

# **Report on Sabbatical Term 2, 2015**

## **Kieran Fouhy, Headmaster**

### **St Peter's College Grafton Auckland**

I am grateful for the time away Term 2, 2015.

I had three foci during this time.

a) **Walk through Israel and stay on the West Bank (two weeks)**

I walked the Jesus Trail Nazareth to Tiberias (5 days) staying in hostels, kibbutz and B/B (personal costs). Stayed with De la Salle Brothers on the West Bank at Bethlehem University and used this time to reflect on the Judeaic Christian tradition of which I am interested.

b) **Walk the Camino Frances from St Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago Compestela in West Spain**

A total of approx. 900 kms (accrued for height) (personal costs).  
This was completed in 34 days with two rest days.  
This was a reflective time, physically demanding and transformative in nature.

c) **Professional development at Harvard University**

Report on professional development at Harvard School of Education  
June 2015

The course was titled: "**Closing the Gap - Excellence with Equity**" and was attended by approx 100 participants from across the States (mostly) Canada, (a lot) and Australia (1) and NZ (3) - two from Auckland University and self.

## **1 Staff**

The lecturers were world class in their chosen field of Education and are used throughout the States and internationally.

**Dr. Ronald Fergusson** - programme director and senior lecturer in Education at Harvard since 1983. A joint appointment between Harvard and the Kennedy School of Government. Expertise: on the closing the Gap achievement initiative now prominent in the States ... "No Child left behind" philosophy.

**Dr. Karen Mapp** - senior lecturer on Education at Harvard.  
Expertise: on the cultivation of partnerships among families, community and school to support student achievement and school improvement.

**Dr. Elizabeth City** - Director of Education leadership at Harvard School of Education.  
Expertise: The use of data and school systems to improve teaching and learning.

**Dr. Michelle Brooks** - superintendent for family and student engagement for Boston Public school.

Expertise: Organisation and programme development for school and district improvement.

**Dr. Jonathon Saphier** - Private consulting firm dedicated to improving classroom teaching and school leadership throughout the States and internationally.

## 2 Style

2.1 The course consisted of a large group lecture type teaching but very interactive. There were prescribed academic readings given prior to the commencement of the course and with the expectation they were read! There were break out smaller groups each day at which the readings were dissected and discussion on the general themes.

2.2 The group I was in consisted of senior leaders, principals and regional superintendents from Louisiana - (all from impoverished economic areas.) Also the three people from NZ. Two from Auckland University specialising in Maori development - Dr. Anne Hynds, Dr. Cynthia Kiro.

## 3 Other

3.1 The day started at 8.00am and finished each day at 6.30pm with an hour for lunch. A strong pace for learning.

3.2 A BBQ held on the grounds of Harvard University on the Wednesday night was a pleasant social gathering to mix with many of the course participants. I found the indirect social mixing of participants to be informative and a feature of the course.

3.3 I found the proximity of Hotel accommodation to the venue at Harvard to be much more expensive than I reckoned at the proposal.

3.4 Travel to Boston was economy flight - Auckland to Los Angeles.

3.5 Then Amtrack (coach seat) to Albuquerque (where I caught up with Father Richard Rohr ofm - a modern author/preacher on Men's spirituality. We had him present to the St Peter's Community in 2008). A personal side-line to the Boston experience.

3.6 Then Amtrack to Chicago where I caught up with Tim O'Connor previous maths teacher at St Peter's. Visited his school in North West Chicago. A personal side-line to the Boston experience.

3.7 Then Amtrack to Boston, (Cambridge where Harvard is situated).  
Amtrack from Boston to New York.  
Flight from New York to Los Angeles (because cheaper).

3.8 **Summary:** A worthwhile professional development programme and one I would recommend to other educators. The course was very topical in terms of modern day debate about inequality in society.

## 4 Themes

### 1 Race and Social Hierarchy theme.

A discussion on the status markers of race, gender, social background and seniority.

4.1.1 Data was presented on the huge and growing gaps between The Black Communities, Hispanic Community and White communities from ages 2 to 18. (NB the words, Black, White and Hispanic were the words used throughout the course). This despite much money being spent to address the disparity of outcomes. Intervention between ages 2 and 5 is money better spent than between teen years! Data collected over 20 years in the States show little change or plateaued or in some cases wider.

(Strangely the data on Native American communities was minimal or invisible ... a point which was obvious to the Kiwis present and a source of challenge to the director).

4.1.2 Gaps in data internationally were presented with NZ around 4th and States around 20th. While a source of pride -comparing the monster of diversity within the USA to a small community like NZ is a real factor. But NZ was acknowledged and especially the "indigenous" factor.

4.1.3 The gaps in data between boys and girls educational outcomes is at all ages with boys languishing, especially in Hispanic and Black communities. There are very few single gender schools in the States.

4.1.4 The gaps in data between social background, wealthy areas was wide and across all communities. School funding is from property based factors ... so Detroit areas are compared with wealthy areas of Boston. (NB there was no data or discussion about faith based learning communities, but anecdotally I have read there are high achievement outcomes and less disparity within faith based communities. Something that is seen in Auckland!)

4.1.5 The gaps in data between ages 2 to 18 - was interesting and ever present throughout these years. There was much discussion on the parenting styles before 5 in all communities. The debate about college (university) education and job securement (with high debt) is a theme prevalent in New Zealand as well as in the States.

#### 4.1.6 **What did I take from this theme ... as applied to St Peters College?**

(a) The diversity of population (ethnicities) at St Peter's is not only desirable but essential to NZ in creating educational outcomes which should be about a "gapless" situation.

(b) The course affirmed to me that single gender boys' schools in NZ do well when compared to boys in a Co-ed situation. This needs to be celebrated at St Peter's College. The gaps in data presented show there is a real problem in the States between the genders.

(c) Poverty remains a marker for under achievement and we should accelerate initiatives to target underachievement. This is not about reducing fees for the school community but targeting families who need help. Keeping excellence but ensuring everyone is there.

(d) The community of schools initiative in NZ is about linking school communities and has real merit in transferring data between schools and hopefully closing educational gaps.

## **2 Data Wise Improvement Systems Theme**

I found this theme very engaging and interactive.

4.2.1 There was the process of COLLABORATION to ANALYSIS to ACTION to ASSESSMENT and celebration.

4.2.2 Schools are drowning in data but its progress into action plans gets "bogged down". Most schools were the same as we were presented with real time responses to what was occurring in schools.

4.2.3 There was a very useful session on meeting agendas and a useful checklist to ensure that priorities of the meeting are kept to the fore.

### **4.2.4 What did I take from this session ... as related to St Peters College?**

(a) Collect data on all activities of the school, especially instruction about teachers. Create data overviews and then dig into the trends. What action should come from the data?

The question - what is this data saying?- should be a constant question.

(b) Reduce meetings (the number and time expended) but spend more time at the preparation for the meeting than at the meeting itself. Have a clear action plan emerging from each meeting.

## **3 Parent, Family and Community Engagement Theme**

I found this theme a little over cooked as I believe it is a no brainer in raising achievement. But in the States there is a wide gap among public schools in keeping families at a distance from the school ... not so in private schools.

The theme was presented more as a district. The small group discussion gave me an insight into how distant families were from the schools their children attended.

### **What did I take from this theme as applied to St Peters College?**

(a) The content affirmed to me the wisdom in the phrase about "enrolling the family" and the implications associated with the phrase

(b) It affirmed to me the importance of listening to the voice of those families where there is "voicelessness " generally as distinct from the voice of those families whose egos have been bruised by the behaviour of their sons or think they have a mortgage on status!

## **4 High Expectations of Teaching Theme**

This was an excellent series of lecturers and discussions.

4.4.1 The concept of intelligence as seen through the centuries. Seen once as fixed quantum, but now viewed as malleable with brain elasticity. Has huge implications for learning and jobs of the future.

4.4.2 The concept of "making students thinking visible" is a challenge for teachers. I found this session excellent with 25 verbal behaviours that lets students get smart! E.g. Teachers with open ended questions which get students to explain their thinking behind their answers. Students to make connections between what another student has said and holding student accountable for speaking and listening to another responses.

4.4.3 I took from this session the five intentions behind teacher behaviour in a "class that lets kids get smart".

- (1) Curiosity ... questions, interaction within classroom.
- (2) Student talk and interaction- dialogue.
- (3) Climate - to acknowledge safety in speaking and risk.
- (4) Respect - able thinkers even if wrong.
- (5) Clarity - make an idea clear through models, visuals and questions.

This could form the basis of teacher observations and provide feedback to teachers.

4.4.4 The other part of this session was the 7 Ps to notice during teacher observations with regards to effective teaching. These are:

- (1) **PROXIMITY** - can the teacher move around the students?
- (2) **PURPOSE** - what is the point of this lesson? Relevance?
- (3) **PLEASURE** - does teacher convey a sense of excitement?
- (4) **PERSONALISATION** - does teacher relate to students as individuals?
- (5) **PATIENCE** - does the teacher let students know that everyone's learning is important? Balance the sense of urgency with patience?
- (6) **PACING** - does the teacher move too slowly, too fast?
- (7) **PRESS** - does the teacher keep the students on task? Give up?

We were given video clips on many lessons taken previously and we were asked to assess the various teacher behaviours. This was a very good session with real practical engagement.

4.4.5 Carrying the theme of seven points , we were given the 7 Cs of effective teaching. A reflection guide for teachers to rate themselves.

- (1) **CARE** - do I neglect any background of my students?
- (2) **CONTROL** - do I use disciplinary practices that fit and make sense to the students?
- (3) **CLARIFY** - do I respond to any systematic patterns of misunderstanding?

- (4) **CHALLENGE** - do I seek rigour or give up on anyone or allow them to give up on themselves?
- (5) **CAPTIVATE** - are my curriculum materials relevant or acknowledge the contributions of the groups in the class?
- (6) **CONFER** - do I value the contributions of all students from my class from all backgrounds?
- (7) **CONSOLIDATE** - do I build integrated understandings of content and conscious of individual identities within the class?

#### 4.4.6 **What did I take from this theme for action at St Peter's College?**

- (a) Put flesh around the words "**Making students thinking visible**" and feedback to teachers on the 7Ps of teacher observation as the discussion after the lesson.
- (b) Aim for four lessons per week of teacher observation.
- (c) Structure this feedback observation among all members of the leadership team, in order to increase the capacity among St Peter's College of the effective teacher behaviour.

## **5 Youth Culture, Identity and Marginality Theme**

I found this theme the least interesting as there was little discussion and heavy notes and straight lecturing.

The themes of disenfranchised youth, job opportunity, wages rates relating to educational outcomes.

I got lost in the over laboured theme of "self esteem" (self appraisal of ones worth) among the various communities as distinct from what I think he meant "self efficacy" (determining one result/destiny through resilience).

There was discussion on "youth build" - a programme gathering strength in USA. This has 5 stages:

Stage One: Trust Versus Mistrust

Stage Two: Autonomy Versus Shame and Doubt

Stage Three: Initiative Versus Guilt

Stage Four: Industry Versus Inferiority

Stage Five: Identity Versus Identity Confusion

I actually found this part of the course as being related to a much wider agenda than schools achievement. As such it was not as interesting for me.

## **6 Papers read as part of the Professional Development**

### **6.1 "Tracking and Inequality: New Directions for Research and Practice"**

Author: Adam Gamoran

### **6.2 "Even Geniuses Work Hard"**

Author: Carol S. Dweck

### **6.3 "Possible Selves and Academic Outcomes: How and When Possible Selves impel action"**

Authors: Daphna Oyserman, Deborah Bybee, and Kathy Terry

### **6.4 "Black" Cultural Capital, Status Positioning, and Schooling Conflicts for Low-Income African American Youth**

Author(s): Prudence L. Carter

### **6.5 "Developing Positive Young Adults - Lessons from Two Decades of Youth Build Programs"**

Authors: Ronald F. Ferguson (Harvard University), Jason Snipes (WestEd), Farhana Hossain (MDRC), Michelle S. Manno.

### **6.6 "Cultivating New Routines that Foster High Achievement for All Students Ideas for Collaborating to Reduce Racial Achievement Gaps"**

Authors: Ronald F. Ferguson, Wiener Center for Social Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government

### **6.7 "The Need for Good Teaching for America's Poorest Children: Where Social Justice and economic meet"**

Author: John Adams

### **6.8 "An Overview of the Social Norms Approach "**

Author: Alan D. Berkowitz, Independent Consultant

### **6.9 "How High Schools Become Exemplary"**

Ways that leadership raises achievement and narrows gaps by improving instruction in 15 public high schools

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