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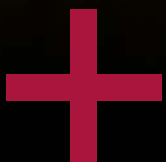
PRINCIPAL

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

June 2023
Volume 38, Number 2



NZPF MOOT 2023



Moot
2023

Emotional
Literacy

Tossing the
education football



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Minister Hon Jan Tinetti joins the audience and listens to presenters at NZPF Moot



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EDITORIAL

Liz Hawes EDITOR



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE HAS been a leading news topic stretching back to last year. It came to prominence in the wake of Covid-19 lockdowns but has been on principals' radars as far back as 2015.

Principals did not need to be told by the most recent research, that around 40 per cent of parents are comfortable for their child to miss school more than a week per term. They have been confronted by parents, at one end of the social spectrum, wishing to take their children on overseas or local holidays outside of the official school holiday period, for years. These parents will argue that a family holiday is as educational as attending school. Principals are also aware that as poverty has grown across Aotearoa New Zealand, so too have parent condoned absences at the other end of the social spectrum. As more parents have fallen into despair and dysfunction trying to manage and feed families, older siblings have been required to supervise younger siblings at home and in some cases, take on employment to help boost the family's income. A further factor feeding the growing school absenteeism is housing. Successive governments have monumentally failed to provide sufficient social housing to give struggling families the dignity of a stable roof over their heads. Too many young people have no such basic security and are moving from one motel block to another, or from one temporary rental to another – often changing towns in the process.

Covid-19 may have brought this issue into focus, but sliding attendance rates are not news for schools.

The causes of non-attendance are complex and varied and principals will report that there has always been a hard core of chronic absenteeism of around 4–5 per cent. The absence of these young people has always concerned schools. Over the years principals have tried multiple, innovative ways to encourage these young people back to school, with mixed results. What has always been apparent, however, is that schools are more likely to be successful when the intermediary already has a trusted relationship with the community and with the family. In some cases, this has been someone from the school or the local community constable, or a highly respected local agency. It is unlikely however that a stranger would succeed in changing truant behaviour.

Schools have invested thousands of hours examining their own school programmes, asking questions like: Is our teaching and learning relevant to young people today? Are we providing sufficient experiences for learners to draw on so they can make

the most of their subject learning? If students are not ready to begin formal learning when they arrive at school, how can school prepare them for formal learning through alternative programmes such as structured play?

Both schools and the Ministry have worked together on reducing bullying in schools, which was seen as another deterrent to attending school. All schools have a set of agreed bullying guidelines to follow and generally have a zero tolerance for any kind of bullying.

Schools cannot influence what happens outside the school gate or on social media platforms but bullying in school is most certainly not acceptable to any school.

For many years schools have engaged attendance services, funded by the Ministry. Localised services were always more successful and when the service was centralised by the Ministry, results declined. That said, the problem persists and beyond Covid-19 has come to a head, such that areas like Te Tai Tokerau were recording as few as 39 per cent of young people attending school. Te Tai Tokerau schools invented a unique, local solution which was to create a social media platform for children to encourage their own friends back to school. The positivity of the media, all driven by the children, has brought unprecedented success with over 80 per cent of children now attending school in Te Tai Tokerau. It may also have involved an ice-cream or two, but once back at school, children quickly realised there was more to attending school than just learning to read, write and do mathematics. There were friends to play with, fun activities to be engaged in, sport and games to play, meals to share, and laughter to be had. They wanted to stay there, with their friends.

It is great that the Minister Hon Jan Tinetti has recently pumped another \$74million into lifting attendance levels, which she calculates will support another 3,000 young people to get back to school. She has also set targets to lift attendance rates to 70 per cent by 2024. Judging on what works, the Minister would be best advised to give her \$74million to the schools and allow them, like Te Tai Tokerau, to invent their own unique solutions that work best for them. At the same time, she might nudge her Ministerial colleagues in housing to get a few more social housing blocks built and ask the Minister for children and poverty to be brave and courageous, to find their moral compass and lift our families drowning in poverty out of the misery that strangles them.

There will always be the hard core to work on, but this way, the vast majority can once again embrace schooling, restart their learning and appreciate the fun of reconnecting with their mates.

... a **UNIQUE, LOCAL SOLUTION** ... a social media platform for children to **ENCOURAGE** their own friends back to school.

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Leanne Otene NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION



PRINCIPALS LEAD SCHOOLS and our work has a significant impact on the quality of education that students receive. At the same time, principals must enact government policy as directed by the Ministry of Education. Over the years, we have found that when the government and the Ministry exclude us from policy discussions, and then ask us to implement their policy, we are reluctant and distrusting. Principals have always requested to work in partnership so that we can bring our professional views, expertise, and our teaching practice to policy debates so that policies can be shaped in ways that not only enhance educational outcomes for our tamariki but are relevant and practical too.

Peak bodies have an important part to play when partnering with Government and the Ministry. We each have our own constituencies or membership groups to canvas when forming a position on different issues. NZPF, for example, looks to regional Principals' Associations to contribute their members' experiences of current educational policies and frequently surveys members on issues of importance. We also consider the impact of policies on tamariki Māori, Pasifika students, rural students, neuro diverse and cultural minority students.

NZPF has also established Ngā Pou e Wha (Four National Executive pou). These cover Leadership, Curriculum, Inclusive Education, Constitution and Policy. Each pou has dedicated executive members who conduct research and lead executive discussions on their topic and represent you on different national working groups. To keep you well informed, they also report to you through the NZPF *Principal Matters* newsletter. In this way the national executive members representing the NZPF position can be confident that they are bringing an all-round position to the debates.

Working in partnership can sometimes be a balancing act and will at times require compromise. We understand that we cannot always achieve what we want immediately, because government budgets are not infinite. We also understand that ambitious goals to build greater levels of quality teacher training, produce highly competent well supported teachers and exceptional leaders and deliver a world class curriculum, take time. Planning the best approaches, training and producing learning support experts and specialists to meet the growing learning support needs in our schools is another ambitious, long-term goal. Examining the demographic trends of our communities

and predicting future growth is yet another important factor in planning educational needs. What will our future schools

look like? What equipment will they require? How many schools will need significant property investment in the next ten, twenty or thirty years? These are all long-term goals too.

A major barrier to achieving ambitious goals for education in Aotearoa New Zealand is politics. Politics prevent long term planning and the three-year election cycles keep education in constant flux.

If there is one thing that principals across the motu would agree on, it would be to remove education from the political arena. It would be to have a long-term plan for education that was not affected by changes of government.

Our biggest problem is that the two major political parties in our country have vastly different views on what education is. Consequently, if there is a change of Government, we get a complete change in direction for education. For example, after nine years of a Labour led Government (1999–2008), we were on the cusp of embedding a world-class curriculum, structured into three-year band levels which had been carefully thought through over many years with input from educational academics, professionals and experts and rigorously debated by professionals and practitioners whose views were incorporated in the final curriculum and assessment documents.

In 2008, before the curriculum was fully entrenched, there was a change of Government to a National led Government which introduced National Standards, twice-yearly reporting to parents on children's progress, and annual reporting on schools' performance from which league tables of schools could be constructed. Whilst the curriculum developed prior to 2008 was all about children's learning progress, the National Standards were all about school performance against an arbitrary set of standards which assumed all children were the same.

In 2017, there was a further change in Government, back to a Labour led Government, and before the 2018 year began, the National Standards were already abolished and taken out of legislation. All of this represents eighteen wasted years for the education of our tamariki. Is it any wonder we now face sliding achievement levels in literacy and numeracy?

What principals are calling for is for politicians to stop wasting precious education budget dollars and establish a cross-party agreement for education where long-term goals can be set and

... **ONE THING** that principals across the motu would **AGREE** on ... to have **A LONG-TERM PLAN** for education that was not affected by changes of government.





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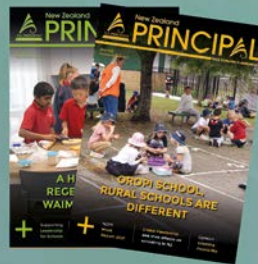
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education experts, researchers, practitioners, academics and politicians can collaborate on policy setting that will enhance the academic performance of our young people.

We will be calling on you to highlight the benefits of a cross-party agreement to your staff and students and encourage them to become advocates for this approach.

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MOOT 2023

Liz Hawes



THERE'S NOTHING LIKE an election year to excite the 'politician' within. There's also nothing quite like questioning political representatives about their party's education policies. We learn how in touch, or otherwise, their party is with the realities that face schools every day; and we learn which parties prefer to work alongside our profession and be guided by practitioners' everyday experiences and professional knowledge, and which prefer to make educational policy decisions in isolation – in other words – for political reasons.

Typically, in election years, NZPF invites politicians from different parties, to participate in a panel at our Moot, to present their vision for education and to answer questions from the regional presidents. This year, representatives from Labour, National and the Green parties agreed to join us. Whilst Labour's education policies are well known, since they have led the Government for the past 6 years, the National and the Green party policies are less well known. We cover the political panel and questions later in this report (p.9). Overwhelmingly, however, feedback from the regional presidents was consistent on one point. Party political views have no place in educational decision making. Policy, strategy, planning and resourcing of education should be a bipartisan effort led by educational experts, researchers, and practitioners, who know best what tamariki and rangitahi need to succeed in work and in life.

The success of any Moot hinges on how proceedings are managed on the day. This year, we thank MC Jehan Casinader, for a star performance, his sharp educational insights, his probing questions and for keeping the day perfectly paced.

NZPF President, Leanne Otene

Following the official opening of the Moot by NZPF Kaumatua, Hatarei Temo, Leanne Otene addressed the regional presidents and guests. She thanked the presidents for the work they do for principals in their regions, supporting them both socially and professionally. She acknowledged the wobbly start to 2023 with floods in Auckland and Cyclone Gabrielle devastating Gisborne, the East Coast and Hawke's Bay and noted the selfless generosity with which regional presidents had worked to support their colleagues through these difficult times.

'The cyclone – and let's not forget the floods that preceded the cyclone – on top of three years of Covid with school learning, home learning and hybrid learning – has left so many principals fatigued,' she said.

She acknowledged that the events of the past three years had dented our normally much higher school attendance records and had a message for the Minister, 'Please take the pressure off us and give us practical supports!' She noted that we are not over

the Covid epidemic yet and said, 'On the one hand, scientists are telling us that tamariki and staff who are sick must stay at home, and on the other hand, government says we must get our attendance rates up! A more balanced realistic path is what we need – and more effort put into keeping our tamariki and teachers safe at school.'

The hauora of principals was her next focus. 'We are not just leaders of our schools; we are leaders of our communities,' she said. Throughout the Covid years, principals have looked out not just for ākongā in their schools but also for the welfare of whānau. The pressures on schools have been relentless, and now principals need to start looking after themselves. That is why NZPF is launching its National Hauora Campaign Strategy – to focus on your health and wellbeing which has taken a battering these past few years,' she said. The Hauora strategy will be based on the principle of principals looking after principals and will be regionally based with NZPF resourcing, she explained.

On the curriculum refresh, Otene had another message for the Minister. 'Slow down! We cannot implement something so transformational and of such high quality when principals and teachers are gasping to get through each day, lurching from crisis to crisis, and their supporting advisors don't yet know what they are doing. No one wants this to fail! We just all need more time to get it right – so it will endure – and our tamariki will succeed and flourish.'

The next urgent issue, she said, has been urgent for too long. It is how to deal with our top 5 per cent of highest needs students. That translates to teams of highly specialized experts including psychologists, speech and language therapists, specialists in dyspraxia and dyslexia and counsellors – continuously accessible to every school. It translates to highly trained trauma and behaviour specialists available in every school. It translates to a substantial level of funding to pay for these experts and to train our teachers in these specialized areas. It translates to brave, transformational and innovative change.

'We cannot wait for the next tranche of Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) to be funded. We need an LSC in every school now. We need the services of a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) in every school now! We need specialists on the ground available to every school – now!' she said.

Finally, she reminded those present to listen carefully to the education policies of each of the political parties since, later in the year, they would be voting for the party to lead the country for the next three years.

Minister Hon Jan Tinetti

As a former teacher and school principal herself, Hon Jan Tinetti

is familiar with the issues facing schools and sympathetic to the challenges. 'Your dedication to your ākonga, teaching staff and your wider community is clear to see,' she told her audience.

She noted that since 2018 her government had embarked on an ambitious transformation of education where learning would be inclusive, equitable and connected, and the plan would take thirty years to achieve. She listed some of the standout achievements so far:

- To loud acclaim, she said, we abolished National Standards and put the focus back on learning rather than testing in our primary schools.
- Increased funding for learning support and introduced 600 learning support co-ordinators into schools.
- Rewrote education legislation to focus on the success and wellbeing of learners, and on the building of safe and inclusive learning environments that honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Introduced national learning priorities to help create learning environments that take account of learner needs, their identities, languages and cultures, and that are free from racism and bullying.
- Replaced school donations in almost 1700 schools for around 454,000 students and their families.
- Expanded the Ka Ora Ka Ako lunches programme to around 987 schools and over 222,000 learners.
- Introduced free period products in over 2100 schools and kura, now reaching 360,000 students.
- Funded counselling in schools for around 200 schools and expanded the Mana Ake programme. Both provide more mental health and wellbeing supports to more children and young people across Aotearoa.
- Introduced the Aotearoa New Zealand histories curriculum so that, for the first time, all ākonga will know where we have come from as a nation and what binds us together.
- Provided guidelines to schools for supporting their LGBTQIA+ ākonga.
- Redesigned the Ministry of Education to deliver more services and resources at the front line. Gone, in this change, is the one size fits all head office approach to the issues you are facing. Instead, we have Te Mahau that is working with you to find and fund local solutions to local education issues.
- Put 21 new school leadership advisory roles in place to support school principals in their management and leadership work.

These achievements are not a random list but intended to address equity and keep our young people in school and engaged in learning, she explained. The free lunches and free period products are two initiatives that support the equity intentions. The counsellors in schools and national learning priorities, further support young people to attend and engage in learning, free of racism and bullying and with mental health support freely

available. As a whole, 'they provide a fairer, more inclusive and more accessible education system for all,' she said.

She was quite clear that she was not satisfied with the current school attendance rates, nor would she accept the decline in mathematics and literacy achievement.

'Past and current levels of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics are a barrier to many of our children and young people's futures – as indeed are declining levels of attendance. These issues, as you know, are not recent. They have been around for decades, and they need to change,' she said.

The Minister told her audience that raising achievement in mathematics and literacy, lifting attendance levels further and implementing the curriculum refresh are her immediate priorities.

'We will not be narrow in our approach to curriculum,' she said, 'We will be focused.'

'The NZC is being refreshed so that it gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is inclusive, is clear about the learning that matters, and is easy to use from Year 1 to Year 13. It is also designed to reduce teacher workload, she said.

Aside from the new Aotearoa New Zealand histories content, schools have until the beginning of 2026 to work towards implementation of the rest of the refreshed curriculum, although the refreshed English and Mathematics & Statistics learning areas will be available for use in Term 2, 2023.

Alongside the refreshed curriculum is the Common Practice Model. If the refreshed curriculum is 'what is to be taught' then the Common Practice Model is 'how it will be taught'. The Common Practice Model, developed with input from kaiako and leaders in the education sector, as well as education experts,

will provide greater clarity and direction for teaching literacy, communication, and maths, and developing sound assessment practices. At the same time, the model acknowledges that ākonga learn differently and progress at different rates. The Common Practice Model will be rolled out, alongside a range of professional learning supports, between 2024 and 2027.

Minister Tinetti then returned to 'attendance' saying that too many ākonga are being denied the education they are entitled to, because they are not attending school regularly. Attendance has been falling since 2015. 'As you know,' she said, 'the causes of non-attendance are complex and varied. But overall we can say one of the biggest challenges we face is that absenteeism is becoming more socially acceptable.

We know, for example, from recent research, that:

- four in 10 parents (41 per cent) are comfortable with their child missing more than a week of school a term, or almost a year by the time they are 16, and that
- a third of learners (33 per cent) don't think going to school every day is that important



NZPF President, Leanne Otene captures the attention of the regional presidents

‘When ākongā are not regularly attending, they are not only missing important learning, but also opportunities to build friendships, make connections and participate in fun activities,’ she said. She then reminded her audience of the attendance targets she set in 2021. These include lifting attendance rates from 60 to 70 per cent by 2024; decreasing the moderately absent from 8.5 per cent to 6 per cent in 2024 and decreasing the chronically absent from 7.7 per cent to 5 per cent in 2024.

Attendance responses are best when they are localised, she said, as she cited the case of Te Tai Tokerau’s campaign featuring videos of tamariki encouraging their mates to return to school because it’s such a good place to be. ‘Their daily attendance rates have been soaring,’ she said, ‘and are now between 90 per cent and 100 per cent. Other amazing initiatives are getting results in other areas too, she said.

She also reminded her audience about the \$37.5 million for 82 new attendance officers, whose job it is to focus on clusters of ākongā with low or declining attendance rates – the moderately absent, who are missing on average more than three days a fortnight and saving them from becoming chronically absent. The new attendance officers expand the services available and reduce the response times for schools.

Minister Tinetti’s final topic for the day was ākongā with highest learning/behavioural needs. She noted that the government now spends \$1.2 billion on learning support, considerably more than when Labour came to office, but she acknowledged that for the highest needs ākongā more must be done. Out of the ‘Highest Needs Review’ came a new model that creates a partnership between the student, their whānau and the school, which will lead to tailor-made support for ākongā. Alongside this new model will be encouragement for teachers to take up professional learning and development to help them better guide the learning of those students with highest needs.

She said it was helpful to have a former Education Minister as the current Prime Minister, because not only do you have his ear, hopefully you also have his wallet! She reminded the presidents of the early 2018 education summits where it was decided that, as a nation, we wanted education and learning policy built by participants and communities – not by others for them. Teachers and principals said that no great education system can be built without the support of its educators. We want ministries to spend more time listening, engaging, and involving people in changes for the future. ‘That,’ she said, ‘will also be very much my approach as your new Minister of Education.’

Bruce Jepsen, President Te Akatea Māori Principals’ Association

Having acknowledged the leaders in the room and presented his own pepeha, Bruce Jepsen then talked about Te Akatea today, its commitments and successes.

He noted that the seven executive members of Te Akatea are full time tumuaki in their respective kura and take on local and national responsibilities as volunteers. Te Akatea, he said, was established in the 1990s by Māori tumuaki, for Māori tumuaki who were leading in mainstream schools and Kura Kaupapa Māori schools. The intention was to support and preserve the mana of Māori tumuaki. Struggles for Māori education leaders included the attitude that Māori belonged to the economic underclass. These attitudes he said were born of racist ideas and view ‘Māori as labourers not leaders.’

Inequities for Māori ākongā are well known with attendance

now a serious concern, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, he said. The Akatea executive uses its influence to advocate for better pastoral care for Māori ākongā, tumuaki and indeed all Māori people. In building relationships with Ministry and education sector officials, and holding to its transformational agenda, Te Akatea has lifted its own profile and is now beginning to sense success. More Akatea members are involved in key organisations such as the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), which commissioned a report on racism in schools, providing insights for addressing racism. Te Akatea will work with NZSTA to address the racism issues raised by the report.

Bruce said he is proud of the work that Māori principals have done in their advisory role with the curriculum working group and the local curriculum focus group to develop a curriculum that truly honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and is more inclusive of Māori. Whilst this remains a work in progress, it is the progress so far that is satisfying.

Advising ERO and in turn receiving information and advice from ERO is another important role for Akatea. Knowing that 97 per cent of Māori ākongā are being educated in English-medium settings is important to know when targeting Māori learners, he said.

Building relationships with hapu and iwi is another critical role for Te Akatea and the executive has travelled to several hui in different rohe to attend hui and hear directly the aspirations of iwi. These hui also provide an opportunity and to tell iwi of the mahi that Akatea undertakes to support Māori leaders.

Finally, he congratulated Eruera Tarena, the Executive Director of Tokona Te Raki for developing Kōkirihiā – the researched plan for the removal of streaming from our schools. Streaming, he said, is another form of systemic inequity and hang-over from our colonial past.

He said it is not hard to build synergies and relationships with other organisations, but for Te Akatea, those synergies must lead to transformation. He left his audience with a question:

‘How does your relationship with us contribute to Māori success and transformation?’

Saane Faafo Oldehaver, President, New Zealand Pasifika Principals’ Association (NZPPA)

Saane acknowledged the difficult start to the year when principals all expected a more settled first term. She praised the work all principals do and especially those in Auckland who had floods to deal with in their schools and those in cyclone ravaged areas.

NZPPA, she said, had 1,000 members nationwide, leading specifically on Pacific Island (PI) student issues. NZPPA supports and connects principals with PI students through their special cultural focus, she said, and advocates for members.

‘Our vision is to proactively advance PI education. Our plan is based on the values PI families uphold,’ she said. These include service in schools and in communities. ‘The pathway to leadership is through service and humour,’ she said. ‘We acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi first and foremost, and aspire to be disruptive in leading our communities,’ she said.

She then outlined the current goals for NZPPA:

1. To successfully connect Pacific Island students with the curriculum
2. To contribute to and protect professionalism for Pacific Island teachers

3. To encourage Pacific Island teachers into principalship and therefore increase the number of Pacific Island principals.
4. To achieve access and equity for Pacific Island students, through the Tautai o le Moana (ToLM) principals' PLD programme, which aims to strengthen the capability of leaders to lead schools so Pacific Island students can be successful. The PLD is run by Pacific Island principals. It comprises a 3-day fono and currently there are 35 principals on the ToLM journey.
5. To build capacity for teachers of Pacific Island students to be culturally responsive in their teaching, through enacting the Tapasa strategy. This is also delivered by Pacific Island principals.

She encouraged her audience to connect, collaborate and co-construct teaching and learning with their Pacific Island communities, for the benefit of Pacific Island students in their schools. 'Pacific Island students travel in multiple lives in your schools,' she said, 'and it is important to understand that at times there will be priorities for those students that sit outside of the school's academic priorities.'

She left the regional presidents with two questions. 'How are you supporting the Pacific Island students and staff in your school?' and 'How are you growing your competence and confidence to successfully lift Pacific Island students' achievement?'

Political Panel

Brief summary from party representatives

Green Party: Marama Davidson, Co-Leader, and Violence Prevention Minister

Marama Davidson acknowledged the vital role schools play in communities across the motu. She said the biggest underlying issues for tamariki are inequities. When tamariki turn up at your schools, they do not arrive the same or equal, she said. Inequities include housing and homelessness. 'You confront that every day in your mahi,' she said. 'Housing must be considered a human right,' she said. 'There are also income inequities,' she noted. 'It is the job of politicians to prioritize these basic family needs and rebalance wealth.' 'As leaders of parties, we must stand up and fight for these basics and we all must speak on education.'

[To view housing as a human right and rebalance wealth] these are political choices. 'We have what we need to do it; what we need is the political will to do it.'

She was clear that teachers are not valued by politicians or society at large. Neither is the work that teachers and principals do to connect children with their communities.

'Tamariki in a modern global world need analysis and inquiry skills. They need to be connected today,' she said, 'just as I am here to learn from you today.'

The Green Party has always understood the need for equity for all students. 'Years ago, our Education spokesperson, Catherine Delahunty, led an inquiry into dyslexia and dyspraxia and those with different ways of learning. That is how those different needs were recognized and resourced, but it is still not enough,' she said.

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National Party: Erica Stanford

Erica Stanford agreed that we are all here today to learn and to listen. She noted that her party had very recently made an education policy announcement.

‘To give you a broad outline of the policy, I spent the last year and a half visiting schools and what I found is that we have a failing system which is letting you [principals] down. The evidence is all there in the declining achievement statistics. You can talk about collaborative learning but if our kids can’t do reading, writing and mathematics, then they can’t think critically,’ she said.

‘For over 30 years the system has been letting us down. [National’s] National Standards [2008–2017] made sure we didn’t continue the mistakes of the past. In 6 years [since 2017] our year 8s are the same. The Prime Minister, Chris Hipkins said that National Standards didn’t improve anything, but we didn’t go backwards.’

‘[When we last had National Standards], kids were told they were below, at or above the standard, but we wouldn’t use that again. We need information from the system so we know where to put resources. If we don’t have the data, we don’t know where to put the resource.’

Investing in teachers PLD in reading, writing, maths and science is more important than any other subject areas. Teachers have been let down by Initial Teacher Education providers, who will have to do more. Teachers need an exit exam to ensure they are ready to teach on graduating. We have spent \$5 billion more on education in the last 5 years – did any of it get to your school?

Labour Party: Angela Roberts

The regional presidents had earlier in the day been addressed by the Minister of Education, Hon Jan Tinetti, so there was no intention for Angela Roberts to repeat what the Government has been doing and what it has achieved in the past six years.

‘Three years ago today, as a secondary school teacher, I was preparing for lockdown,’ she said. Lockdown meant huge efforts from teachers to accommodate home learning, blended or hybrid learning and online learning. The shadow cast by Covid is a long one and is still with us, she told her audience.

‘From our early reviews, we knew that transformation had to happen, and you have been part of the evidence informed plans that have emerged, making sure our kids are central to changes,’ she said.

‘Together, we know why and how to make the changes, and now it is time to start implementing those change plans,’ she added.

Teachers need support to do this work and as collaborators in the process, will be part of it, not just told what to do. The government has been working with you, the sector, with iwi and with school communities, she said.

She spoke about the Common Practice Model, which is an excellent teaching tool.

Most importantly, she said, we must overcome the inequities, rebuild the attendance service and re-engage the kids.

She urged her audience to stay engaged in the transition.

Questions to the Panelists

Q: Our biggest problem is managing students with high learning and behavioural needs, including violent behaviour. The funding is not there.

Green Party: Speaking as the Violence Prevention Minister, the tools available for schools do not adequately address this

kind of behaviour. I launched workforce tools with Police, the Courts and with Corrections, so they could all recognize the dynamics of violence and refer to the right place with the right support. I would like to work with schools to help you deal with extreme behaviour and recognize the signs of violence and better understand it. If you are equipped properly it will help your own mahi. When young people manifest extreme behaviour, that usually reflects other things going on. What we need is expertise and specialist care and that would be my priority. We shouldn’t be concerning ourselves about the resourcing we should just do it.

Labour: Investment in specialist support is critical and we must make sure every school can access it. We have increased counselling by 330,000 hours. It is about prevention and needs full wrap around services, reduced class sizes, and structural changes. That is why we launched the ‘Highest Needs Review’ which has made it clear that we need to spend more on the front line. This is not over, it has just started.

National: Early intervention is best and we have announcements to come on this. This Government made 100,000 hours free for ECE yet less than 10 per cent have showed up. The funding is not flexible and needs to be. When a child comes from CYFs [Oranga Tamariki] they turn up on your school doorstep with no funding. It’s my view that those children should bring funding from MSD. This Government has spent \$5 billion more on education yet there is no money for this really important work.

Q: Restraint issues place principals and schools in danger. I’m talking about kids with knives. Teachers are considered to be in the wrong until they can prove they are in the right. We are expected to meet with the parents the next day – in most cases they are the cause of why their child is in this state. This whole process is putting myself and my teachers in danger.

Green Party: Keeping staff and principals safe is important. I am keen to learn how to balance staff safety with an informed response to those displaying violent behaviour.

National: A teacher feeling unsafe quit recently because of this. There are no supports for the teachers. I’m keen to learn more and to work with you on this.

Labour: Restraints guidelines have been circulated twice and no one is happy yet.

Q: Restraint training is only provided to teachers involved with a child who is on an ‘Initial Behaviour Plan’. It is not provided for all staff which is what’s needed. We need training for all our staff, but there is no funding for training all.

Labour: True, restraint training is not a systemic response.

National: The government needs to take that point on board.

Q: Would you commit to extra support staff for our Special Schools? When we are talking about diverse needs, we don’t need restraint, we need supportive helpful adults. Give schools extra staff and the spaces to manage these kids.

National: We have a policy coming out on this but I can’t talk about it today.

Green Party: All schools should be supported to meet all student needs as required.

Labour: We also need the right structures including proper

professional pathways to train the specialist and expert teachers. Schools should not be finding money out of their Operations Grant to employ Teacher Aides who must be treated differently now.

Q: How has NCEA been treated in the ‘Curriculum Refresh’?

Labour: We have taken small standards and made bigger standards. We have now embedded Tikanga Māori. Finally, Te Ao Māori is in the NCEA system.

Green Party: I’m hearing there is still inequity in the way we are measuring achievement. Mātauranga Māori is a component which will solve future problems for us and must be given a valued place in the system.

National: If we get kids to succeed they can go on to live the lives they want.

Labour: I taught the NCEA pilot. It is very different now. What complicates matters is having both the Ministry and NZQA involved in the design. What we need is for principals and teachers to design NCEA, make the most of pilots, and be open to making changes.

Qu to the National Party: In your initial presentation, you cited reading, writing and mathematics as curriculum issues and made the assumption that all kids coming to school are ready to learn. That is not true. They can be compromised by the level of pastoral care they have received. That means that they cannot all learn at the same pace. That is why we have three-year bands for our learning levels not one year expectations.

National: The curriculum is just one issue. I understand children arrive at school at different levels. We are planning to deal to those issues.

Green Party: We can’t have kids ready for learning till we address housing and health. People say get these agencies talking to each other. We can’t get rid of violence till all the agencies are talking.

Labour: Schools do not have time to coordinate this.

National: I want to make sure that every child has access to Reading, Writing and Mathematics. That was part of our announcement. It’s important to keep kids on track. If you have 3-yearly bands, a child can’t access help till they are 3 years behind. Kids get lost in bands.

Q: I have been advertising for 5 weeks for a teacher and have not received a single application. How can we attract good candidates for teaching positions?

Labour: Pay and conditions play a part. Retaining good teachers also relies on class sizes, support for struggling students and engaging students to lift achievement.

National: Statistics show that the teacher supply for primary schools is ageing, and teachers are not attracted to certain areas. Māori medium specialists are in short supply. Yet we have a teacher workforce strategy. This year we have attracted only 22 overseas teachers on a two year work visa.

Green Party: What would help the pressures?

Labour: There is more and more piled on to principals and nothing is being taken away. Principals need good leadership support. The Teaching Council is supposed to provide this.

National: Was the wellbeing payment delivered to principals? I take on board the workload stress principals are experiencing.

Q: What are the main inequities in the system? Who are the winners and the losers?

Green Party: Māori [and now Pacific Island] whānau have been neglected and left out for 200 years. The social inequities are big and complex. The curriculum framework was structured to leave Māori behind.

Labour: There are families with no housing, who are transient and disconnected.

Green Party: We need to support teachers to better understand te reo and tikanga and to be honest about systemic things like why streaming started.

Q: Why are years 4–8 the most poorly funded? Why are there inequities between primary and secondary?

Labour: Years 4–8 would require new money to address the funding disparity at these year levels.

Q: Our land was stolen from us. To move forward, Te Tiriti o Waitangi should be at the centre of everything, yet I haven’t heard a single Tiriti argument today. The curriculum has perpetuated racism and that must change. The curriculum has to help leaders and teachers to be more inclusive and include Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We are reorientating a system that has underserved Māori since the beginning.

Green Party: Yes, these are the roots of colonialism.

National: When I see how teachers contextualise [Te Tiriti o Waitangi] I am heartened.

Q: Is it the political system or the education system that is iniquitous?

Labour: PPTA members have been trying to get bipartisan support for education for years.

National: I understand the frustrations, but political consensus is not likely. For example, receiving briefings on education from the Labour Ministers just doesn’t happen.

Green Party: The political system has been a failure for generations.

When asked to name the number one priority for education as they see it, the regional presidents proffered the following:

1. Primary schools to have equitable funding with secondary schools.
2. Take the politics out of education and have some long-term strategic planning.
3. More collegiality and support for principals through Kahui Ako and Principals’ Associations.
4. Embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in all we do.
5. Funding teachers to become trauma informed teachers and increasing learning support resources.

The regional presidents engaged fully in the presentations and the political panel questions. In the afternoon, they provided helpful feedback to the NZPF national executive that will shape the NZPF manifesto as the 2023 election campaign builds momentum. The manifesto, once completed, will be posted on the NZPF website and will be disseminated through the fortnightly *Principal Matters* newsletter in due course.

NZPF thanks the regional presidents for travelling to Wellington and for generously making such a valuable contribution to NZPF’s work plan for the year.



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FOSTERING EMOTIONAL LITERACY: WHY EDUCATIONAL LEADERS NEED TO INVEST!

Melissa Collins UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

KIA ORA KOUTOU, my name is Mel, and I have had the pleasure of being in education for the past 10+ years. During this time, I have worked in Primary Schools within the Waikato Region and had a small stint in the UK whilst on OE. I have had the privilege of being a kaitiaki of several leadership positions, such as Associate Principal, Curriculum Leader (Emotional Agility, Numeracy, Cultural Sustainability, Inquiry, Science and Technology), and an Across School Kaahui Ako Leader. These roles prompted me to gain a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and qualify as RocheMartin, Emotional Intelligence Coach.

Introduction

This article presents the synthesised findings from an interpretive study conducted in 2022, which investigated how four primary school principals fostered emotional literacy (EL) in their schools and the impact they believed this had on their school culture. The research sought to illuminate each principal's motivations for investing in EL, the explicit practices used to foster EL, and the perceived impact these had on school culture. More broadly, the study established connections between EL and various leadership styles and the foundational literature and tools used to support the collective understanding and implementation of EL. Thus, I then conclude, that if leaders want to influence and be able to create a thriving culture during times of ambiguity, they must invest in fostering EL practices.

What is Emotional Literacy?

EL is a new kind of literacy that focuses on regulating human relations through words, drawing attention to individuals' emotional well-being and the positive interpersonal relationships created through those words. Emotions connect to neurotransmitters with individualised outcomes and structures, and these consist of personalised, physiological compounds giving feelings assigned to one's perception of experiences. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the social constructs that contribute to understanding emotions and how individuals present themselves. Therefore, to be emotionally literate, individuals must learn to accurately identify and interpret their own and others' feelings, both complex and straightforward. To do this, leaders need to increase their emotional, social and self-awareness and their positive psychology.

How is EL different to emotional intelligence?

There are many similarities between EL and emotional intelligence theories, and many researchers use the word interchangeably; however, there are two semantic differences. The

term 'intelligence' has a more negative connotation, suggesting an innate and finite ability. Furthermore, emotional intelligence focuses on an individual's capability to comprehend and manage emotional information. In comparison, the term 'literacy' reflects positivity due to its connection to language and culture, which can improve over time. Moreover, EL acknowledges the social constructs by utilising relationships with others to comprehend and process emotional information and well-being. Therefore, EL is more conducive to an educational context than emotional intelligence.

Why does EL matter in educational leadership?

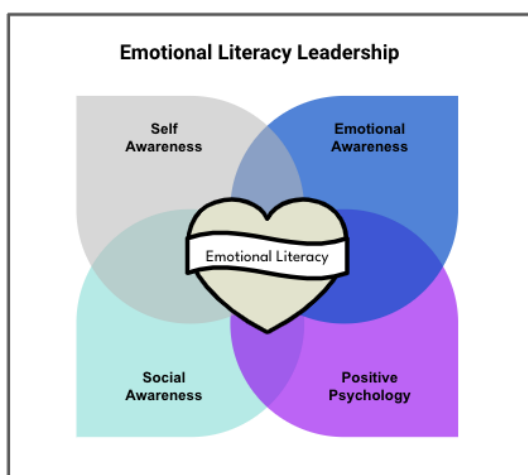
Leaders cannot 'treat emotions like pesky interlopers' (Beatty, 2007, p.333); emotions are not optional and are impossible to avoid in an educational context. Many scholars support this and believe educational leadership is profoundly complex and layered with many emotional experiences. Hence, EL is a practical approach that allows the individual to acknowledge challenging emotions such as anxiety, stress, and anger and convert them into helpful energy. In addition, EL encourages leaders to recognise and respond to the positive or negative influence emotions can have on relationships. This is essential in the educational arena, as our place of practice is founded on relationships. Therefore, leaders must intentionally amplify their social, emotional and self-awareness and positive psychology. Through these intentional practices, leaders will gain the skills and the speed to notice, understand and harness emotions to help themselves accurately and to lead others successfully. This journey is not easy; it takes time and dedication. However, through consistently modelling EL, your authenticity will shine through and influence others to be the best version of themselves for a higher purpose than self-accolades.

How can EL impact school culture?

If leaders ignore the powerful role emotions have when leading others through challenging times, these emotions (from self and others) will continue to disrupt the change process and its sustainability. Unfortunately, some leaders with low levels of EL apply a bandage approach. They ignore what is happening by living in the hope that the 'toxic ringleader/s' will leave when they introduce a new initiative. However, the literature suggests that initiatives often fail when implemented in unhealthy cultures (Leithwood & Beatty, 2009; Mahfouz et al., 2021; Roffey, 2008). This aligns with the proclamation, 'culture eats strategy for breakfast', implying that if leaders do not address the context's culture, they risk unintentionally sabotaging the change process's longevity.

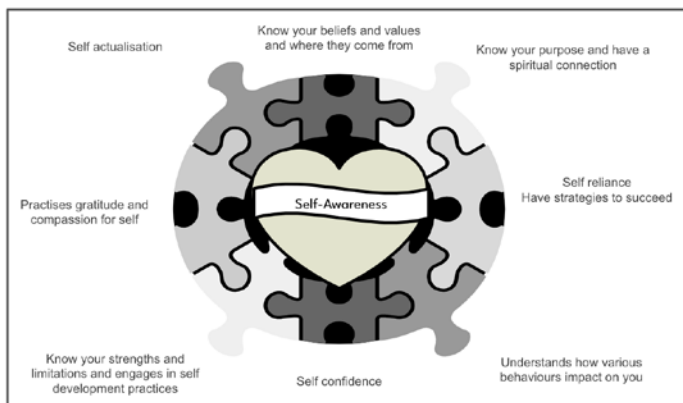
Participants highlighted that this lack of adequate acknowledgement was amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some leaders felt compelled to apply emotional labour and forge on through the emotionally charged and ambiguous climate for the greater good of the school community. Subconsciously, this stoic survival-based approach created negative ripples through some school cultures by inadvertently promoting a climate of suppression, emotional outbursts, inconsistent teaching and learning, unhealthy cliques, burnt-out teachers and compliance or resistance to change challenges and a large number of leaders leaving the profession. In comparison, leaders who fostered EL could draw upon positive psychology to successfully navigate the emotions of themselves and others. Resulting in higher staff morale, stronger relationships, higher levels of teacher and student efficacy, and fewer emotionally charged conversations as individuals were more aware of how to communicate their emotions effectively and collaboratively. Therefore, if you want to be an influential leader and create a culture of connected and emotionally attuned educators, you must begin growing your EL capabilities before strategically growing others. What EL domains should leaders invest in?

The research analysis identified four vital overarching and intersecting themes crucial for fostering EL and contributing to a thriving school culture (See Figure 1). Most participants identified these themes with supporting descriptors, synthesised in the following graphics (See Figures 2–5). The graphics acknowledge that these synthesised frames are partial, based on small-scale research; however, they create opportunities to add future pieces. Moreover, there is a natural overlap between the participants' examples of intentional actions. Conversely, these actions have been allocated to the best-fitting domain to present these findings.



Self-awareness

Participants revealed that self-awareness was one of the most vital components of developing their leadership skills. The leaders explained that intentionally spending time understanding their intricacies allowed them to respond to situations through a more compassionate lens. This involved: taking time to know their limitations, strengths, purpose, and self, having sustainable strategies to succeed, having self-compassion, being aware of the impact on self, and engaging in self-development (See Figure 2). When the above themes were deployed and continually reflected on, leaders found that they could lead as their authentic or genuine selves.

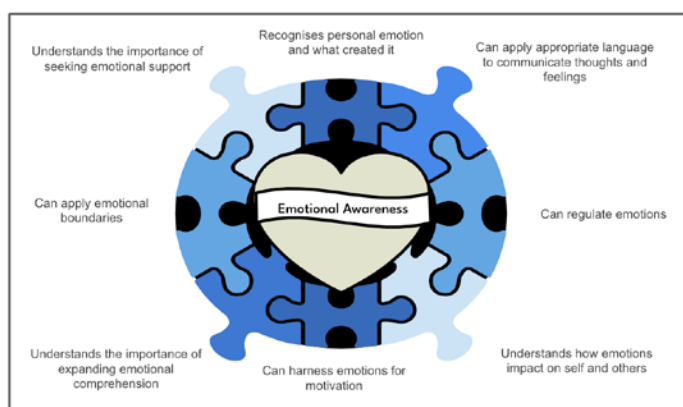


Three practical strategies to grow self-awareness

- Learn more about yourself through the use of personality and leadership surveys, 360° assessments, reflective questions and coaching conversations.
- Intentionally schedule a time to learn about your strength, your weakness and the impact they have on you and others.
- Take time to identify your; why, beliefs, values, and non-negotiables and explore how these have been generated.

Emotional awareness

Participants discussed the importance of having the capability to regulate their own emotions and communicate them in a socially acceptable manner: in other words, being emotionally aware. The participants illuminated eight key emotionally aware descriptors (See Figure 3) that they aspired to model and encouraged their teachers to develop and promote with their children, whaanau and other educational colleagues. Furthermore, they identified that when they fostered these descriptors, there were fewer emotional outbursts.



Three practical strategies to grow emotional awareness

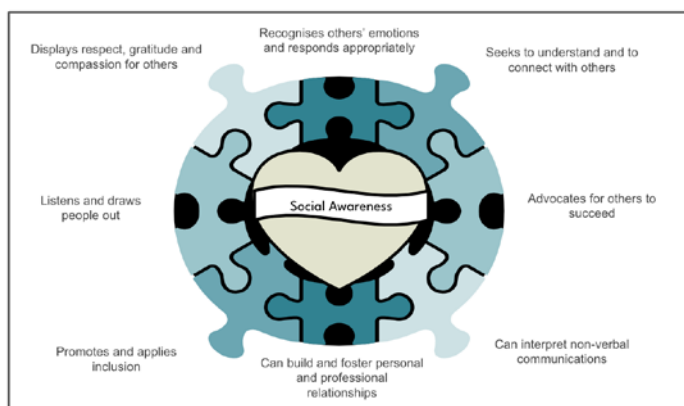
- Understanding and utilising resources grounded in Maaoridom, *Te Whare Tapa Wha* (Durie, 2001) and *Tū Rangatira* (Ministry of Education, 2010) as crucial resources for developing the emotional awareness of kaiako and tamariki.
- Creating a list of shared bucket-filling activities.
- Utilise and encourage the use of experts when needing to reach out for support.

Social awareness

Participants unveiled that social awareness is an essential element of EL. This was evident in their narratives by expressing that



people are the most critical asset in education, and even in the busyness of school, it is vital that leaders model actions that value people. For example, respecting the person and their feelings, especially during critical conversations, and, when appropriate, offering support and praise. Subsequently, leaders identified eight descriptors that they believed contributed to being socially aware (See Figure 4).

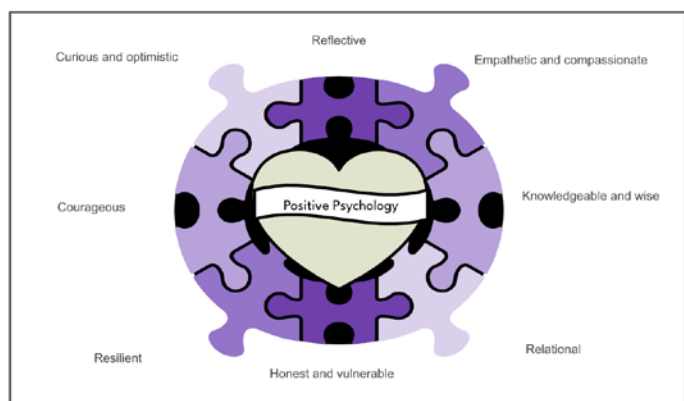


Three practical strategies to grow social awareness

- Use real-life scenario cards to teach kaiako and tamariki to read the verbal and nonverbal communication of others.
- Notice and acknowledge others' emotions and respond appropriately without worsening the situation.
- Learn to interpret what specific behaviours are being communicated and discuss the impact they could have on relationships.

Positive psychology

Participants revealed that social awareness is an essential element of EL. This was evident in their narratives by expressing that people are the most critical asset in education, and even in the busyness of school, it is vital that leaders model actions that value people. For example, respecting the person and their feelings, especially during critical conversations, and, when appropriate, offering support and praise. Subsequently, leaders identified eight descriptors that they believed contributed to being socially aware (See Figure 5).



Three practical strategies to grow positive psychology

- Put one's ego aside and model vulnerability and courage.
- Actively value people and communicate with clarity and compassion.
- When things go wrong, take extreme ownership and be specific about how and why.

So what, now what?

This research identified three prevalent actions that influential, emotionally literate leaders apply. Naturally, these actions are interwoven and organically strengthen each other. Firstly, start with yourself by committing to a journey of self-discovery. Connect the dots; learn about your purpose, passion, aspirations, non-negotiables, leadership approach, strength and limitations, and identify how they increase or decrease your success. This process will allow you to find your authentic self and create consistency between your words and actions. These behaviours will inspire followers to genuinely trust you and encourage them to reflect on these behaviours.

Secondly, connect and attain followers by growing their self-awareness, emotional awareness, social awareness, and positive psychology. This is achieved by intentionally investing in resources, shared languages and practices to amplify the latter. Promote practices such as EL book studies, implement EL meeting rituals, coaching and mentoring conversations with trained EL practitioners, regular weekly and daily whanaungatanga times, and prioritise regular EL-focused staff meetings and growth conversations. Consequently, this will create a genuine emotional connection between yourself and your followers.

Thirdly, invest in an eco-systematic approach to grow EL at all levels. An eco-systematic approach is collaborative, includes all stakeholders and identifies what successful EL looks like at all levels (micro, meso, exo, macro and local). Due to the localised criteria and inclusiveness of the approach, the buy-in of stakeholders will be much higher because they will have clarity around why, what and how EL will make a positive impact on the school community. These strategic emotional and cognitive interventions will help provide any community with appropriate language and skills to navigate and understand emotions and apply strategies to regulate themselves safely. Consequently, holistically co-constructing a strategic delivery plan and effectively implementing EL practices will positively impact the culture of a school community.

We know school leaders are notorious for setting their schools' emotional climates and cultures. Therefore, as leaders, we need to be courageous, hold the mirror up and ask ourselves how we contribute to ambiguity and an emotionally laden culture? What can we do in our realm of influence to grow a thriving, well-rounded school community? The answer is to commit to and invest in growing self-awareness, emotional awareness, social awareness and positive psychology in yourself and others. These practices are timeless, and when intentionally developed, they will positively impact each individual, resulting in a positive culture and performance shift.

For further information and practical development strategies, contact Mel Martin through <https://sites.google.com/view/leadfromwithin/home>

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THE GAME IS ON AGAIN: 'TOSSING THE EDUCATION FOOTBALL'

National's Standards

Lester Flockton

THE NATIONAL PARTY recently announced its education policy. *The Otago Daily Times* (27 March, 2023) aptly titled this play and ploy as tossing the education football! This is nothing new. Back in 1998 then leader of the party, Jennifer Shipley, boldly proclaimed that 'by 2005 every child turning 9 will be able to read, write and do maths for success'. Did she score? Not a single goal! Then twelve years later an ever-confident and self-convinced John Key pronounced the party's repeatedly-stated stand.

I am concerned to learn that up to 1 in 5 of our children leave our schools without the literacy and numeracy skills they need to succeed. That's right. Up to 1 in 5 New Zealanders leaving school with inadequate reading,

writing, and math skills. And that's why the National led government is introducing National Standards in all years 1 to 8 schools. *John Key, scripted on-line video*

Did Key's regulated *system* of National Standards, dutifully served up by the Ministry of Education, score a goal by lifting the 20 per cent of 'failing' students into success? After 6 years of endless championing and outpourings of time, effort and taxpayers' money the answer and evidence are clear to see. The scoreboard barely touched the goal line.

Now, 12 years after the introduction of a miserably failed system of National Standards, National Party leader Christopher Luxon is having his go with the announcement of his party's

Figure 1: Proportion of students achieving 'At' or 'Above' the National Standards by subject 2011-2016

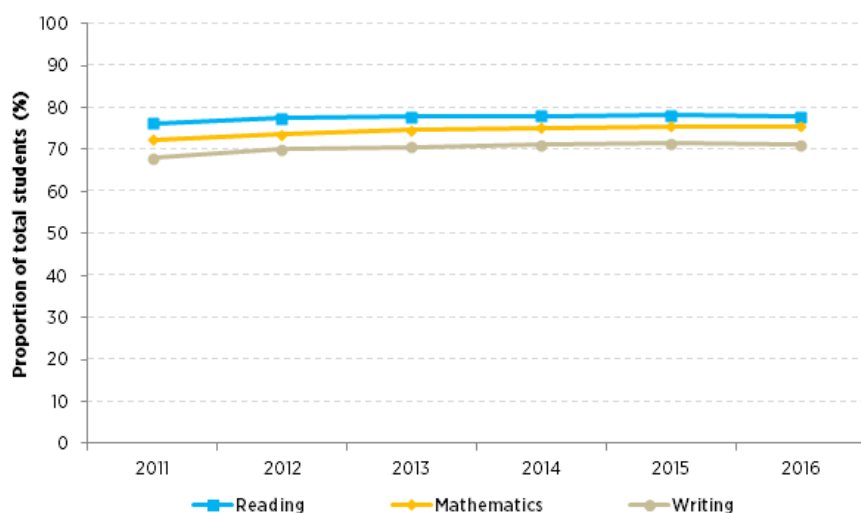


Table 1: Proportion of students achieving 'At' or 'Above' the National Standard by ethnicity and gender in 2014-2016

Student Type	Reading			Maths			Writing		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Māori	68.6%	68.9%	68.8%	65.0%	65.6%	65.3%	61.2%	61.8%	61.6%
Pasifika	65.0%	66.1%	66.0%	61.9%	63.3%	62.7%	59.7%	60.6%	60.5%
Asian	79.1%	79.0%	78.4%	83.3%	83.5%	83.7%	75.1%	74.8%	74.3%
European/Pākehā	84.3%	84.4%	84.2%	80.5%	80.8%	80.8%	76.8%	77.4%	77.1%
Female	82.4%	82.5%	82.1%	75.8%	76.2%	75.9%	79.2%	79.5%	79.4%
Male	73.8%	73.9%	73.6%	74.5%	74.9%	75.0%	63.4%	64.0%	63.4%
Total	78.0%	78.1%	77.8%	75.2%	75.5%	75.4%	71.1%	71.5%	71.2%



‘back on track’ policy for education. Unquestionably, ‘back on track’ includes back on National Standards, albeit with a revised *system*. He claims New Zealand has been running a failed system, while not daring to mention or acknowledge that his party contributed a major part of this failure with years of deeply flawed National Standards. Says Mr Luxon:

The problem is not just the kids are failing but the system is failing. . . . We know that its by improving children’s literacy and numeracy in line with expectations for each and every school year that’s gunna allow them to progress well through primary school and arrive at secondary school ready for extension. *Christopher Luxon*

If only it were that simple and that easy to fix the ‘system’ and to have all children capable of progressing ‘well’ through their primary years and attaining readiness for ‘extension’ when they arrive at secondary school – regardless of natural aptitude, home and community circumstances, upbringing, home support, teacher support, etc. Unlike the proposed standardised tests, children – for better or worse – are clearly not standardised.

Thinking that standardising everything might work magic assumes every child turns up in the classroom on the same footing as every other child. It presupposes all children learn at the same rate and ignores the impact of poverty, the limitations of many children’s pre-school experiences, the diversity of cultures, and those with learning difficulties or unacceptable behaviour, to name a few. *Otago Daily Times 27 March*

It is not surprising that critics of National’s latest policy will see it as a re-jigging of its failed National Standards. Equally it is not surprising that the current National Party leadership is keen to distance itself from that failure by misleadingly claiming their new approach is no longer National Standards. Consider the following points.

- By definition, what National is proposing are indisputably **National Standards** They intend to prescribe what must be taught at each year level (**standards**) and those standards must be followed in every State school in New Zealand (**national**).
- **National standards** can be regulated and administered in different ways but if they fit the above stipulations, then they are nonetheless **National Standards** regardless of the *system* in which they are to be administered.
- The last National Government required that schools **measure** and **report results** of student performance at each **year level**. They required the results to be reported in **plain English** to parents/caregivers. They also required schools to funnel cohort data to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education then published every school’s results in *Education Counts*, giving full public access to every school’s results. But they did not prescribe *how* student performance on the **standards** was to be measured. Herein lies a key difference between the old and the newly proposed **National Standards** which otherwise have some distinct similarities.
- Under this new National party policy, schools will be required to **measure** and **report results** of student performance on the **standards** at each **year level**. It will require the results to be reported in **plain English** to parents/caregivers. But there is no indication (yet?) that schools will be required to submit their data to the Ministry. Unlike the previous National Party policy/regulations, they will **stipulate tests** that must be administered twice a year to measure student performance on their standards.
- Moreover, the policy stipulates that Mr Hattie’s **e-asTTle** will be the tests to be used by every school from Year 3 to

Year 8. Presumably, the results of these tests will be the basis for reporting to parents/caregivers (hopefully not in some statistical code that numerous people simply would not understand).

- Many schools opt to use **PAT** over **e-asTTle**, and for good reasons. Will this latest Party policy disenfranchise **PAT** because of singular patronage of **e-asTTle**? (And please don’t tell schools that they can always use both.)
- The National Party say they will **re-write the curriculum** in Mathematics, Reading, Writing in a matter of weeks. How might they do this with such neck-breaking speed? By simply extrapolating test objectives from **e-asTTle**? In effect this could mean that **e-asTTle** controls the curriculum with schools resorting to teaching to the test. What is to be measured (**e-asTTle**) is what is to be taught.

National’s revised data-fuelled National Standards system seems very much what Hattie had in mind. Perhaps he was even called upon to advise the Party. Regardless, one can be excused for suspecting that National’s policy-makers have very clearly bought into Hattieism. They are not only bent on **e-asTTle** tests but also using Hattie rhetoric by parroting his oft-stated claim that measuring ‘**progress**’ is more important than measuring ‘**achievement**’. Such spin fails to admit that in order to measure progress you must first measure achievement. Progress and Achievement are opposite sides of the same measurement coin. Let’s not forget that. Moreover, most want to know where kids are ‘at’ in their learning – not just the amount of progress made according to a test.

To get ‘back on track’ for lifting student performance, schools would be required to teach mathematics, reading and writing for one hour each a day – in all, 15 hours a week. Is this about right, or is it too much for every child? Then there’s everything else schools are expected to teach: New Zealand Histories and the rest of the Social Sciences area, digital literacy and the rest of the Technology area, environmental science and the rest of the Science area, the creative side of the Arts in music, dance, drama and visual arts, well-being and the rest of the Health, Physical Education area, Te Reo and tikanga Māori– all to be squeezed into the remaining time with schools expected to do the curricular balancing act and teachers having confidence to do the lot!

Once again, the direction of New Zealand’s schooling seems set to fall into the grips of political wizardry, self-assurance and boastfulness. There is no question but that we need to seriously tackle declining achievement among significant numbers of students and that this requires clear and sensible direction with plenty of grass roots support that actually works and is worth the money spent on it. But who is capable of leading such direction? Politicians? Some of the Ministry of Education’s 4000 plus staff? Ministry appointed and anointed academics and technocrats (typically called ‘experts’)? Or widely respected education professionals capable of bringing depth of grounded experience, curricular and assessment know-how, critical fortitude, open-mindedness, common sense and a good measure of wisdom?

John Key was strongly cautioned over the introduction of his National Standards *system* by such people, but he chose to dismiss their advice. Hoped-for votes are what mattered most! But the policy and its sequel, Investing in Education Success (IES) and COLs have failed to meet their purpose of significantly lifting achievement. So are we to go through this all over again?

All of this political footballing begs the important question: what needs to be done that will actually produce the results we all want? It seems to me that it doesn’t just start in the classroom and that the school is not, and never should be, the only site where the ball is kicked around.

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- Learning should complement the social and cultural factors (like experiences of home and community) that shape a child's learning and development.
- Children should be actively involved in their own learning, and helped to develop competence, responsibility, confidence and self-worth.
- Learning should balance physical, cognitive, language and communication, and social and emotional development.
- Learning should be age appropriate, play based and child centred. It should include both child- and adult-led activities.
- Early years education should help children transition successfully to primary school, moving from informal, play-based learning to teaching that is more formal.

The Cambridge Early Years Curriculum

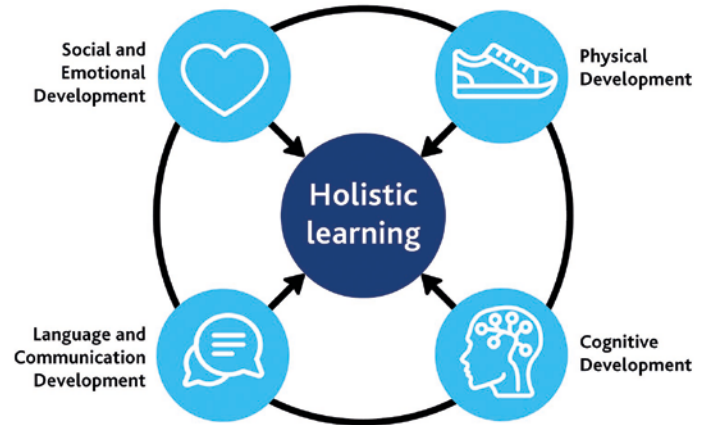
The programme balances physical, cognitive, social & emotional, and language & communication development. Learning follows a spiral approach that ensures topics and skills are revisited and elaborated in more depth to gain the right knowledge, understanding and skills. The structure of the curriculum allows schools to meet each child's individual needs and meet internationally established milestones for early development.

Six curriculum areas

There are six subject areas to guide and support early years teaching:

Communication, language and literacy: Speaking, listening, reading and writing are crucial to a child's early development. Teaching and learning with fun activities and a range of texts allows children to experience and engage with the importance of language.

Creative expression: This important curriculum area brings together skills and cognitive processes from across the whole curriculum, allowing



children to communicate their ideas and develop their imagination through art and design, music, dance and drama.

Mathematics: At an early age, it's important to help children recognise how mathematics impacts everyday life. Through games and activities, we can introduce children to mathematical language, thinking and concepts that they will need when they start their primary education.

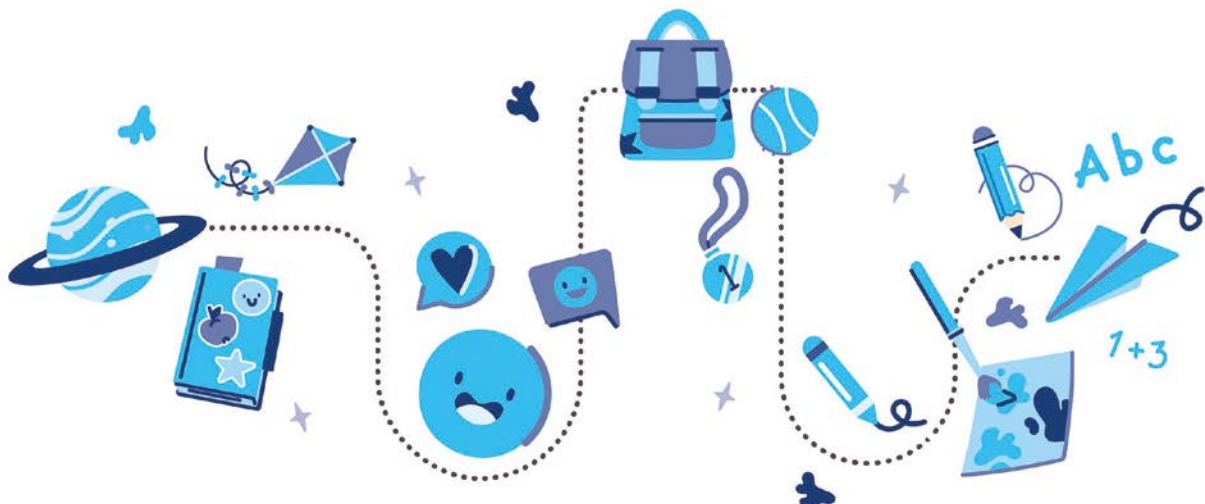
Physical development: The curriculum encourages children to develop movement skills through play, helping them to build positive attitudes towards exercise and laying the foundations for healthy, active lives.

Personal, social and emotional development: This area underpins children's well-being and attainment. It helps them to develop social learning and friendships, regulate their emotional responses and respond to the needs of others, and develop self-esteem and confidence.

Understanding the world: Children's natural curiosity must be encouraged, so that they are equipped to reflect, question, explore and interact with the world around them. This area of the curriculum lays foundations for a range of different subjects in primary education and beyond, including science, digital literacy, history, geography and religious education.

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THE INQUIRY DEBACLE

Dr Linda Bendikson and Dr Frauke Meyer

EVERY SCHOOL CAN improve on their current achievement levels, but it takes a clear vision and strong procedural support, to *ensure* improvement occurs. Currently, there is a major impediment to effective leadership of improvement in New Zealand schools, and that is a fundamental misunderstanding of the type of ‘inquiry cycle’ that is required to lead improvement. The very words ‘inquiry cycle’ are linked to various interpretations of a process that is often poorly executed and, in some cases, is nothing more than a burden for teachers. Some schools have become littered with incoherent practices including requirements on teachers to participate in numerous, and often ill-defined and unrelated, individual and group inquiries. Demanding these multiple inquiry processes can be a barrier to improvement as opposed to an instrument for it.

The problems with ‘Inquiry’

Even when schools carry out less and more aligned cycles, they typically suffer from a number of major handicaps. In our research and development work, we have noticed at least five key problems in the way improvement cycles are interpreted and enacted. These are outlined in our book, *It’s Not Rocket Science: A Guide to the School Improvement Cycle* (Bendikson & Meyer, 2023) from which the next section is a slightly-adapted excerpt.

Time spent planning

We see schools taking up to 10 weeks every year stuck in the scoping or planning step before starting to focus on testing their theories, and they repeat this pattern year after year. While deep analysis is important, all too often school teams get lost in the data and lose focus at this early planning stage. They frequently do not know what data to focus on, nor how to manage the information and discern what data are most important. Cycles of improvement are supposed to be rapid. The first cycle that one undertakes will necessarily be more challenging and take longer to plan than subsequent cycles because of the need to develop and test measurement tools and initial theories. However, the planning stage should not be overly extended or else the team loses motivation and focus. Effective improvement cycles become self-driving as each cycle inevitably leads to further inquiry into why schools are getting unsatisfactory results. This inquiry leads to some *re-design* of strategies and schools proceed around the cycle again. This process does not stop at the end of one year and start at the beginning of the next. It is ongoing. So, after the first cycle, planning or scanning should not take an extensive amount of time.

Failure to form a clear goal

Many schools fail in the early planning stage where they are supposed to clarify a goal focus and narrow it down to an attainable step. For instance, we often find schools approach the goal-setting stage with unclear goals which they ‘load’ with assumed solution strategies. Here is one recent example: ‘Improve student learning through culturally responsive practices.’ This goal is problematic for two reasons. First, the goal does not point to specific learning outcomes that are desired for students. What aspect of student learning does the school want to improve? In our view, the focus to improve should be on a specific student-learning outcome. Second, the goal assumes that the solution is to focus on ‘culturally responsive practices.’ The specific problem to be solved remains unclear, but they have already jumped straight to an assumed solution. Setting out with an assumed solution will hinder leaders from keeping an open mind when they come to the causal analysis and strategy-design step. Thus, embedding one proposed solution in the goal is not helpful in guiding an improvement cycle. This is a typical approach to problem-solving in schools. As noted by Mintrop and Zumpe (2019), ‘solutions may be looking for problems they might fight’ (p.300) or as we describe it, school leaders frequently have ‘a solution in search of a problem’. No achievement problem is solved by one ‘magic-bullet solution’. Multiple related strategies are required and these are derived from systematic causal analysis.

Failure to create short-term outcomes and measures

Most schools, in our experience, fail to define how they will measure improvement in relation to outcome data or implementation of strategies (process data) before they act. Without a short-term measure, they lack baseline data on student outcomes, or on teacher or leader actions. Hence, they do not know where they started and, therefore, do not know how much progress they have made at the completion of a cycle. Whether progress is being made might only be evident at the end of the year when they collect summative data, but then it is too late to address the problem. The steps of designing and testing a short-term measure and establishing a baseline are not explicitly stated in most improvement cycles and are commonly missed, yet these are the most fundamental requirement of a cycle because it is these short-term results that motivate both students and teachers to further efforts and promote their self-efficacy (Locke & Latham, 2019).

Failure to link adult learning with student outcomes

Another common issue is that the professional learning under-

taken by schools implementing cycles often does not address the causes of ‘the problem’, because the professional learning is not directly connected to student outcomes. To be effective, a school has to put in place the changes they think will address the causes of the problem and, as a result, lead to improvement. Then, they examine the short-term outcomes and learn from them. These outcomes should drive their curiosity about how to improve the results further. This, in turn, helps them to ask the right questions of research or experts who can help. The adult learning is, therefore, a *by-product* of measuring effectiveness in the short-term: ‘Did that work? For whom did it not work? Why not? Where can we find out how to help specific student groups more effectively?’ Instead, we commonly see a generic approach to adult learning – such as everyone attending a course that has some general relationship to the goal. That is not the kind of learning that is embedded in a cycle. In a cycle, the short-term outcomes, also known as *quick wins, small wins, just-in-time data, or intermediate outcomes*, largely drive the adult learning, as they reveal what teachers and leaders know and do, and what needs to change.

Inquiry overload

Finally, the last and most common misunderstanding, from our point of view, is that many schools overload teachers with expectations to carry out individual ‘inquiries’ or cycles, as well as school-wide or department-wide ones. If the system is well designed and underpinned by whole-school or department goals, that approach can be fruitful but, all too often, time is wasted as teachers’ inquiries are frequently focused on teachers’ interests with little linkage to the overall improvement goal the school is pursuing. Sometimes teachers must produce a formal report or present their results to the school, but without these inquiries being linked to a shared goal, the sharing of the learning will have little effect on the practice of other teachers or on the systematic improvement of practices and results across the school. Too often, individual inquiries become little more than an act of compliance by busy teachers.

Implementing improvement cycles is a team sport; it requires that teams of teachers define common problems and common goals for student learning, design measures, and implement an agreed and consistent strategy to address problems and improve outcomes. Then they need to, *collectively*, assess their impact in a short period of time, study the trends in their results, and problem-solve before setting off on another cycle. If this work is not collaborative and embedded into school systems such as routine meetings, the learning is not applied. They remain a strategy for one teacher, and other teachers do not have ownership of the learning and the school itself does not improve in how it operates.

So what?

All these problems contribute to schools often trying hard but having little impact. It’s not rocket science, but it can be incredibly difficult to help leaders carry out an effective cycle. We propose a new model that builds off other well-known models (Bryk et al., 2015; Langley et al., 2009; Moen & Norman, 2010; Timperley et al., 2014), theory, and what we have learnt from helping schools improve. The School Improvement Cycle process that we describe (Bendikson & Meyer, 2023) explicitly steps schools through the critical parts of the process but its implementation in a school needs to be centrally organised to achieve common improvement goals – not numerous disparate

practices that merely over-burden teachers and contribute little to improving the school – but a coherent leadership strategy that reduces both the cognitive load of how to lead improvement, as well as reducing the workload of teachers and leaders. The details of how that is done will vary from school to school as they build off their best current practices and amend others. When this way of working becomes ‘business-as-usual’, improvement in student outcomes and the overall running of the school becomes self-sustaining. It becomes ‘the way we do things here’.

Our School Improvement Cycle entails four major steps, just as many other improvement cycles do (see Figure 1) (1) *define the problem and the goal*, (2) *develop the theory for improvement*, (3) *implement strategies*, and (4) *check and refine*. The second step is important, but can be messy, thus we highlight four sub-steps, which we argue are critical for success, but are often forgotten or poorly executed.

- narrow the goal focus to some pedagogical quick wins. (These are usually some fundamental knowledge or skills, the lack of which is going to impede the future learning of the student);
- develop and test measures of success with the quick wins;
- establish the baseline on quick wins to understand the status quo;
- analyse the causes and design both pedagogical and organisational improvement strategies to address the various causes.

Figure 1

The School Improvement Cycle



We accentuate the need to narrow the goal focus to short-term outcomes or quick wins and the need to develop and test specific measures of quick wins, because these provide assurance that the school is moving in the right direction during the year. In addition, a thorough causal analysis is required to address the short- and long-term systemic causes of the problem. These steps of designing and testing measures and carrying out causal analysis feed back into leaders’ thinking about what strategies are required to achieve progress. Research is often required to inform an effective pedagogical response. A school may go around this mini-cycle a number of times. For example, the school might first test the theory about what to improve (the initial quick win) and the measurement tool with a few students. If the data collected on quick wins do not show the needed improvement, the school circles back to the first sub-step. This might lead them to revise their thinking about what the focus of initial quick wins should be, and therefore, the measurement tool would have to be adjusted – along with some of their theorising about the causes of the problem. At some stage during this process, the school team needs to stop and formally record their theories about the causes of the



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unsatisfactory results that they are seeking to address. This leads to the formalisation of a 'theory for improvement' that entails both pedagogical and organisational strategies that are theorised to lead to improvement. It is, in essence, the annual plan.

In the third step, *implement strategies*, the team implement their agreed pedagogical strategies, potentially first in one or two classrooms to test them further, collecting quick win outcome data and process data about changes being made by teachers and leaders as they do so. They then move to the fourth step, *check and refine*, looking at the results they achieved and what they have learnt from the implementation that could support the refinement of their measures and strategies in the next cycle. Simultaneously, the leadership team makes the required amendments to processes that are also impeding improvement such as changes to make meetings focused on outcomes and changes in job descriptions to clarify the important role of middle leaders in this process. The training and support of middle leaders is fundamental to carrying out this process effectively and efficiently. Most importantly, this 'inquiry' process, while not rocket science, requires strong and knowledgeable leadership. Without that, a mish-mash of incoherent practices merely takes up teachers' and leaders' time without adding visible value to student learning outcomes.

An extended and comprehensive guide to this process with case studies from both primary and secondary schools is available in our upcoming book, *It's not rocket science: A guide to the school improvement cycle (2023)* available from Eurospan bookstore from early February. Use code MEP25 for a 25% discount. School-specific guidance and support in using cycles for improvement is offered via Linda's 'Leading Improvement' programme. Go to <https://lbschooling.com/> for more information.

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About the authors

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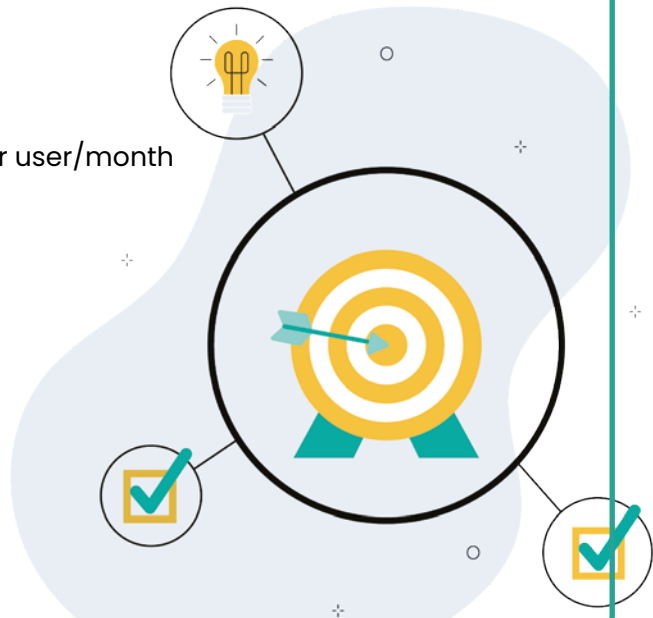
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LEADING THE REDUCTION OF RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES AND OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND



Nick Burnett

The current situation

The decision to use the phrases ‘Restrictive Practices’ and ‘Occupational Violence’ stems from the increasing prevalence of references to the more general language of restrictive practices as opposed to just physical restraint, and the findings of a recent Principal survey from Australia as well as some recent work in the Health sector where this is the more widely accepted term.

As there are a range of definitions, I am using the following for the purposes of this article:

- *Restrictive practices* – A restrictive practice is any action that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm.
- *Occupational Violence* as any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is threatened, harmed, injured by another person in the course of, or as a direct result of his or her work.

In New Zealand the most recent research that I could find was written in 2013 in relation to a 2011 survey, ‘Understanding workplace violence and its prevention in New Zealand: The 2011 New Zealand workplace violence survey.’ 96 New Zealand organisations were surveyed and just over one-half of participating organisations reported cases of violence, with a total of nearly 2,500 cases reported in 2009.

In Australia, there has been an annual survey undertaken for a number of years now called the Australian Principal Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Survey, headed by Professor Philip Riley, and more recently AITSL released the ‘National strategy to address the abuse of teachers, school leaders and other school staff.’

The Riley et al survey identified the current situation in Australia:

- 83 per cent of school leaders were subjected to at least one form of offensive behaviour in the last 12 months
- 62.1 per cent of participants reported being subjected to at least one offensive behaviour from parents and carers, and 39.9 per cent reported being subjected to at least two offensive behaviours from parents.
- 43 per cent of school leaders had been exposed to threats of violence
- 37 per cent of school leaders had been exposed to physical violence

- 33 per cent of school leaders had been exposed to bullying

For threats of violence the rate was 5.5 times greater than the general population, physical violence was 9.4 times greater, and bullying was 4 times greater.

A little on leadership

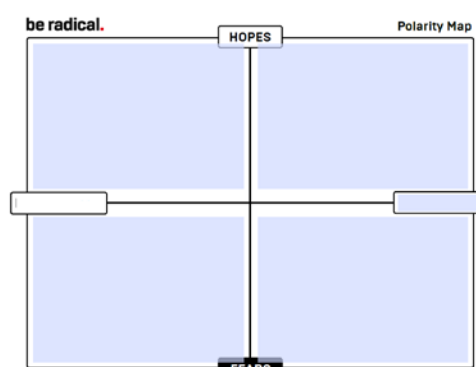
There is obviously a wealth of research on leadership in education, but I’d like to share two frameworks that could be of assistance to leaders in navigating a two-pronged approach to reducing both restrictive practices and occupational violence.

Polarity thinking

As humans we often fall into the polarity trap of binary thinking where we create an unnecessary duality with either/or type thinking.

In many interactions with education systems in Australia and New Zealand, I’ve seen a tension between sections within the organisation whose focus is either on students and reducing restrictive practices, OR staff whose focus is on reducing occupational violence and by its structure it appears to become a decision as to whose rights are more important whereas in reality both have equal merit and are of equal importance.

The quadrant model below is one I believe gives an opportunity to explore the tension in a proactive way. The top boxes focus on reducing restrictive practices on one side and occupational violence on the other. The bottom boxes are places to recognise fears of the impact on the other if there is too great a focus – creating a constructive discussion about how the organisation might recognise they are starting to move into fears and how they might respond.



BeRadical 2023

Agility and adaptability: either/or OR both/and?

Another example of binary thinking is the expectation that leaders should be proactive rather than reactive, despite the fact that the very nature of schools is that there is always going to be a reactive element to the job. In my experience the words adaptability and agility are often used interchangeably, and in doing so lose their deeper meaning and therefore become less useful. So, this is my current take on what they are:

- **Agility** – quick responses to what is happening. This is super important in the short-term in being able to react and respond to the day-to-day challenges that arise – REACTIVE
- **Adaptability** – permanent change over a period of time. These changes are likely to be slower in being implemented but are needed for long-term success and are often driven by an innate sense of curiosity as to how to improve – PROACTIVE

So, which is more important?

The quick answer is both and particularly in relation to leading the reduction of restrictive practices AND occupational violence. Leaders need to take their organisations on a journey to shift their culture to one where there is a dual focus on the young people being supported and the staff who undertake this rewarding but often challenging role.

I hope this article has proved useful to you and I'd love to engage in further conversations as to how we might support you on this important but complex journey.

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Author

Nick Burnett is the Managing Director of Australia & New Zealand and International Director of Coaching for Team Teach.

He has over 30 years of experience working in mainstream and special schools as a teacher, senior leader, and school principal in both day and residential settings. Nick is also an author, accredited Restorative Practice facilitator and leadership coach.

While Nick was headteacher of a successful state special school in the UK, he trained to be a Team Teach Intermediate Trainer. The school was praised in an Ofsted inspection for their implementation and use of Team Teach training. This positive approach to behaviour significantly impacted the high rating they achieved.

Nick then qualified as an Advanced Trainer, running training in a wide range of settings across the UK and, after moving to Australia, in Asia-Pacific countries.

Nick was the first special school leader to gain a Research Associateship from the National College of School Leadership, which involved researching leadership in Special Schools in England and Australia. This has led to the publication of a book, *Leadership and Special Education Needs*, which was highly commended by the Times Educational Supplement and National Association of Special Education Needs (NASEN) Annual Book Awards. He has also written many publications about reducing risk and restraint, leadership, and positive approaches to behaviour support.

Nick now supports and develops Team Teach trainers to equip them with the attitudes, skills, and knowledge for successful coaching. He advocates a whole-setting holistic approach to behaviour and continues to work with teams across a wide range of education and care settings.

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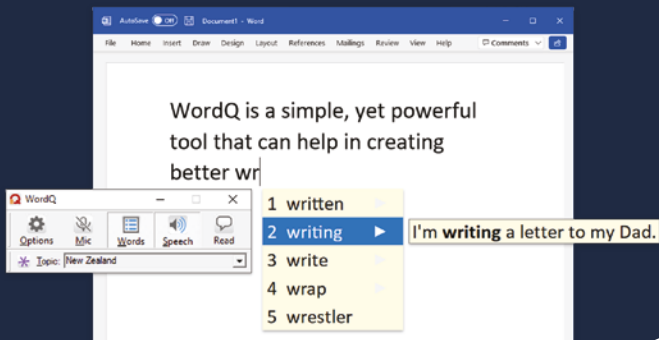


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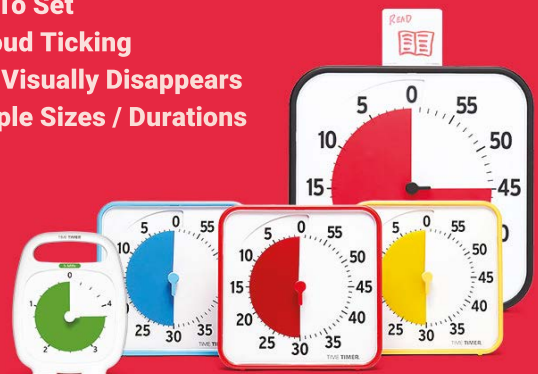
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FALLING ON YOUR FEET

Education and the approaching election

Martin Thrupp thrupp@waikato.ac.nz



LAST YEAR I wrote a column in this magazine with the title 'And so it begins'. Drawing on Opposition Leader Chris Luxon's public comments at the time, I argued that National would likely announce some kind of education policy heavily centred on standards, testing and accountability before the next election. I suggested that whatever would be proposed would most likely be a simplistic 'policy by soundbite' kind of idea but one that would still be taken up enthusiastically by many in an election year.

Sure enough, March this year saw the announcement of National's 'Teaching the Basics Brilliantly' election year plan that would involve primary and intermediate aged children spending an hour each on reading, writing, and maths every day, non-negotiable curriculum requirements, new standardised assessments and an exit exam for teacher education students in reading, writing, maths and science. With Chris Hipkins now Prime Minister, there are new political opportunities for National in such a proposal. There has been the opportunity to paint the PM's former portfolio as ineffectual. Chris Hipkins has also repeatedly signalled 'back to basics' in relation to wider economic matters and government spending. This has seemed to support National's 'back to basics' approach to the education portfolio as well.

Whether or not National gets to carry out its 'Teaching the Basics Brilliantly' plan after the election remains to be seen. But National's plan has already highlighted Labour's sometimes naïve positioning in relation to developing education policy including curriculum and assessment policy. It often seems that the Labour Government thinks that principled education policy can be positioned above the fray, no longer subject to being a political football or to the more general exercise of power. Consequently, Labour will probably be reluctant to respond to National's 'Teaching the Basics Brilliantly' plan, if it does at all.

We have seen this with the so-called 'Education Conversation' consultation in 2018, where Lockwood Smith, former National Education Minister, was appointed 'guardian' of the process and where the aim was a 30 year plan that would survive multiple changes of government. How realistic was that?

Another good example is the way the Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce was sent out to promote their ideas via a national roadshow in early 2019, as if agreement could ever be reached amongst schools and school communities around the 'levelling of the playing field' that the Taskforce was proposing. Again, how realistic was that?

A further everyday example of Labour's 'principled' approach to education policy is the way the central government agencies and other education bodies now typically use Māori language and concepts wherever possible to name new educational developments. Consider for instance the Teaching Council's Rauhuia (Leadership Space) which has been running PLD events for New Zealand school leaders such as 'Tino Rangatiratanga me te Mana Motuhake'. The Teaching Council website tells us that 'it is a non-negotiable that Te Tiriti o Waitangi should provide the framework of leadership capability growth and development for kaiako in Aotearoa New Zealand'.

The framework will probably be popular amongst Te Reo Māori speakers throughout the motu as well as within the Wellington belt-way. Yet how much genuine 'buy-in' will there be to such initiatives from the large number of New Zealand teachers and school leaders who are not strong in Te Reo and tikanga Māori?

What's needed is an approach which carefully scaffolds learning in this area rather than expects huge leaps of understanding and commitment. Yet it seems that the central government agencies and other education bodies don't care if they get massively ahead of the majority of teachers and schools. Let's see in a decade or so if such a strategy was impactful or not.

Turning now to National's plan itself, what stands out is the limited scope of what is proposed in order to improve levels of achievement in schools. 'Teaching the Basics Brilliantly' builds on the idea that teachers are not clear enough about the basics to be covered, hence the allocated use of classroom time. But there are numerous other concerns that are negatively impacting schools and students at the moment that are not included in National's plan. Unless these are recognised, National does seem to be merely pursuing a silver bullet.

Let me mention one area that I've been involved with in recent years: teacher education. There are mainly two types in Aotearoa, undergraduate and post-graduate or Masters.

Undergraduate teacher education students do a three year programme and are typically young and straight out of secondary school. As a result, their learning tends to have been heavily impacted by Covid-19 with recent cohorts being noticeably less strong academically than earlier ones. With the needs of children and young people in schools becoming more complex, it also has to be asked whether such undergraduate teacher education

To me the **BEST ANSWER** for New Zealand **TEACHER EDUCATION** would be longer graduate level programmes.



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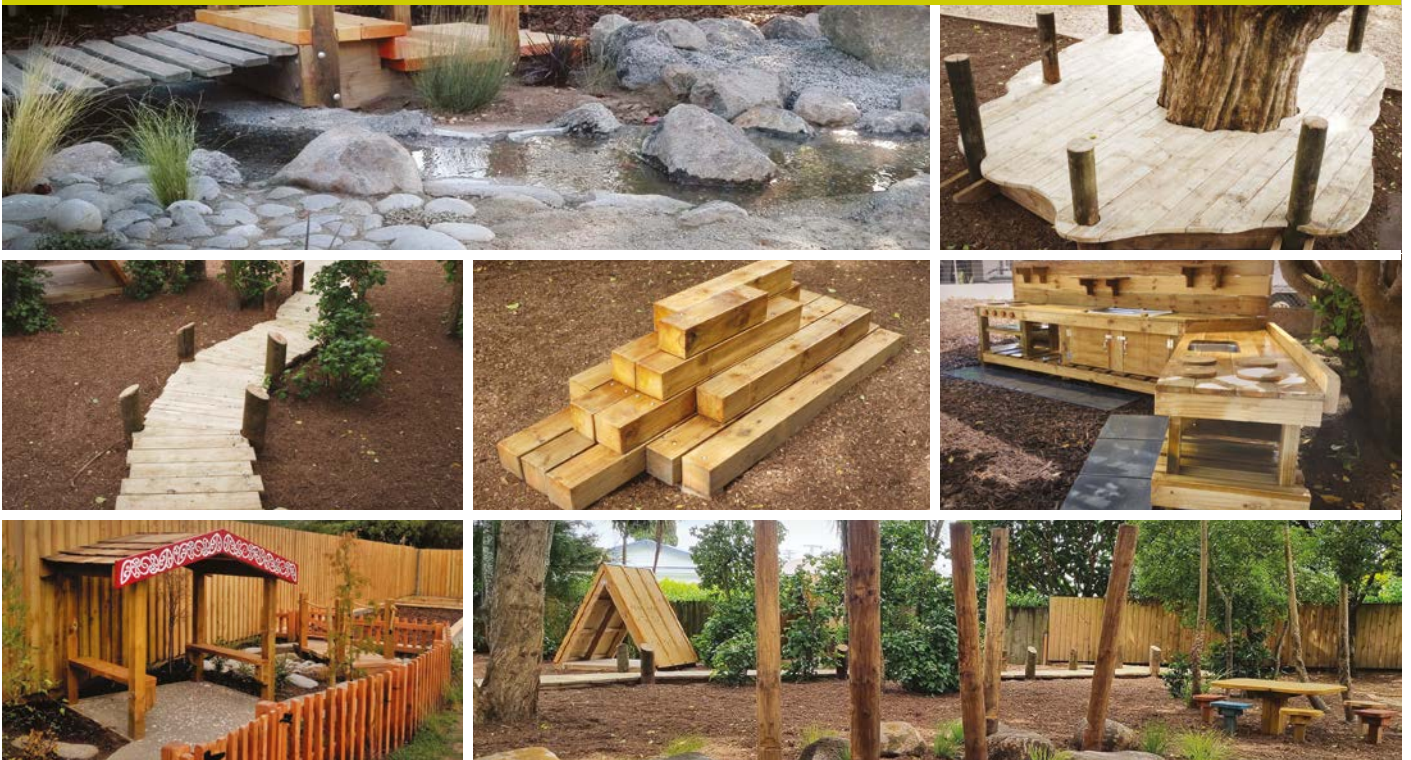
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students have the maturity to cope with the demands of teaching, even after a three-year degree.

Post-graduate or Masters students have done another degree prior to coming into teacher education and therefore haven't experienced Covid-19 problems in schools in the same way as the undergraduates. They also typically have more life experience to draw on than undergraduate students. However, the down-side of post-graduate or Masters level teacher education is that it is only a one year programme which makes for an unhelpfully intensive teacher education experience.

You can probably see where I'm going with this. To me the best answer for New Zealand teacher education would be longer graduate level programmes (yes, similar to Finland). But unlike the exit exam for teacher education students as proposed by National's plan, this would require significant extra resources. Let's hope we get some more substantial commitments to education as this election year progresses.

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TE RITO O TE HARAKEKE

HELEN KINSEY-WIGHTMAN

ON MONDAY, I was welcomed as the tumuaki hou | new principal of Ruakākā Primary School.

In my culture, starting well is important. I was raised with sayings like, ‘Start as you mean to go on . . .’, and ‘You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression.’ In Māori culture beginnings are so important that they are formalised by pōwhiri – the ritual of first encounter. As explained by Rawiri Smith (Ngati Kahungunu)¹:

The Powhiri recognises the mana of all the participants. One of the most important values of the Māori people is manaaki, or caring for the mana of everyone.

In an article entitled, Manaakitanga – more than just hospitality, Cassie Hart (Ngāi Tahu)² explains:

Living by the principles of manaakitanga means stopping to ask “whose mana am I encouraging?” and “am I elevating others?” – whether that be through words or actions. In uplifting others and giving them respect and aroha, we also hold our own mana in balance.

Because I value the mana of my new community – and because I understand that how effectively I do that affects my own mana – I spent time preparing for what I wanted to say at my pōwhiri with support from a Te Reo speaker who understands local hapū. I spent time practising my Te Reo Māori (remembering the words of Tahi Gotty one of my first kaiako who would always say, ‘Short and sweet beats long and wrong!’) and thinking about the metaphor and whakatauki I wanted to use.

Our local hapū are Patuharakeke and our Māori immersion unit is named Te Whānau Harakeke. To honour this metaphor, I used the whakatauki above and talked about our tamariki and mokopuna as te rito o te kaupapa. The rito of the harakeke is the young centre leaf of the flax plant, it is protected by the awahi rito – the parent leaves around it. This week I have felt like te rito – truly welcomed and supported by the awahi rito of all ages around me.

More than anything I have enjoyed meeting the tamariki, my office has a sliding door that leads out to the covered play area and I love leaving the door open so that they can pop in and chat to me.

Before beginning my new role, our Kahui Ako leader Shirley, suggested I might like to attend the Tai Tokerau Principals’ Association Conference in order to begin some of the relationship building amongst other principals who will also form part of the awahi rito of my tumuakitanga. It was a great way to begin my new role. While I was there I asked them for their advice to a new Principal and these are some of the things they said:

- Invite as many people as you can to tell you about their school. Listen and take loads of notes.
- Make yourself present – at the gate in the morning, at pick up in the afternoon, at meetings etc.
- Parents will be curious and will want to get to know you – so be open and available.
- Take the time to know your staff, tamariki and community before initiating any changes. Relationships are everything – reach out for support – there is no such thing as a silly question.

Many new principals choose to sit back and observe for the first year. Not me, my advice is if you don’t like something change it straight away. When you start it’s the best time to pull all the wires out and start fresh.

Make your intentions clear, you’re the leader of learning. Change is good and growth hurts. A bit like pulling off a plaster . . .

Be at the gate every morning to welcome students and whanau. Liven up the school website and develop a Facebook page for the school.

When issues arise – get all the information before responding, and no need to rush this process – It’s ok to get back to them.

I really appreciate the advice of colleagues based on their own hard work and experience. Tēnei te mihi ki a ratou.

We are currently planning a kāhui ako wide training day to look at the draft of Te Mātaiaho. I was encouraged to read within the guiding kaupapa that:

Te Mātaiaho is designed to foster the next generation of Te Tiriti partners by moving beyond the rhetorical notion of “honouring” Te Tiriti to give effect to it and its principles . . . Transformation within and through education and schooling requires leadership that is courageous, resilient, and productively disruptive – leadership by educators who hold themselves accountable to Te Tiriti and its principles, to their communities and to those ākonga who have historically been left behind or situated on the margins.³

It seems to be the perfect time to take on a new leadership role and to explore how I can hold myself accountable to Te Tiriti in a way that is courageous, resilient and productively disruptive.

1 Powhiri: An indigenous example of collaboration from New Zealand. Integration and Implementation Insights December 8, 2016 Rawiri Smith <https://i2insights.org/2016/12/08/indigenous-example-of-collaboration/>

2 Manaakitanga – more than just hospitality, Cassie Hart March 2021 <https://on.mas.co.nz/issues/march-2021/manaakitanga-more-than-just-hospitality/>

3 Te Mātaiaho | DRAFT FOR TESTING | March 2023 | Page 8.



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