

Sabbatical Inquiry and Report.

Term 3, 2017.

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Purpose:

Identify and explore useful strategies, approaches and techniques that assist children to more effectively develop their social and emotional intelligences with a particular emphasis on the hard to shift 15% Tier 2 and 3 children.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people without whom this Sabbatical would not have been possible:

- Ministry of Education
- Green Island School Board of Trustees
- Jan Burn – Acting Principal for the period of Sabbatical Leave
- Green Island School Staff and Community for supporting this Sabbatical
- Julie and Wilson McCaskill
- Principals and Staff of the schools that I visited;
 - John Butler College (Butler, Perth)
 - Tapping Primary School (Tapping, Perth)
 - Rosalie Primary School (Subiaco, Perth)
 - Makybe Primary School (Baldivis, Perth)
 - Our Lady of the Way Primary School (Petrie, Brisbane)
 - Morayfield East State School (Morayfield, Brisbane)
 - Caboolture East State School (Caboolture, Brisbane)
 - Hokitika Primary School (Hokitika)

Furthermore, I would like to thank the many pupils, parents, teacher-aides, teachers, principals and other colleagues who made me feel so welcome and who so willingly shared their experiences, knowledge, feelings and wisdom, on my visit. Your passion for learning and education is inspirational.

Background + rationale:

Green Island School is a full primary school with a very proud history stretching back some 165 years. We have around 200 Year 1 to Year 8 pupils and we recently moved from a Decile 4 to Decile 6 School. Following my appointment as Principal back in 2005, we set about developing a school-wide “Code of

Conduct” with the pupils, parents, Board of Trustees and Staff. Initially, we developed a Staff “Code of Conduct” before we set about consulting about a school-wide one. The aim of this was to ensure that adults around the school were setting a high quality example of how to treat each other before expecting the children to do so. The “Code of Conduct” served us well for the next few years but we felt that we could still do better. We were ready for the “Next Step”.

In 2012, I came across some Professional Development around “Behaviour Education” and developing children’s “Social and Emotional Intelligences” through the use of games. Fortunately, my paths crossed with Wilson McCaskill’s “***Play is the Way Programme® (PITW)***”. For the next 6 years, our school purposely set about finding ways to improve “Behaviour Education Self-Management”. Our Senior Management Team led the school-wide development of a plan to do this over 3 years using a Ministry of Education funded programme called “School-wide Positive Behaviour 4 Learning” (SWPB4L). (I came across this same programme in a number of Australian schools where it is known as PBL). We also used the “PITW Programme” and the full range of its resources. Julie and Wilson McCaskill personally delivered Professional Development to all teachers, teacher-aides and classes over the next 6 years. Parents were also given the opportunity to participate in evening workshops, at no cost to them. We deliberately focussed on ***behaviour*** in 2013, then ***engagement*** in 2014 and finally, ***achievement*** in 2015. Although our data shows that we had great success with this, we knew that we had a hard-core group of about 15% (mainly boys) who were hard to shift.

There are so many reasons for this, many of which are totally out of our control at school (transient families, attendance, home environment, forced enrolment following exclusion from another school etc). Not to be deterred, we wanted to find something to help lift the behaviour, engagement and achievement of this small group.

Starter questions used at interviews included:

- With regards to student behaviour, what is your data telling you? Do you have a hard to shift 15%? If so, what strategies/programmes do you use to help?
- How do you induct new staff and students?
- How do you programme BESM Professional Development for staff?

- How do you monitor and sustain the programme? How do you budget for it?
- How is BESM recognised and honoured at your school?
- How do you inform parents and the wider community of your strategies?
- How do you know that it is working? What are the secondary schools telling you about your former students?
- What is the feedback from pupils, parents and staff?
- Where are the “Next Steps”?

Key Findings:

Each of the 8 schools visited had a very different starting point when it came to dealing with BESM (Behaviour Education Self-Management). Other influencing factors related to their school make-up and size, composition of their local community, socio-economic factors, State or National education authority and in one case, their church. Previous experience of the principal and teachers also determined what type of approach was used. For example, 6 of the 8 schools visited used Wilson McCaskill’s “Play is the Way Programme” (PITW®). Some have used it in a number of different schools prior to the current school that they are working at. All reflected on what was working well and what could be done better and then the programme was modified to suit. The schools who weren’t using PITW, did follow a programme of some kind –e.g. “I Do It”, “12 Buckets” and an American one called “A.V.I.D.”, were 3 programmes that were mentioned.

For PITW to be the very best that it can be then it needs to be followed as it is set out in the Manuals and other resources.

“No program – no matter how sound it is – can have impact if its essential elements are not used.”

Yap, K., Aldersebaes, I., Railsback, J., & Speth, T. (2000)

Schools can put their own flavour into it but the basic programme needs to be followed fastidiously. This will maximise results. It also needs to be persevered with as it is not a “quick fix”. There is no simple pill or remedy to take to get quick results. It all takes time and principals and teachers need to give themselves permission to take whatever time it needs.

Whatever type of programme is followed, it needs to be constantly monitored to check that it is being taught properly. One school had the Senior Management Team focus for the term on insisting that 3 or 4 PITW sessions per week with each Poster being a focus for a 2 week period. Typically, schools using PITW held 4x sessions (20 minutes each) per week, following a structured weekly/term plan. The correct language needs to be used. One principal voiced a concern about the language being too difficult for his younger children up to, and including, Y3 students. For those first 3 years they used a totally different programme. However, no other PITW school had a problem with this. In fact, the opposite was the case as several schools used the genuine PITW approach from Pre-Primary/ Kindergarten up. They had these children on-site and experienced no issue at all with either the children or parents, having any trouble with the PITW language or terminology.

To help with sustainability of PITW, some schools have the Principal or Senior Teacher run some sessions (e.g. for those in the Pre-Primary/Kindergarten area and then have the class teacher do them from that stage onwards). Like our own school, some have a school-wide goal set around PITW and then also have this tied into the Appraisal process. This also includes scheduled formal classroom observations. Some schools also have Senior Management observe daily PITW sessions to help ensure that lessons are taking place as planned and that they are being delivered correctly. Once PITW is introduced, it then becomes a challenge to sustain it into the future. New teachers, teacher-aides, students etc all need to have some Professional Development around PITW. It needs to be properly funded and resourced. To help keep the costs down, some schools hold their Professional Development sessions on a Saturday.

Parents/Caregivers are informed about PITW in a variety of ways like; through the school website, weekly newsletters, special notices, You Tube clips and information/training nights with some involving Wilson McCaskill in person. To help get parents engaged, one school even funded Child Care for the first 50 parents to enrol for the PITW evening course. Parental engagement centred on things to be done at home, to back up school Values/Virtues (not Homework). All of these activities are aimed at moving students towards *Independence*. Schools that have a regular weekly PITW section in their Newsletters, have found the quotes and sayings etc in the PITW Manual called ***“By Wisdom, Not BY Force” by Wilson McCaskill (2007)***, to be an extremely useful and rich resource.

One school selectively used some work around authoritative parent models by Lynn Sharratt, Cathy Quinn and John Hattie. The Principal stressed that schools can't really tell parents what to do but they can say that *"50 years of research suggests that this type of approach works best with children. What can you do to get better at this?"*

In the past 12 months, some schools have now moved on to the next stage of PITW using the ***"3Rs Enrichment Manual – Volume 3 Behaviour education using wisdom, not force" by Wilson McCaskill (2015)***. This is proving to be a particularly valuable resource for teachers to use with the hard to shift 15%.

Strategies used include;

- PITW 3Rs Method – Reflection, Repair, Restitution (Making things better, paying back and moving on)
- GPS, Growing, Personally and Socially
- UCRM – Ultimate Community Role Model

This Manual, like the other PITW material, is very "user friendly" and can be picked up by teachers/schools and used immediately.

More specifically, the "3Rs Method" has easy to follow sheets and photocopiable Masters. It also includes a process that builds self-awareness and self-management skills for children who are having trouble with their behaviour. This method strengthens relationships, develops empathy, addresses bystander behaviour and makes a genuinely safe school achievable. *(Parts of this approach are similar to that of the "Restorative Practice Approach")*. Schools have found the *Enrichment Manual* to be an excellent, hands-on resource. They have found that this has turned around the negative behaviour of many challenging children. One particular Year 6 boy told me how in the 5 months since he had shifted to this school, this programme had totally turned his poor behaviour around. He said that he was often in trouble and would often "run away from his problem". Now he says that he "stays to front up and sort it out" and that this approach is working much better for him. At our school and some of the others visited, some children initially thought that by following the "3Rs Method" they were not getting "punished" and could get away with anything. However, for example, if a letter of apology needs to be written then with this process the offender may need to write 5 different letters of apology to 5 different individuals who have been affected in 5 different ways.

To try and help an individual gain self-control, other strategies might include *Code Switching* or using *Soothing Thoughts*. At one school, when they are trying to establish what happened in a particular incident, they have found that it is often more useful to get the child to draw what actually happened rather than to write it down. Work on their strengths – *“Draw for me what happened”*.

The “GPS Approach” is then an ideal vehicle to transition the offender back from “3Rs” and into the classroom setting. Letters of apology could be read out – and then the forum can be used to either accept or reject the apology. This process may also use a “Circle Time or Circle Conference” approach. One school has the students pass a “Talking Bag of Truth” around. Only the person with the bag is allowed to speak at that time...this includes the teacher/principal etc.

Some schools schedule GPS sessions into their weekly timetable and they are run by the class teacher. However, in one school, the Principal attends (and runs) the senior Y6 GPS. Their issues are often more complex and it gives recognition and status to them as leaders in their school having the Principal there. When discussing a particular incident, the name of the offender is always said aloud. When a comment is made, the offender MUST say “I acknowledge your comment”. At **ALL** times, when those involved are speaking, they need to remember 3 main things...*Name, Manners and Tone*. Other helpful advice is given in the Manual. At one GPS session that I attended, as it was drawing to a close, the offender said “Thank you for trying to help me”. The teacher then worked on one of the 6x Virtues over the next 3 or 4 days and then the class made 3 or 4 positive statements about the GPS. I asked a class of Y6 students if they thought that this was a worthwhile process or not. They responded that it was and that some of them thought that it would be a good process for their families to use at home. The whole session may take 20 minutes but it was scheduled into the timetable and is crucial to the whole process to take the time required. Principals and teachers shared how they felt that time spent on this process in the early stages, saved them so much time dealing with issues later on.

One point of warning that Bill Boylan, Tapping Primary School, repeated to students several times as they were about to discuss GPS was ...

“We are not going to deal with out of school matters...we can’t control them”.

Schools who have moved on to UCRM have 6 focus areas – Friendliness, Manners, Courage, Compassion, Persistence/Resilience and Tolerance/Acceptance. All 6 of these are aimed at developing **EMPATHY**, the Ultimate Community Role Model. The first 3 focus areas are developed in the first 3 years of school and the remaining 3 areas in Years 4 to Year 6.

Feedback from Secondary Schools has been extremely positive with one school having 7 out of their 8 Prefects coming from the one contributing Primary PITW School.

The final area of focus for the hard to shift 15% of students who lack self-control and appropriate behaviour skills, relates to how schools (and parents) use Rewards/Awards/Recognition and Acknowledgement. This obviously differs for every school and every family. Wilson McCaskill, in a variety of his resources covers this very well indeed. Unfortunately, not every school gets the point. Many including my own school, still have a variety of rewards, awards, trophies, prizes etc on offer to the students.

“If you punish a child for being naughty, and reward him for being good, he will do right merely for the sake of the reward; and when he goes out into the world and finds that goodness is not always rewarded, nor wickedness punished, he will grow into a man who only thinks about how he may get on in the world, and does right or wrong according as he finds either of advantage to himself.” Immanuel Kant, Education quoted in “Beyond Discipline” by Alfred Kohn

Furthermore, Wilson McCaskill defines REWARDS as *“Something given in return for service, effort or achievement (good or bad). Used to manipulate, lure and motivate. Bribery/control. Do this and you will get that.”* He goes on to define AWARDS as *“Acknowledgement of service, effort or achievement (good only) that is not motivated by the desire for a reward or the pleasure of the reward giver.”* He then states that TROPHIES and PRIZES are just that. They are bestowed on people who already have innate ability. They have a natural ability. How bizarre would it be for schools to hold Beauty Contests? He contends that competition is not a great motivator for participation and enjoyment.

“Children who do right for rewards will just as easily do wrong for the same.” Wilson McCaskill

By using UCRM awards as set out in the programme, the whole process is enhanced in an appropriate manner.

The 6 key Virtues that form the central pillar of the 3Rs Method, GPS and UCRM, collectively constitute that ultimate attribute of EMPATHY.

“An awareness of another. The ability to see things from another person’s point of view. The ability to identify with the plight, state or needs of another.” By Wilson McCaskill, “PITW Enrichment Manual” (2015)

→ The Golden Rule - **“Treat others, as you would like them to treat you.”**

Quotes:

“Are you doing the right thing or the wrong thing? Show me what it is like when your whole body is doing the right thing.”

“You might not change the world but you might change it for someone else or for yourself.”

“The more self-control you have as a child, the better mental health/financial position/employment you will have as an adult.”

“If you are playing during your work time, then what do you think will happen during your playtime?”

CONCLUSION:

No, one single Programme is a panacea for the hard to change top 15% of behaviour candidates. PITW and more specifically the “Enrichment Manual” and its 3Rs, GPS and UCRM – provide a fantastic framework that is getting results in some schools in New Zealand and Australia.

SO WHAT FOR GREEN ISLAND SCHOOL?

Next Steps:

Continue familiarisation and Professional Development of “The Enrichment Manual” (3Rs etc). Embed into our Behaviour Education at Green Island School.

Approach the Early Childhood/Pre-school facilities who contribute children to Green Island School and gauge their interest in using PITW for their children. Advise and encourage them to make a start in 2018.

Re-brand our school with an emphasis on 6 main Virtues and signage throughout the school and transfer into our Curriculum with a focus on the Key Competencies.

Totally review our use of rewards, awards, trophies prizes etc, going forward.

Encourage and support more Parents/Caregivers to attend PITW Sessions.

Offer to host the Minister of Education to see PITW in action at Green Island School and then invite him to participate in a PITW Teachers Workshop followed by a parent Evening session, when Wilson McCaskill is next in Dunedin.

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SCHOOLS VISITED:

John Butler College, Butler, Perth, W.A., Australia – Principal Brett Lewis and AP Alan Kelly

Tapping Primary School, Tapping, Perth, W.A., Australia – Principal Bill Boylan

Rosalie Primary School, Subiaco, Perth, W.A., Australia – Principal Ros Kay

Makybe Rise Primary School, Maldivis, Perth, W.A., Australia – Deputy Principal Mel Garwood

Our Lady of the Way, Petrie, Brisbane, QLD, Australia – Principal John Parkinson

Morayfield East State School, Morayfield, Brisbane, QLD, Australia – Principal Julieanne Wilson and DP Karen Herburg

Caboolture East State School, Caboolture, Brisbane, QLD, Australia – Principal Amanda Wicks and DP Shane Hoy

Hokitika Primary School, Hokitika, Westland, New Zealand – Principal Kath Martin and DP Nicola Minehan