



## **“Learning Together”**

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### **Sabbatical Leave Report.**

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## **Child Centred Learning.**

Background information.

### **Heutagogy and developing capable people and capable workplaces STEWART HASE AND CHRIS KENYON**

“Capable people are more likely to be able to deal effectively with the turbulent and complex environment in which they live by possessing an ‘all round’ capacity centred on the characteristics of: high self-efficacy, knowing how to learn, creativity, the ability to use competencies in novel as well as familiar situations, possessing appropriate values and working well with others.”

“It is learner-centred as opposed to teacher-centred learning. Teacher centred learning has to be organized by others who make the appropriate associations and generalizations on behalf of the learner.”

“Thus, random individual experiences are taken to be inadequate as sources of knowledge, the educational process is seen to need disciplined students, and literacy is seen to precede knowledge acquisition.”

“Self-determined learning assumes that people have the potential to learn continuously and in real time by interacting with their environment, they learn through their lifespan, can be lead to ideas rather than be force fed the wisdom of others, and thereby they enhance their creativity, and re-learn how to learn.”

“Heutagogy recognizes that people learn when they are ready and that this is most likely to occur quite randomly, chaotically and in the face of ambiguity and need. The challenge becomes how to maximize its potential.”

“A heutagogical approach recognises the need to be flexible in the learning where the teacher provides resources but the learner designs the curriculum, not just the learning process, by negotiating the learning. Thus learners might read around critical issues or questions and determine what is of interest and relevance to them, and then negotiate further reading and assessment tasks.”

“As teachers we should concern ourselves with developing the learner’s capability, not just embedding discipline based skills and knowledge. We should relinquish any power we deem ourselves to have.”

“Some of the work-based learning possibilities that are heutagogical in nature are action learning, and coaching and mentoring and their associated techniques. These approaches emphasize processes that provide the opportunity to access learning ‘moments’, tacit learning, and develop the notion of a learning organisation.” “ A more recent conceptualization of this notion that has been provided a practical base is that of knowledge management.”

“It is when we are confused and anxious that we ask the questions that lead to learning.”

*Heutagogy:*  
*A Child of Complexity Theory*  
STEWART HASE AND CHRIS KENYON

“People only change in response to a very clear need. This usually involves distress such as confusion, dissonance, and fear or a more positive motive such as intense desire. The satiated and the comfortable are less likely to make a behavioural change no matter what others may desire.

“We also like to make the distinction between knowledge and skill acquisition and learning. We see these as quite different processes. Knowledge and skills or competencies can be acquired and even reproduced. But this is not learning at a deeper cognitive level. Learning is an integrative experience where a change in behaviour, knowledge, or understanding is incorporated into the person’s existing repertoire of behaviour and schema (values, attitudes and beliefs). For example, it is possible to acquire a set of competencies that one can repeat in familiar or known circumstances. However, if learning has taken place, competencies can also be repeated and even adapted in unfamiliar, unanticipated situations.”

Heutagogy is concerned with learner-centred learning that sees the learner as the major agent in their own learning, which occurs as a result of personal experiences. The teacher might think that he or she can control the learning experience but we think the teacher’s role is limited to the transfer of knowledge and skills. As well as being an agent in their own learning, it is impossible to predict the extent and effect of bifurcation. Hence, the curriculum and learning activities may become increasingly irrelevant at any point in the so called ‘learning process’.

“Action research allows experimentation with real world experience where learning is in the hands of the participants.”

Thus far there appears, potentially to be a number of ways in which heutagogical thinking might be applied to designing learning processes: Recognition of the emergent nature of learning and hence the need for a ‘living’ curriculum that is flexible and open to change as the learner learns;

- Related to this is the involvement of the learner in this ‘living’ curriculum as the key driver.
- Recognising that knowledge and skill acquisition, and learning are separate processes and need different approaches;
- Identification of learning activities/processes by the learner not just the teacher.
- Using action research and action learning as meta-methodologies in the learning experience.
- Involvement of the learner in the design of assessment, self-diagnosis and application of knowledge in real life contexts.
- Collaborative learning;
- Coaching for individual learning needs and application.

Summary:

- Emergent nature of learning. Chaotic, random, and different from skill & knowledge acquisition. Learning = a change in behaviour, knowledge or understanding in learners values attitudes and beliefs.
- Learner centred.
- Need for living curriculum. – flexible and open to change.
- Action Learning – Inquiry learning.
- Collaborative learning.
- Coaching for application

The 'new' New Zealand Curriculum provides the motivation to 're-frame' our programmes to ensure all students become 'confident, connected, life long learners' able to, 'seek, use and create their own knowledge'. Ironically the imposition ( and associated confusion) of National Standards will distract and distort schools from such an exciting challenge. The NZC encourages schools to be future focussed, teach values & key competencies.

**Challenge: To personalize learning so as to ensure all students develop a positive learning identity.** Such a personalized learning approach values each student's feelings, 'voice', talents, interests, culture, ideas, questions and theories with the idea of leaving students feeling it is their learning the school is interested in pursuing.

**In our school all learning is based on an inquiry model.** There are ideas to consider in each of the Learning Areas in the NZC.

**In our transformed school we need to 're frame' literacy and numeracy to contribute to the inquiry programme – the inquiry programme is to be the most important aspect of the day.** The NZC requires schools to ensure all students are able to 'seek, use and create their own knowledge'. How can we integrate literacy and numeracy programmes so they contribute to in depth afternoon inquiry? Think about how we can develop a positive 'feeling for' or attitudes towards maths and reading.

**In transformed schools/room environments, where student inquiry and in-depth understanding and personal expression are central, what would you expect to see?** In such schools the message is to 'do fewer things well' in depth is understood by all.

**The agreed beliefs provide consistency between teachers but also encourage creativity of each teacher;** an environment of 'no excuses'.

We need to look at;

- (1) **the role of literacy and numeracy –**
- (2) **the kind of learners –**
- (3) **the role of the teacher –**
- (4) **school approach to the curriculum**
- (5) **management and room environments.**

#### **Moot points.**

Difference between learning and skill & knowledge acquisition.

Place of Literacy.

Do we need a matrix type curriculum for learning? Is a matrix necessary for knowledge and skill acquisition?

**'Actions';**

- 1. Re-frame' our curriculum to ensure all students become 'confident, connected, life long learners' able to, 'seek, use and create their own knowledge'. Offer a relevant curriculum - respect for children implies that we are asking them to learn what is worth knowing. Ensure there is emotional as well as intellectual content.**
- 2. Personalize learning to ensure all students develop a positive learning identity. Use children's interests to provide purposes for learning so they are excited to research and read about favourite topics. Match teaching to children's ability to be self directed or outer directed learners. If children are to be free to learn, they need to be able to choose how they learn. If children are not responding to the curriculum, then the curriculum may not be meeting their needs and should be adjusted.**
- 3. Ensure all learning is based on the inquiry model. Making sure real problems are relevant to children's age and stage. Teach children how to learn so that they become producers of ideas rather than consumers of information. Explain what planned activities aim to teach the children so they have a rationale for putting in the effort. Relate topics to their own lives or topics that interest them. Breaking complex tasks into smaller steps to aid understanding. Provide opportunities for experimentation and reflection rather than transmitting information.**
- 4. 'Re frame' literacy and numeracy to contribute to the inquiry programme.**
- 5. Plan so that our room environments, student inquiry and in-depth understanding and personal expression are central.**
- 6. These agreed beliefs provide consistency between teachers but also encourage creativity of each teacher. Teachers should also be learners while they facilitate children's achievement. "Leadership requires followers, but facilitating requires standing among others rather than standing apart."**

7. **Create a caring school community, in which children feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. Teachers need to relate to children with acceptance, respect, empathy, humanity and as a real person with honesty - with the children and themselves.**
  
8. **The process of learning is more important than the end product with the thinking and learning skills being central - learning to initiate their own actions, take responsibility for their decisions, evaluate outcomes, know how to acquire useful knowledge, adapt flexibly to new situations, solve relevant problems and work cooperatively with others.**

**Acknowledge source of information for "Actions":  
Leading & Learning – B Hammonds.**

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