



## **Sabbatical Report Term 2 2010**

### **Mike Johnson**

Thank you to the Puketapu School Board of Trustee for supporting my application and the MOE for granting the Sabbatical opportunity. Congratulation to the two Deputy Principals' who took the lead role during my absence and the staff for carrying on regardless.

I must thank my professional colleagues for their support and answering my questions and sense of curiosity about things that go on in their schools. I appreciated the wanderings around classrooms and the observations of the wonderful work teachers in our schools are doing. I have also enjoyed watching tamariki in their learning environment, the classrooms, and their activities whilst at play.

**Topic of investigation;**

#### **1. Purpose**

##### ***Boy's academic underachievement;***

- To gather information on how schools cater for the special needs of boys in their classroom programme, outside the classroom activities and in their recreation.

##### ***Boy's behaviour;***

- To look at behaviour management schemes that improve/strengthen the behaviour of boys in the classroom and outside the classroom.

*Focus in particular on Primary Schools being Year 0 to Year 8 (5 years through to 13 years)*

## **Concern around issues with young males in today's society;**

Prompted by some of the following;

- The gender gap is more than just about academic underachievement.
- Boys and young men are over represented in accidents, health, crime, prisons, suicides and the use of drink and drugs. Looking at the whole picture shows our boys are in big trouble.
- It is a multifaceted problem with no simple solution. Some of the contributing factors are change to family structures, lack of employment opportunities, social conditions, education practices, electronic entertainment, socio-economic circumstances and role models.
- Expectations in behaviour, social responsibility and academic standards must be the same for boys and girls. School environments and home practices must reflect this.
- Developing successful boys is a whole community problem.
- Teachers and parents are critically important to any solution for making a difference to boys.
- Education can make a significant difference. School environments, practices and pedagogies need to change.

*From the Book; Educating Boys by Michael Irwin*

Further references

Educating Boys; Joseph Dreissen

Trends in Boys Education in New Zealand (2005)

There is much written and presented about boys in education and I have had the opportunity to read and be part of seminars that have that focus in particular. It seems that the concerns around where boys are at, is now over ten years old yet nothing really has changed. Perhaps it is easy to see some of the reasons things are happening but the way to change things are very complex and difficult and will take a good deal of time.

Some findings in relation to my area of focus;

In general, in brief;

- All schools have a behaviour management system and data indicates boys are over represented.
- Effective behaviour management systems are understood by the tamariki and they have clear knowledge of boundaries and consequences.
- The purpose of behaviour management systems is to make positive changes in behaviours.

- Early intervention is most effective when undertaken by the class teacher, senior leaders or the principal.
- Early intervention using an RTLB can be more effective if positive relationships have been established.
- Intervention from outside agents are often ineffective and the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff.
- All schools will use stand downs and exclusion as a last resort as both do little to change behaviours.
- Some schools provide activities that are of high interest to boys and they become hooked into their learning because of it. Behaviour management issues decrease.
- Others schools hook the boys in because of highly effective classroom practice but that is not evident in all classes.
- Hands on activities are a favourite where the process is as important as the end product.
- Schools with highly effective physical education programmes appear to have their boys making good choices with regard to interval and playground activities. The boys are more able to self manage.

Some of my reading included;

Michael Irwin            Educating Boys Helping Kiwi boys to succeed at school

Joseph Dreiseen        Boys in Education

Celia Lashlie            He'll Be OK; Growing Gorgeous Boys into Good Men

Russell Bishop and Mere Berryman    Culture Speaks; Cultural relationships and classroom learning

Louise Porter            Behaviour in Schools

Lyn Worsley             The Resilience Doughnut

Paul Baker:                Understanding the gender gap

Most recent article; May 2010

Professor Sir Peter Gluckman;        Improving the transition; Reducing social and psychological morbidity during adolescence

## **Seminars**

Jon Winder                Boys' Learning Engagement for results

Restorative Justice    Margaret Ross and Mark Corrigan

I visited fourteen schools being one secondary school, three intermediates and ten primary schools.

Some of my concerns shifted to the way adults make connection with boys. The adults include all those that interact with them on a regular basis; parents, whanau, teachers, coaches...

It would be easy to include a lot of academic mumbo jumbo that would be difficult to read and interpret. Rather I will include a brief power point I used with a group of parents to generate some discussion. It did work particularly well and I did make it quite clear to me that there are many parents, whanau who do have challenges with parenting "the boys". I hope it is of some use to someone.

None of the slides are originals but bits and pieces I have borrowed from others.

Power points, like all presentations, are tailored for the audience so may not suit all groups. As to whether parents, whanau, and adults in general make better connections with boys remains to be seen.

**I am still concerned about boys in our education system.**

**We do hope one day we can see a change in the statistics of young males displaying off the wall behaviour and damaging themselves and others. The behavior patterns of boys needs to be set in the right direction at a early age. As Celia Lashlie titles in her book "He'll be OK; Growing Gorgeous Boys into Good Men"**

Perhaps there are some keys points. They interrelate and not one point can be omitted. Each point needs unpacking and developing and discussion on **How?**

- **Good parenting**
- **Good classroom pedagogy**
- **Classroom programmes that meet the interest and needs of boys.**
- **Hope and destiny**
- ***Mix that with parent, teachers and communities who care and want to make a difference.***

**Included a power point used with a parent support group.**