



PRINCIPAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

THE MOST RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL ADVOCATE FOR NEW ZEALAND'S PRINCIPALS

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President's Message



Kia ora e te whānau

Times of crisis and challenge are stressful, but they are not uniformly negative.

That is true of the COVID-19 challenge we are facing right now. On the positive side, it has prompted a professional renaissance.

Education has been under the cosh for decades. Principalship has been subject to the progressive dismantling of a strong grassroots practice leadership perspective.

The purpose of education and our state school system has increasingly been subsumed by a dominant narrative, which has found expression in neoliberalism - an ideology dominated by the forces of market thinking.

It has had a debilitating effect on our system of schooling.

It spawned competition; a dominant core curriculum that could be 'measured'; an overt favouring of quantitative means for assessing achievement (summative assessments and standards); and ceded educative purpose to the economy. Schooling was seen as a mechanism to 'train' students for the workforce.

Consequently, a generation of school leaders have come to accept that this is how the system works. It has had a stultifying

effect on important educational ideas that reflect the whole child and how the system can nurture the diversity of human capital.

Education hadn't always been viewed this way.

In 1939, Clarence Beeby, a remarkable Director of Education, articulated a narrative that, to this day, stands as a beacon for us all. He stated that, "Every person...has the right, as a citizen, to a free education of a kind for which he is 'best suited' and to the fullest extent of his powers." In other words, education should be tailored to each young person in a way that is personal to them.

While we are engaged in remote teaching and learning we have an opportunity, to rediscover our driving educative purpose and elevate it in our minds and work.

But more than that, we have a job, as school leaders, to insist that the entities that have influence on the levers of our education system, such as our Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office, understand how serious we are about eradicating the vestiges of neoliberalism from schooling.

Schooling, in remote mode or at any other time, is not about pouring formal curriculum into young people. It isn't about maintaining tight coverage or being concerned that particular dominant literacies have emphasis. Our job is to grow unique and impassioned learners who have a hunger to learn.

There is evidence of this latter approach flourishing in this time of remote learning. Removing the formality of the school setting is forcing us to consider alternatives and to innovate. In many ways explicit teaching is taking a backseat for a while. Without the immediacy of the physical teaching and learning relationship, we have had to design learning with the student truly in the driving seat.

But perhaps, most excitingly, it is giving us all an opportunity to reconnect with the purpose of education - to help each student experience a curriculum to which they are best suited and to underscore the role of principals as true leaders of people.

Over the past month I have seen the flames of educational purpose and practice leadership burn brightly again. We should

not miss the opportunity to consume this moment, call it out, appreciate it and nurture it!

The purpose of our education system is NOT to train young people to succeed in the world as we know it or to just get a job and fit in.

The purpose of education is to grow young people in ways that are personal to them; to enable them to confidently pursue their own unique talents and lead personally satisfying lives. That way they can influence and change the world they are growing into.

Ironically, such an approach will be more successful in growing a strong economy. The world requires innovators and confident change-makers not just personnel for the daily grind.

Don't underestimate the importance of developing a national, collective mindset regarding the purpose of education and don't underestimate the opportunity that this state of flux presents.

Observe the power of being metaphorically plugged into each other. Generous sharing and connection between principals are both having a powerful effect on our sense of professional self. Use this time, while we are engaged in such significant challenge, to build the efficacy of the learners in your care and enhance the quality of your professional leadership. Give your teachers permission to go 'off-piste' - to deviate from the norm. Be much less concerned about delivering a formal curriculum. Focus on learners' interests and enable recognition and celebration of each young person's own important learning. Use this time to reflect on the impact of being part of a strong and connected community of school leaders and how this, in turn, strengthens the purpose of education.

Then let us use our experience and connection to grow system level change.

Change is long overdue!

Ngā manaakitanga

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NZPF Notices

Creative Resource ready for schools

A project to support primary school teachers with a rich, arts-based set of resources when they return to school next week has been developed by a team at the University of Auckland.

Led by Professor Peter O'Connor in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, Te Rito Toi, provides detailed lesson plans and classroom activities designed specifically for the changed environment teachers and students now face.

The resources, which can all be found on one website, are based on years of experience by University of Auckland researchers who have worked in schools post-disaster. They are recommending teachers use an arts and wellbeing approach to engage children with the changed classroom environment.

The lesson plans include a poetry lesson by former Poet Laureate Selina Tusitala-Marsh, a unit on dealing with anxiety supported by the John Kirwan Foundation and Māori arts resources curated by a bicultural team based in Wellington.

The resource is available now on www.teritotoi.org.



NZ Principal Magazine also Online

You and/or your team members can easily access the NZ Principal Magazines online, as an e-magazine or as a PDF. Additionally you can search for a previous issue, an article by title or by the author of the article. All magazines back to Term 1 2012 are available in this format. To view or search click [here](#).

Useful Information



Resources for Distance Learning

The Asia New Zealand Foundation have the following resources available for students to use:

Distance learning resources for Y4-7 social studies

Mini-units designed for students to be able to learn from home by working independently on differentiated learning activities to explore different cultures.

[Explore Philippines](#)

[Explore Indonesia](#)

[Explore China](#)

Online workshops for students

Online workshops available for students to experience Rakugo (Japanese story telling) or Wushu Kung Fu. The workshops will be delivered by a combination of live-streaming and video materials. Contact Yasheeka Bertram (ybertram@asianz.org.nz) to register interest.

Business Partners

NZPF assures its business partners that, as members, you will contact them to have a conversation if you are purchasing products, services or solutions for your schools that a business partner supplies. Please support our partners as their assistance to NZPF means better membership services to you.

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