Report Following MOE-Funded Sabbatical Leave

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Acknowledgements

most grateful to the Ministry of Education for granting sabbatical leave to me from late May to early August, 2011. It was intellectually stimulating to be engaged in new learning, it was informative to see how schools operated in England and the USA, it was refreshing to rest from the daily challenge of principalship, and it gave me time to do some *thinking*. I sought sabbatical leave most of all because I needed to engage in some new learning and become acquainted with research on aspects of education that are critical to the pumping heart of a school's success, so thank you to the MOE for approving my application. The experience has not left me disappointed.

I also wish to thank the principals and other senior managers who gave of their time to answer my questions. Even though I was imposing on them close to the end of their school year, when everything was hectic, they were gracious enough to host me, answer my questions thoughtfully, show me around their schools and freely give me their resources. One of the things that makes employment in education so special is the sense of collegiality that crosses the borders between schools, even competing schools in the same town. I discovered that the same collegiality crosses international borders as well and am grateful for the discovery.

I also wish to sincerely thank the Taradale High School Board of Trustees for supporting my application. This practical form of support is encouraging and I hope you are pleased with what I have learnt and that you stay long enough on the BOT (hint) to see it come to some fruition over time.

Thank you, too, to the Senior Management Team of Taradale High School for stepping into the breach, especially but not exclusively, Mrs Liz Drury, Acting Principal for the duration of my absence. Without the competence, willingness and flexibility of these capable people, I could not have taken extended leave.

Overview

Perhaps ambitiously, I selected four research topics, each one having resonance to Taradale High School at present:
1. Student motivation
2. How schools are using in-house professional development to improve teacher practice in the classroom
3. Models that exist in state schools for taking a whole-school approach to values education
4. The role designated "thinking" strategies can play in enhancing student learning.

Methodology

My study has three sources:
1. Visits to schools in San Francisco, Corvallis, Eugene (USA), London and Oxford (UK).
2. Attendance at the International Conference on Thinking in Belfast.
3. Professional reading.

I spent many more hours selecting schools to visit than I spent visiting them, an investment of time I would recommend to others conducting a similar study tour. The short list packed a punch, included dramatic "turn around" schools and an exemplary new school. I sought schools that shared enough similarities to Taradale High School to draw some relevant comparisons and conclusions, therefore they had to be co-educational state, secular schools that were neither small nor large by our standard of about 1,000 students. Moreover, I wanted to see outstanding schools, therefore I perused Ofsted reports in the UK and State Department Reports in the USA (both agencies are equivalent to ERO) to ensure I was attending top-ranked schools. Hence, I was not disappointed by any of the visits as the quality of answers and resources I received from them was excellent.

Introducing the Schools

Balboa High School
- Grades 9-12 (ages 13-18)
- Students: 1,375
- Student Composition:
  - Ethnicities:
    - Asian 42%
    - Latino 22%
    - Phillipino 15%
    - Caucasian 7%
    - Afro-American 7%
    - Pacific Island 2%
    - Japanese 1%
    - Korean 1%
    - Other 3%
  - The neighbourhood has more single parent families than anywhere else in San Francisco.
- Location: 1000 Cayuga Avenue, San Francisco, USA
- Principal: Mr Kevin Kerr, who has been at the helm for two years.
- School Background: Following concerns about school violence and poor standards of achievement, the whole education faculty was sacked in 1999 and everyone given the opportunity to re-apply for their jobs. Since then, a gradual transformation has occurred resulting in the school achieving placement on *Newsweek*'s "America's Top Public High Schools" list in 2007 and 2008. However, the current staff do not credit the turn-around to the drastic measure of lay-offs by the State Education Department in 1999. Far from it. The former principal, Dr Gray (1999 – 2009), was described as being strong-willed. It seems the school was at a stage where it needed a forceful approach, but the turn-around was not the result of single-minded leadership either. Some small changes in demographics have occurred in the school's favour, but the Senior Leadership Team doesn't credit that with the change. Instead, it puts school improvement down to a multitude of small improvements, for example:
  - Improving student safety

- Faculty agreements about rigour, student behaviour, expectations of students.
- BBC: Blackboard Configuration – every teacher using the same configuration, including:
  - "Do Now"
  - The goal of the lesson
  - Etc.
- "Bell-to-bell" teaching and learning, i.e. not losing a single minute in the classroom, for example the management opposed "class parties" at the end of the year and any other time wasting activity. "Our students already know how to eat cake," they told me.
- Faculty-by-faculty commitment to "checking for understanding". The school took a compulsory school-wide approach to this through their professional development programme.
- Setting a school-wide acronym for writing paragraph answers:
  - T: Topic
  - E: Evidence
  - A: Analysis
- Making attendance at after-school tutorials compulsory for students who want to be in a sports team.
- Sacking coaches who made statements like, "I don't care about your school work."
- Making teachers conversant with thinking strategies.
- For "freshmen", the timetablers avoided using the first and last periods of the day for "core subjects" such as algebra. Instead, they teach the most complex concepts to Grade 9 in periods 2-4 in the belief that younger students are better able to think and process information at those times than at the start and end of the school day.

Crescent Valley High School
- Grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)
- Students: 1,060
- Student Composition:
  - Mostly Caucasian
  - 8% Hispanic
  - 8% Asian
  - 2% African-American
- Location: Highland Drive, Corvallis, Oregon, USA
- Principal: Cherie Shroud has been the principal for six years.
- School Background: The school was down when Ms Shroud took it over. The staff was beaten, the school felt under-resourced, the poor cousin of Corvallis's other high school, Corvallis High School, which was winning the enrolments war by 300 students. Ms Shroud puts school improvement down to the following factors:
  - She sought to listen closely to what the community was saying. She heard:
    - Students saying they wanted a voice, so she established a range of student forums.
    - Staff saying they wanted to be treated as professionals, so she asked teachers to design courses they would be passionate about.

- Parents saying they wanted more curriculum options for their children, which resulted in the establishment of a student activity co-ordinator, amongst other things.
  - o A large contributor to the improvement in school roll was a resolution by the District Department of Education to create a school zone. The school's reputation has changed now to the extent that they now receive applications to attend from out of zone.

Corvallis High School
- Number of students: 1,190
- Grades 8-12 (ages 12-18)
- Student Composition:
  - o The majority is Caucasian
  - o 17% Hispanic & growing
  - o 2% African-American
- Location: Buchanan Street, Corvallis, Oregon
- Principal, Dawn Granger, who has been there three years and has recently been promoted to District Superintendent in Coos Bay, Oregon.
- School Background: because Corvallis is a university town, the school has many gifted and talented students, but it also has a percentage of unmotivated, underachieving students, often expressed in poor attendance and generally arising from some deprivation of background.

North Eugene High School, Eugene
- Number of students: 970 and increasing to 1035 in the 2011-2012 year.
- Location: Silver Lane, Eugene, Oregon, USA
- Principal: Anne Erwin, who has been at NEHS just on a year. She is the principal of the International High School.
- Background: NEHS operates as three largely independent schools. For five years now, the school has been divided into three schools, each with its own principal and staff. Rather than employing an executive principal, the three principals take responsibility for specific administrative areas of responsibility, e.g. one oversees budgets, another reading support, another ESOL, etc. The motivating driver behind this innovation is the conviction that students do better in small schools, resulting in some of the following advantages:
  - o Students enjoy a stronger connection to staff and staff have a better knowledge of them than is possible in larger schools.
  - o Student needs are easier to identify as staff have superior pastoral knowledge of students, for example
    - staff meet every fortnight to discuss each grade for the purpose of identifying individual students of concern.
    - staff find it easier to link students to extra-curricular activities.
  - o Students find it easier to access services, such as the school counsellor.
  - o Parents become better known by staff and vice versa.

Staff and students have increased access to the principal and the principals have a reduced work load allowing them to get into classes more often, to know their teachers in more depth than would otherwise be possible, to build a climate of high trust. Whilst large schools have considerable efficiencies,

they are also, says Ms Erwin, "efficient at letting students fall between the cracks."

Is it working?
- o Whilst NEHS is the poorest school in the city, it has climbed from 4th place in graduation results to 3rd.
- o Each school has about 95 Grade 9 students, illustrating why it's likely that the assertion of knowing students better is true. Measurements are indicating the success of this programme:
    - Increased grades
    - "Outstanding" value-added growth
    - Decreased absences
- o The Oregon State Education Department gave NEHS an "Outstanding" ranking in 2010 and judged it to have met all the Federal targets.

Phoenix High School
- Ages 11-16. It has recently extended to include "Sixth Form" (Year 13) and has taken a local middle school under its wing.
- Students: 960
- Student Composition:
    - o 50 languages are spoken
    - o 60% of pupils are categorised for free lunches (an indicator of low socio-economic status).
    - o Between 65-75% of students are from single-parent families.
    - o The demographics haven't improved over time
- Location: The Curve, Hammersmith, London, UK.
- Headteacher: Sir William Atkinson (knighted 3 years ago for services to education), has had a 16 year tenure, in addition to previous leadership of two schools.
- School Background: Phoenix High School was previously known as "Hammersmith", dubbed "the worst school in the country" by one newspaper. By the mid-90's it was in terrible shape: graffiti was everywhere, exclusions were high, "special measures" were in place, only 30% of its teachers were permanent, it had 5 Acting Principals in 2 years, one of whom was stabbed by a pupil, a staff member was threatened with rape, and even the police had a hard time there, as one constable had his handcuffs stolen while visiting. Eventually, students burned down one of the buildings, leading, I suppose, to its renaming as "*Phoenix* High School," a school that has literally and figuratively risen from the ashes.

The school's transformation into the model school it is today, with polite, well-dressed pupils, in a safe school that is clean, tidy, with modern facilities, staffed by committed teachers and displaying all the trappings of success, occurred at snail's pace. Sir William describes some of the measures he took to turn it around:
- He sought to impact the low expectations of staff, pupils & parents. The senior staff had express belief that students could succeed to national averages. They repeatedly reiterated their unrealistic expectations and made staff "feel bad" when they didn't meet them. They built an expectation of exceptional acceleration. "You've got to

change the law of physics, to go against nature, in order to succeed with these students," says Sir William.

- Continuity of staffing was a problem. A third of the teachers were supply teachers, a model so ineffective that in 1999 Sir William stopped using them and developed "warehouse" classes instead, whereby good teachers taught up to 100 pupils at a time. Sir William worked hard to retain good teachers and attract more of them. This is still an issue today, as Phoenix is still in the heart of Hammersmith, so teachers in this type of environment have to be "missionaries". Despite a rigorous selection process, many still don't make it. Those that do have exceptional resolve with the energy to match it.
- Sir William worked at building the staff into a team with common aspirations, practices and teamwork. They developed a common code of practice, involving three steps:
  - Teacher compliance with expectations.
  - Agreement on lesson planning, any sort of lesson planning to begin with, but increasingly lessons conformed to the common code of practice across the school.
  - Formal feedback to teachers.
- The school finally got into the position of being able to chase up non-compliance of all sorts amongst pupils.
- The school worked hard to get parents on board with the belief that their children can do well. Success at Phoenix has been predicated on building good relationships with families, communicating with them in ways they understand, getting parents into school and raising their expectations for the potential of their children. Sir William's view is that you've got to work *with* families, including those who might otherwise be deemed to be "difficult". The school runs a community education centre for parents, including language classes and coffee mornings with themes such as flower arrangement as well as running ESOL classes for parents who have emigrated from non-English speaking countries.
- They introduced broad-banding of students, with no top or bottom classes, but also with the tops not mixed with the bottoms.
- They are now at the stage where they can strategise for children -
  - learning how to learn;
  - being their own success agents;
  - developing confidence.
- The school now carries the ultimate badge of success in a UK school, with an "Outstanding" judgement for overall effectiveness from Ofsted.

The Ark Academy
- Grades: currently years 1, 2 & 7.
- Students: 400, but likely to extend to 1600 once the school is in full swing.
- Student Composition:
  - The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English are above average for London.
  - The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average.

- Location: Forty Avenue, Wembley, London, UK
- Principal: Mrs Delia Smith OBE is the founding principal. The site was bare ground when she was appointed two years ago with not a policy written or another staff member on the payroll. Mrs Smith has been able, then, to design a school from scratch, physically, philosophically, pedagogically.
- School Background: Academies were first set up to transform old schools, especially those in deprived areas, but more lately they have been breaking new ground by building new schools. Whilst they are publicly funded, they are freed from teaching the national curriculum, which has become, in Delia's view, "an oversized beast". "Ark" is a private brand of school, with branches in several countries, so in New Zealand terms, The Ark Academy is something like a state-integrated school.

  As an aside, Delia explains that since the early 1990s, Headteachers have been given more autonomy, which Delia believes is key to improved standards in schools, especially in London which now boasts the fastest improving schools in the country.

The Cherwell School
- Ages 11-18, having recently undergone a huge transition by accommodating the local middle school.
- Students: 1860
- Demographics:
  - The majority are white Britons
  - The largest minorities are African and Asian
  - The university generates an eclectic mix of ethnicities
  - The socio-economic mix is both high and low with a very large top, a thin middle with a long tail, illustrated as a tadpole.
- Location: Marston Ferry Road, Oxford, UK
- Principal: Mr Paul James, previously Deputy Headteacher at Cherwell from 2009, appointed at a similar time to his predecessor who resigned after just a year in the job.
- School Background: Because of the university population, a high number of students at Cherwell could be described as "driven" and "aspirational" from well-educated families. This fact and the proximity of the Oxford university, with all its attendant facilities and academic events, Cherwell is a magnet for high calibre teachers. The Cherwell School is also ranked "Outstanding" for overall effectiveness by Ofsted.

I am regularly asked: "But what about the child who is completely 'unmotivated'; who just doesn't want to learn anything?" My answer is that those children don't exist. There are kids who don't want to learn particular things, in particular settings, and there are those who don't find it easy to learn some things in some settings; but the generally lazy child who doesn't want to learn anything is a myth.
Guy Claxton

Chapter 1: Student Motivation

1.1 School Visits

"What's your theory of influence?" I was asked some time ago. It does me no credit to admit that only a couple of inadequate answers echoed briefly in the vacuum between my ears. So I read *Influencer – the power to change anything* by Kerry Paterson *et al*. I refer to it here because motivation is a personal, internal thing, yet as teachers we attempt to plant it in our pupils when it's absent, fertilise it when it's present, weed out its competitors and eventually harvest it when its ripe, because we believe it to be one of the vital factors required for achievement, yet, despite all our efforts, we often feel at a loss to have adequate influence over it. This was not the case, however, at the schools I visited. Mostly, they have become masters at a range of strategies for influencing pupils to learn. In fact, influencing student motivation is possibly their 'tipping point' between mediocrity and stellar success. I have set out the strategies they use against the criteria Paterson *et al* propose for success at influencing people to change their behaviours.

The authors of *Influencer* argue that whenever people are acting in unhealthy ways, it's because the world around them is "perfectly organised to create those unhealthy behaviours". They suggest that there is rarely one single source of influence behind poor performance. Consequently, the reason leaders fail to create change is because they set out in search of the one source of influence that will work for them. In a school, they may try offering rewards, or punishing, or focussing on student accountability. When their chosen solution doesn't work, they give up. However, any problem that is influenced by multiple sources won't go away with a strategy that deals with only one.

The authors suggest that up to six influence factors may apply in any given situation:
1. **Personal motivation**, such as taking personal satisfaction from the right behaviour or disliking the wrong behaviour. Or thinking carefully about how one course of action would help with long-term goals over another. Or aligning actions with the deeper moral values we hold. For educators, it's about making undesirable behaviour desirable by tapping into people's pre-existing motives and reminding them of their own deeply help values.

2. **Personal ability**, that is the skills or knowledge to do what is required, the self-control to do the right thing even when it's hardest to do so. Sometimes building motivation requires building people's abilities.
3. **Social motivation** – a pertinent one for adolescents, who are heavily influenced by the behaviour of peers. If peers are actively encouraging the right behaviour, if they are modelling the right behaviours in an effective way, we all know how powerfully it can influence others. Few motivators are as powerful for teenagers as the approval or disapproval of their peers.
4. **Social ability** refers to the capability of others to provide the help, information, and resources required, particularly at critical times, and the accountability for behaviour. The challenge for schools is to get peer pressure working for us rather than against us, to build relationships of trust with both the formal student leaders and the informal opinion leaders.
5. **Structural motivation** refers to the way things are organised around us, such as recognition for appropriate behaviour.
6. **Structural ability** refers to such things as aspects in the environment that make it convenient, easy, and safe to do the right thing, for example it might include cues and reminders to help students stay on course.

All the schools I visited identified a lack of personal motivation as being a palpable issue for at least some, if not many, of their students, even for the likes of The Cherwell School and Corvallis High School which teach the children of university staff, the sort of student many of us would think of as inheriting considerable internal motivation from parents. In some schools, student motivation was considered to be a major challenge, with high percentages of students coming from families who are poor, single-parent and where English is not the first language spoken at home. Where schools were being successful despite these disadvantages, it was never the result of a silver bullet. Instead, it was the combined impact of a wide range of intentional strategies that was making the difference.

Personal Motivation:
Both Phoenix High School and The Ark Academy have taken a rigorous approach to tracking student progress for the purpose of tapping into students' internal motivation by informing them of where they stand.

At Phoenix High School:
- Every student has an individual target, which is intentionally stretching because they're aiming for at least the national average for everyone, yet the vast majority commence at Phoenix well below average.
- Reports focus on the current *rate* of learning towards each pupil's individual target. The minimum target is the national average by Year 11.
- In every lesson at Phoenix, pupils are graded for effort – they're "big on effort being required for success."
- Students need to be able to say where they're at and what they need to do next, or as teachers I spoke to said, the *teacher* is "in trouble". So there is an onus on teachers to ensure they have communicated clear position statements to each pupil and that each pupil has a genuine understanding of one's position in relation to one's targets.

- Student results are put up for everyone to see, thereby tapping into mutual competition as a motivator. Sir William acknowledges that this is a controversial practice.

The Ark Academy has also committed huge resources to identifying where each student's learning is at. This filters down to students in a form they can understand. Part of the key is that pupils know where they're at in every subject, where they started at the beginning of the year and what their individual targets are. They are expected to record this information at the front of their student planner. When the Vice Principal asked a random student to show me his targets, he was able to do so in a way that suggested he understood them very well.

Phoenix High School made specific reference to the importance of celebrations as a motivator:
- Subjects run celebration nights when student work is showcased to parents.
- Sir William sends individual birthday cards to *every* pupil.

Balboa High School has put an emphasis on student accountability in interesting ways:
- They have made attendance compulsory at after-school tutorials for students who want to be in a sports team.
- They also took a novel approach to making students accountable for learning in class: each teacher wrote the name of each student on a popsicle stick. At different points in the lesson, the teacher would draw out a name at random, and would check for that pupil's understanding in front of the rest of the class. The name then goes back in the hat, so every student knows that at any point in the lesson, he/she could be required to account for learning thus far. Teachers are now putting the names on their phones and setting them to random selection.

At North Eugene High School, they put tertiary training in front of Freshmen to motivate them to higher learning.

At Crescent Valley High School "Behaviour Plans" are used as a support for doing the right things rather than punishment for having done the wrong things.

Personal Ability:
OK, so it's one thing to be motivated to learn, but what if one's motivation outstrips one's ability to learn?

A number of schools expressed the need to build students' confidence in their own abilities to achieve, notably Balboa High School and Phoenix High Schools, with the latter seeking to influence staff and parents' belief in the efficacy of their pupils a much as influencing pupils' self-efficacy.

The Vice Principal of The Ark Academy explained to me that one of the fundamentals of the school's beliefs is that the brain is a muscle, not a bucket, so with exercise it can be developed resulting in accelerated learning. Certainly,

accelerated learning seems to be the norm at The Ark Academy, despite the fact that its pupils are not gifted, privileged or selected for entry.

In answer to my question about student motivation, it was quite common for principals to explain what they were doing to lift the abilities of low performing students. For example, at Corvallis High School, in response to my question about strategies to build student motivation, Ms Granger explained two programmes they are using to accelerate learning. My tone here is observational rather than critical. There is an unspoken rhetorical question, "Why, would a student with learning difficulties be motivated to succeed without a tailor-made programme that makes success achievable?" Fair enough.

Corvallis takes two approaches with "Freshmen":
1   Those with low reading or mathematic scores study maths and / or reading for an extra period per day. A programme by the name of "Read 180" has been used so successfully that it lifts students from a reading age typical of 6th Grade all the way to an 11th Grade in one year. Note that students in the reading class still do mainstream English. By contrast, North Eugene High School operates the "Accelerated Literacy" programme for Freshmen in specific preference to the "Read 180" in the belief that it enhances both reading and writing. It is conducted with a ratio of 4 teachers to 20 students and is "highly successful at raising students to the appropriate reading level for their grade." Phoenix High School uses DIRP, a New Zealand literacy programme that gets "measurable results at an accelerated pace."
2   Special classes are set up for the first semester of Freshman year for those who arrive at school unprepared for high school. Similarly, Phoenix High School runs a successful "home room" style of programme for its lowest performing students.
For other low-achievers, Corvallis High School applies the philosophy of mastery learning, whereby topics are taught concept by concept and students are offered unlimited reassessment opportunities. Courses focus on standards-based proficiency, whereby a few specific skills are demonstrated at a time.

Several schools referred to their ESOL programmes as building the motivation of those students who came to them with English as a second language, but only Crescent Valley High School referred to a range of after-hours programmes requiring students to attend extra classes in order to close gaps in students' abilities:
   • Such students are mandated to attend "Study Hall" during their one free period each week, where they have supervised study. Students with the highest needs are assigned to "Graduated Study Hall" where targeted tutoring is provided.
   • Summer Bridge Programme for disadvantaged students, including field trips, ropes courses and other activities are designed to close some gaps in experience and build a sense of personal efficacy.
   • An after school "Chrysalis" programme on Tuesdays to Thursdays provides homework and tutoring support.

Social Motivation:
I might be motivated to achieve and have the skills to achieve, but am I being supported by peers, families and other environmental influences?

Only Crescent Valley High School made reference to a structured programme of peer support to assist students who need it, but I suspect it wasn't alone in harnessing the positive influence older peers can have over younger ones.

Social Ability
Several schools made reference to peer support programmes and leadership training to build the capability of students to support each others' learning.

Structural Motivation:
We have all heard of systemic failure and perhaps seen it in operation. The opposite is something like structural motivation, where there are systemic features in a school that make it easy to be motivated and successful there.

Balboa High School has introduced "**pathways**" from Grade 11 to build the relevance of school. They call them "Small Learning Communities." Students select their pathway from a menu:
- CAST: Visual and Performing Arts
- WALC: Wilderness, Arts, and Literacy Collaborative
- AOIT: Academy of Information Technology
- Law Academy
- International Pathway
- Special Education Small Learning Community
- PULSE: Leadership and Service

Similarly, North Eugene High School offers students a variety of pathways. NEHS has divided itself into three schools, believing that students are more motivated to achieve when their coursework is structured around their particular interests and learning styles. Students select from:
- Academy of Arts
- International High School
- School of IDEAS: Invention, Design, Engineering, Arts & Science

Furthermore, the smaller numbers enable students to feel more like they belong and are better known by other students and staff. They report that small schools across the country record better rates of attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher college acceptance rates than large schools.

Of all the schools I visited, only North Eugene High School explicitly referred to increased rigour as a strategy to motivate students. They hold to the philosophy that the more rigorous the course, the better the results, therefore they offer International Baccalaureate in the International High School, including history, literature, science, mathematics, film studies, and the theory of knowledge. Where others might focus on more work, they aim to focus on more 'rigour', i.e. challenging students with a higher level of thinking.

At The Ark Academy, Mrs Smith explained that Ark's students are motivated to learn because of the agreed approach to student learning taken by staff. Teachers' adherence to it is non-negotiable, but from what I could tell, every teacher is a believer in it. One of its key features is "Fertile Questions" whereby each department sets an open-ended fertile question for the term. Staff at Ark firmly believe that asking these 'big picture' questions is a significant ingredient in motivating their

students to have an appetite for learning. The fertile questions used in the last two terms are listed in Appendix 1:

Several schools had devised specific strategies to provide parents with the skills and knowledge to support their children's education:
- At Crescent Valley High School, personal data is available on-line for parents: real-time attendance and achievement data, using the "Pinnacle" computer programme.
- Phoenix High School has worked hard to get parents on board with the belief that their children can do well. In addition to the strategies already listed under Phoenix's profile above (in "Introducing the Schools"), they have taken efforts to supply families with quality information in forms they can understand, therefore:
  - They close school for three days a year so that parents can come in for parent-teacher interviews.
  - They send home five written reports per year.
  - They operate a graphic traffic light system on reports:
    - Green for exceeding expectations
    - Amber for meeting expectations
    - Red for failing expectations

    The Ark Academy operates an almost identical system of reporting and, like Phoenix High School, being on target at Ark means, at the very least, reaching the national average by Year 11.
  - At Phoenix, teachers say they are ringing home "all the time." Teachers use *pro forma* postcards to post positive messages home, they notify parents about what assessments are coming up and if pupils are not meeting expectations, teachers are expected to have tried a number of interventions and to record them with a verified paper trail before referring the matter to their line manager.

Structural Ability:
Whilst an organisation might have the systems in place, are its people able to use, manage and harness them in a way that gets motivational value from them?

So concerned was Crescent Valley High School about the lack of preparedness of school staff to identify with the lives of students from low socio-economic families, that they brought in an outside provider to speak to teachers about what it's like to be raised poor.

The Ark Academy has extended its "traffic light" reporting system to provide teachers with clear, visual information about their own students' rate of learning. Thereby, teachers are provided with a student list at the end of each term, grouping the greens, ambers and reds together. The results are then discussed with an HOD.

Crescent Valley High School has a Student Support Team, which provides 'wraparound' services for at risk students, including counselling, contacting parents, etc.

Several school representatives spoke of the importance of developing positive relationships with their students as a key motivating feature in their schools. The Cherwell School exercised a range of strategies to encourage staff to connect with students. Staff are encouraged to "know your kids" in order to remind teachers to look for opportunities to make connections with their students, from simple things such as saying "hi" in the playgrounds, to taking an interest in students' extra-curricular activities. Staff are given occasional reminders of the way things are done at Cherwell:

- *we don't shout at students*
- *students don't get left standing in corridors here.*

When students at North Eugene High School were interviewed by university researchers, 100% of students named an adult in the school they could go to at a time of need. Phoenix High School has invested considerable resources in providing extra-curricular activities to assist students to bond well with school and teachers. Teachers at Crescent Valley High School: "are available to students 100% of the time."

2.2 Student Motivation – Literature Review

Sadly, for all that sabbatical leave is lengthy, one cannot become an expert in a few weeks, so I make no claim to having read the last word on student motivation. Instead, I've recorded here a précis of my own reading on the subject, confident that it is of value despite its inevitable gaps.

Personal Motivation
John Hattie's survey of meta-analyses caused him to comment that there is much to be gained from anticipating when student motivation will be at its highest. He identifies a number of key motivating factors (Hattie p. 48):
- When students are competent, have sufficient autonomy, set worthwhile goals, get feedback, and are affirmed by others. (Dornyei)
- When learners have a sense of control over their own learning. Caine & Caine would agree. Intrinsic motivation, they say, emerges when learners can ask their own questions and probe areas of personal interest (Caine & Caine p. 16).
- When there is a belief that our efforts and interests increase achievement .

This section will start will the last of Hattie's points.

Self-Belief
Robert Marzano's meta-analysis of research on motivation in 2003, resonates with similar conclusions to the third of Hattie's points. Marzano posited "attribution theory" as one of the explanations for our motivation to learn. Attribution theory focuses on what students perceive to be the cause of their success or failure, such as ability, luck, task difficulty, and so on. Of these, Marzano concludes, *"effort is the most useful because a strong belief in effort as a cause of success can translate into a willingness to engage in complex texts and persist over time"* (Westerberg p. 6). Westerberg relates that as long ago as the early 1980s it was concluded that *students are more motivated to learn when they believe that intelligence is malleable rather than fixed at birth and with hard work they can improve their grades* (Westerberg p. 6). It's not surprising then that Marzano encourages teachers to actively reinforce, recognise and celebrate effort, thereby enabling students to see more clearly the direct link between how hard they work and how much they learn (Marzano p.14).

In its explanation of constructivism, Wikipedia refers to conclusions drawn by Prawat and Floden (1994):

> *"sustaining motivation to learn is strongly dependent on the learner's confidence in his or her potential for learning. Feelings of competence and belief in potential to solve new problems, are derived from first-hand experience of mastery of problems in the past and are much more powerful than any external acknowledgment and motivation."*

Emotions

Emotions as well as perceptions play a large part in our motivation to engage. Therefore, our past experiences with the subject or topic, our relationship with the teacher, our perception of the importance of the subject matter and the conviction we hold about our ability to be successful in this subject or topic all play a role in our motivation to learn it. Westerberg summarises Marzano and Kendall's conclusion that a student's high motivation to learn a particular knowledge component exists when the following three factors are present:

- Self-belief: the learner believes he or she has the necessary ability, power, or resources to learn or increase competence in the knowledge component.
- Relevance: the learner perceives the knowledge component is important.
- Emotions: the learner has a positive emotional response to the knowledge component.

When the inverse of these is the case, low motivation will occur (Westerberg pp. 96-97).

Relevance

Sullo suggests that creating relevance is a significant first step when planning a topic. Studies demonstrate that students better retain and apply what they have learned when it is connected to real-life experiences (Sullo p. 94). It seems that this is especially so in adolescence, where the curriculum needs to *"engage the student's feelings in a gripping way"* (Sullo p. 94). At the beginning of a unit explain the real-life implications of it to students, he suggests. Then, whenever possible, ask pupils to compare what they are studying to experiences in their own lives or to personalise any subject involving people by asking questions such as, "imagine you were…" and "would you be pleased if…" (Sullo pp. 95-96). Westerberg would agree and go a step further by advocating for teachers to allow their students to personalise learning goals. He gives the example of a chemistry teacher encouraging students to combine their study of molecular modelling with their cultural heritage. This particular situation resulted in Chinese students studying the impact of the Opium Wars on their culture and an African-American student studying high levels of lactose intolerance among members of the black community (Westerberg pp. 36-37).

Goals

Westerberg helps us with an understanding of the importance of setting worthwhile goals, firstly by way of a warning. He makes the salient point that whilst raising test scores is a necessary and important leadership responsibility, it is not the purpose of schooling and could act as a demotivator to pupils. Principals and schools need to communicate more important goals to students than just raising test scores. He quotes two sets of research that suggest that schools are better to focus on learning goals than performance goals. Newell and Van Ryzin pull this distinction further apart by referring to 'performance' goals as 'ego' goals, representing a focus on appearances rather than on real learning:

> *A 'learning' or 'mastery' goal orientation represents a desire to achieve purely for the purpose of obtaining knowledge and increasing skill. A 'performance' or 'ego' goal orientation, on the other hand, represents a focus on appearances rather than on real learning. The perceived goal orientation of a school can significantly affect a student's own goal orientation. Students who perceive that their school exhibits a 'learning goal' orientation seek challenges, show persistence in the face of adversity, use more effective*

learning strategies, have more positive attitudes and are more cognitively engaged in learning. (Westerberg p. 36)

Sullo reminds us of the part the teacher's language can play in activating fears and hopes: he encourages teachers to replace the language of fear with the language of possibility. The language of fear promotes self-protection rather than learning (Sullo p11), therefore he suggests rephrasing statements such as, "If you don't do well in the upcoming test, you are in danger of failing," to "By doing well in the upcoming test, you can earn a better grade." The first statement deflates students, the second encourages them by emphasising the possibility of a positive outcome, therefore they will be more likely to take risks and learn more. Sullo goes on to quote Saphier and Gower, who researched the skills needed for better teaching. They came to the conclusion that teachers need to promote the building of a culture of success by adopting three key messages:

- This is important
- You can do it
- I won't give up on you

Deep Learning
We often criticise students for exercising choice about what they will or won't attempt, what they will or won't value in their education. Hattie is useful – and a little provocative – here. He says there are three worlds of achievement (Hattie 26-29):

- Ideas: the world of surface knowledge about the physical world.
- Thinking: the thinking strategies and deeper understanding of the subjective world.
- Constructing: the ways that students construct knowledge and reality for themselves as a consequence of this surface and deep knowing and understanding. Here they develop defensible theories, even crank ideas, about reality.

The best teaching & learning happens when all three worlds come together. Yet, for most students, it seems that their experience of schooling resides mostly in the first world of information, which is where they prepare for assessments (Hattie p. 28), yet the teachers of these same students will claim they are teaching for deeper understanding. Students can be very strategic about what they need to know and understand in order to achieve their goals, and to limit their learning to these things. Teachers unwittingly play into the hands of students, by focussing up to 80% of their questions on surface knowledge. The hidden curriculum learnt by students is that the teacher already knows the answers and students are quick to learn that that success requires surface strategies such as revision, reviewing and re-reading. Teachers argue that surface knowledge is what is required of high stakes examinations or assessments, so the context of education can place us in a vicious cycle that draws us into its powerful vortex.

My guess is that when teachers say their students aren't motivated, they mean the students are over-willing to be told the answers, to learn the bare minimum required to achieve their assessment goals and they are wanting the most efficient route to doing so. What teachers want is to see their students engaged in learning in much the same way they did as students: to find it intrinsically interesting and stimulating, to construct their own understandings, and to critique it and debate ideas. Yet, we

fall into the trap set by assessment-driven learning and a student-driven desire for the shortest distance to achieve the tickets they are seeking to purchase from their schooling, so they can then get on and do the things they really want to do. I suspect that the remedy for both is to be found in finding ways for teachers to "have the right balance" between surface and deep knowledge, and understanding and constructing. When students can add a sense of self-regulation, of monitoring their journey of *"learning, unlearning, and overlearning"* (Hattie p. 29) they have meta-cognition and, I propose, they may respond with an intensifying intrinsic motivation which may gather energy as a rolling stone builds momentum, perhaps reaching the desired destinations held dear by both teachers & students more efficiently and forcefully than is currently the case.

Challenge
Vygotsky proposed that *"where learners are challenged within close proximity to, yet slightly above, their current level of development"* they were more likely to remain engaged and to experience success. *"By experiencing the successful completion of challenging tasks, learners gain confidence and motivation to embark on more complex challenges"* (Wikipedia: "Constructivism").

Teacher's Passion
Yet another link in the chain of connections coupling teacher action to student motivation is that of the teacher's passion. Hattie observes that educational research rarely talks about the teacher's passion, yet it *"infuses many of the influences that make the difference to the outcomes"* (Hattie p. 24). He suggests that passion is palpable in the best classrooms and is evident in the absorption of learners in their tasks, the *"sheer thrill"* of learning and teaching, the willingness to attain understanding and that *"it can be infectious, it can be taught, it can be modelled, and it can be learnt"* (Hattie p. 23).

Personal Ability
Students may want to achieve, but do they have the ability to turn that desire into effort?

Perhaps belief in the difference hard work makes to one's own education is the cornerstone of the 'personal ability' to be a successful learner. However, there is a warning here. In every school, there exists students who suffer from learning impairments. If we tell them that all they need to do is try harder, that all they need is a little more motivation, then we do them a considerable disservice (Sullo pp.100-101).

What if one has the motivation to learn, the belief that hard work will make a difference, but not the information at hand to turn that hard work into accurate learning? Hattie argues for the power of feedback as an enabler of greater success, but he is not exclusively referring to written comments on an individual's work or one-on-one conferences, but to the everyday encounters in the classroom which *"enable students to confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information"* (Hattie p174). Marzano's work supports this view, encouraging frequent formative assessment. He cites two meta-analyses that strongly support frequent formative assessments, for example, where five assessments are employed over a 15 week course, a gain of 20

percentile points could be expected. Where 25 formative assessments are administered, a gain in student achievement of 28.5 percentile points can be expected. (Marzano, pp13-14).

Social Motivation
My reading has uncovered only key demotivating factors under the heading of social motivation and nothing to add on social ability. Hattie quotes Dornyei's work in documenting the demotivation caused by public humiliation, devastating test results, conflicts with teachers or peers.

Social Ability
My reading of educational texts relating to student motivation has not uncovered anything pertaining to building students' abilities to provide each other with the help, information and resources required to support motivation. Malcolm Gladwell's book, The Tipping Point, how little things make a big difference, provides plenty of support for the view that a wide range of popular movements, fads, ideas, and behaviours can be traced to influential people – not public leaders, but opinion leaders. There are those who start trends, others who become expert in them, and some who are the self-appointed salesmen of them (Gladwell pp. 30-88). In practice, I observe that teachers are intuitive about who the influential students are, especially the salesmen, and understand the advantages of recruiting their support and harnessing their influence over others, but it is curious that in both the school visits and the literature review, I have found almost no practical strategies nor scholarly interest in this subject, despite the potential it might have for unlocking student motivation.

Structural Motivation

Creating a Context
Spence Rogers and the team at Peak Learning Systems are proponents of the view that teachers should adopt best practice in terms of leadership of students, just as managers should adopt best leadership practice with staff. They advocate for by managing the context (environment, conditions, situation) rather than the students. Therefore, effective teachers, they say, create a context in which students want to work hard, engage, make a difference and are willing to take risks. In order to unlock our students' intrinsic motivation, then, teachers need to know who they are, what their needs are, how they think and what is important to them (Rogers p. 7).

Rewards
It might surprise some teachers to discover that the evidence on rewards as an effective motivating force is indifferent at best and negative at worst. Hattie reports that praise, punishment, and extrinsic rewards were the least effective forms of feedback for enhancing achievement to the extent that there is a *negative* correlation between extrinsic rewards and task performance. Yes, tangible rewards significantly undermine intrinsic motivation. Instead, as described above, it's feedback about the task that adds motivation and encourages further engagement by the students (Hattie pp. 174-175). Marzano's research aligns. He concludes that that by **recognising and celebrating an individual's measurable knowledge gain**, teachers support students' motivation for learning.

However, the studies on providing tangible rewards show weak support for their impact on learning and motivation. **Bestowing external rewards** interferes with the natural desire to learn (Sullo p25). External rewards inhibit the internal reward system we all possess: *the natural reward for learning is the good feeling we experience when we accomplish something* (Sullo p33). Sullo, too, **advocates feedback** and the celebration of learning for its own sake and he distinguishes between rewarding (negative) and affirming (bad) (Sullo pp. 33-35).

Structural Ability
What can schools and individual teachers do – or eliminate – that would enhance a sense of motivation in their students?

Differentiated Instruction
Many schools expend much energy on creating an appropriately challenging level of difficulty, the importance of which is clearly understood. This is the flip side of the message about effort making the difference. Sullo warns against being too simplistic about the message that it's all about effort, as it's also about students' levels of skills and cognitive wherewithal (Sullo p. 100). Motivation to learn is decreased when tasks are too difficult, so differentiated instruction is essential as is the assessment of students' performance against their own previous performance over time (Sullo p. 103). Sullo points to Marzano's work on rubrics for each learning goal (Marzano pp. 19-23). Furthermore, he supports assessing students on responsibility and work ethic – apparently not a common practice in America. He points out that grading students on work ethic demonstrates the significance of hard work, provides valuable information to parents and gives every child the chance to be successful (Sullo p. 105).

Teacher-Student Relationships
Many pupils refer to the motivating power of an individual teacher. A teacher's enthusiasm is contagious (Sullo p62), but some teacher-pupil relationships are powerful in other ways.
Sullo acknowledges the importance of a positive relationship between teachers and their students, but adds a warning. The positive relationship is the starting point and not the end of the story. In some classes, students work hard only because of the influence exerted by the teacher. Such a student may not be encouraged to intrinsically appreciate the learning and may work less well the following year with a different teacher. Sullo suggests that we need to help students to move beyond working hard for the teacher to the point where they *appreciate that working hard and learning as much as possible enhance their lives* (Sullo p 82). He also suggests that a distinction needs to be made between being friendly with students and being friends. Learning is supported by our friendliness to students, but there needs to remain a professional gap in our relationships with students (Sullo p. 84).

Consistency
Sullo also plugs for creating as much consistency as possible in our academic teams and schools: *A school culture that is united on how to handle tardiness, accept late assignments, move safely through the buildings… and so on will establish a feeling of security and predictability that promotes higher achievement* (Sullo p. 61).

Coercion
Some aspects of the school environment can be distinctly demotivating. Sullo's claim that inspirational teachers eliminate all unnecessary coercion, as it discourages quality, it reduces excitement about learning and encourages students to produce the bare minimum (Sullo pp. 21 & 23) is all the more pertinent because we can all think of times when teachers have used coercion unnecessarily. Coercion is unavoidable, but clearly needs to be used with caution.

Summary

Are students the helpless victims of demotivating factors in their lives? As R. Edmonds put it in 1986 "for at least six hours a day [school] can override almost everything else in the lives of children" (Williams p. 125). After reviewing urban schools in the USA in 1996 Lisa Delpit wrote, "When teachers… understand that through their teaching change CAN occur, then the chance for transformation is great" (Williams p. 116).

I believe that Hattie deserves the last word here. His vision for a model of learning demands an understanding of the discussion for constructivism over didacticism:

> *Constructivism is too often seen in terms of student-centred inquiry learning, problem-based learning, and "intrinsically motivated learning". The role of the constructivist teacher is claimed to be more of facilitation to provide opportunities for individual students to acquire reflection and the sharing of ideas with other learners with minimal corrective intervention… These kinds of statements are almost directly opposite to the successful recipe for teaching and learning (Hattie p. 26).*

Hattie argues that the answer to the best form of learning does not reside in choosing between teacher-centred learning (seen as bad) and student-centred learning (seen as good). Instead, the model he advocates combines them. The best teachers are active, involved, visible and in control in their classrooms. Their students are active, intense, buzzing and taking risks. Clearly, excellent learning requires both teacher instruction and student construction. Clearly, learners are motivated to learn when they are in the classrooms of teachers who use explicit teaching strategies, are "activators, … deliberate change agents, and … directors of learning" (Hattie p. 25).

1.3 Bringing it all Together: a school approach to student motivation

When planning a whole-of-school approach to student motivation, consideration might be given to the following strategies. Patterson *et al* report that strategies of influence should come from at least four of the motivational domains and the more one 'over-determines' success by adding strategies rather than relying on a few, the more likelihood of success there is.

Personal Motivation:
- When planning a topic:
  - Explain the real-life implications of it to students
  - Plan questions that enhance the likelihood of students personalising the learning
  - Plan for giving students a sense of control over their learning, wherever possible
  - Pre-plan the teacher's questions to provide a balance between surface knowledge and deeper understanding
  - Plan tasks which balance surface and deep knowledge, and understanding and constructing
  - Plan to enable students to ask their own questions
  - Plan for differentiation, so it is appropriately challenging for every student: *"within close proximity to, yet slightly above, their current level of development,"* as Vygotsky put it.
- Have school-wide protocols for ensuring that no student is left out of class discussions or is exempt from a teacher's questions.
- Ensure that as much focus is put on learning goals as on performance goals.
  - Minimise whole-of-school information to students about performance goals.
  - Emphasise the satisfaction of personal challenges, and the significance of persistence, developing effective learning strategies, and other personal qualities.
- Set specific and challenging performance goals, then:
  - Track student progress towards those goals
  - Report to parents on progress towards them
  - Make their personal progress clear to individual students.
- Ensure students complete work and attend required classes and tutorials.
- Educate students on the benefits of personal effort, therefore:
  - Teach them that intelligence is malleable
  - Award grades for effort and responsibility
  - Acknowledge effort and productive behaviour
  - Celebrate achievement.
- Educate young students about the tertiary opportunities that will be available to them if they succeed at high school.
- Develop awareness of the impact of teachers' language:
  - Rephrase the language of fear with the language of possibility
  - Adopt three key messages:
    - This is important
    - You can do it

- I won't give up on you.
- Develop awareness of how affective factors influence motivation:
    - students' emotions
    - teacher passion
    - teacher enthusiasm.

Personal Ability

- Build belief in students' abilities to achieve; build this belief in students, teachers and parents.
- Provide frequent formative feedback on progress, enabling students to "confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information".
- For lower-ability students:
    - Introduce acceleration classes for students who are behind; try to do so without withdrawing them from mainstream literacy and mathematics classes.
    - Add specifically-tailored extra classes after hours, either after school or in holidays.

Social Motivation

- Wherever possible, avoid these de-motivators:
    - public humiliation
    - devastating test results
    - conflicts with teachers or peers.

Social Ability

- Put resourcing into making student-leadership programmes effective.
- Give consideration to how to recruit the support of the natural opinion leaders amongst students.

Structural Motivation

- Provide enough subject choice for students to follow a range of career pathways, enabling them to see the point of school.
- Consider increasing rigour rather than 'dumbing down'.
- Making open-ended, "rich", "fertile" questions the norm in each curriculum.
- Get to know students: who they are, what their needs are, how they think and what is important to them.
- Replace tangible rewards with feedback that recognises and acknowledges an individual's measurable knowledge gain.
- Work towards agreement amongst teachers about what it means to have an appropriate learning relationship with students.
- Build parents' abilities to give appropriate support:
    - Reporting: supply families with quality information about the progress of their children; do so in language and formats they can understand.
    - *Ad hoc* communications: provide families with information that might assist them, such as when assignments are due, or when something has gone well.

Structural Ability

- Influence the learning environment:
    - Build consistency of approach across the school and within teams

- o Use both didactic and constructivist approaches when teaching a unit.
- Influence the pastoral and affective environment:
  - o Keep coercion to a minimum
  - o Ensure pastoral services for 'at risk' students are effective and co-ordinated
  - o Where appropriate, consider providing professional development for staff on the difficulties of daily life for minority or deprived students.
- Build an encouraging environment:
  - o All learning goals should be assessed against rubrics, thereby making progress visible to students
  - o Where appropriate, provide teachers with clear information about students' progress towards performance goals and their rate of advancement towards them.
  - o Help students to move beyond working hard for the teacher to the point where they *"appreciate that working hard and learning as much as possible enhance their lives"* (Sullo p 82).

Chapter 2: Professional Development

The essence of good teaching is that teachers' expectations and conceptions must be subjected to debate, refutation, and investigation. John Hattie

2.1 School Visits
Balboa High School

- Balboa High School finishes at 1pm on Wednesdays so that teachers can have Professional Development until 3pm (in terms of workload, their classes are now up to 39 students).
- For a while they got experts in, but it didn't seem to work, so they have just established "Professional Learning Communities", which are cross-curricula, self-determining groups. They have even put the "naysayers" into the same group, led by the Senior Leadership Team. Each group will report back to the rest of the staff.
- Informal Appraisal:
  o Each member of the Senior Leadership Team oversees the teaching of a different grade level.
  o They make impromptu visits of about 15 minutes, and they look for particular things related to the school-wide resolutions about good teaching, such as;
    ▪ BBC – blackboard configuration
    ▪ Checking for understanding
    ▪ The tone the teacher uses towards students

The Principal feels that the school is now at a stage where school improvement needs to be consensus driven, not top-down. He is creating an environment where there is sufficient trust for teachers to be honest about their vulnerabilities. He is an advocate of "Discourse Two Schools" which break down self-fulfilling stereotypes about students and eliminates autonomy amongst teachers (see Eubanks *et al* in the Bibliography).
When staff have challenged the Professional Development programme, the Senior Leadership Team has answered with questions, such as, "Who supports the achievement gap?" Of course, no-one puts their hand up. Or "Who is perfect in their teaching and has nothing left to learn?" They use these as means of illustrating that Professional Development is for all teachers.

<u>Crescent Valley High School</u>
Ms Shroud has been working hard at developing Professional Learning Committees, but her efforts came unstuck because of lack of time. Recently, there has been agreement with the other local high, the district education department and the community to close both schools for an hour a week to allow Professional Learning Committees to go ahead during the next academic year. The focus will be on student learning rather than teaching, such as:

- Differentiation in the classroom
- The revised Bloom's Taxonomy
- Marzano's instructional strategies
- Bringing resources to the meetings that illustrate the use of one of the techniques; then using staff feedback to improve them further.

Ms Shroud realises that as more and more has been asked of the staff, their tensions have increased, creating the need for some Professional Development around building relationships and facilitating communication between each other. It needs to "hit the social and emotional". This will be the focus of some Professional Development next year.

Informal Appraisal through Observations:
Ms Shroud uses 5 minute walk-throughs:

- No advance notice is given
- She looks for evidence of one of :
  - This year's school or departmental SMART goal
  - Or the teacher's own professional SMART goal
- The instructional objective - a State requirement is to have it written on the board, but Ms Shroud is content just to see it in action.
- The "Power Standard" the teacher is working from
- Student engagement

<u>Corvallis High School</u>
The school has been operating department-based Professional Learning Communities for a number of years, but made a lot of mistakes along the way:

- It felt imposed
- Those who were initially excited about it left the school before its implementation, so the enthusiasts were largely absent when implementation occurred. Not surprisingly, Ms Granger stressed the need to get staff excited about Professional Learning Communities prior to their implementation.
- Their staff was typical of many. Ms Granger , recommends <u>Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn</u> by Rebecca DuFour , Robert Eaker , Gayle Karhanek , and Richard Dufour , Solution Tree, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, 2004 which describes some common barriers to teachers' effectiveness with students, such as:
  - Teachers blaming students for their lack of learning.
  - Teachers lacking the knowledge now available to teacher trainees.

Teacher Appraisal: Ms Granger uses walk-throughs both as an informal means of appraising the quality of learning and instruction as well as part of a formal process. All three members of the Senior Leadership Team conduct a formal appraisal of teaching staff each year (about 30 each). It's a process that takes about 12 hours per teacher. When conducting walk-throughs and observations, Ms Granger uses a checklist entitled "A Framework for Teaching – Components of Professional Practice" (See Appendix 2, based on the work of Charlotte Danielson, http://charlottedanielson.com) on which she checks off strategies she sees the teacher using. She never assesses as satisfactory what she doesn't see in action – such gaps become a discussion point in appraisal meetings and result in supplementary observations.

Otherwise, Ms Granger is looking for:
- The tenor of the class
- A clearly discernible learning objective
- High quality questions
- Systems in place
- Safety
- Provision for special interest groups such as:
  - Gifted & Talented students
  - ESOL students

North Eugene High School

Staff Professional Development at NEHS is conducted in cross-curricular groups yet is isolated to each small school.

1. Ms Erwin's experience during her teaching career is that professional development trends towards whatever shiny fad catches the eye of educational administrators at the time, so her inclination is to explore a small number of themes at a time and to explore them in depth. Furthermore, to eschew every Professional Development topic but for those which strengthen teachers' instructional practice.
2. Ms Erwin advocates dealing with administrative matters through memos, thereby ring-fencing staff meetings for the core business of teaching and learning.
3. Ms Erwin's experience of teacher meetings is that oftentimes they get hijacked by those who wish to suggest ways that the school should be dealing with truants, "tardies" and disruptive students, rather than gaps in teachers' knowledge and skills to overcome these misbehaviours.

Informal Teacher Appraisal:

Ms Erwin is a regular visitor in classrooms. Over time, she has shifted her focus from attending to what the teacher does in a lesson to what the students are learning, such as assessing how the student activity connects to the learning objective.

She recommends the book, <u>Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning</u> (see Bibliography) which likens walk-throughs to hospital rounds. She was formerly part of a project whereby 3 principals would visit a neighbouring school to observe teachers in action. The group would follow-up their observations with intentionally vague recommendations, intended to invite teachers to come to their own conclusions rather than putting them on the defensive by imposing detailed suggestions.

<u>Phoenix High School</u>
Professional Development at Phoenix has focussed on teachers' expectations for student achievement and the development of a common code of practice for lesson planning
<u>The Ark Academy</u>
Mrs Smith believes that professionalism is rooted in the thinking of good teachers and such thinking is best when it happens in teams.
Mrs Smith is a strong believer in ensuring that pedagogy is the "main thing" so focussing energies on it is essential and observations play a key role in ensuring that teachers are keenly aware of strategies that work in the classroom. They have wired up several rooms with cameras and have an editing room. Three types of observations take place:
- self-assessments
- peer assessments
- formal appraisal

The key to making it productive is to put ownership in the hands of teachers. If they don't want anyone else to see the lesson that's been recorded, they can destroy it. If they wish, they can use it for peer-reflection and add it to the library for anyone to else. It has some great spin-offs, such as using the recordings for coaching new teachers or student teachers. Tim Dainty, the Vice Principal, says he's teaching better than ever now because of seeing himself and others teach on a regular basis and reflecting on what he sees pupils doing and saying during a lesson. Teachers are scheduled for self-reflection and peer-reflection, in order to act as a spur to ensure they don't get forgotten in the busyness of teaching. This is as prescriptive as it gets, but Mr Dainty reiterates that the teachers own the recordings of their own lessons.

Mr Dainty also reports that new teachers undergo a four day orientation in which the principles of the *Teaching and Learning Project* are taught (see an outline of this project above).
Accelerated learning at Ark is put down to:
- The four phase lesson plan (see the work of Smith, A. <u>Accelerated Learning in the Classroom: School Effectiveness</u> (Paperback), Network Educational Press Ltd; 4th Revised edition (1 May 1996).
- Fertile questions
- Frequently articulated values
- Tracking individual success
- Teacher observations being "owned" by teachers
- Knowledge of how people learn
- Academic rigour by staff

- High expectations – Mr Dainty made reference to Malcolm Gladwell's book <u>Outliers: the story of success</u> , which refers to the stunning impact upon success of time spent practising a skill or craft.
- Teacher accountability
- Pupil accountability
- Hard work by staff. As Mr Dainty put it: "Hard work is the only way to overcome the poor prior learning of these students."

<u>The Cherwell School</u>
To understand the Professional Development programme at Cherwell, Lindsay Alexander explains that one needs to realise that the Senior Leadership Team has high confidence in their teachers. Because of the university population, Cherwell is a magnet for high calibre teachers, so the school typically has a strong field of applicants.
In the past, there was an emphasis put on making use of external providers of Professional Development, but they have made a "cultural" shift away from them for a number of reasons. Firstly, externally-provided courses tend to be generic, therefore they do not always match the particular needs of the teachers attending them. Secondly, they lack the support needed to generate practical change in the classroom. With financial constraints currently in force, there is also a financial disincentive to send teachers off to courses.
Cherwell has become somewhat "entrepreneurial" about providing its own Professional Development, a situation further facilitated by its status as a specialist training school in the science curriculum, which has led to some interesting cross-curricula results, such as the History Department adding the topic of "History of Medicine" to its programme. It has also led to some collaboration with Oxford University Masters students. However, most internally-provided Professional Development is aligned to the school plan, such as:
- enhancing the effectiveness of the role of Form Tutor
- faculties conduct their own Professional Development in department meeting
- plenty of "inset" time is linked to pedagogy
- raising middle leadership amongst teachers by providing formal programmes, covering topics such as:
    - managing a budget
    - deploying staff on a timetable
    - philosophical elements of leadership

Cherwell makes use of classroom observations as part of the annual performance management cycle for each staff member. But more and more, they are using observations for the purpose of sharing good practice. They are moving towards coaching rather than mentoring, i.e. asking the appropriate questions of a colleague to assist him/her to find their own answers rather than imposing answers. They refer to this as developing the culture of a "learning walk".
The National College of Leadership has run a programme called "Leading from the Middle". It has a project at the heart of it, e.g. strategies to jell as a new team.

Paul James has adopted the phrase "support and challenge", applying it to every part of the school's operations, from individuals to departments to Board. Cherwell is

involved in establishing a culture of holding each other to account. It's a "no-blame" culture so when things go wrong, problem-solving skills are employed rather than finger-pointing.

2.2 Summary of Professional Development Strategies Identified in the School Visits

1. Time:
   a. Weekly time out for Professional Development, closing school for an hour or so (Balboa, Crescent Valley, Corvallis).
   b. Ring-fencing Staff Meetings for issues of importance to learning and teaching (NEHS)
2. Teams:
   a. Professional Learning Groups (Balboa, Crescent Valley, Corvallis)
   b. Oversight of a department or faculty by members of the Senior Leadership Team (Balboa).
3. Observations:
   a. Impromptu walk-throughs (Balboa, Crescent Valley, Corvallis, NEHS)
   b. Peer observations (The Ark)
   c. Self-reflection (The Ark)
   d. "Learning walk": moving towards coaching rather than mentoring (Cherwell)

2.3 Summary of Professional Development Themes in the Schools I visited:

1. Current or pending Professional Development projects
   a. Balboa: self-determining groups
   b. Crescent Valley:
      i. Differentiation in the classroom
      ii. The revised Bloom's Taxonomy
      iii. Marzano's instructional strategies
      iv. Building relationships
   c. Phoenix:
      i. Lesson planning
      ii. Code of practice for classroom teaching
   d. The Ark Academy teaches the principles of its "Teaching and Learning Project":
      i. The four phase lesson plan
      ii. Framing lesson objectives
      iii. Effective questioning to extend thinking, including Bloom's Taxonomy
      iv. Emotional states and how they affect learning
      v. The five key principles of classroom talk and strategies for ensuring dialogue fosters learning
      vi. The teaching and learning cycle
      vii. Framing fertile questions
      viii. Strategies for integrating new technologies into medium-term plans
      ix. Classroom strategies to ensure that all teachers are teachers of language

          x.   Effective assessment strategies and the effect of feedback on performance
         xi.   Strategies for ensuring that all children are valued
        xii.   Thinking in a disciplined manner
      xiii.   Strategies to enhance reading
      xiv.   Best practice for group work

e. The Cherwell School:
    i.   enhancing the effectiveness of the role of Form Tutor
    ii.   pedagogy
    iii.   raising middle leadership amongst teachers

2. The future direction for Professional Development – what will we, as a profession, need to work on in the 5-10 years?:

a. North Eugene High School: Ms Erwin's hunch is that we'll need to work on:
    i.   "Essential Questions", that is framing deep, rich, cross-curricula questions which the whole school can focus on for the whole term/ semester / year, such as "What is change?"
    ii.   "Proficiency-Based Teaching and Learning", that is, working to broader targets than mere content, such as Art Costa's *Habits of Mind*. A manifestation of such a philosophy would be that a mathematics teacher would consider the ability to problem-solve as more important than the content of the mathematics lesson. She recommends I look at David Conley's work on "college-readiness" skills such as timeliness. (Dr. David Conley is the Director, Centre for Educational Policy Research, University of Oregon.)

b. Cherwell:
    i.   Learning how students learn
    ii.   Literacy & numeracy
    iii.   Emotional intelligence because so many students, whether academically successful or not, have low levels of social skills
    iv.   High quality enrichment in the discipline of one's subject: whilst teachers are passionate about student success, their journey to become a teacher generally begins with a love of their subject area. It is their gateway into the teaching profession. Mr Alexander is interested in finding ways to continue to foster that passion.

2.4 Professional Development Strategies, Approaches & Philosophies Gleaned from the International Conference on Thinking (ICOT)
The information below was gathered from seminars during my attendance at the International Conference on Thinking, Belfast, June 2011. There are many references to Cognitive Acceleration – see Appendix 3 for an introduction to this set of strategies.
2.4.1 Seminars Based on Cognitive Acceleration

Seminar 1: "A Professional Development Model used by the CASE (cognitive acceleration in science) Project" by presenters Bernadita Torneo & Christine Harrison

CASE is a Professional Development programme of intervention in science for Years 7 & 8.

- The Professional Development approach taken by CASE is predicated on three beliefs about how teachers learn best:
  - Effective change takes time (Fullan, 1993)
  - Change happens effectively in "Communities of Practice"
  - Any change requires the need to provide for teacher reflection
- Therefore, they promote:
  - Collaboration between teachers, including whole of department Professional Development, but allowing for:
    - Extra sessions for new teachers
    - Reduced sessions for some teachers, e.g. those not teaching the particular year group in question
  - They start new training with a whole day
  - They use two "pioneer teachers" teaching ahead of others
  - They build in a reflection day
  - They nominate an "experimentation" period of time, in which teachers make initial use of the strategies being taught
  - Teachers keeping learning journals for criticisms, concerns, successes, etc.
  - Embedding the vocabulary of the Professional Development across the school in order to sustain it and to deal with staff movement where informed staff leave and are replaced by uninformed staff

Seminar 2: "Thinking and Learning" by Barry Gunther
Barry led a CASE project, successfully employing the following strategies:
- Fostering self-reflection in teachers rather than telling them what to do
- Presenting 3 models for Professional Development and asking the teachers in the group to select which approach they would like to take.
- Asking teachers to bring either their favourite or most challenging / difficult lesson.

Seminar 3: "Lessons from CAME in the last Ten Years" by Gill Potter
Background: This CAME (Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics) project was for primary-aged students; Gill is a member of the Cognitive Acceleration Associates.
In Professional Development sessions, the presenters engaged in lesson simulation with the teachers, then on the second day the teachers taught the lesson in pairs to students they didn't know, with another pair of teachers observing. However, the pair observing was not scrutinising the teachers, but the students, collecting evidence about what the students were doing and saying.

They quote Borko and Putman, 1995: "A project's assumptions about how teachers learn should be compatible with its assumptions about how students learn."

Seminar 4: "One-Day Lesson-Study as Teacher-Training" by Alan Edmiston and Mundher Adhami

Some of the principles they operate by with teacher training are:

- Professional Development needs to empower teachers in a democratic way.
- Teachers need to use the pre-planned lessons provided at least twice before changing them for ownership. This process is designed to diffuse the personal investment, by using an objective lesson prepared by someone else then seeing if you can make it work.
- The presenters themselves teach a lesson that's observed by the participants in the course. This helps to generate the trust and willingness to take risks and creates an environment which encourages teachers to be observed by others.
- There's a concerted emphasis on how students learn. When teachers are observed, the observational comments are restricted to what the students are doing and saying, not what the teacher is doing and saying. If it's being video-taped, they ask the regular teacher for suggestions about which students to focus the camera on, rather than focusing it on the teacher. This further enables the discussion to stay away from the teaching and on the learning.
- There's a concerted commitment to encouraging teachers to co-operate creatively together.
- There's a fundamental belief that ideas taught in a Professional Development programme need to be assimilated through practice. Only then do the ideas become embedded. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to put the strategies into practice many times.
- Mixed ability is a feature of CAME and CASE lessons. They engage students in a progression from Piagetian "middle concrete" to "mature concrete" to "concrete generalisation" to "formal abstract" and from curriculum levels 3-8, all in the one lesson.
- When teachers get to the point of wanting to make their own changes to the pre-planned lessons, they are still told to have the essential components of:
  - Hook
  - Engaging challenge
  - Time given to students to do the challenging tasks/s
  - Reflection time

  This pattern may occur more than once in a lesson.
- They believe that we need to take teachers away from the hurly-burly of their own school to engage in deep learning. Their one-day process involves:
  - Planning
    - Brainstorming
    - Tutor input
    - Negotiated plan and dividing roles
  - Conducting a lesson with a whole class or a group
    - Team teaching

- With observers, looking at the following elements:
  - Cognitive
  - Social
  - Cultural, i.e. the culture of learning, such as the attitudes to the subject and learning
  - Reflection:
    - Asking what range of thinking occurred
    - What were the major and minor steps in the learning, such as
      - How would you hone the hook?
      - What diversions would you add / subtract?

2.4.2 Other Seminars attended at ICOT Relating to Professional Development
Seminar 5: **"School Principals' improved thinking about the teaching of mathematics in Australia" by Margaret Bainbridge & Pitsa Binnion**
Margaret and Pitsa described a project whereby 25 principals gathered with the intention of improving their understanding and knowledge of the teaching of mathematics. This initiative was in direct response to concerns about the rate of mathematics learning amongst students as recorded on PISA tests. They based their work on Instructional Rounds by City *et al*.

- At the first meeting:
  - principals were given the opportunity to express their hopes and fears about it.
  - Protocols were discussed and agreed to about:
    - Trust
    - Confidentiality
    - Attendance
    - Honesty
    - Support
    - Equanimity in relation to all voices being heard
    - Humour
    - Sharing
- The classroom observations themselves:
  - Up to 15 minutes in length
  - Observations focussed on:
    - The purpose of the lesson
    - Tasks students were being asked to do
    - What the teacher is saying & doing
    - What students are saying and doing
    - Evidence of 'problem of practice'
- Follow-up: the principals had to decide, if they were the teacher of that class, what would be the next step for the maths lesson the next day.
- What they found:
  - Too many activities were being given to students where the learning intention was unclear

- o Clumsiness in dealing with misconceptions
- o Minimal opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration
- o Teachers admitted they put more effort into preparing their literacy lessons than their maths lessons.
- What were the practices in schools with very high performance? Amongst them were:
  - o The learning focus of the lesson was made clear
  - o 'Explicit teaching' took place, i.e. direct instruction on a particular skill.
  - o There was support and intervention for underperforming teachers
  - o Intervention support was given to low achievers.
  - o Extension programmes allowed individualised learning to take place.
  - o Assessment had these characteristics:
    - Whole school assessment schedules
    - Common assessments
    - Consistent approach taken from one teacher to the next
    - Benchmarking took place between teachers.
  - o Preparation for national testing included:
    - Demystifying the test
    - Identifying the language to be used in questions
  - o Data analysis was used to inform teaching
    - It was shared and explained.
    - It was used to identify gaps and build teaching capacity
  - o School-wide, consistent mathematical language
  - o Generous resourcing
  - o Effective use of information technology
  - o Teachers walked in and out of each other's classes freely, with a learning or support focus.

Seminar 6: "Leadership for Creating a Thinking School at Buranda **State School" by David Gurr**
Amongst the many interesting conclusions David came to through his work at Buranda State School are the following:

- How a staff meeting runs should mirror best practice in how a classroom should run. Some of the same things that school leaders wish to see happening in their classrooms should also be happening in their meetings with staff.
- A collaborative culture is much more likely to generate positive change than a dictatorial one.
- Good professional development programmes require both in-house programmes and external providers.
- When introducing a whole-of-school strategy, embed it wherever you can, such as into the behaviour management structures.

Seminar 7: "The Challenges of Educating a Democratic Mental Disposition During Times of Conflict" by Gavriel Solomon

Problem: how to sustain changed attitudes, for example, two months after peace education, the attitudes of students have almost returned to the original levels. His solutions:

- Teach the underlying premises
- Provide continuous opportunities where the appropriate thinking can be applied
- Create an environment where the ideas can be utilised, challenged and reflected on.

2.5 Literature Review
Caine, Geoffrey and Caine, Renate N. <u>Strengthening and Enriching Your Professional Learning Community: The Art of Learning Together</u> Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia, USA, 2010

Amongst other effective strategies employed by the countries scoring well on international measures are these characteristics of professional development programmes:

- Time is provided for learning and collaboration
- They offer job-embedded Professional Development
- They encourage teacher participation in decision making

Commentators add to this list the need for:

- Sustained effort
- Integration with school improvement
- The inclusion of learning communities

Schools are not alone in identifying learning communities, as the corporate world also rates Professional Development in "communities of practice" as highly successful. (Caine & Caine p. 1)

Caine & Caine argue for:

- Considering the stress levels learners are under. Excessive stress handicaps learning (Caine & Caine p. 3)
- Considering the quality of interactions involved in learning together, as "Some ways of being together facilitate a process, but others impede it" (Caine & Caine p. 3).
- No silver bullet, no formulaic recipe for learning together, instead is it a process, an on-going undertaking (Caine & Caine p. 4).
- Learning from experience is an important part of the process, yet it's not enough to embed change. There needs to be time for reflection, thought, examination of new learning and the chance to personalise new ideas and procedures – to get them "in their feelings" (Caine & Caine p. 5).
- Professional Development is for the teaching day and week, not just at seminars and meetings and the like (Caine & Caine p. 6).
- "When the proper foundations for good community are laid for all the adults in a school, a natural indirect effect spreads to the classrooms themselves" (Caine & Caine p. 7).

- "Meaningful learning that leads to real change engages every aspect of a person. It is just as important to teach the whole adult as it is to teach the whole child" (Caine & Caine p.12).

Their experience has led them to three key findings about the optimal conditions for Professional Development to happen (Caine & Caine pp. 14-20):
1. Relaxed alertness, characterised by:
    a. Low threat and high challenge
    b. Learners who are relaxed and alert, of course.
    c. Intrinsic motivation, which emerges when learners can ask their own questions and probe areas of personal interest (Caine & Caine p. 16)
    d. An orderly (but not rigid) and caring community, with healthy relationships based on respectful and coherent procedures (Caine & Caine p. 17).
2. Immersing the learners in a complex experience in an orchestrated manner in which the information, ideas, and skills are embedded, therefore participants need opportunities to (Caine & Caine pp. 17-18):
    a. Analyse the material in question;
    b. Link new material to what they already know;
    c. Act on and physically engage with the material to be mastered or understood;
    d. Receive coaching, guidance and explanations;
    e. Use the material as the basis for action both in the "laboratory" and the real world of the classroom.
3. The *active processing* of experience, therefore those conducting Professional Development need to go beyond providing information, to guiding teachers in these activities (Caine & Caine p 19):
    a. Detailed observation of actions and responses
    b. Deliberate practice and rehearsal
    c. Questioning and examination
    d. Analysis of data and sources
    e. On-going responses to and reflection on feedback.
    For example, as a starting point they advocate asking the following four questions of teachers – in a spirit of inquiry, not criticism (Caine & Caine p 19):
    - Can you tell me what you are doing?
    - Why did you decide to do it this way?
    - Can you explain it?
    - What would happen if you changed one element, such as…?

Hattie, John <u>Visible Learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement</u> Routledge Taylor & Francis group, London and New York, 2009
Teaching is a complex activity. Hattie lists the qualities evident in the best teachers (from Hattie p. 199):
- Setting transparent learning intentions & success criteria
- Modelling the learning intentions and success criteria
- Setting a classroom climate that welcomes error
- Using multiple and appropriate teaching strategies, especially feedback to close the gaps

- Seeing learning from the students' perspective (Hattie suggests this is **a** good place to start, Hattie p. 252)
- Attending to the challenge of the task
- Teaching study skills and strategies of learning
- Creating a sense of satisfaction, further engagement and perseverance to succeed in the tasks

Clearly, to achieve the above in the complex world of the classroom, requires considerable Professional Development, not least of all because they require:
- Commanding a range of learning strategies
- Conscious awareness of the pedagogical means by which students learn
- The ability to assess whether or not one's current strategies with the current students are working, then the skills to adapt if they're not (Ibid p. 23)
- Making teaching "visible" to the students so that the students' learning is visible to the teacher (Ibid p. 25)
- Actively generating learning that is often "intense, buzzing and risky" (Ibid p. 26)
- Actively combining teacher-centred teaching and student-centred learning
- Assisting students to engage in both surface learning and deep learning, enabling a journey from ideas to understanding to constructing and onwards (Ibid p. 29)
- Focussing on what students to do in class: students actively involved in their learning, with multiple paths to problem solving (Ibid p. 35)
- Fostering effort, clarity and engagement in students (Ibid p. 35)
- Explicitly conveying the learning intentions and the criteria for success, right down to the goals of each lesson
- Providing further challenges and yet more feedback to students – the greater the challenge to learners, the more feedback is required by them to ensure they are on the right path to successfully meet the challenge (Ibid p. 38)
- Engaging students in setting appropriately difficult & specific goals (not just "doing your best"), then structuring situations so that students can reach them and providing them feedback on how they're going. Setting both short-term, surface goals and longer-term, deep-learning goals (Ibid pp. 164-166)
- Optimising peer learning, using both co-operative and competitive learning (Ibid pp. 212-214)

Whilst the content of these lists is not unfamiliar, seeing all of these elements together is enough to daunt the most confident teacher. How can a school provide the continuous professional learning required for teachers to gain proficiency in all of them? Hattie says that the single most effective leadership action likely to produce positive student outcomes is promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (*Effect Size 0.84*). Its best characteristics are:
- using goals to narrow down the learning intentions.
- leaders being directly involved in teacher learning: *"direct involvement in support & evaluation of teaching through regular classroom visits and providing formative & summative feedback to teachers"* (Hattie p. 83)

- leaders creating the conditions necessary for substantive, sustained change, especially through transforming existing meetings into highly effective professional learning opportunities. The most effective school leaders transformed their regular meetings into "effective professional communities" where there was an intensive focus on:
  - the teaching-achievement relationship
  - collective responsibility for student achievement & well-being.
- creating school, staffroom, and classroom environments where error is welcomed as a learning opportunity, where discarding incorrect knowledge and understandings is welcomed, and where participants can feel safe to learn, re-learn, and explore knowledge and understanding (Hattie pp. 238-239).

Hattie (p240): *"The essence of good teaching is that teachers' expectations and conceptions must be subjected to debate, refutation, and investigation."*

Robinson, Viviane; Hohepa, Margie; Lloyd, Claire <u>School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why, Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration</u> Ministry of Education, Wellington 2009

Amongst the towering insights provided by the work of Robinson *et al,* include the compelling conclusion that in schools where students perform above expected levels, their school leaders are more likely to be involved with their staff in:
- curriculum planning
- visiting classrooms
- reviewing evidence about student learning.

Therefore, Robinson *et al* encourage the professional development of leaders' abilities to plan, co-ordinate and evaluate teaching and the curriculum, claiming it to have an effect size of 0.42, in other words, an effect that makes a visible change to student learning. Staff in such schools welcome their leaders' involvement in teacher appraisal and classroom observation because it results in useful feedback. This process is linked to leaders possessing knowledge that allows them to provide useful feedback and the skills to create "open-to-learning conversations" (Robinson *et al* p. 203).

> *The more leaders **concentrate on the core business of teaching & learning**, and focus their relationships with teachers on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence will be on the well-being and achievement of students* (Robinson *et al* p. 103).

"Pedagogical Leadership", they say, is 3 to 4 times more effective than "transformational leadership". There is more to educational leadership than building collegial teams, establishing a loyal and cohesive staff and developing a shared and inspirational vision. Educational leadership is about focusing such relationships on specific pedagogical work. (Robinson *et al* p. 201)

Timperley, Helen; Wilson, Aaron; Barrar, Heather; Fung, Irene <u>Teacher Professional Learning and Development, Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration</u> Ministry of Education, Wellington 2007

Timperley *et al* (Timperley p. xxv) are certainly of the view that professional development has the potential to make a measurable difference to student learning, with various studies showing an improvement in effect size of between 0.48 to 2.1. In other words, improvements in one year equivalent to that normally made in 2-4 years. However, not all Professional Development programmes are born equal, so what are the characteristics of effective programmes? Seven elements were identified that contributed to programmes that made a positive, substantive improvement to student outcomes.

1. Extended time for opportunities to learn was considered necessary, but not sufficient (Timperley *et al* p. xxviii). Whilst the *use* of time was found to be more important than the *amount* of time, and whilst some unsuccessful programmes also invested considerable time, Timperley *et al* infer that Professional Development programmes require extended time and frequent contact. This is especially so for programmes which challenge teachers to make difficult changes in practice that are at dissonance with their original personal beliefs. Between six months and two years was common, with monthly contact with the provider a minimum. Limited time seems to be adequate for relatively narrow curriculum goals. Note that both successful and unsuccessful programmes were resourced with funding for release time. Some successful programmes were not funded for release time.

2. External expertise was typically necessary, but not essential. Most successful programmes used outside providers as did most unsuccessful ones (Timperley *et al* pp. xxvii & xxix).

3. Teachers' engagement in the learning was found to be more important than whether or not they initially volunteered for the programme.

4. Teachers' prevailing theories need to be challenged, especially so when the theories include an assumption that certain groups of students cannot or will not learn (Timperley *et al* p. xxx). These theories tended to change as teachers tried the strategies being promoted and found them to be successful in accelerating learning. Higher expectations were the fruit of seeing the difference made by new teaching methods. The other type of theory typically encountered by Professional Development providers was of the prioritisation of facts, procedures and memorisation. As teachers saw a deepening of understanding occur – as they moved the focus onto processes of inquiry and developing students' conceptual understandings – so their theories of what constitutes effective teaching changed.

5. The opportunity to be involved in a professional community of practice was considered to be important (Timperley *et al* p. xxvii). Whilst effective Professional Development tended to occur in some kind of community of teachers, such participation on its own was not associated with change unless they had two preconditions:
   a. There is intelligent support for the changes being encouraged in the programme. Not only is there processing of new ideas and understandings, but there are challenges made to problematic beliefs,

and a testing of the efficacy of competing ideas along with active consideration of new perspectives.
   b. The focus is on student outcomes arising from the programme. Evidence of learning was treated as an objective artefact rather than personalised to individual teachers, allowing collective responsibility to take place by the group.
6. Successful programmes taught concepts that were consistent with wider trends in policy and research.
7. Successful programmes required active school leadership (Timperley *et al* p.xxxi). Effective leadership took a variety of forms:
   a. Ensuring organisational arrangements were put in place or by leaders sometimes taking part themselves.
   b. Systematically developing a learning culture, where they participated as learners rather than providers.
   c. Setting a vision. Typically, visions were associated with better outcomes for students and were often associated with some form of monitoring.
   d. Distributing leadership by developing the leadership of other members of staff.

Of the activities that promoted teacher learning, I list two of their observations (Timperley *et al* p.xxxvi-xxxvii):
1. Teachers need to engage in a wide range of activities for change in practice to occur. Merely listening to experts was not enough on its own to make a difference. In fact, teachers require similar conditions as students to learn effectively, requiring multiple opportunities in a range of activities. Therefore, effective activities included using some – not necessarily all – of the following:
   a. Discussing practice and one's own theories of practice
   b. Observing real or simulated lessons
   c. Examining student understandings and outcomes
   d. Being observed and receiving feedback
   e. Receiving prepared activities and materials to use with students
   f. Participating in activities "positioned as students"
   g. Engaging in professional readings
2. Opportunities to discuss and even negotiate meanings and theories of practice were considered critical (Timperley *et al* p.xxxix-xl). It seems that a high proportion of studies found to ineffective failed to engage teachers in an examination of their own theories. *"Without engaging their current theories about why they do what they do, new practice is likely to become layered onto existing practice, not replace it."* This is not to say that many teachers do not hold valid theories, because they do. Providers are warned against dismissing teachers' theories or assuming that their (providers') theories are more efficacious (Timperley *et al* p.xl). Therefore, the writers encourage providers to negotiate and debate meanings with teachers and test the evidence of both

their own theories and those of the teachers, thereby coming to a mutual understanding of effective practice.

National Schools Reform Project (NSRF) - Source: http://www.nsrfharmony.org/

NSRF employs some strategies for encouraging lasting change in classroom practice that are worth considering:

- developing collegial relationships called "Critical Friends Groups" where teachers work together in "critical friendship," looking closely at one another's practice and helping to improve and adapt it.
- they select their own facilitators from amongst their ranks or from the ranks of trusted outsiders. These facilitators are then given training to prepare them for the process.
- they link everything back to student learning.
- The programme emphasizes making one's practice public ("deprivatising" education), "continuously" assessing teaching in relation to student learning, and "routinely" adapting teaching practices and school structures.
- It aims to build trust by engaging in significant work while providing a safe environment for taking risks.
- They encourage diversity of thought, experience and perspective.
- They draw on the expertise of those within the learning community, as well as on the expertise of "outside" resources.
- They claim to engage teachers in *"reflective discourse based on the ideas contained in 'texts' of various types."*
- Teachers are held accountable for continuous improvement toward helping every student to succeed in school.
- Typically, Critical Friends Groups consist of 6-12 teachers, who meet regularly for a sustained and focused period of time to work and learn together

2.6 Various Uses of Classroom Observations – *"To know and not to do, is not to know"*

The world of teacher observations has evolved from the Neolithic era when I began teaching. Then an HOD would drop by once a year – three times in your first year of teaching – to critique a lesson. If you were really unlucky, an Inspector, the tyrannasaurus-rex of observations, would invade the territorial confines of your classroom. The conversational traffic that emerged from either of these alarming experiences were typically one-way. That's not to say that they weren't helpful, but they were limited by the thinking of the era.

Since then, considerable thought and study has been invested into the potential for observations to make a difference to teacher practice. Yet in many schools, my own included, the practice of conducting observations hasn't moved much in 25 years. Typically observations are used to attest teachers for registration and to make suggestions for improvement. "What else is there?" I hear you say. Quite a bit as it

happens. I summarise below some of the uses of observations I have encountered at schools, the ICOT conference and in educational literature.

Observations of Teaching
Ms Shroud's strategy of impromptu observations at Crescent Valley High School was typical of many of the principals I met (Balboa High School, Corvallis High School, North Eugene High School). She has a well-considered agenda for making unannounced visits to classroom using five minute walk-throughs, looking for evidence of:

- One of :
  - This year's school or departmental SMART goal
  - The teacher's own professional SMART goal
- The instructional objective - a State requirement is to have it written on the board, but Cherie is content just to see it in action.
- The "Power Standard" the teacher is working from
- Student engagement

As described above, Ms Granger, at Corvallis High School formally appraises about thirty teachers per annum. Her walk-throughs and observations are guided by a checklist (see Appendix 2) on which she checks off strategies she sees the teacher using. She never assesses as satisfactory what she doesn't see in action – such gaps become a discussion point in appraisal meetings and result in supplementary observations.

Otherwise, Ms Granger is looking for:

- The tenor of the class
- A clearly discernible learning objective
- High quality questions
- Systems in place
- Student safety
- Provision for special interest groups such as:
  - Gifted & Talented students
  - ESOL students

Robinson *et al* remark that in schools where students were performing above expected levels, staff welcomed their leaders' involvement in teacher appraisal and classroom observation because it resulted in useful feedback (Robinson *et al* p.203). Downey *et al* put up a theoretical and research-rich basis for walkthroughs and give advice about protocols that is worth every principal's attention. So, despite my opening comments, I wish to endorse the excellent practice that clearly takes place by school leaders in relation to their observational practices. However, we would all do well to take note of new work being done in this area, as described below.

Observations of Learning
At North Eugene High School, Ms Erwin is doing something different. As principal, her regular classroom visits are still "high stakes" simply because it's the principal conducting them, but the focus of her observations creates an important shift in practice from the examples above. She has swivelled the lens of her eye's camera from attending to what the teacher does in a lesson to what the students are learning. She captures and assesses information about how the student activity

connects to the learning objective. She refers to the work of City *et al* which likens walk-throughs to hospital rounds. The concept of "Instructional Rounds" is a special kind of "walkthrough" which occurs in a Professional Learning Group to address a specific 'problem of practice'. It is preceded by professional development assisting the participants to 'learn to see and unlearn to judge'. The debriefing has protocols for description, analysis, prediction, identifying patterns and making recommendations for the school and its pedagogical systems. It is a team effort at every turn and is part of a much larger strategy for promoting positive change.

As was noted earlier, other schools are also shifting their attention away from the teacher to the students, or away from teaching to learning. The Ark Academy has harnessed the aid of technology to propel the possibilities for observing student learning light years ahead. The challenge for the rest of us is to ask if we can achieve similar results with low-tech gear.

Observations in Conjunction with Professional Development Programmes
The CASE and CAME projects demonstrate another stage in the evolution of observations. These projects have used collegial observations to support pedagogical innovations. As already noted, change of practice is difficult to achieve for teachers, let alone to sustain. CASE and CAME projects have found that using observations to focus attention on how students learn, rather than how teachers teach, is having a dramatic impact as a change agent for… how teachers teach. Observational comments are restricted to what the students are doing and saying, not what the teacher is doing and saying. If it's being video-taped, the camera focuses on students, not the teacher.

Caine and Caine would approve (Caine & Caine p. 19). They promote the use of observations as a means of embedding change as part of a professional development programme. They advocate *active processing* by teachers as an important part of assimilating and trialling new learning. Therefore, they facilitate activities such as deliberate practice, rehearsal, and constructive self-reflection. Therefore, observations play an important part, augmented by questioning and examination by others in the programme or by the facilitator.

Observations for Moving Staff to Reflective Inquiry

Downey *et al* shift the attention of observations – "three-minute walk throughs" – from assessment to reflective practice. Different processes are recommended for novice or deficient teachers, but for experienced and expert teachers, they recommend a carefully considered framework for asking a question rather than giving feedback. They steer observers away from the typical, "Such-and-such went well" comments, which reduce feedback to that of an adult-to-child exchange, or the "Try this" suggestion, which tends towards the adult-to-adolescent relationship. Instead, they detail an approach that invites the teacher to give deep consideration to his/her theories of practice. They suggest that this adult-to-adult conversation take place after many brief observations, the observer asking a single question of the teacher's practice and the theory that lies behind it. The writers go to great lengths to describe a way of asking a question that avoids putting the teacher on the defensive and enhances the likelihood that he/she will devote some time to thinking through this aspect of practice and the theory that lies behind it.

Downey *et al* argue that the teacher is the "primary client" of principals (Downey *et al* p. 7), that we need to shift away from conventional and merely congenial supervisory practices towards a collaborative, reflective, collegial one: "Moving from an inspectional approach to supervision to a reflectional supervision approach" (Downey *et al* p. 10). They suggest that to move teacher practice, principals need first to influence a teacher's thinking so that the teacher wants to change his/her teaching behaviour. The well-crafted, individual, reflective question, based on the principal's repeated observations of the teacher in the classroom, is their big gun. It seems a bit unlikely, like a David slaying a Goliath with a few small stones, but their work over 30 years suggests it's effective.

Recommendations about Observations
Some recommendations that emerge from all this:
- Distinguish between observations for the purpose of attestation and those aimed at raising good practice.
- Wherever possible, foster teacher ownership of the process.
- Protocols and purposes need to be made explicit before commencing, as does the theory that lies behind the observation, i.e. its deep purposes.
- The issues of how and when feedback will be given as a result of observations should be clear from the outset.
- Consider replacing feedback with carefully-considered, reflective questions.
- Some sort of observational process is going to be required to make just about every programme of professional development successful in the medium term and to enable it to be sustained in the long term.
- Consideration needs to be given to focussing on what students say and do rather than exclusively focussing on what teachers say and do.

2.7 Bringing it All Together: the elements of an effective Professional Development programme

Research is constantly adding to our ability to make substantive change to student learning yet making use of what has been discovered in the years since teachers did their original training is difficult to achieve. We know that not everything teachers do makes a positive difference. A few teachers have a deleterious effect on learning, others make some difference, but much less than is possible. As Hattie puts it, it's not what teachers do that makes a difference, but what *some* teachers do. There is much to learn, even for effective teachers, and the challenge of learning it whilst having a full teaching load is considerable.

As any provider of professional development will tell you, all is not plain sailing in the world of changing teacher practice. Frequently, teachers tack on what they have learnt to their existing practice resulting in no real change. Or they make temporary change before reverting to previous practice. Oftentimes, they enter into a programme with the resentment of a conscript, carrying the baggage of deficit theories that prevent them engaging in the new learning with an open mind. Yet, professional learning by teachers can result in a dramatic acceleration of student

learning, so why do some programmes succeed, where others fail? What are the elements of an effective programme of professional development for teachers?

My study has suggested that there are both practical and affective elements to consider when preparing a programme of teacher learning.

Practical Elements:
- Time:
    - A programme of between six months and two years is needed for most topics.
    - Monthly contact between teachers and the provider is a minimum.
    - Time away from school or class is usually useful, so long as it is well spent.
    - Dedicated time for structured reflection is important.
- Learning with others, such as in Professional Learning Communities: whilst this is often conducted with the guidance of an outside facilitator, an in-house facilitator works well when his/her work is supported by training on how to be an effective facilitator.
- A range of opportunities for active processing: one needs to teach the whole adult, just as one teaches the whole child, such as:
    - Lesson simulation
    - Peer teaching
    - Structured observations of lessons, especially assessing the immediate impact of new strategies on student learning, such as observing what students say and do during a particular lesson
    - Opportunities to challenge and examine the concepts
    - Learning from peers who have volunteered to be "pioneer teachers"
    - Guided reflection
    - Peer coaching
- Observations: Three-Minute Walk Throughs, when done well, may be the most effective form of professional development available.

Affective elements needed for effective learning:
- A climate of trust: healthy relationships, willingness to risk, high trust.
- Democracy in action: teacher participation in decision making about the Professional Development programme.
- Collaboration: creative teamwork.

Chapter 3: Whole-School Approach to Values Education

"What you are doing speaks so loudly, they can't hear what you say." Ralph Waldo Emerson

3.1 Values Education in the Schools I Visited
3.2 Bringing it all Together: some ideas to get started with

3.1 Values Education in the Schools I Visited
Balboa High School
Broadly, Balboa takes three approaches to values education: making expectations explicit, surveys, and adopting a parental approach.

The school has worked at making their expectations of students explicit, including requiring each student to do community service for a certain number of hours in their years at high school. There's a strong articulation about social justice and working for a better society. This is bottom-up; it's felt by students and staff, however, it is also promoted in posters and the like. Here's what you will find on posters around the school, on their website, and in their documentation and pamphlets:

- Students embrace learning to create a better, more equitable society. Students will:
    - Demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for diverse populations
    - Meet or exceed all A-G requirements
- Students experience learning as critical and creative thinkers. Students will:
    - Apply, analyse, and evaluate their own learning
    - Use electronic, print, and artistic media to proficiency
    - Demonstrate academic competency through a rigorous and relevant curriculum
- Students value learning to foster personal integrity. Students will:
    - Contribute time, energy, and talent to improve their school and community
    - Develop a positive self-image through identity, purpose, and hope

Their articulation of clear expectations is supported by the San Francisco Unified School District, which sets outs its expectations of students in a booklet with sections on:
- "Essential Components of Learning Successful Behaviours":
    - Academic rigour
    - Positive behaviour support
    - Restorative approaches
- A "Positive Code of Conduct"
- A "Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities"
Each section provides detailed explanations in language that is student-friendly.

Balboa uses parent/guardian surveys to monitor a range of responses to the school, which includes value-based questions, such as questions about communications to and from school, children's happiness at school, awareness of how to become involved in decision making, satisfaction with school discipline.

The staff takes a quasi-parental approach, extending to the "security" staff as well, who have a particular role to play with students who are disengaged from the schooling process. "We're big on redemption," they say of themselves. Every day is a new day at Balboa, where they can start afresh.

Crescent Valley High School
Crescent Valley operates an "Adviser Programme" similar to the New Zealand concept of Form Classes, where 15-20 students meet a teacher several times per week. Teachers have a lesson plan to follow, with resources such as power points. Freshmen have a "Link Team" with seniors, whereby the Linkmen meet the Freshmen on a regular basis. They operate a targeted programme aimed at reducing bullying.

Corvallis High School
Values education takes a variety of forms here:
- In "Link Crews", seniors teach juniors the school values.
- A variety of clubs are values-based, such as the Peace Corps and aid groups which send thousands of dollars overseas each year.
- Careers values, such as timeliness, are taught in Advisor Classes (Form Classes).
- All school sports teams are aware of the "Athlete's Code".
- The "Sparta" motto has been extended into an acronym representing the school values:
  - **S**cholarly
    - Set high standards for myself and others
    - Make my learning a high priority
    - Find the learner in myself
    - Push myself to reach the next level
    - Do my best
  - **P**repared
    - Engaged in learning
    - Learn about the world around you to become a global citizen
    - Use my time now to build my future
    - Every day, come ready to learn
  - **A**ppreciative
    - Be thankful
    - Be courteous
    - Be humble
    - Celebrate our accomplishments

- o **R**eliable
    - Be on time
    - Do the right thing
    - Be responsible for my own words and actions
    - Represent and support our school positively
- o **T**enacious
    - Pursue excellence in all things
    - Never give up
    - Stay committed to your goals and beliefs
    - Learn from your mistakes
- o **A**ccepting
    - Honour differences
    - Respect myself, others and community
    - Understand differences in cultures and opinions
- Students were involved in the development of these values above.
- To combat bullying and harassment:
    - o the school has run an "impact day" to educate bystanders about the impact they have on enabling and encouraging bullying and harassment to take place
    - o students are surveyed every two years
    - o they established a Student Council

North Eugene High School
In order to graduate, North Eugene High School requires each senior student to complete 50 hours of community service over two years , that is 25 hours per annum. This is a school requirement rather than a State one. Community service can include coaching, assisting clubs, service in church and community groups, etc. An appropriate community mentor signs off that the community service has been completed.

The school promotes the "Portrait of a Graduate" through its web site, literature, pamphlets, and school signage in hallways. They have consulted with community focus groups, parents, "Site Council", staff, and individuals. Its purpose is to give the school direction and to set priorities. The portrait has nine components:
1. College Ready
2. Employable
3. Effective Communicator
4. Culturally Competent
5. Team Member
6. Good Citizen
7. Information Literate
8. Problem Solver
9. Healthy

Each component comes with a full explanation, such as the one below:

College Ready
The small schools at North Eugene must provide a program for all students to ensure that college is an option. We understand and appreciate that not every student will go to college and that many jobs do not require a college degree. However, every graduate must have the necessary course work and experiences to be ready for college if they so choose.

Because different colleges have different entrance requirements, our target will be the current University of Oregon entrance requirements.

"Students need to be aware of opportunities to continue learning beyond high school and be prepared to succeed."
— Community Member
"It is important to go to college. Hey, you can make more money and do more of what you want to do."
— Student
"They should be able to see and access the array of next steps."
— Parent

In some documentation, each component has a summary:
1. College Ready: ensuring that college is an option.
2. Employable: training in skills and attitudes that are expected in the workplace.
3. Effective Communicator: writing/speaking skills to express ideas powerfully.
4. Culturally Competent: understanding our world. Speaking a second language.
5. Team Member: the skills to be an effective team member.
6. Good Citizen: a knowledgeable participant in government and community.
7. Information Literate: understanding computer technology and having the ability to read and interpret new information at a constantly increasing level.
8. Problem Solver: critical thinking and real-life problem-solving.
9. Healthy: skills/attitudes for physical and mental well-being.

Additionally, students are awarded "tickets" for demonstrating the characteristics promoted by the portrait, but Ms Erwin reports that on each of the occasions she has given students the tickets, they have turned them down on the basis that they "were just doing the right thing" and didn't need the tickets.

The Ark Academy
In every assembly there is reference to the school's values, which are clearly articulated. What stands out about The Ark's material on values is:
• The pledge made to students by all staff
• The 'voice' used in their Teaching and Learning Policy Handbook, much of which is written to students rather than to teachers or parents.
See below:

OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING PLEDGE

Our job is help all of you get ready to cope with whatever life may throw at you. 21st century life is very demanding and uncertain and we are sure that, to thrive, you will need to be ready to enjoy challenging situations, and able to

meet them calmly, confidently and creatively. We know that there are many young people who aren't like this, and who are struggling to cope. We really don't want that to happen to any of you. If you turn up, join in and give 100%, we will do everything in our power to give you that confidence and capability.

The qualities we value
Specifically, we will do all we can to help you develop these qualities:
- o *curiosity*
- o *being up for a challenge*
- o *resilience*
- o *resourcefulness*
- o *concentration*
- o *imagination*
- o *questioning*
- o *clear thinking*
- o *self-awareness*
- o *thoughtfulness*
- o *self-evaluation*
- o *independence*
- o *team spirit*
- o *empathy*

To achieve this, we need order and routine. But, given that, we will strive always to
value these qualities over 'good behaviour'. This list is provisional. We will develop it
over time and we expect your input.

The Cherwell School
Barb Timms, Deputy Headteacher, explains that values education at The Cherwell School occurs largely by osmosis. However, there are conscious strategies employed to encourage an understanding of and appreciation for the school's values:
- staff are given occasional reminders of the way things are done at Cherwell:
  - o *we don't shout at students*
  - o *students don't get left standing in corridors here*.
- teachers are encouraged to improve practice: the Senior Leadership Team will repeat slogans such as "know your kids" in order to remind teachers to look for opportunities to make connections with their students, from simple things such as saying hi in the grounds, to taking an interest in students' extra-curricular activities.
- restorative practice is being used, with all its attendant values concerning conflict resolution, respectful conversations and so on.
- posters promote the school values
- assemblies have a theme each week, which are followed up with discussion in tutor groups and "circle time".
- Religious Studies covers topics such as bullying and sex education

3.2 Bringing it all Together: some ideas to get started with

At first glance, the apparent Nirvana of a values-based school would be that staff and students live them. The values are simply part of 'how we do things around here'. They are learnt by new staff and students 'by osmosis' because they are evident in the way staff relate to each other and with students. Thinking back to Patterson *et al*'s book *Influencer*, described in the chapter on Student Motivation, it's fair to assume that left to mere culture alone, with no strategy, there is a high chance that much could be lost in time, slipping from the explicit to the assumed, to the forgotten. Without a plan of influence, many of the motives to live the school's values would risk being untouched, preventing them from gaining anything like full momentum. What strategies might a school employ, then, to influence its staff and students to adopt its values?

Personal motivation: how does one motivate someone who isn't motivated? You could take a carrot and stick approach, but that's unlikely to work in any field of human endeavour, let alone motivating someone to act on the basis of a value they do not already possess. Yet, what if they do possess the value? They might call it by another name, or have never put it into words, but the place to start, it would seem, is with what's already there by engaging all stakeholders in a collaborative development towards reviewing the school's values. The style of collaboration needs to be thought through to ensure it is authentic and listens to all voices as well as how ideas are expressed.

Personal ability is crucial. If people don't know about the school's values, if they remain hidden on a school charter shoved in a dark drawer, then little progress will be made towards making them endemic in daily school life. The key here might be to "overinvest" in values education, hence:

7. Explicitly educating students about the school's values, such as in:
    a. form classes, by operating a well-resourced education programme involving input by form teachers and peer support leaders.
    b. unit plans and lessons, when it's relevant to do so, ranging from the teacher's passing comment to class discussion to structuring tasks around relevant values, such as respect for minority groups.
    c. pastoral and disciplinary situations, where students are affirmed, even while they are disciplined through:
        i. strategies such as restorative practice
        ii. using references that build self-belief, such as, "You're better than this."
8. Iterating the school community about the values, presenting them on posters, displays, website, with acronyms for ease of memory, creating a "portrait of a graduate", repeating them on school material, and making reference to them in assemblies, classes and staff meetings.

Social motivation is enormously important to the success of any school programme because teenagers encounter enormous peer influence. Of the strategies identified

above, just one deals with the crucial issue of how to harness social influence: using peer support leaders, student councillors, house leaders and so on to direct parts of an organised education programme.

Social ability refers to the capability of others to provide their peers with the help and information required to support them. It calls for coaching, feedback, and training; it requires investment of time in both the 'formal' leaders in a school and the 'informal' student leaders. Such strategies for the formal, appointed leaders might include leadership camps, peer support training, mentoring for student leaders, achievers' seminars, and mentoring. It would be worthwhile to consider how to broaden the net of influence to the unappointed 'opinion leaders' as well.
Structural motivation refers to the way things are organised around us, such as recognition for appropriate behaviour.

9. I note again that at North Eugene High School, students were so intrinsically motivated to "do the right thing" that they turned down the opportunity to receive recognition for it. However, I'm also aware that we tend to get more of the things we reward, whether in the classroom or in the staff room, so there is merit in reviewing the means by which we acknowledge the school's values when they are seen in action and how we encourage people to practise them.

10. What of the introduction of compulsory service hours for all students? There are good reasons to have reservations about such a scheme: it is open to abuse in terms of verifying that a student has actually completed the voluntary work, it presents another burden of administration on a school, the school's right to insist that students carry it through would almost certainly be challenged, our best students are busy already without introducing another programme into their lives. However, imagine if one could successfully encourage almost all of our students to give some time for the good of others. I think that possibility is worthy of some consideration.

Structural ability refers to such things as aspects in the school environment that make it easier to do the right thing, for example it might include cues and reminders to help students stay on course, or it could involve teachers analysing their data about students' self-management grades. A school-wide strategy might include:

- Reiteration of the values in the same ways mentioned above (posters, displays, etc.).
- Including support staff in knowing the values and considering the relevance of them in their interactions with students, each other, and the wider school community.
- Collaboratively composing a staff pledge made by staff to students.
- Weaving the values into the warp and weft of school culture, therefore considering their place in:
  - o The disciplinary system
  - o Assemblies
  - o Code of behaviour in sports
  - o Student Council

- To end where this summary began, none of the above strategies will encourage students to adopt the school's values unless the values are lived out by staff. Ralph Waldo Emerson's quote serves as a warning against saying one thing and doing the opposite: *"What you are doing speaks so loudly, they can't hear what you say."* Teenagers are adept at spotting hypocrisy and inconsistency.

In compiling this section on values, I realise it is the least researched aspect of this report. However, I have opted to include it in the hope that it might form a useful starting point for a school-wide review of how to build a school culture that lives out its values.

Chapter 4: Thinking Strategies
There is not adequate theoretical recognition that all which the school can do for pupils,
so far as their minds are concerned, is to develop their ability to think.
John Dewey (Democracy and Education. 1916)

4.1 School Visits

My interviews did not do justice to this important topic. It was obvious that schools were using a range of thinking strategies, such as The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Marzano's instructional strategies, and Socratic tutorials.

4.2 International Conference on Thinking (ICOT)

4.2.1 What's the Problem with the State of Thinking in Our Classrooms as it is?
Isn't everyone thinking all the time? Don't children think before they come to school? Don't we already teach thinking every time we ask pupils to compare, contrast, analyse, label, list, describe, conclude, explain, and so on?
Problem 1: analysis and argument are excellent, but not good enough
From Symposium: "Creating a World of Good Thinkers" Chair: Bob (Robert) Swartz
Most teachers focus on content objectives, not making "skilful thinking" an objective in lessons. Whilst everyone thinks, not everyone thinks as well as they could. Whilst we believe we are teaching students to think when we ask them to analyse, classify, compare, contrast and so on, these activities are not thinking skills. They are "excellent but not enough", as Edward deBono puts it. In fact, the traditional thinking activities of comparing and contrasting, as good as they are, can lead to some very superficial, hasty answers. Therefore, the presenters in the symposium promoted the use of explicit thinking organisers, "operationalised into question strategies."
Edward deBono: we need an alternative to logic because we can't do all that logic requires. For example, when one has eleven articles of clothing and jewellery to put on, there are thirty-nine million sequences for doing so. It has been calculated that it would take seventy-six years to figure out the most efficient sequence. In the face of such variations, we have a number of options:
- Take a creative approach
- Introduce chance
- Create a new value

For 2,400 years, we have done very little with what deBono calls "operational thinking". We are expert at judgement instead of design and creating a new value. Judgement says this is right and that is wrong, whereas provocation says, "How do we move forward from this?" We are excellent at negative sensibilities rather than positive sensibilities. We value the sort of thinking that results in judgement, rather than the sort of thinking that results in values.

Problem 2: in becoming expert at logic, the western world has undervalued other qualities

Edward deBono: The western world has become expert at thinking to prove truth, which has reached its zenith in science. Whilst logic may be sufficient for scientific truth, it does so without perception and values.

Art Costa: whilst the western world has become expert at thinking to prove truth, students still don't know how to perform the traditional thinking challenges we put to them, such as to explain, conclude, label, compare and contrast. We need to be adding the vocabulary of thinking skills to the instructions we give to students.

Guy Claxton: The established view of the Enlightenment places value on clarity, rather than vagueness, logic rather than emotion, explicitness rather than intuition, the verbal rather than the physical, the explanatory rather than the observational, rapidity rather than patience. Yet 99% of our actions emerge without deliberation or even awareness. Thinking about what we're doing may be a good thing at some times but not at all times, e.g.:

- Poets, artists, even scientists report that sometimes ideas come to them
- Apparently, we remember faces better if we just look at them rather than describing them
- Remembering golf advice while under pressure reduces proficiency.
- In psychotherapy, the fluent, articulate patient is less likely to be making progress than those who lack fluency

So, he concludes, there may be perils in over-thinking, such as:

- Valuing articulation over contemplation
- Responding to confusion with fear
- Falsely linking low intelligence with a slow answer and high intelligence with a quick one
- Having disdain for intuition
- Over-esteeming the abstract
- Over-valuing cleverness at the expense of wisdom and thoughtfulness

Aidan Moran: the study of cognition in sport suggests that we have much to learn about traditional views of intelligence. Historically, cognitive psychology has largely ignored sport, yet the same pathways in the brain that deal with active participation also deal with abstract thinking, so sport is a natural laboratory for motor cognition and mental processes in action. Sports research can help us to understand how to develop expertise in non-sports activities, such as developing strategies for overcoming anxieties. High states of anxiety can consume working memory, disenabling us to block out distractions, preventing us from switching 'targets' when we need to, causing us to focus on what's least important by drawing attention to what we fear, and increasing levels of self-awareness causing us to invest conscious control over things best left to automatic processes. For example, trying <u>not</u> to think of something tends to produce the opposite effect as it creates a struggle between

the conscious and unconscious, which typically results in anxiety conquering. Therefore, "aim for the corner" is more likely to result in success than, "not at the goal-keeper". Another solution to high anxiety is to seek distractors at times of high anxiety; some sportspeople sing to themselves, thereby preventing the sort of over-thinking that reduces performance.

Problem 3: critical, creative thinking requires good coaching

Art Costa: Henry Ford said, "Thinking is the hardest work there is. That is why so few engage in it." Costa would disagree. Children come to us thinking. It's a natural process for them. Costa would alter Ford's statement to say, "*Critical, creative* thinking is the hardest work there is. That is why so few engage in it." Therefore, just as Olympians require good coaches, so pupils require teachers to be coaches of good thinking.

Problem 4: students tend to experience few opportunities for deep thinking in contemporary classrooms

Hattie: students have learnt that it's surface learning that leads to success. Deep thinking seldom takes place in contemporary classrooms (Hattie p. 28). Hattie notes that the recent revision of Bloom's Taxonomy is a step in the right direction, including both "procedural knowledge" (how to do something, methods of inquiry) and "meta-cognitive knowledge" (knowledge of cognition generally and of one's own cognitive processes) (Hattie p. 29). If Hattie is right, perhaps the thinking strategies outlined in this chapter may provide teachers with methods of enabling students to engage in deeper thinking.

Art Costa: Lauren Renick's work suggests that when students are treated as if intelligent, they will become so. Perhaps teachers opt for surface learning because they underestimate the intellectual abilities of their students?

John Crossland: intelligence is not fixed. We keep learning throughout our lives as there is considerable plasticity in the brain. Perhaps deep thinking is more possible than we realise, even by those we judge to be incapable of it. Crossland advocates unlocking intelligence by getting the mind and body working together and considering the place of emotion in learning: *"the emotional brain is as involved in reasoning as is the thinking brain"* (johncrossland.com).

Problem 5: we live in an age of misinformation

Diane Halpern: Despite increasing sophistication in scientific knowledge, the general understanding of science by the mainstream population has not progressed. Businesses and journalists make money from people's interests in cleaning auras, untested homeopathic medicines, partial understandings of the links between wine drinking with low rates of heart attack and many other unscientific pursuits. Examples of unscientific thinking are evident in media on a daily basis. Diane is no advocate of cynicism, but encourages teachers to promote the skills of "amiable scepticism" as a means of defence against the misinformation so rife in the "information age".

Symposium: In this knowledge era, more information is available than ever before and it spreads faster than was possible before the era of digital technologies. Information spreads "virally" from people we trust, so we need better skills of discernment than we have ever needed before.

4.2.2 What is to be Gained Through the Deliberate Teaching of Thinking Strategies?

Opportunity 1: enriched understandings of curricular content

Symposium: The promoters of skilful thinking are at pains to point out that it is not at odds with curricular content, in fact it should result in students' construction of rich understandings of curricular content, even while learning how to do a particular type of thinking skilfully. The discipline of skilful thinking involves not just the use of "thinking organisers" but leads to self-selecting the right organiser for the task. It fosters, then, an ability by students to think about their own thinking, to do so "frequently, explicitly and systematically", to do so in school – across all curricula – and in non-school contexts. It enhances their ability to work collaboratively and to communicate their work effectively.

Opportunity 2: "good" thinking

Teaching thinking strategies is akin to developing a culture of good thinking. Thinking strategies should go beyond curricular content to consider the moral purposes schools can serve. Nelson Mandela, despite supporting liberation for Black Africans through armed conflict against the apartheid in South Africa, said, "Education is the greatest liberator." Having a culture of "good thinking" should serve a higher ethical purpose of supporting liberty, justice, and democracy.

Art Costa: for the sake of creating a better world, a place of interdependence and justice, we need to enable students to think big and long-range.

Opportunity 3: enhancing structured writing

Symposium: organised thinking leads quite naturally into organised writing. For a start, the quality of what's to be conveyed is vastly better after deep and careful thought has taken place. Secondly, there is more student ownership of the content, therefore the potential exists for a stronger voice to be conveyed. Thirdly, because the thinking has been shaped in a planned, organised manner, so can the writing follow a sequential, logical road map, taking the burden of responsibility for structuration off students.

Opportunity 4: solving tough problems

Art Costa: we need to move from not only knowing the right answers, but towards knowing how to behave when the right answers aren't known.

Alan McMurray: using thinking skills to explore emotionally-charged controversial issues, such as sectarian views in Northern Ireland, allows an objective framework that results in learning together.

Opportunity 5: thinking strategies make learning visible

Art Costa: we want students' problem-solving to be verbalised and mapped. Rather than just providing an answer, we want them to be able to say how they came to it, how they commenced, what processes they went through to get there. We want them to develop life-long skills, so we want them to be able to repeat their success if given a different problem. By learning a range of thinking strategies, students will be enabled to select the best thinking tool, to explain their processes and to repeat their success.

John Hattie: one of the key ingredients of effective teaching is awareness of students' understandings. Another is having a range of strategies to give to the student when he/she seems not to understand (Hattie p. 23). The best teaching and learning occur when the 'three worlds' of achievement come together: "ideas, thinking, and constructing" (Hattie p. 26)

A Summary of Recommended Thinking Strategies
Dr Edward deBono:

Edward de Bono's key concept is that logical, linear and critical thinking has limitations because it is based on argumentation. The traditional critical thinking processes of Plato, Aristotle and Socrates are reductive, designed to eliminate all but

the truth. De Bono calls for the more important need for creative thinking as a constructive addition to age-old argument.

CoRT (Cognitive Research Trust)

CoRT is a trust set up for the development and practice of de Bono's ideas. It teaches that thinking is a skill that can be improved by focused attention and the practice of some basic skills. The essence of the CoRT Thinking Method is to focus attention directly on different aspects of thinking and to crystallise these aspects into definite concepts and tools that can be used deliberately. CoRT debunks the idea that skill in thinking is developed as the by-product of traditional school subjects such as Geography and History and that a person with a high IQ would necessarily be an effective thinker. According to CoRT, some people with high IQs turn out to be relatively ineffective thinkers and others with much more humble IQs are more effective.

Six Thinking Hats

This is a thinking tool for group discussion and individual thinking. Combined with the idea of parallel thinking, which is associated with it, it provides a means for groups to think together more effectively, and a means to plan thinking processes in a detailed and cohesive way.

The premise of the method is that the human brain thinks in a number of distinct ways which can be identified, deliberately accessed and hence planned for use in a structured way allowing one to develop strategies for thinking about particular issues. Dr de Bono identifies six distinct states in which the brain can direct conscious thought to certain aspects of issues being considered (e.g. gut instinct, pessimistic judgment, neutral facts).

Six distinct states are identified and assigned a colour:
- Information (white): considering purely what information is available, what are the facts?
- Emotions (red): instinctive, gut reaction or statements of emotional feeling (but not with any justification)
- Bad points judgment (black): logic applied to identifying flaws or barriers, seeking mismatch
- Good points judgment (yellow): logic applied to identifying benefits, seeking harmony
- Creativity (green): statements of provocation and investigation, seeing where a thought goes
- Thinking (blue): thinking about thinking

All of these thinking hats help for thinking more deeply. They indicate problems and solutions about an idea a group is considering. In ordinary, unstructured thinking, the thinker leaps from critical thinking to neutrality to optimism and so on without structure or strategy. The Six Thinking Hats process attempts to introduce "parallel thinking", whereby everyone in the group uses the same type of thinking together. Without such a strategy, the thinking of a group will not tend to converge. As a result, discussion will tend not to converge. Due to the power of the ego and the age-old predilection to

"black hat" thinking in the majority of western culture, this can lead to very destructive meetings. Even with good courtesy and clear, shared objectives in any collaborative thinking activity, there is a natural tendency for "spaghetti thinking" where one person is thinking about the benefits while another considers the facts and so on. The hats allow this to be avoided so that everyone together considers the problems, or the benefits, or the facts, reducing distractions and supporting cross pollination of thought.

With CoRT, de Bono has developed thinking tools for schools, that are now used widely around the world, from age 6 up.

Art Costa: Habits of Mind
Costa is the brain child behind Habits of Mind. He says that lesson design has four simultaneous sets of decisions:

1. Content
   o Curriculum knowledge
   o Essential questions / learning objectives
   o Agreed understandings
2. Thinking strategies
3. Rich cognitive tasks
4. Habits of Mind (HOM)

These last two deserve a closer look.
Rich Cognitive Tasks:

> I gather that a variety of things can be meant when educationalists refer to rich tasks. Perhaps the common denominators are that such assignments:
> - are often performance and/or problem-based
> - are "authentic" (i.e. have an obvious connection to the real world) and/or result in a product
> - are cross-curricular
> - have clear and challenging attainment standards (avoiding "veneer of accomplishment" syndrome)
> - and require deep and extended thinking.
>
> For more information, see:
> - http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/learninginclusion/files/links/DesignAuthenticAssess_Asso
> - http://www.education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics
>
> The Queensland State Education Department's "Rich Tasks", one of its cornerstones of "New Basics" are founded on the ideas of John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Paulo Freire and Ted Sizer. However, I have not been able to establish exactly what Costa means by "rich cognitive tasks", so treat the above comments as preliminary work only. My own sense is that there is something left ubndiscovered (at least for me) that is worthy of more research.

Habits of Mind

Art Costa says, "The sum of one's intelligence is the sum of one's habits of mind." HOM are dispositions used by successful people. They have been identified as patterns within the work of those who have been effective. There are sixteen of them:

- Persisting
- Managing impulsivity
- Listening with understanding and empathy
- Thinking flexibly
- Thinking about thinking (metacognition)
- Striving for accuracy and precision
- Questioning and posing problems
- Applying past knowledge to new situations
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- Gathering data through all senses
- Creating, imagining, and innovating
- Responding with wonderment and awe
- Taking responsible risks
- Finding humour
- Thinking interdependently
- Learning continuously

"A habit is a cable; we weave it each day, and at last we cannot break it." Costa says that HOM are successful because they are trans-disciplinary – they are for every sphere of life – they are a good for adults as they are for students, and they are focussed on long-range, enduring, essential learning.

Graham Watts is an education consultant who specialises in providing professional development on HOM. He has also developed tools for "Higher Order Thinking" which provide explicit models for students to select from when asked to perform tasks such as describing and defining. They enable teachers to ask questions of clarification, evaluation, prioritising and so on, such as:

- How do you know that?
- Where else could you go for information?

He says of HOM, that they are most effective when the HOM language is used across the school. They require time and practice to embed and so they require a deliberate change management model to enable them to be effective. He has found similarities amongst schools where HOM are effective:

- Implementation has commenced with exploring their meanings
- Meaning has been expanded by looking for real life examples and models
- Students are asked which HOM is best to use in this or that situation
- For a time, each HOM becomes the focus of positive reinforcement, student self-reflection, and deeper questioning, such as asking, "When does persistence become stubbornness?" or "When is the right time to stop persisting?"
- Students have been given opportunities to build their commitment to each HOM, e.g. through goal setting.

Robert Swartz: Thinking-Based Learning (also called "Infusion")
Thinking-Based Learning (TBL) is the use of appropriate thinking skills, enhanced by Habits of Mind, directed by the thinker's own selection of the best types of thinking to use in the situation. Swartz observes that TBL results in "dramatically" enhanced understanding of content (Swartz p. 2). A unit of work that uses TBL might go something like this:

- Infusing direct instruction in skilful thinking into content instruction: introducing students to thinking skills and Habits of Mind, for example, looking at the relationships between parts and their wholes, and the processes for making skilful decisions
- Prompting active student thinking about curricular content, by:
  - Providing an overview
  - Using a graphic organiser
  - Scaffolding collaborative thinking
  - Finding and processing relevant information
  - Certifying the accuracy of the information
  - Providing an explicit format for moving from good thinking to good writing
- Reflection: once all is complete, prompting students to think about their processes in order to better plan their thinking next time

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4.3 Bringing it All Together: elements of a school's thinking policy

Guy Claxton recommends that, amongst other things, learning policies in schools need to give consideration to:
- Ensuring an equality of status of school subjects
- Building real-world expertise
- Emphasising the "see" as equally as "think" and "wonder"
- Giving students time for genuinely good and creative thoughts to well up
- Emphasising wisdom
- Building wariness of "premature articulation", i.e. giving adequate thought to the task, before putting ideas on paper

David Gurr (seminar leaders at ICOT, "Leadership for Creating a Thinking School at Buranda State School") says because school leadership is considered second in influence only to classroom instruction, principals' involvement in thinking has a significant impact. David argues that education for thinking must be more than "just a vision", it must become an underlying philosophy of education. School leaders need to model promoting thinking then develop the staff by coaching, guiding, and resourcing them.
In other words, a thinking policy needs to be both a philosophical statement as well as a guide to everyday action.
Taking all the above into account, what would I recommend for consideration in a school's thinking policy, were a school to decide to have one?
- An explicit statement of the higher moral purposes behind "good" thinking.

- An explicit set of philosophical statements about the range of thinking valued by the school, such as:
  - that the school values the traditional scholarly qualities of clarity, logic, precision, verbal articulation, explanations and so on.
  - alongside those, it values emotion, intuition, patience, wisdom, thoughtfulness, creativity, and knowing what to do when the answer is not known.
  - physical subjects are considered equal to abstract ones, each seeking to learn from the other.
- Cross-curricular agreement about which thinking strategies to use, so that:
  - students are given opportunities in all classes to think about their thinking, "frequently, explicitly and systematically".
  - the nominated thinking strategies become part of the vocabulary of the whole school.
- A whole-school approach should consider:
  - The role of these in lesson planning (see Diagram 1):
    - Content
    - Thinking strategies
    - Rich tasks
    - Habits of Mind (HOM)
    - Values

Diagram 1: Considerations in Lesson Planning

  - The place de Bono's "six hats" could play in problem solving, lessons, and staff meetings.
  - Using Swartz's "Thinking-Based Learning" as a way of synthesising a range of strategies.
  - Using Graham Watts's "Higher Order Thinking" as a way of deepening understanding whilst broadening the base of thinking strategies students can call on.
- Whatever strategies are chosen, staff should be encouraged to find opportunities to use them in their own thinking, discussions and problem-solving.

- The crucial role the teacher's questions play in shifting from surface learning to deep learning. Task design is also a deciding factor in the likelihood of making such a shift. Therefore, consideration could be given to using:
    - Bloom's Revised Taxonomy
    - Marzano's instructional strategies (see Appendix 5)
- There is much to be gained from strategically linking a school's thinking policy with its writing policy and procedures.
- Giving consideration to the use of a change management model that:
    - is preceded by opportunities by all staff to contribute to the plan;
    - maps out the process of implementation, considering time, resources and professional development over a sustained period of time.
- The impact of the thinking models adopted on other school structures, such as:
    - Adding a "PLA" (Parents Learning Association) as a branch of the PTA. The PLA would give information on and invite contributions to the discussions about the school's philosophy of learning, its policy on thinking, how these things impact on the classrooms, how parents can assist their children to be good thinkers and so on.
    - Using Edward de Bono's "six hats" in Board of Trustees Meetings
    - Incorporating graphic organisers into staff meetings to facilitate discussions.

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Please contact the author for the appendices