

MSR

MIDDLE SCHOOLING REVIEW

ISSUE THREE APRIL 2007

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Curriculum for
Early Adolescents,
What is it and Why?

The Learning
Revolution:
Southland Girls'
High School

Finland's Educational
System is World's No 1!

Learning that Works,
MUSIC

**NO HALF MEASURES!
GETTING THE DRAFT RIGHT**

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MSR Motto

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." Aristotle – Greek philosopher

NZAIMS links with other Educational and Middle Schooling Associations

MSR – Middle Schooling Review actively supports and promotes the aims and objectives of NZAIMS. MSR also encourages readers to refer to the journals of the North American and Australian associations that support early adolescent development, education and welfare:

- www.nmsa.org;
- www.mysa.org.au; and
- www.ascd.org

The ability of all societies to put young people first and give them the best chance in life is a serious challenge, globally.

Parents everywhere know that getting it right is critical, while their children grow and develop as young persons, and as future citizens.

Professionals in a wide range of sectors connected to education all have a vested interest too in the process and the outcomes. They include health and welfare, the judiciary, sport and recreation, economic and social development and the environment.

MSR provides a forum for debate that includes everyone. It fosters developments and reports research and exemplary practices that support the development, education and welfare of young people across all sectors.



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What Kind of School For Their Future?

A rugby tackle broke my left leg early in the second half. Possibles vs Probables. I had just turned 15. The coach yelled, "Go to the sideline And harden up boy". The First Fifteen selections were looming. And I passed out on the sideline.

After the game, a mate dubbed me home on his bike. I fell off twice and landed on my broken leg

Three months later, the plaster came off and the family doctor said "break it again and you'll be crippled for life".

How things have changed, but really have they changed all that much?

For me, this was a make or break time.

Almost every one has some sort of horror story about their school days, and some really good stories too.

The question is: what is the story that we want our children and grandchildren to tell?

The parents and grandparents that I talk to know that Years 7 to 10, for their children, is make or break time.

My comment to them is that we need middle-years education that

keeps young people switched on and fired up.

And I say: Not just any old curriculum, the stuff that schools teach, or any old teaching will do!

The Parents and grandparents of today are themselves increasingly well informed and vocal about this. They want something different and better than what they had at school.

For them, the issue is not about middle schools and intermediates vs high schools.

It's about the nature and quality of the education which their children will get across the middle years.

A renowned US teacher and author, Thomas Armstrong, says in his latest book (2006) called, *The Best Schools:*

During early adolescence, focus on young people's development more than achievement!

I say to anyone who asks, this focus on development is vital.

It's the way that schools and teachers can make sure that their curriculum programmes are flexible,

adaptive and open. This is what the focus on development means.

The research says that programmes that are heavily academic, specialised and not open for scrutiny are outdated and unsuited to anyone.

As far back as 1986, the Curriculum Review said that all schools should initiate urgent curricula innovation and change.

Flexible, adaptive and open curricula were needed for the rapidly emerging information technology era. This was a time when young people needed to learn how to learn, and to be creative and adaptable thinkers.

As Gerry House said in *MSR Issue One*, the central mission of schools is to educate all students to be capable conceptual thinkers. She said we should find these schools and celebrate them.

The Students in these schools use information, skills and technologies to learn in the following ways:

- Construct new knowledge,

- Solve complex problems,
- Integrate concepts and ideas across knowledge disciplines,
- Effectively communicate orally and in writing, and
- Work in diverse groups.

The 1993 *NZ Curriculum Framework* slowed down the change process that would permit this to happen.

The 'slow down' was due to schools getting preoccupied with meeting achievement objectives. They had to meet ongoing compliance and ERO requirements too, and generally cope with being *Tomorrow's Schools*.

The **2006 Draft New Zealand Curriculum** has the potential to change all that.

It has been 21 years in the making!

My comments to parents seeking a school are:

- 1. Look for programmes and teaching that are flexible, adaptive and open; and**
- 2. Avoid schools where heavily**

academic, specialised and closed curricula are mostly the norm.

Parents in the end make their own choices, of course. Not always are these for sound educational reasons.

Here is the bottom line: During early adolescence it's vital to keep young adolescents fired up, motivated and eager to learn.

At this time

- the human brain grows faster than at any other stage except during infancy,
- young people develop powerful, cognitive knowledge and skills needed for a life time, and
- the best learning is active and interactive, not bounded by school subjects or other limits that adults may want to impose willy nilly.

As for brain growth, rapidly increasing brain cells, new pathways and connections in the brain and heightened brain activity, are all going on.

At this time, young people develop and consolidate the power of their brains for the rest of their lives.

As for all the grandparents, like me, who have their early adolescent grandchildren's best interests at heart-

We experience first hand their powerful minds in the making – curious, challenging, witty, and unafraid of the future. They are technology literate and eager to learn. They learn fast and they want to keep learning.

As a grandparent, I am constantly on the look out for ways to stimulate the active and curious, wonderful brains of my grandchildren as they develop and grow.

This is all well and good, but grandchildren everywhere need and deserve no less.

And nothing but the best schools will do. □

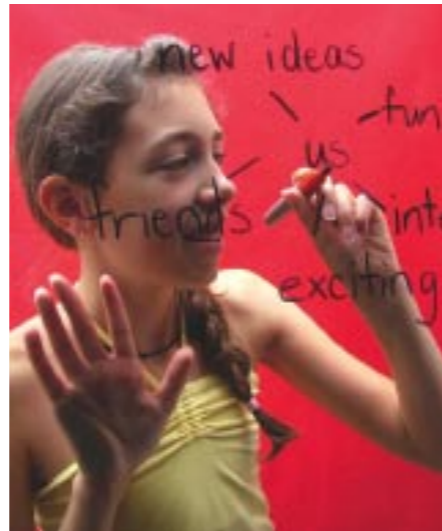
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Limited to 200-300 words.
Email: Editor@msr.org.nz

Invitation to Contribute
Write an article, submit a report or write a description of an exemplary programme or work/teaching strategy for MSR. Email: Editor@msr.org.nz

Cover Story

Andrew Nolan

Madison Baird



Name: Madison Baird

Age: 13

School: Palmerston North Intermediate Normal

"I'm confident and I like to speak my mind". Her words not mine.

I asked Madison if she understood what *feminism* meant.

"No".

I asked if she wanted me to explain.

Not interested.

Madison most certainly knows what she likes.

As for her dislikes; she appears not to have many.

OK, Madison doesn't like maths, or running, and sometimes she doesn't like getting up in the morning for school.

Maths, well simply, she just doesn't understand it.

Running, no excuses there - she just doesn't like it. That's ironic since netball is one of the sports that she plays.

For Madison, sport seems an enjoyable pastime, and most of it seems to revolve around water.

Getting out of bed first thing Monday, for school – name one young person who likes to do that?

Madison's reasoning is quite precise.

Monday morning at school starts with assembly. Apparently, assembly is boring.

For Madison, it appears that learning comes naturally.

Learning means "finding out new stuff; finding out more".

As for her preferred way to learn, no surprises here either:

Talking about it and working in groups.

Everything Madison likes about learning involves action and possibly "a bit of noise". She doesn't like a classroom that's quiet.

"Speeches" she said "I like doing these. I'm a good public speaker".

Madison said that being confident is her best attribute.

When asked what she is worst at, she said simply "I can't remember".

Madison appears to be *an all rounder.*

Other than maths, she appears to be good at learning and school work. She reads for no less than half an hour at night.

We're not talking about teen love/romance novels here, more like biographical stories – stories with real depth.

Doesn't watch much T.V. – though just HAS to watch *Home and Away*.

Nobody's perfect.

On the topic of high school, her feeling was excitement more than anything else, and a little bit nervous.

Meeting new people, making friends, learning, and new experiences all are an adventure and there to enjoy – most certainly not something to fear.

Madison laughs a lot. She said,

"I laugh because I like to laugh. I find things funny".

She said her brother gets annoyed because "I can't tell jokes, but then I can laugh at them".

There had to be one thing that Madison is not good at. And it appears that telling jokes is it.

Though, if Madison can laugh at her own jokes, they can't be all that bad. □

NZAIMS

Presidents Message

Putting young people first by making schools information rich! As far as I am concerned, that's why we're here and why we created Middle Schooling Review (MSR).

Too long we have let structures and territory get in the way.

Too often we compromise doing what is right simply because we're afraid of stepping on toes.

Too often we let ourselves be bullied out of doing what is best for our young people.

Long standing research and experience informs what we do. □

Bill Noble

President

New Zealand Association for Intermediate and Middle Schooling



MSR Photographic Competition:

Say it with an Image

The MSR quarterly photographic competition invites students and teachers to submit a digital image accompanied by a piece of written work of no more than 50 words:

Say it with an Image captures and records schooling that makes a difference.

Spotlight on: students' and teachers' experiences, perspectives and viewpoints.

The competition has two parts:

1. A high quality digital photograph that captures one or all of the following: Exciting ideas, valuable learning, fun experiences, great relationships and making a

difference - 300dpi at 200% see detailed instructions at www.nzaims.co.nz

2. Write: a poem, a descriptive account, an imaginative piece or a pithy report to go with your image - no more than 50 words.

The Competition: MSR publishes the winning image and written piece in the next Issue of MSR and highly commended images either throughout MSR or in the www.nzaims.co.nz "Best Images" gallery.

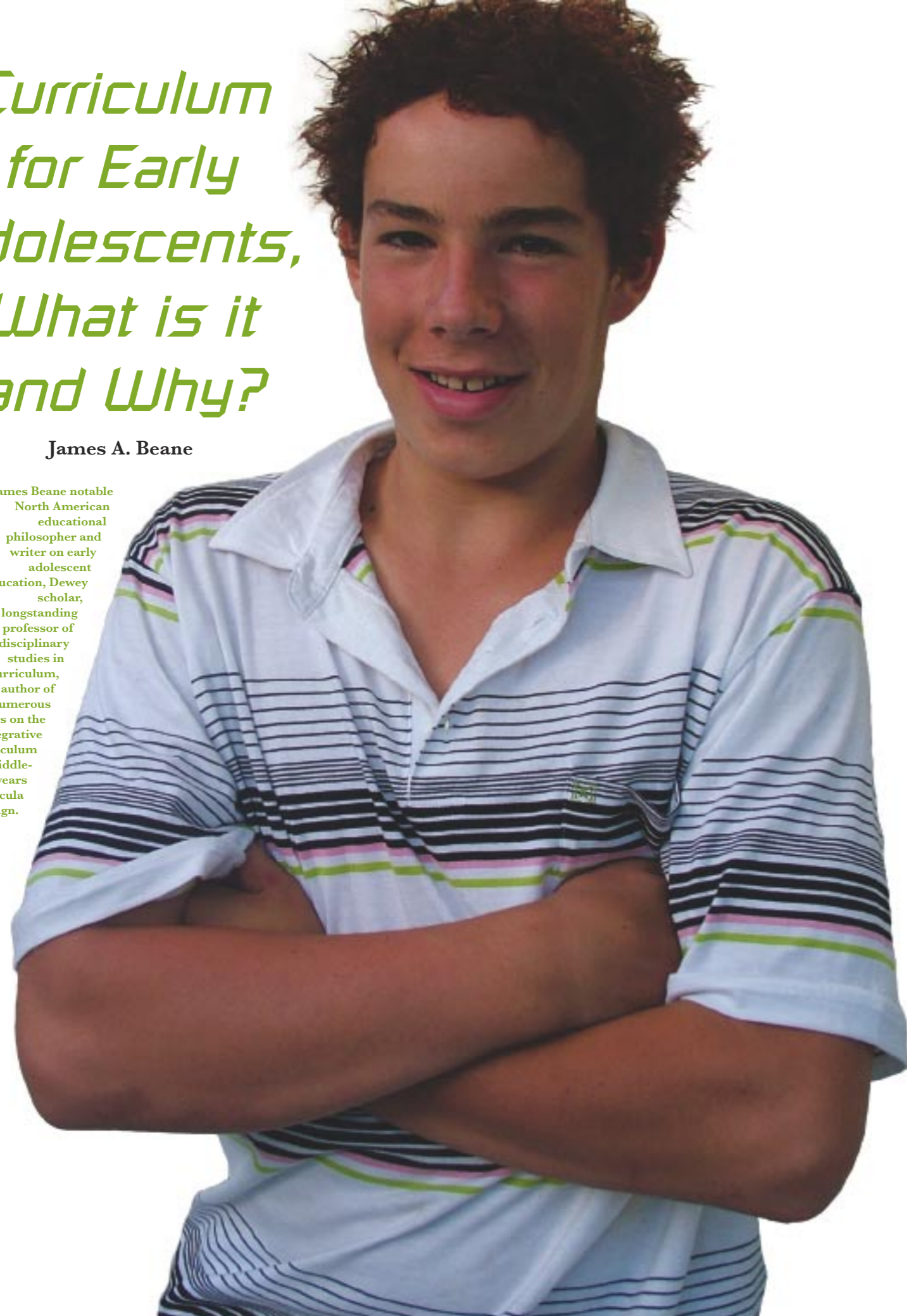
The project: Say it with an Image Anthology – publishes the best images and written accounts annually. This publication will be supplementary to the MSR.

To enter the competition please email: editor@msr.org.nz

Curriculum for Early Adolescents, What is it and Why?

James A. Beane

James Beane notable North American educational philosopher and writer on early adolescent education, Dewey scholar, longstanding professor of interdisciplinary studies in curriculum, and author of numerous books on the integrative curriculum and middle-years curricula design.



Anyone who has taught at more than one educational level or raised children knows that young people between the ages of roughly ten and fifteen are different from the children they were a few years before and the adolescents they soon will become.

This knowledge, born of observation and experience, affirms what psychologists and sociologists have recognized since early in the twentieth century.

Young people at or about puberty have a critical mass of characteristics pronounced enough to place them in a unique stage of development. No longer children, but not yet mature adolescents, this group is most often referred to as “early adolescents.”

While reaching puberty is a key event for early adolescents, other transitions also mark this period: increased concern for peer relationships, heightened attention to self-identity, desire for greater independence, more complex awareness of value and moral questions, and more.

While contemporary researchers reject the “storm and stress” characterization that was favoured in earlier descriptions of early adolescence, there is nonetheless a clear consensus that this stage is one of serious and often dramatic change (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994).

Despite this consensus it is still the case that early adolescents often find themselves in environments that are neither appropriate for their stage of development nor responsive to their characteristics (Eccles & Midgely, 1989).

Faced with a fragmented, subject-centred curriculum, a round of teachers with varying and uncoordinated demands, and large, anonymous enrolments, many early

adolescents lose their way, both educationally and socially within the unfriendly structures of schools.

These structures mimic secondary schools, which are alienating even for many mature adolescents.

For almost a century, educators and other advocates for early adolescents have sought to establish schools that would offer an appropriate and responsive educational experience for them.

Early adolescents often find themselves in environments that are neither appropriate for their stage of development nor responsive to their characteristics

Many of these efforts have focused on structural features of school, such as block scheduling, teacher teaming, and school climate.

In many cases, the change efforts have resulted in better environments for teachers and students. But even when pastoral matters are accounted for, the question remains:

What kind of curriculum is appropriate for early adolescents?

Early adolescents are, as noted, in a stage of transition.

Certainly they are no longer children and it is thus fair to expect that an appropriate curriculum would be more challenging and complex than that of the primary curriculum.

But neither are they mature adolescents who are nearing the end of secondary education and, with

a more refined sense of direction, coming increasingly closer to the actuality of post-secondary plans.

For this reason the specialization and disciplinary abstraction of the secondary school is as inappropriate in its way as the primary curriculum is in the other.

What we need, then, is a curriculum that is for early adolescents, not some other group, a curriculum that helps early adolescents to broaden and deepen their understanding of themselves and their world at this time in their lives.

And we need a general education curriculum that brings early adolescents together to continue to explore the world rather than one that is concerned with specialization for secondary education or post-secondary activities.

A Different Curriculum

Such a curriculum necessarily, then, would draw its organizing themes not from the interests of academic scholars as represented in the disciplines of knowledge, but from the concerns of early adolescents themselves and the world as they experience it (Beane, 1993).

Picture, for example, a group of early adolescents engaged in a unit about “Environmental Issues,” including major concepts or “big ideas” like conservation, pollution, politics, and economics. What kinds of experiences might best help them address these issues?

- To work on the concept of conservation, students might manage school or community recycling programmes; they could make recommendations for resource conservation after studying waste patterns in school or community, and/or carry out a multimedia campaign to encourage

conservation and recycling in the school and community.

- To work on the concept of politics and the environment, they could carry out a survey in the school and community regarding attitudes toward issues like recycling or land use, or prepare exhibits that display competing viewpoints about environmental issues, and/or research how debates about environmental issues have changed over time.
- To work on the concept of pollution, they might test water or soil from nearby sources, or they might survey businesses and industries about efforts to reduce pollution, and/or they might prepare exhibits on various kinds of pollution.

Having completed that unit, suppose these early adolescents are next involved in a unit on “Living in the

Future,” with related concepts such as technology, living spaces, health, and others.

socially significant issues offer opportunities for early adolescents to engage with the world

Here students could conduct a survey on beliefs held by peers about the future, tabulate the results, compare them to other forecasts, and prepare research reports. Or they could do anyone or all of the following:

- Study technological, recreational, entertainment, or social trends and develop forecasts or scenarios for the future of one or more of those areas;
- Research past forecasts made for our own times to see if they

actually occurred;

- Develop recommendations for the future of their local communities in areas such as population, health, recreation, transportation, conservation, and so on; or
- Study the effects of aging on facial features to imagine how they might look when they are older.

To imagine such a curriculum is to imagine how we might create a curriculum for the middle school and middle schooling that is simultaneously responsive to early adolescents, intellectually challenging, and socially conscious.

Within each of the units described, and others like them, early adolescents might explore answers they have about themselves in connection with also exploring significant social issues. In order

to carry out the activities within, they would necessarily engage with significant concepts and skills from a variety of knowledge sources, including the disciplines of knowledge.

In a problematic context, however, that knowledge must be applied and extended, thus enhancing the possibility that it will actually be integrated into the early adolescents’ developing schemes of meaning and carried forward to new experiences.

Moreover, the focus on socially significant issues offers opportunities for early adolescents to engage with the world in meaningful ways, heighten their sense of responsibility and encourage their growing sense of autonomy.

This kind of curriculum is significantly different from the abstract, fragmented separate subject fare historically that schools offered to early adolescents.

The new curriculum provides a meaningful context for knowledge. It responds to early adolescents’ curiosity about self, now and in the future. It connects early adolescents with significant issues in the larger world. It provides a coherent and unified sense of purpose and activity. And it involves authentic and purposeful activity.

Is such a curriculum possible? The short answer is “yes!”

In fact, variations of this kind of curriculum have been offered to early adolescents for nearly eighty years. Reviews of research conducted since the 1940s consistently suggest that early adolescents engaged in a problem-centred, integrated curriculum do at least as well or better on both academic and affective measures as peers who experience a separate-subject curriculum (Beane, 1997).

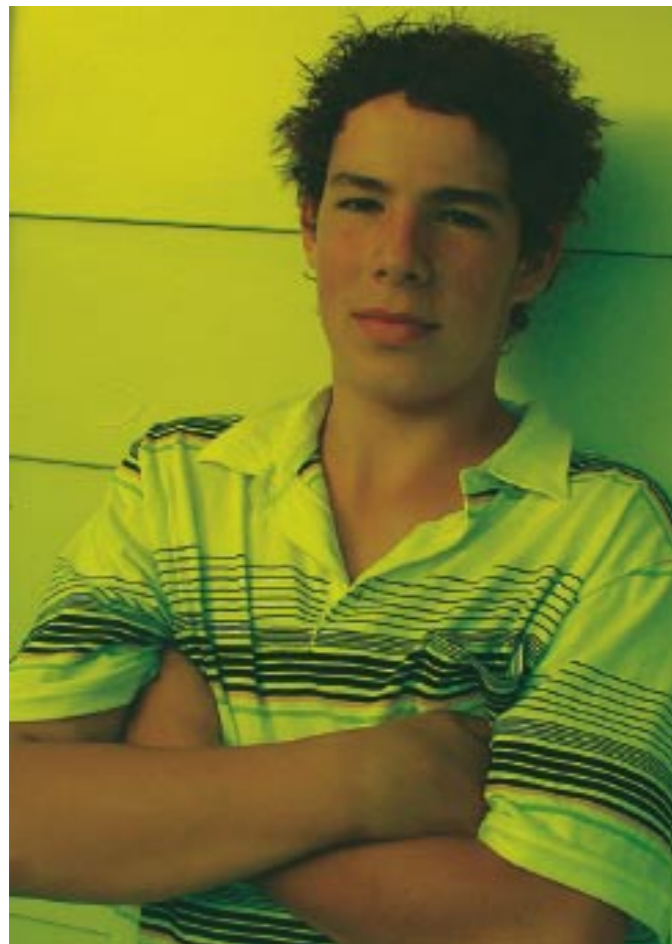
What has kept such a curriculum

from becoming the centrepiece of early adolescent education?

The answer is far from simple as it involves a mix of subject area loyalties, teacher education and certification traditions, bureaucratic identities, and high culture interests.

Powerful as these forces may be, especially in combination, the curriculum they have entrenched has not represented the best interests of early adolescents. As a result, many of these young people continue to be disengaged from the school curriculum and disinterested in all but the social aspects of school life. This is the case even where well-intentioned educators have substantially remade the structure and climate of their schools.

In short, we cannot change the fact of early adolescence, but we can change the curriculum. And if the school is ever to match the former, the latter must be done.□



Welcoming *The* Draft

The Draft makes learning authentic, connected and real for young people.

This is the Draft's true spirit and its primary intention for school curricula across the middle years.

The Draft's principles, values, key competencies and effective pedagogy especially embody this spirit and intention.

John McAleese, Principal, Howick Intermediate School, says all this and more in this feature article on the 2006 Draft New Zealand Curriculum.

Something different

Al Gore, US Ex-presidential candidate has his finger on the environmental pulse, globally. He recently described this time of global challenges, in the history of the world, as the ‘age of consequence’.

Today, Al Gore says, society as a whole needs to create solutions to problems that actions of the past created.

We need to do things that have less of a negative impact on our planet. We need to be more adaptable and resolve the challenges that Mother Nature throws at us and that mankind has created.

To survive and prosper in this new age, says Al Gore, we need thinkers, problem solvers and large amounts of flexibility.

The *2006 Draft New Zealand Curriculum* is a serious step in this direction.

Its approach is laudable: schools focus on the learner. They create new curricula and teaching solutions, rather than persist with the subject based curricula of the past, which still predominate.

For years, worldwide research on preadolescent students’ needs has suggested that schools use a more learner centred approach.

It’s exciting that now we may have a New Zealand Curriculum-in-the-making that advocates and supports the approach.

Purpose

In this article, I discuss how the Draft’s learner centred approach makes the new Curriculum in essence a curriculum for the middle years.

The Draft says continue with

Early adolescents need places where they help to decide the focus and pace of their learning.



and consolidate the things that we already do well. But we’ll have to face up to, and meet, a few new challenges too; so that school learning becomes and stays authentic, connected and real for New Zealand’s young people.

The leap maybe quantum

Lots of practitioners have known for quite some time that preadolescent students need a particular kind of curriculum – one that is different from primary and secondary schools. They need teaching methods and school environments too, which are different.

Early adolescents need places where **they** help to decide the focus and pace of their learning.

They actively monitor and assess what they already know. They decide learning goals to pursue and the methods to achieve them and, in the process, their teachers provide the support and teaching they need.

National curricula of the past have not readily permitted or encouraged these things.

The Draft’s quantum leap

The 2006 Draft is different: it encourages all schools not just intermediates and middle schools to make a quantum leap!

The key competencies are the key to making the leap.

The competencies in practice mean that schools now can focus more on the processes and less on subject matter content.

Students develop the competencies by applying them to issues and concerns that are real and which the students see as connected to them and their lives i.e. they experience integrative learning.

This kind of learning means that

teachers spend less time preoccupied with “subjects” as they:

- spend more time developing positive and supportive relationships with students;
- work in partnership with students as guides, advisors and facilitators of learning; and
- help students to design learning tasks that have real point and purpose, for them.

A curriculum and teaching change

Here, we are witnessing an important change.

The Draft mandates schools to work in ways different to the past, and the present.

Under the new mandate, schools no longer feel guilty about meeting Ministry or ERO accountability requirements and being found wanting. Now, we can put students first and not teaching driven by achievement objectives.

No half measures

The Draft means *No half measures*. It means full steam ahead, without compromise, to create student centred learning in all our schools.

The Draft encourages schools to draw on all the resources available in the community to support the *No half measures* strategy.

Starting points and the process

James Beane (1997) says that the starting point is the students’ own concerns about themselves and about the world, fuelled by natural curiosity.

Students’ concerns are a natural and

logical place to start because they are motivational and they engage students’ interest and they sustain it.

Teacher and adult decided objectives and topics (temporarily at least) go on the back burner.

Teachers and students in dialogue is the Draft’s preferred curriculum process. Together they explore, identify, debate and decide the focus and topics for inquiry, investigation and systematic reporting.

The students report the discoveries and findings of their inquiries and projects. They report that this and that is what they found out, and what they now know, supported by the evidence they gathered.

The teacher’s role, says the Draft, is to provide scaffolding and support – along with expert instruction in subjects, as needed.

Students begin developing as life long learners. They identify new situations, they ask questions, they challenge the known and they seek knowledge that is new (Brewerton, 2004).

The heart of the Draft

From a middle schooling viewpoint it’s the key competencies together with the Draft’s educational principles, values and effective pedagogy that lie at its heart.

The core elements of the Draft in-action challenge schools as organisations, at least as we know them - though perhaps some more than others.

Directions for organisational change

In the past and still now, organisational considerations usually drive what happens and they exert a very big influence over what gets done and what gets taught, and learned.

The hidden curriculum often teaches the students that fitting-in is what comes first. School organisational purposes, timetables, doing and performing well on tests and obeying authority are what really matter.

Commonly, timetable constraints and the practicalities of managing students decide the course options that students can take.

If schools truly implement the Draft's core elements then the organisation of many schools probably must change!

Flexible teaching arrangements (e.g. one on one and small groups) and block scheduling are a clear direction for the future, under the Draft. This especially is the case if schools wish to accommodate the cross curricula and interdisciplinary curriculum designs that the Draft recommends.

The teaching scene also changes

Teaching, as well as the curriculum, is a part of the change of scene.

Jane Gilbert (2005) of NZCER suggests that the "problems" and student centred inquiry approach means that the teachers' roles will change.

Increasingly, teachers will work *with* their students, helping them to ask and answer important and relevant questions:

- What do I need to know to carry out my investigation?
- What resources will I need and where can I get them?
- Who else might I approach to assist me?
- How will I present my learning and its outcomes?

- How will I know that I have achieved what I set out to achieve?

As teachers help their students to explore the questions, the students drive the learning process. And the students not the teacher provides the answers.

The teacher may have to wait, as the answers emerge, and resist the temptation to 'force the issue' or find the (correct) solution.

In this teaching scenario, the teacher is facilitator, and the teacher's task is to foster students' thinking. The teacher helps them to apply their thinking to real problems and assists them to manage time and create time frames for learning.

Effects of students

The students experience consequences, and that's what Al Gore said is important as students explore needs and concerns and

work to individual tempos and learning styles.

In the process, students may take their learning into areas that their teachers have not thought of.

They inevitably will need teacher support to:

- Minimise the limitations of the school's existing organisational and administrative structures (Bishop & Glynn, 1999); and
- Work in an interdisciplinary way across learning areas.

Brave New World

The learner centred - key competency approach to teaching means that teachers become learners.

This may push many teachers out of their comfort zones.

If teachers do become learners, and model the processes they want their students to use then, in my view and experience, their teaching will be revitalised. Preadolescent students will respond positively and learn well.

In this brave new world, teachers and students work together and schools are organised and function much more organically.

Groupings of students become more varied and flexible and not all students learn the same things.

Time frames change and actual learning, mastery and inquiry processes drive the instructional interactions that students experience -- rather than course prescriptions and organisational factors.

Teachers collaborate more and work in partnership with students. Teachers construct learning pathways for students and with them, individually and in groups.

The 2006 Draft provides schools and teachers with the mandate to change in these ways.

Professional development is vital. Teachers and schools need to learn how to take charge and develop the kinds of programmes, and teaching, that young adolescents increasingly will need -- competent, principled, values-based and dynamic.

These are the kinds of programmes and teaching that fit with Al Gore's line of thinking. They fit also with what the 2006 Draft New Zealand Curriculum and Middle schooling philosophy say and that are needed:

Middle schooling where young people develop the attitudes, competencies and ways of knowing that will last them a lifetime.

If the Draft New Zealand Curriculum, as it stands in April 2007, does not fully explain to the

schools and to the community at large how the schools might meet the challenge that Al Gore has posed, then time is still on our side. Perhaps only just.

Right now we need to do the school and teacher development so that all schools can get up to speed.

Many schools already are working 'at speed'. Their experience and practice, if documented, could provide models and strategies for others to emulate as we seek to implement the new New Zealand Curriculum, and do so in ways that are true to its spirit and best intentions for the future. At the very least, our students need and deserve this focus.□

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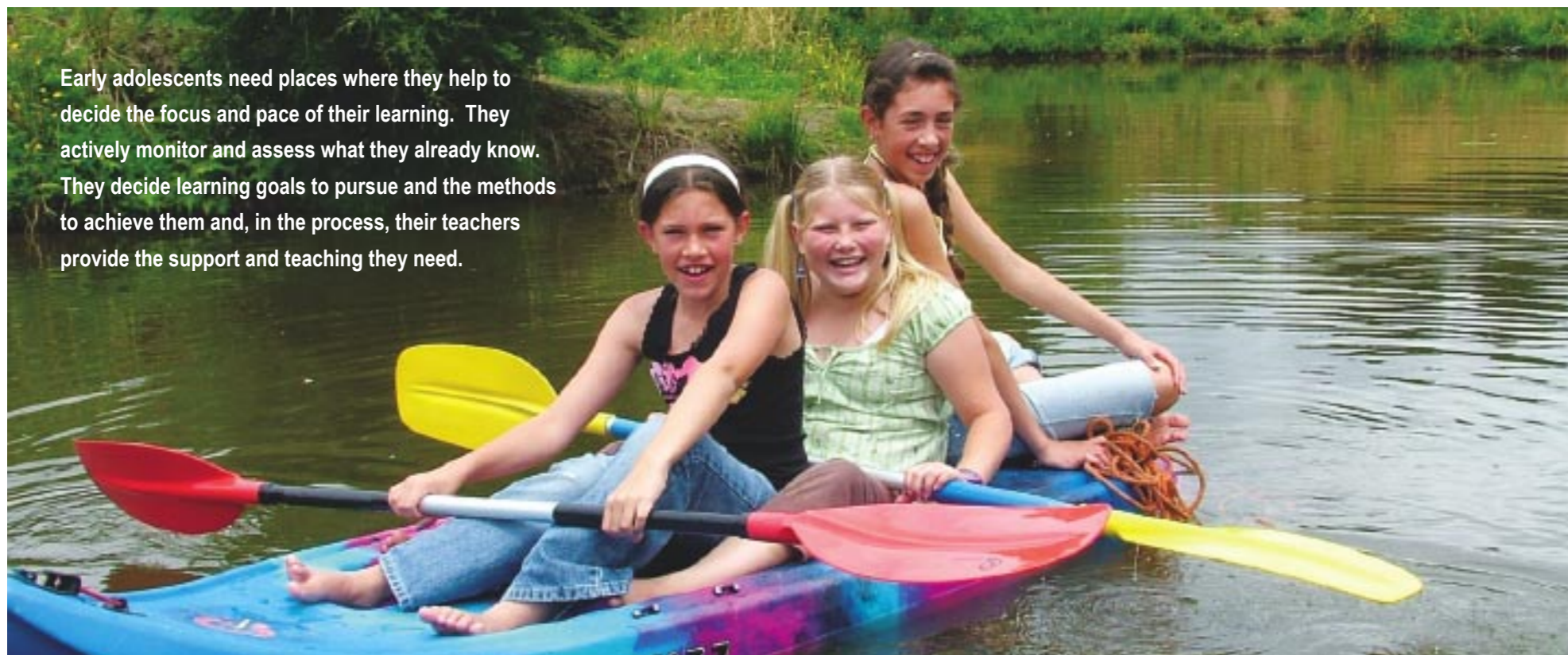
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John McAleese

John has worked with preadolescent students for thirty years and always has believed that they should identify the focus of their own learning. When his principal's hat is not on he builds houses and grows acres of flowers which nicely blend the theoretical with the practical. He believes students should enjoy the same mix. Further information about John's views is available at: principal@howickint.school.nz



Early adolescents need places where they help to decide the focus and pace of their learning. They actively monitor and assess what they already know. They decide learning goals to pursue and the methods to achieve them and, in the process, their teachers provide the support and teaching they need.

Finland's Educational System is World's No.1

Two hours drive due north from Helsinki lies the Arctic Circle. But in this town of 120,000 people one not only feels the bitter cold but also the white heat of the technological revolution.

Here are the principal research and development offices of Nokia. There are 800 other high tech companies, some overflowing their expertise into neighbouring Russia where they see the future "beckoning", in the words of Pertti Huuskonen, the boss of Technopolis, which is just building a big facility close to St. Petersburg airport. There are probably more Ph.D.s per square meter in this compact old paper-milling town than anywhere else on earth.

This astonishing intellectual creation can be laid at the feet of the Finnish educational system, considered by all who survey it, including the OECD, as possessing the best school system in the world. Finland is also reckoned to be in the top three of the world's most competitive countries.

Why? Prime Minister, Matti Vanhanen reduces the explanation to one pithy observation. "The teachers are respected; high talent is attracted into teaching; it is considered to be one of the most important professions", he told me.

But how did Finland get to such a happy state of being? Tapani Ruokanen, editor of Finland's leading news weekly, Suomen Kuvalehti, argues that it goes back to 18th Century when the Lutheran bishops wouldn't allow anyone to marry unless they could read the Bible. Then in the 19th Century there were a series of



strong revivalists' movements, which led to the creation of a flurry of newspapers and magazines.

The big departure that everyone refers back to was the decision by a Social Democratic government in the 1970s to turn what was then an elitist system into a comprehensive one. Before then the working class could only progress into the upper schools if they won a scholarship that covered their fees. But for the last thirty-five years the schools have been open to all, free and unstreamed.

Marie-Laure Foulon, the Stockholm correspondent of *Le Figaro* who has just published a book, "Le Rebond du Modèle Scandinavie" (The Rebound of the Scandinavian Model), argues that the critical ingredient in the 1970's reform was "to decide it was better to push up the bottom level to the middle than to push the middle to the top." She says that Finland's success shows that a system based on equal opportunity is superior to one like the French, "with excellence at the top and mediocrity at the bottom." She adds, "the top will go to the top anyway." She tells of interviewing the head of the Finnish stock exchange who told her that although at the time when he was at school he felt he was not being stretched, he realizes because of the comprehensive system he now knows his peers better and that has enabled him to be a more effective businessman. "It appears", she concludes, "that equality in education creates productivity, even if it doesn't always create excellence."

The big departure that everyone refers back to was the decision by a Social Democratic government in the 1970s to turn what was then an elitist system into a comprehensive one. Before then the working class could only progress into the upper schools if they won a scholarship that covered their fees. But for the last thirty-five years the schools have been open to all, free and unstreamed.



Jonathan Power

upgrade their knowledge and skills.

In short, the Finns work at it and, unencumbered by a class-stratified educational system, they have shown that equality is a plus, not a hindrance to fast progress.□

Jonathan Power

Columnist, film-maker and writer. M.Sc in economics, trained as a geographer and agricultural economist. For the first ten years after graduate school community work in slum neighbourhoods in Chicago and London. Worked for Martin Luther King 1966-1967. For 30 years a journalist, of which 17 were as columnist for the International Herald Tribune 1974-1991.

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Day to day, the Finnish government keeps the pressure on, indeed to such a degree that the pupils complain of a lack of fun at school, a problem that the minister of education, Antti Kalliomäki, tells me is being worked on with new proposals to extend the short school day that often ends at 2 p.m. for another couple of hours where pupils can play sport and do their hobbies before they return home.

Nevertheless, compared with say French or British children, the children should feel themselves lucky

Only 15 percent of those who apply to be teachers are accepted, even though pay levels are about average for Europe. No teacher can teach at any level without a master's degree.

— there are no nationwide exams or big final tests. It is a system of continuous assessment by a mixture of monthly tests and teacher evaluations.

Much of the success of the educational system lies in a detailed application

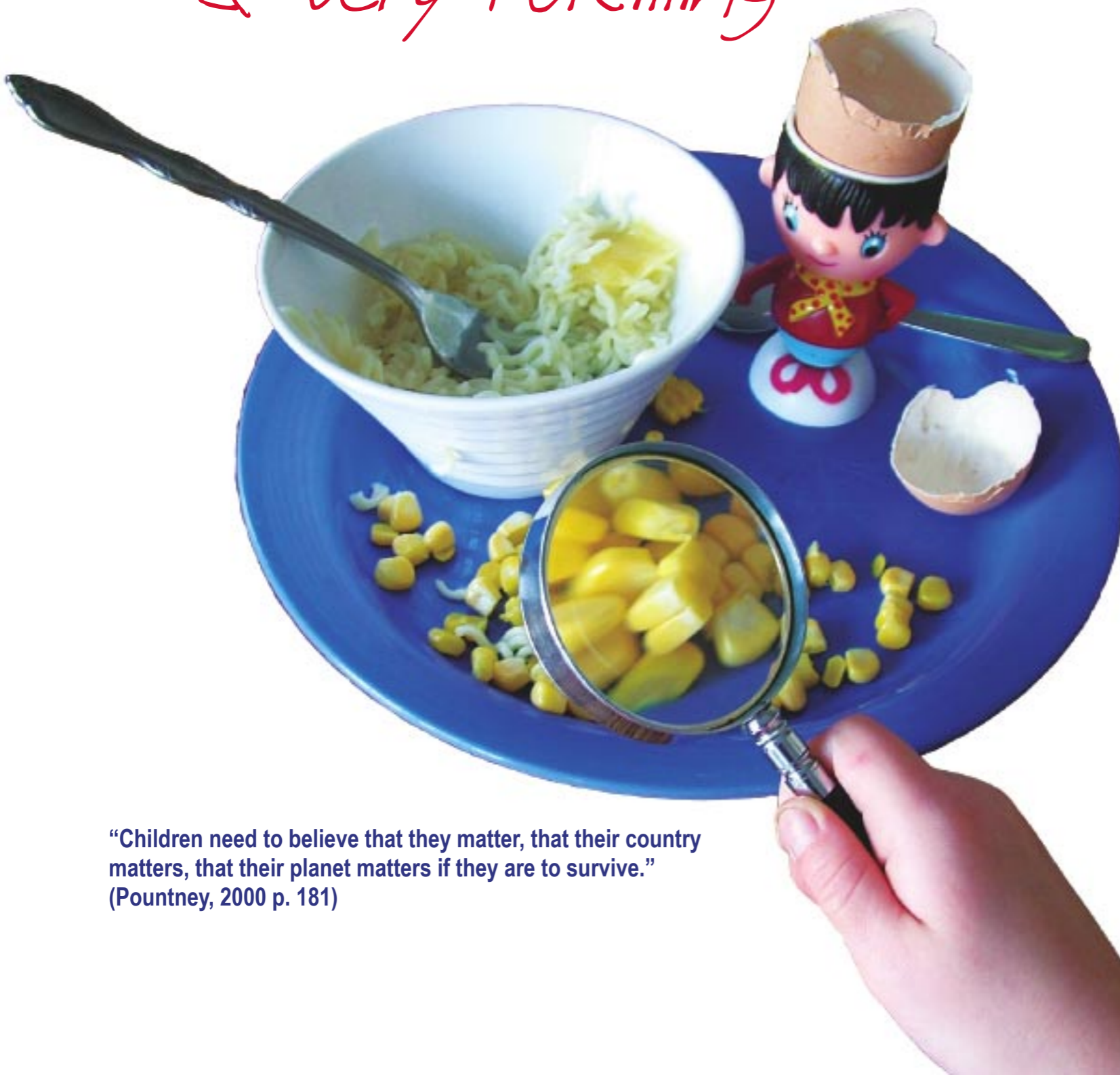
to the problems that can arise in all educational systems — from making sure that all children get fed by providing free meals at school to subsidized travel.

Likewise no student, however badly behaved, need fear expulsion. The school is simply responsible for getting on top of whatever behaviour problems emerge.

Only 15 percent of those who apply to be teachers are accepted, even though pay levels are about average for Europe.

No teacher can teach at any level without a master's degree. Once in a job, teachers are encouraged to keep abreast of the academic literature so that educational decisions are based on rational argument, not just everyday intuition. Moreover, they are constantly being sent on courses during their long holidays to

Engaging, Demanding & Very Fulfilling



**“Children need to believe that they matter, that their country matters, that their planet matters if they are to survive.”
(Pountney, 2000 p. 181)**

Introduction

Mansell Senior School is a Decile One intermediate in Papakura, south of Auckland.

In 2005, when working on a Massey University postgraduate paper, I began looking at how our school’s student council could play a part in promoting better health among the students and relate to them in ways that truly are responsive to and respectful of them as young people and emerging citizens.

The project was a spin-off from the Health-Promoting Schools concept developed by the World Health Organisation in the 1980s and initiated in Northland and Auckland in 1997.

The Counties Manukau District Health Board, whose territory includes Papakura, has a model called Tipu Ka Rea which signifies growing and multiplying - and which has three levels: Manuka, Kowhai and Kauri.

Each participating school undertakes to provide “a healthy setting for living, learning and working” by identifying and dealing with its particular health issues.

At Mansell, 11 Year Seven students were chosen for the student council and had a 1 and a 1/2 hour timetabled block for their duties. Then, last May 2006, they were given another similar block of time to focus on their new projects.

By June, they had reached the Manuka level - and were aiming for the next stage (Kowhai) by the end of the year.

At the September 2006 NZAIMS Annual Conference in Auckland, Professor Jim Beane from the USA spoke of middle schooling needing a **relevant** curriculum, in an **authentic** context - and one that is intellectually

stimulating and democratic and **integrates** knowledge from many sources.

In this Article I explain how Mansell has been pursuing these goals.

Relevant, authentic and integrative at Mansell

Given the opportunity to choose, the 11 student councillors quickly identified relevant, authentic questions and activities they wanted to pursue and formed their own groups. The head girl and head boy chose to work together. The others worked in three groups of three.

At the September 2006 NZAIMS Annual Conference in Auckland, Professor Jim Beane from the USA spoke of middle schooling needing a relevant curriculum, in an authentic context - and one that is intellectually stimulating and democratic and integrates knowledge from many sources.

They had brainstormed possible inquiries and strategies and quickly began on four tasks. The head girl and head boy began writing a letter inviting a sports hero to speak to the whole school at assembly about keeping healthy. They then wrote a cover letter to a friend of the school at Counties Manukau Sport asking him to forward their invitation to a high profile sportsperson.

The second group designed, copied, distributed, collected and collated data from a whole school survey asking peers what they ate or drank in the past 24 hours.

The third group focused on exercise. Using enlarged maps of Papakura

they asked all classes to find out who regularly walks the furthest to school.

The fourth group wanted to start a Breakfast Club – an idea supported by the data that showed 30 students had come to school without breakfast. They listed supplies they would need and started drafting letters to organise fundraising supplies.

They all are involved in a fifth project that developed out of an identified need: better school drinking water facilities.

Six months later

The invitation to a sporting role model was given instead to Diabetes Projects Trust. Two of their staff visited the school several times, collaboratively writing and directing the student councillors to perform for the whole school a play called “Healthy Eating” with PowerPoint visuals and other props. The head boy also wanted to establish a way for lonely, troubled or bullied students to get support. Variety - The Children’s Charity responded by presenting the school with a Friendship Seat for the grounds.

Data from the “Food Survey” were collated and presented on bar graphs representing breakfast, morning tea, lunch, after-school snacks, dinner, anything else and drinks. 230 students returned completed survey forms from a roll of about 280. One member of this group phoned Diabetes Auckland and arranged for a speaker to visit the school. She gave a thorough presentation to the whole school, with question time, Yummy apples, and follow-up worksheets, which she monitored, rewarding five students, who had made healthy changes, with tickets to Rainbows End.

The results of the ‘Who Walks Furthest to School?’ survey were

presented on one map and displayed on the students' notice board. This group of students sewed and presented, at assembly, foptails (throwing toys) to the big walkers from each class.

Then, they wondered what to do next. The other groups were still busy. They wanted to run a fun games day for the whole school. I intervened and suggested that they organise a fun afternoon for one class. They, planned games, chose a class, asked for permission, took the class for one hour, and found it difficult to keep them focused.

The fourth group prepared several draft letters. They were hoping to hold a fundraising barbecue. This, however, didn't get approval. The school was fundraising vigorously for a trip to Rarotonga.

So, they drafted a letter to Auckland Mayor and cereal manufacturer, Dick Hubbard, inviting him to open the Breakfast Club. They prepared lists of what they would need and surveyed the staff, asking them who would help. But this was lost when my laptop crashed. They still did not have school management approval for the breakfast club!

At a HPS meeting of local schools' representatives I heard of a

voluntary group called *AngelsLight* and invited them to speak with our student councillors about other breakfast clubs they run in local schools. As a result, the students proposing this assisted one morning at a nearby primary school helping to feed 90 children between 7.30 and 9am. Soon after, *AngelsLight* offered to start a breakfast club in our school. And Papakura District Council gave a small grant to help establish it.

The students were enthusiastic, engaged in small groups, focused on chosen tasks and excited about changes they could make. It was not long before they were organizing me.

The fifth activity involved the following six activities all linked to the quality of drinking water in the school:

- A visit to beverage company *Frucor* - to look at bottled water and discuss school beverage guidelines;
- A presentation to the Board of Trustees (about the current facilities);

- Monitoring our school fountains weekly and reporting to the property manager;
- The property manager's support to fix what is fixable and remove what is not working;
- A visit to a local school to see recently installed fountains; and
- Presentations to students by *Living Water* fountain designer and other water companies.

We intend to continue this research and present our findings to the Board of Trustees, detailing the pros and cons of different options.

In September, four of these 11 student councillors participated in a WHO Western Pacific Regional Forum Youth Event at the Aotea Centre, Auckland. Young people represented nine high schools and two intermediate schools. Their main task was to discuss with the WHO delegates and New Zealand MPs, the student-led, health-promoting initiatives in their schools. Each student was matched with a delegate.

That prompted this response from the Mansell's head boy, Scott Booth, who then was 13:

"It was worthwhile to hear ideas

from all over the world. I had lunch with the representative from Papua New Guinea. We just talked about anything and everything and carried on an inspiring conversation about health in the world. My next goal would be to have longer conversations with Ministers from other countries to hear what they are doing; to bring their ideas back to improve our society. I want to be someone big like them."

These students also prepared and distributed donated fruit and vegetables (Decile 1 intermediate schools do not qualify for *Fruit in Schools*), ran an inter-class dress-a-carrot competition, and made suggestions for healthy food options on the school lunch menu. No high fat or high sugar foods or drinks are for sale and the school currently is applying for a *Gold Heartbeat Award*.

Outcomes

The students were enthusiastic, engaged in small groups, focused on chosen tasks and excited about changes they could make. It was not long before they were organizing me. Our appointment schedule on several occasions was similar to this:

7.30-9am - Visit and help Takanini Primary School Breakfast Club;

9.15 - Media interview at school re Friendship Chair; and

9.30-10.30 - Meeting with Diabetes Projects Trust.

The students seek social learning opportunities appropriate for this age group (Kellough & Kellough, 2003). Their projects require them to: interact socially with others; make and keep appointments; network within and beyond the school community; think critically; organise their time and other resources; present themselves, their proposals and their data; and decide priorities with reference to their mission statement.

The success of the Health-Promoting Schools projects focused on improving nutrition, done by 11 student councillors over a period of six months motivated and engaged the students. Maybe this was because the subject was relevant, the context authentic and the knowledge integrated. Although the projects involved only a small and focused group, this case study shows that "middle-schooling" can be engaging, demanding and very fulfilling. □

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Tui Cox

Tui Cox is a senior teacher at Mansell Senior School, Auckland. Through postgraduate study at Massey University she is exploring ways to advance middle schooling in New Zealand based on her work with the students whom she teaches at Mansell. More information is available from Tui at: tui.hine@actrix.co.nz



Purpose

“In one way or another, music is the key to who we are. Each persons inner most self and emotions express themselves through music – music is the core of our being for everyone.” Anon.

John Santrock, pre-eminent US authority on adolescent psychology,¹ says that all aspects of our developing self and our uniqueness as individuals are important - physical, social, cognitive and emotional. But during early adolescence the emotional is vital.

Renowned art educator Eliot Eisner once said that during early adolescence emotional development through music and the arts fosters and supports all other development. If this is the case then, arguably, music and the arts are the heart and soul of curriculum during early adolescence. This is when young people begin to come into their own and consolidate their identities.

This article argues the case for music in middle schooling and the exemplary music education practice it describes is persuasive and compelling.

Learning that Works, MUSIC



Sian Bennett

The scene

Walk past any primary or intermediate school these days and you could be forgiven for thinking you've wandered into the self-help section of a bookshop. Signs that proudly offer education in support of the 'whole child', and promote learning to foster 'emotional intelligence' liberally festoon entrance-ways and they adorn school gates and walls.

Instinctively we sort of know what they're on about: Something important. We get a warm, fuzzy feeling - even if we can't quite put our finger on it: Heart-felt, soul-nourishing stuff. Just what 'it' is, we're not exactly sure, but we definitely want 'it' for 'our' kids.

Teacher, parent, curriculum developer, policy-maker... it matters not, because everyone, not least the learners themselves, hold a critical stake in children's healthy emotional development.

Successful emotional development, or fostering a positive sense of self-esteem, deeply affects every person's ability to learn and get along in life, regardless of the subject or situation. So, if emotional intelligence is that important, just how can schools nurture this most elusive, yet essential quality in the developing and growing individual?

Could music and Arts education, the learning area that traditionally has fallen 'below the salt' in New Zealand schools, provide this?

Aotearoa-New Zealand has a proud cultural heritage. Haka is performed before battle commences on the paddock and our musicians are everywhere.

New Zealand's first-lady and champion of the Arts, Helen Clark, endorsed the NZ Arts curriculum in May 2000² as a means to 'define us as the confident, proud, and creative peoples we are.' Yet what is happening in schools today to nurture and affirm the sense of culture so essential for individuals to feel good about themselves?

Apart from a few isolated examples, "not much", according to Sue Germann, deputy principal and music teacher at Te Awamutu Intermediate School.

Sue's opinion is based on her research and experience in Arts, particularly music education, which uncovered what most teachers, many parents and some principals acknowledge. It's that during early adolescence not only is the basis for skilled musical performance and development as a musician laid. It's also that education in and through the Arts is vital for healthy and positive social-emotional development and accomplishment as 'well-rounded' young persons.

Required to offer learning in all four Arts disciplines (dance, music, drama, and visual art), many schools continue to offer the "bare minimum". **Yet music and Arts education are a salvation for many students.**

In an all-too-common scenario, they are short changed at least and, at worst, they can suffer long-term damage to their sense of self-esteem and attitude to school. Over time, this can lead to gradual disengagement from learning.

The essential is invisible to the eye

Middle schooling, from Year 7-10 (approximately age 10-14) is the domain of the upper primary, intermediate and junior high school years. It is a period when the majority of New Zealand children change schools at least once. It's a critical stage in emotional development and identity formation, and although little seems to be spoken about the transition from the so-called years of 'childhood', or 'pre-adolescence', to

'teenage-hood', any parent or secondary teacher will confirm that, compared to those above and below them, middle-

school age students *are* different.

Educating the emotions of young people to cope with change is the key also to harnessing all other aspects of development – cognitive, physical and social. And all aspects interact, so that in a Year 9, say, in a dramatic performance students acquire and demonstrate a wide range of capabilities – physical, emotional, cognitive and social as the experience of learning and performing harnesses all aspects of development to

The Arts is but one essential learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum. The way schools value, and give high priority to, aesthetic subjects, are a good measure of the responsiveness of their curriculum programmes to meeting early adolescent educational and development needs³.

produce satisfying and rewarding outcomes. And students take another step towards developing identities as accomplished, emotionally mature your people -- through music and the arts.

There's got to be a better way

Stewart Stanbridge, for whom music is 'just a hobby', is passionate about, if not obsessed by, what he does. You get the

feeling one has to be in his role. I visited Te Awamutu Intermediate the day after their return from a cultural exchange and series of concerts with Northcross Intermediate School in Auckland. With Sue Germann, the dynamic duo are a tour-de-force, facilitating a thriving music programme "based on the American system", Stewart points out. So how does an approach like this survive without its leader dropping dead from exhaustion? Sue and Stewart exchange cursory glances. 'Is she joking?' they seem to ask.

Tables groan beneath a lunch of biblical proportions to rival a Samoan wedding. Prepared and beautifully presented by band students for 'the adults' I can't wait to be asked whether I'd like to join them? Yes, I would. Silence befalls the munching crowd, "We don't usually get a lunch break" I hear Sue and Stewart chime in unison as I reach for a third coffee-truffle, "Mmm...? Yes, yes" I agree. It's just as well Sue's *piece-de-resistance* is alcohol-free otherwise I'd need smelling salts or a lie-down afterwards. Enquiring as to the truffle recipe, I am expertly advised to use real coffee, not essence. "It's stronger".

Both Sue and Stewart went to the US, got inspired by the elegance and efficacy of music education there and promptly returned to implement a band programme in Waikato schools. Stewart comes from an engineering background and structures learning systematically, "starting with three notes... then

five... [you] just keep building, step-by-step". It's a problem-solving approach to a curriculum area that presents a lot of problems to a lot of teachers. This is a man who doesn't understand any part of 'no'. Identifying a need for students to play on quality musical instruments, Stewart convinced an outfit in Auckland to hire them out. "My only mistake was not going into business with them ...they're sitting pretty," he muses.

So what in terms of music education are Sue, Stewart, Te Awamutu and Northcross Intermediate doing that others are not?

"It's as simple as it comes really", says Stewart in describing the band programme he's coordinated since 1990. Students hire an instrument, obtain a method book and opt into an in-school instrumental music course that would put many secondary schools to shame. It's not that what is presently done in New Zealand classrooms is necessarily all bad - the intention that the various elements of music such as aural, composition and performance are covered is worthy enough. It's just that we're going about in such a backward way.

Stewart continues: "There's a music teacher from the US at Freyberg High - he can't believe why we're [NZ] still mucking around". I can't either. Not when the band approach represents such a simple and effective means to manage the making of music. And it is a management

issue. Because sound somehow needs containment. By starting with performance a strong practical basis is developed for other musical elements to build on. It's turning our prevailing model completely on its head. After all, words don't teach

Te Awamutu has combined with Northcross Intermediate, an Auckland school running a similar programme. Bigger than Cher in Vegas, over a hundred students have assembled on stage, few older than about 12, to present a show of symphonic and jazz band items on instruments which include an oboe, cor-anglais, baritone sax, euphonium and bass clarinet. This is heart-warming stuff. "The band approach works for any instruments" Stewart enthuses, and it seems there are no limits to the numbers involved.

- experience does. Like music notation, words provide an efficient means to record and make sense of experience, and deepen one's understanding. We know this is true for reading or any other language learning, yet

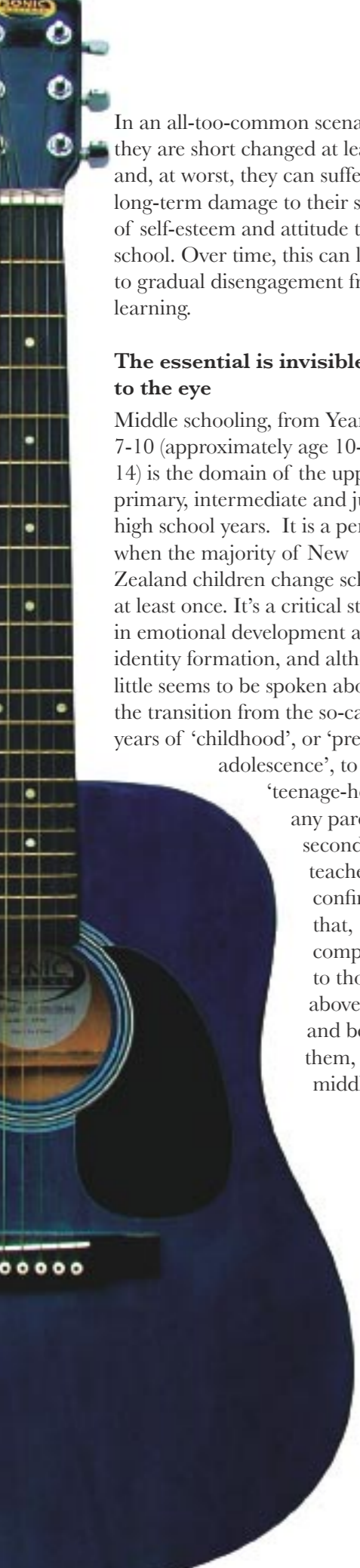
the traditional approach towards music education, which teaches theory first, can stop children dead in their tracks and halt the creative flow. But in the band it's experience first... concept last, and always fun.

I ask if this kind of immersive, 'tatou-tatou' group method works for Maori students and others with a preference for aural and learning the culturally-valid? "Yes", he affirms without hesitation, "We're only just scratching the surface really... Technology and recording also hooks students in, along with composition and writing band arrangements".

"We do this every year" says Stewart, of the concert tour. "It gives students goals... something to work towards. We encourage them to take ownership of the programme". These are happy children. This is evident as I'm shown around: City kids staying on farms, rural kids visiting Rainbow's End. "It's cool as" confirm a couple of boys from the band rhythm section. They look like they'd be right at home on surfboards in this land-locked provincial town where playing music is the inland-version of catching a wave, riding a barrel. Not surprisingly beach themes are popular, "...Wipe-out, Hawaii Five-O. We get to choose what we want to play at festivals". "But we all have to agree", another is quick to point out. "Of course", I nod sagely.

'Plays well with others'

Sue explains it's this co-operative and goal-focused approach where the real educational value



of the band programme lies. Not unlike team sport? There are comparisons, yes, although music can be 'life-long'. On the other hand, endless rote-learning without the goals of concerts and tours, "would be like a rugby team never playing a game. 'and that can be... soul-destroying". Apart from assisting whole-brain development, learning through the arts helps the ordinary student develop empathy, cooperative and leadership skills. "There's a group expectation to arrive prepared and be a team player, otherwise you let the team down" insists Stewart. This is what businesses are looking for now and, generally, lower-achieving learners will be mixing with a 'good' lot of students, where they have to develop organisational and self-discipline skills, "just to work well with others in a group on a cooperative basis".

It was precisely the 'traditional', default approach to music education of yore that inspired the focus and title for Stewart's education thesis in 1994: *There has to be a Better Way*. In response, the programme he devised has changed little. The fundamentals are still there: small group tuition, big band rehearsal. "Students have one lesson then they're in [the band]". An expectation of participation, achievement and success underpins the programme. Everyone reads music. If it's so exciting and successful then why don't more schools and teachers adopt the band approach? "They feel secure" exclaims Stewart. He doesn't have much to say on the issue before he's waxing lyrical,

extolling the virtues of the band approach "...it's a far more exciting and rewarding way to learn and teach music". Students agree, "If we make a mistake, we just carry on – no one knows". What it is that motivates them to continue year after year? "It's fun playing with heaps of people,

performing to others" they enthuse.

Sue points out some key things required to implement a successful band programme as part of the core business of a school, "You need a management structure that values it". A

band or performance group is a window into a school for the community to see students being encouraged and a sense that all things 'musical and cultural' are valued. Ideally support from the top is essential - from the principal. However where there is reservation, even active resistance, a strong parent lobby can advocate for change. What else? "You need personnel...organized people running the programme, who are passionate about music, and like working with students this age". Sue contends this is 'far more important' than having the world's best musicians. Te Awamutu has a band support group to fundraise for instruments, repairs and events. Stewart has a bus licence, so does a Northcross parent. That

helps. Student's set-up the equipment, the whole thing runs with military precision. Everyone knows what to do.

Sue feels it's important for schools to offer quality learning in music and the Arts at least at intermediate level. "It's really an ideal time to capture students, she says.

They have to be able to hold

'If they're not strong [in music] at intermediate they drop out at high school'. Stewart agrees, "They have to feel really good about themselves going up [into secondary] ...otherwise the peer pressure is horrendous.

their head up high with what they can do". The self-discipline and persistence students develop make a big difference for those who've participated in the band programme. "It transpires into every other subject area" says Stewart. And Sue points out that the music students "feel able to join any other group". Both give examples of high-achievers at secondary level who stuck with music education.

So is it possible we're going to start seeing the 'American system' of music education replacing the school-singing and recorder-tuition en masse, which some of us may fondly recall? Although the band programme is just one approach, both Sue and Stewart are unanimous about seeing it implemented in all schools. It would be wonderful,

they say. However, they stress that it is dependent on personnel and the will of those involved. "It can fall down really quickly if someone leaves" says Sue. "Stability is crucial. Although no one's indispensable, you quickly see how things can deteriorate".

Teachers, parents and schools wanting to implement this kind of programme, one that offers heart-felt soul-nourishing music education will need stamina. But more important, they must envision the outcome they want - draw on the strength of the parent community and marshal local-body support. Unless we get serious about improving music in schools, we'll continue to get the 'default' approach to music that has colonised education. Isn't it about time we embrace the potent cultural richness and artistic potential lying dormant in children?□

Sian Bennett – bio

Sian Bennett is a resident of Whakatane where she teaches music at a number of Eastern Bay schools and also writes, gardens, picks berries and frequently goes walk-about in the bush or at the beach. Studying a Master's degree in Education, Sian has an enduring passion for music and Steiner-Waldorf education in New Zealand. Having completed a Diploma in Steiner Education with Raphael College (NSW), Sian is interested in how aspects of Waldorf practice can enhance learning in state schools.

(Footnotes)

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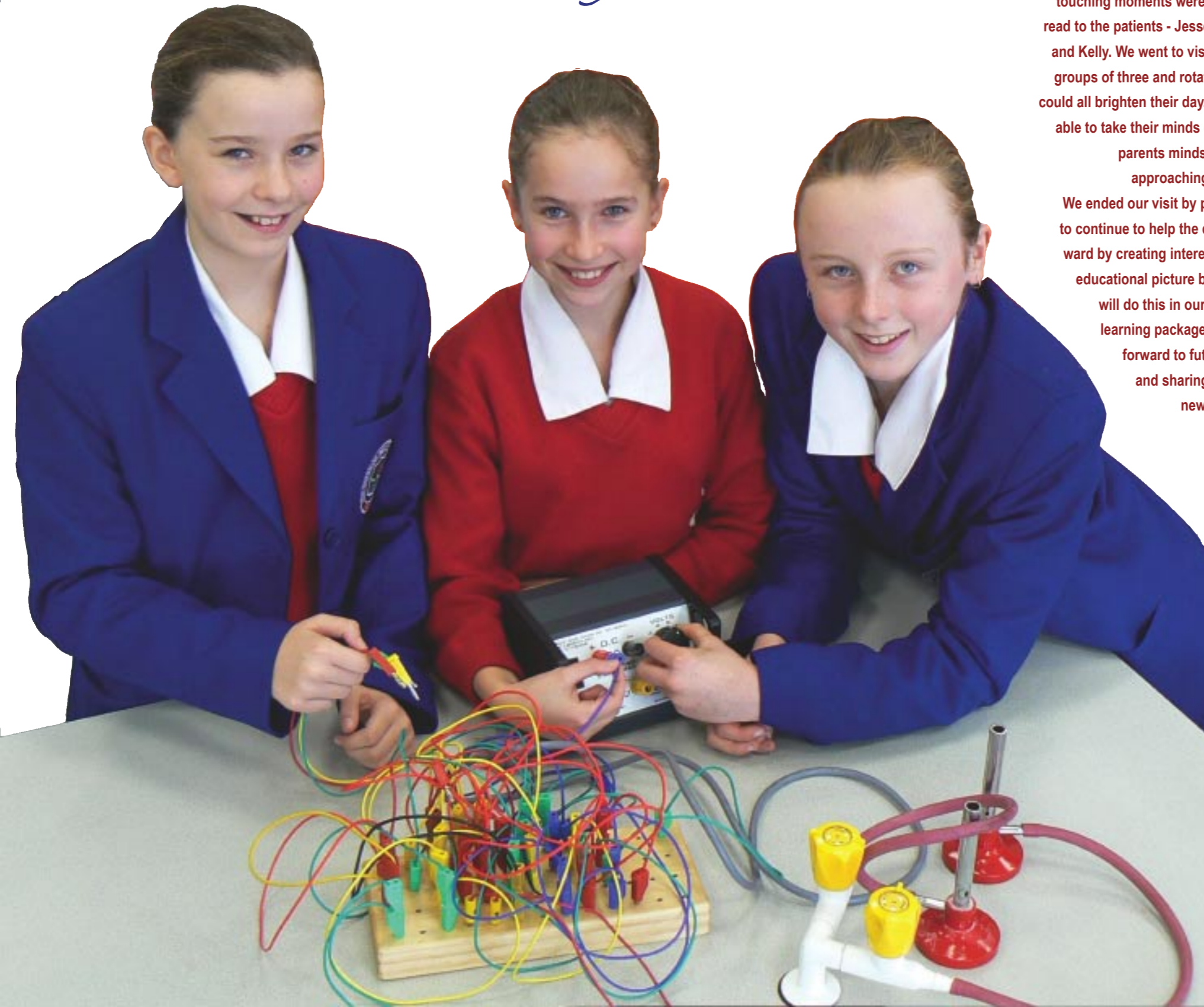
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The Learning Revolution: Southland Girls' High School



The girls in Year 8EK at SGHS said that empathy and courage are the two words that came together to create a sense of community for them. They said: "The most memorable and touching moments were when we read to the patients - Jesse, Tamara and Kelly. We went to visit them in groups of three and rotated so we could all brighten their day. We were able to take their minds (and their parents minds) off their approaching surgery. We ended our visit by promising to continue to help the children's ward by creating interesting and educational picture books. We will do this in our graphics learning package. We look forward to future visits and sharing with our new friends."

We have learned, especially in recent years that American leaders don't always talk sense.

Thomas Jefferson, however, was an exception. He often made observations worth noting - such as his comment that "a little revolution now and then is a good thing".

Southland Girls High School came to the same conclusion three years ago. They had carried out a review of Australian and New Zealand middle schooling research and decided that their girls would benefit from a new approach.

Already SGHS had become New Zealand's first Year 7 - 13 Sate girls secondary school when, in 2003', all five secondary schools in Invercargill had Years 7 - 8 classes added to them.

But, in 2005, Southland Girls' took another revolutionary step by introducing a Learning Packages curriculum for Years 7 and 8. And, in 2006, Years 9 and 10 joined in.

Sharee Ineson explains how this Learning Packages approach has been working.

Initiating change

The staff at Southland Girl's took to heart writer Alan Cohen's comment that "it takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure and to embrace the new".

Our Principal, Yvonne Browning, said that the School did not want to emulate the traditional intermediate Year 7-8 approach and that *Learning Packages* released us from the familiar and seemingly secure subject based secondary model.

Unlike both, "learning packages are about personalising an individual students learning; identifying their

Sharee Ineson & Pat Nolan

interests and abilities and building on them." (Yvonne Browning, Principal, SGHS).

Beginning with Years 7 and 8 "is the way it should be; the Year 7 and 8 curriculum drives the change from the bottom up, not being dropped down from Years 9-13" (Yvonne Browning, Principal, SGHS).

Purpose

This article presents a brief outline of the learning packages approach along with two mini-case studies which illustrate how the approach actually is working. A short discussion comments on staff and student reactions, directions that the junior school curriculum is taking, using the approach and it concludes with some observations about what the change in direction means for SGHS, as it faces the future.

The Learning Packages Approach

At SGHS, a learning package is a unit of work or a project that girls in Years 7 to 8 mainly, at this point, develop with their teachers around an issue, concern or specific topic real and important to the girls. The units and projects typically involve the girls doing service learning, usually somewhere in the local community. Teachers and the girls together design and plan the units of work and projects. And the girls execute them with teacher assistance using the School's inquiry learning model (see below).

In their units of work, the girls develop and apply a wide range of knowledge and understandings from the essential learning areas and they use the key competencies of the 2006 Draft New Zealand Curriculum.

It is the issues, concerns and topics, however, which the girls identify that drive the design of their units of

work and projects, not the teacher or curriculum prescriptions.

At each Year level, the School uses four general organising concepts to frame and sequence units of work and projects *across* the junior school and to provide a focus: *Citizenship* in Year 7, *Community* in Year 8, *Reflection* in Year 9 and *Extending* in Year 10.

Inquiry learning model

The Model comprises seven steps, based on Kath Murdoch and Jenni Wilson research, which all units of work and projects by and large follow:

1. **Tuning In** - means that students brainstorm and discuss issues, concerns and topics that they wonder and think about and may wish to investigate - they identify their specific abilities and interests and needs to be met, and they form groups in which to work together to frame and plan possible units of work and projects;
2. **Finding out** - means that teachers assist students to identify what they know already and what they need to know, and the students search for, locate and gather more information that helps them to fill any information gaps;
3. **Sorting out** - means that the students organize the information they possess and have collected so that they may work with it to deepen their understanding of the issue, concern or topic they want to investigate further;
4. **Going further** - means that the students think about and reflect upon their information and through shared learning experiences with other groups in the class, or school, challenge and extend each

Making conclusions – means a class or groups of students work together as a community of learners - they pull together all that they know and have learned, and they identify from both separate and common learning pathways, directions for their units of work and projects



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others' thinking to ensure that they canvass a wide range of perspectives;

5. **Making conclusions** – means a class or groups of students work together as a community of learners - they pull together all that they know and have learned, and they identify from both separate and common learning pathways, directions for their units of work and projects;
6. **Taking action** – means that students and teachers together celebrate learning and accomplishments to date - in classes and perhaps with the wider school community, they develop and present specific action plans and develop their service learning proposals along with a specific plan to carry them out; and
7. **Reflection** - means that students evaluate by thinking about and reflecting on what they have done and accomplished and consider future steps using a range of methods, e.g., Art Costa's habits of mind; this step also runs throughout all the preceding stages.

The action plans and service learning of Step 6 are pivotal. Here, the students contact people in the community and elsewhere likely to be involved. They decide on the specific service they will provide and how best to deliver it. They identify intended outcomes and the steps they will take to accomplish them, and they decide how to evaluate in Step 7 what they have learned and accomplished.

With any learning package, core educational knowledge and understandings of the New Zealand Curriculum's Essential Learning Areas and the key competencies are

important, but they come second not first in the Learning Package design process.

Students' ideas and interests are the key to engage and sustain their interest and motivate them to keep working through to completion.

Each unit of work or project culminates with a learning portfolio and the girls present their work and its outcomes to a discerning yet appreciative audience. As the students develop their projects, their teachers assist them to identify success criteria, which reflect groups of achievement objectives, against which to measure learning and progress.

Two learning package mini case studies

The mini case studies below each describe a Year 7 and Year 8 project on two quite different topics, connected with citizenship and community respectively, to illustrate how the learning package concept works in practice.

Global Citizen

The *Global Citizen* learning package is a case study project that Year 7 students carried out to achieve key objectives related to **Citizenship** in three essential learning areas – language, social studies and health-physical education, and all of the key competencies of the 2006 Draft New Zealand Curriculum.

Understanding citizenship as: (i) awareness of issues and crises that others face; (ii) demonstrating empathy and care for others; and as (iii) leadership through positive action are the ideas that teachers used to engage students interest in this package. The key question that students addressed was:



As students in a New Zealand girls' secondary school, what is a (particular) global challenge or crisis that we might study in depth, understand better and help to resolve?

Two associated understandings about leadership and global challenges/crises that the package helped students develop were: (i) Giving feedback is an important part of being a leader; and (ii) The economic activities of (conspicuous) consumption, production and distribution affect societies and communities both positively and negatively.

Parenthetically, teachers helped the girls to learn and use Art Costa's Habits of Mind such as questioning and posing problems,

In this way service learning in action and in tandem with pastoral care helps the girls address and meet three needs of early adolescent girls simultaneously:
(i) feeling and being successful;
(ii) being valued; and
(iii) sense of belonging.

along with the inquiry and planning skills (e.g. working to a timeline) they needed to help the students to focus, to design their projects and to execute them.

During *Tuning-In*, the girls considered

many topics that they might investigate, but a magazine article about the *Bikes for Ghana Project* especially captured their interest. They discovered as part of their reading that Hayley Westenra was an ambassador for the Project and this was the tipping point for electing *Bikes for Ghana* as their Learning Package project.

During *Finding-Out* and *Sorting Information*, is where the students in effect became a community of learners. They focused on understanding social and economic conditions affecting the lives of people, and especially the children of Ghana. They investigated the steps that international helping agencies like *World Vision* were taking to eradicate child labour and to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, such as drought, on daily life.

In *Going Further*, they used simulation

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games, available on the *World Vision* web-site, to develop an authentic understanding of the Ghana situation and explore conditions affecting the sustainability of life itself in this country. Two games that the girls used were: eliminating child labour where students step into the shoes of a social worker; and EQ where students accept the challenge or delivering relief after a simulated earthquake.

In the Action Plan (Stage 6) the students designed a coin trail activity in the community to raise money for bikes so that more girls in Ghana could attend school.

Teachers taught the girls to use *creative problem solving* to develop criteria against which to evaluate the Action Plan that collectively they devised and implemented, e.g., ensuring that the action plan involved a full range of girls across Years 7-13 and that the Project would be manageable in the given time frame.

All up, the girls raised enough money for six bikes and they further raised community awareness through an interview on local radio and an article that they published in the *Southland Times*.

Hospital visits

In the hospital visits project, home room teachers helped Year 8 classes to identify a specific service learning project to demonstrate "Giving back to the community". In Year 8 such projects built on the Year 7 citizenship programme involving environmental action projects such as adopting a land care nursery and saving the Kakapo (In 2007, Year 7 students are doing a beach clean up, simulated whale rescues and also planting natives trees and shrubs at bushy point reserve).

In year 8, *community breakout* as it is called, changes the focus from citizenship to service learning in the community. In the first four weeks of Term One *community breakout* sets the

scene for all learning that follows throughout the year.

It is important to note that the focus on community links explicitly with the SGHS pastoral care network that runs alongside the junior school curriculum.

In this way service learning in action and in tandem with pastoral care helps the girls address and meet three needs of early adolescent girls simultaneously: (i) feeling and being successful; (ii) being valued; and (iii) sense of belonging.

In hospital visits, the girls observed first hand what the play therapists do at the local hospital to make hospital a positive experience for children and the methods they use to help the children who are ill to maintain learning in the hospital setting.

The girls then used the information they collected to learn about the sick child to whom they had been assigned so that they may form a

relationship with the child and work with the child to design a positive learning experience in a climate of warmth and support.

Homeroom teachers encouraged the girls' to take responsibility for arranging the trips and setting the goals for what they wanted to achieve, both as a class and individually.

This hospital project provided the means for the class to realize their potential to make a difference and also the importance of creating positive relationships with people and organisations in the community.

The project lead to a further whole junior school event during which, on Roald Dahl's birthday, girls brought treats to go into a gift basket to deliver to the children's ward.

The service learning of the hospital visits enabled the girls to establish

a benchmark for other learning packages throughout the year and which extended and built upon the real life learning atmosphere they experienced first hand in the hospital.

Many other initiatives and projects have since been devised following the two reported here, with more in the offing as teachers increasingly adopt the Learning Packages Approach and the Inquiry Learning Model of action learning.

Forming links with community organisations and groups, e.g., Adventure Southland, Environment Southland and the Department of Conservation, is pivotal. They provide ideas and opportunities for student projects and access to situations, issues and topics real in the community to study and to investigate.

Summary

Through their experience of the *Learning Packages*, the girls at SGHS seem to be identifying really important ideas, exploring what they mean and developing key curriculum knowledge and competencies, systematically. They

do this not by teacher instruction in any traditional way, but through their own curiosity and interest. In this way the girls own self initiated inquiry and projects seem quite naturally to meet learning objectives of the New Zealand Curriculum in a range of areas --- and the girls see the relevance of the learning areas to them and their lives.

As Principal, Yvonne Browning comments, "the level of excitement for the new developments has been contagious among the girls. There is an air of optimism and self belief about their learning capabilities, like never before. For us this is a key signal of success".

No less important, the Learning Packages Approach is helping the teachers and the girls to connect with each other in meaningful and purposeful ways. The Approach helps create opportunities for the girls to discuss with their teachers how they might apply the contents of various curriculum statements to help them do their projects and develop their knowledge, e.g. in social studies, health and language and in communication, to name just a few.

Learning Packages, by engaging the girls, has created new, adventuresome and exciting pathways for learning in the spirit of Alan Cohen. The Girls' sense of achievement has inspired further community action projects.

As deputy principal, Noreen Melvin says, "the learning packages at Years 7 seven and 8 have given us the opportunity as a school to immerse ourselves fully in an exciting journey of developing student learning in ways that we have often (only) dreamt of as teachers. As a deputy principal and as a teacher in the area, I have seen growth in the thinking of students, and teachers. The thinking about learning, the expectation and fascination of unravelling a shared learning experience and the sheer desire of our staff and students to learn has been uplifting. As a philosophy, (Learning Packages) is now driving other initiatives in the school around Year 9 and 10, and it marries together the desired learning dispositions and motivation we need for our students to succeed in their senior years of schooling and as life long learners."

She concluded that: "all that is

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good, desirable and exciting about teaching and learning is evident in the classes, it is energising to watch, motivating to teach in, and inspirational. It has made me want to continue as a learning leader in the School".□

Sharee Ineson

Sharee Ineson is Head of Junior School, Southland Girls' High School. She previously taught at and was Head of Year 7, Rosedale Intermediate, Invercargill (where she also implemented a gifted and talented programme at called Minds Alive). Further information about the SGHS Learning Packages Approach is available from: Sharee.Ineson@southlandgirls.school.nz

Pat Nolan

Pat Nolan is editor of MSR and Associate Professor of Education at Massey University. In the distant past Pat was a teacher at the intermediate school level.

(Footnotes)

¹ In 2003, following the recommendations of the Ministry of Education Invercargill Schools Network Review, all five secondary schools in Invercargill became Year 7-13 schools by adding Year 7-8 classes from closed and merged schools across town, with many of their existing and prospective students going to Southland Girls' High School. Large numbers of students came from both Collingwood and Rosedale Intermediates, which became a merged school, and also a number came from Tweedsmuir Junior High School, which closed.

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Casebrook, Transforming Learning & Teaching

Andrea Knight is now the Principal of Heaton Normal Intermediate School in Christchurch. Formerly Principal of Casebrook Intermediate School, the experiences this article reports are based on her time at Casebrook where Andrea was involved integrally leading and supporting the various developments. For further information contact Andrea at: Heaton Normal Intermediate School, Heaton Street, Christchurch. Email: aknight@heaton.ac.nz

Over four years, the teachers at Casebrook Intermediate School, a Decile 5 in Christchurch, steadily but surely transformed the school curriculum. And they changed the way that they teach and the way that students learn in this school.

The Principal Andrea Knight said “things did not always go smoothly, but as more and more staff came on board, a critical mass was reached of staff who wanted to use student centred project and inquiry methods, after about two years. Now in Year 4, all the staff members are committed”.

And, as one teacher said, “this simply is the way we do things around here”. According to Andrea “caring, genuine relationships, driven by values of student centred learning” is the only way she could explain how they got there.

Purpose

This article reports how a seemingly simple idea, *painting the school fence*, that a small group of Year 7 students came up with, illustrates how Casebrook Intermediate School operates as a learning community. In the community, the students and teachers use the school’s inquiry learning process routinely and they carry out student initiated projects.

It is typical for students at Casebrook to dream up and carry out projects on topics as diverse as designing, and fund raising for, a new adventure playground, developing a recycling programme and creating a website to promote

understanding of environmental issues.

The projects deal with themes that are local to global. And they can involve many students working on a large project (e.g. the adventure ground project) over an extended period or a small group project that may take only a week or two.

Whether large or small scale, “most projects inspire the students who do them to feel passionate and to be excited about what they are learning, doing and achieving” (Principal’s comment).

The methodology that eventually the students employed, with teacher

support (see below) in the fence painting project, is a modified version of the School’s generic inquiry learning model: tuning in, investigating the topic, sharing and explaining to make connections, and reflection and action.

Beginnings

A group of students, in a Year 7 class, initiated the project and with teacher support proposed it to the principal. She in her turn, (though privately chuffed with the idea) gave it qualified approval subject to the students being able to demonstrate its connection with “understanding community”. This is the umbrella topic for Year 7 studies in Term 1.



It straddles social studies, language, aspects of science, maths and other areas as appropriate e.g. the Arts and ICT.

Fence painting project –Vignette

The bell rang to signify the end of the school day. The five Year 7 students remained in deep discussion sitting around a laptop computer oblivious to the noises of others packing up and leaving. The mix of boys and girls were debating the merits of different types of stains for the fence. They had investigated all the possibilities. Which would be easiest to apply, which would last the longest, which would be the most cost effective, what colour would look the best? They were in the “action” stage of their inquiry – the “so what” stage. They all had learned about the topic, *Building Our Community* and were now asking: how has this knowledge affected us, changed us, how will we make use of what we have found out, how we can use our knowledge to make a difference to our (school) community?

The students had investigated the concept of community, what makes an effective community; they had examined different types of communities and discussed their purposes. They had developed in-depth focus questions around understanding more about communities. They understood the importance of everyone making a meaningful contribution to their community. They wanted to make a meaningful contribution to their school community.

They surveyed all the students in the school. They asked and sought answers about what needed to be improved?

Many students wanted the tatty old fence straightened and painted. It ran the length of the school and it was the first thing you noticed as you entered the school. They felt proud of their school but the fence was an eyesore. It became their passion. They were determined, purposeful and their project was real.

Methodology

The project methodology in action that the students employed comprised the eight elements below,



adapted from the School inquiry learning model:

1. A focus on students doing something positive to improve the physical environment of the school and surveying students for their views - a form of rich task that enabled the students to see relevance and meaning in what they planned to do and to learn;
2. Students as evaluators – working with teachers to make assessments, e.g., how to work out what is required to repair the fence involving fence timber sizes and quantities, labour costs for fence construction, seeking and assessing estimates of costs and the like;
3. Students investigating different types of fence design and learning how the chemicals in paint protect timber and help it to resist wear and tear by the elements, e.g. UV rays, which entailed learning actively and creating knowledge, with teacher support;
4. Selecting and using a diversity of knowledge and skills to produce a viable and affordable proposal, and solutions – this meant drawing on and using content knowledge from a number of curriculum areas and making judgements involving values linked to environmental and aesthetic effects, and balancing these against cost and other pragmatic considerations, e.g., durability, robustness, and fit for purpose.
5. Students understanding that doing the project meant planning carefully, organising tasks in sequence and that each step in any given sequence contributes to the whole – e.g. thorough preparation of a surface for painting prior to the actual application of paint;

6. Students learning that all actions have consequences for them personally in terms of the tasks they commit to do, understanding what it means to do the job well, working with and being responsible to others upon whom one depends and working as a team;
7. Students seeing things whole and understanding that the project they wanted to do meant having a clear picture of what they, and the people they work with, were aiming to achieve (seeing the whole picture of the jig saw at the outset that James Beane speaks of) in this case the students visualising what the completed fence would look like and then working backwards to plan all the steps to get there - constantly thinking about what they were doing, reflecting and evaluating; and
8. Students accessing various ICT tools to learn about planning a project in much the same way as professionals do, e.g., doing costings on spreadsheet, and word processing a project critical path, and reporting progress and outcomes.

Through the eight steps, Year 7 students came to see that fundamentally developing educational knowledge, like knowledge in life itself, is integrated and connected, not insular and segmented.

The project, which the students devised and carried out, involved using a full range of essential skills – e.g. working as a team to scope and sequence the whole fence refurbishment.

Evaluation

A whole staff evaluation of the

project had two effects and said the following:

1. The students experienced and affirmed the value of inquiry learning through the project they produced and this was the case with most if not all projects, not just this one;
2. The staff involved confirmed that this is the way they wanted to develop and operate the school curriculum programme, and to teach.

This project, like others, demonstrated that teachers working closely with students and with each other create an environment and culture of support and collaboration.



Purposeful, authentic and meaningful project-based learning motivated the students and it sustained their interest. No less important, the Project addressed and met three key developmental needs of the students: (i) to contribute positively, (ii) to form positive and affirming relationships; and (iii) to enjoy working together in a team and respect each others diverse strengths and abilities.

The teachers developed and exercised a wide range of teaching roles and saw first hand how students learn in many different ways (viz. they demonstrated

multiple intelligences at work).

The repertoire of teaching skills included: teachers providing explicit instruction in specific subject areas as needed (e.g., teaching measurement, how to calculate areas and making reliable estimates); helping students break their learning and work into small manageable steps; asking open ended questions to stimulate inquiry; and helping students to develop and realise demanding but achievable expectations.

An important upshot is that over time, the staff developed a shared view of how things work at Casebrook. For example, all the staff at Casebrook speaks with one voice and they use a shared language about effective teaching and learning for the middle years, in this school and in the school community.

In projects like the fence painting one, all students, not just the academically able were involved and included.

All of them collectively exercised their minds to achieve important goals. They came to know first hand that the Project approach affirms them collectively and individually – they learned by experience what it means to work and learn as part of a team – not always without difficulties but with teacher support they could resolve them and move ahead.

Learning of this nature essentially is integrative in the sense that James Beane advocates in this Issue 3 of MSR.

And it is powerful learning, because students explore problems in depth and resolve them. In the process they learn skills and knowledge from across the curriculum and, as the saying goes, “just in time” teachers know when to provide the explicit instruction in subject knowledge and skills that their students need.□



The Draft New Zealand Curriculum - A Response

NZAIMS Executive

NZAIMS

NZAIMS Executive congratulates the Draft New Zealand Curriculum writing team.

The Draft is getting the New Zealand Curriculum right for the middle years and its right for our times.

BUT three important changes are needed.

The first is to rename the Draft's middle two phases of learning as *Learning in Years 1-6* and *Learning in Years 7-10*.

This change is vital. It would say to the community at large that the Government now recognises early adolescence as a distinct stage of development and school education.

The change is in line with earlier curricula planning and thinking in New Zealand. A good example is the Form 1-4 (Years 7-10) Social Studies curriculum.

It's what middle schooling research has been advocating in an outside New Zealand for nearly a century.

The NZAIMS Executive recommends that:

The middle two phases of learning in the Draft are renamed in the New Zealand Curriculum as Learning in Years 1-6 and Learning in Years 7-10.

The second change is to reduce the number of achievement objectives and downplay their importance.

This change would send an important message: While the objectives may be important, they are less important than the Draft's key competencies, the principles, the values and effective pedagogy.

The latter not the former are, in our view, the main drivers of all middle years teaching and learning; and the *New Zealand Curriculum* should say so.

If the objectives are downplayed, this will encourage schools to be more responsive to young people, to be more innovative and be more progressive. Schools and teachers will be less likely to confine themselves to teaching and learning narrowly by objectives.

That's why we want the Draft's key competencies, the principles, the values and effective pedagogy highlighted as central in the final version, and the role of achievement objectives reduced and downplayed.

Thirdly we believe that *the New Zealand Curriculum* should highlight and endorse, much more explicitly than at present, the following methods and ideas from middle schooling research and recent *best schools* research:

- Students learning through experience and service learning in the community;
- Students being coached to learn how to learn;
- Students doing investigations and projects that they help to design;
- Students developing the skills and attitudes to be independent;
- Students developing as reflective learners and critical and creative thinkers;

- Students learning responsibility through experiences that schools organise;
- Students attaining high standards of achievement by setting goals and doing self directed learning;
- Students experience achievement progression in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and across Years 7 to 10; and
- Schools help students and parents to see how integrative and cross curricula learning is a good preparation for specialised learning in the senior secondary school.

Integrative and cross curricula learning and teaching will best enable teachers and schools to put the *New Zealand Curriculum's*

principles, values, key competencies and effective pedagogy into effect. They will provide young people with the kinds of school programmes that they need and deserve.

An opportunity to act

Before the New Zealand Curriculum is finalised, a wonderful opportunity exists to take up Minister of Education, Steve Maharey's, suggestion that:

Now is a good time to look at how (the national) curriculum ought to proceed from the primary years into the middle years, and also, how the expansion in curriculum in the senior secondary years ought to (and ought not to) impact on the curriculum for the years immediately prior to NCEA (Maharey, MSR Issue 1, P6.)

We want to keep the dialogue going. Schools, the community and the Ministry of Education must keep working together to form the Curriculum of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The dialogue will help everyone understand better that the New Zealand Curriculum, in action across the middle years, is very different from primary and secondary.

The articles in *MSR Issue Three* illustrate the difference and they provide evidence of curriculum programmes that really do make a difference.

If the New Zealand Curriculum is changed in the directions we suggest then it stands a very good chance of getting it right for young adolescents, and right for the future.□



Dear Colleagues

I am delighted to have this opportunity to express my support and that of the NZEI Te Riu Roa National Executive for middle schooling in New Zealand. This journal is evidence that the middle schooling movement continues to evolve as an effective way of meeting the needs of young adolescent students in our education system.

Middle schooling proponents have always recognised that the developmental needs of students – physical, social and emotional – must be taken in account in any meaningful learning programme.

That concept is now enshrined in the Government's framework for schooling, which recognises that learning systems must be tailored to meeting the needs of individual students if we are to make real progress in lifting achievement and

fostering lifelong learning.

As a union and professional organisation, NZEI believes diversity within our education system is important and fosters a climate of enquiry and experimentation that is vital to growth and progress.

The history of middle schooling in New Zealand has sometimes been marked by controversy and setbacks.

In the past decade some very good intermediate schools have been forced to close as secondary schools scrambled to shore up their rolls.

On the positive side, the building of two junior high schools for Years 7 to 10 children in Flatbush, Auckland was a vote of confidence in the middle schooling philosophy.

NZEI has a proud history of strong advocacy for those teachers who

are teaching in the middle years and support staff in intermediates, middle schools, area schools and full primaries.

Being part of NZEI Te Riu Roa will ensure that the important contribution you make will continue to be recognised within the education system. It will also ensure you continue to have a strong voice in negotiations over pay and conditions and in the development of education policy.

If you are not a NZEI member, join now!

You owe it to yourself and to the middle school sector.□

Irene Cooper
National President
NZEI Te Riu Roa

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Advance Notice

Experiencing
Marine
Reserves
(EMR)

Samara Nicholas
talks with the Editor

Personalised education and inquiry learning for early adolescents take on a special and important meaning when students participate in the EMR project - *Experiencing Marine Reserves*.

EMR has operated in Northland since 2002 and in other parts of New Zealand since 2004. Anyone interested – schools, teachers, students, parents, can request the EMR manual and resources via the EMR Website or contact Samara Nicholas (nee Sutherland) at either: samara@emr.org.nz or www.emr.org.nz/

EMR is exemplary middle schooling. Samara Nicholas's brainchild, EMR brings together: (i) EMR coordinators' knowledge and understanding of marine environments and the importance of their biodiversity for the whole ocean ecosystem; and (ii) their motivation to work with young people, educating them through first hand experience and helping them make a difference through community action projects.

EMR especially targets young adolescents. Samara says that she knows from experience of working with young people across Years 7-10, in secondary schools, intermediates and full primaries, just how important experiential learning is -- during early adolescence.

She says "real learning is not passive, it is active learning, just like marine scientists and researchers do – actually being in the water and surrounding areas



Samara Nicholas

– doing field work, observing marine animals live in their natural habitat, and appreciating the natural beauty of it all and nature's special effects”.

EMR Feature article in MSR Issue 4

Samara is writing a feature article for MSR Issue 4. In it she will explain how *Experiencing Marine Reserves* “empowers schools and communities by providing hands-on experience in the ocean.” She will illustrate with a case study how this kind of middle schooling makes a difference, with real and enduring effects on students’ learning and attitudes.

Samara says that “students remember their EMR experiences, even after 5 years”. She said that “I discovered this, as I encountered one of the original 2002 students recently who recalled everything that he did and learned in great detail and how it changed his thinking,” and probably his life.

“EMR promotes enlightenment about and connectivity to the marine environment. It encourages people to stand up and base their opinions on experience.” Students compare unprotected and protected areas, and EMR encourages them to use their knowledge to good effect in community action projects.

EMR and the NZ Curriculum

EMR aligns directly with The 2006 Draft NZ Curriculum, with

Science/Putaiiao in particular and also other learning areas, e.g. Social Studies, the Arts and language.

EMR provides students with the means to develop key competencies, and core attitudes and values linked to sustaining life in our oceans, and it supports the effective pedagogy that the NZ Curriculum Draft advocates.

The interdisciplinary nature of EMR opens up numerous opportunities for teachers, especially across Years 7 to 10, to deliver the school curriculum in new, exciting and innovative ways through:

- a two hour classroom presentation;
- a day trip to the school's local seashore; and
- a day trip or two day camp to a fully protected marine reserve.

The programme teaches students the necessary skills, e.g., how to snorkel and identify marine life.

Guided inquiry helps students to understand the difference between an ‘unprotected coast’ and a Marine Reserve.

EMR's advanced audiovisual media provide students and teachers with the learning and teaching resources that they need.□

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Contents: The articles, reports and studies inform practice, they encourage discussion, they suggest practical applications they develop community awareness and provide insights for professionals. Articles in future issues cover a diversity of topics ranging across anxiety, innovative teaching, nutrition, suicide, philosophy, crime, motivation, abuse and latest research nationally and internationally.

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