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November 2023
Volume 38, Number 4

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Sadie O'Rourke, NZPF Office Manager, joins Executive members Hayley Read, President Leanne Otene, and Tracey Fraser in the Hobart snow

EDITORIAL

Liz Hawes EDITOR

'I FEAR THE day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.'

Albert Einstein

Einstein died 34 years before Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989. It was originally created to meet the demand for automated information sharing between scientists in universities across the world. Another 34 years later, 65.7 per cent of the world's population or 5.3 billion people are using the internet. There are 9.6 new social media users every second. The average global internet user spends 6 hours 41 minutes online per day (https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview).

We are now dependent on the internet for so many facets of everyday life. Our social interactions, shopping online, internet banking, research, reading for pleasure, information gathering, music, entertainment, playing games, news podcasts . . . the list is endless.

The **HUMAN CONNECTION**, **MENTORSHIP**, and **INSPIRATION** that teachers provide **CANNOT BE REPLICATED**.

I wonder what Einstein would have to say about technology today. It could be argued that already, young people – and indeed adults – spend more time interacting through their various devices than they spend engaging face-to-face. Moreover, the language of popular platforms for young people is more likely to be image based than text. And now we have Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Sharing information through networked databases, having chat sessions on customer service websites with Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven chatbots, using virtual assistants like Siri to access your phone contacts and call a person for you by voice command, using AI driven Alexa to turn on and off your smart home devices – all of these are already old technology.

We can create AI enhanced digital images of ourselves – cartoon one day, avatar the next. We can have a flawless profile picture for social media or a 3-D one. There is no end to the ways you can alter your own image. Long hair, short, curly, straight or wavy – all at the press of a button. At the age of 70, it is possible for a group to reinvent their 30-year-old selves as digital avatars and perform as the star-studded band they were 40 years ago. Think ABBA.

The new AI technology is feared as much as it is welcomed. People worry that AI driven machines will be taking over more jobs. Sub-Saharan Africa and many emerging economies in Asia are among those with the lowest access to the internet which compounds the many other inequities they experience.

One of the most topical AI advances in the education sector is ChatGPT, which could potentially transform teaching and learning. ChatGPT is an AI chatbot. It uses language to create humanlike conversational dialogue. It can respond to questions, write content such as articles, essays and emails and produce images, text or videos. The GPT stands for 'Generative Pre-trained Transformer'. It is trained through human feedback which helps its future responses. It uses algorithms to find patterns in data sequences and the transformer draws on a huge databank of information to formulate its responses. The data was limited to 2021 information, but that has changed now because in September 2023, AI learned how to browse the internet.

For those who can access ChatGPT, there are still limitations that result in inequities; for groups who speak languages that ChatGPT does not understand; students with diverse learning needs also struggle; algorithmic bias can occur making the tool more effective for mainstream students than those who are differently abled.

Andy Mison, an experienced Australian secondary school principal, has submitted an article on the use of AI in the school setting (see p.6).

Mison writes, 'It [AI] should never replace the essential role of educators. The human connection, mentorship, and inspiration that teachers provide cannot be replicated by machines.'

He notes some of the welcome benefits of the new technology, particularly in reducing the administration workload for teachers and principals. He adds that the technology can also be helpful in individualising learning for students. These are benefits that schools would want to exploit.

There is, however, a downside. Mison explores the ethical consequences of ChatGPT, and it is clear from his discussion that schools using the technology would need strong policies to protect students' data and privacy.

Further, there is the issue of critical thinking. Students need the skills to distinguish between what is real and what is not. They need to know what is fact and what is fiction. With the manipulation capability AI brings, young people are vulnerable. That is where teachers take on a critical role. Students using the technology can easily become reliant on AI and give up on their own student agency believing every response they get is correct.

More than ever students need the guidance of their teachers, if they are to avoid – in Einstein's words, being 'a generation of idiots.'

PRESIDENT'S PEN

The Importance of Principals Connecting with Their Global Colleagues

Leanne Otene NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NEW ZEALAND PRINCIPALS' FEDERATION

THE GREATEST REVELATION of the International Confederation of Principals (ICP) Congress this year, was not the differences between the 50 member countries, but how much they have in common. Principal and teacher wellbeing, insufficient staffing, post-Covid attendance, lack of support for learning needs, promoting indigenous cultures, the advance of Artificial Intelligence (AI), inequities, and insufficient Government investment were common factors for every country. A further shared concern was the inability of political parties to agree on a long-term vision, set long-term strategy and enact long-term plans for education. In the few cases where countries can achieve cross-party agreement, and build policy in partnership with the profession, education systems were far more successful.

We have always known that collaborating with a broad network of colleagues gives us greater insights, a wider range of perspectives and stimulates more effective responses than working in isolation. We have always maintained close relationships with our Australian colleagues, attended each other's conferences, shared knowledge and experiences and debated the many system issues we have in common. As the Australians grapple with normalising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures in their schools, they look to us to emulate some of our initiatives for promoting biculturalism. In turn they shared the mechanics of their Leadership Advisory system with us which influenced the development of our own Leadership Advisory here. We are now proposing a Trans-Tasman coalition – an enduring structure which will further strengthen our ties. Our Trans-Tasman relationship demonstrates the power of collaboration among neighbouring nations. The exchange of ideas, best practices, and innovative solutions between New Zealand and Australian principals enriches both education systems, ultimately benefiting the students on both sides of the Tasman. By working together, principals can address common challenges, share resources, and learn from each other's experiences.

A strong partnership with ICP is like our Australian relationship on steroids. The international stage takes debate to another level. As our own country has now gone to the polls to elect a Government for the future, we are reminded how education policy can change. At the ICP Congress, we were reminded by the UK delegation that accountability systems, where achievement results become a measure of a school's performance, are dangerous and negatively affect the wellbeing of students, teachers and Head Teachers. In the UK, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) ranks schools as excellent, adequate, requiring improvement or inadequate, then publishes these rankings for each school. In primary schools these are largely based on the Standard Assessment Tests (SATS) or in secondary, General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) results. Australia shares the same problem with its NAPLAN system, where league tables of schools are published according to test results in literacy and numeracy. Aotearoa New Zealand had its share of this punitive system for a decade from 2008 to 2017 with the introduction of national standards, again narrowly focused on literacy and numeracy.

> . . . **COLLABORATING** with a broad network of colleagues gives us **GREATER INSIGHTS**, a wider range of **PERSPECTIVES** . . . than working in isolation.

The ICP discussions promoted a broader understanding of these accountability systems, particularly from countries with long-term experience. Knowing that we have the strength of a global network behind us supports our resistance to Government policies that work against a broad curriculum and are not helpful for student learning. It encourages organisations like our own to point out the shortcomings of such systems to our politicians to avoid their reintroduction.

As members of the Oceania region of ICP, we share a responsibility to strengthen connections with our Pacific Island neighbours. Building bridges with educators in the Pacific also advantages our own New Zealand teaching profession. It helps us provide culturally appropriate teaching to Pacific Island children in our own country, grow a deeper appreciation of diversity, and create more inclusive and effective educational environments.

A new international opportunity is our partnership with the Ontario Principals' Council. This introduces exciting opportunities for collaboration and growing our knowledge through a principal exchange programme. Such exchanges not only benefit the participating principals but also contribute to the growth and development of their respective schools and communities. This partnership exemplifies the spirit of nations coming together to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

Initiatives like the Trans Tasman Coalition of Principals, collaboration with the Pacific Islands, exchanges with Canadian counterparts, and involvement with the ICP ensure that our education systems remain dynamic and responsive to the challenges of the 21st century.

International relationships are not just about networking; they are about creating a global community of educational leaders committed to excellence, innovation, and improving the lives of the students they serve. Through these connections, principals bring new ideas, perspectives, and practices to their schools, enriching the educational experiences of countless young minds and preparing them for a brighter, more interconnected future. By engaging with their global colleagues, principals are not only shaping the present but paving the way for a more promising tomorrow.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Andy Mison AUSTRALIAN SECONDARY PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION, andy.mison@aspa.asn.au

IN AN ERA defined by rapid technological advancements, the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is increasingly reshaping the classroom landscape. As educators, it is paramount that we consider the implications of AI on classroom practice, both its potential benefits and challenges. AI has the potential to revolutionize the way we teach and learn, but it also raises important questions about the role of educators and the ethical considerations that must be addressed.

One of the most promising aspects of AI in education is its ability to personalize learning experiences. With AI-powered adaptive learning platforms, students can receive tailored instruction based on their unique strengths and weaknesses. This personalization can significantly enhance student engagement and achievement. Imagine a classroom where each student's educational journey is as individual as their fingerprints. AI has the potential to make this a reality.

Furthermore, AI can help teachers save time on administrative tasks. Grading, for example, can be automated with AI algorithms, allowing educators to focus more on instructional design, classroom management, and individualized support for students. This streamlining of administrative duties has the potential to reduce burnout among teachers, which has become an increasingly concerning issue in the education field.

AI can also be a powerful tool for early intervention and identifying at-risk students. By analyzing student performance data, AI can flag those who may be struggling and in need of additional support. This proactive approach can help prevent students from falling through the cracks and ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

However, as we embrace the possibilities of AI in education, we must also be vigilant about potential challenges. One concern is the risk of over-reliance on technology. While AI can be a valuable tool, it should never replace the essential role of educators. The human connection, mentorship, and inspiration that teachers provide cannot be replicated by machines. Therefore, it is crucial that we strike a balance between AI-driven tools and the human touch that makes education meaningful.

Another challenge is the ethical use of AI in education. Data privacy and security must be of utmost importance. The collection and analysis of student data should be transparent, and students and their parents must have control over how this data is used. Furthermore, we must guard against algorithmic biases that may inadvertently disadvantage certain student groups. The design and implementation of AI systems in education must be done with equity and fairness in mind.

The **TRUE PURPOSE** of education is to foster **INTELLECTUAL GROWTH**, **CRITICAL THINKING**, and the development of **RESPONSIBLE, ETHICAL CITIZENS**. AI can aid in achieving these goals, but it is not a substitute for them.

Additionally, there is a concern that AI might perpetuate a one-size-fits-all approach if not properly designed. It is crucial that the algorithms used in AI-driven systems take into account the diverse learning needs and styles of students. We should view AI as a tool to enhance, not replace, the creativity and adaptability that teachers bring to their classrooms.

Incorporating AI into the classroom should also be accompanied by adequate teacher training. Educators need to be prepared to use AI tools effectively and to understand the data they generate. Professional development in this area is critical to ensure that teachers can harness the full potential of AI.

The role of teachers in the AI-driven classroom is shifting. Educators are becoming not only instructors but also facilitators of learning. They must guide students in using AI tools effectively and help them develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the information they encounter. In this evolving landscape, educators should view AI as a collaborative partner, not a replacement. Together, we can provide the best of both worlds: the efficiency of technology and the wisdom of human experience.

As we navigate the uncharted waters of AI in education, it is essential to remember that technology is a tool, not an end in itself. The true purpose of education is to foster intellectual growth, critical thinking, and the development of responsible, ethical citizens. AI can aid in achieving these goals, but it is not a substitute for them.

In conclusion, the implications of AI for classroom practice are profound. AI has the potential to personalize learning, reduce administrative burdens, and identify at-risk students, but it also raises concerns about over-reliance, data privacy, and ethical use. To harness the full potential of AI, educators must adapt their roles, embracing technology as a partner in the educational process. The future of education lies at the intersection of human expertise and artificial intelligence, and it is our responsibility as teachers to ensure that this partnership serves the best interests of our students and society as a whole.

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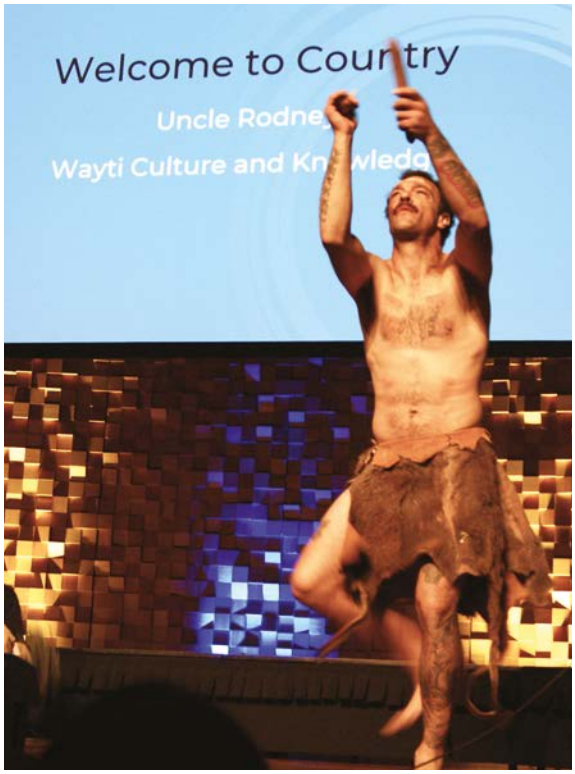
HOBART HOSTS MEMORABLE CONFERENCE

Liz Hawes Editor

FOR THE KIWI delegation attending the Australian Primary Principals' Association conference, Hobart was full of surprises. If a visit to the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) didn't shock the senses, then stepping off the bus into a snowstorm on Hobart's Kunanyi Mt. Wellington certainly did. It stands a mere 1,271 meters above the city – about a third the height of Aoraki Mt Cook – but can produce a nippy chill to bite the toughest of Kiwi beaks. 'Prepare for snow in Australia' is not a typical instruction for visitors, but on this trip, no one scoffed at those who had stashed an extra jersey in their travel bag. Temperatures for the Hobart stay were rarely higher than a mean Wellington southerly.

The one windless day had conference-goers scampering to the Salamanca markets – where soft, woolly hats and cheap, warm scarves were bought at breakneck speed. There were plenty of gastronomic temptations to warm Kiwi bellies and musicians and entertainers created a carnival atmosphere to encourage the spenders. 'You can't buy this back home,' was a common refrain as another $200 leather handbag fell from the bag stand. Tourism triumphs at the Salamanca markets.



'Uncle Rodney' welcomes the delegates 'to country'

The outdoors may have chilled the body but indoors, it was all warm hearts and the best of Aussie hospitality. The Kiwi contingent was not just made to feel welcome. They were warmly embraced by their Trans-Tasman colleagues. Our collective thanks to all Australian principals who made this such a memorable and friendly conference.

The conference theme was 'Refreshing Leadership and Inspiring Futures'. Optimistic themes lead to optimistic presentations and this conference had an uplifting beat from beginning to end.

Uncle Rob welcomed everyone 'to country' wasting no time in telling his audience that the land was stolen from his aboriginal ancestors, who were gunned down by the invaders. 'We lost skills and knowledge, as a people,' he said, 'and still suffer [the effects] today.' In his view, education in schools can address these issues best, by acknowledging the truth, and giving the Aboriginal race a second chance. He concluded by extending a warm welcome from his people.

Uncle Rob's address was followed by a traditional welcome and 'cleansing dance', by Uncle Rodney and his son, to signify connection, so all can get along and be culturally respectful.

School performances began each day with polished choral, orchestral and dance routines, drawing warm appreciation from the 350 strong gathering.

The Minister for Education in Tasmania, **Roger Jaensch,** officially opened the conference. He thanked the principals for the work they did, especially as front-line workers during the Covid pandemic. Student absences and workforce shortages continued to be a problem post-Covid, he said. To address workforce shortages the plan was to attract, train and retain. The 'Tasman Workforce Roundtable', he said, listened to the voices of the sector and would respond to them. He noted changes were underway to the curriculum and NAPLAN (National Assessment Programme for Literacy and Numeracy), with three pilots in place. Improving literacy was a major goal, and all would be expected to implement the Science of Reading by 2026. Resources would be necessary to meet the target, he said. The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) panel recommendation to support mental health and wellbeing to retain teachers was also noted, and work was underway to develop a staff wellbeing framework. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) got a mention with a focus on choosing the recruits with the right personal attributes, considering employment-based pathways to training and better understanding of future staffing needs. He concluded with a message for principals to listen, connect and share with peers to re-energize staff and schools, and to celebrate 'Australia's Primary Principals' Day'.

There was much affirmative nodding from the New Zealand delegates who were clearly in accord with many of the points the Tasmanian Minister made.

The Federal Education Minister **Hon. Jason Clare** also spoke,

saying to the principals, 'You all remember your first great teacher's name, who will remember yours?' He listed some of the current issues as the need to assist teaching recruitment, by introducing $40,000 scholarships, with bonding; improving University training and noting there is not enough emphasis on the practice of teaching with too many graduates leaving within three years of graduation; the difficulties of managing behavioral issues and complex needs; changes to national guidelines and having teachers and principals on the panel deciding these; mentors having professional recognition; the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged eight-year-olds now extending to two years of learning and more disadvantaged students not finishing High School. The Minister concluded that full fair funding was required so the investment would allow us to catch up and keep up.

Further affirmation from delegates indicated that both countries are facing very similar issues.

MC for the Conference **James Castrission** had an incredible story to tell – a story of extreme adventure. He and his companion Justin Jones are extreme explorers and endurance athletes.

In 2008, they kayaked 3,318 km across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand in 60 days, 20 hours and 50 minutes (a record) and in 2012 completed the first unsupported polar expedition from the edge of Antarctica to the South Pole and back in 80 days. Norwegian explorer Aleksander Gamme simultaneously took the same journey.

Castrission shared some of the most challenging aspects of each adventure. These included being hit by a storm of mountainous waves creating unbearable condensation, getting no sleep for 24 hours and suffering hallucinations during their kayak challenge. After 48 hours the storm broke and they discovered they had travelled just 15 kilometres in a circular whirlpool in the middle of the Tasman Sea.

Another kayaking trial were the 90 barnacles (the size of golf balls) that attached themselves to the kayak about two-thirds of the way across. They had to be scrubbed off because they attracted blue sharks which were already lurking not far away.

But the major test came with the Antarctic expedition to the South Pole and back. The two had never skied before and were embarking on doing so whilst dragging three months of supplies on a sled. They navigated crevasses; survived whiteouts; pushed through thick powdery snow for 30 days and endured pain like never before. Keeping morale up was paramount – celebrating Christmas was hugely important. The return journey was the toughest as 'our bodies started to die around us.' The pair had lost 56 kgs between them and they were now sleeping no more than 2–3 hours a night.

What kept them going through all this adversity? 'Only our minds kept us going. It was perseverance, passion, grit and sticking to our long-term goals,' said Castrission. As they approached the end, they could just make out the figure of the Norwegian explorer, who had waited for them, so they could all finish together. 'It was an act of humility, of love, to give us all a sense of collaborative achievement, because, in the words of the Norwegian, it was better together.' Principals immediately recognized that the qualities required to achieve these feats are also important to success in life.

The Cleansing Dance performed by Uncle Rodney and his son

APPA President Angela Faulkenberg addressed her audience with a powerful message, inspired by a quote from Marcel Proust who wrote, 'The real journey of discovery consists not in seeing new sights but in looking with new eyes.' Her message of leadership was about refreshing and inspiring oneself. It was a message of positivity, honesty, and reality.

'Diary quarantine time,' she urged, 'to reflect and gain insights. Have questions like "When did I last make someone smile?"'

Quarantine time, she said, was necessary to bring balance to school life. 'It can't all be about NAPLAN,' she said, 'there are other qualities to children.' She encouraged the principals to keep photos of good stories and focus light on those things that are going well.

Her next message was to 'refresh your social capital'. 'This is the glue that keeps us together and gives us a sense of belonging,' she said. 'We are hardwired to be connected.'

She moved on to say we always remember the positive amplifier, saying some people spread joy wherever they go, and we would all do well to be that positive force ourselves.

Analysis paralysis was not uncommon for principals, she said, and we must recognize this as a barrier to progress. We must also stop adding things to our already stretched diaries, she cautioned, because that leads to multi-tasking which does not work.

'Less is more – reduce your emails and meetings,' she said. 'Remember this mantra: Pull it tighter and make it shorter – whether report writing, policy making, or conversing.'

Her final message was to make 'time for me'. 'Take a look at your workplace and give it a refresh – add some plants, maybe paint it green and add some environmental pictures,' she suggested. 'Then think about the concept "wise selfishness". It is wise to disconnect sometimes; to remember – short stays make long friendships; and every month, give yourself two hearts for helping others, and two stars for rewarding yourself.'

Simon Breakspear spoke about the 'pruning principle' – unlocking progress by mastering the art of strategic subtraction. It rarely occurs to us that changing how we do something to improve it, might not just mean adding something new, but also deleting something we do now.

He asked his audience if they were busier than they were three years ago. The mass response was a groaning 'yes'. This, Breakspear described as 'system exhaustion' or 'overload'. 'With

a whirlpool of demands and activities, you are exhausted by Thursday with nothing left for Friday,' he said. 'Schools are like a computer that's operating on slow speed with too many applications running,' he explained.

Casting an eye back to the global pandemic and lockdowns, he said, 'During lockdown, weekends were great. There were no demands. Unfortunately, that was only a pause and not a change,' he said.

He introduced a new concept called 'frenzied stagnation'. You can identify this concept from the principal who says, 'I've been flat out all week and I'm exhausted, and I don't think I've achieved anything.'

'The problem is,' Breakspear explained, 'humans struggle with subtractive thinking when faced with a problem. We think, what should be added to solve the problem?' This thinking tends to compound overload and exhaustion and doesn't solve the problem.

Instead, what we should be asking are the following questions:

- What percentage of your emails result in *gaining free time* back in your calendar?
- What percentage of your team meetings result in a *stop doing list* rather than a to-do list?
- What percentage of your school improvement plan initiatives involve *intentional subtraction strategies?*
- What percentage of accountability conversations in your system focus on how effectively you have *de-implemented* something?

He offered his audience a definition of pruning describing it as:

> A regular, intentional subtraction process designed to stimulate long-term robustness, growth, and health. This preventative measure redirects energy and resources, bolstering overall vitality and fruit-bearing potential while fortifying structural integrity. It is an artful balancing act of subtraction and preservation.

Angela Faulkenberg, APPA President, delivered a powerful address of refreshing and inspiring oneself

He suggested that looking to horticulture, pruning might offer a set of principles and practices to learn from and apply to the dynamic living ecosystems of overloaded educational settings.

The purposes of pruning in horticulture are three:

1. To redirect energy and resources.
2. To stimulate new growth.
3. To reshape for long-term structural integrity.

It is important to know what to cut and again he uses the horticultural example:

1. Remove the dead, diseased, damaged, or problematic.
2. Cut back to promote growth, flowers, and fruit.
3. Thin out and reshape to enhance strength and vitality.

What you need is a 'stop doing list', he told his audience. Appoint a pruning crew who are always looking to remove things. For example, prune the default time of meetings from one hour to forty minutes.

He described the Education Prune Cycle in five words:

1. **Prioritise** – Decide what to prune and by how much.
2. **Remove** – Eliminate the ineffective and stimulate fresh growth.
3. **Unify** – Simplify, reshape, and enhance coherence.
4. **Nurture** – Focus on and cultivate what's left.
5. **Examine** – Regularly inspect, scrutinize, and evaluate.

Breakspear said if you are not enthusiastically affirming something then say 'no' to it. The most important improvement strategy is not adding, it's pruning, he concluded.

Pasi Sahlberg, is a Finnish educator, teacher, and academic currently residing in Melbourne, Australia, and engaged as Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Melbourne. He has performed many roles in education across his career including as education policy advisor in his homeland. He is an esteemed author of several authoritative books and winner of many educational honours for his work. He entitled his address: '**Fast Track to Transforming Australian Primary Schools**'.

He opened with a quick summary of participating countries' achievements on the PISA tests – an OECD global league table. The trend was clear. From 2000 to 2012 there was slow average improvement for all participating countries, followed by an average decline from 2012 to 2018. At the same time, for these same countries, spending on education – on average – had increased over the last ten years, but as a proportion of GDP, spending was unchanged. It was noted that parents are contributing more to their children's education, although money alone was not necessarily the answer.

When these results were clustered by socio-economic status (SES) of the participants, a different picture emerged. Sahlberg noted that the gap between the highest SES participants and the lowest SES students was, on average, three years of learning and that had remained stable for the past twenty years.

Australian data followed this trend and revealed further that Aboriginal and Torres Strait students were over-represented in the low SES group. They were found to do better in low SES schools where there were fewer of them compared to low SES schools with higher numbers of them. Further, the gap became wider as the years progressed. At Year 3 there was a six month difference in learning achievement whereas by Year 9 the gap was 1.3 years.

Sahlberg verified that the National Assessment Programme for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results in Australia, had not declined since 2009 but neither had they improved.

Sahlberg outlined all the different ways in which jurisdictions

continued on p.13

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One of the many school choral performances to excite the principals each morning

had attempted to address the decline in results and the inequities between high and low SES students. They included system reforms, gathering more data, having bigger bureaucracies, more technology, less playtime, teachers working longer hours, and introducing systems of punitive accountability for principals.

All these things amounted to flogging a dead horse according to Sahlberg, because they had all been tried and had always failed. He suggested three new ideas to transform primary schools.

1. **Teacher Looping:** This is a system whereby the class is taught by the same teacher for two or more years. There can be variations of this system such as having the same teacher for Years 1–2; a different teacher for Years 3–4; and another for Years 5–6. Or the same teacher from Years 1–6. The advantage of the looping system is that the teacher can build strong relationships with the students which invariably improves their performance, attendance, and wellbeing. Teacher satisfaction also tends to lift, and students build trust in their teachers. It results in a positive culture for the whole class.

   There are some disadvantages of the looping system, including that teachers must have a broad knowledge of the different curriculum levels. Students may be disadvantaged if saddled with an underperforming teacher for longer than a year and teachers must be nimble enough to switch curriculum levels every two or more years. Teacher workload may increase, at least during the transition to a different level, and new teaching skills may be required. Not all teachers are prepared for such changes.

James Castrission, MC for the conference, tells his own story of extreme adventure kayaking the 3,318 kms from Australia to NZ

2. **Learning through better health:** It is important to focus on the development of the whole child. Sahlberg uses the term 'full-service schools' which includes nutritious school meals for every child going to school. It also considers health and wellness as twenty-first century skills and a key to improved wellbeing, attendance, engagement, and better learning.

3. **Play as a child's right:** Play is integral to a child's education and its importance cannot be underestimated. The school schedule may need to be altered to provide more play breaks during the day. Whilst some schools have just a morning tea and lunch break it is much better to have three 15-minute

continued on p.15

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Hobart from the hills

short breaks and a lunch break during the day. This does not reduce the teaching time it is merely a re-organisation of the day to incorporate more breaks for the children.

Sahlberg left the principals with a challenge. Make these changes now, he said, if not now, then when?

Nathan Wallace, is an expert on parenting, teaching and understanding brain development. He is especially talented at translating complex neuroscience into accessible concepts.

He guided his audience through the first 1,000 days of a child's life. This is the period of development that defines later outcomes for young people, he told the principals. It is not the genes or even the environment a child is raised in that has the greatest impact on learning and social outcomes. It is how much a child is loved, nurtured and protected in the first 1,000 days that counts most. For the learner to successfully develop the social–emotional skills that underpin learning of all school subjects, these first 1,000 days are critical. The quality of love and nurturing that occurs during these early days of a child's life will predict the child's lifetime levels of success and achievement. It is not what they are learning that predicts their future success, but how they are learning, he said. For these reasons, Wallace emphasized the importance of focusing effort on the first three years of the child's life, making sure they are safe, secure, loved, and nurtured.

Roger Jaensch, Minister of Education for Tasmania, surprises the NZ delegation with the similarities between the two countries

Other speakers covered topics including mental health and wellbeing, future-ready leaders, co-regulated schools, and interpersonal effectiveness, to round out a positively successful three-day conference. Principals who had travelled from Aotearoa New Zealand all found the topics relevant to their own professional lives. Perhaps what resonated most sharply were the messages from the Australian Ministers – who might just as easily have been describing the education issues all schools are facing right here, right now, in Aotearoa New Zealand.

CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL PATHWAYS

Being brave: No more area models!

Amanda Gardner PRIMARY TEACHER, NEW ZEALAND, amandag@mtprimary.school.nz / miss.amanda.gardner@gmail.com
BASED ON HER MASTER OF EDUCATION DISSERTATION 'IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF FRACTIONS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS', UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Abstract

This article is based on one of the main findings from an action research project which investigated how primary school teachers could improve the teaching of fractions. The study focused on what pedagogical strategies might be employed when shifting teaching and learning from procedural application to conceptual understanding. The purpose of the research was to unpack what key elements of lesson design could be utilised in order to raise student achievement and understanding of fractional concepts. Using models, constructs and representations beside the typical area model was deemed a key finding. When students are exposed to a range of models, constructs and representations, they make connections and apply their knowledge in increasingly flexible and generalised ways. The research also sought to develop a strength in teacher pedagogical content knowledge and confidence.

Key words

- Linear models, area models, fractions, action research, representation

Challenging Traditional Pathways

Being brave: No more area models!

The very definition behind the notion of 'fractions' is to fracture – but these rational numbers do not have to break your teaching spirit anymore. We are all guilty of the sorrowful, eye-rolling moan when fractional teaching comes around. We dig at the back of our resource filled cupboards and pull out our trusty fractions circle pieces. Maybe you are lucky enough to have magnetic ones, or even the pretty bars that can be made into eye-catching, colourful fraction walls. We spend hours checking each piece is accounted for in order to make the range of wholes (which of course, are not!); realistically, how many times have you found a twelfth of something. You may even let the students play with, explore, and get a feel for the equipment. Then what? Will you move past equal sharing of equipment? Mathematics is more than a set of procedures, calculations and operations to be completed and appraised; it is aesthetic, presenting many opportunities for creativity, exploration and reasoning (Boaler, 2016). I hope to encourage you to use a variety of drawn models, constructs and representations of fractions – even student made! – to develop a deep and conceptual understanding of this anxiety-ridden, yet crucial, strand.

Part-whole constructs and area models have dominated classroom practices. These are *seen* to build on students' understanding of equal sharing and are likely a student's first experiences with rational numbers (Clarke et al., 2011; Neagoy, 2017). Although an effective starting point, more emphasis on other fractional concepts, representations and models are necessary for in depth understanding. Traditionally, techniques such as folding of paper, shading of different shapes and sharing of counters, for questions such as 'what is one quarter of 24?', are used to model ideas and demonstrate understanding. I found that this worked well for juniors or for unit and non-unit fractions under one whole, and I have been guilty of focusing on numbers under 50. These tasks are engaging and hands-on and are a fantastic *starting* point. Using a variety of models, like number lines, to develop one concept will encourage your students to 'look for patterns and relationships, make and explore conjectures, and use what they learn from their visual models to generalise concepts' (Petit et al., 2016, p.4).

Practical issues that are 'both problematic yet capable of being changed' are identified (Elliott, 1978, as cited in Cohen, et al., 2007, p.298).

A small-scale, action research study was used to investigate the factors teachers might consider during the teaching and learning of fractions to deepen their students' understanding and accelerate learning. The *research team* (two participating teachers and the researcher) wanted a practical, classroom-based approach to find solutions to the identified problematic areas that directly affect student learning. It is important to note that the difference between normal practice and action research is that those who are involved in action research are more careful, systematic and rigorous in their thinking (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992). As this was a collaborative venture, compromises were made to ensure that the research was relevant and benefited all persons involved. Whitney and Kylie (teacher pseudonyms) acknowledged that their previous learning design of fractional concepts followed no clear structure and they were unsure about the required sequence or scope of learning that would lead to deep understanding of the content.

The *research team* discovered that when students were exposed to a range of models, constructs and representations, they made connections and applied their knowledge in increasingly flexible and generalised ways. Teacher pedagogical content knowledge was found to be crucial in developing the learning pathways; each teacher exhibited different strengths and weaknesses and, naturally, they often were unaware of what they 'did not know'. Hence, the teachers in this study decided to implement what Land and Drake (2014) suggested in their research, and that was to collaborate and devise a progression of learning, which is concept based. The research team thus developed an understanding around how models, constructs and

representations can support students and their differing abilities.

Research of this type 'is considered democratic, equitable, liberating, and life-enhancing qualitative inquiry' (MacDonald, 2012, p.34). The *research team* focused on transitioning fractional representations using area models (namely circle), to linear models in the form of bars and number lines. Fractions are usually taught through area models, where they are represented as a part of a region and are commonly expressed as rectangles and circles (Petit et al., 2016). The use of different constructs and representations was cognitively challenging for both the teachers and the students, but well worth the effort.

Improper fractions and area models are a confusing mix

In real-life situations not everything is divided into nice, even packages – if only! There are often odd numbers, measures or remainders that need to be shared, which reiterates the need to fracture a unit for accurate measures (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2008). We also cannot carry around a set of fraction circle pieces, ready for equal-sharing opportunities to arise. One key idea when applying fractional understanding is that there can be no remainders or unshared parts; this can then lead to the use of mixed numbers and improper fractions. Unfortunately, the area model, which is used the most regularly in instruction, limits what the student knows and does with fractions as it cannot be applied successfully to a range of fractional contexts and problems.

During the research, students such as S6 would attempt to apply their understanding of area models when working with improper fractions problems. The figures below outline S6's efforts to solve problems like 'three tigers ate half a slab of meat each, how much [meat] did they eat altogether' (MoE, 2020) (see Figures 1 to 3).

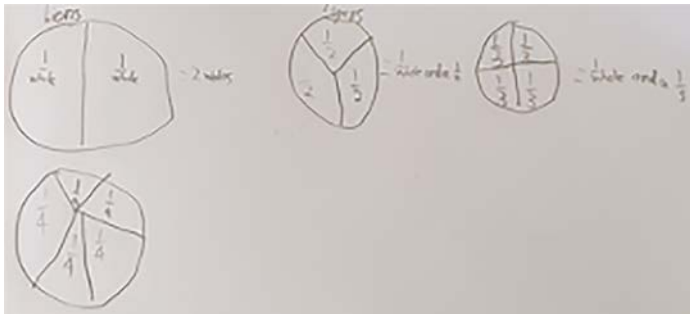

Figure 1
S6 independent attempt to solve problems using the area model

Initially, S6 could not understand why her model did not work. The teacher intervened and asked probing questions. For example, 'How many quarters are in a whole? Can you have five quarters in a whole?' There was an emphasis around having five quarter-sized pieces, not five pieces of one whole.

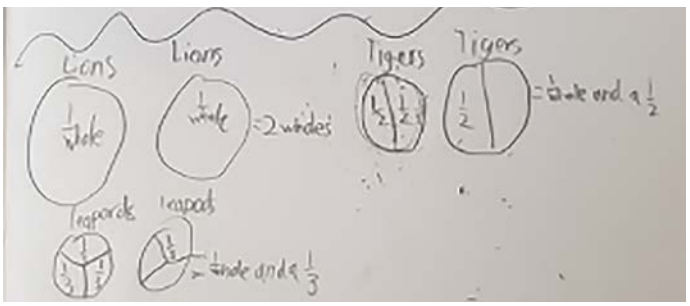

Figure 2
S6 Fraction representations after the intervention

The researcher helped S6 connect the ideas used in the area models to other fraction and linear models (see Figure 3), while Kylie observed. The reasoning behind this was that students should be exposed to and use a variety of visual models, so they do not come to rely on or align their understanding to just one source. It is about presenting the same or similar information in different ways; a student may struggle with a concept using fraction circles but may see the pattern and connection through fraction tiles or a number line. Additionally, using a variety of models offers students multiple opportunities to think and rethink about their understanding as they focus on the similarities and differences of the perceptual features (Petit et al., 2016). This is also related to the use of manipulatives. Ball (1992) reminds us that effective learning arises through the ways we – teachers and students together – interact with, talk about and convey meaning through any tool we choose to use, even self-created models. We convey and carry the intended meaning.

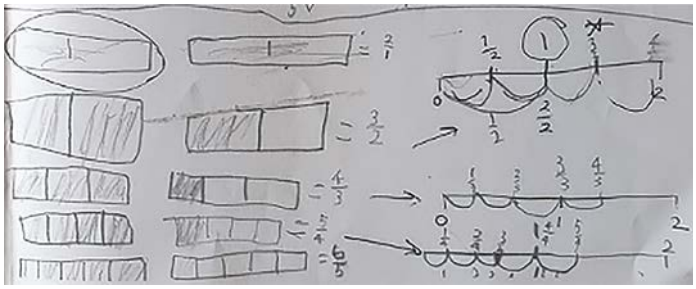

Figure 3
Making connections between fraction models

Number lines were used as our main bridging tool to reinforce the understanding that fractions are quantities that can be counted and are numbers that have an ordinal placement. This aligned to previous research of Mills (2018) and Petit et al., (2016). Number lines are deemed useful for fractions greater than one, as it prompts students to think 'proportionally about a number line, [and] not just sequentially' (Petit et al., 2016, p.99). Initially, the teachers in this study worked with number lines 0 to 1 and emphasised the proportional distance between fraction units. A common error made by the students was that they would make four marks to represent quarters (for example) instead of showing four equal divisions/partitions. This was addressed and developed during warm up activities, such as skip counting in various fractions. When the students began feeling confident, the teachers built their fractional understanding by using number lines greater than 1 (see Figure 4). This helped the students see that whole numbers can also be written as fractions; a strategy outlined by Fazio & Siegler (2011) which emphasises that fractions are numbers with magnitudes. Kylie and Whitney found that drawing a number line after or below other models, such as an area or bar, made the number line more easily understandable and relatable for the students (see Figure 4).

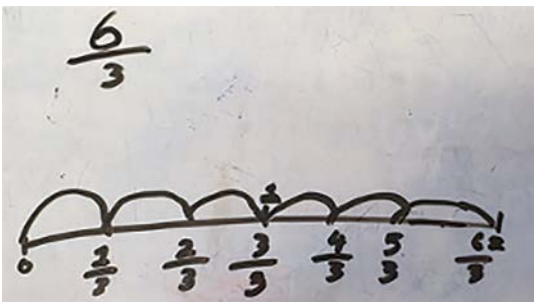

Figure 4
A student's representation of counting in fractions on a number line

Figure 5
S4 connecting area and linear models

Halfness, non-unit panic and number bias

At the beginning of the study, the teachers had a sneaking suspicion that the students had a limited understanding of fractions, which was confirmed through the results of the pre-unit test and the pre-research, semi-structured interviews. A few examples included that most students could not identify or order unit fractions and no one could label the parts of the fractional number or articulate the related roles. The frustrating part for the teachers was that the students had been marked as competent on many fraction and division related school progressions. This could indicate they had previously only experienced procedural- or instrumental-based learning design and snapshot assessment – demonstrating the skill one time, with potentially leading questions like 'using equal sharing find $\frac{3}{4}$ of 20'. Skemp's (2006) research cited that instrumental thinking is applying 'rules without reason' (p.89), while understanding of the mathematical concept is demonstrated through knowing and using rules, such as formula. However, proficiency and mastery in mathematics is dependent on knowing what to do and why. It quickly became clear that the students had not been presented opportunities to develop their understanding of concepts in sophisticated ways or create what Land and Drake (2014) referred to as an 'integrated knowledge framework' (p.111).

As learning progressed beyond using unit fractions, namely halves and quarters, 'halfness' and 'non-unit panic' (*research team* terms) set in. 'Halfness' referred to the students' automatically defaulting back to finding halves when other unit fractions were introduced, such as one third. Mills' (2018) research noted similar findings that students would find half 'regardless of how many whole objects there were to share and how many people there were to share the objects among' (p.164). The *research team* tried to combat this by drawing the students' attention back to the denominator and its role. There was emphasis on the denominator being understood as the name and number of parts in the whole and the numerator as the number of pieces of that size (Clarke et al., 2011; Mills, 2018). This generalisable rule was particularly useful during improper fractions instruction. Many of the students believed at the beginning of the study that a fraction like $\frac{10}{10}$ was the highest you could go. However, by the end of the research they were able to count and identify fractions beyond one whole (see Figure 4). This indicates that the students' thinking had progressed further than what Fazio and Siegler (2011) referred to as the part-whole approach.

'Non-unit panic' (a term coined by the teachers), occurred when the students were asked to find non-unit fractions of a set, for example, $\frac{3}{4}$ of 20. The teachers and the students expressed difficulty with word and multi-step problems. Kylie indicated during a research meeting that she had observed that the students exhibited limited number sense and limited problem-solving skills. She noted that her students struggled to understand that they first needed to find one quarter and then iterate the portion the required number of times (in this case three). Additionally, the students automatically defaulted to finding halves and quarters of sets when asked to find other unit fractions (like $\frac{1}{3}$) and could not explain why they did so. The students were unable to break down the steps required or often forgot previous connected learning. Kylie explained:

> My students can find a quarter easy as, and then we went to $\frac{3}{4}$s and they forgot how to find a quarter . . . and then started giving random numbers.

The students continued to show whole number bias throughout the study, particularly viewing the numerator and denominator as two separate whole numbers or confusing the relationship between them, which was also a common problem recognised by researchers such as Aksoy and Yazlik (2017) and Gabriel et al. (2015). Whitney dedicated instructional time to correct a related misconception. Whitney's students represented the denominator as a whole number rather than a proportional amount, for example, sharing counters into groups of three instead of three groups (thirds).

S2 required help from the researcher during a warmup task. The question had asked the students to compare $\frac{7}{4}$ to $\frac{5}{2}$. However, S2 had confused the role of the numerator in both numbers and assumed that the numerator in the fraction indicated the number of whole circles that the denominator value would be shared into. For example, for $\frac{7}{4}$ S2 drew seven whole circles and divided each into quarters. The student then counted the number of quarters she had made (see Figure 6). The researcher suggested to S2 that she needed to re-look at the fraction number in relation to her drawing. She said to S2, 'You drew seven wholes cut into quarters, not seven quarter pieces.'

Figure 6
S2's attempt at comparing two improper fractions

An interesting observation was that students were independently able to order unit fractions when given a jumbled set of numbers but reverted to whole number reasoning when asked to create their own number lines, an occurrence that was also observed in Petit et al., (2016) research. For example, placing $\frac{1}{2}$ before $\frac{1}{3}$ because two is smaller than three. Furthermore, Whitney noted that a lot of instruction time was dedicated to students making the correct number of groups while equal sharing. The students were initially making groups of three

continued on p.20

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The role of colour in Education

Colour is a great way to help enhance the overall learning experience in educational spaces.
It can be used to capture attention, increase alertness, or simply create a calming atmosphere.

Cool palette

Cooler colours such as blues and purples can create a sense of calm and are thought to stimulate productivity. The blue palette in particular creates a sense of tranquility that can also aid learning. These are great colours to use for accent walls and key learning or teaching zones.

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Main Broadwall	Puhoi	Millwater	Grey Lynn
Windows, Doors & Trim	Ōkārito	Ti Point	Franz Josef
Feature Wall & Wayfinding	Lake Brunner	Rāwene	Mairangi Bay
	Lake Taylor	Bruce Bay	Hot Water Beach

Warm palette

Warm, lighter colours such as pinks, apricots and beiges can create a nurturing and welcoming atmosphere that can help students feel at ease in their surroundings. Striking colours such as reds and oranges can be used in small volumes to bring focus and impact.

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Main Broadwall	Prebbleton	Titahi Bay	Ōpononi Half
Windows, Doors & Trim	Kauri Cliffs Quarter	Cardrona	Tapawera
Feature Wall & Wayfinding	Kauri Cliffs	Coatesville	Earthquake Flat
	Lauder	Benhar	Gimblett Road

Green palette

Greens can bring a sense of balance, calm and relaxation to a space. Pale greens and blues can be a great choice for reading nooks and libraries as these colours help to enhance concentration and focus.

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Main Broadwall	Martins Creek	Whakaari / White Island Double	Woods Creek
Windows, Doors & Trim	Mt Aspiring Quarter	Whakaari / White Island Half	Aoraki
Feature Wall & Wayfinding	Te Puke	Flat Island	Te Aroha
	Waiheke	Happy Valley	Matauri Bay

White palette

White is often a popular choice due to its versatility, light reflectance and flexibility to complement other palettes. There are many whites on offer, so the choice of undertone is highly important.

	Scheme 1	Scheme 2	Scheme 3
Main Broadwall	Manorburn	Cardrona	Southern Alps
Windows, Doors & Trim	Ōkārito	Haast Half	Mt Aspiring
Feature Wall & Wayfinding	Rāwene	Ōpononi	Narrow Neck
	Manorburn Double	Ōpononi Quarter	Mt Aspiring Double

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when finding one third. Again, interestingly, all the students in this study had previously (prior to this year) been marked as competent (on their school progression record) for equal sharing when carrying out division problems and for finding halves and quarters of sets in fraction problems.

So, moving forward what can educators do?

Bridging the gap between the known and unknown requires teachers to carefully and perceptively decide which images, models and materials will be appropriate to explicitly and concretely represent the mathematical concept (Chinn, 2017; Moyer, 2001). The teachers within this study concluded that understanding mathematical concepts involved in teaching fractions is much more complex than merely implementing a known set of procedures. Boaler (2016) asserted that as teachers explored, reasoned, and justified their own actions and decisions, they became more expert mathematicians. Through working collaboratively, Whitney and Kylie became more confident with what they had to teach, in what order they would teach it, and recognised the depth of understanding the students required to be successful in mathematics.

Below are some points and ideas to consider for learning design and enactment.

- **Area models have their place.**
  Area models introduce young students to the concept of equivalence, as well as essential features of visual models – representation of a 'whole unit', division of the whole into equal parts (equipartitioning) and the relationship between the parts and the whole (Castro-Rodriguez et al., 2016). Furthermore, area models provide opportunities for equal sharing of materials.
  The teachers in this study challenged themselves to learn to use a range of constructs, such as linear and set models, while trying to resist the temptation to rely on the area models and traditional patterns of learning design they had depended on in the past. Recognising the need to upskill their teaching practice will allow teachers to continue to learn how to make connections between the different facets of fractions and to develop more dialogue in their classroom, alongside the need to press for justification and explanation of solution methods.
- **Students should create their *own* models.**
  When planning and enacting instruction it is important to remember that any 'model is a bridge to the mathematics – it itself, is not the mathematics.' (Neagoy, 2017, p.53). It should also be noted that many researchers advocate for students to create, share and analyse their own meaningful models (see Figure 7).
- **Connect fractional understanding to real-life.**
  Aksoy and Yazlik (2017) noted that when fractions are not related to daily life, the teachings and knowledge is easily forgotten in a short stretch of time. When posing or using pre-made word problems, educators should consider where they are teaching and who is sitting in front of them in what Anthony and Walshaw (2007) described as grounding the learning into the life of the learner. For example, using problems that involve sharing cows between paddocks is irrelevant and potentially quite boring for students who have lived in the inner-city their entire lives. Changing vocabulary costs us nothing but a short amount of time.
- **Variation is key.**
  Comparing drawn models to manipulatives will help students focus on the features as well as their justifications and conjectures (Petit et al., 2016); good practice also includes students comparing with other peer models (visual and physical). Students need to observe and listen to how visual models connect to each other, and then have time to rehearse and practise themselves (see Figure 8).

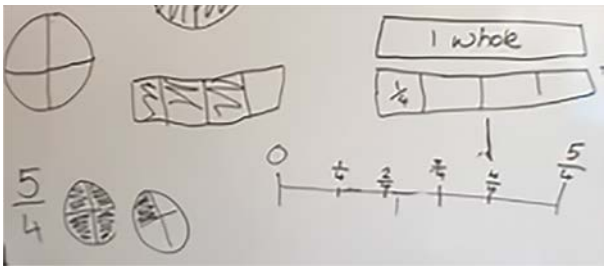

Figure 8
The researcher and students co-constructed models of $\frac{5}{4}$

- **Slow down!**
  Yearley and Bruce (2014) concluded that there is a tendency in classroom instruction to move quickly to fraction symbols, which is not beneficial to sense making.
- **Consider your modelling structure.**
  A proposed modelling structure for the teachers to use when teaching new concepts arose from an interaction within Kylie's second observation (see Table 1). The model consists of three steps – model, assist and supervise, and upon further research, it was found to align with McCoy's (2011) 'I do, we do, you do' instructional model. McCoy (2011) expressed that the model is particularly useful in mathematics as there are often multiple steps and skills to be simultaneously integrated. Additionally, the first two steps equipped the students with a better sense of direction and confidence.

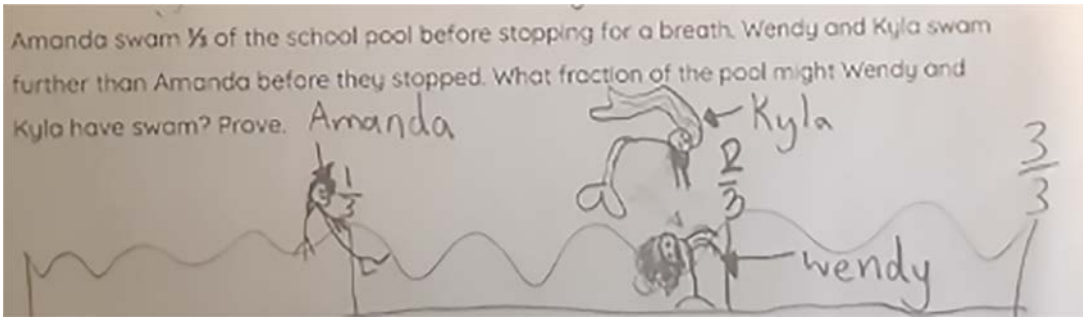

Figure 7
Example of a student created model

Table 1
Proposed Modelling Structure

Step	Teacher Action	Student Action	Who has control?
Model	I do	You watch	Teacher
Assist	I support	You do	Shared
Supervise	I watch	You do	Student

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NZPF CONFERENCE 2023

Queenstown, 11–13 September 2023

Liz Hawes Editor
Ian Chadderton, PhotoLife Photography

THIS YEAR'S NZPF Conference was an early sell-out, such that in her President's address, Leanne Otene extended an apology to all those who weren't able to attend. Queenstown has always been a favorite with principals, but the venue capacity limits delegate numbers. That is a problem for future conference organisers to resolve, but those present were very clear in their feedback – the conference was a roaring success and the location superb.

With a nod to the physical landscape, the conference was entitled 'Reimagine Remarkable'. Traditional practices, like the sit-down conference dinner, gave way to a less formal night in the 'Kingpin' Queenstown. The dinner was indeed reimagined as a night of fun and games – from bowling alleys to battling virtual enemies, escape rooms, karaoke, table tennis and more. There was an endless supply of very tasty food on hand and the bar didn't close till late. If the organisers worried about how delegates would respond, they shouldn't have. The principals loved it all.

Highest NZPF Award For Worthy Former President

It was a fitting event at which to honour former NZPF President, Whetu Cormick with the highest award of Life Membership of the Federation. Reading the nominating member's endorsement, President Leanne Otene said Whetu's service to the NZPF membership was outstanding. He held the unusual record of being elected President in three consecutive years and was instrumental in the establishment of the Māori Achievement Collaborations (MACs), a prominent PLD Kaupapa which has proved most successful in changing school culture to lift the achievement of tamariki Māori. Whetu continues his involvement with MAC as a Facilitator in his home region of Otago. He was praised for his relationship building skills, including with media, and lifting the media profile of NZPF to greater and greater heights. The MAC team was on hand to perform a rousing haka in his honour.

Steven Lethbridge, former President of the Auckland Principals' Association was also honoured with a 'Service with Distinction Award' for his outstanding support of Auckland principals during the Covid-19 pandemic.

NZPF President, Leanne Otene

Early in her opening speech, NZPF President, Leanne Otene commended the 'remarkable' way that principals have led their schools this year through the pandemic, floods, and cyclones. She especially noted those affected by cyclones in Gisborne and the Hawkes Bay region, saying, 'Despite your own personal tragedies and challenges, not one of you walked away [from your schools]. You are all absolutely remarkable,' she said to the applause of the packed audience.

She then invited the principals to reimagine a 'world leading education system' that is uniquely Aotearoa New Zealand, and what that system would look like. She summarized the elements of such a system under six headings.

1. It would be free from party politics and instead education policy would be developed by a 'Cross-Party Coalition' comprising representation from all political parties, educational practitioners, researchers, and academics. It would make considered long-term educational plans that would extend beyond the three-year electoral cycle.

Former NZPF President, Whetu Cormick, responds to being honoured with NZPF Life Membership

Steven Lethbridge receives the honour of service with distinction for leading Auckland schools through the Covid years

Different school Kapa Haka groups performed each day at the Queenstown Conference

2. It would enact – not just honour – Te Tiriti o Waitangi. That would mean normalising Te Reo Māori in schools and bringing a deeper understanding of Māori relationships with whenua and takiwa or place. The Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum would be a great starting place to connect with local hapū, iwi and marae, hear stories directly from local Tangata Whenua and become immersed in a Māori world view. In this way racism will fade and partnerships, friendships, and unity will blossom.
3. It would have equitable, ongoing, fully funded professional development for teachers and principals, because opportunities for professional learning and networking have a hugely positive effect on the quality of education our young people receive. Currently smaller and rural schools suffer disproportionately because the funding model is based on roll numbers not the professional needs of a teacher or school leader.
4. It would have a broad and rich curriculum mix of national and local curriculum. Assessments would focus on progress, not meeting measurable accountability standards. 'What' to teach would be prescribed in the national curriculum whilst the local curriculum would be constructed locally. 'How' to teach would be decided by the school in consultation with the leadership and teachers. Professional learning would support teaching in an ongoing way.
5. It would have equitable support and resources for our diverse tamariki and their diverse learning needs. Currently one in five tamariki require some form of learning support and that means reducing class sizes, and drastically increasing learning support funding and personnel including trained specialist support services, to be available to all schools irrespective of size or location.
6. It would have professional principal and school Board relationships and Board members would be skilled and trained. When leadership is strong, the school will be successful. School Boards of Trustees are variable. Too many schools have untrained and unskilled Boards who do not make good employers of principals. They can be: ignorant and benign, leaving all the decision making and Board preparation work to the principal: ignorant and hostile where the principal is repeatedly undermined; skilled and benign where Boards function highly effectively; or efficient and hostile where the principal is constantly being questioned. Although the majority function effectively, for principals saddled with less capable or hostile Boards, careers can be destroyed.

She concluded by inviting all principals to read the NZPF manifesto before heading to the general election voting booths in October.

Minister of Education Hon. Jan Tinetti

The Minister opened her address, agreeing with the NZPF call to take politics out of education. She agreed that education systems such as Finland and Scotland, with cross party political consensus on education, did well. 'I am happy to keep working on this with you,' she said.

She listed some of her Government's achievements, emphasizing that all initiatives have been developed in partnership with the sector. These included:

- 100 million school lunches have been delivered to 995 schools which also provides employment for people in the community making the lunches.
- Free period products for intermediate and secondary schools reducing shame for young people and allowing many to come to school full time again.
- Equity Index providing better targeted resourcing for schools.
- Collective bargaining delivering pay increases to teachers.
- Eligibility criteria for principalship.
- Promoting recruitment into teacher training.
- Curriculum refresh with special emphasis on literacy and numeracy without narrowing the curriculum. Development of new online curriculum resources.

Dr Patrick Camangian delivered an affecting presentation on social equity and cultural relevancy for marginalised students

Professor Pasi Sahlberg updated principals on the latest education research and had some useful tips to make schools more productive

- Attendance and new attendance officers.
- Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) to be chaired by Karen Sewell, with a staffing focus including teachers and non-teachers and learning support staff with a view to setting schools up with staff needed for the future.

In answer to questions from the floor the Minister said she had not lost sight of principal wellbeing and would be following up on the business case for the High Needs Review, and in-class support.

On reducing class sizes, she said that dropping the ratio to 1:28 had cost $105m. The MAG would be working on future staffing but currently the budget was tight because of the collective bargaining settlements.

Patrick Camangian

Camangian entitled his presentation 'The transformative lives we lead: Making education our own'. His area of expertise is social equity and cultural relevancy for marginalised students. To explain resisting the status quo, he offered a critique of social oppression. Transformational resistance, he said, refers to demonstrating a critique of social oppression and an interest in social justice. It indicates a belief in the possibility of change at both the individual and societal levels, incorporating both internal and external resistance.

If you engage in self-defeating resistance, he said, you are not motivated by social justice. If you practice transformative resistance, you are.

Too many marginalized students, he said, are blamed for their own circumstances and this results in angry kids behaving badly. It is self-defeating resistance which results in interventions, but there is no racism critique.

For these kids, the dominant narrative devalues their narrative. Education is engaging them in a system that despises their humanity.

He told his own story to illustrate his point saying that his Filipino parents were highly motivated to move to America to give him a better chance at education and life. This was the American dream. They achieved their goal, at great sacrifice, and it was the American nightmare. Camangian said he was disengaged, marginalized at school, and got poor grades. He experienced racism every day, so he joined a neighbourhood gang. He engaged in 'horizontal violence' because school was not aligned with the everyday reality in his community. It was during a stint in prison, talking to another marginalized prisoner, that made them both realise that they were doing what an inequitable societywanted them to do – start on small crime and move on to big weapons.

Beyond prison, he focused on his own success and finally completed university in 1999. Initially conforming to expectations, he then became transformational and moved on to culturally relevant teaching which includes more than knowing students' ethnic backgrounds. Culture is not just a proxy for race, he said, it's also about who has the power and who doesn't. To humanize learning, as educators, you have to look beyond policy that has ignored history and ignored young people navigating social oppressors. This includes changing the way we assess young people's learning. Rather than designing assessment based on repetitive learning we may need to look at growth over time, he said.

Pasi Sahlberg

Sahlberg entitled his address: **'The Big Picture of School Education: What every principal needs to know'.**

Much of Sahlberg's message had also been delivered to the Australia Primary Principals Conference in Hobart, which is reported on page 8 of this issue.

He told his audience that the achievement gap in New Zealand, like Australia, has not changed in 22 years. The question is how to narrow the gap. The education system, he said, is giving more to kids who have more and less to those in need.

He explained that in 1983 the US President, Ronald Reagan announced that there was a crisis in education and unless something radical happened they would have a national security issue on their hands. This was nonsense but it paved the way for the introduction of the Global Education Reform Movement. He warned his audience to keep away from toxic narratives about crisis and to focus on hope.

He offered some ways primary schools can be transformed and these too appear in the Australian story on page 8.

Abbas Nazari

Nazari told his own extraordinary story of his family's 2001 escape from their mountainous northern village in Taliban occupied Afghanistan to eventually end up in New Zealand,

Abbas Nazari told his family's harrowing story of escaping the Taliban in Afghanistan, becoming refugees and settling in New Zealand

via Pakistan, Indonesia and the Norwegian container ship, the Tampa. It is a story of corruption, desperation, courage, high risk and high seas, terror and inspiration. As the Tampa approached Australian shores and what the occupants believed to be freedom, Australia closed its doors to the asylum seekers. The Nazari family were some of the fortunate few, he said, to be resettled in New Zealand. His family has thrived in their new country of New Zealand and in 2019 he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship w to study at Georgetown University in Washington DC where he attained a Master's degree in Security Studies. He continues to work for refugees to help them build meaningful lives. In 2021 he published his story in a book entitled 'After the Tampa – from Afghanistan to New Zealand'.

Dame Valerie Adams

If ever there was a reason to stay for the final day of a conference, it is Dame Valerie Adams. Her imposing figure is even more imposing in person and her personality and confidence make her a treat to meet. Dame Valerie was interviewed by MC for the conference, Wikitoria Day.

Now retired from top level athletics, Dame Valerie said retirement isn't always easy to navigate for top athletes unless they have a clear plan. They often don't easily fit back into society. She added that she was fortunate to have two young children and a brand but that is not the story for every athlete.

Her plan is to inspire the next generation because, she said, it's all about the future of youth. She has immersed herself in charitable work including 'Jamas for kids' to make sure all children have warm pyjamas for the winter. These are things, she said, she couldn't be involved in when in training, but now she must take care she doesn't spread herself too thinly.

Wikitoria asked her which of her Olympic medals was the most important to her. Her answer was clear: every medal has a special story.

Inevitably the mental side of preparing for big events would enter the conversation and Dame Valerie said her early attitude was 'take a concrete pill and toughen up'. Seeking help, she said, was seen as a weakness for a Tongan. That's how it was. She was very particular about who she opened up to, although she saw a sports psychologist, she felt the need to keep this a secret.

Her message now is different: Even the strongest fall over!

She told the story of growing up in Mangere, Auckland and personal tragedies that affected her.

'My Mother died at 39 years old when I was 15,' she said. 'It hit hard.'

She was already seen as an adult because she was six feet four inches tall at the age of twelve with size fourteen shoes. 'I grew up quickly,' she said, 'and realized I had two choices. One was to dream of going to the Olympic games.'

Her schooling years were not all fun and at Intermediate school she was bullied because of her height. Sports became a saviour because she was always good at sport, and everyone wanted to be in her team.

A standout PE teacher paid for her first Nike athletic shoes because she had none. 'I've now been sponsored by Nike for 15 years, but will never forget that first pair. I adored this teacher,' said Dame Valerie. 'She took the time to help me, was positive, pulled me up for bad behaviour and gave me positive affirmation when I did well. She built my self-esteem. She was such a special teacher. When you have no money you can't see a future, but this teacher changed that for me.'

Dame Valerie was scathing of the 'tall poppy' syndrome that continues to thrive in New Zealand. 'You just have to grow a thicker skin,' she said, 'and remember that for every one negative comment, there are 99 positive ones.'

She spoke of the importance of her team. Her sport may be individual but there is still the team behind her. She used the analogy of a bus. I am the bus driver and everyone on the bus is here for a reason – the physiotherapist, the chiropractor and so on. Everyone is helping the bus go forward. If someone is not pulling their weight, they have to get off the bus, because if everyone is not working together, I can't perform.

Her stellar career has not been without its hurdles and the greatest of these is injury. She told her audience she has now had eight surgeries. 'Each time there is that doubt and you question whether you can come back. That's when you need the team behind you to plan ahead.'

The media is another pressure, but Dame Valerie has worked out her own strategy. 'I know I am public property as an athlete, and I take it in my stride. What you see is what you get. That works for me, if media disrespects my story for their own ego, I won't talk to them.'

A balanced life and hauora rank high on Dame Valerie's list now, although she says as an athlete, she had no balance of life at all. Her number one focus is her two children and she has a balance between time for herself (when the children are in bed), movement and training, including 30 minutes in the gym, and the daytime activities. Her body is now very damaged with knee issues, vertebrae, discs and back issues and her life goals are different.

'If I can inspire one child to see a better life for themselves, I will feel I have achieved,' she says.

A documentary movie has now been made of her life called 'It's more than Gold.' 'I took up the challenge,' she said, 'because I've been through a lot in my short life, and I just wanted to tell my own story.' A Tongan speaker herself, Dame Valerie took the film to Tonga to show her people. 'A thousand children saw the screening every day,' she said, 'and I could talk to them about it in Tongan. It was a beautiful experience.'

Our thanks to Dame Valerie for sharing her story. You were our beautiful experience.

And so the curtain falls on another successful NZPF conference. From the networking to the social events, from the inspiring speakers to the camaraderie, the celebrations and the fun, Queenstown 2023 will be remembered for being truly remarkable.

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FRANKLIN PRINCIPALS HOST MEGA TEACHER ONLY DAY

Liz Hawes Editor

MOST SCHOOLS RUN their own Teacher Only Days (TODs) or meet as a Kāhui Ako (KA) cluster of schools. In a first for the district, Franklin hosted 46 schools with over 600 teachers for this year's TOD. The day included multiple KAs and multiple individual schools.

The agenda for the day was as 'mega' as the event itself. Teachers and principals traversed the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum (ANZHC), the Curriculum Refresh, including exploration of the progressions model, the selection of resources to support teaching, and principal and teacher wellbeing and resilience.

Jonathan Salisbury, Lead Principal of the Tuakau KA summed up the day saying,

> It was a valuable opportunity for all Franklin educators to come together and receive a unified message. As educators, we understand that our work is never truly finished, and we are always looking for ways to better support the growth and development of our students. The event emphasised the importance of working together as a community, sharing our knowledge and resources, and learning from one another.

The ANZHC was a feature of the day, given that in its construction, the learning model of 'Understand, Know, Do' (UKD) was adopted. It had already been announced that this model would equally apply to learning for the entire Curriculum Refresh or Te Mātaiaho.

Explaining the model was the job of Shaun Hawthorne of the Ministry of Education. He gave his audience a comprehensive overview of the progression model, and the UKD learning model.

The curriculum, he said, starts from the premise that all ākonga

Dr Sven Hansen shares some excellent tips on how to build resilience

NZPF President, Leanne Otene, [far right] joins a group of the Franklin Principals on their Training Day

are taonga who can achieve their potential and excel. Progress through learning phases is cumulative and strengths based, and meaningful progress will require teachers to use responsive pedagogy.

So, what do we mean by Understand, Know and Do as a model for the curriculum?

Hawthorne offered an explanation:

- **Understand** means at the heart of learning there is a set of big ideas that all ākonga can relate to.
- **Know** refers to the contexts that enable illumination of these big ideas, bringing them to life.
- **Do** means that ākonga develop practices that enable them to think and act as 'experts' in each learning area and across learning areas.

He then described the seven key features of the progression framework as:

1. Five phases across Years 1–13 that replace the eight curriculum levels.
2. Each phase has eight learning areas.
3. Each learning area has one progress outcome in each phase (five in total).
4. Progress outcomes replace achievement objectives.
5. Each progress outcome describes what ākonga should understand, know and do at each phase of learning.
6. More granular progress steps describe the literacy, communication and numeracy that support the learning described in the progress outcomes.
7. Together they provide explicit signposts along the schooling pathway, while leaving space for local decision making and classroom teaching that is responsive to individual ākonga.

Next were the six phases of learning from early childhood through Years 11–13. Descriptors ranged from early childhood – 'being confident curious learners' – to Years 11–13 – 'navigating pathways and developing agency to help shape the future'.

Leitia Preston, from Vision Education, a PLD provider, also discussed the ANZHC workstream and the links to Understand, Know and Do, as well as the Literacy workstream. She acknowledged mana whenua, Ngāti Tamaoho, and gave clear explanations on the authority within iwi and manawhenua to speak on local curriculum and history.

Through this discussion, Leitia identified how to be culturally responsive, when asking tamariki to prepare and present a pepeha, ensuring the appropriate use of the pepeha for Māori and Pasifika, as opposed to a mihi for all other tamariki. She explained that the Ministry's generic template doesn't necessarily allow for differences in whānau backgrounds and situations as some tamariki are not living with their biological parents.

Tikanga is often used in schools and Leitia explained that schools are covering the 'Do' aspect of the ANZHC, however, they do not always focus on the 'Understand' and 'Know' aspects. There can, at times, be little understanding behind the history of tikanga, why they do it, and the meaning behind it, however, they 'Do' aspects of tikanga. What is important is to identify what 'Understand' and 'Know' really means. She explained that this is the focus for each of the workstream representatives to learn about then share within their own schools.

In support of the ANZHC mahi, Matua Henare shared his story about growing up in Pukekohe and Waiuku. This was followed by Matua Selwyn explaining how Waiuku came to be and the whakapapa of Ngati Te Ata. The kaipūrakau team taught the room a newly written, uplifting waiata about the Waiuku rohe and whakapapa of the tupuna entitled 'Puketapu'. 'Learning waiata about the rohe is brilliant for history recall and engages our ākonga,' said Lysandra Stuart, host for the day and lead of the Waiuku Kāhui Ako.

continued on p.31

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Whaea Ngātipikiao (Piki) Jakeman and Lysandra Stuart outlined the opportunities kapa haka and waiata bring to the classroom and how they link to Te Mātaiaho, the local curriculum, the ANZHC and the Waiuku Kāhui Ako Education plan for Māori. Lysandra also led a session highlighting the importance of working alongside mana whenua. She noted the work her Kāhui Ako is doing with their local Ngati Te Ata iwi with wāhi tapu (sacred places) and celebrating other taonga or treasures in the community.

There was also a presentation from, Te Kāhui Ako o te Puuaha o Waikato who outlined their shared focus, and the resources available to educators for learning, learning support, transitions, and assessment. The information presented by the Across School Leaders was both informative and practical, providing teachers with valuable insights and tools that can be applied to their daily work as educators.

Principal and teacher wellbeing and resilience has been a focus for many years, so it was appropriate that the TOD would include a session on resilience and how to live a fulfilled life. This session was led by Dr Sven Hansen of the Resilience Institute.

Hansen engaged his audience in practical ways to 'bounce, flow, connect and grow'. He listed a number of threats to leading a fulfilled life: worry, fatigue, anxiety, apathy, rumination and insomnia.

Lack of sleep caught the attention of many in the room, as Hansen explained that 'our daytime effectiveness depends on regular, disciplined and structured sleep.' He outlined ways to improve sleep quality by:

1. Having a small early dinner, abstaining from caffeine after 2pm, limiting alcohol and protein.
2. Having a cooling down phase before sleep.
3. Ensuring you have a cool, dark and quiet bedroom with no technology.
4. Exercising early in the day, including both strength and aerobic exercise.
5. Having at least 7–8 hours of quality sleep every night.

Another strategy to overcome anxiety, said Hansen, is to stay in the present. 'Thinking is over-rated,' he said to the surprise of his audience. He continued, explaining that depression is thinking too much about how you ruined the past. 'When you stop thinking, you become present, focused and effective,' he said.

He offered a few tips on how to keep your mind in the present. These include:

1. Take one thing at a time.
2. Stay focused for short bursts.
3. Rest plenty.
4. Seek out your optimal rhythm for your workflow.
5. Practice noticing and block out mental chatter.
6. Strengthen your ability to focus attention.
7. Be aware of your context.
8. Influence situations to the positive.
9. Principals and teachers appreciated the simple, practical advice Hansen offered and found his presentation relatable.

Overall principals and teachers found the mega TOD event a worthwhile investment and were grateful for the Ministry support which allowed so many to participate.

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FALLING ON YOUR FEET

The world-class resistance of New Zealand primary principals

Martin Thrupp martin.thrupp@waikato.ac.nz

WRITING THIS PIECE in early October, I can only guess the outcome of the General Election. By the time you read it, you may well be already despairing about what our political leaders have in mind for education, particularly primary education, over the next three years. Let me briefly share your concern and then perhaps cheer you up a bit.

Sharing your concern, I would suggest that trouble is probably ahead whether we have ended up with a National-led coalition or a Labour-led one. A risk with National is that a damaging reform will become a cornerstone policy that will be pursued come hell or high water (as with National Standards). A risk with Labour is that it will continue its interminable processes of modifying previous education policy but then still come up with something highly flawed (think Curriculum Refresh).

> We can all **LEARN** a lot from how principled principals have **TAKEN ACTION** against flawed policies in our **RECENT PAST**.

To cheer you up, let me remind you that policymaking is never a purely top-down process. Policymakers in an education agency such as the Ministry of Education might wish to say 'jump', but principals and teachers rarely ask how high. Rather policy goes through processes of translation and re-interpretation at the school level. To use the academic term, policy is always enacted rather than simply implemented.

One form of enactment is to resist bad policy in various ways and let's recall at this post-election moment that New Zealand primary principals and their regional and national lead organisations have shown themselves to be very good at such resistance. I was reminded of this recently when I was asked to contribute a chapter to a new book on school leaders and their resistance.

The book, *Resistance in Educational Leadership, Management and Administration* is an international collection of 15 chapters being edited by Amanda Heffernan, Pat Thomson and Jill Blackmore and published by Routledge early next year. My chapter is called 'Educational leadership in trying times: Primary principals' resistance in New Zealand'. It makes a valuable contribution to the overall book because it is full of practical examples of what principals can and do get up to when unhappy with education policy.

Part of the chapter puts on record the response of primary principals to the National Standards policy from 2009–17. I won't go into all the limitations of the policy here, but rather focus on the quite remarkable opposition by educators, much of which was led by, or involved, primary principals.

The NZEI hosted expert forums and organised a nation-wide bus tour to promote opposition to the National Standards in local communities. The NZPF set up an 'Our Principals' website to show professional opposition to the National Standards and set up a Facebook page dedicated to critiquing them. Both organisations refused to attend the National Standards launch and withdrew from the Government's Sector Advisory Group.

As well as activity in national organisations, regional principals' organisations were active in opposing the National Standards. Some boycotted National Standards training or reporting. Others issued press releases and open letters of opposition to the policy. Also strong in some regions, the Boards Taking Action Coalition (BTAC), a coalition between principals and Boards of Trustees announced that 225 schools would not set National Standards-related targets and then later delivered school charters without the required targets. Individual principals also began to use the media, both old and new, to voice their opposition to the policy. Some even posted on a forum on a Ministry of Education website for education leaders, colonising it as a space to express their concerns about the National Standards.

All of these activities were highly public interventions intended to impact public opinion. As the years went by and the National Standards policy became embedded, there was less such activity, but this did not always mean that principals had come to accept the policy. Rather resistance often moved to less public forms of contestation such as token and fabricated enactments of the National Standards policy in schools.

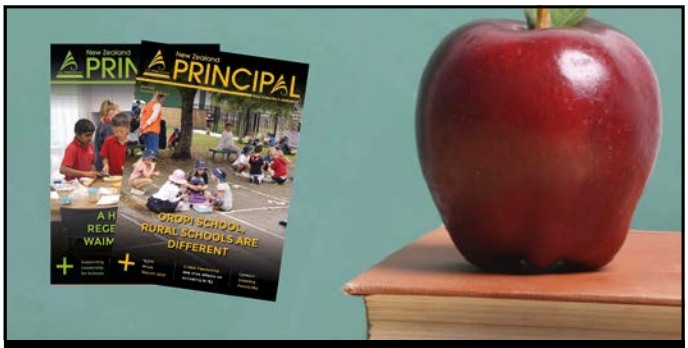
In the end it was the change of government in 2017 that saw the removal of the National Standards. But the confidence of the incoming Labour Government and its coalition partners to so quickly throw out the policy was undoubtedly due to unwavering resistance to National Standards from educators, especially primary principals.

Another part of the chapter looks at the activities of a small group of experienced Auckland principals, the so-called 'Concerned Principals' group. These principals were unhappy with the 'Investing in Educational Success' policy announced in 2014, the policy that eventually led to Kāhui Ako, Communities of Learning.

The Concerned Principals were also unimpressed that the then NZPF president had quickly endorsed the policy without recognising the damage it could do. They set out to mobilise fellow principals across the country to oppose the policy in a

process that one in the group described as 'push-back leadership'. There were various setbacks but eventually the Concerned Principals got the result they were looking for. A primary leaders forum secured a vote of no-confidence in the policy and the NZEI and NZPF put out a joint press release to that effect. It was the strength of this resistance, a far cry from the initial stance of the NZPF, that allowed the NZEI to put forward its alternative plan and have it taken seriously by the Government. The rest, as they say, is history.

To sum up, education policy can and has been resisted by primary principals in Aotearoa, with many fine examples to draw on. Clearly resistance of any kind is a serious matter, something to be considered carefully before taking action. But it is not the case that compliance is always good, ethical leadership. We can all learn a lot from how principled principals have taken action against flawed policies in our recent past.



NZPF CONFERENCE TAKE-AWAYS

HELEN KINSEY-WIGHTMAN

HATS OFF TO whoever had the genius idea of taking 500 school principals to an amusement arcade for the night! Yes, I loved the Virtual Reality pirate shooting game but I laughed the most playing Hungry Hippos. I also had a great time playing at being Captain of the Million Dollar Cruise on beautiful Lake Wakatipu. Thus, the importance of play was an overarching conference theme for me. It is good to remember – for children and adults – that play is important for relationship building and learning happens within relationships.

I first heard Pasi Sahlberg speak at the NZPF/APPA Conference in Melbourne in 2012. At the time he was Director General of the Finnish Ministry of Education & Culture. He gave a keynote entitled 'Finnish Lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?' At the time I was Principal of a small rural school in the Manawatu and had successfully applied for the NZPF Don Le Prou PLD award which allowed me to attend. (Applications for the award close on 1 March next year, details on the NZPF website) I came back and listened eagerly to the audiobook of Finnish Lessons – the updated version is still available on Audible. My takeaways during the Global Educational Reform Movement were about the Finnish focus on learning support interventions in the early years of children's learning rather than waiting until we were labelling their achievement 'Well Below'.

Educational research is a fiendishly difficult pursuit – measuring the outcomes of educational systems is complex but isolating the effect of individual variables of a system in the learning lives of children is almost impossible. Hearing Pasi speak 10 years later has left me reflecting on the impact of researchers fully immersing themselves within a culture. Having his own children schooled within the Australian Education system has clearly given him a new and valuable perspective which cannot be gained by researching a system from the outside.

Pasi has always talked about equity in education – looking

back on presentation slides from 2012, the key areas he talked about were the same ie food in schools and play based learning. However, until we live and work in other places, we can fail to recognise the most basic aspects of our education systems. His realisation that looping – teachers remaining with the same students for more than one year – is not commonly practised in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, may be an example. As he said, if we focus on the value of relationship building (and we also take into account Russell Bishop's emphasis on the significant value of relationships for Māori learners) it seems incomprehensible that we would have a system where teachers spend a year getting to know students and then begin the next year with an entirely new group of learners.

This term I will be taking this idea to my staff as a trial in 2024, along with a different way to organise our school day. Pasi's presentation can be found on his website www.pasisahlberg.com.

One of the benefits of stepping away from the busyness of school life is the opportunity for reflection. As I cruised around a breezy Lake Wakatipu I thought about the changes I am noticing having returned to Year 0–6 Principalship after ten years in High school leadership. If I was creating a *PMI chart* these would be the three significant changes that strike me.

My *Plus* would be the impact of Structured Literacy – I have to be honest when I first came to New Zealand, having trained in the UK and taught in International schools, I had no idea that children were not being taught to decode words phonically. I taught Y7/8 and saw immediate success in shifting poor readers through using PROBE assessment and teaching tools to teach inference and evaluation skills. Looking back I also taught them to sound out words because that is how I taught reading – it did not occur to me that many children had never been taught phonic strategies. I have only come to discover the legacy of Marie Clay's mistaken beliefs in recent years – I found Emily Hanford's podcast, 'Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong' really useful. Regardless of what you believe about the efficacy of Reading Recovery this is essential listening for all NZ educators.

My *Interesting* would be the massive change in approach to the teaching of mathematics. When I moved out of the primary classroom Accelerated Learning in Mathematics (ALiM) had been introduced as a short term intervention for students deemed to be below the national standard and teachers and researchers were beginning to question outcomes of the Numeracy Project. The subsequent rise of Numicon, DMIC and the common use of textbook teaching through PRIME mathematics is a surprise to me and I am watching with interest.

My *Minus*, the significant area of struggle I see, is the rise in numbers of young children lacking the social and emotional skills to play and thrive in a school environment. Hence Patrick Camingian's presentation about overcoming trauma was sadly of great relevance.

The value of a conference is always the casual chat with other professionals. One of the significant themes of the coffee queue chat was how to make best use of the Wellbeing fund. Finnish Education Tours sound amazing (https://visitedufinn.com) as do the Eduteach Conference in Canada and the World EduLead Conference in Singapore. For me developing a better understanding of the impacts of trauma on children is a real priority, so the Trauma Aware Education Conference in Brisbane in October 2024 is currently top of my list. Since an Aussie conference delivers pretty good bang for buck, I am also planning to invest in some mentoring. My social worker friends have the benefit of regular professional supervision – a confidential place to unload, think out loud and assess their own wellbeing. I will be looking for someone to take on this role for me in 2024.





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