

Good Teacher Magazine

Term One 2007

***ICT, is it a case of
too much too soon?***

A question often asked

2007 - the Year of the Pedagogue



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Advertising enquiries:

Rachel 027 322 0527

barisa-holdings@xtra.co.nz

Submitting material for publication:

barisa-holdings@xtra.co.nz

enquiries to 021 798 868

fax: 07 542 5258

mail: ed-media publications

PO Box 5531

Mt Maunganui

ISSN: 1173-0499

Please keep a duplicate of text and illustrative materials submitted for publication. ed-media accepts no responsibility for damage or loss of material submitted for publication

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2007! Already we are in the second month. Welcome back to school, and a year bursting with the innovative practices which only teachers dare to trial. If you (or someone in your school) are doing something which you think others would like to know about, please contact us and let the rest of New Zealand know.

We had to bid a sad farewell to Gray Clayton after the term four edition, and wish him a rewarding retirement ... However all is not lost in the ICT environment, this issue has an interview with Garry Falloon who has had a varied career in education and is about to take up a senior lecturing position with the University of Waikato. We also have a paper co-written by our new ICT writer Pauline McLeod.

Gwen Gawith and John Hellner have started 2007 firing on all cylinders, and welcome feedback on their articles, as do all Good Teacher Magazine's contributors. Andi Adder was still enjoying the festive season but should be back for term two while Lucy Literacy looks at visual language static image exemplars. Anne Sturgess continues her reflective articles, considering and questioning values in today's education realm. Mary Loveless talks about working in South East Asia, an enlightening time for both sides participating in the experience, and Karen Bennett reflects on what makes her tick and how that can be translated into the classroom.

Catherine, Seamus, Gabriel, Miles, Karina and Caitlin continue our book reviews giving enlightening insight to some terrific books, new - or fairly new to the market. Isn't a six year old's insight into books refreshing?

A welcome element introduced in this issue is Richard Crypt's crossword. Good luck with it. It certainly created a lot of entertainment when being tested, I hope your staff room enjoys it as well. Results will be in the term two issue. Richard tells me he is already working on the next one!

The Mystery School competition continues. Tauranga Girl's College could have filled this magazine there is so much happening in their school. Again the second school wasn't recognised however on page 28 there is another chance for two schools to identify themselves and send us information on the great things they are achieving - with a new year there must be some exciting events to look forward to.

As always we have a light hearted look at something to keep you entertained over coffee and that is just what the Travelling Teacher has provided ... Who knows what that teacher will come up with next time!

As always your feedback on the magazine is appreciated but for now...

Enjoy

George Hudson and the GTM Team

The cover sculpture is "Taurus" by Nathan Hull, photographed in the beautiful Waitakaruru Arboretum (www.sculpturepark.co.nz) This sculpture was created from recycled steel and was just one of 99 sculptures on display in the park. With displays changing regularly the park is delightful and well worth a visit, either with your class, for time out your own, or with friends and family with a picnic.

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ICT, is it a case of too much too soon?

Catherine George interviews Dr Garry Falloon

The use of information and communication technology in the classroom is an area with many uncertainties and few rules. Some schools have all students using laptops, while others may share a PC between classes. Digital filmmaking? Animation? Interactive whiteboards? Intranet? Extranet? Where is the future of ICT in New Zealand Education heading?

Programmes focussing in this area in the last few years include the Microsoft Innovative Teachers' Scholarship and the Digital Opportunities Project.

The Microsoft Innovation Teacher Scholarship has two main objectives:

- to increase teachers' professional knowledge of computing
- to create industry and education linkage.

By placing teachers in leading-edge industries, the initiative aims to extend and enhance innovative teachers' ICT knowledge and skills. The ultimate aim is to expand the learning opportunities available for students in the classroom, and enhance the sharing of knowledge between teachers.

The Digital Opportunities (Digiops) projects are joint partnerships between schools, organisations involved in ICT and the Ministry of Education. The aim is to improve learning through the use of leading edge technologies. However, it is not just technology for technology's sake. All of the projects have been funded and supported on the basis that they will contribute to a student's learning in a positive way and be based around core curriculum subjects.

University of Waikato's Dr Garry Falloon has a broad view of the use of ICT in education. His passion for it has seen him leading the Digital Opportunities project, and he has also been a judge for the Microsoft Innovative Teacher's Scholarship. As the former education manager at Telecom NZ Ltd, Garry was responsible for the education and online programmes provided to schools around the country. Prior to this he taught for 15 years.

At the end of 2006 Garry attended the Worldwide School of the Future Summit. The summit is about bringing together policy makers from around the world to share best practices and talk about the role that ICT can play in education. It was held in Philadelphia at the newly opened School of the Future, a high school built as a collaboration between Microsoft and the School District of Philadelphia.

Garry sees projects such as the

Microsoft Innovative Teachers' Scholarship as integral to the development of ICT use in New Zealand education.

"There has been a window of opportunity at the high end of the market in terms of ICT in schools. The government programmes have been doing really good stuff, and we are so lucky in New Zealand to have so much support. But many teachers are still struggling with the whole concept of technology in the classroom, where it fits in with the curriculum, how they trial it and so on. There are teachers out there who are real trailblazers and are pushing the envelope and looking at the real potential of what the technology can offer and that's where the Microsoft programme came in."

Garry sees the support of these trailblazers as imperative, that these teachers need support because that's where our future is. New Zealand is in a prime position to sell our intellectual property, and he thinks we need to be educating children who are outside the box thinkers, who have that creativity and entrepreneurial attitude and the whole desire to learn.

"If you look at the world our kids are existing in, they get bombarded with all sorts of digital information, it's the kind of thinkers they are - a totally different environment from learning in the past," says Garry.

However he is concerned about too much too soon.

"They need to know how to use technology properly. There's a whole new area of activity I think schools will have to cope with in the future. There's been an emphasis up until now on understanding how to use technology in a technical sense, how to use the software, but very little has been covered in the area of the morals and ethics of correct and appropriate use. Schools have policies laid down on what is the appropriate use of the internet, but policies are policies, not education. Kids need to know to respect others when interacting in an online environment. It's a very easy

thing to discard relationships in an online environment. While these technologies are wonderful, you have to respect people, and this is something that's going to become more important for schools and parents in the future.

Its part of the almost semidisposable way of living, but potentially technology can enrich huge gaps in understanding, as long as people are prepared to interact with the information they are receiving and make sense of it. Actually sit there and think, what is this information telling me, and is that a realistic view of the world? My question over this is because kids are being bombarded with these huge amounts of information from all sorts of sources - to what extent are they turning that information into knowledge? Because the information itself isn't knowledge, it's just a code. It's the ability to decipher that code and develop understanding from it that creates knowledge. I think that's the challenge for us as teachers, and I think that's why we have to have teachers who are very knowledgeable people in their own right."

Garry discussed how the Microsoft Teacher Scholarship recipients were able to clearly link the use of technology with improvement in student learning. He said what was important was that it wasn't just an improvement in academic learning, but could also be increases in student communication skills, social skills, problem solving skills and ability to work collaboratively. In other words an increase in knowledge.

At Digiops, the chosen projects use varied forms of ICT, but something the projects have in common is that they are all based on needs or opportunities that were identified by the school communities. The projects



Dr Garry Falloon

can only be achieved with the use of technology, but they are community led, not led by the technology. This is where the power of these projects is, according to Garry. He also notes the successful projects have strong resource commitment from the schools or organisations running them. Funding can be an issue for these innovative projects, as there is limited government funding available. However partner organisations such as Microsoft and Hewlett Packard have been "stunning" in their support, Garry says.

But ICT dilemmas in education are not unique to New Zealand. At the Worldwide School of the Future Summit there were over 44 countries represented, and over 250 delegates. What Garry found really interesting was that no matter where the delegates came from, they were grappling with the same issues. Some, of course were more or less extreme.

"Some of the Southeast Asian and Pacific Rim countries had huge obstacles of infrastructure, political systems and poor curriculum. And huge student teacher ratios - 80 children to a class. How can you be innovative within those kind of parameters? But given the situations, they were incredibly innovative in their own right. Some of the things I saw there, by were things that are relatively common practice in most New Zealand classes, because we are very, very lucky. But for them, wrestling with 80 kids in the class and developing a power point about cleaning up the local creek was really quite an innovative thing."

Then at the other end of the scale Garry listened to speakers from European countries, for example Finland, where classes were using high tech mobile technologies such as hand-held GPS devices for Education Outside the Classroom. The students use "MOOP" devices to assist with information gathering. (MOOP is a mobile learning environment where a pupil first makes observations, then saves and manages them on a mobile and web-based platform. The learning environment is closed and safe for pupils to use, requiring users to log in before allowing access once students are back in a classroom.) As the students move around, and as they pass landmarks, information on the landmark would come up on their screen. They then used this information for gathering their own further information - it wasn't just taking notes about what they were

seeing, but really learning more as they were doing it. Once again, furthering their knowledge through the ICT use.

I wondered where Garry saw New Zealand's position in the world in ICT use, and what he thinks important issues for the future will be.

"Overall we've made incredible progress in the last eight or nine years. Before that we didn't really have a strategy, or committed funding. Technology is just a bottomless pit, you can keep pouring money in and it will never be enough. But the government now has a balanced strategy, dealing with the infrastructure, equipment and professional development.

If we're looking at the future, where things might be going, I think we can look at it on two levels.

Bringing up and improving the everyday practises of teachers and their use of technology in the classroom, because still, by their own admission, many teachers struggle with it. They struggle with the fact they don't have enough of it. They struggle with the array of software that's available, they struggle with in some ways their teaching style, their pedagogy and the management of the two or three computers in a classroom situation. So one thing is to deal with those issues.

The other thing is what kids are learning when they are on the computer. There's the technical thing, of the learning about software, but what knowledge is coming out of that? Are they learning about the world? Are they learning about how to get on with other people? Are they learning about environmental issues? And do children know what the contextual learning is around these activities? Children are going through valuable processes in learning with technology, and I think their awareness of this is quite important. Knowledge is an evolving thing, and it is worth pursuing."

Dr Garry Falloon (MEd Massey PhD Curtin HDipT AdvDipT) is now a Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato School of Education.

An interview with Microsoft Innovative Teacher Scholarship recipients will feature in a future edition of Good Teacher Magazine.

Further information on Digiops is available on its website: www.digiops.org.nz

FAST-TRACKING ICT AT TOKOMARU SCHOOL

By John MacGibbon

Tokomaru School in the Manawatu has suddenly moved from almost no computing to a sophisticated new ICT system, thanks to the Ministry of Education's 'Schools Network Upgrade' project and a bunch of cheap yet grunty computers from CANZ refurbisher Remarkit Solutions.

Before the new installation, which took place at the end of Term 3, students at the school had only five computers that were barely used. Once brand-new, they'd become ancient, slow artifacts. There was no network and only one computer had Internet access, through a slow dialup connection.

In 2004 a Ministry survey showed that few small schools had networks, mainly because they faced disproportionately high costs to build them. Following this, upgrade deals were offered to 550 schools identified as either 'very small' (less than 77 students) or 'small' (77-187 students). The Ministry would pay most costs for network installation or upgrades. The very small schools would share 20 per cent of the cost and the small schools 25 per cent.

Tokomaru School was among 350 schools which took up the offer. Funding their contribution was not difficult – the cost was taken out of the school's five-year property development fund which the Ministry holds.

The networking equipment was top quality, very capable and reasonably priced as a result of the Ministry's bulk purchasing. The package included

design, cabling, switching, training and an Acer server running a customised Linux operating system developed in Christchurch by Smart Computer Systems.

Tokomaru School saved even more because it opted to buy CANZ refurbished ex-corporate computers for less than half the price of the cheapest new machines. They're powerful machines with Pentium IV-2Ghz processors that should handle school computing needs for some time to come.

Total cost for the network infrastructure was \$39,000, of which the school's share was \$7,800. The 20 computers, a network printer and equipment roll-out cost another \$8,350.

The computers, pre-installed with Windows XP, Microsoft Office, Spybot antispyware and AVG anti-virus, were set up onsite by Woodville company Lael Computers.

Two machines went into each of the school's active classrooms and a specialist suite of 12 computers was set up in a spare room. Security immediately became a physical problem as well as Internet issue when someone broke in and walked off with one of the computers. Fortunately, Tokomaru's community spirit kicked in and neighbouring Stevenson's Engineering, which had been burgled in the same week, installed steel bars on the computer suite windows at no cost.

Suddenly the Internet has become practical. "We're rapt that email opens up in five seconds instead of five minutes, and students no longer get bored waiting for information to come up," says Nick Beamsley, the school principal. "It's fantastic and opens up a wealth of possibilities."

The school opted for a DSL internet connection, as part of Telecom's SchoolZone package that also includes a firewall and spam filtering. A website could be hosted at no cost, but this is "down the track". Video-conferencing is another SchoolZone option the school could consider later.

Now Tokomaru School has all the gear and a big learning curve lies ahead for staff and students. "One of our first priorities is to join one of the Ministry's ICT Professional Development Clusters."



Students at Tokomaru getting to grips with one of the Compaq Evo computers in the school's brand-new network.

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2007 – the Year of the Pedagogue

by Gwen Gawith

2007 – a great time to look backward as well as forwards.

In GT Term 1 04 I wrote:

“...I claimed that ‘less is more’ with regard to the obese curriculum... the many ‘Yes, but HOW?’ emails got me wondering whether part of the problem is that we’ve lost sight of the centrality of LEARNING in the whole school mix.

“Art Costa... talked about ‘bone-deep learning’.

Surely bone-deep learning is not just the prerogative of children?

Can Professional Learning be bone-deep, satisfying a lifelong personal professional hunger to understand more about learning and teaching?

Do the lasagne layers of PD superimposed on each other and on the bloated curriculum represent rich, bone-deep Professional Learning?”

The terms I used about the curriculum statements in recent years include: obese, bloated, inflated, over-stuffed duvet, flatulent, fragmented patchwork, grab bag, lucky dip, confused conflation of aims, objectives, outcomes and teaching ideas! Wah, wah! I rant about superimposed layers of PD because consolidation and integration of the multiplicity of ideas, strategies, and even underlying educational philosophies of the different lasagne layers has been left to schools. While some problems remain, the draft curriculum offers a clear framework to harness, consolidate and integrate some of the teaching approaches encountered in the frantic years of lasagne PD to develop pedagogy.

Time to rejoice:

HALLELUJAH FOR THE NEW SLIMMED DOWN SIZE 8 CURRICULUM!

What it does it does well. One can quibble about some of the vapid trendy terminology but the *substance* is much improved. Simply, it does what a curriculum is supposed to do – outlines WHAT we need to teach at each level, WHY we teach it, and while it describes six teaching approaches that characterize effective pedagogy (p. 7, 24), it doesn’t go so far down the HOW route as to become a teaching prescription. However, by substituting vague competencies for the ‘essential skills’, it does highlight the need for pedagogy that is clean, clear and precise. It is in no way intended as a criticism of the draft curriculum to say that, even if/ when we adopt it, teachers will *still* need to know more about the pedagogies needed to achieve bone-deep learning (vs the inevitably shallow once-over-lightly approach with obese, confused curriculum statements).

Bruce Hammond’s latest e-zine confirms “(t)he importance of developing a unified yr 1 – 12 pedagogy that builds on the best of primary learning-centered approaches and secondary in-depth content knowledge.” Indeed. Surely the recent deluge of Ministry PD has provided teachers with all the pedagogy they need? In GT Term 4 05 I made the point that teaching activi-

ties are just that – teaching activities, NOT pedagogy.

So, given that the draft curriculum omits all skills, including information skills, these GT articles will focus on pedagogy – specifically pedagogy involved in the effective use of information by students for LEARNING.

PEDAGOGY: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

*Pedagogy is about knowing **what** works in teaching>learning, **why** it works and **how** it works. It is usually called the 'science' of teaching - research-based understanding of how things (knowledge/ skills) can be taught and learned. If you want to teach inquiry, you need to expand the steps of the various 'inquiry' frameworks into viable pedagogy, asking, how exactly to coach the steps, and which **cognitive tools** (skills and strategies) students need to **learn** them (GT Term 4 05).*

Pedagogy is a relatively new focus here. At the late lamented ACE,

lecturers talked about teaching methods. Few seemed to see LEARNING as a key dimension of pedagogy. In 1994, they imported a strange sociologist bird from UK as Dean of *Learning* who called pseudo Marxist gobbledegook 'pedagoagy'. There may well be sociologists who understand pedagogy, but she wasn't one of them. I'm sure pedagogy is now pronounced correctly, but I know from my experience of two colleges of education 1985 – 1997 and the 5,000+ teachers who passed through our infostudies courses, that few teachers had adequate knowledge of LEARNING and how to teach to achieve particular types of learning. In subsequent years (see GT Terms 1 and 4 05, Term 3 06) 'inquiry' (well, a pedagogy-free framework and self-directed steps of some sort) seemed to be redefined as *the* best, optimum, 'preferred', 'mandated' approach to learning irrespective of the purpose of the learning.

Things may have improved, but it's still worth asking, in relation to the draft curriculum, questions that help to inform pedagogy as defined above, i.e. the art and science of teaching and LEARNING. It is through questioning that we develop the TOOLS learners need to become partners in learning. The response to the GT articles mentioned above shows that there are *many* intelligent teachers and principals who *do* see the need for explicit pedagogy. Is this also why so many teachers continue to flock to PD offered by people such as Art Costa and David Hyerle who focus on the applied *pedagogy* of learning, not just 'new' tricks for teachers? (And is this why 3Doors® continues to build despite my commitment to semi-retirement?)

QUESTIONS THAT INFORM PEDAGOGY

How exactly do younger/ older learners learn?

What works best

for which learners in which conditions relating to which content? For example, do learners achieve 'deep learning' with steps for self-directed information-finding? Is this self-directed learning? If so, at what age are learners capable of self-direction? Or do learners at any age need tools (literacy, cognitive and self-management) and guidance toward self-direction? If so, what tools and how do we guide them?

The draft curriculum talks about encouraging reflective thought and action. **How best do we encourage reflective thought and action? What exactly do we mean by reflective action?** Thinking before you leap? Curbing impulsivity as per Art Costa? Sounds good, but how EXACTLY do we keep ALL children engaged in learning and motivated to learn despite the *reality* – that many of them, despite teachers' best endeavours, are ill-equipped for sustained learning in terms of language, literacy level, attitude, diet, upbringing, etc, etc?

You can break all the directions for pedagogy (p.24) down in this way. For example, the draft curriculum challenges the confusion of 'presenting information' with demonstrating knowledge. It says (p. 25):

*Students need to understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they will be able to use their new learning. Effective teachers design learning experiences that stimulate the curiosity of their students, that require them to search for relevant information and ideas, and **which require them to use or apply what they discover in new contexts or ways.***

Instead of saying, "Hallelujah! We can 'do inquiry' just as we have always done projects?" we need to ask:

What exactly is understanding? How best do we get younger/ older learners to demonstrate/ apply it?

Is understanding a synonym for knowing? (No, it is a dimension of knowing). **Is thinking a synonym for learning?** (No, it is a dimension of learning).

How best to get students to understand *what* they are learning and *why* they are learning it? (No, you don't just say "We are doing such and such because it's in the curriculum" if you really want the 'best way').

Is the best 'learning experience' to achieve understanding in every subject domain the

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requirement to search for relevant information and ideas? (NO it is NOT!!!! What you want people to learn influences the HOW, as does their age, prior knowledge, literacy and language level).

If you really understand something (I would say *know* something) **how do you get learners “to use or apply what they discover in new contexts or ways”** (I would say to demonstrate or apply their knowledge because not all knowledge, heaven help us, is ‘discovered’. Discovery learning is a discrete theory and philosophy of learning with its own pedagogy.)? **So, is ‘pasting up infosnippets on charts or screens the best way to get learners to demonstrate or apply knowledge?**

This is just a sample of questions you should be asking - pedagogy is predicated on research-based and evidence-based ‘How *exactly?*’ I took ten years to research similar questions and develop and trial research-based tools for *learners*. But academic research is not a prerequisite for developing effective classroom pedagogy. NZ teachers are *excellent* at sharing evidence based-best practice. All you need to re-focus your school and classroom on pedagogy is to consider these questions in the context of the draft curriculum. Instead of thinking how you will *teach* the new curriculum, focus on how exactly your students will develop the learning skills and strategies, the tools, they need to *learn* what is in the curriculum, and what you, as their teacher, will have to do to equip them with *tools for learning* and for demonstrating, evaluating and applying their *knowledge*.

Treat the questions like problems. Divvy them up. Choose those that interest you. Analyse the problem. Explore solutions. Cycle round and round the problem, gnawing at it until you have evidence-based strategies to share - and benefit from those developed by colleagues.

Then researcher/teachers like me won’t feel as if we’re leading horses to water who are simply too tired to drink. We can help you to support, refine and deepen strategies by explaining the *why* – how and why we think it works in terms of learning theory, whether research exists to support it and how it fits into applying pedagogical theory.

Yes, there are a few frustrated pedagogues around (not pedagogs!) I am proud to be one and have my field of study in the spotlight after 27 years!

Happy to respond:
gwen@metacog.co.nz

In her article Gwen refers to Bruce Hammond’s e-zine. Bruce’s article follows: for those who would like further opinion and wisdom from Bruce go to www.leading-learning.co.nz

A unified pedagogy

It is only when you work in a school that spans the year 8 and 9 age groups that you really appreciate that there is world of difference between teaching approaches of primary and secondary schools and that this difference makes learning too difficult for many students.

This difference, it seems, is an issue that is all too often sidestepped by educationalists who happily talk about a ‘seamless’ curriculum on the grounds that all curriculum documents are developed to cover students from 5 to school leaving. As for teachers, or schools themselves, they are so busy developing, or ‘delivering’, curriculums that they seem blind to the problem. Primary teachers often quietly despair about the lack of pedagogy of their secondary colleagues while secondary teachers often grumble to themselves about what their students can’t do when they reach their area.

As for students, they either accept differences in teaching and learning as how it is and always has been and, if they can’t cope with the change, then any difficulties must lie within themselves.

The truth is that for many students entering secondary schools must be like visiting a foreign country. Where their learning was once taught by one teacher and often in integrated way, is now taught by a range of separate teachers. And by teachers who have no idea about what each other are teaching or the teaching strategies they each use.

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What is required, as we enter the 21stC, is the development of a common language of teaching and learning to cover all ages. A few years ago, the then Minister of Education, announced that his researchers had informed him it was the classroom teacher that made the difference! More recently the current Minister of Education stated that 'since 1989 we have moved to a focus on teaching and learning based on a growing body of evidence about what works best'. His 'new mantra' is the need to 'personalize learning'! It is as if common sense had finally permeated the walls of the ivory towers.

The truth is that the revolution in teaching and learning that reaches back to John Dewey (and earlier educational philosophers) has had trouble finding a place in the specialists secondary schools whose genesis lies within a mass education 'one size fits all' 19thC, industrial aged, 'mindset'.

It is as if there are two competing narratives about teaching – the 'old story' where learning is seen as a form of cultural transmission to often passive learners; where students are taught by subject teachers, tested and sorted. Teaching in this narrative is about 'covering', or 'delivering', the curriculum by specialist teachers and successful student are those who can remember the 'stuff' they are taught. The metaphor that comes to mind is that of a factory and the production line, complete with waste products. Many teachers blame their students for any failure ('deficit theory'), or poor earlier teaching, when, all too often, it is the school itself that is 'learning disabled'!

The 'new story' sees schools as 'learning organizations' based on the belief that, with the right tasks, help, and time, all students can learn. An important element in this narrative is the relationship between

the student and the teacher. As in this 'story', learning is co-created through the actions of both, but led by the interests, question, queries and concerns of the learner. Through realistic problem solving tasks, meaningful to their students, teachers do their best to develop whatever talents their students may have so as to develop a positive learning identity in all their students. This is where the 'new' idea of 'personalized learning' comes in, as such an approach brings into question the whole concept of a preplanned curriculum. Learning in this; 'story' is a process of students actively creating their own 'knowledge'. Our 'revised' New Zealand curriculum represents these ideas and, if put into practice, it would challenge many current secondary practices.

The problem is that it is all too easy to fall into 'either /or' camps and for opponents to harden their positions.

The solution is to combine the best of current primary and secondary approaches. In schools that include students from year 7 to 9, there is a great opportunity to do just this and in the process escape, what some writers call, the 'muddle in the middle.' Such schools have an opportunity to lead educational transformation by developing this 'best of both worlds' approach. By combining the strong relationship and integrated learning of primary teaching with the rigor and depth of subject disciplines of secondary teaching, these schools could become centres of new educational thought.

Our own site www.leading-learning.co.nz was developed with just this challenge of developing a 'More Informed Vision' inclusive of all age groups in mind. A vision, that if put into practice, would have the potential to develop the learning power

and creative talents of all students. The new 'capital' for any country, in what some are calling the 'Creative Era', will be the innovation and creativity of all its citizens.

This blend of the best elements of 'child centred learning' and 'subject centered teaching' needs to be founded on interplay of student inquiry, problem solving and an increased depth of knowledge and understanding as provided by subject specialists. It would also require teachers to 'do fewer things well' and for them to 'design' studies with their students. Most of all it will require teachers to see themselves as 'creative learning coaches' practicing high levels of 'pedagogy' or 'artistry' of teaching.

Such teaching will be seen as 'co-constructivist', representing Vygotsky's idea of 'scaffolding'; 'What a child can do by with help today she can do by herself tomorrow'.

This 'learning centred approach' avoids the false dichotomies which persist in education to the detriment of the learners. Learning, for some students, particularly for students whose backgrounds impose limits on their success, need not be as if finding yourself in foreign country.

Creating this unified pedagogy and common educational language by combining primary pedagogies and secondary subject expertise combines 'the sage on the stage with the guide on the side' and will create a 'seamless' and 'personalized' educational experience for all learners – and, as well, provide an exciting creative challenge for teachers.

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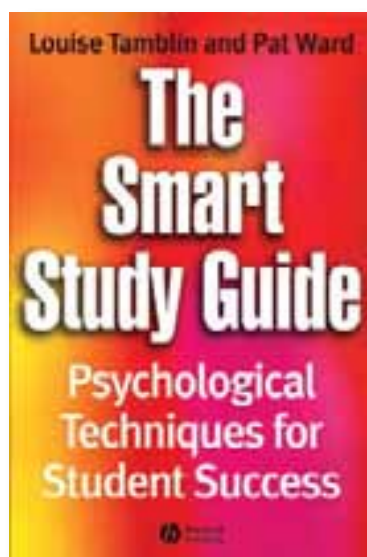
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The Smart Study Guide

Louise Tamblin (researcher and lecturer)
and Pat Ward (Learning strategist)
Blackwell Publishing
\$32.95 AU

Available from Education Resource Centres,
Whitcoulls

This book is a 'must have' for all senior students or adult students considering returning to education after some time away. It gives an excellent insight into the actions of learning. While it is possible to sit and read from cover to cover in depth it is also a book you feel comfortable with 'dipping into' to review specifics. The Smart Study Guide is full of assistance. Using logic and user friendly language. it is helpful in getting you to understand not only

how to study but also how you should be studying... how to tailor your methods to suit your own particular habits and personality.

It could also give some current students a reality check, while motivating and encouraging them to focus in a different way. The reviews are all stunning and supportive

"At long last, a study guide that's not only useful but actually fun to use and evidence-based to boot! This deserves to become the standard text in this area. Not only will I recommend it to my students (and my children) I'm going to mine it for tips for myself!" *Dr Susie Page, Principal Lecturer, University of Greenwich.*

"This book is a breath of fresh air. It turns a vast range of expertise and experience about how learning happens into a usable form, with hot tips, questions and

books and things


answers, and much more. It's the 'off-the-wall' study guide - 'out of the box' - and it works. It liberates the human brain from all the stuffy thinking about effective studying being simply hard work, and encourages owners to make use of all of their brains - not just a few academic bits." *Philip Race, Senior Academic Staff Development Officer, University of Leeds.*

"Having read just about every study skills book out there, there is not a lot that excites me about yet another new one ...but this one is in line with current thinking by being research and evidence based. To my delight I could dip into it and use two - three good ideas straight away without much adaption. Overall, this is essential for the staff shelf and student resources section - well worth the reasonable price", *Jan Stewart, Manager, Student Learning Support Service, Victoria University of Wellington.*

This book should be essential reading in any place where study and learning is occurring.

“The Tune Up”

by John Hellner



Sometimes a considerable number of students turn on a teacher, reluctant to join him or her on the “journey of learning”.

The phenomenon defies reason, no rational explanation exists, but good teachers inevitably blame themselves to one degree or another, whether justified or not.

But, the reality may be: the class simply needs a “tune up”.

When a class needs a “tune up” the teacher must “embrace the dark side”, as one pre-service teacher called it.

Blockages to learning

The blockages on the pathway to learning manifest many satanic forms: dreadful, pushy, noisy entrances into the room and failure to settle until five minutes before the dismissal bell; several lessons of substandard work ethic and/or reluctance to engage in a magnificently planned series of worthwhile activities; a fun activity turning nasty with chaos ensuing when students wander in the room, give cheeky answers and start making popping noises by popping their fingers from inside the mouth and the slightly deaf boy in the front starts calling out loudly so he can heard himself above the din in the room: in short, sustained and unproductive behaviours, such as diminished work ethic, surliness, chatter, and non cooperation.

Types of Tune Ups

Teacher conducted “tune ups” can be subtle and low key, hardly detectable to even the most discerning student eye. Obviously, the best “tune up” is the preventive “tune up”: spotting the trouble before it starts and changing the activity or intervening at the source. But sometimes, it gets too late for that one. In which case, calling a halt and delivering an informal, reasoned appeal to the students’ better instincts and the value to them of listening to the teacher: all very “Dr. Phil”. But sometimes, it gets too late for that one.

Sometimes “tune ups” need to become more crushing and grinding. For example, the “tune up” can happen over the next lesson or two with the teacher using a variety of the following strategies, either singly or in clusters: lining up outside the room; practicing entries to the room; moving back into a seating chart with desks in rows; planning simple to master, desk time activities, no hocus pocus dominocus, just nitty-gritty, quiet slog work, allowing the teacher to concentrate on managing behaviour from their frontal perch; a couple of lessons of “notes and learn it for a test that will count”.

“Tune ups” also suggest the teacher conduct some “private consultations” with the main players: describing

their unacceptable behaviours serving to undermine the teaching and consequently the opportunity for others to learn; gaining the student's acknowledgement of their behaviours; providing the student with a choice to either self correct or suffer further consequences. The teacher may have to dole out some overdue punishment for the individual at these "interviews".

But sometimes, it gets too late for that one too. In which case, a lead teacher or mentor, the Dean, the counselor, or the parents might need to come to the party to draw a bull's eye on a few ringleaders, who want to impede the "tune up", or who are just "bloody minded".

Tune up protocols

Good teaching incorporates an element of acting and when a teacher "tunes 'em up" they need to deliver a stellar performance. All the non verbal communication skills (stern, serious and resigned facial expression, perhaps with a hint of madness, lowered voice tone and volume, muted gestures, urgent movement or immobility) should operate congruently – all working to send the same message: "I'm disappointed/gutted by your behaviour and could flip out at any stage" – as described by the pre-service teacher.

Forget class detentions and long lectures, delivered with anger, about what should be and why: they invariably punish the innocent and "tune ups" are not punishment, more helping students to help themselves in order to achieve. If a teacher feels it appropriate to make a speech, they should keep it short and probably not go much beyond the "golden rule".

The attitude to take when "embracing the dark side"

The "tune up" has two salient characteristics. Firstly, it is an art form, with specialist techniques, timing, styles, strategies and protocols. The second characteristic relates to a belief system: the "tune up" serves as a form of exorcism designed to purge the gremlins lurking within the deep inner recesses of any worthwhile classes' soul. Part of a teacher's job forever remains conduct training for the young, both as individuals and in groups and a good teacher undertaking a "tune up" sees themselves as fulfilling that dimension of their job description and demonstrating their concern for the social development of the young: teachers "tune up" because they care.

At the same time as a teacher demonstrates they "tune up" because they care, they remember they are actors, performers and patrons of the absurd. They recognise "learning slow downs" and teacher "tune ups" as normal and natural occurrences, having little to do with them personally or signaling the decline of western youth in general: it simply means, kids in groups can be boorish. As a consequence, the teacher maintains an inner sense of mirth while professing an exterior of anguish: they pretend to be grumpy, but in fact they seek the best for their students. They "embrace the dark side" as part of the job and undertake the task with just a small twinkle in their eye. In this light, the teacher's strategies attain light-hearted, yet celestial and high, moral grounding.

Disengaging the embrace

Teachers don't want to be grumpy all the time: they need to disengage the "embrace of the dark side" when the "tune up" finishes. Come out slowly and tentatively, ready to drop back to the dark side at the first unwelcome sign of further disruption to student learning: Aesop was right – "slow and steady wins the race." Don't be grump one day and manic the next, ease back to the relaxed and supportive class environment everyone enjoys and profits from. The retreat from grumpiness may occur within an hour or a day, or it may take two or three class periods during the course of the week. But, if it takes any more time, something else is wrong and further advice might be wise.

The value of the tune up

More amazing than how quick the "tune up" will need to end will be the ensuing era of good feeling. Boundaries will have been reconfirmed, routines enforced, expectations re established and the students will recognise and appreciate the operation of natural justice: irresponsible behaviour brings consequences. Most importantly, students will respect the teacher's willingness to do what has to be done - to embrace the dark side – for the benefit of the students, because the teacher cares about them.



Classroom fun: John Hellner

A 45 minute audio-visual clip of practical strategies for incorporating fun into classroom practice, ideal for a light-hearted staff meeting or individual teacher "professional development" and suited to both primary and secondary levels.

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In April 2006, John presented to the "Making a Difference" symposium in Wellington. A 45 minute audio-video CD disc of John's presentation, entitled "Classroom Fun", is now available. See above.

John's books on: building interpersonal relations in the classroom; using humour in the classroom; what makes a good teacher and relief teaching are available from "Essential Resources" in both New Zealand and Australia. The website is: www.essentialresources.co.nz/

You can read blurbs for the books and the CD on John's website: www.johnhellner.co.nz

“What Makes You Tick?”

by Karen Bennett

*I am from Mid Canterbury
New Zealand, a third year
teacher with an ‘It’s all
about attitude’ attitude and
a passion for sports.*

*I love short walks along
the path to work (20m),
the sunshine in a Friday
afternoon class game of
tee ball and the ‘giggle
smile’ children get when
you twist their words to
make them laugh.*

Hinds Primary School has been a prime opportunity for me to begin to learn my craft in teaching. I will never ever forget my first job and who would or could. The wonder of that initial opportunity to have your ‘own’ class. To be able to build rapport with them, and to facilitate their learning “your way”. It is quite a spectacular experience. I challenge every teacher to remember their first teaching job for the very reason that it is easy to lose sight of the reasons why we chose this career path.

While I was studying at the incomparable Dunedin College of Education they tutored us about building a rapport with the pupils you teach. I clearly remember a remarkable lecturer explaining to us on several occasions what importance this quality in your teaching can hold. I personally hold this highly when creating and setting up my class for the year. I guess in some ways I am just that kind of person. It is very much in my personality that I teach from my heart and my students quickly learn that about me. I am not scared to show them that I am human. Would you agree that rapport is important?

I tend to teach on a triple R style in terms of teacher/student relationship. That is

Respect,
Rapport and
Routines (RRR).

Actually I just made that up then, however it is quite true. I find that these three aspects of teaching can often underpin a smooth running classroom climate.

Respect yourself, others and their property and the environment (an extremely important value that we especially encourage at our school). Rapport is an emotional bond or friendly relationship between people based on mutual liking, trust, and a sense that they understand and share each other’s concerns (Encarta1999).

Students need to know that you care and understand what is important to them in order to trust you and feel comfortable with you. These qualities.. respect, trust and understanding are important for learning to occur. Rapport is built on this basic idea.

In the heart of Canterbury, Hinds Primary School is situated quarter of an hour from Ashburton Township

along State Highway One. Having grown up in the Mid Canterbury region, and being a country kid myself I have and will continue to thoroughly enjoy the parallels between my upbringing and primary education, and that of the students I teach. I feel that I am able to relate well with them and bring my own experiences and knowledge to theirs. They respect and enjoy this as much as I do.

I believe it is important to acknowledge and respect what is important to the individual child no matter how exciting or timely it is to you. Children’s love of life is often inspiring from my experience...I won’t grow up as long as I’m around children, and things that make life fun for me. I take pleasure in life, that is what I like to do. I do, however, have ambitions to eventually venture into the city and enculture the town children with my wholesome up bringing and views on life.

The basics are essential, this I’m sure we can agree on! How many of you also place the importance in teaching on social skills and the love of life.

We talk about learning as a life long journey, hence firstly what does this mean to you and secondly how does this influence your teaching?

For me this means a whole raft of things.

You must be clear, I feel, that you yourself aspire to life long learning, as how can you model to your students that at this point in time you are continuously taking opportunities to learn more, develop new skills in any chosen area and strengthen or challenge your ways of thinking.

I personally choose to practice this. For example I have passion in the area of sport and in particular hockey. I have played hockey since I was knee high to a grass hopper. In my district the midwife was trained to thrust the hockey stick into the babies hands right there in the delivery room.

For those of you whose attention I have seized, yes, the small strong district I am boasting about in rural Mid Canterbury is Wakanui and especially having a surname like Bennett, hockey is in your blood. I’ve represented good old Mid Canterbury right through the age groups as a player and more recently as a coach. I love hockey, there is no doubt about that!!

However my highest honour from being involved in hockey in the last four years, is with umpiring. I was spanking new in the 2006 season to the National Hockey League (NHL). What a new and tremendous achievement for myself. This is a huge part of my life right now and will be as I continue to develop, learn and expand my skills and knowledge in this area of the sport.

This is a part of who I am and I will ensure that the students I teach while I head down this road of experience have an insight into what it means to me to keep learning and aspiring to be better, as this is what I will be encouraging them to do in life in their areas of expertise.

So I asked my students "what makes you tick children?" And as you can imagine my six and seven year old students needed me to explain what that question meant.

"What things do you like to do more than any other things?"

What puts the biggest smile on your face when you are doing it? I explained.

I do not think that these young people are too young to ask that type of question because, of course, you are only ever going to answer the question based on 'that very moment in time' anyway. I do not know what is going to make me tick in 10 years time but right now hockey umpiring does it for me. Some students replied: arts and crafts, some soccer, some helping mum and dad in the cowshed, the list goes on. It is all-relevant, it is all-real and it is all about how they feel about something that they love to do. I remember that at seven years old I was going to be a farmer forever, just like my dad. Life has not panned out that way yet for me, but at that 'moment in time' that was what I loved to do more than any other thing and it is what put the biggest smile on my face.

It is a teaching belief at Hinds School that we aim to facilitate a strong foundation of the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and to promote positive attitudes about personal physical well-being so that in turn the student will be a confident life long learner. The key word in that for me is – confident.

Be proud of who you are and what you can achieve when you put your mind



to it. Let's remember to keep teaching on the positive side of life.

Encourage life-long learning by modelling that you are in fact a life long learner in many ways, including what makes you – you!!

Your students will respect you more for being real and make that connection, that life is about learning.

We are equipping the students that we teach for tomorrow and the future, so let yourself shine through to them as you continue to live and love life and enjoy learning the 'stuff' that makes you tick.

This has been a piece from the plains....I hope you have enjoyed it!!



Editor's Note: Karen won the award for Most Promising Umpire at the National Hockey League (see above left) but then remembered she had to be back at Hinds Primary School the next day! (bottom right!!)

A question often asked...

by Anne Sturgess

Where have the values gone?

Values live on in the hearts and attitudes of the children we teach and will continue to do so for as long as they are nurtured.

How do I know that? Because for many years I, and other teachers, have asked young people to name their heroes.

Occasionally a brave adolescent ventures to identify a parent or favourite family member as their hero but more often than not students faced with this particular question will name a rugby, rugby league or a netball player, and not just any player; those most likely to be named are those most often on our screens.

No surprises there; disappointment perhaps but not surprise.

Their responses say very little about what these young people value and more about what they are exposed to on a regular basis.

The problem is not with the response but rather with the task. The old adage that “quality questions produce quality responses” applies very much in this case. I suggest you are more likely to receive a more positive and heartfelt response by reframing the question and asking students *how they would like to be remembered*. For several years I referred to this task as *writing your own eulogy* but one parent found it offensive that her child should have to think about **that** topic and complained. You’re probably as surprised as I was that only **one** parent complained, to my face anyway. I adhere to the principle that it’s wise to listen to the dissenters – they might be the only ones who are actually right! A favourite misquote of mine reads along the lines of “just because a million people say a dumb thing doesn’t make it not dumb.” So I considered this parent’s point of view and decided that what a change to the title might lose in impact, it might gain in accessibility, for some students. The task became *writing your autobiography* but students only had to include those aspects of their lives they were proud to mention (this brings in a key difference between a eulogy and an autobiography).

In the hundreds of responses I have read to this task I have not yet come across a year 9 student who wants to be remembered **primarily** for his or her prowess on the field or court. If mentioned at all the topic is usually included in the ‘also ran’ section of the autobiography. By far the most popular qualities they want to be remembered for are being a loving parent, a loyal friend and a contributing participant within the community. Making lots of money is sometimes mentioned but usually in the context of providing for families, friends and community. These young people could have written our schools’ mission statements.

Without ever having been exposed to the current draft curriculum, these students believe in the concept of excellence (page 9) and they know at an intrinsic level about the values of

“community and participation for the common good” and “integrity” (page 10). Somewhere along the way key people in their lives have had a positive influence on the development of these values. So, the problem is not that young people do not know what positive values are, it is that they don’t always know how to achieve them. Yes, some of our sporting heroes provide excellent role models and so do many other New Zealanders who have strived for and achieved their own high standards of achievement. Information gleaned from reading about the lives of adults who are both high-achieving and successful by their own standards (and the two don’t necessarily go together) suggests that *striving for high standards* is an integral part of being successful.

My concern is; how often are our students exposed to the concept of “**striving** for excellence?” Do they fully appreciate the role that **persistence** plays in achievement of goals? Have they had opportunities to strive and persist over long periods of time in pursuit of important, self-determined goals? Our most worthwhile and satisfying achievements as adults are usually centred around self-selected goals; achievements that are often the result of striving over time, persisting in the face of difficulty, keeping on keeping on.

How often do students get the chance to experience the satisfaction of reaching their own goals in spite of, or because of, the difficulties they have encountered along the way? Costa and Kallick (2000) make reference to “persisting,” and “striving for accuracy” in their work. Claxton (2002) talks about the “Fours Rs of Learning Power – Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflectiveness and Reciprocity.” In Claxton’s work perseverance is subsumed under the heading of ‘resilience’ but I consider perseverance to be much more than that: to me it suggests determination, fixation on a goal, resolve, purpose, tenacity

Continued page 18

The Question is the Answer

Smart Uses of New Technologies for Thinking and Problem-Solving

Dr. Jamie McKenzie



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Schools and teachers around the world are asking how they might best employ new technologies and the Internet to strengthen student learning. This workshop will show how powerful questions and questioning are the secret to winning good results.

Students can learn to move beyond trivial pursuit, cut-and-paste thinking and mere collection if we nurture their sense of wonder encourage their pondering and equip them with sharpened questioning and invention skills.

Jamie McKenzie shares insights from his new book by this title, exploring ways to deepen and enhance the quality of student performance, production and insight.

Workshop content includes:

- Clarification of the role of questions and questioning as technologies that are critical elements of thinking that is in line with the New Zealand Curriculum;
- Exploration of ways that questioning may work to produce students capable of thinking critically, creatively, reflectively, and logically;
- Consideration of learning examples illustrating strategies that will equip students to inquire, explore, generate, and develop ideas that will prove innovative and original;
- Review of sound unit and lesson design strategies to make questioning and wondering central;
- Attention to varying strategies to reach differing learners.

Dr Jamie McKenzie has devoted his career to the development of teaching strategies that might empower young ones to make up their own minds and figure things out for themselves. He has a passion for student questioning and inquiry - a passion for classrooms that hum with the excitement of children pursuing those issues and concerns that touch them most deeply. He balances his enthusiasm for new technologies with a healthy dose of scepticism and an abiding respect for classical tools and strategies.

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and, in more colloquial terms, showing real grit. I like Costa and Kallick's reference to persisting and striving.

If childhood is the time we develop the habits we take into adulthood...

When are our children presented with opportunities to develop perseverance?

When are they allowed to persist over a long period of time towards the achievement of a long-term goal?

When are they not only allowed, but encouraged, to make and learn from mistakes?

Students are too often moved from one 'topic' to another with an 'assessment' task being just an intervening activity between topics. It is heartening to see the continued emphasis on formative assessment and the recognition that observation of everyday performance (in all its glorious shapes and forms) provides many valuable assessment opportunities.

When referring to long-term achievement I am not meaning the achievement of having *passed* an exam or assessment task, even if the exam is a long way down the track. I am referring to the satisfaction of experiencing real learning, of knowing more about yourself as a learner than you did before, of setting yourself the goal of becoming as expert as possible in some area and knowing that you achieved this because you persisted in the face of difficulties. This applies to all students and is something that well-taught students with learning difficulties experience and of which academically able students are often deprived. It is the satisfaction that Betts and Kercher (1999) refer to as the attainment of autonomous learning skills. An integral, in fact the most important part, of the 'Autonomous Learner Model' is the in-depth study, described as the culmination of the year's work and the "highest level of thinking and learning" (Betts & Kercher, 1999, p.304). It allows learners to pursue areas of interest through the development of a long-term study; the operative phrase being 'long-term.'

Sandra Kaplan (2003) exhorts us to **teach** the value of practice, to help students understand the relationship between achievement and practice, to **teach** students the joy to be gained from delving into their own learning, and to **teach** them about intellectual humility (the sure knowledge that "*the more we know the more we realise we know very little*"). Rather

than being satisfied with receiving an 'achieved' grade, particularly when that 'achieved' standard is well below what they're capable of, students need opportunities to set, maintain and achieve to their own high standards.

In recent years I have become increasingly intrigued by the power of helping students understand that we human beings have more in common with one another than we don't. Across time, space and culture we all travel a similar path on the journey to taking our place in this world. In order to achieve our purpose we must first "*heed the call*." The hero's journey curriculum is about that journey – it is found in stories across all traditional cultures, and told through personal stories, ballads, dance, myths and legends and, more recently, through film, novels and autobiographies. The story of the hero's journey is particularly powerful when the main character in the story is someone the listener can relate to on a personal level (parent, aunt or uncle, ancestor, neighbour, etc) but is still powerful when told about a 'far away' hero as long as the story becomes personalised. The hero's journey is not about always taking up the challenge or always getting it right; it is about being human with all the characteristics associated with that state. It is about facing and overcoming challenges, about becoming the person you want to be not the person past or current circumstances might suggest you ought to be. In the hero's journey negative life experiences become the very fabric of the journey toward achievement.

'The Hero's Journey' provides a powerful theme for teaching about perseverance, humility and striving for excellence, while also providing students with the context within which to experience each of these attributes (or habits of mind). According to Harris (2005) 'The hero's journey' curriculum is an approach to learning and a process through which learners can better understand themselves as heroes in their own lives by reflecting on the journey all heroes undertake in the pursuit of goals. The process of being *called* to achieve or do something, of *refusing the call* and of eventually *taking up the challenge* is one to which learners of any age can relate. The autobiography mentioned earlier is simply a context within which each learner produces their own story with themselves as the central hero. The study of heroes' life journeys (we all have several throughout our lifetime) provides powerful material for examining the importance of setting goals, perseverance, practice, striving for

excellence and learning as a deep and meaningful part of life. It is so much more than just asking young people to name their heroes. The values we espouse will remain alive and well in the children we teach as long as we accept our role as important catalysts in their development and not assume it is someone else's job to teach them.

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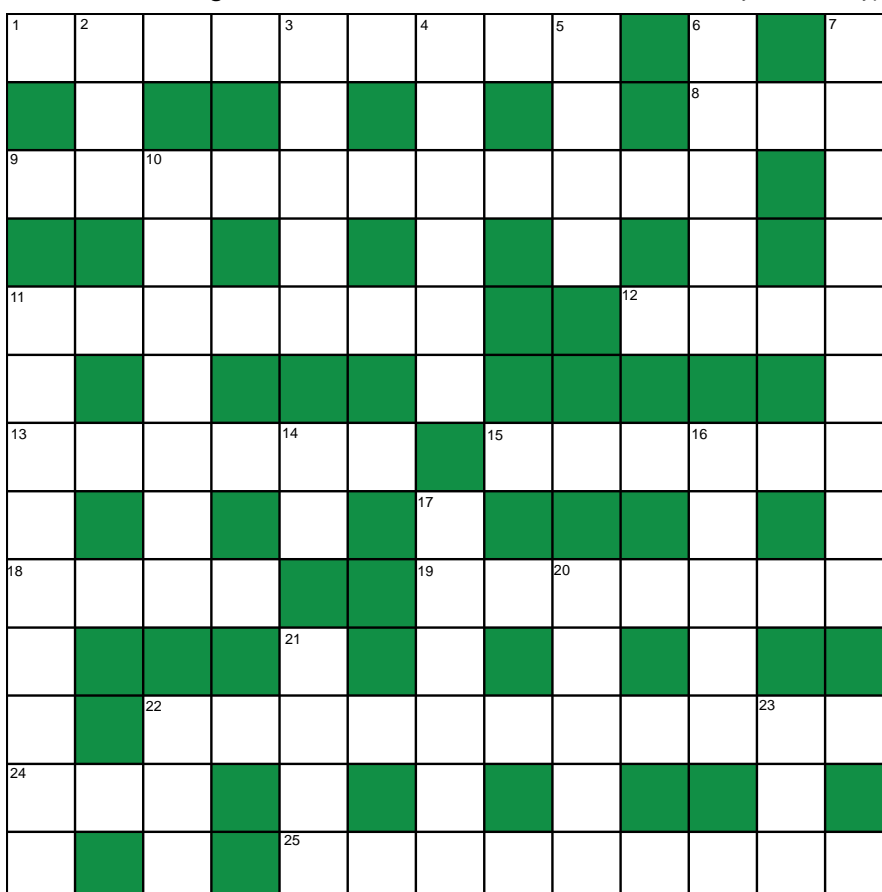
Anne Sturgess works as an Adviser to secondary schools in Gifted and Talented education. Anne's focus in education on meeting the needs of students who require curriculum and/or other modifications has led to her involvement in teaching at all levels of compulsory education and presenting at a number of national and international conferences. Anne's most recent school appointment was Assistant Principal at Hamilton Boys' High School where, in 2002, she was awarded a Beeby fellowship to write *Future Thinking*, a programme designed to provide students with the foundation skills they need in order to become efficient and effective autonomous learners. Anne has recently been awarded a fellowship to undertake part-time doctoral study in the field of giftedness and talent amongst learners from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Please photocopy and attempt this crossword ... this ensures it can be enjoyed by, or can frustrate, more of you!

Answers will be published in Term Two Good Teacher Magazine

Those of you who enjoy a challenge might like to send your completed crossword to Good Teacher Magazine before the 9th of March. The first correct one pulled from a hat wins a small prize and the dubious honour of acknowledgement.

Richard's crosswords will be a regular feature in future magazines.



Across

- 1 Blinded. Zed blazed away. (9)
 8 I am quiet although a little devil. (3)
 9 Sad Rev upset by a celestial ram and became enemies. (11)
 11 Six balls. Look. Direct. (7)
 12 Iron registered nurse for a plant. (4)
 13 Gamine arranged a puzzle. (6)
 15 Deep speaker. (6)
 18 Party and endless tax. Best friends. (4)
 19 First man and a worker are inflexible. (7)
 22 Would this biscuit give sagacity? Just a joker. (11)
 24 Five, that is compete. (3)
 25 Kay, we hear, is an element, symbolically speaking. (9)

Down

- 2 Initially a scholar of high degree. (3)
 3 Old fighters give nothing. (5)
 4 Broken easels land contracts. (6)
 5 Penny's epitaph and a leak. (4)
 6 I'll sound. A walk in church. (5)
 7 Serpent in trouble. It weaves a silky thread. (9)
 10 Give win. Pickled and seeing. (7)
 11 Gear above tee off. (9)
 14 She was one initially before she turned and became this. (2)
 16 Loud and lean on the side. (5)
 17 Mum's bed should bring luck. (6)
 20 Gather morning donkey. (5)
 21 One drip soonest. (4)
 22 Produced by 7. (3)
 23 Some of them, unfortunately, are unable to fly. (3)

books and things

move baby move

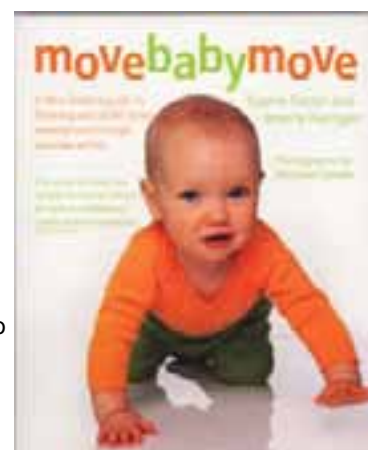
By Sophie Foster and Jerome Hartigan
 Photographs by Bertrand Demee
 Published by Random House
 RRP: 34.99

Written for New Zealand parents, Move Baby Move details why babies and children love and need to move, and how everyday activity links with learning and brain development.

Author Sophie Foster is co-founder of the well known Jumping Beans preschool exercise classes, with co-author Jerome Hartigan. The book's colourful photographs are taken in Jumping Bean classes, and they illustrate practical explanations of how exercise works on specific areas of

children's developing brains. The book is divided into four main sections, covering development of the brainstem (love, cuddles and learning to walk), midbrain (exploring safely), limbic system (making friends) and cortex (learning tricks).

Move Baby Move is written in an accessible question and answer style. It provides clear and comprehensive information on a really wide range of activities, from rocking babies to crawling to trapeze spinning! Beautifully produced, it is just the right size to be popped in a new parent's baby bag, to be picked up and read in small snatches between running around after baby! Recommended for parents of babies and preschoolers wanting to know a bit more about the "why's" of movement and brain development.



Reviewed by Catherine George

Selamat pagi.

Teaching and Learning Science: some experiences in South East Asia

by Mary Loveless

Over the past four years I have had the privilege of working with teachers of science from all the countries in South East Asia on an annual basis. This experience has been both humbling and enriching, interlaced with humour and pathos and marked by the disaster that was the Asian Boxing Day tsunami, where most of the workshop participants from Aceh in 2003, lost their lives.

This Asian connection arose from a presentation I made at the ICASE World Conference on Science & Technology Education, in Penang in 2003. Following the conference Barbara Spurr from Christchurch College of Education and I were invited to return to Penang to facilitate workshops for teachers, with a focus on teaching and learning strategies.

Following that first visit a Memorandum of Agreement was drawn up between our respective institutions, and Barbara and I became consultants for a series of residential courses held each year for teachers by the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) in their Regional Centre for Education in Science and Mathematics (RECSAM) in Penang.

The workshops form part of the residential courses offered by SEAMEO at RECSAM; this year we facilitated components of the following courses: Design and Development of Primary and Secondary Science Instructional Technologies and Visualizing Science with Information and Communication Technology to Enhance Primary Science Learning. Teachers travel from around the region and live in at the centre while attending the courses, they are selected to attend by their governments but also participants come from tertiary teaching institutions and the respective Ministries of Education in the region.

While the language of science instruction in Malaysia is now English this is a recent innovation and is slowly being implemented throughout the school system. This change came about because the Malaysian Ministry of Education believe that using English as the language of instruction in science would help to lift student achievement. However, the Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Phillipines, Singapore, Cambodian, Laos, and Brunei teachers use their own language in the classroom.

The variety of languages spoken and the ability to speak and understand English by the participants poses



somewhat of a challenge to us mostly monolingual New Zealanders. However, the teachers without exception are so gracious, polite and enthusiastic about their learning that we are becoming familiar with everyday phrases. Our tentative attempts are always greeted with huge smiles and laughter. It is really an interesting exercise to try to communicate the scientific concepts associated with forces, chemical reactions and scientific classification through drawing and gestures but with both sides full of good humour it is surprising how well we can communicate with each other. Hugs, smiles, and expansive gestures are universal!

What is really interesting is that we have found that teachers everywhere have much in common when it comes to the welfare and learning of their



students. We all want our students to achieve and when we focus on student learning we have so much to share.

The focus of our workshops is Improving the Learning in the Science Classroom. We model good teaching practice, and through participation, help to familiarise the teachers with a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies. These assist recognition of student prior learning, facilitate student engagement and support the learning process. As in New Zealand the secondary teachers have a depth of understanding of the pedagogical



content knowledge of their subject but the primary teachers have a much less developed understanding of science concepts. While we use a variety of

contexts to develop a wide range of strategies, the focus of the workshops is not content knowledge but teaching and learning.



We use a variety of strategies to communicate the ideas and concepts, with paper copies of the activities and simple visual instructions and demonstrations proving a most effective combination. However, the emphasis is always on participation and learning by doing. To achieve this we are most grateful to the staff and technicians at RECSAM who we now regard as old friends. They are most accommodating of our requests for effervescent tablets, a range of exotic fruits, balloons, toothpicks, marbles, baking soda, film canisters, pens, teabags, scissors and paper which are a few of the items on the long list that we send to them every year prior to our arrival. All the everyday tools of a New Zealand science educator but a little strange to teachers more used to a transmission way of teaching.



The course concludes with a cultural evening where all the participants shared their culture through song, dance and poetry. The kiwi contingent were honoured to be invited to contribute and participated by singing several waiata.



Living in the residential accommodation with the participants gives us the opportunity to socialize with the teachers and tap into their extensive local knowledge.

Where are the best hawkers markets to eat or which night markets are open for late night shopping?

It is rather disconcerting though, to be recognized and greeted like old friends by the stall holders at the night markets, or the staff at the local Indian cafe. But then again tall, grey haired western women visiting local eateries and stalls are few and far between! We have deciphered the local public transport system and manage to get around the island for a couple of ringitts; much to the horror of the RECSAM staff, who mostly have their own air conditioned cars.

Penang is known as a melting pot of cultures; Malay, Chinese, Indian, Arabic, and Eurasians resulting from the islands colourful history. This wonderful mix of people seems to exist comfortably side by side and the temple, mosque and church communities welcome visitors and broadcast their calls of worship over the island.

It is a very special honour to be able to share the lives, hopes and aspirations of the teachers who attend our workshops, to gain an insight into their lives in some ways so different from our own but then again so familiar. The issues we face as educators in New Zealand are surprisingly similar to the issues and concerns of our RECSAM friends. Hopefully the relationships and friends we have made over the past few years will contribute a little to greater understandings and tolerance between New Zealand and our Asian neighbours.



At the end of the workshop we asked the teachers what they had learnt. Some feedback from July this year was:

- *I learnt a lot of ideas to make science lessons more exciting.*
- *That science can be taught in many different and interesting ways.*
- *Different activities that can make students think*
- *Co-operative teaming*
- *Science can be fun and not only content orientated*
- *Everything was new and refreshing. Especially the experiments. Good lecturers and interesting topics.*
- *Carrying out the different strategies that could be used in the science lesson and how it can help our teaching and improve the pupils learning.*
- *Teaching science is so interesting if we use the correct strategies*
- *Learnt a lot of strategies the way to apply those strategies in the classroom with different topics.*
- *Problem solving*
- *Sharing, cooperation*
- *The strategies to make the science class more lively and interesting.*
- *Learnt a lot of experiments that are new and can be carried out in class. Actually easy experiments for children.*

Terima kasih

books and things

And did those feet...

By Ted Dawes
Published by Longacre Press
RRP \$18.99

Reviewed by Seamus Ford Aged 12

"And did those feet..." is an easy to read book narrated by the main character, Sandy. Sandy's lives with his mother and father in Auckland. His family is wealthy, and he is used to a city life with lots of privileges. His house is so big, with about 20 bedrooms, that the three of them get lost in it. When his mother dies his father doesn't cope very well, and Sandy is sent to live with his cousins on a big farm in Taranaki.

Sandy's relatives are different to say the least. They follow the teachings of William Blake, and live in a hexagonal house, where everything (except the toilet) is hexagonal. Unsurprisingly they are teased a lot at school, and once Sandy arrives he is in the same boat.

When Sandy first arrives he hates being there, but after a few life-changing events he appreciates their differences, and comes to see that their values and way of life is just as valid as more "normal" ways of living.

I liked the descriptive writing, because it made you feel you could really picture things like the hexagonal house. I thought the themes of working together and putting aside your differences were really good. It seemed a bit like a book that I would read at school, and go into more depth about the themes and characters, rather than one I would just pick up to read on my own. I think if I'd read it at school I would have got more out of it because there was probably a lot more to it than I got on the first reading. It was a quick book to read, but dealt with some interesting issues.

I enjoyed this book, and would recommend it to over 10's.

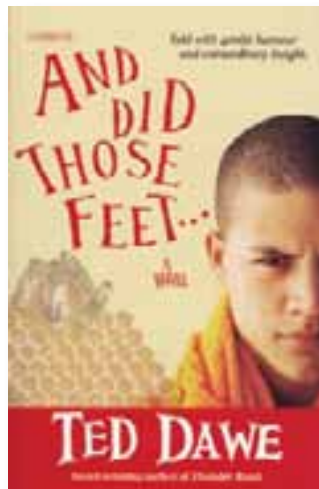
Reviewed by Catherine George

"The year Mum died and Dad went mad I was packed off to live on a farm for a while."

After an ugly showdown at school, Sandy gets sent to stay at his aunt and uncle's Taranaki farm. "Going agricultural" is bad enough for this city kid, but worse: the relative's he's sent to live with are members of an unusual group who follow the teachings of poet William Blake (hence the title). Branded "cultie" along with his cousins at the country school, events on the farm, and at school camp, show Sandy more about his own strengths than he'd ever thought possible.

This is the story of a boy trying to find himself when the whole world he has always known has changed irrevocably. I particularly enjoyed the characters of the uncle and aunt, who were compassionate and sensitive to Sandy's needs. There are plenty of sub-plots and themes for older readers to get their teeth into, from the poetry of William Blake to the mystery of beehives and hexagons. Sandy is a worthy lead character, carrying the story and its themes of displacement and growing up.

An enjoyable read for ages 11 and up from award winning author Ted Dawes.



Genesis

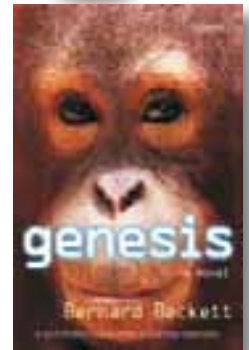
By Bernard Beckett
Published by Longacre Press
RRP: \$18.99

Reviewed by Catherine George

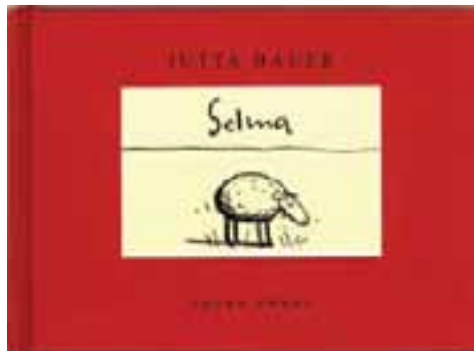
Genesis tells the story of Anaximander, a young Academy candidate being examined on her ability to interpret the history and origins of her society. New Zealand in the not too distant future is renamed The Republic, after a reforming Governor, Plato. The Republic has separated from the rest of the plague-ridden world, and society is strictly divided with assigned roles. Anaximander's special topic of examination is Adam Forde, a rebel who insisted on his right to independent thought and action. Forde's punishment was to participate in a new programme of artificial intelligence...

This science fiction novel is a gripping thriller, and it works on several levels. Some readers will read for the story of Anaximander, while others will delve into the bigger themes raised by the novel: What is consciousness? What makes us human? Where can artificial intelligence lead for the planet?

Bernard Beckett's books are very popular with teenagers, and this is his seventh novel. His 2005 novel "Malcolm and Juliet" won that year's NZ Post Senior Fiction Award, and "Deep Fried" (co-written with Clare Knighton) was shortlisted for the 2006 NZ Post Children's and Young People's book awards. Genesis is his first science fiction novel, and is an intense, somewhat disturbing novel for young adults, with a stunning ending. I enjoyed the conversational telling of the story, and was drawn quickly into Anaximander's world. This unique New Zealand novel is the type of book that I can imagine stirring up incredible conversations about life, ethics and our place in the universe among its readers.



books and things



Selma

Written and illustrated by Jutta Bauer

Published by Gecko Press

RRP: 14.99

Reviewed by Miles Ford age 6

Selma is a really, really funny book.

It is about a sheep called Selma who was asked what she would do if she had more time and won a million dollars - no matter what changed in her life she said she'd like to do the same things. The things she liked doing were to eat a little grass in the morning, play with her children until lunch, have some exercise in the afternoon, talk with Mrs Miller in the evening and finally fall fast asleep. She was very happy with her life.

I loved this book, and have read it lots of times. It's easy to read in bed because it's so little. I would recommend this book to readers of all ages.

Review by Catherine George

Selma is a gorgeous, gorgeous small picture book, that had my children in hysterics! Translated from the original German, a jaded dog goes to the wise ram to ask "What is happiness?" The ram tells the story of Selma, a sheep who knows how simple happiness can be.

A philosophical tale with a healthy dose of quiet humour, this appealed to our whole household (probably on several different levels). High quality production and the universal appeal of sweet Selma make this book a delightful addition to a bookshelf or coffee table.

Henrietta the great go-getter

By Martine Murray

Published by Allen & Unwin

RRP \$23.99

Reviewed by Miles Ford Age 6

Henrietta is a funny girl who has a Rietta in her house. A Rietta is supposed to have spots, but when it gets sad it starts losing its spots, and Henrietta's Rietta is sad because it's not with other Riettas. So Henrietta takes the Rietta to the Wide Wide Long Coast of the Lost Socks. One of the socks helps her, but the sock's a bit cheeky!

I liked this book because lots of strange things happened and there were lots of funny made-up words. The first time my brother read it to me, but after that I read it by myself.

I recommend this book to anyone who likes funny books with interesting words.

Reviewed by Catherine George

Young fans of Clarice Bean can extend their horizons with "Henrietta the great go-getter". Eccentric Henrietta P. Hoppenbeek loves big words (her catchphrase "sheezamageeza" was my favourite) and has a unique imagination. She has a Rietta – a sensitive hippo-like friend, but its spots are fading and it needs a new home with other Riettas, fast! With the help of baby brother Albert, who dribbles and dribbles (but he can't help it), and best friend Olive Higgie (who has been known to eat pickles), Henrietta sets off on a great adventure.

This small, beautifully designed book is a follow-up to "Henrietta There's No One Better". It was a great hit in our house. Henrietta is an immediately likeable character, and I imagine life would never be dull in the Hoppenbeek house with her around.

Quirky language, a fast paced story and lovely graphics all add up to a fabulous flight of fancy for early readers. Melbourne Martine Murray is the author of the wonderful Cedar B Hartley books for older children, which I would also highly recommend.



The Last Elf

By Silvana De Mari
Published by Bloomsbury
RRP: \$24.00

Reviewed by Caitlin Dougherty Aged 11

This book was very cool.

It is about a young elf called Yorshkrunsquarkljolnerstrink whose only family member, his grandmother, passes away. This leaves the young elf all alone in the big wide world.

On the night his grandmother passes away, Yorsh (for short) falls asleep and wakes up in a shack. He is not sure where he is but a very nice woman called Sajra and her canine called Dog are in the shack also. They build a friendship, with some very unusual "elf" language (which I really enjoyed) and go about their business getting to know each other until they meet a hunter called Monser.

They all go on an adventure, as Yorsh tells the woman and the hunter that he had read a book that told him that the last elf must meet the last dragon so off they all go looking for this last dragon!

They go through a number of villages and get into some sticky situations, one of which they narrowly escape being hanged, and eventually find the dragon. Sajra & Monser leave Yorsh with the dragon to live their life together. But that is not the end of the adventure.

I would recommend this book to children aged 11-14 who like adventure, dragons & elves, and even those who don't as I would not normally have read this type of book but I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Reviewed by Karina Davies

It was great to read a book with such an adventure and innocent humour base targeted for our early-teens. The "elf" language was light hearted and certainly put a smile on my face. The whole story was based around Yorsh being left as the last elf and making his way through life meeting new friends and hunting for the dragon.

It was great to see Caitlin laughing as she read some of the things in this book and although she recommended it for children aged 11-14 I certainly have to say adult readers would not be disappointed reading this.

My friend Percy and the Sheik

By Ulf Stark
Published by Gecko Press
RRP: \$15.99

Reviewed by Gabriel Ford Aged 8.

My friend Percy and the Sheik is a humorous tale of two friends who are very different from each other. Percy's father is a venetian blind salesman, and because he's run out of people to sell blinds to in their town Percy might have to move away. Ulf's father is an amateur radio communicator, and talks to people all around the world. One of these people is a Sheik from Saudi Arabia - and he gets invited to dinner! Could this be a solution to Percy's problem?

I really enjoyed this book, the language was really descriptive, almost like watching a film. Lots of different things happened throughout the book, it wasn't just about one story. It was easy to read, and I would definitely like to read other books in the series, because I liked Ulf and Percy. Even though it was a story, they seemed like they could be real people, especially Ulf, who wrote the book. I wonder if this really happened to him when he was little!

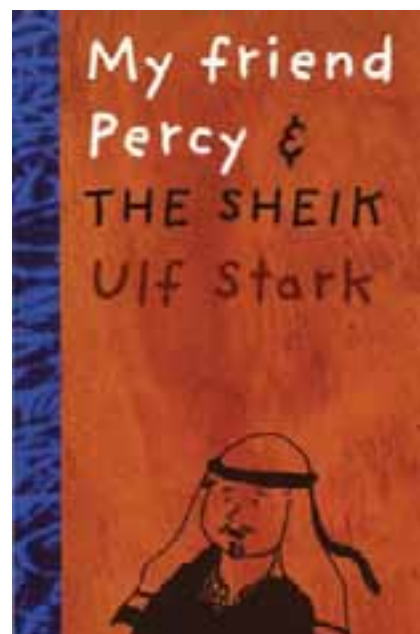
I am definitely going to recommend this to my friends and teachers. It is suitable for ages 6 and up (but littler kids might need it read out loud to them).

Reviewed by Catherine George

My friend Percy and the Sheik is the second in a series of three books about Ulf and Percy. Ulf Stark has been described as Sweden's equivalent to our Margaret Mahy, and his books have been translated into more than 20 languages. Translated into English for the first time by Gecko Press, the series is already being highly recommended by children's bookshops. The gentle humour in the stories about the two boys is heartwarming, and the characters are immediately familiar. Ulf is an ordinary boy with an amateur radio buff father. This hobby of his father's provides a lot of possibilities for interesting plotlines - while his father talks to Saudi Arabia on the radio, Ulf is reading a book on hypnotism...

Percy is a sporty tough guy with a heart of gold, and Ulf is small, plump and unathletic. The unlikely friendship between the two began in the first book in the series - "My friend Percy's Magical Gym Shoes". Both books subtly show the differences between children's and adults perception of life. The deceptively simple style and schoolboy humour would make this an ideal book for not-so-keen readers.

Highly recommended.



Bogging around Europe

or... timely tips for a kiwi going away from home

Dear Editor

After spending some 23 days travelling through Italy, France and London I wanted to share a few travel secrets that I picked up along the way.

These may or may not help you to negotiate the cobbled paths that beset the unwary traveller as you wend your weary way from coffee to café through Europe.

Toilets (bogs to us Kiwis)

1. For the month before you leave home do your exercises.
 - a) Pelvic floor clenches.
 - b) Squatting with backpack on and money belt around chest just below breasts.
- 2) Always have change in your pocket or purse for that urgent dive into the nearest toilet when you suddenly discover that the dinner from last night is just about to appear in another form. Cost is currently running at .70 Euro.

If you don't have change you can

 - a) Try to use the change machine. May not work
 - b) Ask the local gypsy begging outside the door for change of E5.00. May not work either.
 - c) Pretend you're a gypsy as well and beg for change.
 - d) Ask one of the locals.
- 3). Be prepared to use one of three toilet types.
 - a) NZ style with a seat.
 - b) European style without a seat.



- c) Turkish style with a hole in floor and foot pads for you to squat on.
- 4). If you want a clean toilet go to McDonalds. They are required under their franchise agreement to keep their toilets clean and tidy. You may be required to buy something. The code for the toilet is on your receipt. Or ask one of the other customers for their receipt.
- 5). Cleanest toilet in Venice. Peggy Guggenheim museum on the Grand Canal. She was an American millionaire who collected modern art. She is buried in the grounds of the museum along with her 20 or so dogs. Museum is worth while going to as well as to use toilet.

If travelling with children

6. Leave at home the all terrain, 3 wheeled vehicle otherwise known as a pram. Instead, buy one of those cheap buggy's made in China with the 4 small double wheels and plastic upholstery. It will save you hours of frustration and angst. They are light and easy to use and if they get run over by one of the testosterone fuelled Italian drivers, hopefully without



the child in it, you can buy another very cheaply.

7. Don't even bother to look at going to the Vatican Museum or Sistine Chapel.
 - a) the queue is always about a kilometre long.
 - b) They don't allow prams inside.
 - c) It is always totally crowded (twice as bad as leaving Eden Park after a test match.)
 - d) Very muggy. About 35 degrees and 95 % humidity.
- 8) Instead go to St Peters Basilica. Its large, spacious, cool, plenty of room and absolutely stunning.
- 9) Don't expect children to have the



same stamina or interest in 16th Century art as you do. They will wilt in about 1 hour.

- 10) Always have hats for you and the kids. It will help to keep them cooler. Buy ones that are all the same colour and the brighter the better. This allows you to keep an eye on your family through colour recognition.

Beggars.

- 11) Do not give money to beggars. Once you give money to one, its like you have the mark of Cain on your forehead. They will all pester you mercilessly.
- 12) Be aware that in Rome, and other places I'm sure, the gypsies drug their babies to help them beg. Very distressing to see but do not weaken.

- 13) If a young woman with a bright Romanian style dress asks you "Do you speak English" answer in your best German or French, Nein/ non. If you say yes, you will be handed a plaintive note saying that her father is ill in hospital and she needs the money to save his life, etc. We struck about 5 in about 500 metres in our walk in the park near the Arc de Triumph. All with the same story. Must have been a large family.

- 14) If you are buying a train ticket at a vending machine be careful to have someone with you to shoo away the beggars who come swarming around to help you and then demand the change as payment.

Finally ... Coffee

- 15) Be careful where you have a cup of coffee. Prices vary enormously.
- 16) If you have coffee at a table you will be charged more than if you stand at the counter. Look for cafes that advertise "no table charge"
- 17) Don't have coffee in the piazza beside a famous Cathedral or Museum. It cost us \$11.00 per cup

for coffee beside the Duomo in Florence. Around the corner it cost about \$6.00

- 18) If you're desperate for a pee most cafes have toilets. May be worth the \$12.00 or so to use their loo.
- 19) If you're going to hire a bike get one that looks really scruffy. My brother had his nice new shiny one stolen from outside the Florence Railway Station in broad daylight even though it was secured by 2 metal security chains. We found both chains on the ground cut with bolt cutters.
- 20) Food. If you have a look around, most areas have Tourist menus, which are 2 or 3 courses for about 15 Euros. (about \$30.00). Normally very good value.



Till next time.

Yours,

The Travelling Teacher

COMPETITION ...

CAN YOU IDENTIFY YOUR SCHOOL??

If you think **your** school is one of the two mystery schools pictured below ...

- a Write to us identifying your school
- b tell us some of the great things going on there (with photos if you like)

We will publish what you write in the Term 2 2007

Good Teacher Magazine and send you a book for your library.

Mystery School 1



Mystery School 2



Send your entries by March 9th 2007

to:

Mystery School Competition,
George Hudson
PO Box 5531
Mt Maunganui 3150

or email to:

georgehudson1@gmail.com

Unfortunately Term Four 2006 Mystery School 1 was not identified. It was Hobsonville Primary

COMPETITION RESULT FROM TERM FOUR 2006

Mystery School 2... **Tauranga Girls' College**



Tauranga Girls' College celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2008 and has developed from small beginnings 49 years ago when Tauranga District High School split into separate Boys' and Girls' Colleges to the current school with 1680 students and 105 teaching staff.

With a mission statement of "empowering tomorrow's women", the motto "Pergo et perago"- I strive to succeed, and a painting in principal Pauline Cowens office entitled "Powerful beyond measure", this has to be a school with a strong belief in where it is going and how it intends getting there.

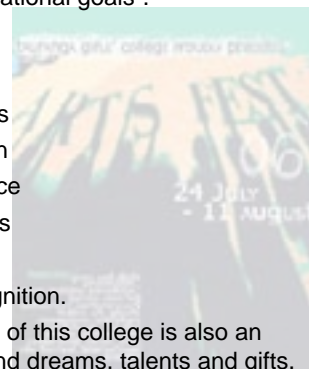


As Pauline says "The title comes from a Nelson Mandela speech which also includes 'our playing small does not serve the world'." Pauline continued, "I am proud to say that in 2006 our girls have the talent, creativity and academic ability to never play small but to seize every opportunity to "shine", personally, by community service and by participation in this college's proud tradition of academic, sporting and cultural success."

"This College is founded on high standards, active participation, determination, discipline and commitment to the achieving of individual and educational goals".

At Tauranga Girls' College they:

- Celebrate diversity
- Offer wide opportunities
- Encourage participation
- Value community service
- Maintain high standards
- Develop confidence
- Achieve National recognition.



Every young woman who is part of this college is also an individual with her own hopes and dreams, talents and gifts.

Everyone at Tauranga Girls' College will work to ensure that she realises her potential as she prepares herself for the world of tomorrow.

Tauranga Girls' College creates leaders in all aspects of New Zealand society.



Pauline acknowledges the integral part the groups of senior students play in the successes the school achieves. Their commitment to their school and willingness to be involved in the fabric of the school's life is what ensures the culture of the school, academic, cultural and sporting "remains alive and well".

Tauranga Girls' College website is www.tgc.school.nz for those wanting to see a bigger picture than shown here or to find out more about the reunion in 2008.



Please Miss, not another book report!

by Lucy Literacy

How many times have we asked our students to demonstrate their understanding of a text by writing a "book report"?

Often these reports are so structured that some students find it difficult to respond in a way that truly shows their depth of understanding. These structures usually predetermine the responses without giving the student an opportunity to think beyond the lines or to share their interpretation.

Recently the staff of Otumoetai Intermediate School in Tauranga took some time to look closely at the Visual Language Static Image exemplars. A key question emerged. "How could we use these exemplars with our students to give them opportunities to demonstrate their understanding when looking for meaning from a variety of texts?"

What better way to answer this question than by putting it to the test.

The teachers looked at the Static Images Exemplars closely, particularly at the matrix focusing on Impact and Concept <http://www.tki.org.nz/> and the other vital component, the explanation that accompanied the static image. This explanation clearly showed the thinking behind the choices the student made for the construction of the static image and their interpretation of the text.

Armed with this knowledge the teachers organized themselves into groups and gave it a go! (- this can be an individual task or a group effort)

The context for learning was the lyrics of Beatle songs (most had prior knowledge of these!).

Set the scene: We need to design a cover for a CD. We need to read the words of the song and agree on the message. Using their knowledge of static images they were ready to create.



I made Sophie's head like a volcano because she's so angry. I started to do her hair yellow, but yellow isn't an angry colour, so I did it over in orange. This bit here [points] I made a mistake, so I turned it into a black cloud coming out of the volcano head. The sides are wiggly, like there's lava coming out and running down the side. She's really angry. I made her teeth tight - RRRRR - and she's got angry lines on her face. I think she's saying angry words. She's stamping and shouting and stopping people from coming near her angry mood.

I collaged a number of photographs of buildings together, and they became just about the whole image I created. I did include a very small piece of grass in the bottom left-hand corner. The photographs were used to make the image look real - this happening all around us. The grass is struggling to survive in an environment full of concrete and buildings. The colours of the buildings are fairly drab and cold in contrast to the life and brightness of the green in the tiny bit of grass. I covered the whole image, except for the tiny piece of grass, with chicken wire to give the effect of being enclosed, imprisoned.





This activity enables the learner to draw together learning from two aspects of the English Curriculum. Using knowledge of the composition of static images to demonstrate their understanding of a written text provides students with another option can allow for a more individual interpretation.

Imagine

Imagine there's no countries.
It isn't hard to do,
Nothing to kill or die for,
No religion too,
Imagine all the people
living life in peace...

You may say I'm a dreamer,
but I'm not the only one,
I hope some day you'll join us,
And the world will live as one.

The word imagine is in black as it holds a great deal of power. Range of colours in lower half are also dark - red, black, greens to emphasise destruction, fighting, unrest and lack of peace on earth.



Catching Them - Hook, Line and Sinker

by Pauline McLeod and Louise Bonnar

Abstract

This paper looks at an eLearning project carried out by two post-graduate students who focused on four key areas essential for a successful online journey.

The key areas are called:

Preparation, Baiting your Catch, Reeling Them In, and Keeping them Hooked Online.

We used this fishing analogy as the desired end result of both journeys is the same – to keep your users (fish) hooked online. In this study, we wanted to catch the attention of a group of literacy tutors (teachers, teacher aides and parents) and hook them into an online resource to provide post-seminar support.

We found that in order for an online support resource to be successful, there needs to be a substantial pool of people with a learning focus, the motivation to take an active part and have a need for the level of support offered.

The findings of our study support the theory that without a collaborative learning community established over time and through appropriately assessing and addressing needs, limited value will be gained from the online experience for all those involved.

Introduction

As part of a post-graduate study in eEducation through the University of Waikato, we were given the task of developing a small-scale eLearning Project to trial and evaluate. We were not aware of any other online projects that supported teachers, teacher aides and parents in implementing reading and writing programmes. As a result we decided to create a literacy support resource to be trialled over a period of six weeks with a group of teachers and teacher aides. Along the way we discovered the importance of building a learning community and of appropriately assessing and aligning the needs of both users and facilitators.

The following is our tale as we reflect on this eLearning adventure.

Preparation

Initially we needed to decide where to go fishing, what we hoped to catch and what to do with the fish once we had them hooked online. As trained primary school teachers, we wanted to create a tool that would be useful in enhancing the literacy skills of children and adults. This led us to the SimpliReading programme developed by Mary Andrew (1997). This structured reading and spelling programme is taught by teachers, teacher aides or parents who attend a training seminar to help learners experiencing reading, writing and spelling difficulties. In such situations where each learner's needs, rate of progress and approaches to tasks are different, support from others implementing the programme can be invaluable. These factors contributed to the feeling that a resource to meet this need for on-going post-seminar support would be practical in nature and in turn benefit a wide range of learners in the area of literacy.

From here we decided the best approach was to develop a support website online for those who had attended SimpliReading seminars. The resources consisted of a website containing supplementary information and resources for using the

SimpliReading programme, as well as access to a discussion forum and twice weekly chat sessions (<http://www.tmc.waikato.ac.nz/simplireading>). In this way, it was anticipated that meaningful interaction would provide the key to a successful online learning environment (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002; Coomey & Stephenson, 2001; Mallinen, 2001) and would encourage support and discussion between users.

As inexperienced fisherwomen, all we initially had in our tackle box was FrontPage for web authoring and a boat load of enthusiasm while floating in a sea of theory. From there we needed to find hosting for the site on completion and went in search of further tools to add to our tackle box, primarily a discussion forum and chat room facilities.

It was envisaged that tutors using the programme would be able to use the information provided on the website to broaden their understanding of the programme and provide practical examples of how it could be used in a variety of situations. We hoped that the discussion forum with a relevant weekly topic would allow people to share ideas and think critically about a variety of scenarios and therefore actively engage them in learning. We hoped people would come into the chat room to ask questions relating to the programme and gain immediate answers, as well as being able to develop a sense of personal connection (Palloff & Pratt, 2001).

Being smart fisherwomen, we decided to target a school of fish we knew existed at a current SimpliReading Seminar. This group would have the Level One Seminar knowledge fresh in their minds and would be (we assumed) going on to use the SimpliReading programme that we in turn were trying to support. At this one-day seminar we had a ten minute slot in which to promote our site. Many took the bait and filled out the initial registration form, giving us their email contact so we could invite them to join the support group, hosted by MSN Groups.

Baiting the Hook

Once we had determined our target audience, it was important to use the correct bait for the type of fish we wanted to catch. Clearly defining your audience and therefore anticipating their needs determines the level of support they will require and how to maximise learning and discussion opportunities (Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Morris, 2002).

The main target group for our resource were classroom teachers. It was important to provide them with examples of how the SimpliReading programme, originally designed to be used one-to-one, could be used with groups of children or a whole class. As such, we dedicated a section of the website to this. We also hoped they would take part in the chats and discussions to share ideas they had found successful in their own classes. We assumed participation would just happen!

The second target group for our support site were teachers and teacher aides working one-to-one or

with small groups of children requiring extra assistance in reading and spelling. As the SimpliReading programme is primarily designed for this situation, we structured the website to provide clear examples and follow-up ideas. We also felt this group would benefit from a place where they could share the highs and lows associated with their job. We catered for this perceived need through a designated area in the discussion forum.

The third main category of users we identified were parents who were using the SimpliReading programme as a structured way to offer their children extra support. We envisaged that the support site, particularly the discussion forum and chat sessions, would facilitate the development of a support network between parents. We believed this would alleviate some of the isolation that personal experience suggests can be felt by parents trying to support their children at home. Potentially it would also provide them with an opportunity to tap into the experience and knowledge of qualified

teachers.

Keeping in mind the need to create eLearning projects that are interactive (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002; Salmon, 2002), we made provisions within the website for FAQs to be submitted and also for users to submit to us (via fax or mail) samples of their learners' work so that we could provide assistance in analysing needs and how best to meet them. A link from the website took users to the login page of our discussion forum and chat room. We chose to use a synchronous chat and asynchronous discussions to get a combination of the benefits associated with each method. While asynchronous discussions can provide effective online learning by encouraging deeper thinking (Palloff & Pratt, 2001 cited in Hardie, 2002; Coomey & Stephenson, 2001) and are more convenient for learners who also have many other commitments, we wanted to benefit from the informal, more personal approach afforded by synchronous chat sessions (Hardie, 2002), particularly as we had not met some of the participants face to face.



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The chat sessions would also provide instant feedback to any users who logged in and would help them build up a sense of belonging.

Reeling them in

We soon discovered that there is more to it than simply using the right bait and finding a good fishing spot. The fish need to be encouraged to take a bite and be hooked by the experience. Many of our users who were tempted by the bait could not be enticed to take a real bite. Others took a bite, nibbled at the site, but could not be hooked into the interactive components of the support site.

Part of being able to reel users in successfully is providing a clear path to ensure that your fish don't get snagged on rocks or tangled in seaweed (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002; Hase & Ellis, 2001). This means it is important to use suitable software to ensure that the registration process is as hassle free as possible and that the resource is functional, user friendly and visually appealing (Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Ko & Rossen, 2001).

Detailed registration instructions, along with the reasons why we required users to register, were handed out at the seminar. Despite this, the registration process still caused some users difficulties and others may have been put off right from the outset by the prospect of having to register (Bischoff, 2000). The registration process was like having a glass-bottomed boat that enabled us to see what was happening. We soon sensed that accessibility issues caused by using the MSN Group Hosting were becoming a deterrent to users. Therefore we organised to have our site hosted by the University of Waikato. While this was effective in enabling easier access it blocked off our window into what was happening and removed our control of over who was able to access the material. Our only indication of activity became the number of hits on our website and any postings made in the discussion forum.

Keeping them online

Alexander and Boud (2001) state that being able to sustain learning over time is dependent on the emotional and personal support we gain from others. While this type of support was what we set out to establish, we found that keeping our users hooked online proved to be the most difficult challenge in making this a reality. It has been documented that without making involvement in discussions a

compulsory element linked to course marks and with a meaningful purpose, people are not likely to participate in them (deLuca & Hoffman, 2003; Hase & Ellis, 2001, Coomey & Stephenson, 2001). As our project did not expect this level of commitment, nor was it set up to 'grade' learning, this was not easy to apply to our situation. We also assumed that participants would inherently want to take part in the discussions for their own sake and that of supporting the learning of others. While many users made comments within the discussion forum, it was difficult to keep them involved in the ongoing forum on a regular basis and to establish an online community.

Research indicates that online communities develop over time when learners share common interests and work towards common goals (Jonassen et al, 2003; Hardie, 2002). We felt that by having the three components of the support site (website + discussion + chat) once people were familiar with using the SimpliReading programme, they would want to extend their knowledge through the discussions in collaboration with other learners. However, the majority of our users were new to any form of online learning and the associated participation that is required to keep it alive. We discovered first hand that it is necessary to not make the assumption that people will feel comfortable in this new learning environment nor that they will naturally understand the impact their own input has on the learning of others within online environments (Palloff & Pratt, 2003). Furthermore, the six week duration of our project was not long enough for the 'conversion' from passive learning towards active approaches essential to online learning (Mallinen, 2001; Berge, 2000).

While we had several users who logged into the discussions and chat sessions frequently, the small group number (about five regular participants) meant there was a limited number of postings which can be discouraging for users (Bishop, 2002; Hardie, 2002). Because of this we refined our fish finding tactics and went in search of more fish by sending out an email with tips for taking part in discussions to those who had expressed an interest in the project and by inviting colleagues to join. This proved more successful and we began to get threads running through the postings and people adding their own discussion questions. Even so, the

number of postings was not sufficient to make the discussions sustainable. Had we included this information and targeted a larger group at the very beginning of our project, we may have had greater success initially (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). We also questioned the suitability of the questions we had chosen for the discussion forum and the impact this may have had on the low level of participation. Additionally, the structured nature of the SimpliReading Programme does not lend itself well to open-ended questions, yet this is what is necessary in order to provide a valuable learning experience (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002, Palloff & Pratt, 2001).

While as facilitators we found the chat sessions to be very time intensive, often disjointed (Jonassen et al, 2003; Ko & Rossen, 2001) and subject to restrictions based around rural dial-up connections, we received positive feedback from our users regarding this component of the support site. Being able to match the needs of the users with our needs as facilitators is an important factor in the success of an online course (Hase & Ellis, 2001). The other interactive aspects of the site were also time consuming for us as facilitators and involved a regular commitment to checking the FAQ area and participating in the discussions. This input is essential however in ensuring a successful experience for everyone involved. No users took advantage of being able to have work samples analysed, nor did they ask their own questions for adding to the FAQs.

Participants also need to establish an identity as part of the online community (Wenger, 1998 cited in Mayes, 2001). Despite that all the people in our initial target audience (from the SimpliReading Seminar) had met one another, encouraging people to post introductory profiles and photos into the discussion forum would have helped our users to develop a personal connection (Hardie, 2002; Palloff & Pratt, 2003).

As well as encouraging collaboration and support between tutors, it is important for facilitators to keep users well fed with a variety of food to ensure they keep coming back. If the same things are on offer everyday, there is no reason to return to the site and interest is lost (Ko & Rossen, 2001). Our website provided a great deal of information and we received much positive feedback on this aspect but once people had been in a few times, there was little need to go back to this component.

Summary - The fisherwomen's basket

Without fish to go in the basket, the pickings from online learning are slim.

We provided the bait, the line and the online presence. While the website was well visited, we had difficulty encouraging a school of fish to return to the discussion forum.

Feedback from participants regarding the website reinforced its successfulness but this component on its own was not geared towards facilitating high levels of interaction. For this, we relied on the discussion forum and chat room. We quickly realised however that not all our users needed the level of support being offered by the discussion forum at this point and have no way of knowing how many seminar participants actually went on to use the programme. This, along with the fact many users were new to online learning and that the SimpliReading Programme itself does not facilitate the establishment of active learning, meant that participation in this area was low. Nevertheless, those who did use this component of the project commented on its value, with feedback such as "I enjoyed reading ideas from other teachers and I am keen to try some in my own classroom. I enjoy the practical aspects - the what works for me ideas." (J. Park, personal communication, 1 October, 2003), and "The chat sessions were great because I received instant answers and could follow up on any comments that were of interest to me straight away (K. Radley, personal communication, 27 September, 2003)".

Because any one project will not suit everyone, it is important to trawl deeply and widely to attract enough users to make the journey viable for all involved. We feel that in many ways we did not catch all the right fish i.e. we did not catch enough of the fish who actually needed the level of support our site was intended to provide. It is also important to educate users about the benefits of collaboration and interaction and to provide them with support as they venture into online learning.

While it was easy to become discouraged by the low participation levels in the interactive components, we need to be realistic about expectations of the project. Considering the short timeframe and the small initial target group, there were many successes in the journey. For both of us this was a fantastic

opportunity to spread our fins in the ocean of eLearning. It was exciting to get feedback from people we had positively helped who would in turn be helping others to read and write more effectively. Despite the fact we were unable to create a strong learning community we feel there is still potential for this community to expand if opened to a wider audience, which is backed up by this final quote from one of the support site participants –

"This would be great for exchanging ideas especially if more users of the programme could be persuaded to contribute. I think it would be a good idea if you really pushed the website etc at seminars and sang its praises in order to get more teachers to participate." (K. Radley, personal communication, 27 October, 2003).

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Pauline McLeod
mcleod.b@xtra.co.nz

Louise Bonnar
lou.and.earl@xtra.co.nz

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