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New Zealand
PRINCIPAL
NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

November 2021
Volume 36, Number 4

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SUBSCRIPTION
Distributed free to all schools in New Zealand. For individual subscribers, send $40 per year to:
New Zealand Principals' Federation
National Office, PO Box 25380,
Wellington 6146

New Zealand Principal is published by Cervin Media Ltd on behalf of the New Zealand Principals' Federation and is issued four times annually. For all enquiries regarding editorial contributions, please contact the editor.

ISSN 0112-403X (Print)
ISSN 1179-4372 (Online)

PHOTOS FOR THE MAGAZINE:
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TECHNICAL DETAILS:
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600 school principals enjoy their last big unmasked conference hurrah before Covid – Delta Strain sent them all into lockdown again

EDITORIAL

Liz Hawes EDITOR

I USED TO play club netball. Netball is a wonderful sport where you make life-long friends. You play strenuously and competitively, until it's time for the knee or hip replacement then you glide gently to the couch phase. Once a year, you stretch out with your closest netball mates to watch a Silver Ferns test, and if there isn't one, you rewatch the last one. Over countless glasses of wine, you relive all those air-hanging ball retrieval leaps, intercepts, match winning goals, bullet and 'Hail Mary' passes – all of which you retrieved through startlingly skilful agility – and laugh yourself hoarse.

My career has reached the couch phase. This year, every date set for our netball shindig has been scuttled by another COVID outbreak. We now have a slot booked, in the Manawatū, for November, except one of our number lives in Whangarei . . .

Our 'normal' has now become 'abandonment of certainty'. Living with uncertainty tests our trust in systems, in society and in each other. We have been plunged into a state of on-going doubt.

The problem is, a global health crisis like COVID, cannot be managed through rationality alone. It is impossible to make finite predictions and plans from the scientific evidence, because we are still gathering the scientific evidence. The COVID virus changes shape frequently, and the contributing factors are numerous. Our best medical experts across the globe are still grappling to fully understand this elusive intruder. It is a novel virus so we can't just look up the scientific literature on the last outbreak and follow the blueprint for eradication. Consequently, advice changes as understanding grows. For example, during the 2020 outbreak, experts advised us masks were unhelpful. Now, with the mutated Delta strain of the virus, we have been instructed masks are mandatory inside any public space.

The constantly changing rules and advice render us a tad anxious. As a species, we like certainty and don't naturally welcome ongoing unpredictability. In this time of COVID, it is therefore critical that we have as much consistency of credible information as possible, to prevent us wobbling off course.

If changing advice from the experts isn't challenge enough, we have another 'virus' to contend with called social media. Social media has been one of the greatest impediments to alleviating the fear and distrust that the global pandemic naturally generates. It is unfortunately the playground to enable the mis-informants, mischief makers and conspiracy theorists to thrive, often without scrutiny. These groups are responsible for undermining the efforts of the majority who are trying to stay the course, do the right thing, listen to the science, stay sane and stay safe.

This is **NOT A REALITY WE ENJOY** and we look forward to the **UNCERTAINTIES** we currently endure being conquered by **BOOSTING OUR RATES** of vaccination.

Conspiracy theories have abounded, for example that the COVID virus is just an elaborate hoax or that dangerous elites are trying to kill off the elderly to create a new world order.

Despite the World Health Organisation (WHO) roundly rejecting the theory that the virus originated from a laboratory in China, social media menaces augmented this idea into a theory that China deliberately released the virus from its laboratory so it could then create a vaccine into which various controlling features would be injected. China would gain ascendency, rule the world and control everyone in it. That would take some time, but China can wait. China has never been in a hurry. This mischievous theory spawned more theories, such as the vaccine contains magnetic properties or will render males infertile.

The next theory to emerge was that pharmaceutical companies have conspired to spread the virus so that the inevitable need for vaccinations will make them mega-millions. Another suggested that the rollout of the 5G mobile network caused the pandemic and a global cover-up ensued. There were physical attacks on engineers and mobile phone masts as this theory circulated.

Such deliberate misinformation grows legs, particularly amongst the disenfranchised – those less educated, less connected and less likely to have access to alternative sources of information. Fear and distrust of the establishment takes hold, followed by resistance to the instructions of our health authorities and Government officials. The disenfranchised are then recruited to swell the numbers of the anti-vaccine lobby and will ultimately fill the critical care beds in our hospital ICUs.

COVID has unsettled all of us and the mischief makers have seized their chance to target and exploit the vulnerable, the ignorant and the disconnected.

Meanwhile, the rest of us do our best to counter the misinformation, continue to comply with the COVID rules, support each other, and prepare ourselves for the possibility of a further lockdown. This is not a reality we enjoy and we look forward to the uncertainties we currently endure being conquered by boosting our rates of vaccination. Only then can I once again join my netball mates on the couch to celebrate our stunning sporting accomplishments, over a few quiet wines.

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Perry Rush NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION

WHEN YOU THINK of schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand, what comes to mind? What are the unique features of how we approach the education of young people and how do those features find expression?

During my teacher training, I remember being given an assignment by my professional studies lecturer, to record my philosophy of education. This was a tough ask for a fresh faced 19-year-old Naenae boy who hadn't yet had enough life experience to develop a philosophy of anything.

Such early naivety was best captured in my English Literature paper when I told my lecturer that I preferred the work of popular junk fiction author Wilbur Smith to Sylvia Plath. That little bomb shell didn't help my grades much.

I was digging through my papers the other day and came across the philosophy of education assignment-6 simple statements about my early educational beliefs. It makes for interesting reading.

- That the liberal arts should be central in learning. The arts encourage self-expression and there is no truer learning than sharing one's own experiences of the world through the arts.
- As Don Quixote once said, "Facts are the enemy of truth". I hold this to be true. Truth is personal and all learning is the expression of what each of us judges to be true. Facts may or may not support this. Teaching should help children discover what is true for them.
- The job of the teacher is to help expand a child's experience of the world so that they can become more mature, more knowledgeable, and more skillful.
- Literature helps children learn about what is possible. I plan to share great literature with my students and help them learn about the world outside of themselves.
- Learning should be fun and creative. I aim to make learning in my classroom an adventure that my students will look forward to every day.
- Children learn differently and have different interests. My approach is to have many opportunities to personalise learning so that children enjoy learning, and it is relevant to them.

Through the years, these 6 statements have found shape in my work. We form ideas and opinions because on a personal level they resonate. I am an artist myself, so it is no secret that the love of the arts is at the heart of my educational philosophy, similarly, I have a deep respect for partnership between young people and teachers, and so it not surprising that I afford young people the right to articulate what they consider to be important and then I find a way to honour that in my teaching.

In an age when principals are punch drunk with administration and accountability, it is vital that we rediscover the essence of our educational soul. What is it that you stand for and what do you privilege in your work? Cutting through the noise of the job and getting to the heart of a principal's work is the essence of great leadership. Our responsibility as leaders is to chart a course and bring our teaching team along for the ride. Sometimes we will hold firm together in the face of inclement weather, whilst we create the conditions for truly inspirational work to surface.

This is taking a bold view of leadership. It demands that principals are brave and able to push back on parts of the system that seek to control and mould principals in sameness.

The educator Paul Goodman set us this same challenge. It is no less true now than it was when he was de rigueur. He describes *Progressive Education* as a reaction to a school system that has become rigid. *Progressive Education* aims to right the balance. He

goes on to say, '*Progressive Education* is a political movement – it emerges when the social problem is "breaking out", or to put it more positively, when an old regime can no longer cope with new conditions, new energy is needed.'

I believe that principalship needs to 'break out' and that 'new energy' is needed. A progressive, grassroots sense of the professional principal self needs to rise and push back on the tentacles of the system that have been allowed to reach into schooling. For too long principals have been organised and controlled by the system and we must not let that cause hesitancy and timidity of decision-making.

We need principals to connect to principals to grow understanding of the pedagogy and approaches that enable creativity, connection, beauty, joy, and rigor in learning.

There is nothing wrong with the principal who is clear about the need to push back on the inappropriate demands of the system to preserve deeply held beliefs about teaching and learning.

The profession needs that sort of backbone.

The very best professional work arises when professionals act on their personal, professional knowledge.

I encourage you to look inwards and examine your own personal educational philosophy. What do you hold dear? What do you enable in your kura that reflects your philosophy? You are not employed to be a service delivery agent for your community, delivering to their aspiration alone. You are the lead professional.

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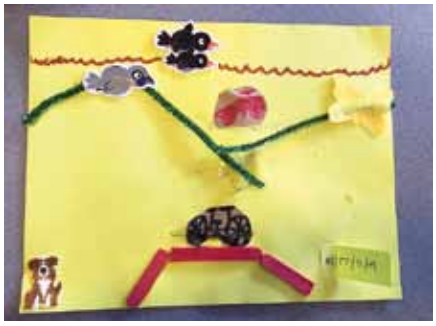
HOW CHILDREN'S EVERYDAY LEA STRENGTHS HELPED THEM DURI NATIONAL COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

Roseanna Bourke, John O'Neill and Sue McDowall

I learnt how to knee flip and I was getting close to backflipping but I was too scared of it. But I learnt how to do an aerial—a no-handed cartwheel. I saw videos of how to do it and I thought 'That looks cool' so then I decided to try it. I was thinking about doing the backflip but then I realised I didn't really need to do a backflip anyway and I might break myself if I did it. (Year 6 girl).

THE FIRST EVER national COVID-19 lockdown occurred in Aotearoa New Zealand over a 6-week period towards the end of school Term 1 and into Term 2 2020. Schools pivoted quickly to new forms of teaching. The Ministry of Education created two television channels and, with schools, distributed learning devices and resources into homes. Internet connectivity became an urgent issue for many children, and both national and local solutions had to be quickly sourced. Liz Hawes (2020) wrote of this time, 'principals and teachers stepped up and set free every neuron of creativity they could muster' (p. 8) in order to ensure that school-learning for children could continue. As many principals have explained through their school and teachers' experiences (NZ Principal June 2020, 9–28), school-based learning and home-learning took many turns in response to the range and types of resources that schools and households could draw on.



Meanwhile, at home, children and their families and whānau were making their own adjustments, figuring out new routines, creating work and learning spaces at home, and were generally trying to understand how learning at home would 'work'. Children have unique insights on what this period was like for them as they observed their teachers,' parents' and peers' responses to something that landed quickly and unexpectedly in their lives. During Terms 3 and 4 in 2020, a team of researchers from Massey University and NZCER worked with 178 children in Years 4–8 from 10 primary schools. We wanted to document how children were influenced in their learning during this time, and to focus on the strengths that children deployed to navigate their way through an entirely novel, challenging and unsettling period of time.

Context of the research

Children and their whānau had to develop and navigate the breakdown of their usual kanohi ki te kanohi experiences with teachers and their peers, which vanished overnight. Our research reports them reflecting on their varied, and unusual learning conditions in their own words.

For the research, the children engaged with individual art-making activities alongside other participating children, and were then interviewed individually by a researcher using their collage as a prompt. The research adopted a strengths-based approach on the basis that most children are capable actors in their social worlds, and was centred around a child's rights and a child voice approach. This meant we were interested in learning through the experiences of these children, rather than take an adult view of learning and what children 'should' be learning. At the time of the first lockdown, there were common mass media assumptions that children would miss out or fall behind on essential formal learning, that informal learning in the household bubble would be a poor substitute for formal learning, or that children's informal learning had little or no relevance to their formal learning at school.

Given earlier research showed the critical influence of the child's particular cultural and social environment on their everyday learning (Bourke, O'Neill & Loveridge, 2018), this research explored how the child's home environment and learning context shaped what and how they learned during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

What did the children experience?

For children it was a swift separation from the known routines of school, classroom learning and the loss of regular face-to-face

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contact with their friends. The context of lockdown through COVID-19 was new for both the children and their family, and the first lockdown shocked them all. As one child explained he asked his dad about it and was surprised when his dad said it was new to him as well. Another child assumed it was just his school, and then his community that was in lockdown and slowly became aware it was the entire city, then the entire country. While there was distinct overlap, seven distinct themes were identified in the interviews:

1. Learning new structures and routines in the bubble
2. Learning from and with whānau
3. Learning about and through language, culture, and identity
4. Learning through life events
5. Emotional dimension of learning
6. Learning about and through digital technologies
7. Self-directed and self-regulated learning.

Learning new structures and routines in the bubble

Children and their families and whānau grappled with different conceptions and experiences of 'time' and 'day' and the challenges and opportunities of being 'locked down'. They developed new routines, some structured but many unstructured. They included combinations of indoor-outdoor and active-passive ways of being, the obligation to undertake chores and housework, choices about when and how they ate, the type of activities, tools, and artefacts they engaged with, and even when and how they undertook their schoolwork, and who determined this. Getting up early and completing all schoolwork became one way of coping, whereas other children took a more fluid approach and went in and out of their school-based learning. There were differences between the rural and city experiences. For example, one child on a farm noted:

> *Sometimes, I did some jobs without being asked once in lockdown. So I fed the teenage ewes and rams, and basically I also fed the cows without being asked. I also got to drive the digger into the shed. I've also done it with the quad bike my Dad has. I drive it to the council paddock, which has all the beehives and stuff and then I'm kind of an excellent driver on the quad bike so I'm really good at parking in the shed.* (Year 5 boy)

Learning from and with whānau

Children actively identified the importance of family and whānau in their learning. This was often in situations where an older or more experienced adult or sibling facilitated and supported learning something that the child or family and whānau member regarded as useful knowledge. Some children were involved in learning novel life skills from their family and whānau that extended beyond daily routine tasks or chores:

> *I learnt how to cut hair. My uncle owns a barbershop so he gave me tips and stuff, how to cut hair, so I started to cut my dad's hair.* (Year 6 boy)

For many children, simply observing their mothers, fathers, grandparents, or siblings undertake tasks, and then 'having a go' was a powerful and fulfilling form of learning. Learning to get along with siblings was important, including learning how to manage difficult situations with their siblings.

Learning about and through language, culture, and identity

Children learned from their families more about their culture. One child talked about their father trying to teach his language (Fijian) and another Samoan. Another father told a child about his experiences of growing up in India – something the child had not previously heard. Other children had clear motives in mind when learning their language.

> *I wanted to learn Samoan for next year, but also to communicate with my Aunty because she doesn't really speak English. She doesn't really talk to me, but I want to be able to talk to her because no one else really does.* (Year 8 girl)

Children taught their siblings on many occasions, and in one example it was around a child's culture and her love of dance:

> *I taught my sister how to Samoan dance. She's two. I dressed her up in all my clothes. She's really good at it. Because at school we have a kapa siva group, and they teach us, and I want to do that. So, I'm starting with teaching my sister, and my Nanna was so proud of me.* (Year 8 girl)

Learning through life events

Life events gave another opportunity for children to explore their learning – new ways to celebrate birthdays, to work through the death of an extended whānau member, Anzac Day (making biscuits and poppies) and Easter. Lockdown presented new opportunities for children, such as seeing more of their family. For example, one Year 4 boy, said on his birthday the gift was having his dad around: *'it was good because I had something to look forward to. We got to spend the whole day for my birthday instead of Dad going to work'*. An incident with guinea pigs was

a major event for one child:

> *I had a lot of video calls with [friends]. In one of the major calls, Mary's guinea pig had babies. She was saying that her guinea pig looked really pregnant, but she didn't know when she was going to have babies. And then she closed the laptop in the middle of her sentence and hung up on us because she was just like 'Oh my goodness' and left, and then she said, 'Skittles is having babies!' The babies looked weird. We visited them after lockdown as well, and they were pretty big, and then me and my sister took one each.* (Year 7 girl)

Emotional dimension of learning

Children spoke extensively about experiencing emotions such as boredom, fun, excitement, fear, and happiness during lockdown. As one child said *'I could see that other people were a bit stressed as well. I noticed some people that were normally 'chill' were on edge a bit'* (Year 7 girl). Children learned more about themselves, and about how to create their own conditions for relating to valued others within the home—or online. Children spoke positively of the way forced separation from established school routines and relationships created the space to renew and reshape relationships in the home, and then later when they went back to school.

> *I made my own books, and I called my cousin and we made them together. We video chatted and made books together. She made one of me and I made one for her. They were about when at lockdown how we couldn't see each other, and the books were called 'Sad Goodbyes'. We made different pages. They had words and told a story. It took pretty long to make.* (Year 4 girl)

Learning about and through digital technologies

Most children described using digital technologies during the lockdown, and often for significant amounts of time, either for learning or through using the technology to connect to others within and outside their bubble. They watched television, learning TV, streamed content, clips on social media such as YouTube or TikTok, both for relaxation and entertainment, but also to acquire new knowledge and skills. One child described learning 'a lot of things leading up from the Triassic period till now' and about 'the evolution of how Aotearoa came to be now' from watching Papa Kainga TV and the Aotearoa Show. Online context was used to learn to play an instrument, perform a new dance, do science experiences, play online games, or learn a new language. They also created digital context and created their own activities collaboratively with others (even filming with a friend across the fence).

> *So, I like making games myself, so over lockdown I found it fun to code a few things. We are encouraged to do our schoolwork up to lunchtime and then after lunch, we were encouraged to learn something new or try something or do something out of the ordinary.* (Year 8 boy)

Self-directed and self-regulated learning

Although all children were assigned school-based work during lockdown and were connected to their teachers and peers online at different times of the day, the freedom of being able to organise their days without external control was a significant factor in these children's lockdown lives. This afforded the sense of becoming more self-reliant, autonomous, and independent, being able to make decisions, and therefore becoming accountable for what they wanted to learn, and how they did this. Their stories showed how they developed more confidence and courage in choosing and self-directing their learning. A great example of self-directed learning was knowing when to take breaks:

> *Now that I know a bit more, I can control myself with PlayStation. Usually I used to go on PlayStation and just not stop. Now I do take breaks a bit. It's because I get bored sometimes. If you keep playing when you're bored, you lose the wanting to play anymore. I have little breaks so I can get something to eat and stuff. If I'm playing a game I'll usually play one or two matches and have a break.* (Year 7 boy)

Summary

Home is a naturally good place to learn – we cannot control or predetermine what children will learn but this is often a good thing because it means as adults, we do not impose our limits on their learning. Children demonstrated impressive observational skills and were able to recount a range of activities that they were directly or indirectly involved in. Research has shown before

that 'Learning by Observing and Pitching In' (Correa-Chávez, Mejía-Arauz, & Rogoff, 2015) is a powerful way for children to learn. They might be 'observing' one of their parents, or their grandparents, or siblings. Then they might start to 'pitch in' slowly, as they develop their confidence and skills to do more. They are often learning more than we realise simply by becoming part of the activity – whether it's concreting the driveway, helping with the dinner, painting a shed, watching an older sibling learn a new dance through YouTube, or observing spiders in the garden.

A feature of lockdown for the children was the uninterrupted time to do things and be with their family members – they might not otherwise have had that time. Some were aware of the differences between times when parents needed to work, and other times when they could spend more time with them.

Children adapted and learned to develop the ability and capacity to deal practically with life challenges. Some children understood when their family members needed support, and as one Year 4 child explained her mother was crying because she did not want to be in lockdown anymore and the child told her that it would be okay, it would not last forever.

Advice from the research

During this first national lockdown, children experienced and observed stress and anxiety in their home, but also gave us examples of when they provided advice or support to parents and siblings who were experiencing their own challenges.

My sister, she was stressed. I told her not to. I made her a smoothie and that calmed her down. I taught her how to do times tables. (Year 6 girl)

Eighteen months on, and several lockdowns more, there is now, inevitably, fatigue in the education system as schools move into Term 4 2021. Nevertheless, this research gives us reason for optimism about children's capacity to adapt, learn and develop valuable skills in challenging circumstances. Teachers can be assured that while not all learning can be measured or made 'visible', children can self-regulate and self-assess their informal and everyday learning at home. Sometimes adult presence is essential for this to occur but often it is not. This is useful knowledge for teachers and leaders in school when preparing for the next lockdown or, indeed, the next pandemic.

continued on pg 10

Key learnings from the research

- One of the big learnings children had was about themselves. Simply ask children: *What did you learn about yourself during lockdown?*
- Transition back to school is an adjustment for both children and teachers. Many children, particularly older ones, have become used to setting their own routines, exercising more control of what they do and when, and often who with. Home routines were different for children, and after lockdown they will need to refamiliarize with school routines. However, children are quick to adapt.
- Teachers have much to learn from children's informal learning at home and thinking about where productive links can be made between home learning and school learning so that children get to bridge the two environments more seamlessly.
- It is important for adults to really listen to the children's accounts and interpretations of these accounts because this reveals the child's own view of learning rather than an adult interpretation of what they are trying to say.
- Children are natural learners, curious, capable and creative. They will learn anywhere, anytime provided they are given the guidance, support, encouragement and freedom to do so.
- It is just as important to ask children what they taught during lockdown, as it is what they learned.
- Teachers can help children to identify, understand and appreciate that learning takes many forms, and that actively participating in the everyday culture and routines of the household is a valuable form of learning that can also benefit their learning at school.

To access the full report, and children's digital narratives go to:

Bourke, R., O'Neill, J., McDowall, S., Dacre, M., Mincher, N., Narayanan, V., Overbye, S., & Tuifagalele, R. (2021). Children's informal learning at home during COVID-19 lockdown. New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/learning-during-lockdown

Do you want to initiate research in your school in 2022 on children's informal and everyday learning?

If you would like to join in research partnerships with Massey researchers to continue this work exploring informal and everyday learning, and to work in your school, please contact Professor Roseanna Bourke r.bourke@massey.ac.nz or John O'Neill j.g.oneill@massey.ac.nz

Our team would be very interested to keep learning alongside you in child rights and student voice programme of research.

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The stumbling block is complexity. Claiming donation rebates, managing receipts and submitting them to IRD in the correct format is a huge hassle for most parents. For many, it's not worth the effort to claim just a few tens of dollars back. So they choose not to, and leave thousands unclaimed with IRD each year.

Yet for a school, those unclaimed donations represent an ongoing revenue stream that has never been tapped.

To help schools fill their funding gaps, Kindo has developed a new service. It brings together Kindo's integrated admin management system that is already set up to manage donation receipting for schools. The system has now been updated to facilitate the re-gifting of donation rebates.

By partnering with TaxGift and Supergenerous, Kindo has made donation re-gifting possible with the click of a button. Instead of claiming back their donation directly with IRD, parents are given the option to leave the rebate with the school, as a new donation gift for subsequent years. This means parents are able to increase school support without paying a cent more.

A simple way to fill the funding gap.

For schools already using Kindo for donation collections and receipting, it's simple to add an option for parents to re-gift their rebate. Kindo's partners – Supergenerous and TaxGift – handle the process with the IRD, and pay the rebates directly to the school's bank account.

Schools that aren't with Kindo – or aren't yet using the Kindo platform for donation collections and receipting – can still access donation rebates. Kindo can set them up to access donation rebates going forward.

But schools need to act fast. 10 December 2021 is the final date for setting up donation rebate gifting with Kindo in time for 2022.

For more details visit www.dothemath.co.nz or call 0508 4KINDO.

Now you can grow school funds from donation rebates

Turn a $100 donation into over $140 with one click

Thanks to a law change, it's possible for tax rebates on donations to be claimed by donors up to four years following the initial gift. Right now, there's **$1 billion sitting with the IRD**, waiting to be claimed.

Now **Kindo has found a way** to get some of those funds back to your school – and create an ongoing revenue stream from future rebates.

Kindo has partnered with **TaxGift** and **Supergenerous** to make it simple for families to gift their rebates back to schools. A one-off donation can become an ongoing compound gift to your school. With Kindo handling all the admin, it's a hands-free way to fill the funding gap caused by Covid-19.

Scan the QR code to 'do the math' and find out what your school could get.

Do the math scan me

Questions? Call **0508 4KINDO / 09 869 5200**

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NZPF CONFERENCE 2021

Liz Hawes EDITOR
Photolife PHOTOGRAPHY

Conferences in the time of COVID, are rare. Plans for the 2020 Trans-Tasman conference were locked off as both countries locked down. This year, as community cases again surged in various Australian States, hopes of reviving the Trans-Tasman conference fizzled like the last balloon at the end of a cracking good party.

UNFORTUNATELY, AOTEAROA'S COVID free party has also fizzled but early in 2021, we were in high spirits and resolved to appease the conference cravings of school principals in our own backyard. It would have to be a hastily organized affair. A national conference generally takes a full calendar year to organize and NZPF had less than 8 months.

The organizing committee, efficiently led by Jill Corkin, retired principal of Snells Beach School, Usain Bolted out of the planning blocks and set to work. Rotorua was chosen as host city and the Energy Events Centre, adjoining the splendid Lake Rotorua and historic Government Gardens, the venue. An avalanche of registrations rocketed their way to the conference website. Principals from across the motu made clear their intentions to turn out in record numbers.

On August 2, 2021, six hundred principals responded to the call of the kaikaranga and filed in to the warmest of welcomes from leaders of Ngati Whakawe – Te Arawa Tāngata Whenua after which the Kapa Haka group, from Rotorua Intermediate School, warmed the hearts of the excited delegates with a spirited, uplifting and polished performance. It is unlikely that a single principal entertained the thought that in exactly two weeks' time, the whole of Aotearoa would be plunged back into 2020 style level 4 lockdown.

MC Jehan Casinada, well known current affairs and investigative journalist, introduced the theme of the conference, before handing over to NZPF President Perry Rush.

He took the three threads of the conference theme, 'Power, Passion and Pace' and asked a question of each: Where does the power come from? How do you keep the flame alive? How do you respond to constant change? He invited his audience to think about these questions as they immersed themselves in the unfolding conference programme.

NZPF President Perry Rush addresses the conference

PERRY RUSH – NZPF PRESIDENT

'What a privilege it is,' said Rush proudly, 'after enduring the global pandemic, to be gathered here together in this magnificent Rotorua Events Centre. We are one of the few countries in the world that can host a huge indoor event like this without wearing masks!'

Rush may have chopped these words into his scrambled eggs two weeks later, but right at that moment, it was true. We were living the dream! We were in the moment – about to conference like crazy!

He acknowledged the sector leaders in attendance, invited guests and Minister Jan Tinetti, who was forced to seek a special pass from the Prime Minister. Her speaking slot clashed with the normally 'not-negotiable' Monday Cabinet Meeting. He also paid homage to Australian colleagues who were unable to attend conference due to the COVID delta variant ravaging several Australian States.

In welcoming the 600 tumuaki of Aotearoa, he congratulated and thanked them for being beacons of strength throughout the 2020 COVID lockdown and remarked how proud he was of their extraordinary response. With that behind us, it was time to get our muscular leadership into some pressing issues, he said.

There are two important conversations underway in our sector, he stated. These are curriculum achievement and the challenges of dealing with young people in crisis. He explained that while work was underway with the second challenge, getting real traction was difficult and progress was not unfolding at the pace expected. On the first issue, he said, we need more vigor and to be very clear about curriculum content and how to measure achievement. Ministry support was the key to making progress.

He quoted former Secretary of Education, Peter Hughes, who said 'Real leaders are principals who lead schools. The Ministry's

Principals connecting and reconnecting over social hour at the conference

role is to be the stewards and back them to win.'

'Minister Tinetti [as a former school principal] understands our challenges,' he said, 'but we are not there yet. We will make gains, however, when we are strong together.'

He illustrated his point saying that when NZPF asked principals to tell their own stories of young people presenting with violent behaviours, the trauma stories poured in. 'After lobbying for support for over ten years, when these stories landed on Ministers' desks, support ramped up,' he said.

He explained that the Intensive Wrap-around Services have been stream-lined, the Mana Ake programme, which has been so successful in the Canterbury region, has been extended to other regions and access to alternative education has been made simpler. Much urgent help is still required, he said, and teachers are not trained therapists who can counsel the growing number of young people presenting with troubling complexities. We need expert therapists in schools and more alternative education options, he said, if we are to cease excluding these vulnerable young people.

On enrolments directed by the Ministry, Rush said NZPF had sought a legal opinion on the responsibilities of principals to keep all staff and students safe while accepting directed enrolments of students with a history of violent and threatening behaviour. The legal opinion indicated that the Ministry must undertake a risk management analysis and construct a suitable risk management plan of support, before directing an enrolment which threatened the safety of others.

The Ministry did not agree with the opinion, he said. Rush then challenged Minister Tinetti saying 'Is this a Ministry that is backing principals to win?'

Turning to achievement issues, Rush quickly dismissed the value of international league tables like TIMMS, PIRLS and PISA surveys and directed his audience to look at our own national data. The story is not good. On science and mathematics there has certainly been a drop in achievement levels. 'We've been placing too little emphasis on teaching knowledge and too much on teaching how to learn,' he said. He explained that we don't understand what 'localised curriculum' means. Localised

Ngāti Whakaue – Te Arawa Tāngata whenua welcome the 600 NZPF principals warmly

curriculum has become what you choose to cover, he said, at the expense of teaching the national curriculum. Consequently, there is no national coherence, as each school invents their own curriculum.

He had further criticism of the way 'student agency' has become such a focus. 'Sure, we want kids to be at the heart of learning, but it is not appropriate to leave kids to choose what they learn. There is a place for deliberate, intentional teaching,' he said, with a warning that we must not fail to deploy clear curriculum goals.

He suggested it was time to audit the curriculum knowledge of senior teams and to power up staff with PLD. 'Let's be brave, keep your practice-based approach to the fore and don't be beige! Be bright, bold and energetic and unafraid to make a mistake,' he said.

He concluded on a high note telling the principals gathered to enjoy the conference, to network and to have fun!

Hon. Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education

Minister Tinetti opened her address with an acknowledgement of the wonderful work principals do in their schools saying, 'You and your staff are the ones making magic in our schools.'

'I tautoko the words of your president,' she said, 'and agree, I too have never been so proud of the teaching profession as last year. There are so many untold success stories. I know it all comes down to leadership and I know how hard it is to lead a school through a crisis.'

She thanked the principals for recording their trauma stories and noted the challenges they bring. 'Hearing directly from you, informs me,' she said.

Her address would update principals on the topics she raised at the NZPF Moot, earlier in the year, she explained. These include curriculum development, attendance and learning support.

Curriculum Refresh & Support

This will be a five-year project she said and has been allocated the biggest Budget that curriculum development has ever received. The work is based on the principles of equity, trust and coherence, she said. Also integral to the future of curriculum development, she said, are the principals of Mātauranga Māori [an indigenous body of knowledge that arises from a worldview based upon kinship relationships between people and the natural world.]

A working group was announced last week, she said, to establish the Curriculum Advisory, a service which principals have been advocating for. The group will challenge the shortfalls of the current curriculum and ensure inclusivity. There will be close scrutiny of the literacy and numeracy strategies to ensure clarity of what learners know, understand and do. She agreed with the NZPF President, who had expressed his concerns about the lack of clear national goals, which are contributing to the drop in achievement.

Minister Tinetti outlines the Government's progress on the Curriculum Refresh, Attendance and Learning Support

Attendance

She acknowledged that it was the most vulnerable students who had the lowest attendance rates, and this indicates a system failure. 'I won't blame parents,' she said, 'we must move to a solution focus.' She noted that the URF (Urgent Response Fund) had shown improvements can be made and so Government has allocated $20 million over four years to develop appropriate systems to improve attendance.

'Attendance systems that operate closely with the school community work best,' she said, 'where trust relationships can be developed locally.' What has been missing is the resource to achieve that. Attendance systems need to be redesigned and we will be working at pace on this issue, she told her audience.

'I am motivated to get rid of barriers for you and that's why we have extended Mana Ake to provide more school counsellors; introduced school lunches; funded schools in lieu of charging school donations; allocated $600million to school property to address overcrowding and to create quality environments for schools,' she said.

Learning Support

Minister Tinetti said learning support had always been her passion and she was delighted to be allocated this delegation. 'We have learners who thrive and those who don't, and we want all to be successful,' she said. 'I know how hard it is to make suspension decisions,' she said, 'I know how stressful it is for everybody and no one makes that choice lightly.'

She noted that the Government has invested high levels of funding in learning support, yet we still have issues. 'The problems are wider than just pushing money at it,' she said, 'and so we have a plan for the short, medium and long term,' she said.

In the short term the intention is to respond to the immediate pressures – the cry for help. She said she has requested funding of $17.7million for psychologists for up to 95 students annually. 'This has been hard work because the budget is a year-long process,' she said, 'but I will keep trying hard.' Another $75.8 million has been allocated to counsellors for over 100 primary schools, and there will be more funded in the next budget. There are now 7,500 young people in alternative education pathways.

She addressed Te Tupu Managed Moves, which NZPF has been advocating for, saying that although it is not suitable in all cases, she will be looking at evaluation findings and consider expansion of the programme.

Later in 2021 her intention is to implement the new referrals process, as quickly as possible.

In the long term there will be a review of managing high needs students. This will include neurodiverse supports. 'Learning support has not been reviewed in 20 years,' she said. The focus on the review will be inclusiveness and moving away from deficit thinking. The review is yet to be approved by Cabinet.

'We do not want education and learning support separated

from children's other needs,' she said. 'We will use the disability review to bring education into the mix,' she said.

She made it clear that she does not want learning support provision prone to political whim, emphasizing the importance of getting it right. This, she said, will mean working in partnership with the sector so that all students can reach their potential.

Dr Michelle Johansson

The title of Dr Johansson's address, 'What will it take to change the world for brown scholars?' piqued the interest of the audience before this dynamic and powerful wāhine even took the stage.

Johansson is a Polynesian educator, of Tongan and Danish descent, Creative Director of the Black Friars theatre company and Head of School at Ako Mātātupu – Teach First NZ, which develops outstanding people to teach in low-decile schools. Black Friars, she explained, is about activating our heritage literacies to grow future leaders and hold courageous spaces for our young people to walk confidently in both worlds. 'We teach drama and music in schools and in the University,' she said. 'As drama teachers we know that kids remember what they feel, not the lesson on the calculation of Pi,' she said, acknowledging that the education system has not served Māori and Polynesian kids well.

The lower the decile, the browner the population, says Dr Michelle Johansson

The seventh child of fifteen, Johansson was raised by her grandmother. 'My family was poor, and my mother worked on the factory floor so that I could stand here today, and my children could lead the future,' she said.

The statistics are clear, she explained. The lower the decile, the browner the population. When you look at children in hardship, it is Māori and Pacific Island children who dominate the numbers. Student stand-downs and those with chronic health issues are predominantly brown kids. Māori have the highest suicide rate (one quarter of suicides are Māori) and self-harm rates and half of those incarcerated are Māori. Most of those in prisons are poor people. Unemployment statistics, she said, are ambiguous because statistics include only reported unemployment, whereas many may be caring for others at home. University students include 64% of Asian students. 59% of Pākehā/European, 34% of Māori and 33% of Pacific Island students. Some 40% of Pacific Islanders are living in crowded housing. 'My family was a big family which makes us stronger, but houses aren't built to accommodate big families,' she said.

Any systematic change to these abysmal statistics can only occur through multiple and simultaneous interventions, said Johansson. She quoted Keri Milne-Ihimaera who said, "Those who do nothing are complicit in it."

'If no one cares, the boy who isn't fed and has no roof over him, will grow into the man we fear,' she warned.

She was clear that it is futile to engage in the blame game because, 'We have to save us,' and, 'education can make the difference.'

There are six lies, she said, that need to be challenged and questioned because they are commonly held beliefs and a barrier to progress. These include:

1. New Zealand is free, fair and equal.
2. Education is an equalizer.
3. People are all treated the same.
4. It's just that long brown tail . . .
5. If you just work a bit harder . . .
6. I did it so everyone can.

'We have to believe, not only *that* these things can change, but that we have the *power* to change them. So, what can we do?' asked Johansson.

The first thing we can do is 'flip the script' she said. Our kids are not failing, we are failing them. Secondly, advocate for our kids and amplify the message. Third, serve them. Think 'O le ala i le pule o le tautua' – 'The road to leadership is through service'. Finally, think 'talanoa' and ask what do you believe education is for? Think about those Pasifika communities and ask how to engage them and use their knowledge and cultural practices to set the right school culture for Pasifika students to thrive in.

Johansson concluded her address with her own poem, *'Ten*

Principals are serenaded in a duet by two outstanding young performers, Nikau Grace Chater (L) and Jasmin Hulton (R)

The Forte Choir of Western Heights High School brought humour and fun to their performance

pieces of advice for the teachers of young brown scholars'

1. **Raise the bar.** Don't dumb it down because they are brown, respect them enough to expect their best, and when they bring to you less, say THIS is not good enough, not YOU are not good enough. They've been told that enough and it's rough and they're tough, but the stuff that they're made of is enough.
2. **BELIEVE unfailingly in their limitless potential.** They will look in your eyes and know if you are lying.
3. **Feed them.** Literally. Feed them. Feed their minds, feed their mouths and feed their hunger for justice. Break bread with them and remember that when you take communion a covenant is made and there was a promise in that supper, that blood shed and shared means sacrifice.
4. **Laugh.** Laugh at yourself. But not at your jokes. Your jokes are dry, but you are funny – And in laughter there's power; and in humour there's humility – and this ranks higher than their academic standing or rank score – it is more.
5. **No one ever changed the world by yelling at it.** Fear might change their behaviour but respect will change their mind.
6. **Know that you are in the presence of warriors.** They have fought. They are fighting. There are battles behind their eyes; and you cannot possibly understand the arms they bear, the scars they wear. Don't make the classroom another trek behind enemy lines. Sometimes they need a soft place to land, a safe space to stand, someone willing to understand. And if this is not the lesson you planned? perhaps it is the lesson YOU need.
7. **Be the grown up and own up when you're wrong, be strong enough to fail sometimes, to ask for help sometimes.** Be the mistake maker, the risk taker, give them permission to do the same. Be fallible, be malleable – take the shape of the tool that's needed coz ako means that if they're not learning then you're not teaching and if nothing ever changes, then nothing ever changes.
8. **When they rage at you – and often they will coz often they're full up and fed up with their lives and they throw words like knives at your feet – don't throw them back.** Pick those knives up and see them for what they are. Not weapons thrown to hurt YOU but to relieve THEM. They could not carry them anymore. And you? Pick the knives off the floor, throw them out of the door and begin again.
9. **Defend them.** Inherent in their postcode. You will hear stories of failure that's prevalent in the pigment of their skin and Don't let that shit happen on your shift. It is your duty to tell a new story.
10. **Stand WITH them and FOR them and BY them.** Speak with them and for them. See them and know them for who they are. Hold them – in your arms, in your thoughts, in your prayers.

Don't let go.
Fight.
Fight for them.
And keep fighting.
They are worth it.
And if you back them when they're 15?
They will have your back for life.

When the applause subsided, MC Jehan Casinada thanked Johansson for her beautifully balanced address and had one last question, 'In the media and social media environment young people are hearing stories and narratives. What do you say to those drowning in toxic narratives?'

Johansson answered, 'It depends on the young person. The internet allows delusional information to circulate but we have to know where we can make the change. If school is a safe place, schools can counter those toxic messages.'

Filivaifale Jason Swann

While introducing his topic, *A Pasifika Worldview in Aotearoa,* Filivaifale Jason Swann, principal of Otahuhu Primary School, acknowledged the Tangata Whenua, his own Samoan culture and had a special greeting for all Cook Islanders in the audience. 'Kia orana,' he said, 'It is Cook Islands language week! It should of course be every week because all Cook Islanders should be able to live and learn in their own language. I mean, you don't hear of builders having "hammer only Thursday" do you?' This one quip gave the audience a quick insight into Swann's Pasifika world view.

'The term Pasifika,' he said, 'includes recent migrants or New Zealand born Pasifika people of single or mixed heritage. While identifying themselves as Pasifika, this group may also identify with their ethnic specific Pacific homeland.'

'Each of the Pacific countries has a different language and so children's names are not likely to be English names,' he explained.

'If you want to connect with Pasifika children, then first pronounce their names correctly,' he said. 'You will have children in your school who have had their name gifted to them, which makes it very precious, so if you butcher their name, you butcher the relationship.'

He took his audience on a quick trip around the Pacific then showed them how the Ministry categorises Pasifika. The Ministry list includes 18 subgroups. These are Samoan, Cook Islands Māori, Rarotongan, Tongan, Niuean, Tokelauan, Fijian, Australian Aboriginal, Hawaiian, Kiribati, Nauruan, Papua New Guinean, Pitcairn Islander, Rotuman, Tahitian, Solomon Islander, Tuvaluan and Ni Vanuatu.

One of the tragedies, when working with different cultures, is that we want to categorise everyone. We expect that all Māori are one group. We think all Pasifika kids are just one group too. But this of course is not the case. Swann explained that in his multi-ethnic school in Otahuhu, for purposes of Ministry requirements, he is steered towards categorising his children as one ethnicity or another. Many families are mixed ethnicities, he said. They may have multi-ethnicities or a Māori parent and a Samoan parent. So how are they categorised? Mostly, a child of mixed ethnicity, that includes Māori, will be assessed as Māori. That is worth thinking about, he challenged the audience.

'How does your school incorporate biculturalism and multiculturalism? Do the children and young people in your school see themselves in your school?' he asked.

Filivaifale Jason Swann took his audience on a journey through the Pasifika world

Pasifika peoples have lived in New Zealand for over sixty years and have contributed to many parts of New Zealand society. Think of the All Blacks, Super Rugby and netball. If you take out the Pacific Islanders those teams would look very different.

When you look at the census data, you will see that the biggest group of young people in New Zealand is Pacific Islanders. If they are successful, New Zealand will be successful. If the opposite happens, we all pay for that pain economically and socially.

He then offered a brief history of Pacific Islanders' experiences in New Zealand. In the 1950s New Zealand wanted Pacific Islanders to come to New Zealand to work in the factories and fields, he said, but by the 1970s things had changed. Suddenly, overstayers were targeted for deportation. Less than one third of the overstayers, at the time, were Pacific Islanders. The other two-thirds were Americans, British people and others, but only Pasifika people were ruthlessly pursued. The now infamous dawn raids were the result, for which Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has just this year apologised. That is after fifty years of relentless activism and railing against racism by the Polynesian Panthers.

The Pacific Education Plan was next on his list and he quickly noted that the second action on the plan was to reduce discrimination and racism. 'Fifty years later,' he said, 'and we are still doing it.' The plan is a ten-year plan, which is pleasing and hopefully will have continuous funding irrespective of any change in government. That said, if you are a pessimist, then ten years is a long time to do nothing. Schools have the power to look positively on the contributions of their Pasifika children and communities and value their culture. This would go a long way to helping eliminate racism and discrimination, he said.

He urged his audience to think about and critique their own biases and unconscious biases; to critique media reports and be aware of the 'Pasifika Add On (PAO) effect'. Sometimes, he said, policy on Pasifika issues is written in invisible ink.

Our young are master navigators. They want the collective

Unable to resist, President Perry Rush joined the Photolife crew on the stage for the sing-along and show

to have success – the whānau, the village, the nation, the aiga – because collective success is central to what drives us. All the same, many young Pasifika kids wear a mask. 'It's a game they play,' he said, 'to get through school, family, church, part-time work and sport. They are masters at navigating these different paths and as a profession we need to understand this and be smarter navigators with their learning.'

One way that schools can do better is to build closer, more positive relationships with their parents and families. 'Don't just call parents in to tell them that their kids are failing,' he said, 'Bring them in to talk about the great things their young people are achieving.'

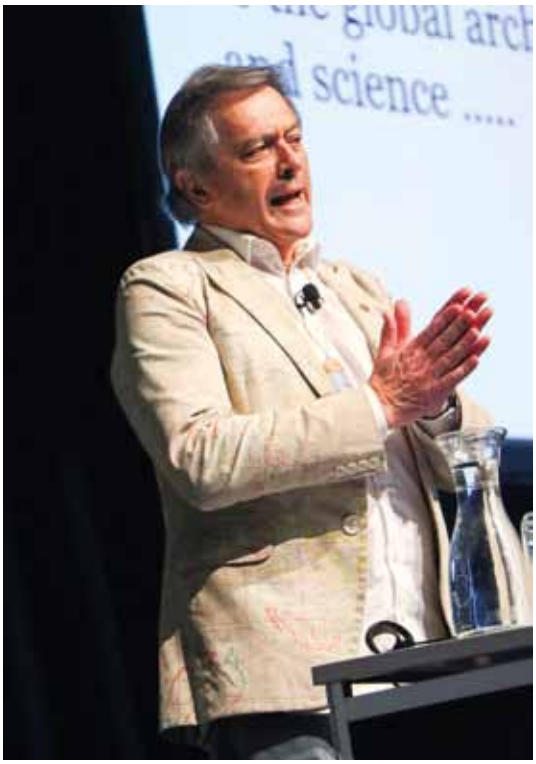
To illustrate his point, he used a joke.

Son: Dad, there's a small get together at school tomorrow!!!

Father: Small get together??? How small?

Son: Only me . . . you . . . and the principal . . .

He described another option, the talanoa, for positive engagement with Pasifika communities. 'A talanoa is a free-flowing conversation, sharing stories, thoughts and feelings,' he explained. 'On my school Board, we never vote. We reach consensus,' he said.



Sir Ian Taylor hammers home the message that Science, Technology and Mathematics are part of a much bigger world view called Mātauranga

'In my culture, we use the concept "Vā" to describe different relationship spaces, or the connections and space between us, which almost always includes the sharing of food,' he explained. There is Teu le vā, the relationship space; Vā fealoa'i, the respectful space and Vā tapuai, the sacred space.

'If you are having a meeting with a Pacific Island person or group, then take the time to connect over food. Eat together, share together. That puts you all on the same level. Conversations will flow and connections will be made. From here relationships will grow,' he explained.

Tautai ole Moana [Way-finders of the Ocean] is a programme that can help you, he said. It is intended to strengthen the capability of principals and their leadership to improve outcomes for Pasifika learners. It provides principal mentors to help you with your strategic planning and give you knowledge of the Pasifika world. It assists you to navigate the best learning approaches to support our young people to be successful. It has been well researched and this PLD is funded. Already there are two clusters of principals engaged in the programme and there will be more to come, he said.

He encouraged his audience to think about a Pasifika world view and ask themselves what that looks like to them. He described his own family as an example of how his world view was shaped.

'My mother is European, the youngest of three, she is vibrant and the life of any party, whilst my father is Samoan, the youngest of fourteen, and a consummate diplomat. They raised me and made me successful. I wanted to succeed because that makes all my family successful.'

One characteristic of Samoan life is that the kids will do anything for their parents, he said, and my mother is acutely aware of that. Generally, after church, we all have lunch at my parents' house. For a change we once asked her where we could take her out for lunch. She answered, 'Rarotonga!'

He then showed his audience slides of his mother enjoying her lunch in Rarotonga, fully funded by himself and his siblings. Devotion to mothers travels a long way!

Married with seven children of his own, he has a granddaughter born in Singapore who has already travelled the world. 'My question of myself is how does what I do affect this baby?'

He finished by thanking his audience for engaging with his address on a Pasifika world view in Aotearoa and encouraged them to consider some of the practical ways they can better understand and support Pasifika young people in their schools.

Day two of the conference opened with a surprise no one expected. The audience was introduced to two young women, Nikau Grace Chater (13 years) from Rotorua Girls' High School and Jasmine Hulton, (14 years) from John Paul College. The two are trained singers and have only recently joined up to sing together. Across a medley of half a dozen popular songs, a duet and a few well-known operatic pieces, they sang to us in English, Māori, Samoan, Italian and French. The exquisite power and clarity of their voices had the audience hushed. The principals were spell-bound to the end when, as one, they sprang to their feet in collective ovation to these remarkably talented young women.

Sir Ian Taylor

Globally respected as a successful entrepreneur, designing graphics for major world sporting events through his Dunedin based company ARL (Animation Research Limited), Sir Ian Taylor is equally passionate about his own Māori heritage and the journey his ancestors took to settle in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Motivated by his drive to use modern technology to share the true story of his ancestors' journey across the Pacific, some 500 years before Captain James Cook, he has put together a series of video clips.

He entitles his series Ake Mai – Jump on Board.

'It is the footsteps laid down by our ancestors centuries ago that create the paving stones of where we stand today,' writes Taylor in his introduction to the series.

Taylor's research led to evidence that his Polynesian tupuna set out to cross the great Pacific Ocean more than 3,500 years ago, travelling from Southeast Asia.

'The journey of our Polynesian ancestors is one of the greatest voyages of discovery in human history,' he says.

Taylor says the story of migration is an untold story which he is determined to share. He explained that his ancestors were master

continued on pg 22

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Hundreds of school principals line up to register at the Rotorua Conference

navigators and were guided by their knowledge of the stars. They had learned to read the winds, waves and sea currents and closely observed the behaviours of the sea creatures and birds. These natural phenomena became their tools of navigation. They used their relationships with the land and sea, which were already integral to their survival and success. For hundreds of years, they explored the Pacific Islands of Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Rarotonga, Tahiti, Hawaii and Rapa Nui Easter Island. They even explored areas of South America.

About 1,000 years ago, Kupe set sail from Hawaiiki in a double-hulled waka, to find Aotearoa. He already knew it was there, but he would travel many thousands of kilometres across the Pacific to reach it. Like his ancestors before him, he too used the stars, winds and bird behaviour to navigate to the new land. Beyond this there was a whole new wave of migration across the Pacific Ocean but it would be another 500 years (1769) before Captain James Cook turned up, under the guidance of Tahitian navigator Tupaia. He followed in Kupe's footsteps. Whalers and sealers were the next arrivals and many more who made New Zealand their home.

Taylor believes this extraordinary story has to be told and made available to all. That is why he set up the Mātauranga online learning platform, to help tamariki learn from the past to navigate the future. The platform is a valuable collection of engaging videos showing that science, technology, engineering and mathematics are part of a much bigger world view called Mātauranga.

Taylor demystifies these subjects for tamariki, by showing their practical application in the real world of ancient navigation. In this way, tamariki can see the continuum of these scientific understandings through to today where innovative Kiwis are sending state of the art 'waka' (rockets) to the very stars that brought us here in the first place.

'When Bill Bryson journeyed through time and space to create his masterpiece "A short history of nearly everything", he epitomised the concept of Mātauranga,' said Taylor.

It was no surprise that Taylor took the opportunity to lay down a fierce 'wero' to the academics of Auckland University who say Mātauranga is not science. 'They need to rethink their perspective that indigenous knowledge is not science', he said, 'or they can pack their bags and go home to the planet of Wokerati'. This practice of failing to acknowledge the value of indigenous knowledges is intolerable from Taylor's point of view and steeped in notions of elitism and racism.

They lead to outrageous statements such as:

'Māori have benefited from colonisation lifting them out of

a violent stone age existence.' (Don Brash – One Treaty One Nation)

' . . . many things that came after Cook massively enriched the lives of the inhabitants – protein-rich food, the written word, metals, the wheel, access to the global archives of literature, religion, music, science and stories . . . (Paul Goldsmith, National Party Spokesperson on Education).

It is outdated, racist attitudes such as these that Taylor wants to replace with positive thinking, collaborative teams, looking forward futuristically to create innovative solutions to the world's problems. One needs to look no further than his own company, ARL, which exemplifies these values and ideals, whilst holding steadfastly to the ancient knowledges of where his people came from, how they got here and where they are going now.

Bali Haque encourages principals to follow up on the Cabinet Paper that includes all the recommendations of the Tomorrow's Schools Report

Bali Haque, Chair Tomorrow's Schools Task Force

The title of Bali Haque's presentation *Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together, Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātinitini*, had a familiar ring for the audience of 600 school principals. It is the title of the final report of the *Tomorrow's Schools* Independent Taskforce.

Haque has held several high-profile positions across his career in education, including as Deputy CE of the NZQA, where he led major NCEA reforms. He is currently a member of the Board of Ako Mātātupu/Teach First New Zealand, which is focused on addressing inequities in the education system, especially those facing Māori and Pacific communities. But it is his earlier career in secondary school principalship that gives him such high credibility and trust with the schooling sector. It was therefore not surprising that the Minister appointed him to Chair the Independent Taskforce to review *Tomorrow's Schools*.

The *Tomorrow's Schools* review was well overdue. Cracks had been appearing for many years. Whilst few principals would wish to relinquish the self-managing schools' model, many realised that inequities had crept in. Inequities existed both between and within schools. The decile system of funding was a contributing factor to between school inequities. Parents incorrectly judged that high decile meant excellence and low decile, the opposite. A drift from low to high decile schools gained momentum, in part exacerbated by principals of high decile schools happy to increase their roll sizes to have more flexibility in the use of their resources. The competition between schools was palpable and growth of inequities inevitable. Such an environment is not conducive to collaboration and connections between principals were being severed. The role of the principal was also becoming increasingly complex and compliance issues were stifling many. Principals felt unsupported as their workloads grew exponentially.

Haque nailed the within schools inequities quoting from a statement by the State Services Commissions 2016, " . . . there is too much variation in learner achievement with long standing problems for particular learners and learning populations like Māori and Pasifika. Adoption of good practice is almost always referred to as patchy and the uptake of promising innovation is seen as slow to spread across the system.

There are too many systemic weaknesses in the way funding information and talent are developed and deployed to be confident that the good results we do see are the result of good system performance rather than personality or situation specific."

The Independent Taskforce, established in the wake of the 2017 Labour Government's country-wide conversations on the future of education, published its report in 2018. It identified ten systemic problems:

1. Highly devolved, one size fits all
2. Highly centralised
3. Compliance driven
4. Low trust top down
5. Consumer choice for some
6. Kura Kaupapa Māori Pathways
7. Post code driven
8. Incoherent PLD
9. No action on leadership
10. Mary Pop In school review

As a result, there were 32 recommendations put to the Minister, but not all of the recommendations were accepted by Cabinet. One major omission was the recommendation to establish hubs which would reduce the powers and functions of Boards of Trustees, would employ principals and deliver a range of services to schools including business services. This would substantially reduce the compliance and property management functions, freeing principals to focus on leading the learning in their schools.

An NZPF survey of members found principals were not supportive of hubs, and these were omitted from the Cabinet paper.

Haque explained that many of the recommendations,

Although not creating too much of a threat for Pink Floyd, Business Partners, Photolife, put on a priceless rendition of "We don't need no education" to entertain the troops

especially those addressing inequality, were however included in the Cabinet papers, and he urged principals to prioritise them, read them thoroughly and discuss them at regional meetings, then monitor the changes as they occur, he said, and be prepared to hold the Minister and officials to account.

He outlined four important observations:

1. We must double down on our purpose
2. We must focus at this time on how the system delivers for everyone
3. We can do it
4. We should assume good will on all sides.

He also had some specific questions for principals to ponder about the impending Curriculum Centre.

- Is the curriculum centre responsible for the national curriculum?
- Are the people working on the Records of Learning and Progress and Achievement 'road map' and the people rewriting the curriculum regularly talking and planning together?
- Are the appropriate Assessment tools being **concurrently** developed – and tested for reliability validity and workload?
- How will the newly created progress and achievement markers not turn into another version of National Standards?
- Will the proposed 'Know, Understand and Do' template, used for NZ histories work for all learning areas?
- Is the bicultural lens to the refreshed curriculum being thought through?

- What is the PLD for the refreshed curriculum going to look like? What is the balance between online and face to face mentoring and support?
- What role do school principals have in all this?

The questions were entirely relevant. It was also clear that many principals had not yet considered them. No matter what their current workload, these questions were clearly too important not to prioritise. They encapsulated the future shape of NZ's school curriculum, which was likely to be embedded for many years to come. Haque's clear message was 'Now is the time to get it right'.

To open Day three of the conference principals were called to attention by the Forte Choir from Western Heights High School. Adding a touch of humorous drama to their routine, these young men and women gave a polished performance, warming the hearts of the attentive audience.

Rawiri Waru belts out a waiata of his own from the stage

Rawiri Waru

Bedecked in his street jacket and jeans, cradling his guitar under one arm, and smiling in the manner of an impish teen, Rawiri Waru strolled to the stage and immediately owned it. He turned, greeted his audience in Māori, then launched into his korero.

'You've heard about *Black Lives Matter* in the U.S. and how Erec Smith started *Free Black Thought*,' he said, 'and it's easy to think, well, this is about freeing black people from poverty and other social snags.'

'But black people are **not** all the same. They are not all in poverty. They don't all interpret experiences the same way. There is no such thing as a "black perspective" on anything. There are 40 million black narratives, and if you look at other ethnicities, it's like that for them too, so don't put us into boxes' he said.

And there, laid bare, was his first challenge. Waru then strapped his guitar on and sang his own waiata, ' . . . change is gonna come, oh yes it will . . . ' he belted out to his bemused audience.

'I hope that woke you up a bit,' he teased.

The title of his address was He Kura He Kura He Kura.

Kura, he said, has many meanings including, to glow; a place of learning; red ochre; something very precious; glow of the morn; sunlight.

'My Kura was my marae, growing up in Ohinemutu, with my grandparents,' he explained. He was seven or eight before he attended school.

'I had learned so much before I went to school, but all that didn't mean anything at school, so I thought I must be dumb,' he said.

Attending school became synonymous with running away from school, for Waru. 'There were some great teachers at school, but the Pā was my real school and so I'd run away again and again and be dragged back each time,' he said.

'Why would I want to go to school? The mātauranga of the marae had everything. There was something for everyone,' he said.

During this time, music and sport became important in his life and his father arranged piano lessons with the Catholic nuns so he could learn to read music.

He took an entire year off during the Intermediate school years but at High School, he met Mr Woon.

'He brought me back to school once and sat me down to ask me, "How do you think your ancestors got here?" "Do you think they just floated here?" No, they knew the winds, the currents and watched the birds. They had sails made from Coco leaves. Your ancestors were scientists,' he said.

For the first time, Waru felt he could connect. School began to make sense for him because it matched what he had already learned from his nan and others at the marae. Mr Woon challenged him to make a scientific model and enter a national competition.

'I can tell you now,' he confided to his audience, 'that I won and beat Jacinda Ardern!'

This was the beginning of a long and successful scientific career, for Waru, which took him, at the age of 18, to the Conference of the Worldwide Young Researchers for the Environment in Hanover, Germany, in 2000.

'This was a global science competition. My study was on

geothermal geysers and I was the only entrant from New Zealand,' he said.

He then proceeded to entertain his audience with the hilarious and adventurous way he found his way to Hanover.

'From the airport, I was instructed to take the train that said "Expo". Well, every train said Expo, so I jumped on any train which of course was the wrong one. I arrived in this small little town which was not where I was supposed to be. I was lost. I had phone numbers to ring but nobody spoke English on the other end, so that didn't help. And I had no German money to buy food or stay anywhere because I forgot to sort that at the airport. But I had my guitar so went busking and made €80. I thought that would be enough for a feed and a bed for the night, then a stranger called Bruno made friends with me and took me to his house. Meanwhile the Expo people thought I had been abducted, but a day or so later I got the right train and turned up in the right place in Hanover, €80 ahead!!'

The competition itself drew experts from across the globe, including one who became very interested in his graphs.

'I see you have some graphs here,' remarked the stranger.

'Yes, I do,' replied Waru. 'I use Excel. Have you ever heard of Excel?'

'I have,' said the stranger. 'Great to meet you. Bill's the name, Bill Gates!'

He explained that this was the beginning of a wonderful friendship and Bill Gates introduced him to further volcanology researchers in Yellowstone, Japan, one of the world's most dynamic volcanic systems.

'From being invisible,' he said, 'I was now embracing everything I knew from my learning years on the marae, and bringing my mātauranga to volcanology,' he said.

His next career step was supported with a scholarship from the Royal Society which took him to further science studies at Stanford University.

The future, according to Waru is for Mātauranga Māori and western ideologies to work in harmony. It is all about everyone benefitting from each other's knowledge and strengths, he says. He promotes his own kaupapa, not just for his own people but for everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand to experience and enjoy. 'I'm Scottish,' he said, 'as well as Māori.'

He also believes in the importance of whakapapa, understanding who you are, where you are from and where you are going.

'Whakapapa and Mātauranga Māori are inextricably linked. In this regard, no discussion on Mātauranga Māori is complete without discussing the relationship between whakapapa and Mātauranga Māori.'

'Mātauranga Māori is a cultural system of knowledge about everything that is important in the lives of the people,' he said.

His success in the world of science and his own experience of cultural alienation in his early school days, have led him to pursue changes so that future rangatahi will not feel culturally alienated from education.

To achieve transformative change, we have to look to leadership, according to Waru. Transformational leadership, he said, is about modelling the way, enabling others to act, challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision and encouraging the heart.

Waru has now partnered up with the Ministry of Education to help in the delivery of Te Ahu o te Reo Māori, based on a seven level te reo Māori competency framework called Ngā Taumata o Te Ahu o te Reo Māori. The five focus areas are the Local dialect, Use of language, Grammar, Curriculum and Revitalisation. The intention is to upskill 40,000 teachers in Te Reo Māori by 2024 through a 22 week-long course commitment.

For this to be successful, he said, will require all of you, as school leaders, to be on board the waka and support your staff to participate in this transformational kaupapa.

Waru also works through his own local iwi organisation Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake Trust, which was established by Ngāti Whakaue in 2005, to achieve the aspirations of the iwi in the areas of education, Te Reo and well-being. He has also worked with other tribal leaders, has advised Ministers, CEOs, various mayors and industry leaders. His sights are set on improving Te Reo Māori proficiency, normalising the language and sharing narratives and histories relevant to Aotearoa and to the system that supports the education of all students.

Fiona McMillan, Employment Law specialist for the NZPF PASL scheme

Fiona McMillan, Employment Lawyer for PASL

Senior partner with Anderson Lloyd Lawyers, Dunedin, and specialist in Employment Law, Fiona McMillan has been the lead legal advisor for school principals for many years. She takes all the referral work for NZPF's Principals' [legal] Advice and Support (PASL) scheme. Her address to the conference was entitled *'A Peak at PASL'*

Fiona is aware that principals' employment arrangements, as employees of their Boards, makes them vulnerable. NZSTA is much more likely to take the Board's position in a dispute with the Principal and NZEI more likely to take the side of a teacher, should that be the site of relationship breakdown. Principals are basically left out in the cold. It is no wonder that the NZPF PASL scheme is so popular with principals.

'We prefer to give advice, through our Hotline service, at the earliest opportunity,' says McMillan, 'so that we can de-escalate issues. If that isn't possible and we take your case further, the PASL scheme gives you the buffer of $25,000 free legal advice,' she said.

Principals may well think that their employment relationship with the Board will never be an issue for them. Whilst this will hold for most principals most of the time, McMillan can attest that this is not always the case and when things turn 'pear shaped', they can get very ugly very quickly.

'It can happen to any principal, anywhere,' she said compellingly.

A quick statistical summary showed that in the past year about 60 principals had received advice on matters affecting their

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SCHOOL BUDGETING – STRETCHING THE DOLLARS

Given the challenges posed by COVID-19, Schools and their whānau have proved to be amazingly resilient over the last 18 months; learning to adapt, innovate and enhance learning experiences by quickly implementing online learning platforms. This has changed education forever, and driven the need for longer-term strategies and streamlined processes, throughout the rest of the school environment.

With this in mind, timely and informative budgets play a vital role providing principals and boards with financial confidence during these uncertain times. A well-constructed budget can also provide opportunities, facilitating instant decision making when required. Budgets should not just be viewed in the context of the next 12 months, but also consider the schools longer term strategic goals; what does the board want to achieve in the next 5 to 10 years? This ensures that not only the children of today are benefiting from sound financial decisions, but future generations as well. Those future generations will also contribute to the community during the years ahead.

Given the importance of reliable financial information in order to deliver enhanced resources for students and teachers alike, schools need access to value-adding financial solutions and knowledgeable support. Choosing the right solution, along with engaging an experienced support provider, is critical.

When preparing an annual budget, every school is different and, as such, requires personalised assistance. Sound advice should provide suggestions around enhancing revenue and be considered when making some of the tough spending decisions. As part of the onboarding process at Accounting For Schools, we take a lot of time and care to understand a school's specific requirements and needs. A comprehensive and accurate annual budget for the coming year should also consider the impacts on the years beyond as well. We have developed several cloud-based collaborative tools that include, customised budget templates, staffing calculators and asset replacement programmes. We are genuinely focused on the long-term future of all schools, not just the next few months.

A budget is only as good as the information available, however. At Accounting For Schools, we use the latest technology to provide insight and deliver confidence around the Schools finances. We utilise cloud-based accounting software, Xero, that can be accessed from anywhere. Xero provides accurate, understandable, and timely financial information. It also gives back control to the school, allowing payments to be made when required, management of categorising expenses, and the ability to collaborate with multiple invested partners.

When preparing financial information for schools, such as month management reports, we strive to provide understandable summarises of the key impacts, and how those impacts are now being managed. Our team of school experts provide timely support, genuine advice, and technical expertise to help schools make more informed decisions.

By utilising Xero, Google Drive and other cloud-based applications, Accounting For Schools can assist and support schools in any part of the country; we also enjoy travelling when we can. These systems also enable collaboration and allow us to deliver a more streamlined process, which ensures faster delivery for schools; which also extends to our annual accounts support process.

When it comes to the annual audit and the year-end financial statements, many schools find this a daunting and time-consuming exercise. At Accounting For Schools, we view audits as an excellent opportunity to review the school financials, not just a box-ticking exercise. We seek to filter the audit queries, mitigating needless disruption during an extremely busy time of the year for the school support team, and ensuring statutory deadlines are met.

Using Xero already? Mention this article and we will prepare a budget template in Xero for your school at no cost, and provide access to our budget training toolkit.

If your school needs in-depth assistance with regards to the 2022 annual budget, assistance with preparing a multiyear budget, enhanced monthly reporting, or just managing the year end accounts and audit, please contact Ben Duflou or Allison Henderson today for a no-obligation chat. We will be able to tailor a solution specific for the schools needs..

Accounting For Schools – www.afsl.nz.
Ph: 0800-ASK-AFS (0800-275-237)

employment and about 30 Board or operational matters were causing consternation for principals. There were also 17 files open which meant these cases were likely to go much further.

'We step in if Boards are not following fair and proper process,' she said, 'or not following correct process in dealing with a parent complaint against the principal.' 'Our approach is always constructivism but not every Board wishes to be constructive,' she said.

She outlined a case which did have a happy ending. A long serving, well regarded principal, who had already signalled her intention of retiring, inherited a new Board Chair and a new staff representative.

Myles Ferris faces his own Te Akatea Executive in acknowledgement of their haka to honour his achievements

A set of complaints and concerns about the conduct of the principal were received just two weeks out from her retirement so PASL lawyers penned a letter for her to deliver to the Board. After a meeting or two with the new Board Chair, the complaints were withdrawn, there was no risk of mandatory reporting to the Teaching Council and all enjoyed a happy retirement party.

'That was a case where we acted quickly and got the best outcome for the principal,' said McMillan. 'The complaints were baseless, but without quick action, could have festered and acquired legs,' she said.

One of the weaknesses of the Board employing the principal is that there is no protection for the principal when baseless accusations are made. 'I have seen so many cases where the principal has been hung out to dry over complaints that never did have any sound basis in the first place,' she said. 'When we are notified early and can intervene straight away, we can usually get a reasonable response. When these matters are left to fester away, it can be much more difficult to reel them in,' she said.

She cited cases where minor issues had not been dealt with and grew into much bigger allegations. 'The principal may have thought they would just go away, but instead they were getting worse.'

McMillan said the saddest examples were those where a principal has in the end just resigned, because they can't take the pressure of continually fighting a case which should never have been brought against them in the first place. The fact that a principal has been under such scrutiny from a Board can also jeopardise their chances of future employment.

Myles Ferris receives his prestigious Service Award from President Perry Rush

'PASL,' she said, 'was one of the few protections that principals have available to them, unless they choose to join a private protection scheme.'

Fiona McMillan made herself available at the conference to meet with individual principals and assist those who wished to sign up for the scheme.

Myles Ferris celebrates his special moment beside his wife Malvina and members of the Te Akatea Executive group

NZPF Award of Service with Distinction – Myles Ferris

On rare occasions the NZPF Executive Committee receives a nomination to honour a member for extraordinary service. This year, Hayley Read from Northland nominated Myles Ferris, former President of Te Akatea Māori Principals' Association, for his outstanding service to Māori principals and Māori education.

Myles led Te Akatea whilst tumuaki of his own school, Te Kura o Otangarei, in Northland. During this time, he increased the membership of Te Akatea; in collaboration with Ministry officials, he made many gains for Māori principals; he built strong relationships with NZPF and proposed the constitutional change which places a Te Akatea Māori representative on the NZPF executive, as of right, to advise NZPF on all matters relating to Māori education. He also continued the advance of the highly successful Te Ara Hou, Māori Achievement Collaborations (MACs), the culturally transformational PLD programme for principals, which has been led by Te Akatea for the last 5 years and now serves in excess of 350 schools. Using his extensive networks, he was instrumental in engaging Dr Ann Milne to help work up the framework for the MACs which serves the programme so well.

Myles has been influential in the international space for many years, alongside other indigenous groups, particularly those closer to home. He was also a key contributor to the conference, hosted by Te Akatea, for the National Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Principals' Association (NATSIPA) in Waitangi.

His knowledge and understanding of Te Ao Māori are highly sought after and currently he is on secondment to the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Council working on leadership development for Māori kaiako and tumuaki in both Māori and English medium schools.

Most notably, Myles has the drive and the capacity to bridge the divide between Māori and Pākehā worlds, in the true spirit of Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership, so that we can learn from each other and be stronger together. The whakatauki that best sums up Myles' motivation is:

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

My successes are not mine alone, they are ours, the greatest successes are those that we will have from working together.

Myles proudly wore the korowai, lent to him by his own iwi, to receive his award. We congratulate Myles and thank him for his outstanding work on behalf of his colleagues.

NZPF Presidents Reconnect: Back Row (L to R) Pat Newman (2005–2006), Iain Taylor (2016), Ernie Buutveld (2009–2010); Middle Row (L to R) Whetu Cormick (2017–2019), Paul Drummond (2012), Peter Simpson (2011), Denise Torrey (2015); Front Row (L to R) Perry Rush (2020–2021), Marilyn Yeoman (1995–1997), Philip Harding (2013–2014)

The Presidents Celebrate with Presidents' Drinks

At every NZPF conference, the President of the day hosts an evening for special guests, business partners, former Presidents and life members. It is always a jolly event as old relationships are rekindled, and nostalgic stories shared. This year we were delighted that nine former NZPF Presidents responded to current President, Perry Rush's invitation. The photo opportunity was irresistible.

MC Jehan Casinada Interviews Young Leaders of the Future

It was a stroke of genius by the conference organisers to invite eight student leaders from Rotorua High Schools to share their thoughts on their education and hopes for the future. The eight – Rohm Dixon and Paretoroa Webster-Tarei (Rotorua Boys' High School), Helena Dou'ble and Hope Smith (Rotorua Girls' High School), Zach Jans and Haeun Kang (Western Heights High School), and Isidora Gonzalez-Diaz and Aryan Emile-Chura (Rotorua Lakes High School) were unfazed by Casinada's questioning, responding with confidence, thoughtfulness, clarity and optimism for their future.

The Panel of Young Leaders of the Future from Rotorua High Schools: From Left to Right: Rohm Dixon and Paretoroa Webster-Tarei (Rotorua Boys' High School), Helena Dou'ble and Hope Smith (Rotorua Girls' High School), Zach Jans and Haeun Kang (Western Heights High School), and Isidora Gonzalez-Diaz and Aryan Emile-Chura (Rotorua Lakes High School)

In answer to how COVID lockdowns had affected them, Hope Smith was the first to offer her views saying, 'The hardest part was not seeing friends and whānau and not being able to go to school.' She observed that it was really hard learning on Zoom calls at home, especially when others of the family were watching TV or just chilling. Helena Dou'ble agreed it was also difficult for her but for different reasons. 'I need order around what I am doing, and support. If its up to me I won't do it,' she admitted.

Paretoroa Webster-Tarei saw the effects of lockdown beyond his own schooling saying, 'It hit our people in Rotorua hard. We are the heart of cultural tourism and we couldn't support our families and showcase our culture,' he said. 'There were 150 staff members made redundant and received no payments,' he said. Rhom Dixon added, 'We had many boys who had to leave school to find jobs because parents lost jobs. These boys should be in school not in jobs,' he added.

Casinada remarked, 'We have no idea what kids are bringing to school, like work as well as responsibilities to families.'

Helena Dou'ble added, 'In our culture we provide and put family first and it can be hard balancing that with school. My teachers, and friends took the weight off my shoulders.'

Aryan Emile-Chura said 'A big part of our culture is to connect with each other as people so [with lockdown] there are underlying mental health issues which affect grades and at our school there is the problem of boys needing to get jobs. I know some personally – intelligent students dropping out to get jobs.'

Paretoroa Webster-Tarei said, 'You could only have ten people at a tangi. I had to do the karakia for my Koro then take him to his family. We could not hongi or touch. It was hā mamao – long distance hongi.'

Casinada's next question was about technology and Zoom sessions. People think it's easy for kids, he said, is that true, he asked?

Isidora Gonzalez-Diaz said Zoom is good when you are studying at home and yes, we do know technology so it can be easier for us. 'I take classics,' she said, 'and if you miss a day, you miss heaps. Having classes on zoom is great but it does come down to access. If COVID comes again, how will we communicate? We can embrace technology, but it must be for all.'

Rhom Dixon added, 'Many students rely on technology too much. With Google classrooms, school attendance goes down.'

Haeun Kang said, 'Under COVID yes, technology is great, but our younger generation is too dependent on phones. We need to lock down the phones! Kids are coming back to school and not interacting with teachers.'

Casinada's next question addressed school structure. 'Do you want a structured school environment? Tell us about that. Have we moved too far?'

Paretoroa Webster-Tarei replied, 'A little bit of structure is alright. With no structure, we do all the organising and learning by ourselves. Being independent is good,' he said.

Zach Jans said, 'It is preparing us for living our lives and being self-directed learners. It prepares us for the workforce. I do think that primary schools should be structured.'

Isidora Gonzalez-Diaz said 'There has to be a middle point between structure and independence. You need some structure to prepare for university, but once you are there you have to do it on your own. We can't come up with new ideas if we are completely structured.'

Casinada's next question was to ask the panel what they saw as their issues.

Hope Smith answered that mental health in young people was

an issue. Social media, she said, played a big part in the way we live. Many kids today compare themselves to others in the way they look. They look at themselves and see that they are not good enough.

Aryan Emile-Chura saw a different issue. He said, 'We are not taught to take our time. We need to slow down. We are always told we are not achieving fast enough.'

Zach Jans reinforced the views on social media saying, 'There is massive pressure on social media. We are always conscious of the tragedies playing out daily on social and public media. It fatigues us. The global news is depressing and it [depression] builds up over time, so there is constant anxiety. You are forced to have an opinion on everything.'

Casinada's next question was about how to manage our own hauora.

Paretoroa Webster-Tarei answered first saying 'If I am feeling bullied I go back to my family, not to "Mackers" (MacDonalds). Family can bring you back to earth and help you through hardships. They love and support you.'

MC Jehan Casinada was as popular with the audience as ever

Rohm Dixon added that rangatahi don't know how to talk about their feelings. We need to teach kids how to talk about feelings and when thy are older they will know how to talk to their elders.

Next Casinada asked, 'When we are talking about COVID and climate change and housing, how can teachers help you not to become overwhelmed?'

Helena Dou'ble answered, 'By being understanding. Students need to know they can come to a teacher because the teacher is like part of the family and that comforts them. I thank the principals for being so great through COVID because they were like family.'

Haeun Kang followed a similar theme saying, 'Identify those that struggle at home because they won't do well at school. Have connections with your students and be their family.'

Hope Smith agreed saying, 'Be understanding and open minded so each student has a support system. Some don't have support at home for homework, so talk to them and look after them. Most of us don't know what some students are going through. Support at school through staff helps.'

Aryan Emile-Chura said, 'We need more love and compassion for everyone around us. Offer kindness, and smile and ask how their day is going. It might save a life.'

Casinada then turned to what the panel thought makes them optimistic for the future?

Paretoroa Webster-Tarei said, 'My plans for the future? I will get a scholarship to get into the performing arts. My dream is

to get into the Juilliard School of Music in New York and study operatic music!'

Helena Dou'ble announced that next year she is applying for the Army. 'I am protective of my family and friends and now I can protect my people and my community. To serve communities I would love to be a medic and help refugees in poverty.'

Rohm Dixon offered his ideas for the future saying we need many more inventions to solve the problems of today. We have to be open-minded about that and push for more inventions. Then the world would be a better place

Zach Jans said, 'Having this panel at your conference shows optimism for change. You've all showed up here and you have listened to us. That makes me hopeful for our future and the future's future.'

The Te Akatea Executive perform an impassioned haka to honour Myles Ferris

Hope Smith said 'Seeing Rangatahi Māori thrive and grow as leaders is my dream. To see students at my Kura as leaders would create a legacy for our Kura and a legacy for New Zealand and the world. My personal future will be at university doing a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology and Indigenous Studies.'

Rohm Dixon said hearing other people's ambitions motivates him, like Paretoroa's dream [to sing opera in New York].

Zach Jans added, 'This is our generation and the people next to me are going to make huge changes helping our planet. I will do a teacher's degree and a Bachelor degree in Science and Commerce for secondary teaching.'

Isidora Gonzalez-Diaz said she would be studying political science at university. She then put a plug in for the Arts. 'I do school, go home, do some painting and feel good. It's a solution to the overwhelming issues.'

She also put a final plea to her audience saying, 'Please put recycling bins in all schools, and teach us solutions. Look to Māori because they know how to look after the land, and then let's make those solutions happen.'

This was a conference to savour. Filled with provocative and interesting presenters, totally committed to their respective values and visions. Every keynote tugged at the audience's conscience and shifted their perspective. We connected to a Pacific world view with Filivaifale Jason Swann and jumped on board the greatest migration journey in history with Sir Ian Taylor. Rawiri Waru took us on a different journey from school run-away to Science Fair Exhibiter in Hanover and finally the students of Rotorua High Schools gave us their unique and youthful perspectives on their direction for the future.

Six hundred school principals could not have spent their week more productively.

KIA HIWA RĀ

On cutting one's cloth in Covid times

Martin Thrupp thrupp@waikato.ac.nz

AS I WRITE, the Waikato has just joined Auckland in Level 3 lockdown and it seems things are about to get messier as Covid travels widely through the country. For the time being, I'm so pleased the school holidays are here as I know how demanding it is for schools to manage Level 3 with both face to face and online teaching. Such developments, on top of everything else Covid or otherwise, create enormous pressures on tumuaki and kaiako and we are all so aware of that.

There were **GALES OF LAUGHTER** when I came through the door and they got **'SPRUNG' BY PROFESSOR THRUPP.**

With Mike Bottery, England's well-known educational leadership academic, I've always thought it important that school leaders not just 'lower their heads to pull the cart' but rather 'raise their heads to look at the road'. But lately I've also been thinking a lot about how you have to cut your cloth (or 'cut your coat according to your cloth') if you want to take a wider view.

Certainly I've found myself having to do this in my university role. A few years ago I finished up an administration position and went back to doing more teaching, including leading the teaching team for a huge first-year class which has four face to face versions and two online ones, this year catering for nearly 500 students.

It's extremely complicated, and because academic teaching has become increasingly DIY in recent years – and first year students tend to need a lot of support – it's also very time-consuming.

It doesn't help that in recent times the University often has to go into online teaching mode and sometimes face to face and online together. So I've had to cut back on other things. I used to do a lot of reviewing of articles, book proposals and PhD examining, but not anymore, now I mostly turn it down. I also used to follow the detail of education policy but no longer (more on that later). Indeed there are a host of things I have just had to say 'no' to these days. Unless I want to work 24/7 I simply no longer have the time.

It has been difficult to see my wider academic roles shut down by teaching workload but there are compensations. I like the enthusiastic and thoughtful discussions with my students and they regularly make me chuckle. I walked in to take a tutorial group recently and a couple of students were at the front of the class doing elaborate dance moves to music: they were recording a TikTok! There were gales of laughter when I came through the door and they got 'sprung' by Professor Thrupp.

I digress, my main point is that unless you accept there's only so much that can be done in a day it is easy to commit to doing too much. At best you will then take your eye off the road, at worst you will go under. This is also true when work or life in general throws you a curveball which is common enough in these Covid times.

I know there are numerous discussions amongst principals and teachers about everyday ways to keep pressure down, the importance of taking time out and getting enough sleep and exercise and all the rest of it. But in such extraordinary times if you are still struggling there is nothing wrong with careful medication. A low dose of an anti-anxiety drug might make a profound difference to daily life. Sleeping pills could help too although you tend to lose your dream-world which is such a precious thing.

Mental health is not a topic people in my generation discuss easily. But times are changing and during the recent Mental Health Awareness Week, our university brought in Jehan

Casinader, the well-known journalist, to 'share his own mental health journey in a vulnerable way'. And certainly many of my students are quite open about being depressed or anxious, it happens such a lot these days.

Related to this, being able to provide steady support for students and teaching team colleagues is another compensation for cutting my cloth more carefully at the moment. I can see the prospect of valuable succession in our education sector if I can help the younger ones get a good start in these difficult times. As I wrote earlier in the year, I don't think we are tough enough with the entry requirements for teacher education. But many of our students are really impressive and so – TikToks and all – I think our schools will be in generally good hands in the future.

Another reason for cutting one's cloth is so that we can better focus on what matters. Here I would like to reengage with a whakatauki that many of you will recognise: Rurea, taitea, kia toitu, ko taikaka anake. Strip away the bark. Expose the heartwood. Get to the heart of the matter. It used to be ERO's motto but they brought a terribly managerialist agenda to these powerful words. Their processes were more about jumping through hoops than genuine engagement with educational concerns.

Nevertheless there are many truly important things to focus on in education. The deep wellbeing of people in our school community. Those things that the tamariki in our care really need to understand. And the developments that are truly going to make a difference to our world in the future.

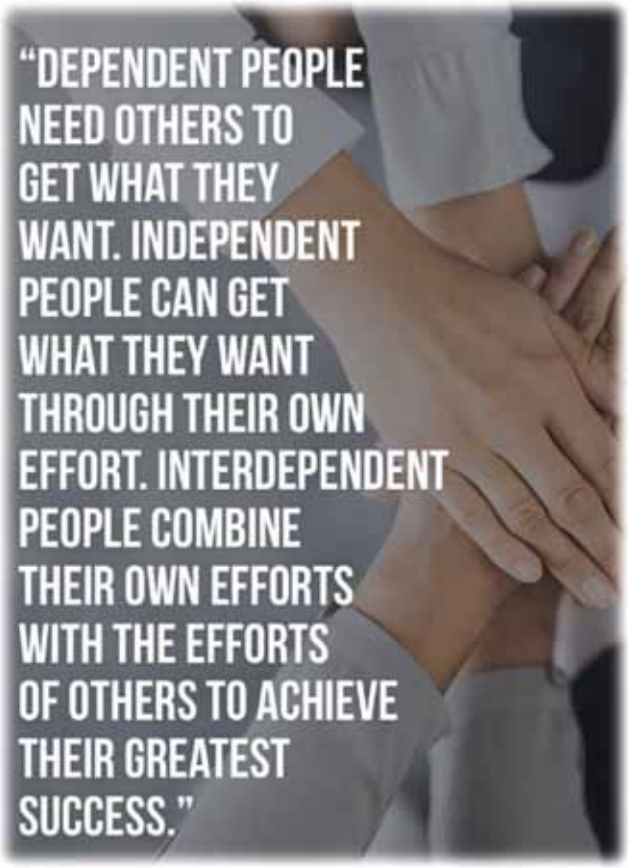
Nevertheless there are many **TRULY IMPORTANT THINGS** to focus on in education. The **DEEP WELLBEING OF PEOPLE** in our school community.

A good example of the last of these is denial of climate change. As discussed by Jonathan Freedland in *The Guardian*, we are increasingly moving past the kind of scepticism that climate change is happening but there is now the denial mindset that 'accepts the science . . . – it hears the alarm bell ringing – but still does not change its behaviour'. This is due to reasons such as self-interest or fear. Unfortunately such denial happens both at the personal level and at the level of governments. By the time this magazine issue gets published all eyes will be on COP 26, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, to see what international climate pledges can be achieved now that it has become so abundantly clear that the planet is in trouble.

Finally, I have decided that from next year I am going to change the name of my column away from Kia Hiwa Rā – Be alert, be watchful – because as mentioned above I can't promise to be keeping up and warning you about educational developments as was the original intention. So I'm going to keep doing more general columns along the lines that most of them have been already. Of course, I'm conscious that there is already such a lot of opinion about – Covid has spurred more 'reckons' than anyone could keep up with. But let's see how it goes and I wish you all the best for Term 4 and the summer break in the meantime.

INDEPENDENCE VS INTERDEPENDENCE

HELEN KINSEY-WIGHTMAN



Stephen Covey – The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

THIS WEEK WE dropped my eldest son down to Wellington to move into his first ever flat. The 27 steps up to the front door are not for the faint hearted, so I was pretty relieved that he has embraced minimalism and moved out with 2 bags of clothes and his gaming PC (which he insisted on carrying himself!) The view from his bedroom window out over Wellington harbour is worth every step and by Christmas I'm pretty sure he will have the calves of a WWE champion.

Over the past few weeks, as he has been preparing to move out, I have been thinking back to my own life transitions. Since he is not given to massive bouts of sharing, I have deliberately talked about my first independent experiences of overseas travel on a train ticket around Europe; heading off to Uni as first child in my family with parents who were just as nervous as me; my first night working in a pub; my first flight to a teaching job in Kuwait . . . These deliberate conversations about my own experiences of anticipation, nervousness and vulnerability helped us to begin to broach some of his worries.

We got to talking about deliberate steps to work on wellbeing and I found myself talking about the volunteering I had done at Uni. I had taken my bike and so I joined the cycling club, through the Sports Office notice board I signed up to take a partially sighted student out on his tandem – starting was easier than stopping and I may have tipped him off in a ditch more than once. In my second year I played it a bit safer and read to a blind philosophy student – I learned about Hobbes and Locke as well as developing a deep appreciation for the ease with which I could access a book.

This has led me to thinking about how we view the transition to adulthood and our view of independence as the ultimate goal. As a woman, my mother impressed upon me the need to seek financial independence. When she got her first job, her mother had advised her to open two bank accounts – the second to be kept a secret so that when she gave up work to have children she could squirrel away money should she need it. She had not done so and had regretted it. At times my parents' marriage was pretty tempestuous and my mother's level of education and lack of financial independence gave her few choices, hence this conversation had a strong influence on me.

Looking back though, my focus on being fiercely independent meant that I viewed the need for help or support as weakness. When I think about what I want to teach my son as he navigates life away from home, it is to build support networks in order to create a life of interdependence.

The contrast between these concepts is often made in relation to Western and Eastern cultures. In her book *Tiger Writing: Art, Culture, and the Interdependent Self,* Gish Jen explains, *'The "independent", individualistic self, stresses uniqueness, defines itself via inherent attributes such as its traits, abilities, values, and preferences, and tends to see things in isolation. The second—the "interdependent", collectivist self—stresses commonality, defines itself via its place, roles, loyalties, and duties, and tends to see things in context.'* Thus when the focus is on interdependence – as in Māori culture – success is supported and celebrated by the collective, *'Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.'*

In an organisational context, Stephen Covey sees interdependence as the ultimate goal, yet as with everything it is based on relationship, *'You cannot continuously improve interdependent systems and processes until you progressively perfect interdependent, interpersonal relationships.'*

Reflecting on the educational leadership teams I have been a part of, those where independence is highly valued result in a focus on speed, efficiency and individual achievement through competition. I know I will always trade that in a heartbeat for a team where strong, interdependent relationships allow vulnerability, shared learning and collective problem solving.

As I write, I am listening to the government's 4pm announcement that vaccination is now mandated for teachers and healthcare

workers. As we in Aotearoa navigate this pandemic together, our survival is quite literally linked to our ability to exercise interdependence.

In a Boston Globe article titled, 'This year Independence Day is also Interdependence Day', the author stresses the need to move beyond our own borders as we think about our survival, '*. . . it's becoming increasingly clear that a vaccination strategy that does not ensure some level of global vaccine equity will leave all of us unnecessarily at risk. We all know that ensuring global vaccine equity is morally justified, but it also might be the best strategy for ending the pandemic and building toward a recovery that helps everyone. If so, how do we turn that vision into a reality? In our increasingly interdependent world, vaccine equity is not charity but the smartest investment we can make for a better future for all.*'

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MoveWell

Supporting children's learning and enjoyment of movement

MoveWell is a new resource to assist teachers, kaiako and others who may be involved with implementing activities to support and extend children's learning, confidence, ability and enjoyment in movement.

Children love to move. MoveWell aims to build from their playful and creative nature, not by just 'teaching skills' but by creating environments that allow them to explore, problem solve and build their movement abilities, competence and confidence to play games with others and feel a sense of success.

MoveWell:

- uses an enjoyable, games-centred approach to develop children's knowledge, attitudes and movement skills
- is a collaboration between Sport New Zealand, Physical Education New Zealand, ACC, and supported by the Ministry of Education. The University of Auckland contributed to the principal writing team.

Download the resource

MoveWell has been sent to all primary and intermediate schools and kura. You can also download the resource from the Sport NZ or Physical Education New Zealand website.

www.sportnz.org.nz

Workshops

Physical Education New Zealand will be providing workshops for primary and intermediate teachers across the country to support the introduction of MoveWell in Term 1 2022. You can register for a workshop on the Physical Education New Zealand website www.penz.org.nz.

www.penz.org.nz

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