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New Zealand Association for Intermediate and Middle Schooling

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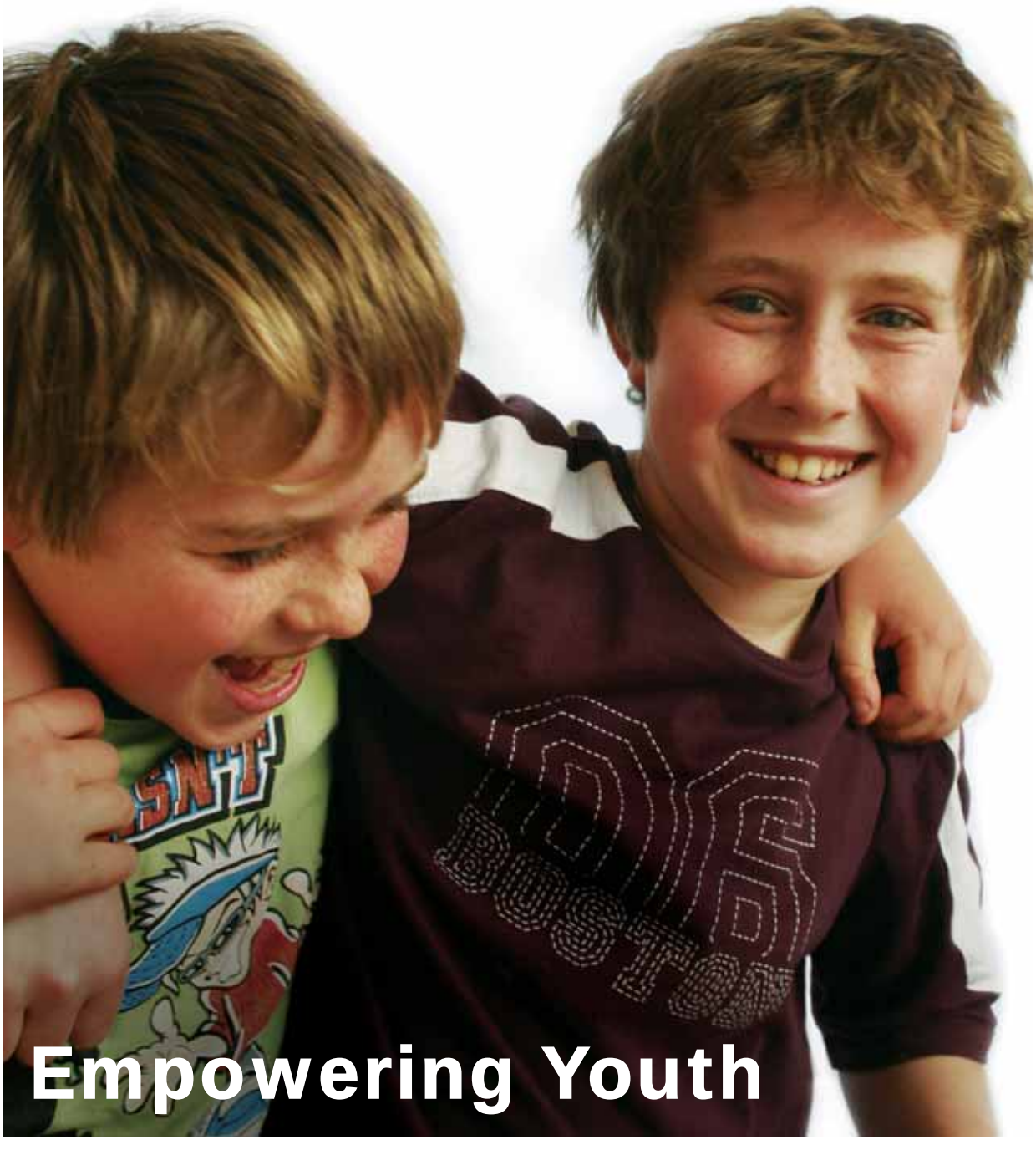

Empowering Youth

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Empowering youth with relevant, challenging and real learning

Pat Nolan

It's about history repeating itself: the National Curriculum that best suits children and young people today could well take note of 1930s' and 1940s' innovative and pioneering curricula designs in rural high schools and Maori schools[1]. The schools developed the designs often with adolescents explicitly in mind.

Crawford Somerset (1938), visionary principal of Oxford District High School, said that adolescents learn best when learning is embedded in life experience. His secondary department's 'scheme of work' accordingly stated that adolescents needed to learn skills (i.e. competencies) not facts.

In this spirit, schools all around New Zealand took learning out to the community.

An unidentified 'Native school teacher's' newspaper in the North, entitled the *Korero Wikiri*, made links with the local Maori community (Department of Education, 1937) and school programmes fused three and more school subjects together.

In the 1940s, school farm based learning, for example in Taranaki, Northland and Whakatane, made topics such as sheep farming, poultry farming, forestry, dairy farming and bee-keeping the organising themes of school studies, and whole communities supported the learning.

Teachers and students in Maori and rural schools elsewhere (e.g. Ruatoria and Westland) designed and built iconic model cottages as their organising centres for learning. They used multidisciplinary curricula designs.

Rangiora High School and Oxford District High (acknowledged at the time as pioneering, innovative schools of New Zealand) integrated the school curriculum with everyday life. Teachers and students used the survey method, which their principals (Strachan and Somerset) developed. With it, they implemented cross-curricula, student-centred, integrative learning designs (Somerset, 1938; Strachan, 1938). The social studies they conducted were the forerunner of secondary social studies today.

By all historical accounts, the 1930s and 1940s designs were highly motivating and energised all those involved.

In the words of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (2007), perhaps one could say the designs were instrumental in helping the schools develop confident, connected, actively involved children and young people; doubtless many became life-long learners too.

As I see it, that's because the children and young people experienced curricular learning that was relevant, challenging and real. That's what Clarence Beeby said was needed in schools of the future, in the 1943 Thomas Report, which planned New Zealand's secular, compulsory and free secondary school system.

The articles and resources of *MSR Youth* Issue Four, 'Empowering Youth', illustrate school strategies and curricula designs that make learning for youth relevant, challenging and real.

Issue Four's main articles and resources, on stopping and preventing school bullying, explain clearly how schools may create school cultures and environments that are supportive, enabling and safe.

The theme of *MSR Youth* Issue Four is that if the latter doesn't exist (supportive, enabling and safe school environments), then the former (relevant, challenging and real learning, which is empowering for youth) is highly unlikely to happen.

What this adds up to is a serious challenge for schools. That's because school bullying, not high-quality learning and curriculum, says the research, is what many children and young people experience persistently today in our schools.

The articles and resources in Issue Four

The theme of MSR Youth Issue Four is that if the latter doesn't exist (supportive, enabling and safe school environments), then the former (relevant, challenging and real learning, which is empowering for youth) is highly unlikely to happen.

show how schools can change this situation and help children and young people to develop as competent learners who'll participate actively and contribute positively in the ways the 2007 *New Zealand Curriculum* intends. □

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Letters to the Editor: Limited to 200-300 words.
Invitation to Contribute: Write an article or submit a report for MSR Youth.
Email: Editor@msr.org.nz

Aloha is our intelligence

Social justice learning in Otara

Clover Park Middle School & Te Whanau o Tupuranga

Ann Milne

It's 7pm in Otara, in Manukau City, and a group of students is just leaving school. The students have come back to school at 5pm, just in time to catch up with a boys' group which has been working since school finished for the day at 3pm. Many of these students will come again several times during the week, including Saturday mornings, and again for a full week in the school holidays. No one will call a roll or expect them to be there. They come purely because they want to. They are engaged in high level information technology learning in Clubhouse 274 - the Computer Clubhouse.

At 6pm a group of Maori students, who have also stayed after school, board a waiting bus to travel to the Telstra Pacific Centre in Manukau where they are the regular support group for the city's fortnightly citizenship ceremonies. Almost as regularly they welcome overseas visitors or business groups on behalf of the city's mayor. Other groups are in the nightly study support centre, or at sports practices.

It's the first week of the June holiday break. A group of Years 7 and 8 Maori students and teachers, are at school from 10am to 4pm every day, practising for the regional Kapa Haka competition to be held next term. This too is advanced, high level learning. With the group is a large number of Years 9 to 13 students, giving up their holiday time to help the younger students. No one has asked them to come. They are simply there to help, with tutoring, with preparing food and with support for both students and staff. The numbers swell every day as more and more helpers, including former students, arrive.

In another building on the campus, again in the holiday break, Samoan students and staff are preparing for a high quality cultural performance at an upcoming international Samoan language conference in front of educators and dignitaries from Aotearoa and the Pacific.

Is this any different from extra-curricular activities in schools all over the country? Are these activities held outside school hours because they are 'extras' or because there is no time in an already crowded curriculum? Definitely not! These activities ARE our curriculum and a great deal of school time is also given to these endeavours. The commitment that staff, students and families put into these learning experiences goes to the very core of what our two schools believe about achievement and success.

Education for social justice

Clover Park Middle School and Te Whanau o Tupuranga are schools born out of struggle against an education system that marginalises Maori and Pasifika learners. The community fought to extend the previous Clover Park Intermediate School to a Year 7 to 10 middle school and then again, more recently, to grow a Year 7 to 13 designated-character Maori bilingual secondary school out of Clover Park Middle School's long established bilingual whanau. Although Te Whanau o Tupuranga is a secondary school, Years 7 to 10 are run as a middle school and the curriculum approach for Years 11 to 13 is also underpinned by this philosophy. The two schools share the same site in Otara and have a combined board of trustees and one principal.

In both schools issues of social justice shape the curriculum. This ensures that students become critical thinkers through a curriculum and ways of working that are innovative, and implemented through meaningful school relationships. Our community and the cultures within it are our classroom and we want all learning to be relevant to the lives of our students.

Relationships and cultural identity

The understanding of the importance of this approach has brought us to identify relationships and the development of cultural identity as the key components of our learning model. The schools have developed the concept of 'Power Lenses' that describe necessary learning, above and beyond the overt National Curriculum, to empower young people, families and community. These lenses include a 'school-knowledge' lens where the mandated curriculum sits and a 'self-knowledge' lens, which includes cultural competencies and knowledge, identity, language and cultural norms. These two lenses have equal status and importance in our learning programme. The third 'global-knowledge' lens is designed to provide our young people with the 'toolkit' they need to equip themselves as citizens of the world beyond school.

The overarching principles that links these lenses together is whanaungatanga or 'connectedness' and critical pedagogy.

Crucial to our learning approach are the key ideas that:

- Learning is integrated - across subject areas and with students' lives and realities
- Learning is negotiated - by students, with teachers
- Learning is inquiry-based and student-driven
- Learning is critical - it provides young people with the power and the tools to understand and challenge inequity and injustice and to make change in their lives
- Learning is whanau-based - it is collective, cooperative, collaborative and reciprocal, i.e. learning is shared - you receive it, you share it, you give back to other learners
- Learning is based in strong relationships - with self and your identity, with each other, with teachers, with the learning itself and its relevance to your cultural background, with the world beyond school and a reciprocal relationship between home and school.
- Learning is culturally located and allows you to live your cultural norms throughout the school day

Our community and the cultures within it are our classroom and we want all learning to be relevant to the lives of our students.

Clover Park's philosophy and approach to learning are specifically designed to prepare our Maori and Pasifika students for a future that does not limit them to 'school' or Eurocentric knowledge and empowers them to challenge the status quo and change it. A key component in this direction is a transformative curriculum for social justice and a democratic society.

The after school and holiday learning activities then are an extension of what happens in classrooms during the school day.

Learning is integrated, negotiated, inquiry-based and student-driven ...

Our choice as a curriculum approach is the model of curriculum integration pioneered by James Beane (2005), where students pose questions they have about themselves, their community, country and the world to identify issues of social concern. These questions shape the contexts for learning which teachers and students negotiate further until, together, they have worked out the basis of a term's inquiry. For our students this naturally includes issues relevant to their culture. Our students were thrilled when 'Matua Jim,' as they call Professor Beane, spent a week in our schools last year and told us he felt as if 'he had died and gone to heaven,' when he saw the way his approach had been applied to develop a culturally responsive learning model.

This is far removed from simply studying cultural perspectives locked in the past. To be relevant, culturally responsive practice must recognise the multiple identities and the changing worlds of our young people.

In the classroom students' contexts have included the Treaty of Waitangi, immigration from the Pacific, loss of language and culture, colonisation, assimilation, Maori education, social roles in Pasifika societies, issues of poverty and family violence, youth gangs, government policies that impact on our families and community, and interaction with marginalised youth in other countries. Always, inquiry starts from a known and familiar cultural perspective and branches out into other learning. Always, negative stereotypes are challenged and examined to find the reality and the reason behind them. Always, cultural knowledges and competencies are seen as valued and legitimate learning and never as a stepping stone towards 'real' learning, which our system seems increasingly determined to interpret only as academic achievement. This means we are not focusing on cultural competence in order to build self esteem that will ultimately will result in improved English literacy scores. It might, but that is not the goal. The goal is to develop all ways of knowing as legitimate learning. Dr Manulani Meyer, a keynote speaker at the Hamilton 2005 World Indigenous Peoples' Conference in Education, whose research area is Hawaiian epistemology, puts it best when she says, "A SAT score does not summarise the life force of our children. ... Aloha is our intelligence."

How is that thinking demonstrated in the learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day? The Computer Clubhouse and the Kapa Haka practices give some insight into that process and into the 21st century global toolkit we believe our young people need.

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The Computer Clubhouse

The Computer Clubhouse – Clubhouse 274 – is an after-school drop in facility on part of the campus of Clover Park Middle School and Te Whanau o Tupuranga in Otara. Developed in partnership between the schools and a community group, Te Houhanga Rongo, the Clubhouse is the only one in New Zealand and is part of a worldwide network of Clubhouses established in under-served communities and licensed to the Boston Museum of Science in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Laboratory.

The Computer Clubhouse is guided by four principles:

- The Clubhouse focuses on 'constructionist' activities, encouraging young people to work as designers, inventors, and creators.
- The Clubhouse encourages youth to work on projects related to their own interests.
- The Clubhouse aims to create a sense of community, where young people work together with one another with support and inspiration from adult mentors.
- The Clubhouse is dedicated to offering resources and opportunities to those who would not otherwise have access to them.

This model, closely aligned to the schools' learning approach, puts learners in the driver's seat and empowers them to design and create pathways that are relevant to them. Students never play computer games or do their homework in the Clubhouse. They go to create and design projects using industry standard high level software and equipment. They communicate with other Clubhouse members all over the world. A group of Clubhouse members is currently developing digital stories to share their lives with Native American children living on a reserve in Arizona. Over 70% of students on the campus are members of the Clubhouse. The demand is so great that we have had to divide the after-school sessions into two: running special nights for girls, boys, older, and younger students from 3 to 5pm. Then, open the doors to all Clubhouse members from 5 to 7pm. This is powerful and empowering learning that has enormous spin off into classroom programmes and increasingly into families and the community. The Clubhouse Trust is fully involved in developing the One Laptop per Child programme in New Zealand and the Pacific.

Learning is critical, and based in whanau and relationships ...

Kapa Haka

Duncan-Andrade (2006) says critical pedagogy needs a vehicle and school is not usually it. Many young people use sport as a way to resist. For our students Kapa Haka, Maori performing arts, provides that vehicle for getting their message across. Our students compose and choreograph their own items and older students tutor younger groups. Far from being consigned to an after-school or lunchtime activity, Kapa Haka is central to our programme.

Kapa Haka is a curriculum in itself.

Waiata and haka themes have included the importance of taking a stand and fighting for what is fair, challenges to the Minister of Education for the right to have an education that suits Maori learners, the beauty of the world when we focus on the positives, the impact of youth suicide, pollution and the changing landscape, the story of Te Whanau o Tupuranga's struggle and history and the need to make change and find solutions to the issues facing Maori youth. Items have paid tribute to a fellow student who passed away suddenly and to elders and those who have contributed to the whanau. Kapa Haka involves learning to live-in on the school marae regularly and giving back to the community in a variety of ways. It includes families and community in authentic contexts, it develops leadership and teamwork, it provides positive role models, it requires huge commitment and, above all, it is high quality learning, designed to teach our young people what excellence looks like and feels like, and how it is achieved through working together as a whanau. Kapa Haka is a curriculum in itself. The same principles apply in our Samoan and Tongan bilingual units' performing arts programmes and to our Cook Islands drumming group.

Whanau

The glue that binds all of the schools' practice together is whanau. When you stop thinking of students as 'other people's children' (Delpit, 2006) and start to think of them as 'our kids,' and therefore a collective responsibility, then school can't be confined to a weekday, term time, 9 to 3 framework. It can't be confined to a limited monocultural view of academic achievement. It can't be just about single class levels or subjects or other structures that are about convenience. Learning for social justice has to be about authentic relationships and experiences that empower young people to 'live as Maori' (Durie, 2001), or as who they are, throughout their school day, and in their futures. □

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Feature

Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR)

Fostering environmental responsibility

Pat Nolan interviews **Samara Nicholas**

A group of students snorkels among a forest of kelp, surrounded by dozens of fascinating and unusual species of marine life.

Frenzy erupts as someone spots a crayfish. Everyone takes a turn, diving to get a glimpse of the cray crouching under a ledge. Students surface exhilarated and gasping for breath. Their adult buddies, in the water close by, keep a close watch. A bright yellow body board is only a stroke or two away.

Large snapper cruise past, looking to see what all the fuss is about. One of the group observes an eagle ray resting on the sandy sea floor. The adults, including some parents, keep their eyes on the bright yellow wetsuits of the students in their care. Shortly after, on shore, the children chatter excitedly about the different fish they have seen, and compare notes on the size of the snapper.

This is the norm for each and every Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) programme - enthusiasm, animation and high energy discussion.

What is the Experiencing Marine Reserves programme?

EMR is a new and special education programme for youth in Aotearoa New Zealand. It's dedicated to working with young people, schools and communities New Zealand-wide.

It challenges young people intellectually, physically and emotionally about how and why to protect our coastal marine areas and their delicate and endangered ecosystems.

EMR fosters and promotes environmental and marine learning through educational experiences that are personally meaningful, highly enjoyable and fun. In 2007 no less than 47 schools from 23 Northland communities, and a steadily increasing number from other areas, participate in the EMR programme.

Well orchestrated and well organised fieldtrips and excursions to protected marine areas, such as the new Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve and the long-established Goat Island Marine Reserve, are the main focus. This is where the EMR programme really kicks into action.

Frenzy erupts as someone spots a crayfish. Everyone takes a turn, diving to get a glimpse of the cray crouching under a ledge. Students surface exhilarated and gasping for breath. Their adult buddies, in the water close by, keep a close watch. A bright yellow body board is only a stroke or two away.

How did the EMR programme come about?

Environmental and marine scientist Samara Nicholas co-founded the Experiencing Marine Reserves[1] (EMR) programme in 2002.

Samara was destined to do something different and interesting linked to the sea. She learned to swim before she was three: *underwater*, not on the surface!

Key stages thereafter included:

- Adolescent surfing and junior surf life saving on Auckland's wild West Coast, acquiring and honing invaluable ocean experience and skills;
- Learning about diving and snorkelling and how to teach them when the family switched home to the opposite coast;
- A Bachelor of Applied Science degree (Environmental Studies) at AUT;
- A Diploma in Environmental Management while co-founding EMR in 2002;
- A Sir Peter Blake Emerging Leader award in 2005.

EMR is not the first programme of its kind. While in high school herself in 1990, Samara and other Year 13 students initiated the Kamo High School Marine Reserve Project. Visionary Kamo High School teacher, Warren Farrelly, guided and supported them, but the students did the work and set the ball rolling.

The Kamo experience, positive, affirming and highly motivational, changed the whole direction of Samara's life:

> *Our first field trip was a geography experience in the sea where we went snorkelling. The experience amazed us: seahorses hiding in weed amongst the currents, leatherjackets, sponges, and all kinds of fish species and breathtaking views. All this inspired us. First hand, we developed our knowledge of marine ecology, environmental science and our positive attitudes and beliefs about the marine environment and its biodiversity, and how to conserve it. We had meetings with community groups at which we applied our knowledge and promoted our ideas for a marine reserve.*

Samara says that the Kamo project was where she "fell in love with conservation". It was during this time that she germinated the idea for the EMR project - what it would look like and how it could work.

[1] Samara Nicholas describes a marine reserve as a library of the sea. It provides a safe place for marine life to live and breed. In marine reserves all the sea life and their homes are protected. In them anyone and everyone may observe, study and 'fish watch' by means such as swimming, snorkelling or glass bottom boating. No fishing, removal of any natural material or any damaging activity (e.g. dredging, dumping of waste, construction or other disturbance) is permitted. Goat Island Marine Reserve (Cape Rodney to Okakari Point, North Island) was established in 1975 as New Zealand's first marine reserve - over a century after Tongariro National Park was established. Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve established in 2006 is the very latest, making 31 marine reserves in all. For a full list of marine reserves and how to access them contact your local DoC education officer: http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/summary.aspx?id=33776. Otherwise go to Google for lots of educational resources and ideas, and especially www.marine-reserves.org and look at Resources and Links.

EMR design elements

Six elements, says Samara, make up the EMR programme:

1 EMR staff introduce the philosophy, approach and methods to teachers and students and help them to plan learning activities, units of work and student projects.

2 EMR staff present and run activities, using material from the sea and EMR interactive resources, to motivate students and introduce key marine environment and ecosystem concepts and understandings.

3 The EMR team trains students, teachers and the other adults involved (e.g. parents) how to snorkel confidently and safely using EMR's water safety procedures (see the EMR 1:2 adult to student ratio, safety procedures and snorkel risk management policy at www.emr.org.nz).

4 Through EMR field trips and excursions, students (and significant others – teachers, parents, grandparents) experience *protected and unprotected* marine areas, first-hand, directly observing similarities and differences.

5 In follow-up discussions *in situ* and in class, students explore how human actions affect the marine environment. They propose actions to limit, mitigate and in some cases reverse negative effects, and they consider and plan ongoing learning, units of work and projects.

6 Assessment for learning (as in units of work, investigations, marine action projects and other activities) is by reports, presentations, portfolios and performances to audience real and important to the students -- peers, teachers, parents, local community and Iwi, local government organisations and central government officials and politicians.

Samara says that after a field trip, discussions on how human actions affect the environment typically stimulate and sustain student (and teacher) motivation and interest.

There's a limit to EMR's involvement with schools, due to lack of time, personnel and resourcing. So, what the schools do following their EMR fieldtrips and excursions is, by and large, up to them. The follow up ranges from one-off small scale learning activities that last for a week or two, to whole-school, cross-curricula programmes of learning.

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Examples of EMR-based learning in action

Waiheke and Great Barrier Island Schools, with DoC support, each year survey the number and size of shellfish on local beaches, visiting established transect lines in areas that DoC has mapped using aerial photos and GPS. The students collect "real" data. Their work and learning is directly relevant to assessing the health of the local marine environment, with follow-up classroom work creating graphs, tables and other data analysis outcomes in mathematics, statistics and other curriculum areas.

At Kamo Intermediate School the focus was on language, with the students writing letters to the district council, campaigning for toilets and changing facilities at the car park above the newly established Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve. They did not think it was either appropriate or good for the environment, or them, to be 'doing their business in the bushes'!

Whangarei Intermediate students got excited and wrote letters to the editor about a range of issues, including marine pollution, bottom trawling, critically endangered Maui's dolphins and marine reserve degradation. One student made a t-shirt to campaign against the damaging effects of bottom trawling techniques.

Kamo High School students, nearly ten years on, still regularly visit the (new) Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve, supported by EMR. Along with students from Whangarei Girls High, Otamatea High School and Auckland Girls Grammar, the students do fish counts to monitor the Reserve's fish populations. In this way, the schools collectively honour and continue the work that the 1990's Kamo students initiated.

The students from Opua School incorporated elements from music, drama and technology in the Marine Reserve Sketch and Waiata. This was performed for the Minister of Conservation, other dignitaries and their parents at a public community evening in 2005 to mark the opening of the Whangarei Harbour Marine Reserve.

Te Huruhi Primary students and their classes made a documentary video about Waiheke Island and showed it on the Auckland-Waiheke Island Ferry, along with 3D posters, display boards and murals arising from their participation in the EMR programme.

Who supports EMR?

Local and national organisations provide the support upon which the sustainability of EMR depends.

The Nga Maunga ki te Moana (Mountains to Sea) Conservation Trust is EMR's (Northland) umbrella organisation. In 2003 the Department of Conservation and the Trust agreed formally that EMR and the Whitebait Connection (WBC), another like-minded project, could take their programmes to the whole of New Zealand, once suitable regional coordinators were appointed.

Locally, other vital supporters include: (i) The Lion Foundation, (ii) WWF-NZ, (iii) The ASB Trust and (iv) DoC, all of which (currently) fund the EMR programme; (v) *wildblue* supplies all EMR's snorkel equipment; and (vi) every summer in Northland, Dive! Tutukaka sponsors an annual EMR competition trip to the Poor Knights - it's for the top achieving students from each school involved in the EMR programme.

What are the benefits?

Samara says that in the EMR programme, young people, and adults too, get fired up, motivated and eager to learn.

For more information about EMR action learning and projects, and the people who do them, contact Samara Nicholas at samara@emr.org.nz, and she'll help you contact the appropriate teachers.

In and around the sea, students constantly ask searching questions: 'What do the crayfish eat and where do they live?' 'Why is it that some fish are coloured brilliantly and others are not?' 'If protected reserves (also known as no take reserves) work so well, how could we (our school) create one?'

"Young people are inherently curious," Samara observes. "They always want to know 'why?'"

The EMR learning is real; it's not passive. It's active learning, just like marine scientists and researchers do - actually being in, and under, the water and in surrounding areas - doing field work, observing marine animals live in their natural habitat, and appreciating the natural beauty of it all and nature's special effects.

In particular, says Samara, parents comment that EMR provides just the kind of environment for learning that they want and like for their children.

Managing risk - safe to learn

"Teachers always comment on the professional way in which EMR handles and endorses safety measures," says Samara. "Our experience, equipment, and systems allow us to carry out activities in the water that most schools or teachers would not attempt... The students learn the physical skills of diving and observing underwater really fast and they equally quickly master the skills and attitudes to be safe and to minimise risks."

With the safety boundaries known and understood, and safety assured, young people are in charge of their learning.

When the students know they're safe, they become freer to learn - they work together and they look out for each other as they explore a world underwater they hardly knew existed, full of strange and fascinating (and at times scary) plants, fish and other sea animals... discovery, exploration, inquiry, observation and action, all are going on simultaneously.

Connecting family and school

EMR excursions are often a family affair, as parents and whanau get in on the act.

"It's more than just a learning experience for the kids," says Samara. "Mums and dads participate actively."

"It's more than just a learning experience for the kids," says Samara. "Mums and dads participate actively. They snorkel, dive and explore the undersea world with their kids."

On one excursion a mum could hardly sleep because she was so excited by what she experienced and a dad, no stranger to fishing, said it was the first time he and the other parents had been in the water without taking anything away; he loved it. He spent much more time observing all that was there to be seen. He was particularly fascinated by all the little things that he discovered.

These small but significant happenings help the interest and learning to continue at home, long after the formal EMR programme is over.

In this way, EMR is helping to establish a learning accord between community, families and school.

EMR links to the curriculum

Just how much and how widely EMR experiences link with the National Curriculum depends on the teachers.

- Some teachers see EMR as supporting mainly science teaching and learning, and maybe outdoor (adventure) education connected with swimming and snorkelling.
- Others connect EMR with all areas of the curriculum - maybe two or three strands in science, e.g. making sense of the living world and making sense of planet earth and beyond; almost all genres of language - report writing to poetry; marine life visioning and values in social studies; drama; music; visual art and digital photography in the Arts (quite a few students over the years have become avid underwater photographers).
- In technology, one day, a young inventor may come up with an innovative new snorkel design.

The last word

Samara Nicholas knows that EMR is an education programme that is highly effective at motivating students to learn.

Just to clinch the argument, she wanted Harriet Duley, student, Pakaraka School, to have the last word.

The following extract is from Harriet's speech to the Honorable Chris Carter, Minister of Conservation, during Seaweek 2006:

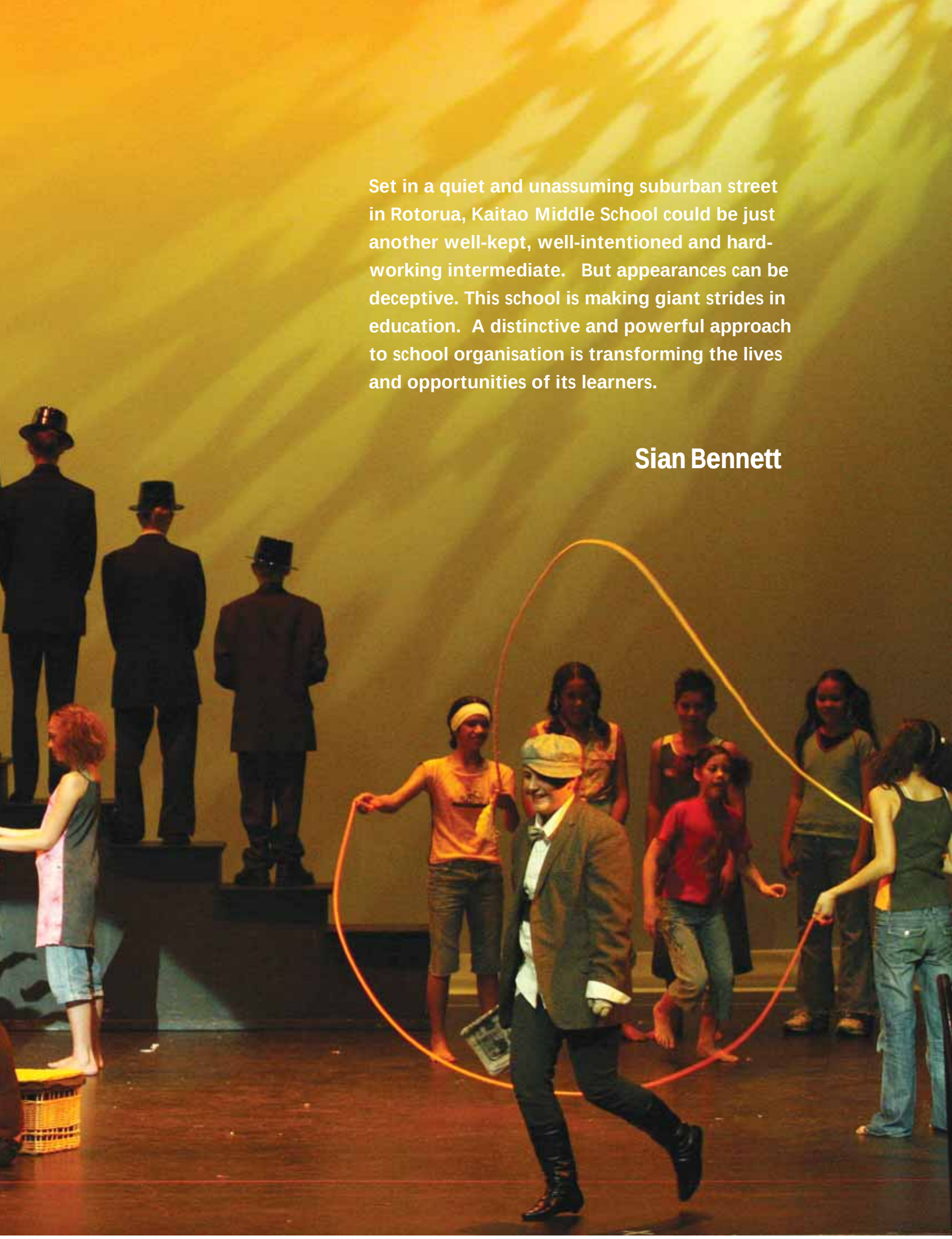
In Term 4 last year (2005), I had the opportunity to go on a school trip to the Goat Island marine reserve. Only then did I realise what a balanced marine environment is. Even snorkelling in the beautiful Bay of Islands could not prepare me for the vast range of sea-life (for which) Goat Island is home. It was so different to the large kina and starfish barren areas (where) I had been used to snorkelling. This is why marine reserves are so important. Without people fishing them, the kina are kept under control by carnivores, such as snapper and crayfish, which (in turn) give the kelp a chance to grow.

For a long time we have realised that we need to preserve our natural treasures on land, but 80% of our biodiversity is found in the sea. So, it's time that we protected our marine environment too, before it's too late.

Samara's Experiencing Marine Reserves programme has opened my eyes to how important marine reserves are to us all, and to our futures.□

Academies at Kaitao Middle School -

An innovation that's working



Set in a quiet and unassuming suburban street in Rotorua, Kaitao Middle School could be just another well-kept, well-intentioned and hard-working intermediate. But appearances can be deceptive. This school is making giant strides in education. A distinctive and powerful approach to school organisation is transforming the lives and opportunities of its learners.

Sian Bennett

Under the leadership of Principal Rory O'Rourke, the school has always done things a bit differently. At the time the school rebranded itself as a middle school, Brian Hinchco was the Deputy Principal and a strong supporter of the middle school philosophy. The request to rebrand from Kaitao Intermediate was met with ministerial indifference, yet the school went ahead and changed its name anyway. This was to be the first of many innovations that see Kaitao Middle School stand apart from the crowd.

Impetus for change

In 2004, prior to its adopting an Academy approach, Kaitao recorded 39 stand downs and 19 suspensions. An average of 25 students arrived late every day. By 2007, these figures had dropped to no stand downs and three suspensions over the year, and fewer than 10 late arrivals per day. In other words, since adopting the Academy concept this decile 2 school has seen a striking improvement in the attitudes and attendance of its students.

And that's not all. Achievement in literacy has improved across the school, with high levels of student engagement and Maori learners progressing at the same rate as others. Students' fitness levels are up too.

In March 2007 an Education Review Office (ERO) report found that student learning needs, including those of Maori and low-achievers, were now being met through more targeted teaching and 'significant school-wide developments' had occurred in the area of behaviour management since the 2004 findings.

Already a successful school with a good local and national reputation, Kaitao received a praiseworthy ERO report in 2004. Its accelerate classes were highly contested, with up to 118 applicants for 18 places. Despite its achievements, Kaitao was experiencing a steady increase in suspensions, truancy, lateness and stand downs. Research on boys' education and preferred learning styles of Maori and other students signalled a need for a 'different' way to structure the school.

Learners are grouped in classes belonging to five 'Academies': Adventure, Challenge, Expressive, Discovery, and Awa. Planning, teaching and learning across the entire curriculum are guided by the hallmarks of each academy, with teachers' interests matched to those of the learners.

How Academies work

The academy initiative at Kaitao Middle School works like this. Learners are grouped in classes belonging to five 'Academies': Adventure, Challenge, Expressive, Discovery, and Awa. Planning, teaching and learning across the entire curriculum are guided by the hallmarks of each academy, with teachers' interests matched to those of the learners.

Challenge Academy places an emphasis on learning through physical activity and outdoor education. Discovery Academy emphasises academic and digital learning, with a strong focus on the use of technology. Expressive Academy encompasses learning through the Arts: dance, drama, literature, visual arts and music. Adventure Academy has a focus on diverse experiences outside the classroom. It specifically targets lower achievers, with small class numbers and fulltime teacher aides. Efforts are focussed on improving student resiliency and learners' physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Awa is a combined academy - it has a focus on science and environmental issues, and also caters for learners with special abilities and those attending Maori Rumaki immersion classes.

In each academy, learners' interests and needs are met according to their learning preferences. For example, within the Discovery Academy Kaitao Television (KTV) provides a rich context for learning across the curriculum. The students do research, work with storyboards and present news items and they operate camera equipment and other technology to record and broadcast school events. Kaitao radio is another Discovery Academy initiative and works along similar lines to KTV.

The Expressive Academy is another example of an academy working well. In term one of 2006 the students in Expressive studied Maori myths and legends and in particular the work of Robyn Kahukiwa, a local author. They chose *Supa Heroes* as the primary text and it became the centre of integrative studies they helped to design. The students adapted the story to a play, made costumes, masks, scenery and at the end of the term performed for a parent gathering of over 100. All other subjects - literacy, numeracy, social sciences, science and technology - were integrated through the theme of *Supa Heroes*.

Integration that works

In term two the students' study was integrated around festivals and ceremonies. At the end of the term, the students invited their parents to a meal consisting of a variety of dishes from around the world and entertained

them with dances and plays from other countries and religions.

The Challenge Academy attended a week-long sports camp and in term one used the Commonwealth Games as the centre of integration. Discovery Academy in term three used a rich question as the focus: "Why should we care about Antarctica?" Each student prepared a PowerPoint presentation in response to the question. These presentations were shown at an end of term parent evening.

Engaging parents and whanau

During 2006 Kaitao had a 50% increase in the number of parents interacting with the school, due to the academy structure and the end of term presentations. Principal O'Rourke comments that 'ERO is using our school as an example of Best Practice in their upcoming publication "Engagement of Parents and Whanau."'

Kaitao encourages all its students to participate in additional sports, arts, music and other activities such as bands, kapahaka and choir, regardless of their academy. Celebration assemblies are whole-school occasions where each academy presents items, whilst the entire school comes together for singing. Every academy emphasises the use of technology and all learners are encouraged, supported and expected to do their best in relation to themselves rather than others. The learning environment is summed up in the school motto, 'Kia puawai I roto I te whanaungatanga' - 'To blossom within the family concept'.

Kaitao's main driving force is to improve student literacy and physical fitness. These over-arching goals inform school-wide policies, which influence the content of learning and instruction for all students in every academy. While a main emphasis is on practical

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learning by doing, issues of numeracy and literacy are not subordinated to the academy's theme. Library reference guides are tailored separately to the individual interests and needs of each academy. In its 2007 report, ERO singled out the school's central library for its attractive appearance and appeal to students. Adventure learners' booklets have larger fonts and simpler text, while Expressive Academy centres on books and references of an artistic nature. ERO commended the Kaitao librarians on their careful matching and thoughtful presentation of reference guides as they pertain to the overarching interests of each academy.

Designing the academies

Rory O'Rourke never intended the academy initiative to be a trial-it-and-see project. "From the outset I knew I would have to provide a sound research basis for the staff to take it on." Investigative visits to other schools followed consultation with teaching colleagues and the school community. Rory and his team drew on research around boys' education and the preferred learning styles of Maori and ultimately the research fuelled the development of Kaitao's own academies.

Benefits for the school community

All learners and teachers get their first choice of academy and Rory is quick to point out that the concept doesn't work unless this occurs. Challenge Academy is very popular, particularly among boys, where 70% are males. Expressive Academy, on the other hand, has 80% females. Adventure has 75% Maori males. Students reading two years below their chronological age automatically go into the Adventure Academy where 60 students are supported with four teachers and three teacher aides. Ninety five percent of these learners graduate and choose their own academy by Year 8.

After an initial trial period in Term One, students are given the option of choosing a more suitable academy if they prefer, while teachers can also choose different academies throughout their career at the school. This permits much-needed professional development, supports change and motivates teacher interest. Teachers develop new skills and strengths by challenging themselves to work in a variety of academies over time. Where a mismatch of students' learning interests with teachers occurs, this quickly becomes apparent and the students seem to know they're in the 'wrong' academy.

The natural grouping of learners by common interests makes individualised programmes far easier to design, implement, manage and assess.

Teachers and community embrace the Academies

Enthusiasm for the concept is evident amongst the whole school community as teachers are encouraged to teach to their strengths and the possibility of learner misbehaviour is reduced. For example, prior to the academy initiative, one teacher was having a problem with classroom management, particularly with boisterous, physically active students. Matching her teaching style to the interests of learners in the Expressive Academy resulted in an immediate reduction in the number and degree of conflicts. Many of the rowdier and more energetic learners moved to academies such as Challenge, to which they were better suited. The situation appeared to have been a simple mismatch of teaching to learning styles. Conversely, many teachers whose predominant strength is physical education have found their classroom management style highly effective in the Challenge Academy.

It seems that the academy initiative, through its ability to engage learners in rich, meaningful learning experiences, provides them with a powerful sense of belonging and they develop insights into the young persons they are becoming, as they learn. The benefits of Kaitao Middle School's unique approach to learning also have been positively and overwhelmingly reflected in parent surveys. In Term Four, 2006, 91 per cent of parents agreed that the school structure had helped their child's learning, while in Term One, 2007, 96 per cent of the parents confirmed that their child enjoyed coming to school.

Interests and temperaments

The academy initiative is an expanded version of the older, longer established, concept of centres of interest. A strong correlation can be observed between the academics in action and the Steiner-Waldorf schooling movement's emphasis on understanding and working with children's temperaments in centres of interest. This philosophy of education has some origins in the Greek notion of the 'four humours' or temperaments: melancholic, sanguine, choleric and phlegmatic. These are the elements of earth, air, fire and water as they relate to the child's personality.

Steiner-Waldorf education seeks to harmonise the child's temporal body with their developing individuality. Teachers work closely with children's temperaments to balance, rather than counteract or overcome them. Whilst all four temperaments are evident in every individual, Steiner-Waldorf theorists say that one generally predominates and plays into every area of personality. For example, melancholic (earth) children may exhibit a certain seriousness in which the weight of the world appears to burden them. Themes which allow learners to 'wallow' their feelings can be ideal for the melancholic child.
Children of a 'phlegmatic'

temperament enjoy a languid fluidity in all that they experience. They deliberately ruminate on what they learn as it slowly crystallises into conscious form. 'Fiery' or 'choleric' learners are full of active will and passion, loud, boisterous and happiest when moving around, whilst 'sanguine' or 'airy' children flit from one artistic and dramatic topic to another.

A natural grouping seems to occur at Kaitao Middle School as the academies attract learners with characteristics or temperaments in common. In a similar way, Steiner teachers group children of the same temperaments together in the classroom. Grouping classes according to interest has yielded unexpected and considerable benefits for Kaitao teachers' planning. While meeting the individual needs of all learners has long been aspired to, it previously often remained just an ideal. Kaitao's academy approach has simplified teachers' lives by allowing them to plan thematic studies with students which correspond with the basic premise for learning that each academy holds. The natural grouping of learners by common interests makes individualised programmes far easier to design, implement, manage and assess.

Initial results at Kaitao Middle School suggest that the academy concept is proving highly successful. On this basis other schools might be stimulated to explore the academy method of organisation, perhaps by commencing with a needs analysis and an investigation of pertinent educational research. The academy concept lends itself particularly well to individual schools' needs and profiles and responds to the sorts of school based curriculum development initiatives that the Ministry of Education and National Curriculum encourage.

At Kaitao one thing is certain - the advances the academy concept has brought across the entire school community mean this is an approach that warrants further exploration. The benefits show that academies simply can't be ignored. □

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MSR Youth Motto
We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.
Aristotle - Greek philosopher

MSR Youth actively supports and promotes the aims and objectives of NZAIMS. MSR Youth 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

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

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Feature

The Curriculum superhighway

Thomas Armstrong

In the race to get kids to the finish line, let's not bypass their developmental needs.

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Church St
Pitt St
TURNING
TRAFFIC
GIVE WAY
TO
PEDESTRIANS

A superhighway is being built across today's education landscape. It has been under construction for some time. Initially, this project focused on connecting kindergarten to the junior school. Gradually, it has broadened its vision until now it extends from preschool to university.[1] All the byways, narrow routes, and winding paths that have traditionally filled the journey from early childhood to early adulthood are now being 'aligned' so that the curriculum (a Latin word meaning 'a lap around a racetrack') can move along at breakneck speed.

So far, this project has received the approbation of most educators and policymakers. Such a colossal undertaking, however, extracts a great cost.

An environmental impact report

Educators today are almost entirely engaged in academic achievement discourse (Armstrong, 2006). The topics of this discourse - test scores, benchmarks, data, accountability, and adequate yearly progress - are the bulldozers, backhoes, cement mixers, and asphalt pavers that are constructing the curriculum superhighway. A more appropriate focus of educators' dialogue would be human development discourse, which recognises that human beings travel through different stages of life, each with its own requirements for optimal growth.

The curriculum superhighway is carving an asphalt swath through several distinct areas of the human development countryside, threatening to damage or destroy their delicate ecosystems. Let's consider some of the eco-disasters likely to ensue from this multi-billion-dollar road project.

Early childhood

In early childhood, the developmental bottom line is play. When I say play, I'm not talking about playing draughts or soccer; I'm referring to open-ended play in a rich, multimodal environment, with supportive facilitators and a minimum of adult interference. Between the ages of 2 and 6, children's brains go through an incredible process of development. Metabolism is twice that of an adult, and brain connections are formed or discarded in response to the kinds of stimulation the child does or doesn't receive.

The curriculum superhighway is carving an asphalt swath through several distinct areas of the human development countryside, threatening to damage or destroy their delicate ecosystems.

At this time of life, it makes the most sense to encourage open-ended engagement with the world in an environment like that of Habibi's Hutch, a preschool in Austin, Texas, that calls itself a 'natural childlife preserve'. Children spend most of their day playing on swing sets, in sand pits, in playhouses, and with art materials and toys. They perform their own plays and participate in a cooking class (Osborne, 2007). The preschool's website (http://habibishutch.com/philosophy.html) explains, "Our kids leave the Hutch with so much more than their ABCs and 123s. They all leave with a sense of themselves and a wonder and drive to know more about themselves and their surroundings'.

This approach to early childhood education is a good example of a developmentally appropriate programme. Unfortunately, the curriculum superhighway is delivering academic goods and materials as well as formal teaching lessons from the higher grades down to the preschool level - a trend that could ultimately destroy this precious ecology.

Middle childhood

In middle childhood, the developmental bottom line is learning how the world works. Naturally, children of all ages are constantly learning about the world. But from age 7 to 10, this need becomes especially important. Kids are becoming a more significant part of the broader society, and they want to understand the rules of this more complex world. Their brains have matured to the point where they can begin to learn the formal rules of reading, writing, and maths, but they also need to satisfy their insatiable curiosity by learning how governments work, how butterflies grow, how their community developed, and countless other things.

The 'children's museum' model of learning, recommended by Howard Gardner (1994) among others, is a good example of how we can preserve this developmental ecology. 'In a children's museum,' Gardner explains, 'kids have an opportunity to work with very interesting kinds of things, at their own pace, in their own way, using the kinds of intelligence which they're strong in.' In a unit developed by the Minnesota Children's Museum, for example, students spend six weeks studying insects using the museum's Insect Discovery Kit and then take a trip to the museum's anthill exhibit (Association of Children's Museums, 2003).

Because schools today are spending more and more class time preparing students for academic tests that are part of the superhighway scheme, students have fewer opportunities to engage in a rich exploration of our incredible world. As a result, this ecosystem could eventually decay and disappear.

Early adolescence

The developmental needs of early adolescence consist primarily of social, emotional, and metacognitive growth. In boys, surges of testosterone at puberty contribute to the generation of strong emotions (Giedd et al., 1996). For girls, oestrogen levels appear to affect serotonin levels, leading to high rates of depression (Born, Shea, & Steiner, 2002). The curriculum needs to reflect young adolescents' greater sensitivity to emotional and social issues. For example, at Benjamin Franklin Middle School in Ridgewood, New Jersey, students read about the Warsaw ghetto and then discuss how they can combat injustices that they see in their own lives (Curtis, 2001).

Just before puberty, children's brains experience a surge in the growth of grey matter in the frontal, parietal, and temporal lobes, which may be related to what Piaget called formal operational thinking - the ability to 'think about thinking'. This new capacity represents an incredible resource, enabling young teens to begin to reflect at a more abstract level - not only to gain perspective on their own emotional responses, but also to engage intellectually with such universal issues as justice and individual rights.

Unfortunately, the project managers of the curriculum superhighway appear to regard this newly acquired metacognitive capacity as merely an opportunity to teach algebra and reading comprehension. The components of the superhighway's infrastructure - tougher requirements, more homework, and harder tests - leave teachers little chance to engage students' emotions, social needs, and metacognitive thinking in any substantial way. The resulting deterioration in this ecosystem may lead to environmental hazards such as gangs, violence, and mental disorders.

Late adolescence

In late adolescence, the developmental bottom line is preparing to live independently in the real world. At this age, neural pathways in the brain are becoming increasingly sheathed, or myelinated, so that nerve impulses travel more quickly - especially in the frontal lobes, which control planning and decision making (National Institute of Mental Health, 2001). At this age, young people in many areas of the world are legally empowered to set up their own individual retirement accounts, drive a car, marry, vote, and engage in other adult responsibilities. But in a typical high school classroom, these same adolescents have to raise their hand for permission to go to the bathroom.

At this stage of life, kids need less classroom time and more time out in the real world, in apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing, career-based work experiences, and other situations in which they can experience themselves as incipient adults. The traffic on the curriculum superhighway, however, is especially intense at this point. High school students are deluged with pressures to pass high-stakes tests, meet university entrance requirements, and take advanced courses that will prepare them for higher education. Many of them aren't even allowed to dip their toes into the currents of the real world, because to take this time would mean falling behind their peers in an increasingly competitive society. The curriculum superhighway's attack on this ecosystem may erode students' ability to think for themselves, reflect on their futures, and make responsible choices that mirror their own proclivities and interests.

Restoring a human development curriculum

Schools need to approach curriculum in a way that is environmentally sensitive to the ecologies of different developmental stages of life. Let's start with literacy. In early childhood, literacy

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needs to take place in the context of play. According to developmental psychologist David Elkind (2001), children aren't even cognitively ready to learn formal reading and maths skills until they reach Piaget's operational stage of cognitive development around age 6 or 7. In early childhood, literacy should be just another part of the child's rich multisensory environment. A playhouse area, for example, should include books and magazines along with dolls and furniture. If a child wants to play at being mummy reading a story to baby, that's up to her (experts call this process emergent literacy).

At the primary school level, we can appropriately teach formal reading and writing skills, because the symbol systems of literacy are an important component of how the world works. Literacy will develop best, however, not with boring worksheets and sterile reading programmes, but with reading and writing experiences that give students a chance to learn about all aspects of the world, from science to history to social relationships. In such programmes, students may read historical narratives, guidebooks on science topics, and other reading materials (such as reference sources, Internet text, or high-quality fiction) that whet their curiosity to find out more about the world. Likewise, they may take field notes on bush tramps, write letters to people of influence, and create reports based on what they've discovered about their community's history.

In intermediate or middle school, literacy needs to take place in the context of a young teen's social, emotional, and metacognitive growth. Journal writing, therefore, is developmentally more important than book report writing. Reading material should include emotional themes that speak to the adolescent's inner turmoil. Teachers should assign collaborative and cooperative reading and writing assignments to honour the social needs of early adolescence. They need to teach students how to use metacognitive strategies to monitor their own reading and writing habits.

Finally, in high school, literacy needs to serve the interests of the student becoming an independent person in the real world. Here, higher education reading lists are appropriate for some students. But all students should learn more practical literacy skills, including how to write a résumé, how to skim for essential information on the Internet, and how to develop a lifelong interest in reading as a hobby.

In intermediate or middle school, literacy needs to take place in the context of a young teen's social, emotional, and metacognitive growth.

Maths and science instruction should also evolve as children move through each developmental ecosystem. In early childhood, maths and science are an integral part of daily play activities as kids build with blocks, examine insects, and dangle from the monkey bars. In primary school, kids are developmentally ready to learn the formal systems of mathematics and the use of science to answer questions about the world, from why the sky is blue to how a car works.

In intermediate or middle school, maths and science become vehicles for exploring the biology of life, the ultimate nature of the cosmos, the consequences of a nuclear war, and other emotionally laden and thought-provoking topics. Students need to work on high-interest, group-oriented maths and science projects (for example, preserving a bird habitat or monitoring junk food habits) and communicate their findings to others through the Internet, science fairs, and other means.

At the high school level, students need to study for exams in maths and science to help them apply for further education. They also need to learn the practical maths and technical skills necessary for living independently (for example, financial planning and using computer software) and develop the science and maths literacy necessary to vote intelligently on such issues as taxation, global warming, and the costs of war.

A human development curriculum also extends beyond literacy, maths, and science to other subjects, including the arts, physical education, social skills training, and imaginative, moral, and spiritual development. In far too many schools, these subjects have been crushed beneath the heavy weight of the concrete (benchmarks), asphalt (standardised tests), and steel (adequate yearly progress) that make up the bulk of the curriculum superhighway.

As educators, we need to rescue these important components of person-building from the rubble of the superhighway construction site and preserve the delicate ecologies that make up our students' stages of human growth and development. By dismantling the curriculum superhighway, we can ensure that our students will not stress out in traffic jams, keel over from road fatigue, or be maimed or killed in collisions along the way. By focusing on the whole child, we can prepare our students to meet the challenges of the real world in the years to come. □

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Endnote

[1] See, for example, the 2004 publication of the California Alliance of PreK–18 Partnerships, Raising student achievement through effective education partnerships: Policy and practice (available at www.ced.csulb.edu/California-alliance/documents/AllianceReport-printversion.pdf).

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Anna's story: The party

Sad but true - girls really can be this mean

Kate Nolan-Tong

Anna wasn't really popular in class. She was pretty quiet and didn't get included in things much. Sometimes others would tease her. There wasn't any particular reason. She was just an easy person to pick on. It also didn't help that she was one of the newer kids in the class.

Sarah was popular. All the girls seemed to like her and she thought up really exciting games for people to play. Sometimes she could be mean, especially if things didn't go her way, and she didn't always let you be part of her games. But when she did let you join in you felt like you were someone special. If Sarah decided it was OK for you to join in it was cool, but if not, her friends didn't really want to know you either. That's a bit what it was like for Anna (and me sometimes, more so before Anna joined our class).

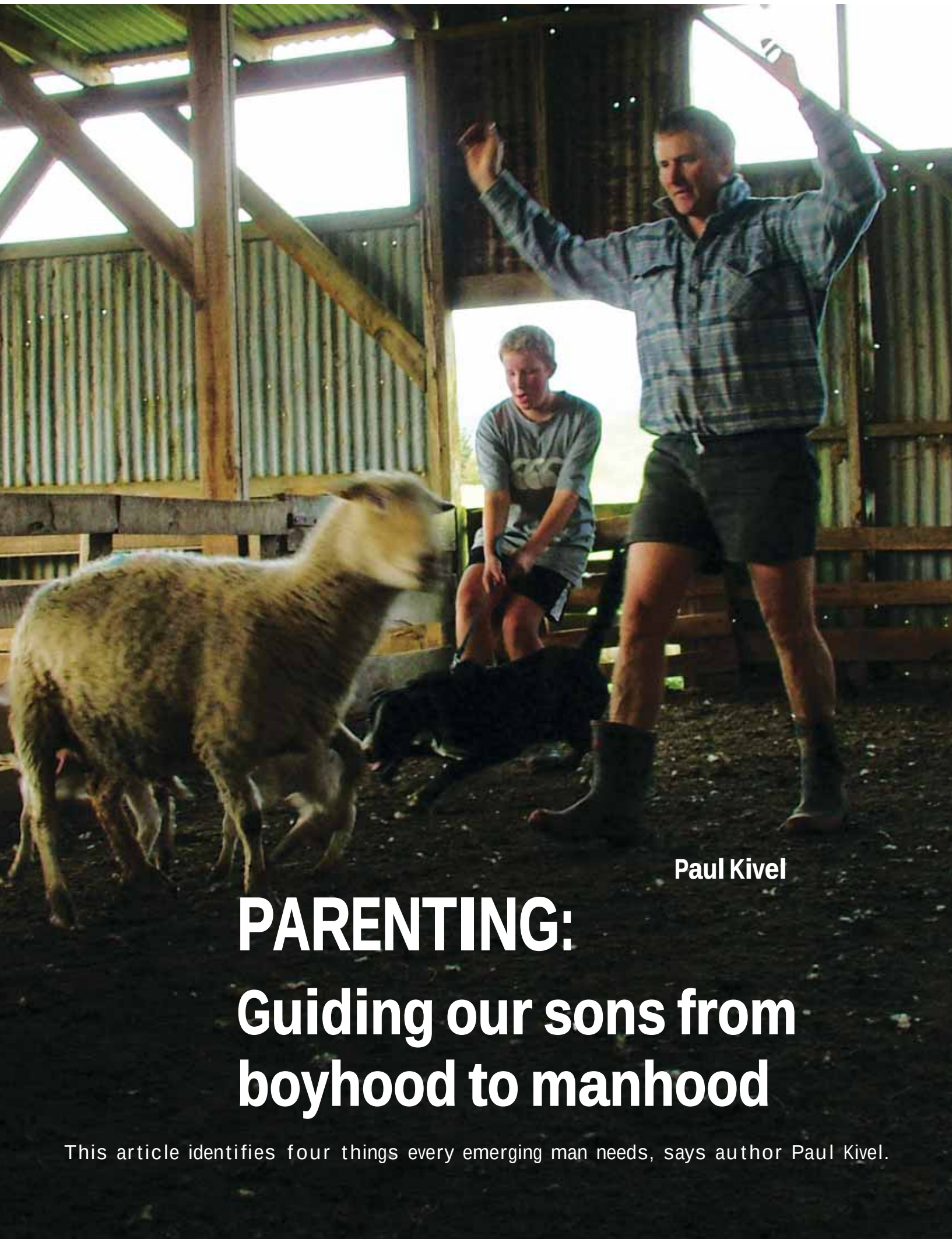
One day Sarah came to school with some birthday invitations. She gave them out to most of the girls in the class (including me). She even gave one to Anna. I could tell that Anna was really excited. She asked Sarah what kinds of things she would like for a present. Sarah still didn't really let Anna join in games at school even though she had given her a birthday invitation. Sarah and a couple of her friends would whisper and giggle when they looked at Anna. Anna was really happy about being invited to Sarah's birthday. You could tell because she smiled a lot and seemed brighter and more confident in class.

Sarah's party was a sleepover. We had to bring a pillow and sleeping bags. We got to stay up really late and chatted for most of the night. Anna didn't turn up to the sleepover. We all slept in next morning then got up to watch TV.

At 10am there was a knock at the door. Sarah opened it. Anna had arrived for the party. Sarah and some of her other friends thought it was hilarious that Anna had turned up on the wrong day. Sarah told everyone that she had given Anna an invitation with the wrong day on it for a joke. We all kind of laughed along. I could tell that Anna was really upset. She gave Sarah her present then walked back down the path. We all went home not long after that. I don't know what happened. I never heard if Sarah got into trouble or not. Anna didn't come to school on Monday and ended up going to another school. □

Go to www.msr.org.nz for an in-depth readable account of why bullying is developmental: called, 'Understanding bullying', by Kate Nolan-Tong and Pat Nolan.

Sometimes we may not take seriously what our sons are learning and doing, telling ourselves that "Boys will be boys". At other times we may take what they do too seriously and tell them to "Grow up and act like men". Raising sons today, with our concerns about the violence they are vulnerable to and the controlling and abusive male roles they may grow up to inhabit, is a challenging occupation. How do we guide them from boyhood to manhood with their strength, creativity, caring, and lives intact?



Paul Kivel

PARENTING:
Guiding our sons from boyhood to manhood

This article identifies four things every emerging man needs, says author Paul Kivel.

Many of us operate out of a tug-of-war theory of parenting, with our sons tied to the middle of the rope. We see ourselves as pulling against the media, peer pressure and the temptations of modern society for our sons' attention and allegiance. This approach can lead us to feel constantly embattled and trying to save or protect our sons from the evil influences out there.

Our sons are not unthinking and gullible people tempted into horrible (but tantalising) fates. Boys have feelings, thoughts, ambitions, dreams, and the capacity to make their own decisions. We need to realign ourselves so that we are on their side, instead of trying to get them to be on our side and accept our values. This involves working to help strengthen their ability to make good choices about their lives. We need to trust that they will pick their own best directions, activities, friends and future, given the options they see. We can help them expand those options.

Of course they will make mistakes. Few of those mistakes will be fatal and most of them will be necessary for them to grow and learn how to be mature adults. Our challenge is to help them make their own choices, and their own mistakes, rather than have them simply carry out the traditional male role - training in violence and control.

How are boys trained? At a very early age boys are told to "Act like a man": be tough, be aggressive, don't back down, don't make mistakes, be in control, take charge, have lots of sex, have money, be responsible, don't show any feelings, and don't cry.

I have come to call this the "Act Like a Man Box" because it feels like living in a box. One reason we know it's a box is because every time a boy tries to step out he's pushed back in with names like wimp, sissy, mama's boy, girl, fag, nerd or punk. With the names come the fights. Most men were in a fight sometime in their youth to prove they were in the box.

There are lots of variations on this theme, but the similarity of male expectations across cultures is striking. Boys have different strategies for trying to survive in the box, or sneak out of it, but the scars from living within it are long lasting and painful.

Boys have feelings, thoughts, ambitions, dreams, and the capacity to make their own decisions

As parents we've been taught to train our sons in the importance of being in the box. Even though we may fervently want them to get out of the box, there are probably subtle and not so subtle ways we reinforce this training.

Have you ever not held, hugged or kissed your son because you were afraid it might make him too soft? Have you discouraged him from crying, or have you ever been uncomfortable in the presence of his feelings?

We may also think of our son as too soft or weak or a wimp for not standing up for himself more aggressively. We may become fearful for his safety and offer lukewarm support if he shows interest in activities that are not traditional. We may encourage him to participate in athletic or other competitive programmes because we think it's good for him, without questioning the values he learns from these activities. There are probably ways that all of us sometimes give up and say "Boys will be boys," and fail to challenge the messages and training boys receive from TV, movies, books, sports and their peers.

Perhaps most important of all, few of us talk to our sons about the gender role training they are receiving. We don't point it out or notice with them the consequences for themselves, women, and other men. We don't challenge them to think critically about that training and to develop communication and problem solving skills for getting out of the box.

What do boys need from us?

What do boys need from us to get out of the box, to become the healthy, creative, intelligent, compassionate, interdependent members of the community that we know they can be?

- Practise expressing feelings
  Boys cannot be in touch with themselves or close to others if they cannot express their feelings. To help them we can regularly ask them how they feel. When we read stories and watch videos with them we can ask them how the characters feel, and how they would feel if they were in

"ACT LIKE A MAN BOX"

MEN ARE	FEELINGS	MEN
bread winners	confused	have no emotions
violent	angry	stand up for themselves
mean	scared	yell at people
bullies	ashamed	can take it
tough	alone	don't make mistakes
angry	stupid	don't cry
active	powerless	take charge
strong	vulnerable	push people around
successful	revenge	know about sex
in control	hopeless	don't back down
over women	worthless	take care of people

that situation. We can also help them find ways to express their feelings besides words, such as though art, music, writing, and dance.

- A chance to nurture
  Besides lots of healthy nurturing, boys need the opportunity to become nurturers. We should assume that boys can and naturally want to nurture others. We can give them plants, animals, dolls, stuffed animals, and younger children to take care of. Commensurate with their age and abilities we can enable them to practise the skills and learn the joy, satisfaction and responsibility involved in nurturing activities.

- Someone to talk with about the hard subjects
  Many of us postpone talking with our boys until they are adolescents because we are uncomfortable talking about sexuality, drugs, violence or other difficult issues. The best time to begin talking with them, at a level appropriate to their age, is when they are in primary school. At that age they are still listening to us, and they are not yet ready to experiment with different kinds of behaviour. We can use books, videos, TV programmes, news items and political events to talk about sex, violence, drugs, the media and other difficult issues. Talking about sex or drugs does not encourage young people to experiment. In fact it lessens their need to. If we wait until they are teenagers they may already have so much confusion, fear, or misinformation that they will not listen to us.

- A chance to participate and make a difference
  We know that boys have a tremendous sense of fairness, concern for others, and that they want to make a difference. Community service projects are a wonderful way to take them into the community and help them participate. We can take them to a homeless shelter, to a programme for feeding the hungry, or to work on an environmental cleanup project. This gives them a sense that they are part of a community and that in a community people care for each other. They get to see that they can make a difference in other people's lives.

When I ask people at a workshop to name some of the wonderful qualities of boys they throw out words like energetic ... challenging ... curious ... intelligent ... caring... rebellious ... creative... artistic ... expressive ... dramatic ... pushing the limits ... wild ... passionate ... loving ... clever ... ambitious ... hardworking ... experimental ... fun loving ... sexual ... vital.

Today, when boys and young men are often portrayed as violent, drugged out, underachieving sexual predators and the cause of many of our social problems, it is easy to forget their wonderful qualities. However, if we stay grounded in our love, caring and high expectations for our sons, we can help them stay safe, develop strong and caring relationships, and achieve their most creative and visionary dreams.

Paul Kivel is an educator, activist, writer and parent. His book Boys Will Be Men: Raising Our Sons for Courage, Caring, and Community and many other resources are available at www.paulkivel.com. □

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Stop bullying in our schools:

Kia Kaha is making a difference

Pat Nolan interviews **Bob Filbee,** Police Education Officer

Senior Constable Bob Filbee is a police education officer (PEO) in the NZ Police Youth Education Service. He's been working in schools with young people and teachers for over sixteen years in Palmerston North, delivering, and supporting teachers in the delivery of, Police programmes including Kia Kaha, the NZ Police anti-bullying programme.

Bob confirms what all the recent bullying research says:

Bullying is pervasive in schools at all levels and in all types of schools.

He knows, first hand, that bullying behaviour is not restricted by social class, ethnicity or gender.

He says some forms of bullying are more subtle than others:

"While boys tend to be physical, with girls it's more often emotional and relational bullying – snide remarks, putdowns, etc. Commonly, these are not easily seen and identified, but nonetheless they are hurtful and sometimes devastating in their effects."

Bob says the secret to stopping bullying is simple:

"Work closely with children and young people. Interact with them personally. Build positive relationships and let them

know by your actions and words that you think they're OK."

In fact, Bob Filbee is a walking example of the saying (adapted from Mary Kay Ash): "Pretend that every young person you work with or teach has a sign around his or her neck that says - Make me feel important."

That, says Bob, is the key. Telling or showing someone they're important also says that 'you like and trust them; that you value who they are, and you value what they say and think.'

Bob says that schools are getting better at saying and doing these things. But he's under no illusions: we have a long way to go yet, especially supporting young people as they approach and attend secondary school.

He's optimistic that programmes like Kia Kaha can, and do, make a difference in schools. But for Kia Kaha to work well, he says: "Everyone has to be committed and vigilant. That's because bullying is deeply entrenched and it won't just go away".

Bob says that schools working together is a key factor too: "If we're going to reduce bullying substantially... It's up to the schools to work together, to spread the word among schools and in the community that all the schools together are determined to stop bullying".

Bob says, "We may be hard pushed to eliminate bullying totally, but together we can minimise it and we can make our schools safe".

Telling and sharing stories is a technique that Bob favours. These are true stories. They're about what he and young people have experienced, and young people relate to them readily (see the story about girls bullying girls, page 27).

Stories empower the story teller and they empower the listener too. Everyone listens, empathises, reflects and learns something positive to do to help themselves and to help each other.

Stories about bullying, and how to stop it, work with the teachers too, says Bob. 'Even if some teachers resist, or deny that bullying actually happens or dismiss it as being of no real consequence', true stories can galvanise a whole staff into action.

'Bullying is cyclical' says Bob Filbee. He tells the story of the Year 9 boy at a local boys' high school. He was behind the school tuck shop at lunch time. The boy was about to eat the meat pie he had just bought when a larger burly Year 13 boy said: 'Give me your pie or I'll smash you skull in'. The boy handed over his pie. His comment later was, "Why bother telling a teacher - what could they do? Besides, I'll be a Year 13 one day too and then it's my turn".

According to Bob Filbee, stopping bullying at school - in fact stopping it everywhere - is about breaking the cycle. He suggests the four actions below as the first steps to take:

1. Acknowledge explicitly that bullying actually occurs in our schools;
2. Survey students to find just what's going on;
3. Develop a Kia Kaha action plan;
4. Work hard to develop, and sustain, positive and affirming relationships in and outside the classroom.

Beyond these steps, he thinks that schools might consider treating bullying prevention as a cross curricula inquiry topic or unit of work, and not regard it just as an optional extra to be fitted in, where possible. Bullying links to a number of learning areas – health, language, PE, the Arts, social studies and maybe others. It engages all the key competencies through inquiry and action learning. Maybe a direction to take is PEOs and teachers working together. They could plan units of work with students and together identify real achievement objectives and outcomes to stop bullying and make our schools (and communities) safer. □

"Everyone has to be committed and vigilant. That's because bullying is deeply entrenched and it won't just go away."

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Colman McCarthy

To battle the tradition of bullying

A view from the United States

Child abuse receives ample amounts of public attention -- from the courts, the police, social workers and the media. Less noticed, though, are children abusing children.

The National Association of School Psychologists reports that more than five million elementary, middle school and high school children (in the USA) are consistently bullied.

More than six million frequently do the bullying. In the school of hard knocks, enrolment starts early with shaming, taunting, mocking, beating and intimidating.

To be darker, slower, fatter, thinner, weaker, quieter, poorer or different in any way but the prevailing way is to be vulnerable to the physical or emotional might of bullies.

Fit in or be a misfit. How common is it? When I asked one of my recent college classes if anyone had ever been bullied, nearly all hands went up. Stories poured out.

One student told of being bullied on the school bus while in the sixth grade. Those in higher grades forced her and her classmates to sit only in the front seats. They were also ordered to open the windows during freezing weather, while the older students laughed at the shivering. When this student became a senior, she humiliated sixth graders (Year 7 students in New Zealand) the same way -- and enjoyed it. The tradition of bullying was carried on.

Fit in or be a misfit. How common is it? When I asked one of my recent college classes if anyone had ever been bullied, nearly all hands went up. Stories poured out.

In 25 years of teaching courses on non-violent conflict resolution -- to high school, college, law school students and prison inmates -- I've argued that violence is a learned behaviour.

Bullies aren't born, they are taught: often by peers, sometimes by the adults at home or coaches who berate their players during practices or games, and perhaps by living in a country like the United States that is perceived by much of the world as a global bully.

If violence is learned, can empathy, kindness and tolerance also be learned? Yes. If taught well and taught consistently, those skills are as teachable as any others.

A prime solution is exposing children in the early grades to the satisfaction of service to others. If parents, teachers and coaches encourage -- and demonstrate themselves -- reaching out to someone who needs help, a message is sent: We are a caring family, we are a caring school and we are a caring team. Be a part of it. Whether the service is as basic as clearing the table after dinner or as large as volunteering at Special Olympics, chances increase that a child will become less self-centred and more other-centred.

A second anti-bullying strategy is for schools to schedule regular class meetings and student assemblies where children are encouraged to speak freely

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about their fears or anxieties. Children's feelings of powerlessness increase when they feel emotionally isolated and think they have no voice. They become loners, withdrawn and easy marks for bullies.

Class meetings can empower children to step in when they see bullies at work, by telling the victimiser to lay off. Group disapproval can be potent. Bullies themselves are likely to know, deep down, that they are essentially unhappy. In *Reclaiming Our Children,* Dr. Peter Breggin, a Bethesda, Maryland, psychiatrist in the USA, writes that a bully also is injured by his behaviour:

He "learns methods that not only harm other people, but will also backfire on him in adult life, when abuse and violence ruin his family life, alienate other adults, result in job loss, and lead to criminal convictions".

It would help if schools themselves decreased academic bullying, as found in the current testing mania of No Child Left Untested.

I know of no meaningful evidence that ace-ing tests has anything to do with students' character development or whether their natural instincts for idealism or altruism are nurtured.

As imposed on public schools by testocrats in the federal Department of Education, excessive testing is an abuse of power over the weak -- the basic definition of bullying. No school, no family and no community is without flaws, but none of that justifies allowing the ethic of domination and competition to persist.

"It is easier to build a peaceful child than repair a violent adult."

When parents or teachers obsess about academic or athletic excellence, the pressured child may seek refuge in becoming a dominator. This blossoms into get-aheadism, with bullying a way to cull the competition.

If the pattern starts early, so should actions to confront it. I think it was Maria Montessori, and it usually is, who said:

"It is easier to build a peaceful child than repair a violent adult."

Colman McCarthy

Former Washington Post columnist, Colman McCarthy directs the Centre for Teaching Peace in Washington, D.C, which he founded in 1985. He is a journalist, teacher, lecturer, pacifist, and long-time peace activist. The Centre is a non-profit organisation that helps schools begin or expand academic programmes in Peace Studies. Colman gives on average 50 lectures a year at universities, primary, middle and high schools.

In 25 years, he has had more than 7,000 students in his classes. Since 1982, he has been teaching courses on non-violence and the literature of peace. In 2006, he taught at four universities and three high schools: Georgetown University Law Centre, American University, the University of Maryland, the Washington Centre for Internships, Wilson High School, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and School Without Walls.

Tip for students teachers and parents:

If you want to explore Colman McCarthy's views on peace, bullying, violence and war, a Google search on Colman McCarthy is a good place to start. □

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STOP BULLYING

Build positive relationships in your school

Between:

- students and students
- teachers and students
- parents and teachers

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- **Kia Kaha is made available to schools by Police**
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www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully

www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/contacts.html

New Zealand POLICE
Nga Pirihimana O Aotearoa

The New Zealand Police Youth Education Service

Special topic

Kia Kaha - Creating bully free schools

By Juliana Raskauskas PhD

Kia Kaha is an anti-bullying programme that the New Zealand Police developed. It utilises a whole-school approach to improve the school culture and prevent bullying. Teachers and Police Education Officers (PEOs) deliver the programme through classroom based activities with students.

Kia Kaha in te reo Maori means 'stay strong' - 'stand up for yourself'. The programme is founded on the belief that the whole school community should be encouraged to stand strong so that their children and students will not be victims of bullying. Likewise, the programme empowers children who observe bullying to stand up and do something to stop it. The Kia Kaha programme is linked directly to the social sciences and health/physical well-being essential learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum.

Kia Kaha is made up of two components: (1) education for parents, teachers, and school administrators about bullying; and (2) four curriculum packages for schools (Years 0 - 3, Years 4 - 6, Years 7 - 8, and Years 9 - 13). The programme's whole school approach means that students, teachers, Boards of Trustees, and parents work together to confront the issue of bullying. This has been found to be the most effective way to deal with bullying because it raises awareness and helps everyone come together to stop bullying (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, Smith, & Pepler, 2004).

Kia Kaha adopts the whole school approach through using PEOs. PEOs are police education officers trained in educational techniques, who work with schools. PEOs administer and support the implementation of Kia Kaha in schools. The implementation involves four key components:

1. PEOs introduce principals, Boards of Trustees, teachers, and students to the programme.

2. PEOs raise awareness by teacher training in how to run the programme, and by parent nights to introduce families to the content.

3. PEOs teach up to four lessons of the Kia Kaha curriculum, and the classroom teachers teach the rest.

4. PEOs provide support and maintenance of the programme once every two years, to introduce new cohorts of students and teachers to Kia Kaha.

The programme is founded on the belief that the whole school community should be encouraged to stand strong so that their children and students will not be victims of bullying.

In these ways the PEOs help to develop the whole school approach. Through meetings with principals and Boards of Trustees, PEOs help schools develop anti-bullying policies. They also coordinate training and information sent home to parents to raise awareness of bullying. The whole school approach requires commitment from everyone to communicate to students that bullying is unacceptable.

PEOs play a key role in delivering the Kia Kaha curriculum as outlined above. Kia Kaha is a free curriculum resource and comes in an attractive boxed set, including a teacher's guide with an overview of the programme, instructions for planning and implementing lessons, a video cassette, and information to send home to parents. Students are encouraged to take an active role in developing strategies and reducing bullying. The

Kia Kaha resources provide them with facts about bullying and opportunities to learn interpersonal skills and responses to bullying. Kia Kaha for Years 4 - 6 includes four modules with four activities each. Kia Kaha for Years 7 - 8 includes four modules with a total of ten activities. On average PEOs teach about half of the lessons and classroom teachers deliver the other half.

The whole school approach requires commitment from everyone to communicate to students that bullying is unacceptable.

The purpose of all activities in the programme is to prevent bullying. Bullying is a deliberate and hurtful behaviour repeated over time. It is difficult for those who are bullied to defend themselves effectively, and those who bully have, and exercise, power over their victims (Olweus, 1993). Bullying can take a number of forms, including:

- being teased or called names;
- being hit, pushed or pulled about;
- having your possessions taken;
- having rumours spread about you;
- being excluded or left out on purpose; and
- being sent mean text-messages or emails.

Although it is a growing concern in New Zealand schools, research shows that the prevalence of bullying is similar to other Western nations. Between 20 - 30% of children have ongoing problems with bullying and 75% of students experience being bullied at least once in twelve months (Adair, 1999; Adair, Dixon, Moore & Sutherland, 2000). In the study on which this article is based, 53% of students at Kia Kaha schools and 62% of students at non-Kia Kaha schools reported being bullied in 2006. There were no significant gender differences, but Year 5 students reported significantly more bullying than students in years 6 - 8.

The research involved 49 schools (of which 27 had done Kia Kaha in the past three years and 22 had not) participating in an evaluation of Kia Kaha in 2006. Schools were drawn from the lower North Island and upper South Island and were matched on size, decile ranking, location and type of school. The evaluation included a comparison of Kia Kaha and non-Kia Kaha schools.

Survey data were collected from 3,155 students and 67 teachers. Interviews or classroom discussions were conducted with students, teachers, and all nine PEOs who delivered the programme in the participating schools.

This article summarises the main findings from this research. While the statistical analysis of the survey data will not be discussed here, you can find this information in the full report available at: www.police.govt.nz/service/yes (Raskauskas, 2007).

Findings

Below are the five main findings from the evaluation. Information from the classroom discussions and teacher/PEO interviews is presented to help interpret the findings.

1. Schools with Kia Kaha reported less bullying and victimisation than schools without Kia Kaha.

Statistical analysis indicated that Kia Kaha schools had less bullying than non-Kia Kaha schools in 2006. Sixty-five per cent of Year 7 and 8 students who did Kia Kaha said that it had reduced bullying, while the remaining 35% felt bullying had stayed the same. In their interviews, teachers discussed whether they felt bullying had increased, decreased, or stayed the

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same. Several teachers were clear that the programme had reduced bullying:

'Kia Kaha was chosen by the school as a preventative measure to keep bullying from becoming a problem and it has done that.'

'Using Kia Kaha has reduced bullying, especially the minor name-calling and put downs. The awareness is what makes them think about bullying and then they try to stop it.'

Other teachers felt that while Kia Kaha had reduced bullying, new students could impede its effectiveness. For example:

'Kia Kaha reduced bullying among the children who did it; however new children contribute to increases in bullying. Bullying is not static; it seems to change with different students.'

'Last term 10-15 new kids came who did not get Kia Kaha and there was a lot of bullying.'

One teacher commented on Kia Kaha students' ability to stand up for themselves against bullying:

'I don't think it has reduced bullying, but it makes people more aware and teaches them to stand up for themselves when they see it.'

2. Kia Kaha had a positive effect on school climate, which was related to less bullying in the school.

When students in Years 7 and 8 at Kia Kaha and non-Kia Kaha schools were compared, it was found that students who had done the programme reported a more supportive school climate than those who had not.

In interviews, teachers and PEOs discussed the positive changes to school climate resulting from Kia Kaha. Below are examples of their comments.

'The whole tone of the school has improved with Kia Kaha.'

'Kia Kaha has made everyone more aware. It has made this a school that will not tolerate bullying. Even peer mediators say that after Kia Kaha they have less to do on the playground. The playground is a happier place. Doing the whole programme made the difference.'

'Kia Kaha is about teachers too and has changed some of the teachers' attitudes toward bullying at our school.'

Kia Kaha students reported significantly less support for bullies and more support for victims than students who had not done Kia Kaha.

PEOs say that schools select Kia Kaha to create a positive school climate:

'Schools use Kia Kaha to establish rules and be consistent on right and wrong behaviour.'

'Schools use Kia Kaha to establish their school expectations and behaviour plans.'

3. The programme was associated with better attitudes toward victims, partly through creating a safe environment for reporting of bullying.

Students at Kia Kaha schools were more likely to report bullying they had witnessed than those at non-Kia Kaha schools. Willingness to report may be a function of attitudes toward victims and bullying. Kia Kaha and non-Kia Kaha students were compared on Rigby's Attitude Toward Victim Scale - higher scores indicate more supportive attitudes of bullying behaviour while lower scores show a more supportive attitude to victims. Kia Kaha students reported significantly less support for bullies and more support for victims than students who had not done Kia Kaha.

In Years 5 and 6 students were asked in classroom discussions what Kia Kaha was about and what they had learned from it. The most common answers showed changes to attitudes:

'Be strong, stop bullying.'

'Learn to care about people - to look after victims.'

'Try to stop bullying you see at school.'

'Tell someone if you are being bullied.'

Years 7 and 8 students also reported significant knowledge gains on what bullying is, what it looks like, and what can be done about it.

4. Implementing the programme according to the guidelines and using the whole school approach was related to less bullying in Kia Kaha schools.

Teachers and PEOs reported on how well the participating schools implemented the Kia Kaha programme. Teachers were asked how closely they followed the manual. Eighty-four per cent of teachers said they followed the manual closely, and 16% 'somewhat closely'. Using teacher reports it was found that the more closely teachers followed the manual and the more frequently they taught Kia Kaha lessons (once a week or more), then less bullying occurred at the school.

Several teachers credited the materials' ease of use as the reason why they followed them so closely. One teacher who had used the programme quite a bit over the years had this to say:

'The teacher's guide is easy to follow and I like it for that reason. I have

done Kia Kaha in several schools and it has been effective in all of those schools. The school where I am now doesn't want bullying - Kia Kaha helps kids recognise what bullying is and makes them look at their behaviour.'

PEOs reported in their interviews that the teacher training they offer makes the Kia Kaha programme easier for teachers to pick up and use. They also felt that teacher training contributed to teacher buy-in to the values and principles of the programme.

The effectiveness of the whole-school approach was examined in interviews with teachers and PEOs. Teachers were asked about the whole-school commitment to the Kia Kaha programme. Most teachers felt that schools were committed to a whole-school approach:

'Definitely there is a whole-school commitment when it is offered every two years.'

'All teachers across all classes adopt the Kia Kaha philosophy.'

'Most staff deliver the programme uniformly, so you know that all

PEOs played a vital role in delivering the programme. They provided support and training for teachers, and students felt safe reporting bullying to them.

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students are getting pretty much the same thing.'

'The whole school did Kia Kaha at the same time for consistancy.'

Other teachers commented that the whole-school approach is an important and valuable component of the Kia Kaha programme:

'Whole-school approach is the best way. Staff need to be consistent with what they say and do about bullying.'

'We planned together - the staff and the PEO. We used a whole-school approach with the lessons standardised between classrooms so it is more effective.'

'In a school I was at before we couldn't have all classes doing the programme at the same time because of scheduling so different classes did it at different times. The scatter gun approach is not effective. It should be whole-school at the same time.'

5. PEOs played a vital role in delivering the programme. They provided support and training for teachers, and students felt safe reporting bullying to them.

Teachers described the role of the PEO in their interviews. They saw the PEO's role as more than just delivering the programme:

'PEO does many programmes in the school including road patrol, road safety, DARE, and Keeping Ourselves Safe. Knows well how to relate with the students and talk at their level.'

'PEO gave parent training night and gave a presentation to the teachers. Did a waka activity for the whole school, so parents could come and see it.'

In their interviews teachers had a lot to say about their relationship with their PEO:

'I have a good relationship with our PEO. Our PEO is wonderful. She has good rapport with students.'

'Staff and students know PEO well. The police uniform is important. It impresses the students that a police officer cares and comes to their school.'

'PEO is very approachable.'

'PEO is a good resource and is available for more than just Kia Kaha. Provides support for schools in dealing with bullying.'

In their interviews, PEOs were asked if students had disclosed personal experiences of bullying to them. All of the PEOs had students who had disclosed. In fact one PEO said;

'Students do disclose. They talk about the bullying at school and where you can't play. Sometimes kids are too scared to talk about it, but I'm able to deal with that.'

When asked why students disclose to them, all of the PEOs said it is because the students know them and trust them. 'Kids often come up and talk about their own personal experiences and ask for advice', one PEO explains. When students disclosed, it usually came up in the class discussions in Kia Kaha, or was told in confidence.

Below is a poem written by a group of students about Kia Kaha. This poem was given to a PEO by the school in recognition of her contribution to the school climate. It summarises the benefits of Kia Kaha to schools.

Kia Kaha Poem

Kia Kaha is what we learn
We like to play and take our turn
We are special because we care
We also like to play fair.

We are a class who are polite
Other classes think we are such a delight
Being different is okay
We like to have our say.

Our class is special and unique
We like to play hide and seek
Co-operating is our game
We do not like to lay the blame.

Hand in hand go rights and responsibilities
We are all different in our abilities
Together we are brave and strong
We know how to get along.

Our class likes to share
We don't like to shed a tear
We don't like to make people cry
Even when they're way up high.

Kia Kaha is fun, fun, fun
We like to play with everyone
No bullying at our school
Because we are cool, cool, cool!

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the evaluation it appears that Kia Kaha is meeting its objective of reducing bullying through a supportive whole-school approach. The keys to making the Kia Kaha programme most effective as a prevention programme in schools seem to be:

- Use the whole-school approach in which students, teachers, parents and administrators work together to create a safe school environment.
- Follow the instruction materials closely and use the activities provided.
- Give lessons once a week or more and reinforce concepts and strategies throughout the year.
- Work with the school's PEO to deliver the programme and reinforce the concepts.□

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To find out more about Kia Kaha or to contact the PEO in your area you should visit the No Bully website: www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully . On this website you can also download the document Stop Bullying! Guidelines for Schools prepared by Mark Cleary, Principal of William Colenso College (a Year 7 -13 High School, which has a Year 7-10 middle school), Napier, and Gill Palmer, Curriculum Officer, Police Youth Education Service. These guidelines give good ideas about dealing with bullying and creating a safe school environment.

"Bullying in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in our schools or communities... Schools can expect to get more help and to see a greater focus on the role played by the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office in dealing with the issue."

NZ: 2006, Minister of Education, Steve Maharey *(http://www.beehive.govt.nz)*

Helping students to deal with bullying behaviour - Exemplar

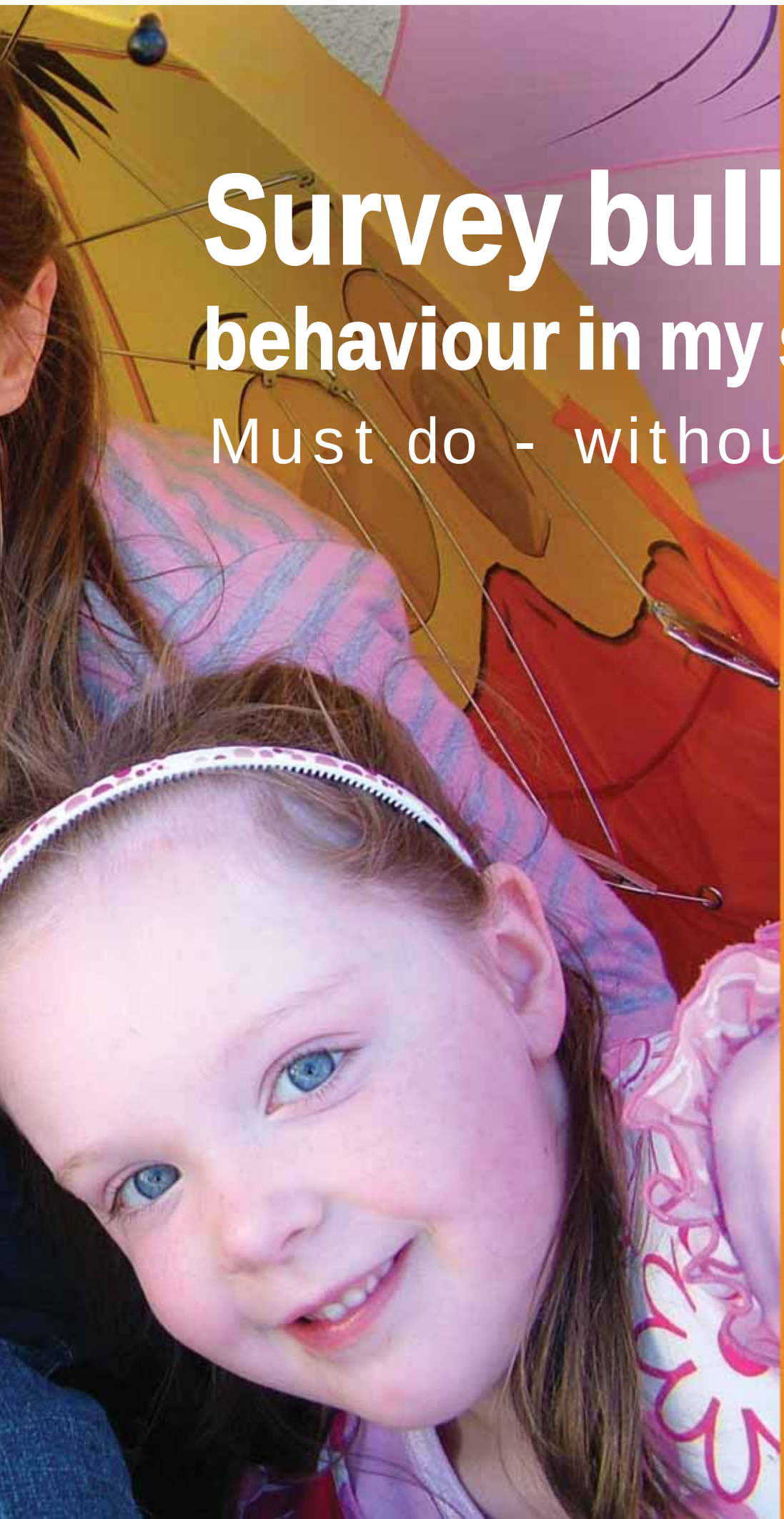
The teacher initiates and manages class discussions using the questions below. One way to get started is to say:

Today we're going to discuss a topic that probably is very important to each of you. The topic is bullying.

- What is bullying? Why do some kids bully others?
- Have you ever been bullied? How did it feel? What did you do?
- Are kids who bully others popular? Why or why not?
- How do you feel when you see kids being bullied?
- Would you like to help the victims of bullies?
- Do you know what the bullying myths are?

Caution: When asking questions it pays to keep in mind the developmental level of the students and their individual personalities, as some students prefer private to public attention.

Developed from Boynton and Boynton, 2005



Survey bullying behaviour in my school

Must do - without delay

Pat Nolan

Building a common school-wide anti-bullying philosophy - Exemplar

School staff and teachers too often and all too easily turn a blind eye to bullying, and bullying behaviour persists.

Whole staff discussion of the following four statements helps to gauge the extent of agreement among staff and see where work is needed to develop a common anti-bullying philosophy:

- Bullying is not a problem in my classroom or school.
- Bullying is normal, and the kids can handle it.
- I was bullied at school and survived and these kids will too.
- Why should I be concerned about bullying? My job is to teach.

Developed from
Boynton and Boynton, 2005

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'Bullies' is the title of the final chapter in a recent book by Mark and Christine Boynton (2005), *Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems.*

The book is a fascinating read and the chapter on bullies is right on the money. In six pages, it says more than most whole books on the topic!

The 'Bullies' chapter says that surveying information directly from students is vitally important, for two reasons: it's important to understand students' personal experience of bullying, and it's important to ascertain the true nature and full extent of bullying behaviour at school.

The 'Bullies' chapter contains a straightforward, ten-item Student Bullying Survey. Although developed for use in North American middle and junior high schools, the survey is readily applicable and highly relevant here in New Zealand.

Purpose

This short article briefly discusses the Student Bullying Survey. It describes how and why it makes good educational sense to use the survey in our classrooms and schools. A survey exemplar (based on data from 27 Year 8 intermediate school students) illustrates how to apply the Student Bullying Survey in practice.

Preparing the ground

Mark and Christine Boynton (2005), designers of the survey (and authors of *Preventing and Solving Discipline Problems*), say that teachers usually ask students to complete it only after prior class discussions that set the scene.

The discussions develop students' understanding of what counts as bullying and bullying behaviour, and help them to dispel common myths about bullying.

The Helping Students and Dispelling Bullying Myths exemplars, inserted in the article, suggest ways to manage the discussions. They're based on ideas from the Boynton's book.

Survey content and process

Content

The survey questions cover:

1 Types and frequency of bullying behaviour;
2 When and where the bullying is happening;
3 Who is doing the bullying;
4 Who saw the bullying behaviour and whether the students sought teacher help.

(The Student Bullying Survey can be downloaded from www.msr.org.nz)

Completing the survey

The survey works best if students complete it anonymously. Anonymity encourages students to indicate the true nature and full extent of the bullying behaviour they experience, and to express their views honestly.

As students come to understand more and more that talking about bullying is helpful, both for themselves and others (especially the bullies), they'll begin to see that expressing their views by completing the bullying survey serves a useful and constructive purpose. Actions taken on the basis of the survey's results may in time help to curb, possibly eliminate, bullying behaviour.

As Bob Filbee says elsewhere (see pages 32-33), once teachers and students openly begin discussing and dealing with bullying, then treating bullying prevention as a cross-curricula inquiry topic, or unit of work, becomes a realistic possibility. The inquiries and units, in their turn, can become a powerful, additional means to address and resolve bullying issues and problems in schools.

Analysis and reporting

The table on the following page illustrates how data collection and analysis culminates in a one-page summary of results, organised by groups of questions, which correspond with the four categories of the survey.

Data analysis involves tallying students' responses to each survey question. The results for the questions are expressed as totals, subtotals and percentages and entered into a prepared results sheet (see Table One) or into a computer spreadsheet.

Results

The format means that the results can be interpreted easily. In effect, they speak for themselves.

A useful class activity is to invite and assist the students to:

- Discuss what the results indicate for each question;
- Explain what they mean; and
- Suggest appropriate actions.

By way of illustration, the results reported here for the Year 8 class indicate the following:

- The majority of students in the class are experiencing bullying;
- The bullying is persistent, serious and real for a very sizeable number;
- Girls and boys report experiencing different kinds of bullying behaviour;
- All the students observed others being bullied; and
- All said they wanted their teachers to help them to stop the bullying behaviour, but many did not ask for help.

Interpretation

The students' message is simple and very clear. Something must be done to stop the bullying they experience: doing nothing is not an option. The message is very similar to that of the early adolescent students in Louise Stoll's ground- breaking British research (Stoll, Fink and Earl, 2003, p51):

Results - Student Bullying Survey: The *"What if" Year 8 classroom somewhere in New Zealand*

			All students		Females		Males		Total Students 27 / Total Females 11 / Total Males 16
	Survey item	Responses	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	Physically bullied during the last month	a. Not at all	5	19%	2	18%	3	19%	Numbers of students bullied and type of bullying by whole class
		b. Once	**14**	**52%**	**6**	**67%**	**8**	**62%**	
		c. A few times	**5**	**19%**	**2**	**22%**	**3**	**23%**	
		d Many times	**3**	**11%**	**1**	**11%**	**2**	**15%**	
		Total of students bullied	**22**	**81%**	**9**	**82%**	**13**	**81%**	
2	Bullied in other ways during the last month	a. Not at all	12	44%	2	18%	10	63%	
		b. Once	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	
		c. A few times	**10**	**37%**	**4**	**36%**	**6**	**38%**	
		d Many times	**5**	**19%**	**5**	**45%**	**0**	**0%**	
		Total of students bullied	**15**	**56%**	**9**	**82%**	**6**	**38%**	
3	Handling bullying on my own	a. Not bullied	5		2		3		Handling bullying as a % of students bullied
		b. Handled it on my own	**16**	**73%**	**6**	**67%**	**10**	**77%**	
		c. Not able to handle on my own	**6**	**27%**	**3**	**33%**	**3**	**23%**	
4	Getting adult help	a. Not bullied	5		2		3		
		b. Bullied and did seek adult help	**6**	**27%**	**5**	**56%**	**1**	**8%**	
		c. Bullied and didn't seek adult help	**16**	**73%**	**4**	**44%**	**12**	**92%**	
5	Bullied by whom	a. Not bullied	5		2		3		Who bullies as a % of students bullied
		b. Mostly boys	**12**	**55%**	**2**	**22%**	**10**	**77%**	
		c. Mostly girls	**10**	**45%**	**7**	**78%**	**3**	**23%**	
6	Age of bullying students	a. Not bullied	5		2		3		
		b. Younger students	**4**	**15%**	**1**	**4%**	**3**	**11%**	
		c. Older students	**13**	**48%**	**5**	**19%**	**8**	**30%**	
		d. Same age students	**17**	**63%**	**7**	**26%**	**10**	**37%**	
7	Where bullying occurred	a. Not bullied	5	19%	2	7%	3	11%	Where bullied as a % of students bullied
		b. My classroom	**8**	**30%**	**3**	**11%**	**5**	**19%**	
		c. The hallways	**3**	**11%**	**1**	**4%**	**2**	**7%**	
		d. The playground	**12**	**44%**	**5**	**19%**	**7**	**26%**	
		e. Coming to/Leaving School	**10**	**37%**	**4**	**15%**	**6**	**22%**	
		f. Another place	**9**	**33%**	**5**	**19%**	**4**	**15%**	
8	When the bullying occurred	a. Not bullied	5	19%	2	7%	3	11%	When bullied as a % of students bullied
		b. Before school	**8**	**30%**	**3**	**11%**	**5**	**19%**	
		c. During school	**17**	**63%**	**8**	**30%**	**9**	**33%**	
		d. After school	**7**	**26%**	**4**	**15%**	**3**	**11%**	
9	Seeing others being bullied	a. Yes	**27**	**100%**	**11**	**100%**	**16**	**100%**	Seeing of bullying by whole class
		b. No	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
10	Teachers should do something	a. Yes	**27**	**100%**	**11**	**100%**	**16**	**100%**	Request for teacher assistance by whole class
		b. No	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	

Students' first priority is to have safe places to learn where no children are picked on or bullied, where no one has weapons and where no one gets hurt in the playground.

Louise adds, "If children, and indeed adults, do not feel safe (then high quality or even any) learning is highly unlikely".

Suggestion

Discuss the survey results reported here with your students, prior to completing the survey. Do this in conjunction with the Helping Students and Dispelling Bullying Myths exemplars.

Summary

Mark and Christine Boynton (2005) designed the Student Bullying Survey. They say that it's vitally important to

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survey our students. The data and information obtained will help us to understand the extent and nature of school bullying, and deal with it more effectively.

Designed for use in North American middle and junior high schools, the Student Bullying Survey (or an adaptation of it) is a potentially valuable research and monitoring tool for:

- New Zealand teachers who work with and teach young people across Years 7 to 10 (that's the grade span it was designed for in USA schools);
- Schools wishing to monitor whether bulling behaviour is decreasing or increasing in response to their school-wide bullying prevention initiatives.

If a school takes the step of administering the Student Bullying Survey across classes, then whole-school meetings with all teachers and other staff members are vital (Olweus, 1993; Beane, 1999; Boynton and Boynton, 2005). These will help to develop:

1 A common philosophy and knowledge base for concerted action; and
2 A whole-school 'Stop Bullying' action plan.

A third exemplar below illustrates how teachers and schools might prepare to take these vital steps, perhaps by participating in a Kia Kaha anti-bullying programme, which fits well with the Boynton's common philosophy approach. □

Dispelling popular myths about bullying - Exemplar

Boynton and Boynton (2005), along with other notable researchers such as Beane (1999), say that it's important to dispel the following myths, which many students and even adults and teachers believe to be true.

It's important to teach students the real truth about each myth.

Myth 1: Bullying is only hitting

Reality: Bullying can be much more that hitting. It can be intimidation, harassment, social ostracism and many other attitudes and behaviours.

Myth 2: Only babies complain about bullying

Reality: Bullying behaviour is hurtful no matter what a person's age. Every person has the right not to be bullied and not to see others bullied. It's cruel and unjustified and students need to speak up against bullying.

Myth 3: Fighting is the best way to stop bullying

Reality: Using violence to stop bullying only propagates violence. When a student turns to violence to put right a wrong, it's not always the victim who's the last person left standing. It's important to find other ways.

Myth 4: Bullying teaches kids to be tough

Reality: Bullying does not have a silver lining. It teaches students to fear school, to be nervous and to be insecure.

Myth 5: Telling on a bully is ratting

Reality: Telling on a bully is reporting, not ratting. Reporting is telling someone what happened so as to help the person being bullied or to help the person doing the bullying to stop it. Ratting is telling on someone to get them into trouble.

For further practical ideas go to: www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully/kia_kaha/

Developed from Boynton and Boynton, 2005

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For New Zealand ASCD - Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development members (individuals and schools) full text access is available online at, or may be purchased at: www.ascd.org.

"Research shows, the most effective method of dealing with bullying entails a school-wide approach where administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members all take action together. Safe & Caring Schools programmes help that happen"

-Dr. Katia Tetersen, Ph.D. *http://www.safeandcaringschools.com/bully.asp*

MSR Youth

CLASSROOM PHOTO COMPETITION

coming soon

Special topic

The Pacer Foundation

Three-Step Plan to Stopping Bullying

For parents (and teachers)

Discovering that your child or pupil is being bullied can be devastating. You may feel bewildered, scared, sad, guilty, angry, or helpless. You may even feel like a target yourself.

It's important to recognise and acknowledge all these emotions. It's equally important to remember that feelings alone will not change the situation. The most effective thing that you can do is focus on the issue and develop a plan.

Here are tools, strategies, and tips that can help you develop successful short-term and longer-term plans for protecting your child from bullying.

1 First, make sure that the issue **is** bullying and not routine childhood conflict. It's bullying if the action is hurtful, intentional, and repetitive, and when a power imbalance exists between the children.

Sometimes, children are afraid or embarrassed to talk about bullying. If you suspect your child may be a target of bullying, you may want to try the approaches below to find out for sure

Ask and listen:

- Did someone hurt you on purpose?
- Is the other person bigger than you or scary to you?
- Did the other child know you were being hurt?

Watch for signs such as:

- Suddenly wanting to be driven to school instead of taking the bus or walking;
- Unexplained stomach aches or headaches; and
- Changes in sleep routines or temperament.

2 Second, if your child is being bullied, you can take action at home to help your child learn how to respond more effectively.

Teach direct and indirect techniques for dealing with bullies. You may want to encourage your child to:

- Avoid situations where bullying occurs;
- Hang out with classmates, friends, peers, or siblings;
- Tell the child who is bullying to stop; and
- Do something the bully does not expect or want: yell, blow a whistle, laugh.

Encourage group involvement. Children who interact with peers are less likely to be bullied. You may want to help your child:

- Join an after-school programme or activity; or
- Develop a hobby that allows interaction with others.

3 Third, if your child is being bullied at school, you can work with teachers and school administrators to create a safe environment.

Talk with teachers and administrators.

- Notify them of the situation in writing, as schools are obligated to respond to bullying; and
- Discuss ways the school can help, such as by developing a bullying awareness and prevention programme.

Be part of your child's school.

- Join the PTA or BoT and raise awareness of bullying as an issue;
- Offer to speak to the school BoT and be the "bullying expert"; and
- If your child has disabilities, you can build bullying prevention goals into your child's Individualised Education Programme (IEP).

NZAIMS

President's Message

Bill Noble

In July, on the eve of departing for a National Middle School Association (NMSA) conference in the USA, I was surprised (and alarmed) by a PPTA press release announcing that "Teachers question middle school role".

The press release (and the PPTA Website that the press release mentioned) seemed to me to serve only one or two purposes, maybe both: to scare away parents from considering middle schooling as a viable schooling option (e.g. as with the Government's middle schooling plans for Howick and Flat Bush); or, as one of my colleagues commented, "It's a thinly disguised ploy to attract and retain PPTA members".

Either way, the parents of young adolescents need and deserve far better than that. They deserve and need open and balanced debate and they need high quality research information. The PPTA Website provides neither!

In contrast, the NMSA Conference was a heartening experience. The many colleagues I met readily pointed out (I was impressed by their wide ranging research based knowledge) that more than a century of rigorous research supports authentic middle schooling practice and provisions in the USA.

The research has been carried out with tens of thousands of students and with thousands of teachers drawn from a vast number of middle schools: the USA has over 12,000 middle schools in 2007.

Of course, middle schooling, there, has its detractors (what form of schooling does not?), but it has far greater positive parent, teacher and community support.

Everyone I met knows, and they include parents as well as professionals, that the early adolescence stage is real and it's special.

It seems that everyone I met knows, and they include parents as well as professionals, that the early adolescence stage is real and it's special.

They have known this ever since G. Stanley Hall American psychologist and father of the child study movement did his foundational research on this topic, over a century ago. Since then, such notables as John Dewey, John Lounsbury, Donald Eichhorn, Joan Lipsitz, William Alexander, Gordon Vars, James Beane and innumerable others have accumulated and tested the evidence.

Early adolescence is distinctive and real, as a stage. Generations of researchers have shown, in one way and another, that early adolescents warrant "developmentally appropriate" middle schooling provisions and practice, which are equally distinctive. They're different from primary and senior secondary methods today, in the USA and here.

I look forward to the report of recently commissioned Ministry of Education research on middle schooling. I expect that it will provide a wide range of research findings that document and explain key ideas, key distinctions and best practice, and inform (not inflame) the debate and decisions about future schooling provisions and practice.

That's what parents, the teaching profession and the wider community need, and it's what all our young people deserve.

MSR Youth

At a mid-year meeting, the Executive approved the renaming of our flagship magazine as *MSR Youth*. Our September Summit endorsed the decision. With this new name, our NZAIMS demonstrates its broad and inclusive view of the development, education and welfare of young people - during and beyond early adolescence. The new name reflects our commitment to engage the interest of and support the wide range of teachers, other professionals, and government and community agencies that work with and support youth. □

NZAIMS

Executive Viewpoint

The Technology Curriculum, as proposed, could stop powerful, high quality technology learning and teaching dead in its tracks!

Technology education's vital to the education of young people during early adolescence.

That's because it's a restive, itinerant non-discipline, says British technology educator Richard Kimbell. Technology taught well, he says, encourages adaptability and fresh ideas and students learn and use soft skills such as communication, team work and problem solving.

We say: technology learning at its best empowers young people. They take projects from inception to delivery. They creatively intervene to improve the made world. They imaginatively manage their resources. They competently apply and integrate knowledge from across multiple learning areas. They work confidently, alone or in teams, and they use portfolio methods of presentation and assessment.

Technological learning at its best, in our schools, is imaginative, creative, inventive. It's problem solving, fun, useful, practical learning. Young people enjoy it because technology learning engages and absorbs them cognitively and emotionally: they design and invent and they create products and outcomes which they, and others, value, appreciate and use.

Technological learning at its best, in our schools, is imaginative, creative, inventive. It's problem solving, fun, useful, practical learning.

In high quality technology programmes like this for early adolescents, in schools all around New Zealand, the learning is relevant, authentic and real.

It involves students exploring, making mistakes as they design and invent products, processes and solutions. They learn from their mistakes. They meet deadlines and they see things through to completion.

The Draft 2006 New Zealand Curriculum says that all these technology aspects and outcomes are the directions for learning and teaching that all schools should keep taking.

The Draft Technology Curriculum, if left in its present form, could stop these directions dead in their tracks, generally and particularly during the middle years.

In our view, about two thirds of its contents are unfamiliar and off putting for most middle years technology teachers. For many it's unintelligible to read and difficult to follow as a guide for technology teaching!

The progression indicators are likely to stifle, not facilitate, powerful

The dilemma is this: do we teach them separately or teach them in an integrated fashion, say, in integrative technology units of work.

technology learning. They look a lot like the old fashioned learning and planning by objectives of the past, which limit and constrain, not help and support.

A major rethink is required to discourage "one-off technology experiences" that the Curriculum Stock-take said we should avoid in the future. That's because such experiences inhibit students' understanding of technology's role in the world.

A reassessment of the role of prescribed technological areas and contexts vs technology concepts, which focus on more than just technology practice, is needed. It's needed so that teachers and schools may be reassured that the new technology curriculum truly retains the best of the present while shaping desirable directions and practice for the future and, in the process, keeps empowering young people to learn. At present, it very likely may not.

Further, clarification is needed of the role of the technology strands - two of them are theory and only one practical - and their relationship to each other.

The dilemma is this: do we teach them separately or teach them in an integrated fashion, say, in integrative technology units of work? The Technology Draft's message to teachers is mixed.

Our preference is integration. That's to ensure that technology practice remains the focal point of technology programmes in schools. In this way technology teachers with vocational and/or home economics backgrounds may see more clearly how technological practice and theory combine. Here, ongoing teacher professional development along with explicit guidance and exemplars, which both affirm and extend current technology teaching, may go a long way to retain highly skilled and experienced, but scarce, technology teachers in the profession.

If the *Draft Technology Curriculum* were written using ordinary common language and divested of language that's complicated and heavy in its use of educational jargon, then this would go a long way towards developing the Draft into a document that students, as well as teachers, might read and use. Such development would fit much more comfortably with the goal of personalising learning for early adolescents (See Steve Maharey on personalising learning in this Issue). Then, the Technology Curriculum Statement might better assist teachers to empower young people to learn in this technology area of learning that's vital to their future and ours. □

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Personalising Learning

Adapting to Change

Steve Maharey - Minister of Education, New Zealand Government

The world we live in is changing rapidly. Increasingly, the emphasis is on the creation and application of knowledge as the foundation for success throughout life. New Zealand is responding to the changes in many ways, but most significantly we're responding through the transformation of our education system.

We all are living in a time of transition from one kind of society to another. So, if we are to meet the contemporary needs of early adolescents, and other students, we simply cannot continue using last century's model.

This means education has to change, and it is changing. But like all major institutions, change does not come easy in education. As educators, we are adapting and we are doing things differently to meet the needs of young New Zealanders in the 21st century.

Middle school students also are going through a transition, from childhood to adolescence. This means that any changes to schooling must adapt to their needs as well, and to the needs of others.

The shift is from the old mass society that dominated the 20th century to the diverse, differentiated, fragmented society of the 21st century. We now live in a time of globalisation, new information technology, flexible specialisation, changing social roles and new senses of identity.

If we are to meet the contemporary needs of early adolescents, and other students, we simply cannot continue using last century's model.

As adults, most of us predate the world that is taking shape now. We live in this world, but our understanding of society was moulded at a time when many of the forces so important today either were unrecognised or did not exist.

For example, when I came to Parliament 17 years ago, no one used mobile phones, or personal computers. Now, these two pieces of technology keep me in touch anytime and anywhere.

Preparing for the future

So how do we prepare young people for the changes they'll face in a future world very different to the way things were when we grew up?

It is not easy. In education, we tend to emphasise the need for:

- High standards
- High achievement
- Life long learning

In the face of overwhelming change, no nation should want for less from its education system.

If the modern world of today is going to be more demanding of our young people, then we must urge them to: (i) achieve higher and higher standards; (ii) acquire more and more qualifications;

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and (iii) develop a disposition for learning throughout life.

In the traditional education system, familiar to most of us from our own time at school, knowledge was a series of items, formulated within traditional disciplines, held inside schoolbooks and teachers' heads, and transmitted via those schoolbooks, and teachers, into students' brains.

The students whose brains were receptive to these items did well at school. Those whose brains were less receptive did less well - because the teaching style didn't suit them, because they had different talents, because their brains were dancing in six different directions at once.

Today, if we are to serve young people well, we need all of the fine educational aims to be attached to a new education system - a learning system.

Other learning options for these students simply didn't exist. Our schools branded them as less able, or failures. And they believed it. In our school system we had just one form of knowledge, one way of transmitting it, one way of testing it.

And this resulted in an education, actually a schooling, system which international expert on innovation and creativity, Charles Leadbeater, says prescribed that we:

> *"... choose what to study from a pre-defined and delineated set of options; sit with 20-30 other learners; learn from your teacher, who has to deliver a set amount of content often with a particular style; sit some exams; have your learning assessed by an examiner; get your results; move onto the next stage; do it all again."*

Today, if we are to serve young people well, we need all of the fine educational aims to be attached to a new education system - a learning system.

And so, we are working to transform education.

But that's not entirely new in this country. New Zealanders will recall the famous saying of Clarence Beeby and Peter Fraser in 1939:

> *"The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers. So far is this from being a mere pious platitude that the full acceptance of the principle will involve the reorientation of the education system."*

Reflecting on this statement in 1986, Beeby said his vision for New Zealand of the future was:

"A school system from which all students will emerge with a sense of achievement, with a feeling of their own worth and with respect for others".

Beeby and Fraser never saw a New Zealand education system that fulfilled their aims. They lived in an age when education was very much about sorting young people into successes and failures. In no way was everyone going to leave that system with a sense of achievement, a feeling of their own worth or respect for others.

But we live in an age now, in this new millennium, when it's in the interests of society and all of us to find out what all young learners know and how well they know it, and in the future use this knowledge to help design new kinds of curricula, learning and teaching.

So what are we doing, and what should we be doing?

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Personalising learning

The phrase "Personalising learning" best captures what's happening in the transformation of our education system.

Personalising learning means students have to be informed and active participants in their own learning. They can and should contribute to and help make decisions about what learning works best for them and understand how they are progressing.

This means, in particular, that education may better suit the needs of early adolescents, as they go through the transition from childhood to adolescence.

To work in this way, our education system needs to be responsive and flexible enough to ensure that every young person meets high standards, realises their potential and is set up for life-long learning.

Tomorrow's Schools pushed the leadership of learning out to schools and into the hands of educational professionals, local communities and learners themselves. The changes were structural and they got educators and the community more involved in education.

The shifts in education that Tomorrow's Schools brought about and that support personalised learning included:

- **Effective teaching**

In the past teaching would not have involved the learner directly helping teachers construct what will be learned and help decide how learning will take place. Now it does, especially in the primary and middle years.

This year, the Government will implement plans to reduce teacher-pupil ratios in the early years of schooling, as part of our goal to achieve a 1:15 teacher-pupil staffing ratio for Year 1 classes. This will provide over 1,300 extra full-time teachers in the schooling sector.

Another part of our effective teaching package is to encourage more young people to take up apprenticeships. The programme 'Young Apprenticeships' gives senior secondary school students the chance to spend time in both on-the-job and in-school training that will contribute towards a future apprenticeship.

Personalising learning means students have to be informed and active participants in their own learning. They can and should contribute to and help make decisions about what learning works best for them and understand how they are progressing.

- **Assessment for learning**

In the past the assessment of learning approach meant that little was done with the work that students produced to assist their learning. Now with an assessment for learning approach, students' work is being fed back to them and what's taught is then tailored to meeting their needs.

- **Leadership**

We now recognise principals as leaders and not just school administrators. Professional leadership programmes include 'Aspiring Principals'. This is a pilot scheme, which builds stronger career paths for aspiring and beginning principals. It's helping to keep the best and brightest leaders in our schools.

An induction programme for new principals also has been running for the past five years through Auckland University. 700 professional leaders have been involved in this leadership programme, out of a total of 2,700 principals. School environments that foster personalised learning feature centrally in the programme. .

- **Curriculum**

The education system of the past used to have a prescriptive curriculum. Now we are aiming for a curriculum that sets out key competencies, values and knowledge processes that students need to develop, with teachers guiding the learning process and using professional judgement.

The New Zealand Curriculum currently is being revised so that schools and teachers may operate this way: they'll tailor the curriculum to meet the learning and development needs of the students.

At the same time, the entire approach to Maori education is under review, and this is reflected in the redevelopment of the Maori medium curriculum.

For the first time in the history of New Zealand, a specific school curriculum is being developed to emphasise Maori teaching and learning, and reflect Maori philosophy, language and vocabulary.

- **Information technology**

The Labour-led government has invested heavily in providing schools with the Information and Communications Technology to help educate our young people. The new technologies allow schools and teachers to shift the way that learners may access knowledge and they help to personalise the relationship between the learner and teacher.

- **Involvement of parents and community**

We now understand far better that learning takes place everywhere. And the more that we involve the parents and the community in the learning process the better. Team-Up is an example of the Ministry of Education getting parents more involved in the learning of their children, with great results.

- **Reorganisation of schools**

ICT is allowing the development of schools without walls. ICT use permits students to do more information sharing and teachers and schools to improve education. School days also are being changed to maximise learning.

These and other shifts are major steps forward towards personalising learning.

But we still have a lot more to do if personalising learning is to be more than a catchall label that describes the large number of initiatives that our school system is implementing.

New directions

British politician and former junior Minister of Education David Miliband's definition captures the direction that personalising learning is taking us:

> *"High expectations, of every child, given practical form by quality teaching based on a sound knowledge of each child's needs. It is not individualised learning where pupils sit alone. Nor is it pupils left to their own devices - which too often reinforces low aspirations. It means shaping teaching around the way different youngsters learn; it means taking the care to nurture the unique talents of every pupil."*

Personalising learning turns the traditional view of knowledge on its head.

Knowledge is not "stuff" that learners acquire from the teacher. Instead, knowledge is a process that learners get directly involved in. They help create knowledge and they manipulate and use it so as to learn. While learning, students engage in a dynamic, two-way process - no longer are they just passive recipients of knowledge.

For the first time in the history of New Zealand, a specific school curriculum is being developed to emphasise Maori teaching and learning, and reflect Maori philosophy, language and vocabulary.

Poet, W.B. Yeats' view captures the challenge of personalising learning:

> "Education is not the filling of a pail, but a lighting of a fire."

Many of our schools have responded to this challenge. They are changing the way they approach learning by

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encouraging and enabling students to play an active part in the learning process.

Over the past year, I have talked about personalising learning as a way of bringing together and focussing the wide range of world-class initiatives that currently operate in our education system. And I have found people agreeing with me. Sometimes they disagree. What's undeniable is that the change to personalising learning is not, and will not be, uncontested.

In her book, *Catching the Knowledge Wave*, Jane Gilbert at NZCER captures the depth and extent of the debate about 'knowledge'. She says that personalising learning means being learner centred. Instead of seeing knowledge as something (e.g. a set of facts) that we have to master, it's actually more productive and useful to see knowledge as a process - it's what we do rather than something we have or possess, like a commodity.

Jane's argument is that we need to build everyone's ability to work with others to produce new knowledge and use and apply it to solve real world problems.

Viewed this way, knowledge changes from being a noun to a verb. This means that knowledge today is knowing how to do things. It's learning things and using knowledge to create new knowledge. It's not just stuff to memorise or stuff to know.

This (process) view of knowledge gives young people, such as early adolescents, the opportunity to engage with the world in meaningful ways. It heightens their sense of responsibility and encourages their growing sense of autonomy as they move from childhood to young adulthood.

We need to think differently and use these resources differently. That is our challenge in New Zealand, from early childhood education to the middle years, to the NCEA system in secondary schools.

At the education system level, the transformation is creating a school system that better meets the educational and development needs of learners, rather than learners having to fit the system.

The new view must - and needs - to prevail if our young people are to have the kind of personalised learning they will need this century.

International pioneer of personalising learning and renowned expert on business, creativity and education, Sir Ken Robinson, says:

> *"Conventional education looks only for certain sorts of ability. Those who have it often have other abilities that are ignored: those who don't are likely to be seen as not intelligent at all...*
>
> *Human talent is not in short supply. The limitations are in how we recognise and develop it."*

What this comes down to for us in New Zealand education is that no matter how difficult it might be, we have to think differently.

It does not matter how many computers schools have in their classrooms if the relationship between the learner and the teacher doesn't change. It doesn't matter how small the class size is if the learner is not made the centre of what goes on. It doesn't matter if we build whole new schools if they are just flash versions of last century's schools.

We need to think differently and use these resources differently. That is our challenge in New Zealand, from early childhood education to the middle years, to the NCEA system in secondary schools.

NCEA is an examination system based around personalising learning. It's moulded to suit the needs and abilities of students. It has introduced excellence to the New Zealand education system for the first time, and allows students to achieve in a broad range of areas and skills, from practical unit standards, to internal and external achievement standards.

The focus for us now is to continue in the transformation of education, to embrace the changes it brings to our schools and early childhood centres and to keep working together to build a world class education system for the 21st century.

The school system change towards schools becoming learning systems and personalising learning is needed especially across the middle years. The Government and I encourage all schools that work with and teach young people to move rapidly in these directions. □

According to the Justice Policy Institute, 99 percent of children's deaths occur away from school, after hours, and during holidays. It's important that schools are safe havens for learning.

USA: October 2006 Chicago Department of Public Health "Violence Prevention E-Brief"

MISSION-ON

HELPING FUEL NZ SCHOOLS

When students are well-nourished and active, they can concentrate for longer, learn more effectively and achieve better results – in the classroom, on the sports field or on-stage.

What is Mission-On?

The Mission-On campaign, delivered by the Ministry of Education, SPARC, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth Development, aims to improve young New Zealanders' lifestyles through better nutrition and increased physical activity.

From 1 June 2008 new clauses in the National Administration Guideline (5) (NAG) require schools and early childhood centres to promote healthy food and nutrition and make only healthy options available where food and beverages are sold on school premises. Part of Mission-On's focus is on helping education providers prepare for these changes.

What's been delivered?

Workshops being held around the country are providing relevant professional development for schools and early childhood staff and management. Other resources include:

- a Food and Nutrition for Healthy, Confident Kids toolkit containing advice for schools about improving nutrition
- the Ministry of Health's Food and Beverage Classification System and other resources to assist food providers for the education sector to choose healthy options
- 'Healthy lunches made easy' posters.

What are other schools doing?

Many schools have already made significant progress in improving student nutrition and increasing physical activity levels. Their experiences will inform an online resource being developed to support other schools in making improvements in these areas (available early 2008).

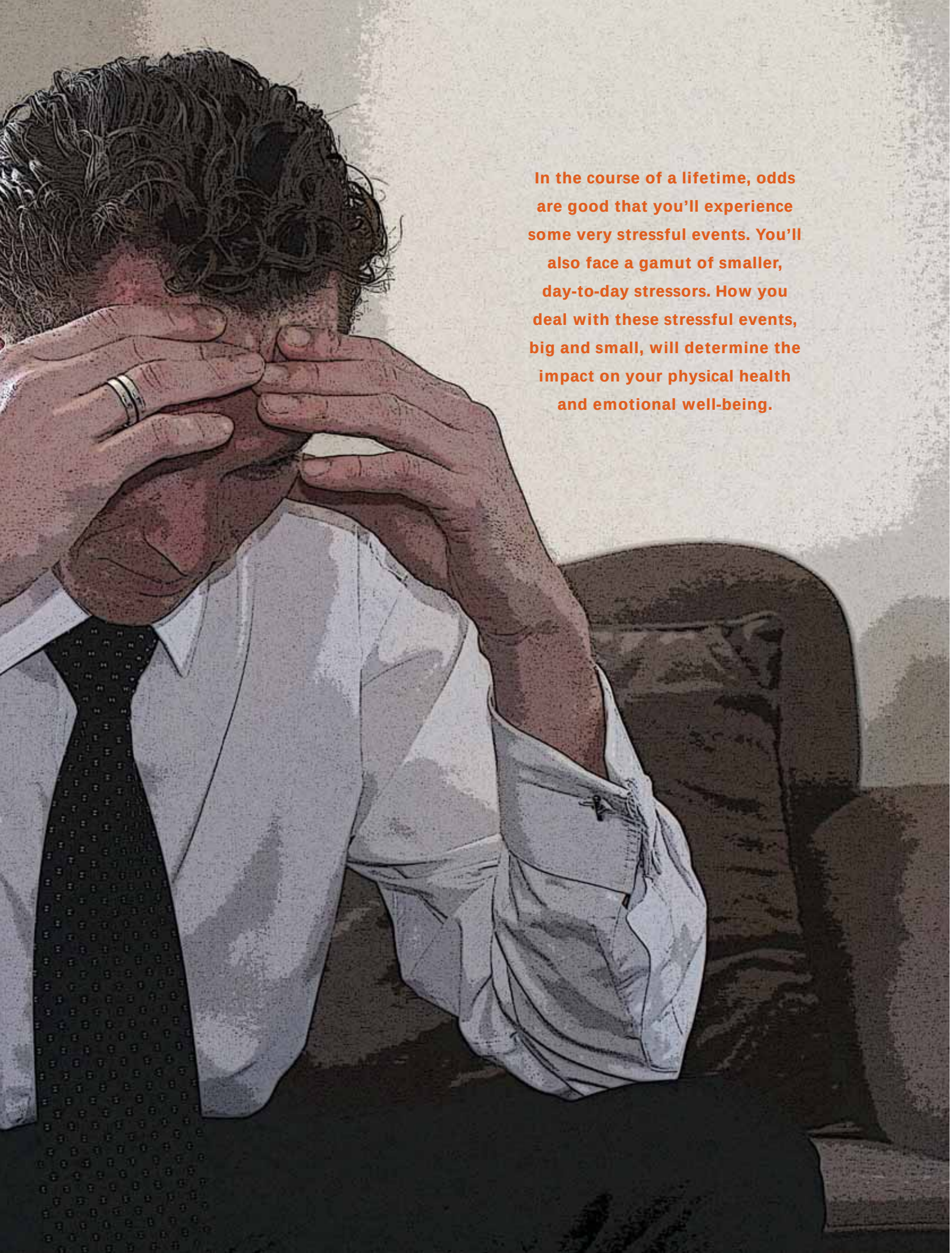
It's becoming clear that a whole of school approach works best – where nutrition and health messages are integrated into the curriculum, reflected in school policy, role-modelled by staff and supported by trustees. Engaging with parents/whanāu and with the wider community is also important to ensure healthy messages are reinforced at home.

What else is coming up in 2008?

Research and feedback from students suggests they should be involved in leading changes where possible (supported by teachers and school management). Early next year Mission-On will be inviting students to come up with their own proposals to 'fuel their school': for example, surveying eating habits, redesigning canteens and menus and promoting healthier options.

Also launching early next year is an interactive website for 5 to 12-year-olds and a television show where secondary school students compete in physical and culinary challenges.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR COPIES OF RESOURCES, PLEASE EMAIL: Mission-On.team@minedu.govt.nz



In the course of a lifetime, odds are good that you'll experience some very stressful events. You'll also face a gamut of smaller, day-to-day stressors. How you deal with these stressful events, big and small, will determine the impact on your physical health and emotional well-being.

Stress-reducing techniques that work -

Empowering principals and teachers

From Harvard Medical School

School principals and teachers, as a group, are particularly vulnerable to stress and "stress situations" are a routine aspect of working in schools.

So, read on and try out some stress-reducing techniques that work.

Note: The article is from Harvard Health Publications at the Harvard Medical School (for more information go to: www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat).

Topics covered are:

- The role of stress in everyday life;
- A set of mini-relaxations that work to reduce stress for anyone, and which teachers easily could introduce to, and use with, students; and
- A recent Harvard Medical School publication on stress management.

Effects of stress in our lives

Glance at the most recent National Vital Statistics Report listing the ten leading causes of death in America and many other Western industrialised countries. You won't find the word "stress" anywhere.

Yet many well-respected studies link stress to heart disease and stroke - two of the top ten killers. Stress also may influence cancer and chronic lower respiratory diseases, which rank as numbers two and four, respectively, in the top ten.

Stress has implications for many other ailments as well. Stress can cause or exacerbate depression and anxiety, which afflict millions of people. It also triggers flare-ups of asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems. And illness is just the tip of the iceberg. Stress affects you emotionally as well marring the joy you draw from life and loved ones.

In the course of a lifetime, odds are good that you'll experience some very stressful events. You'll also face a gamut of smaller, day-to-day stressors. How you deal with these stressful events, big and small, will determine the impact on your physical health and emotional well-being.

Several decades ago, two psychiatrists at the University of Washington devised a scale for researchers that weighed the stress of major life events. The death of a spouse - which ranks highest - was later shown to have a serious impact on the health of the surviving spouse. Although most of the events on the scale would be considered traumatic, many of the life events aren't obviously negative. An outstanding personal achievement (e.g. appointment as a school principal), a new baby or a marriage may seem like cause for celebration. But many life events can be construed as uplifting or upsetting - or perhaps a bit of both.

While most symptoms of stress may be obvious, others are more subtle. Although most individuals might attribute headache, sleep disturbances or irritability to stress, less obvious symptoms can include ringing in the ears, a frequent urgent need to urinate, and difficulty swallowing.

Understanding the many ways that stress can manifest itself in physical and behavioural symptoms and identifying the triggers for stress are the first steps toward achieving relief.

Stress has many causes. Almost as many techniques, practices and treatments exist for dealing with stress. From ancient relaxation techniques to the latest thinking on proper nutrition, from breathing exercises to repetitive prayer, we have numerous tools to help us cope. Some techniques can be especially beneficial under certain circumstances, but not as helpful under others. Understanding what works for us as individuals and for the stressful circumstances at hand can require an exploration of a number of stress-reduction methods. And, as always, it is important to know when to seek professional help. These efforts can reward you richly with better health, greater peace of mind, and a smoother course through life.

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Mini-relaxations

Mini-relaxations can help allay fear and reduce pain while you sit in the dentist's chair or lie on an examination table. They're equally helpful in thwarting stress before an important meeting, while stuck in traffic, or when faced with people or situations that annoy you. Here are a few techniques to try.

When you've got one minute

Place your hand just beneath your navel so you can feel the gentle rise and fall of your belly as you breathe. Breathe in slowly. Pause for a count of three. Breathe out. Pause for a count of three. Continue to breathe deeply for one minute, pausing for a count of three after each inhalation and exhalation.

Or alternatively, while sitting comfortably, take a few slow deep breaths and quietly repeat to yourself "I am" as you breathe in and "at peace" as you breathe out. Repeat slowly two or three times. Then feel your entire body relax into the support of the chair.

When you've got two minutes

Count down slowly from ten to zero. With each number, take one complete breath, inhaling and exhaling. For example, breathe in deeply saying "ten" to yourself. Breathe out slowly. On your next breath, say "nine," and so on. If you feel lightheaded, count down more slowly to space your breaths further apart. When you reach zero, you should feel more relaxed. If not, go through the exercise again.

When you've got three minutes

While sitting down, take a break from whatever you're doing and check your body for tension. Relax your facial muscles and allow your jaw to fall open slightly. Let your shoulders drop. Let your arms fall to your sides. Allow your hands to loosen so that there are spaces between your fingers. Uncross your legs or ankles. Feel your thighs sink into your chair, letting your legs fall comfortably apart. Feel your shins and calves become heavier and your feet grow roots into the floor. Now breathe in slowly and breathe out slowly. Each time you breathe out, try to relax even more.

For further information on stress in our lives and stress management consider reading Stress Management: Techniques for Preventing and Easing Stress, a newly revised Special Health Report by Herbert Benson, M.D.

For more information go to:

http://www.health.harvard.edu

The report draws on expertise from the Benson-Henry Institute and its Harvard Medical School staff. Reading it will help you identify triggers for stress in your own life and understand ways in which the stress response affects your body. Applying the techniques in these pages can help you neutralise the damaging effects of stress. The report provides a variety of tools you can use to accomplish that task. Your job is to decide which tools fit you best and to start wielding them. □

check out the free pdf downloads at www.msr.org.nz

How to use MSR Youth in your school

By Weymouth Intermediate School teachers

1 Use the Editorial to generate professional discussion on issues and topics pertinent to middle schooling.

2 Use the President's message to make staff aware of topical or current issues relating to NZAIMS.

3 Encourage staff to read articles & respond to the Editor. Their feedback could be published.

4 Identify articles that are relevant to curriculum planning & programmes that the school wants to initiate or implement and use them in the planning process.

5 Invite individuals or groups to do presentations at staff or planning meetings on selected MSR Youth contents, e.g. an article or resource.

6 Use case study articles with students to examine and discuss topical issues and concerns in the community or school (e.g. bullying behaviour) and to encourage creative problem solving and lateral thinking.

7 Use newsletters and local cluster meetings to share ideas, strategies and topical issues from MSR Youth, relevant to the school community & to contributing schools.

Top awards for NZ educational researchers

New Zealand Massey University middle schooling researchers win two prestigious post graduate research awards.

Dr Tony Dowden is the recipient of the 2007 Sutton-Smith Doctorial Award of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE).

The award is for outstanding research and scholarship on Curriculum Integration for Early Adolescent Schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A key conclusion is that integrative curricula based on the James Beane model are well justified educationally, developmentally and ethically. The research builds on and extends early pioneering and curriculum work in New Zealand.

For more information contact Tony Dowden at: Tony.Dowden@utas.edu.au

Emily Nelson was awarded the 2007 Middle Level Education Researcher of the Year Award of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

The award, seldom received outside of the USA, was for Emily's Master's thesis research on the topic of co-constructing early adolescent education using image based research methods. AERA granted the award ahead of strong competition from recently completed North American doctorial research. □

For more information contact Emily Nelson at: e.nelson@xnet.co.nz

Profiling a principal in-action

Finding alternatives

Chris Cooper, Principl, Weymouth Intermediate

In 2005, as principal of a large South Auckland Intermediate school, I faced a huge problem with a group of disruptive Year 7 boys. They had gang connections and really were causing mayhem in their classrooms and the wider school. I felt that if I didn't do something then the boys would be stood down, or teachers and pupils would be hurt. The education of all students was being affected and teachers were despairing. There had to be an alternative.

Decision time

Deciding how to deal with the situation, for the good of everyone, was a daunting challenge. Doing nothing or finding partial solutions was not an option.

As principal, and school leader, I asked various support agencies for advice. How to deal with the situation? What solutions might we try? What course of action to take?

In the end, I relied on my own research and experience, and that of key staff, as the best source of help and advice.

Our situational analysis said this: the existing school programme and school culture simply did not work for these boys. Yet, like all the boys in Year 7, these boys still needed affirmation and boundaries, challenge and achievement, high expectations and support and to experience positive self worth and sense of esteem.

The decision:

Segregate the boys, all Maori

Form them into a separate stand alone "achievement group"

Separate them from the rest of the school

Support them with a whanau based system

Our decision, in the face of outside expert opinion, was to: (i) segregate the boys, all Maori; (ii) form them into a separate stand alone "achievement group", of their own; (iii) separate them from the rest of the school; but (iv) crucially, support them with a whanau based system, as detailed below.

1 A dedicated Maori teacher and teacher aide worked with the Achievement Group continuously in a home classroom of their own, for all of Year 7.
2 With ongoing principal support, the boys and their teachers developed an alternative programme, different to the rest of the school - one tailored explicitly to addressing and meeting their needs.
3 The active participation of whanau placed strong emphasis on building relationships - among the boys themselves and between the boys and their teachers, families, the principal and in time the wider school.
4 Regular principal visits enabled close principal contact with the students, the teachers and the daily programme. In this way, as the year progressed, I got to know the boys on a very personal level and affirm them as important, along with the progress they were making.

At the end of Year 7, the boys' progress indicated their readiness to return to mainstream classrooms in Year 8, which was always the aim.

Without exception, the progress they achieved in Year 8 has continued as they now settle into, and cope with,

the somewhat different expectations and demands of secondary school.

At decision time, however, consult and use your own experience and judgment. Go with your gut feeling, as I did.

A first conclusion: what happens in Year 7 is crucial. Teachers and students using the whanau strategy and approach turned the situation around. Focussing on relationships constantly, and building them progressively, was the key. The boys belonged in their (temporary Year 7) whanau based Achievement Group. They developed a sense of belonging. Each boy was important and became someone. That sense of belonging and importance, each feeling valued as rangatahi, made all the difference. Step by step it turned their attitudes and behaviour around.

A second conclusion: always listen to and heed what the advisors and experts might say. At decision time, however, consult and use your own experience and judgment. Go with your gut feeling, as I did. Back it up with lots of reading and draw on and use ideas and reflections, shared and developed with others. The others were valued staff members and members of the Te Whakapakari research project linked with the school. On the basis of the experience and outcomes that I've briefly reported here I'm willing and able to say I'd do this all over again if a similar serious group enrolled in my school. In the end it all comes down to gut feeling and knowing and believing that your decisions will work.

For further information contact Chris Cooper at: chrisc@weymouthint.school.nz □

Developing the future together

"MUSAC, in conjunction with Knowledge Net and the OLE project have enabled Takapuna Grammar to connect student management systems with learning management systems.
This union gives students, staff and parents unprecedented ability to track student achievement and to engage meaningfully about teaching and learning. MUSAC have been instrumental in enabling our school to strategically develop the primary function of student profiling, in its entirety."

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New Zealand schools have provided the inspiration for MUSAC software since our humble beginnings in a Levin classroom. This kiwi innovation continues to strive for perfection by delivering the most flexible solutions for school and classroom management. So as a new era unfolds, don't just sit back and watch developments like the SMS-LMS project come to fruition. Become an active partner in our new revolution of software for schools and together we can take a giant leap ahead.

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