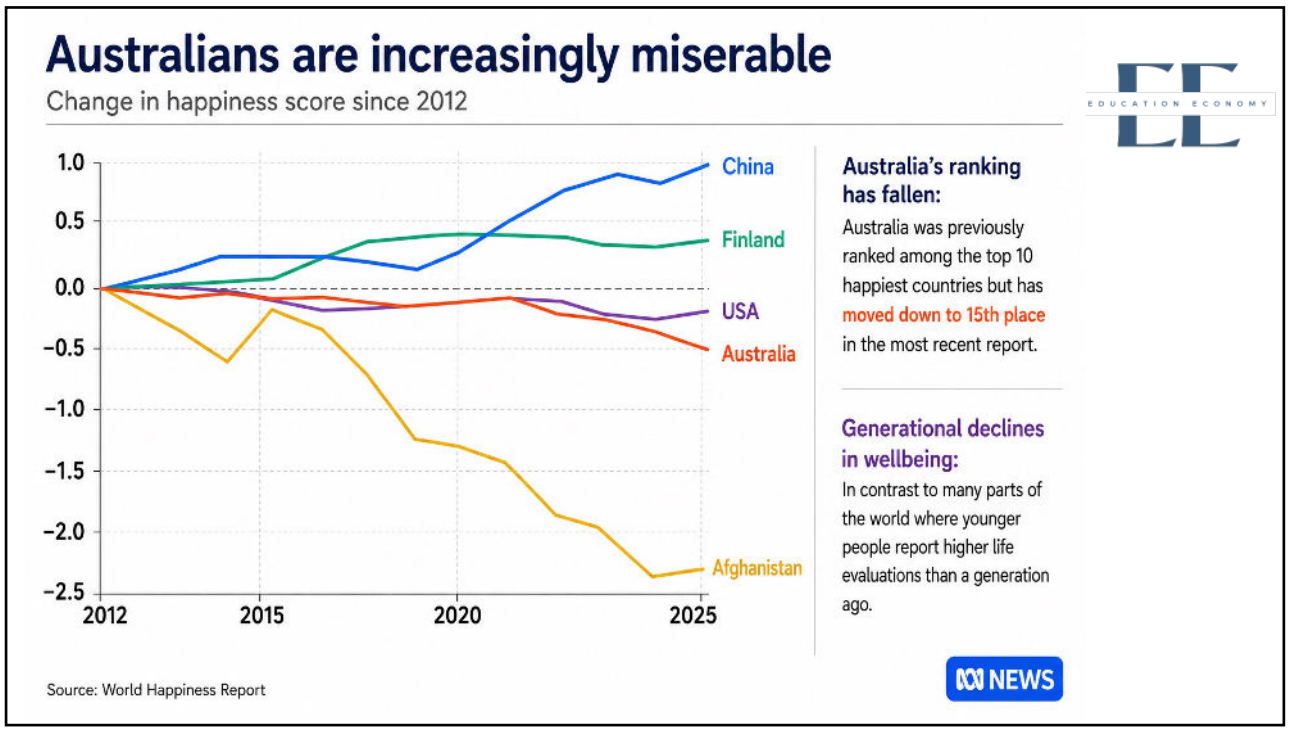
Australians are increasingly miserable
Change in happiness score since 2012
1.0
0.5
0.0
−0.5
−1.0
−1.5
−2.0
−2.5
2012
2015
2020
2025
China
Finland
USA
Australia
Afghanistan
Australia's ranking has fallen:
Australia was previously ranked among the top 10 happiest countries but has moved down to 15th place in the most recent report.
Generational declines in wellbeing:
In contrast to many parts of the world where younger people report higher life evaluations than a generation ago.
Source: World Happiness Report
NEWS

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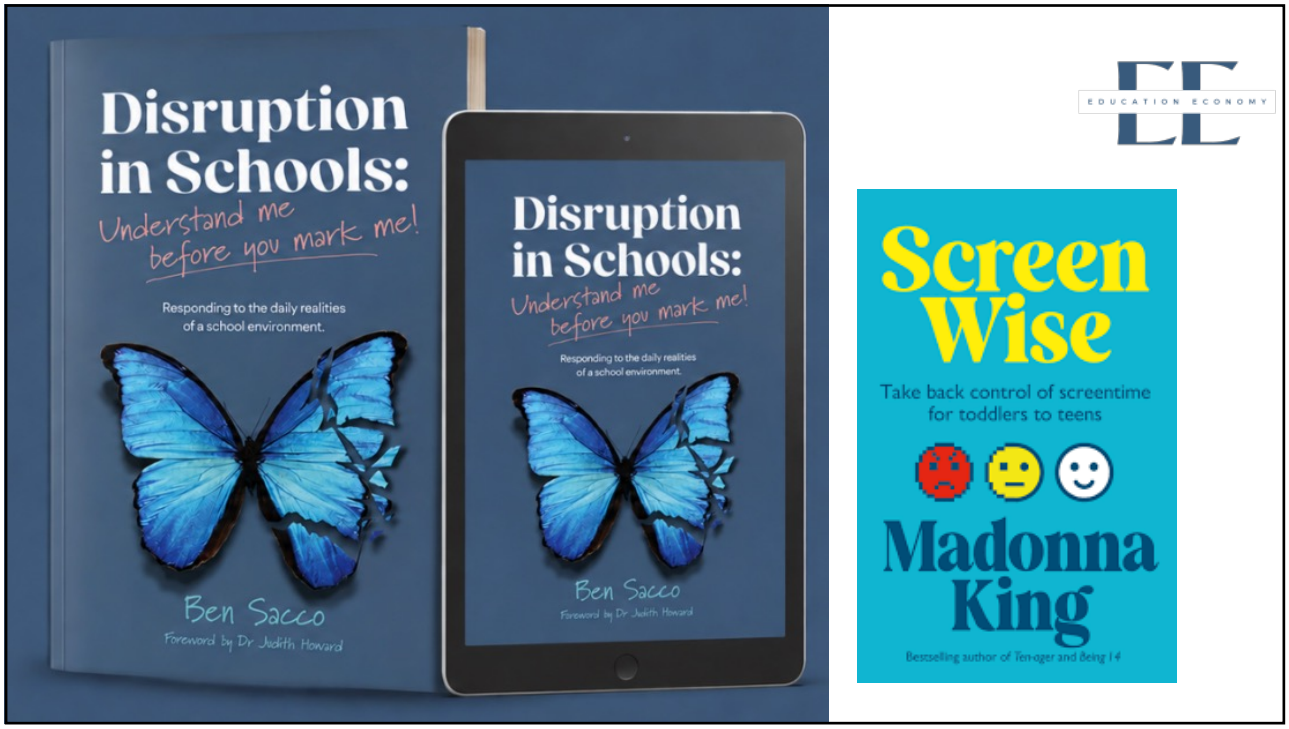
Disruption in Schools:
Understand me before you mark me!
Responding to the daily realities of a school environment.
Ben Sacco
Foreword by Dr Judith Howard
Screen Wise
Take back control of screentime for toddlers to teens
Madonna King
Bestselling author of Teenager and Being 14

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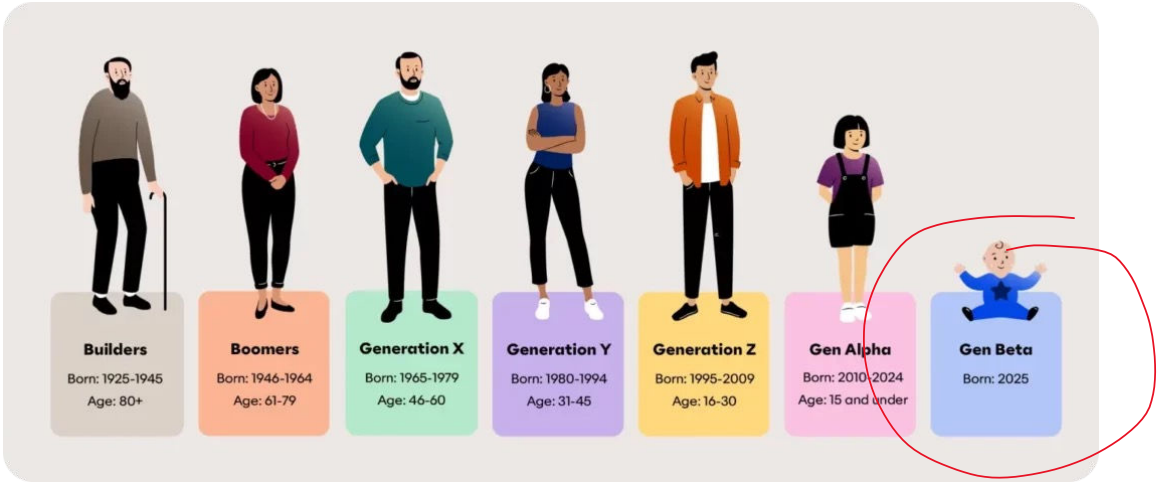
2025 marked the beginning of a new generation, in Generation Beta.



Source: *mccrindle.com.au*

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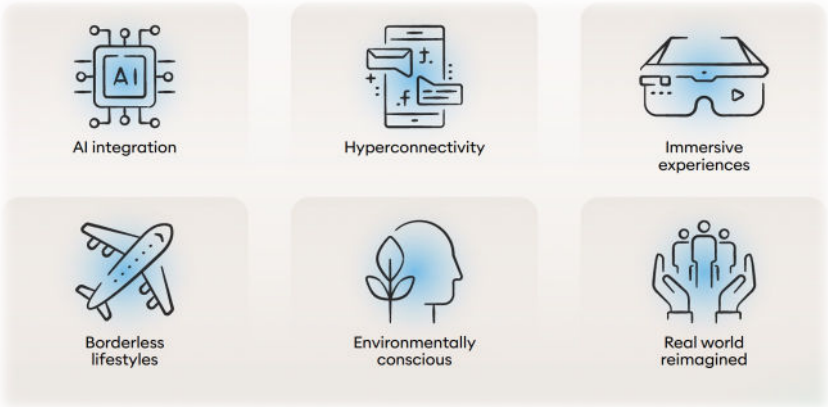
A new wave of students:

In 2030 the first Gen Beta children will start their schooling years. Considering the world they are growing up in, Gen Beta will likely be characterised by...





Source: *mccrindle.com.au*

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Gen B will see innovation as essential for solving the urgent challenges of their time.

Source: *mccrindle.com.au*

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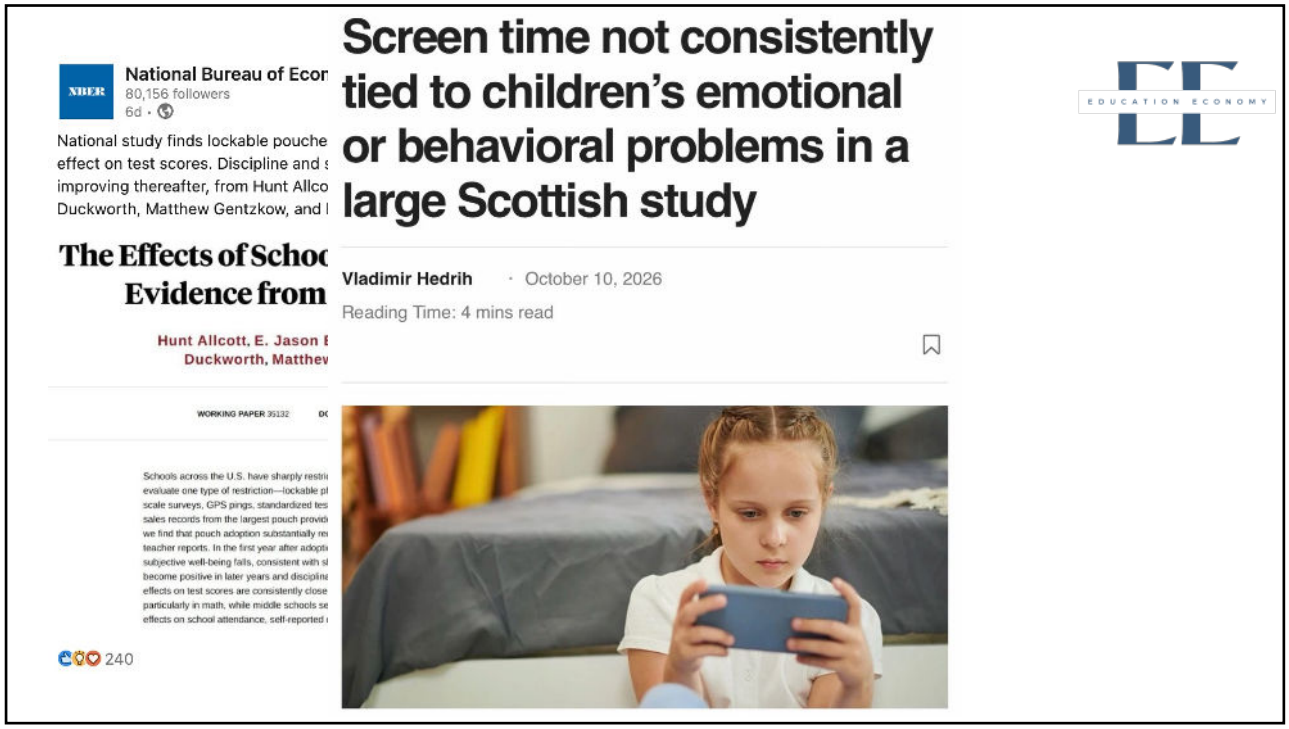
National Bureau of Econ
80,156 followers
6d
National study finds lockable pouche
effect on test scores. Discipline and
improving thereafter, from Hunt Allco
Duckworth, Matthew Gentzkow, and
The Effects of Schoo
Evidence from
Hunt Allcott, E. Jason
Duckworth, Matthe
WORKING PAPER 35132
240
Screen time not consistently tied to children's emotional or behavioral problems in a large Scottish study
Vladimir Hedrih · October 10, 2026
Reading Time: 4 mins read

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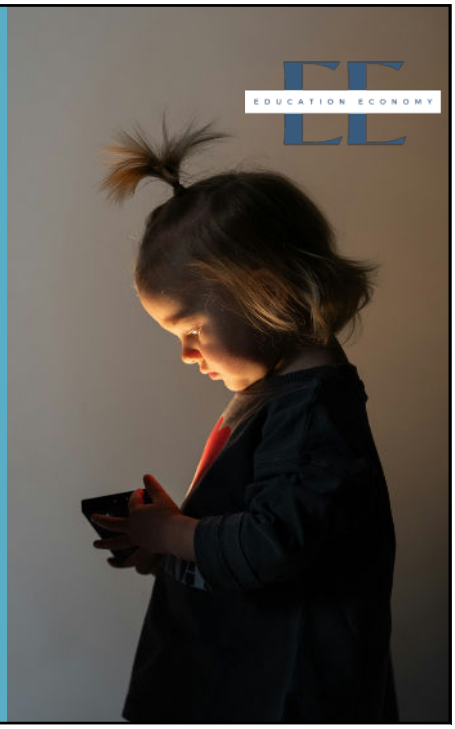
The brain research doesn't say screen time on its own is negatively impacting our health.

It says *unstructured, unmoderated screen exposure during critical development windows causes harm.*



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A study tracking more than 100,000 students over three years found teenagers who used social media in moderation reported the strongest wellbeing outcomes, while both heavy users and teens who avoided social media altogether were more likely to struggle.



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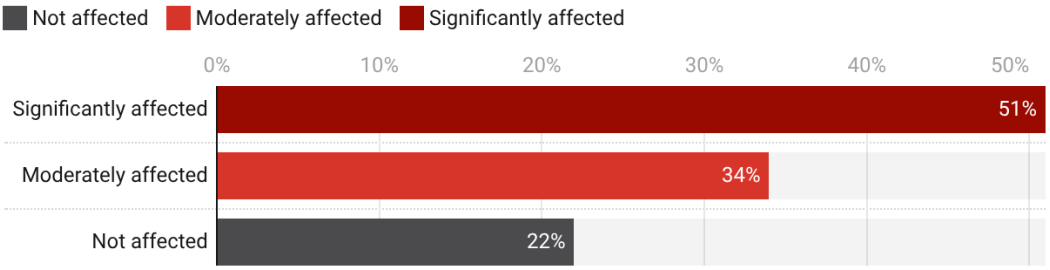
More than half of under 16s significantly impacted by the ban are now getting less news



Survey of 607 10-15 year olds who used at least one age-restricted platform before the ban came into effect

Chart: The Conversation • Source: Author provided • Created with Datawrapper

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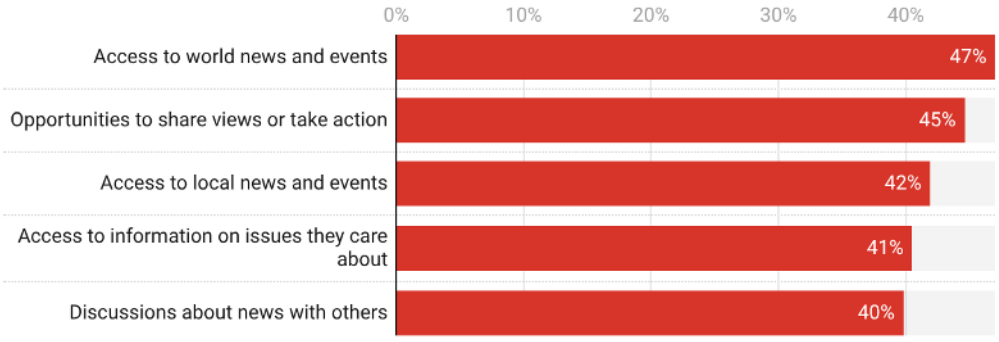
What kind of news access did young people lose?

Proportion of people who responded "much less" or "a little less" to the question:
"Since the ban was introduced on December 10 2025, do you now have less or more of the following?"



Survey of 160 10-15 year olds significantly affected by the ban

Chart: The Conversation • Source: Author provided • Created with Datawrapper

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What's happening in society is having an impact on our learning environments.

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Understanding what is 'helpful' or 'harmful' allows us to minimise the negative effects.



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Who feels like they don't have enough time for prevention work?

Who feels like they're constantly putting out fires?

If you could name one thing in your workplace that is a predictable problem, could you identify what prevention would look like for that one thing?



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Prevention feels expensive in time.

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Let's invest our energy and resources in addressing the conditions that influence classroom culture.



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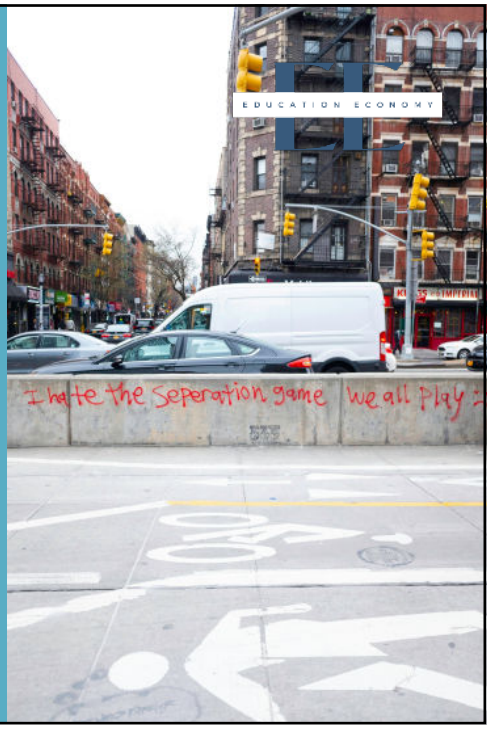
Prevent social interactions from deteriorating.



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We can educate about consequences without diminishing a child or young persons right to express and learn through the process.

”

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The behaviour of the adult in the room matters.

”

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Prevention is the key.

23







REDUCED SPEED LIMITS

Reduced speed limits (40km/h) were introduced in **1992.**

The lower speed limit was specifically designed to reduce the risk and potential severity of crashes.

HELMETS SAVE LIVES

No helmet: 38% rate of serious head injury.

Helmet: 22% rate of serious head injury.

Effectiveness: Up to **60%** reduction in severe traumatic brain injury.

SEATBELTS SAVE LIVES

Seatbelts are now considered one of the most effective safety innovations in road history, reducing the risk of death for front-seat passengers by around **50%**.

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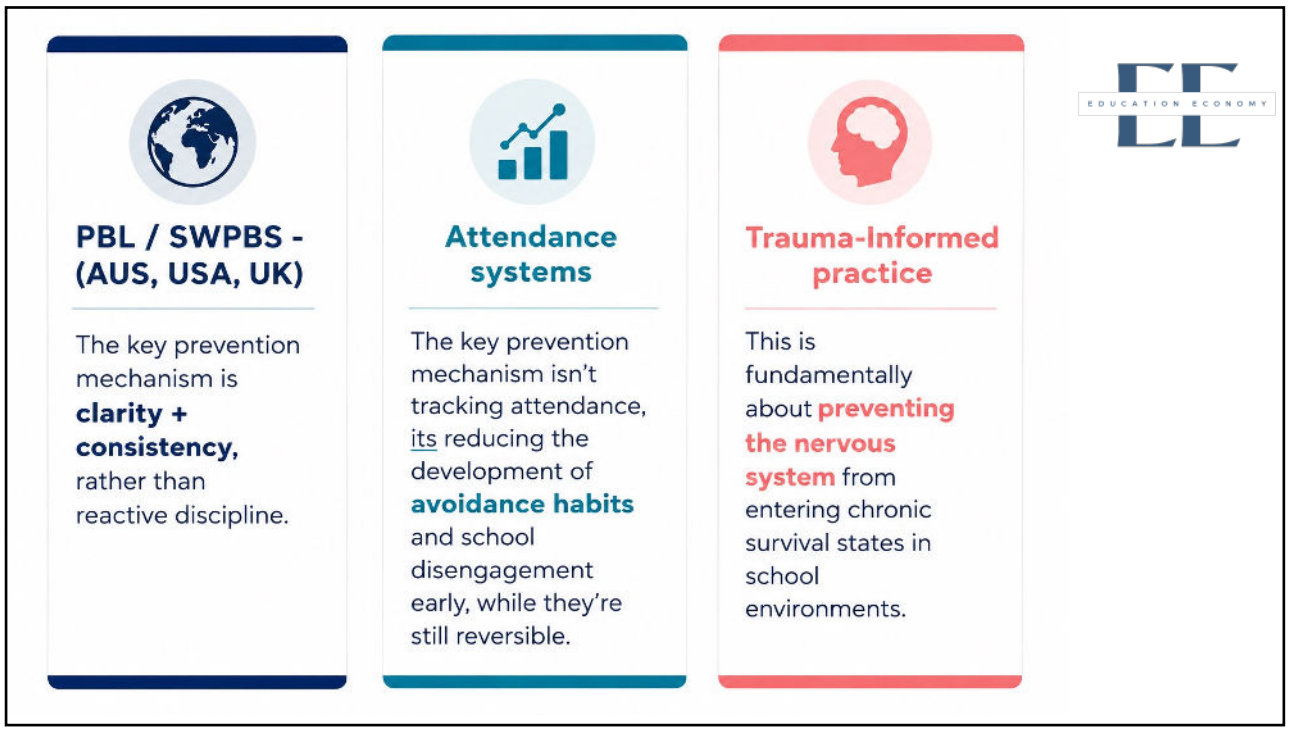
PBL / SWPBS - (AUS, USA, UK)
The key prevention mechanism is **clarity + consistency,** rather than reactive discipline.
Attendance systems
The key prevention mechanism isn't tracking attendance, its reducing the development of **avoidance habits** and school disengagement early, while they're still reversible.
Trauma-Informed practice
This is fundamentally about **preventing the nervous system** from entering chronic survival states in school environments.

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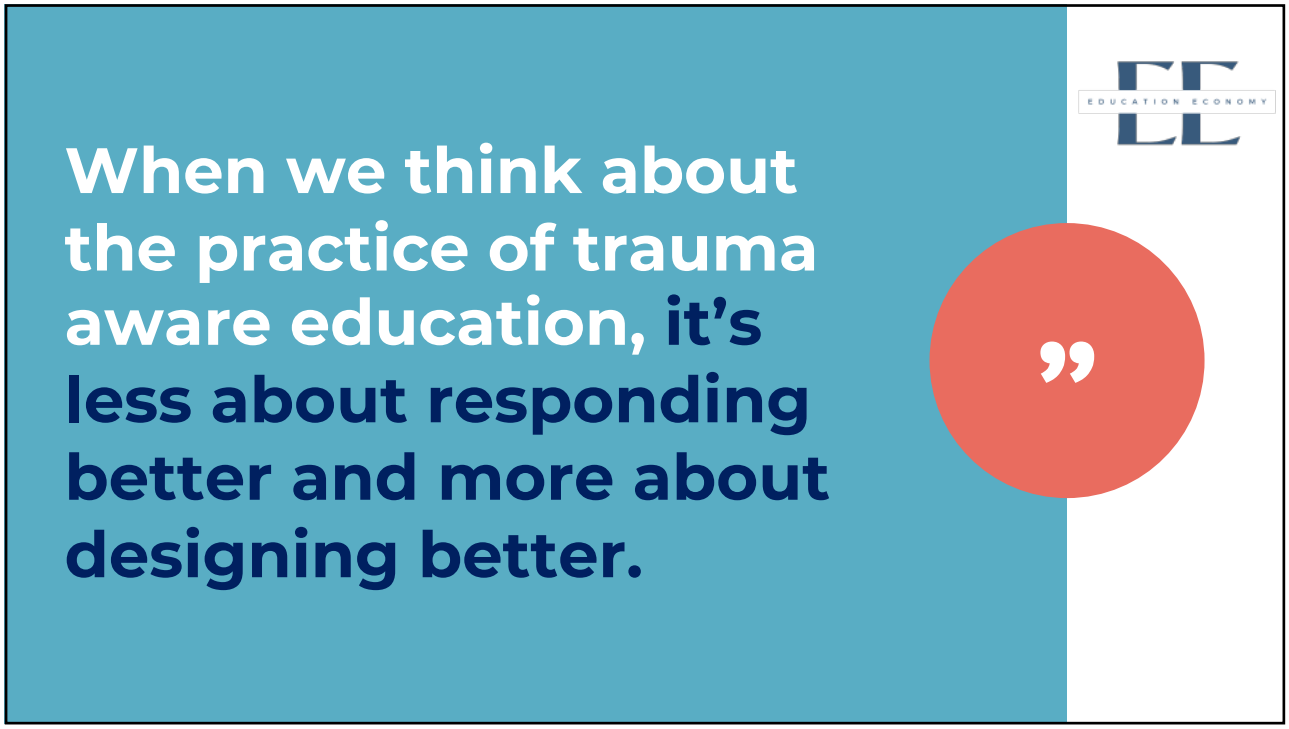
When we think about the practice of trauma aware education, it's less about responding better and more about designing better.

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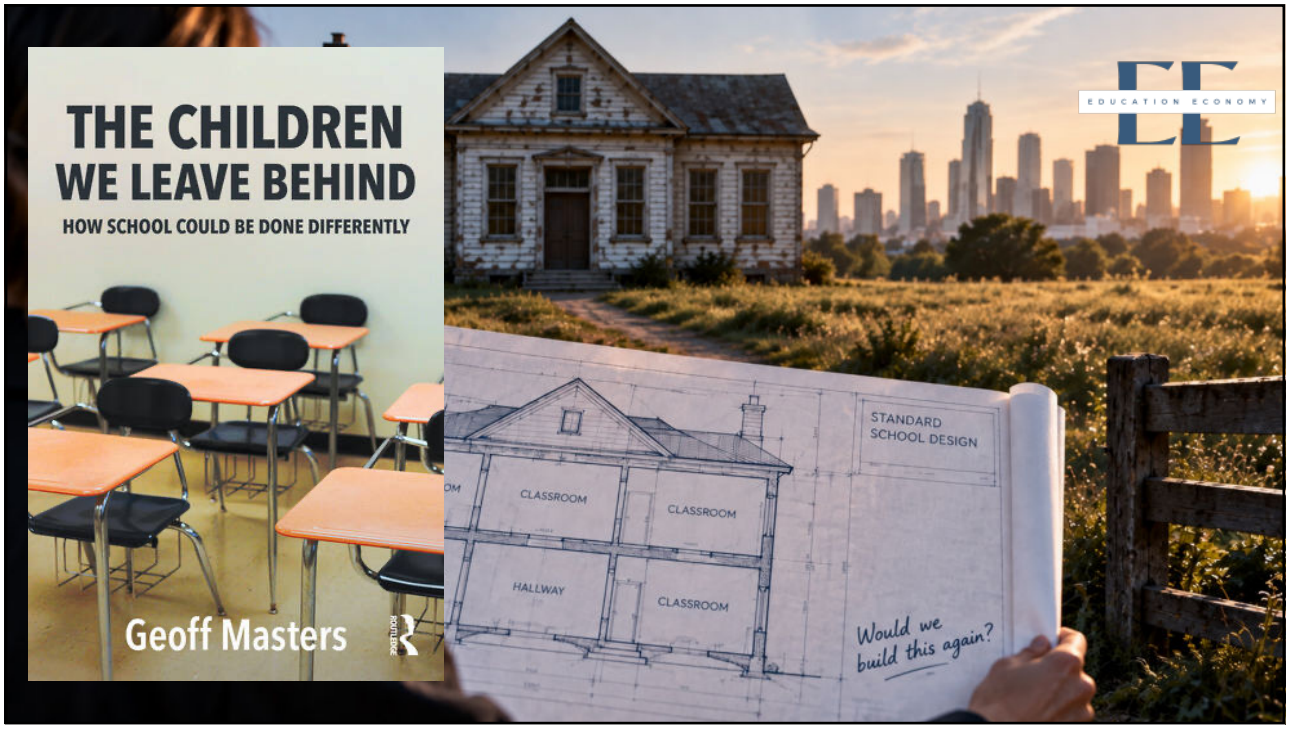

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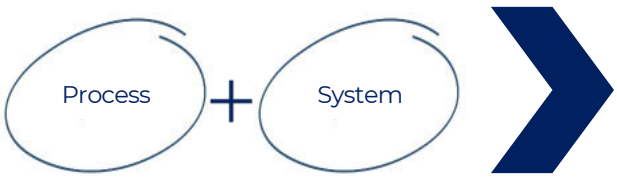
System thinking.



Proactively respond to the 'problem of practice'

Be informed by data and the voices of those living it

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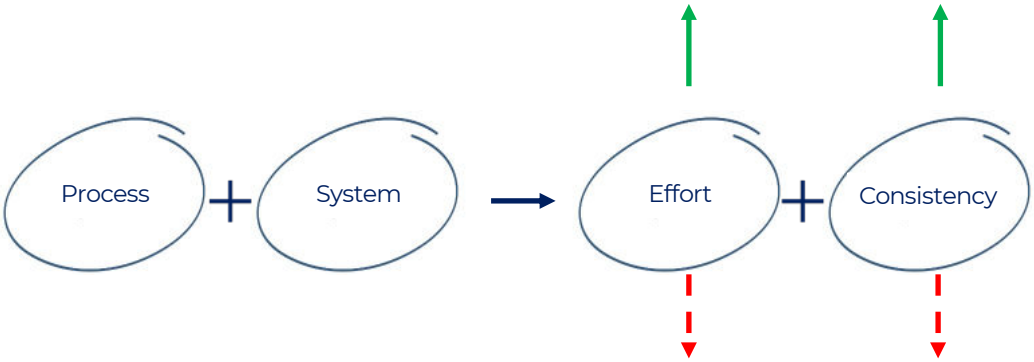
System thinking.



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Effort without consistency burns out.

Consistency without effort stagnates.

We need both.

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The impact of over-structured approaches?

- Less capacity to problem-solve
- Lower tolerance for ambiguity.
- Less likely to take risks in learning.
- Dependence on teacher direction
- Shallow engagement - *tell me what to do.*

Disengagement



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Why learner curiosity matters in modern classrooms.

- Knowing facts isn't the main advantage anymore because information is easy to find.
- Curiosity helps students adjust when things change or aren't clear.
- When students are interested, they remember things better and understand them more deeply.

Engagement



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Disruption, discipline and PISA: what does the evidence actually tell us?



By Ben Sacco
Community contribution / September 10, 2026

The latest OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results provide an important insight into Australian education, although they may not explain quite as much as some of the public debate suggests.



PISA measures what the OECD describes as the "disciplinary climate".

While these measures provide important information about the conditions in which learning is taking place, they don't identify the cause of every disruption.

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