

Principal Sabbatical Report

Developing and implementing a curriculum for a future oriented learner

Dion Stechmann: Principal Glentunnel School Malvern Term 3 2019

This report is a summary of the readings I have done, the professional development I have attended and the visits I have made to other schools. This is not meant to be an academic paper but is simply a summary of my findings and thoughts.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Glentunnel School Board of Trustees for approving and supporting this sabbatical. Thank you to Judith Beales and the wonderful team at Glentunnel School for positively keeping the school moving forward while I was away.

I would like to thank to Ministry of Education and NZEI for making sabbaticals possible and for providing this opportunity to our profession. I feel appreciative of the time I have been given to research this topic and rejuvenate myself both mentally and physically.

I would also like to thank the following Schools and their Principals and Deputy Principals for given up their time to allow me to visit their kura and learn about their curriculum and how it was developed and continues to evolve.

- Mount Pleasant School – Chris Nord and Meagan Kelly
- Clearview School – Rob Rush, Tracey Young and Leigh Fowler
- Ararira Springs School – Claire Howison
- Knights Stream School – Mike Molloy
- Lemonwood Grove School – Sean Bailey and Jen Hodgkinson
- Halswell School – Stuart Cameron

Executive Summary

Research shows that we need to replace old education standards still in general use with an educational framework that combines the acquisition of traditional knowledge with 21st century skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. We will need to teach both skills and character, in addition to knowledge, with a focus on 'metacognition' which includes 'learning to learn'. Precisely because we cannot predict what technologies will be ascendant in the future, we have to teach ourselves and our children to be versatile; *Future of Education and Skills 2030: OECD 2018*.

Students need to be change agents who have the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to enable them to have a positive impact on their surroundings, influence the future, understand others' intentions, actions and feelings, and anticipate the short and long term consequences of what they do; *Future of Education and Skills 2030: OECD 2018*.

The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) is a framework curriculum that provides a sense of national direction for local decision making rather than specifying what must be learned. It is up to each school to work out how best to build up a coherent curriculum based on this national framework, and do so with sufficient flexibility to appropriately meet the learning needs of all the students in the school.

The NZC is enabling and future focused and is intended to promote self-efficacy. This requires a learner centred approach, where teachers choose contexts and design learning opportunities in discussion with their students, and support them to work collaboratively on challenges and problems set in real world contexts. A responsive curriculum incorporates connections to students' lives, prior understandings and out of school experiences. It draws on and adds to parent, whanau and community pools of knowledge. Student identities, languages and cultures are represented in materials used in the enacted curriculum; *Keeping children engaged and achieving through rich curriculum inquiries: Education Review Office 2018*.

There is no 'one size fits all' model for developing a school's curriculum. There is also no specific pathway for a school to follow or a particular starting point. The curriculum needs to be a bespoke design that reflects the school, its community and students, is based on the framework of the NZC while allowing for the complex needs of a future orientated learner. This bespoke design often encompasses more than one framework within a school and provides the 'skeleton' and foundation for consistency and clarity across a school. The 'meat' and details of the frameworks are constantly evolving and developing as the teachers have the flexibility to design responsive and personalised learning experiences when adapting to meet the needs of their students.

Background and rationale

I started at Glentunnel School in 2015. Since my arrival I have been collaborating with all stakeholders of the school to develop a curriculum with the potential to meet the complex needs of our students. This started by reviewing our behaviour management plan through using the Well-being at School's survey. I choose to start here because I believe student well-being is the foundation for learning. Students need to develop a positive disposition towards themselves as a person and a learner before fully being able to engage and challenge themselves with their learning. Over three years we developed and implemented School Vision Statements and a Well-being Curriculum which is based around our four school values and five explicitly taught social skills under each value. This is supported by other tools which include Circle Time and the Pause, Breathe Smile mindfulness programme. Our school values and social skills have been developed into a Learner Profile rubric. This has helped create understanding of each skill for students, as well as allowing us to measure student progress over their time at our school. We also report to parents on students' progress within the Learner Profile rubric as part of our written reporting cycle.

As part of our journey we use the Spiral of Inquiry model to help us narrow our lens and focus on a particular area of development. Over the last two years this focus has been on developing student agency.

After developing our Well-being Curriculum and from the insights of our inquiry it was clear that there were important frameworks still missing from our curriculum. My focus then shifted to

building on from what we have already developed to create a Learning Curriculum which incorporates these missing frameworks. My intent was to do this by unpacking the NZC while attempting to meet the complex needs of a future orientated learner.

Methodology

I choose to investigate and gather information on how to develop and implement a curriculum for a future orientated learner in three ways:

- Attend relevant professional development opportunities
- Read and summarise research relevant to this topic
- Visiting schools which have recently reviewed or developed their curriculum

Findings

I choose to attend the following professional development opportunities:

- CORE seminar on Future Trends
- New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL), NZ Deep Learning Lab

The seminar on Future Trends looked closely at CORE's Top Ten trends for education in 2019. This allowed me to connect with 'future thinking' and discuss ideas with colleagues from a range of education perspectives. There was a clear connection with these trends and the research I had been reading. The Structural and Cultural trends of; schools as part of the community, changing role of teachers, well-being and cultural identity align with the Ministry of Educations Report, Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching – a New Zealand perspective. Here they identified six emerging principles for an education system for the 21st century; personalising learning, new views of equity, diversity and inclusivity, a curriculum that uses knowledge to develop learning capacity, 'changing the script': rethinking learners' and teachers' roles, a culture of continuous learning for teachers and educational leaders and new kinds of partnerships and relationships: schools no longer siloed from the community. These connections were evident in other readings and would start to form the foundations for my thinking and curriculum framework development.

The NPDL NZ Deep Learning Lab was a wonderful opportunity to learn from colleagues that were already implementing curriculum frameworks designed for meeting the needs of a future orientated learner. What was becoming apparent from the presentations and conversations was that there is no 'simple way' or 'single framework' that will fulfil the intent of the NZC and meet the complex needs of a future orientated learner. Schools involved in the NPDL programme were using the NPDL framework to help them design their own bespoke school curriculum. The NPDL framework was an important part of their curriculum design but was not necessarily the only part.

As well as attempting to summarise my readings in the following passages I have included a list of my readings in the reference section of this report. This way you will be able to form your own understandings from the research on this topic. Three readings I would highly recommend are; The Future of Education and Skills, Education 2030, The Future We Want (OECD report 2018), A Rich

Seam – How New Pedagogies Find Deep Learning (Michael Fullen and Maria Langworthy 2014) and Supporting Future – Oriented Learning and Teaching – A New Zealand Perspective, Report to the Ministry of Education (R Bolstad and J Gilbert with S McDowall, A Bull, S Boyd and R Hipkins NZCER 2012).

In a time where we are facing unprecedented challenges (social, economic and environmental); with a future that is uncertain, complex, ambiguous and leaves us feeling vulnerable; we need to develop new visions of education, develop understandings of a new way of being/doing, have the courage to try new things and to be different and create agility in our thinking.

To navigate through such uncertainty, students will need to develop curiosity, imagination, resilience and self-regulation; they will need to respect and appreciate the ideas, perspectives and values of others; and they will need to cope with failure and rejection, and to move forward in the face of adversity. Their motivation will be more than getting a good job and a high income; they will also need to care about the well-being of their friends and families, their communities and the planet. Education can equip learners with agency and a sense of purpose, and the competencies they need, to shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others; *The Future Of Education and Skills, Education 2030, The Future We Want: OECD 2018.*

There are multiple learning frameworks in the readings that highlight the necessary tools a future orientated learner will need to navigate through the uncertainty of the world we live in. One thing they have in common is the need to understand and develop a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values while connecting with and taking action in the real world. Below is a table I've created to show these necessary tools.

Knowledge	Facts and Information	The understanding of information about a subject that you get from experience or study	Disciplinary Interdisciplinary Epistemic Procedural	Development of new knowledge from existing knowledge and application in the real world
Skills	Expertise and talents	The ability to do something well and use one's knowledge effectively and readily	Cognitive and meta-cognitive Social and emotional Physical and practical	Creativity, leadership, problem solving, collaboration, communication
Attitudes	A way of thinking and feeling	An individual's choice of action and responses to challenging ideas, objects, people or situations	Personal Local	Growth mindset, empathy, initiative, reflective, adaptability, curiosity, persistence
Values	Moral standards and ethics	Moral principles that influence your behaviour and how you act in different situations	Societal Global	Social and cultural awareness

Future focused curriculum frameworks need to allow for learning in the above four areas (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) in a coherent, systematic and flexible way.

The principal function of the NZC is to ‘set the direction for student learning and to provide guidance for schools as they design and review their own (local) curriculum. Each school is expected to design a bespoke school curriculum that takes account of the vision, values, key competencies, learning areas and principles of the NZC, while also focusing on the school’s own local priorities and values, and the strengths, needs and interests of their students. Teachers have latitude to interpret and adapt the curriculum in light of what they know about the students in their class and school; *Keeping children engaged and achieving through rich curriculum inquiries: Education Review Office 2018.*

The NZC is a future focused curriculum framework with clear connectivity with the tools shown in the knowledge, skills, values and attitude table above. It’s a combination of both frameworks that is needed when developing a localised, responsive and personalised curriculum for a future orientated learner.



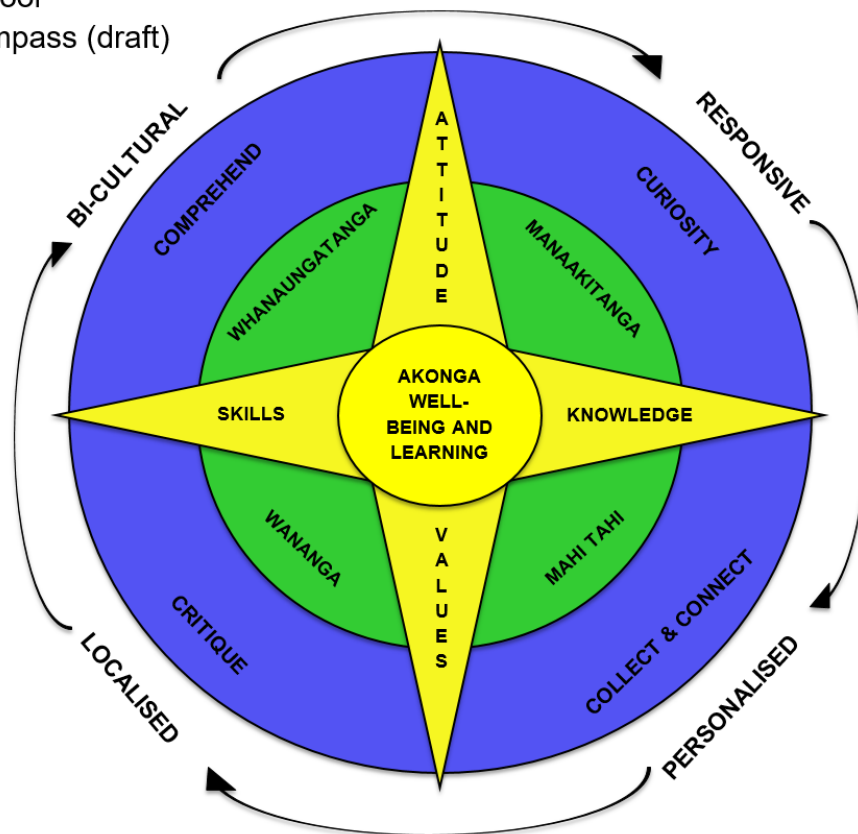
I choose to visit the six schools listed in my acknowledgements because they were either new schools (which allowed them to develop their curriculum from current research and with a blank canvas), schools that undergone a curriculum review or schools that were using another type of framework alongside the NZC to deliver their curriculum.

What was evident in my visits was the different types of frameworks schools had created to encompass the NZC framework as well as meeting the needs of a future oriented learner within the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes table. Most schools had more than one framework to accomplish this, with one school using the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program to facilitate this. As well as frameworks for their curriculum schools were exploring ways of measuring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. This is something that is missing from current assessment standards which focus on the ability of a student to retain and reproduce content knowledge of a specific topic or theme. One method of measuring progress is the development of rubrics which are specific to the type of knowledge, skills, values and/or attitudes a school is focusing on as part of their curriculum frameworks. This not only enables schools to track student progress, but also helps develop student and community comprehension of the subject.

Implications

This sabbatical has allowed me the time and head space to continue my school’s curriculum journey by connecting the needs of a future oriented learner alongside the NZC. The below diagram illustrates how I have pulled my curriculum thinking together.

Glentunnel School
Curriculum Compass (draft)



I choose this design as it resembles the Golden Circle model where you focus firstly on the centre of the circle and then work your way outwards. Our centre and focus is akonga well-being and learning supported through the four tools of a future oriented learner. The next layer is our well-being curriculum displaying our four school values. The outer layer is our newly designed school inquiry model. The four principles surrounding the circles are the over-arching themes of the curriculum, driving the direction of the curriculum and connecting everything together.

The new inquiry model was developed to encourage student agency, creativity, knowledge building and thinking skills.

The 5 C's

Critique	To critically review and examine our thoughts and ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect on the process asking; What have I done well? What could I improve on? 	Future focused looking at sustainability and real world issues	ITC used to enhance learning experiences throughout each stage of inquiry
Collect & Connect	To gather and bring together ideas and thoughts to share with others while furthering connections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To record ideas, thoughts and future questions To present and share new knowledge with others To connect new knowledge to previous knowledge To connect knowledge from our school to our community and beyond. Application in a real life context. 		
Curiosity	To follow a strong desire or urge to know or learn something. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driven my student's interests, questions and desire's Focused around student exploration and creativity To create new knowledge through knowledge building relationships 		
Comprehend	To develop an understanding of, and make sense of a subject. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build on student's existing knowledge in order to develop new knowledge 		

This is the core of what I have developed while on sabbatical, and what I will now share with the many different stakeholders of my school. Together we will refine the new frameworks and create curriculum foundations for the future.

Conclusions

I feel very privileged to have been awarded a sabbatical in 2019. It has allowed me the time and energy to look deeply at the needs of a future oriented learner and design curriculum frameworks for my school. Now through consultation with the different stakeholders of Glentunnel School we will work together to develop a bespoke curriculum which is unique to our community and our students needs and desires.

How I have gone about developing my school's curriculum has been a natural and organic progression for my staff and our school. It's important to note there is no set path or rules around reviewing and designing a school's curriculum. The important idea is that a school is prepared to start somewhere, and looks at creating deeply embedded changes to the 'skeletal' or foundational frameworks of their curriculum. This creates long lasting change which allows for flexibility and adaptability with in each class and across all year groups, in the way the 'meat' or detail is designed around the 'skeletal' frameworks.

In my opinion it is very important to look at the needs of a future oriented learner when thinking about designing curriculum frameworks. Developing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in students helps them form positive dispositions towards one self and others, creating engaged and curious lifelong learners. In a world that is rapidly evolving and constantly changing students need to develop character traits which enable them to be resilient, positive, creative and able to build affirming relationship with all people around them.

Our NZC is a future focused curriculum and framework which allows and enables schools to develop their curriculum for a future oriented learner. It intertwines and weaves together with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for a future oriented learner. Together they lay a platform for schools to design a bespoke curriculum for their students and communities.

References – list of readings

10 Principles for Schools of Modern Learning - modernlearners.com
By Will Richardson and Bruce Dixon

The Future Of Education and Skills, Education 2030, The Future We Want
OECD 2018

Future of Education and Skills 2030: Conceptual Learning Framework
Education and AI: preparing for the future and AI, Attitudes and Values
OECD 2018

Moving a School: Higher order thinking through SOLO and e-Learning
Anthony Hunt, Frank Walton, Stephen Martin, Mavis Haigh and Earl Irving 2015
Learning to reinvent the school curriculum
Rosemary Hipkins, NZCER

21st Century Learning: Research, Innovation and Policy
Directions from recent OECD analyses (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
CERI (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation)

A framework for transforming learning in schools: Innovation and the spiral of inquiry
Helen Timperley, Linda Kases and Judy Halbert

The primary school curriculum: Assimilation, adaptation, transformation
NZC at primary and intermediate level: Findings from the NZCER National Survey of Primary Schools
2010
Jacky Burgon, Rosemary Hipkins and Edith Hodgen

Education matters to me: Key insights
A starting point for the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities
NZSTA and the Children's Commissioner, Jan 2018

The Nature of Learning
Using Research to Inspire Practice
How can the learning sciences inform the design of 21st century learning environments?
OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation

Curiosity and Powerful Learning
David Hopkins and Wayne Craig with Oli Knight

Keeping children engaged and achieving through rich curriculum inquiries
Education Review Office 2018

A Rich Seam - How New Pedagogies Find Deep Learning
Michael Fullen and Maria Langworthy 2014

Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching - a New Zealand perspective
Report to the Ministry of Education
R Bolstad and J Gilbert with S McDowall, A Bull, S Boyd and R Hipkins NZCER
2012

Leading Innovative Learning in New Zealand Schools
Education Review Office 2018