

WE TROLLED PEOPLE

**Statler (Hamish) and Waldorf (Leo), a monthly vent from the balcony.....
(often referred to as a bit of dribble from two crusty old principals...)**

BEFORE IT WAS CALLED TROLLING

We have had a fairly intense last few terms and the challenges seem to be compounding for Principals and finding stuff to have a moan about is frankly bloody easy. We could discuss; new curriculum roll out, strategic planning guidelines, resourcing, teacher shortages, the challenges of applying for ORS funding, covid fatigue, finding relievers, the MOE strategy for recruiting overseas teachers, teacher training practice and relevance and the dwindling appeal of principalship for would be school leaders. That said, this month Hamish has decided to take lead and go off in a different direction. To be honest (don't tell him I said so), he makes some good points and he does make you think about whether or not the MOE and PM have a clear plan for; what they want to achieve in education, why they have made certain decisions and how they want to mandates to be actualised in schools? In my opinion, evidence would suggest decisions are being made by individuals rather than through consensus and that the puzzle is fracturing rather than coming together. See what you think.

PS For new principals reading this dribble, We do want to reiterate that despite the doom and gloom contained within these pages, we do love our jobs.

Disclaimer: To any people we offend, or for those of you who are slightly sensitive, we do apologise. If you are REALLY upset, disagree or feel like hurting one of us, please contact Hamish directly. (He lives in Cambridge, address available on request.)

October 2022 offload, ponderings and liver cleaning....

Well, I hope that this finds you relaxed and ready to charge into the final term of the school year. It has been a challenging year as we work back to full "match" fitness while continuing to navigate the impact of waves of COVID hitting kaimahi and the hapori at different stages throughout the rohi.

It became very clear to me that some balance was required for our rants as I engaged in one of our in-depth and philosophical conversations with the other muppet, Leo, at the last Connections Day.

Whilst this provided much entertainment for Sandra, who happened to witness this encounter, it's fair to say I had a few things to get off my chest, which Leo helped unpack for me.

Our conversation (argument pending on violence) soon drilled into the now surround sound or noise that we seem to be getting from both National and now Labour around "the state of education" in Aotearoa. The main topic is around the changes a-foot in regard to the teaching of Literacy in Aotearoa.

To be very clear, I sit on the fence at this point with a "traditional" whole literacy approach (our akonga developing skills across oral, reading and writing and applying these) along with the use of Phonics. In our case, we are using Yolanda Soryl's Phonics programme through our Timatanga (Junior syndicate) and into our Year 3/4 learners as well. This, in essence, looks at the sounds and groups of sounds associated with letters to help build words. This relies a bit more on working memory, which can be a barrier for neurodiverse learners.

As you can tell, this chat got far deeper than Leo and I would have liked, and it simply ended with us at a philosophical crossroads and leaving it to the literacy leaders in each of our settings to guide us into the future to sort out.

However, our now Associate Minister of Education, The Honorable Jan Tinetti, is clearly on the record as saying we will see "the introduction of a standard teaching model (common practise model), which will mean that teaching in these areas is consistent."

This is where the real debate started. Leo was happy to point out that Jan was right in some respects.

We can not deny that Literacy rates in Aotearoa continue to fall, which I couldn't help by questioning - by who's measure and is that form of testing or measure still relevant? We still use methods which are more about the retention of knowledge and facts, which Siri or google can answer in seconds, rather than exploring how we go about applying skills to practical situations and preparing learners to be agentic in different situations. Unfortunately, the fact retrieval approach to "testing" continues to be the primitive way we go about measuring success in education across the globe.

Whilst I had to concede that on the surface, Literacy rates have dropped over the years, is this enough of a reason to place in a mandated Literacy Programme (like Better Start Literacy) for all schools/kura.

To me, it's a bit like the 3 Waters debate. Is it needed across the whole country, is a one size fits all model lead from the top down make a difference for our people? I'm not sure if it will. Are we moving back to the dark age of a set Syllabus for all schools? Only time will tell.

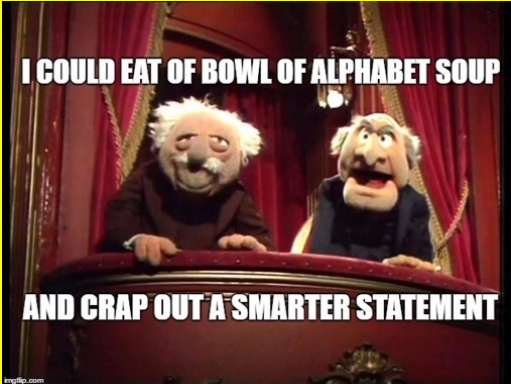
One thing I can, however, tell you that will make a difference and has been in my mind the reasons for the decline is the underinvestment in our education system and the people we are lucky enough to have work in it.

If we compare apples with apples, per-child funding in Victoria, Australia, is up to 3 times that of what we have. Each of their kaiako has a full day of release to work with curriculum coaches and their colleagues to work through a collaborative sprint to help improve practice. Our funding for such things, especially in our primary settings, is non-existent. They have Learning Support Coordinators and/or SENCo equivalent in every school, not just the lucky 700 kura (don't get me started on that!!!).

Anyway, hold onto your hats, people, as we start to explore the devil in the detail that is coming our way. Let's hope the likes of Nathan, NZEI and NZPF can get our friends in Wellington to start listening to the sector and start investing in the people, not some "new programme" or "Curriculum Refresh" which is merely rearranging the chairs on the Titanic....we need thinking to change to aspirational rather than stretching our education dollar as far as we possibly can. COVID has taught us all that good well has unfortunately been eroded in recent times!

Go forth and be awesome in your settings during the busy run to Christmas. Continuing to make decisions for your settings for your community to make sure the learner remains at the centre of everything you do!

Kia pa to wiki, have a great week!



Moving on....

So, Hamish has had his five minutes on the soap box to have a bit of a go and the touchy feely bit at the end of his waffle had me getting all tearful and need of a hug. Unfortunately, I still have issues, (yes I have a few) that I need to share too. One in particular that was passed on to me via a good bloke from Te Ao Marama is something that I was aware of but once revisited, my hackles really started to rise. (See the table below from the APA).

This table clearly highlights that the equity gap between primary and secondary has not closed and that despite our best efforts over multiple campaigns, primary are far from having parity. Now I don't want to detract from our secondary colleagues, as they deserve all they get. What I am concerned about is they massive gap that still exists between the two. I'm not sure which Muppet first determined that secondary teaching was a tougher challenge than primary but I would suggest that they have never taught a New Entrant class for week. I'd also be happy to let them have a go should they wish to try.

The final problem I have is a funny one. Like most schools across NZ we have recently finalized our

2023 calendar dates. The challenge we encountered has been around when to slot in Teacher Only Days and also trying to assess how many we can use in the calendar year? This being made all the more difficult when we don't have an updated *Collective Agreement* to guide us and the Ministry seem to be more focused on other things. What are we legally entitled to is a total unknown? What to do, what to do?

Don't tell anyone but to solve the problem, we just went with our gut and added in two TOD mid year to support PLD and support teacher need. My suggestion is you proceed and if required apologize or beg for forgiveness later!

Well that's all from Hamish and I for another month.

Have a great start of term team. Fingers crossed the COVID challenges are kept to a minimum and do remember to take care of yourselves.

Current Reality A – Student Roll 600			
Entitlement Type	Primary	Secondary	Difference
Curriculum Staffing <small>Roll Based Ratio</small>	26.7	28.2	+ 2.5 FTE
Technology Staffing – Years 7-8 <small>Roll Based Ratio</small>			N/A
Classroom Release Time <small>Formula</small>	1.2		- 1.2 FTE
Curriculum Base Staffing - Secondary <small>Formula</small>		6	+ 6 FTE
Base Management Staffing <small>Roll based formula weighted by Year Level</small>	1	1	Same
Roll Generated Management <small>Roll based formula weighted by Year Level</small>	1.5	3	+ 1.5 FTE Management
Salary (Management) Units <small>*Generating staffing x formula \$4,000 primary/\$5,000 secondary</small>	34	58	+ 24 Units @ \$5k Total difference - \$186k value
Senior Management Allowances <small>Management staffing x formula \$2,000 per unit</small>		3	+ 3 Allowances Total difference - \$6k value
Middle Management Allowances <small>*Generating staffing x formula \$2,000 per unit</small>		33	+ 33 Allowances Total difference - \$66k value
Guidance Staffing <small>Roll Based Yrs 9-15 x Formula</small>		2.3	+ 2.3 FTE

*Generating staffing is FTE staffing – 1 (Principal)

Teachers in September:



Teachers in June:



Student: Why do you have coffee every day? Will you die without it?
Me:

