

IES JOINT FORUM NZPF & NZEI

Ivan Snook – Academic perspective

1. **How do you evaluate an education document?** You look deeper and ask what lies behind this document? We faced that with 'Tomorrow's Schools'. They said what people wanted to hear. They talked of accountability, local control, appealing notions. We asked 'Whose interests will be served by this radical change?'
2. Today we ask 'What's the environment into which this policy has been thrown?' Worldwide it's GERM (Global Education Reform Movement). Locally it is a succession of Governments that favour privatisation both generally and specifically
3. We have a political scene where \$36m is allocated to 5 charter schools and there are 6 more lining up. We ask 'Whose interests will be served?'
4. The '**collaboration**' theme is dotted like confetti throughout the document. The word 'equity' was also scattered throughout the Picot Report but the ink was barely dry when 'equity' was licked into touch and 'choice' came to the forefront. You might question talk of 'collaboration' in a context of GERM, competition, choice, a standardised curriculum and performance pay.
5. The McKinsey report, Fullan and the OECD have a focus here. **The OECD** is becoming a super Ministry of Education for the world with PISA etc.
6. **Fullan** has become the patron saint of the reform movement and is working in NZ. He is the favoured thinker for business interests and runs a huge business himself. This makes me sceptical. There is a phoney progressiveness about his thinking which is half right and half wrong. He is right on the easy subjects and wrong when it comes to the more complex. In 2012 he was awarded a Canadian honour for his work in the reform movement. I have read all of Fullan's books and from a teacher perspective he has a paternalistic contempt for teachers as a 'broken thing to be repaired'.
7. **Clusters** and the notion of clustering is mostly based on economic models, except in Cambodia where participants' leaders are elected. When leaders are appointed under the IES model and paid more, we are told this is not performance pay. How? People are moved according to these positions. They work in competition and use standardised measures of performance. They focus on mechanistic skills and are not focused on the broad notion of curriculum. In NZ the clusters that already exist are superior because they have grown in response to local needs
8. Underlying this notion there has to be a '**Value-Added**' measure. Fullan says the key thing is measurement and logically that has to be 'value-added'. And so we ask 'what has been the progression from point A to point B?' What we know is that such a system is unreliable from teacher to teacher, from year to year and for assessment. We note that the Treasury has made significant shifts towards the notion of 'value-added'.

9. **SES (socio economic status)** is crucial in predicting learning outcomes but for Fullan it is bleached out and for the OECD it has been moved out. SES is a key factor in what a child brings to school. Teachers are the most important feature **in** schools. There is far too much made of objectively measuring kids, teachers and schools.
10. There is nothing in the document about '**what schools are for**'. By default therefore the economic model will win out.
11. There is an '**Air of Fatalism**' that says nothing can be done, but that is not true. Think of class sizes and other Government back downs.
12. If entrenched this policy in due course will be **evaluated**. In other words someone will be appointed to show what's working. And that's that.