

# Professional Discussion Kit for National Standards Module Three

This practical evidence-based resource kit provides a response to the government's National Standards policy. The purpose is to help build support in schools and engage staff, boards, parents and the wider school community.

This is the third of three modules, and profiles student learning and what makes a difference.

ambition  
NZ values  
progress success for my child  
fair for all high achieving aspiring accountable  
for every child strong relationships  
excellent the kiwi way the best world class  
happy children  
independent  
achievement investing in the future  
qualified teachers  
great start in life quality

This is the third of three modules, and profiles student learning and what makes a difference.

**Also available:**

[Introduction \(click to view\)](#)

[Module One \(click to view\)](#)

[Module One Discussion Guide \(click to view\)](#)

[Module Two \(click to view\)](#)

[Module Two Discussion Guide \(click to view\)](#)

## **PROFILING STUDENT LEARNING**

This module contains a series of information sheets which profile those students who are achieving (86%) and those students (14%) who require more intervention and support. There are also examples of “what makes the difference”. The information sheets are presented in the shape of flags, and highlight what we know creates success for our students, and what can make a difference for those who need more assistance. (A blank flag is provided for you to profile your own school.)

This positive perspective supports our determination to be ambitious for all our students and their whanau, and to be focused on moving our system from great to excellent. It contrasts with the approach taken by the government and the media where the focus is invariably on the 14% of students perceived to be underachieving, ignoring the fact that the New Zealand education system is, by any international comparison, performing very well for the vast majority of students.

We are ambitious to make a great system even better: Our aim is to increase the number of students achieving (86%) in aspects of reading, mathematics and writing. Our aim will be achieved when the lowest levels of achievement are raised.

We will not settle for mediocrity: Schools should not mess about trying to use the Government’s National Standards trying to make them work. Each school should articulate its own high expectations which reflect student achievement and progress. These expectations fit the school’s vision for its students. These expectations are challenging and based on The New Zealand Curriculum.

### **NZEI Te Riu Roa Messaging is outlined in NZEI Te Riu Roa vision and Module One**

#### **What will make the difference at school level?**

- Each school must make clear its evidence-informed and school-based teaching practice by which teachers collaborate with the school community to set expectations for its students based on multiple sources and to which they hold each other accountable
- A school curriculum that responds to individual students’ learning needs supported by ethical use of data for improved learning
- Effective practice articulated and made consistent throughout the school e.g. learning inquiry into practice to bring about improvements for all learners, leading to a sense of ongoing learning
- Partnership and engagement with parents on their child’s learning and what the school is trying to achieve.

#### **What will make the difference at a systems level?**

- Professional learning and development opportunities (in literacy, numeracy and assessment) across New Zealand, and not in a contestable environment
- Targeted resourcing for the 14% of the lowest-achieving students
- Resourcing to ensure teachers have the time, resources, and flexibility to reflect on and try out new ideas to better support student learning
- Ethical use of systems data through national monitoring of the education system in which assessments are carried out by “light sampling” multi-matrix methods
- Support for building a network of quality public schools
- Strong coordinated social services support for schools when needed
- Access to high quality early childhood education staffed by qualified teachers.

#### **What does this look like in your school/community and what are the implications for taking your school from great to excellent?**

14%

86%

## CELEBRATING OUR SCHOOLS' SUCCESSES

Most students are confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners

### PROFILING 86% OF NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS

- World class National Curriculum, placing the learner at the centre, endorses assessment for learning, and teaching as inquiry
- Ethical use of assessment data and information focused on promoting learning
- Registered Teacher Criteria which promotes teaching effectiveness
- High quality resources provided to all schools which support teaching and learning
- School-based and school-wide professional learning programmes (albeit contestable) in literacy, numeracy and assessment which promotes sustained effective teaching practice
- Best-evidence syntheses provided to school leaders to support effective teaching, learning and leading practices.
- Professional learning programmes to prepare aspiring and new principals
- Study leave and sabbaticals to enable qualification upgrade and professional extension
- Professional learning communities operating within and between schools to identify, enhance and reflect upon effective teaching practice
- High quality assessment tools to help identify strengths, gaps, needs of learners
- School initiatives which respond to broad range of student needs and community aspirations
- Previously, NEMP, a New Zealand designed, internationally recognised model based on researching a representative sample across all curriculum areas, and using creative assessment practices to assess the health of the system

### WHAT IS WORKING IN NEW ZEALAND

- Teaching as an inquiry process
- Assessment data and information focused on promoting learning
- Registered Teacher Criteria which promotes teaching effectiveness
- High quality resources provided to all schools which support teaching and learning
- School-based and school-wide professional learning programmes (albeit contestable) in literacy, numeracy and assessment which promotes sustained effective teaching practice
- Best-evidence syntheses provided to school leaders to support effective teaching, learning and leading practices.
- Professional learning and development linked to school-wide longer term improvement
- Recognition that 86% of our students are achieving success

## **WHAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: An example**

### **Teaching as Inquiry: An example**

Inquiry into the teaching learning relationship can be visualised as a cyclic process that goes on moment by moment (as teaching takes place), day by day, and over the longer term. In this process, the teacher asks:

#### **What is important (and therefore worth spending time on), given where my students are at?**

What strategies (evidence based) are most likely to help my students learn this. Teachers use evidence from research and their own past practice ....

#### **What happens as a result of the teaching and what are the implications for future teaching?**

In this learning inquiry, the teacher investigates the success of the teaching in terms of the prioritised outcomes, using a range of assessment practices.....They analyse and interpret information to consider what they should do next.

cf. The New Zealand Curriculum. p.35

Flockton, L. (2009) The Connected Curriculum. NZEI Te Riu Roa, Wellington

**What does this look like in your school/community and what are the implications for taking your school from great to excellent.**

14%

86%

## SOCIAL EQUITY

Despite New Zealand's relatively poor material living conditions, Kiwi kids manage high rates of educational achievement-the fourth best in the OECD

### PROFILING 14% OF NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS

- New Zealand government spending on children is considerably less than the OECD average. The biggest shortfall is spending on young children, where New Zealand spends less than half the OECD average (OECD 2009)
- Material conditions are relatively poor; average family incomes are low by OECD standards and child poverty rates are high (OECD 2009)
- Widespread child poverty undermines children's rights to an adequate standard of living (Dale et al. Child Poverty and Child Health ACYA)
- New Zealand has the highest rates of suicide in the OECD for youth aged 15-19. Overall child mortality is also higher than OECD average (OECD 2009)
- New Zealand rates for serious bacterial infections and respiratory diseases compares poorly with other developed countries
- Māori and Pasifika children disproportionately suffer higher hospitalisation rates than New Zealand European/Pakeha (CPAG 2010)
- ECE services are not always available rural areas have few children, high costs of transport, less access to services and high levels of poverty
- Only 83% of new entrants in decile 1 schools had previously attended ECE services, compared with 97% in decile 6 and 99% in decile 10 schools (MSD, The Social Report, 2008)

## WHAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: An example

### Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG): Failing our commitments to children: Child poverty and child health in New Zealand in 2010. Working paper July 2010<sup>1</sup>

CPAG strongly believes that income inequality are the main causes for New Zealand children having worse health and safety standards than almost any other OECD country, ranking 29th out of 30. CPAG argues as a direct result of poverty many children lack basics such as adequate nutrition or warm and dry housing.

The underlying issue is increasing income inequality and a consequent high number of children living in poverty and severe hardship, in poor housing conditions, with limited access to primary health care. Our research found that children from low income households in New Zealand are multiple times more likely to suffer from large variety of diseases than their more affluent peers. These inequalities are most evident in hospital admission for relatively common diseases such as rheumatic fever (28 times), bronchiectasis (15 times) serious skin infection (5 times) and tuberculosis (5 times).

CPAG also calculated that in 2010, 150,000 children in New Zealand are in severe or significant hardship. Compared with almost any other OECD country, our children have higher rates of infant mortality, preventable illness and deaths from injuries.

<sup>1</sup>Dale, M.C., St John, S., Asher, I. and Adam, O. (2010) Published as supporting paper for the ACYA report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. "Children and Youth in Aotearoa 2010. ISSN 1177-7764 (online)

## A Linwood College Research Project

A Linwood College research project<sup>2</sup> found thousands of young people are failing academically at school because of undiagnosed health problems and argued that issues with eyesight, hearing and oral health were stopping young people from learning and leading to behavioural problems in the classroom. The Project Leader said that the government was wasting money on numeracy and literacy programmes which would help those students with a health barrier to learning. Maori and Pasifika children were particularly vulnerable but undiagnosed health issues were a problem across all socio economic groups.

The Linwood research is unequivocal and shows that a definite improvement in health will affect learning outcomes.

## WHAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: An example

In its working paper, CPAG argues that the following actions are needed to improve child health and reduce the damage to poverty:

**Nutrition;** free healthy breakfasts for children in decile 1 & 2 schools

Primary health care; increase funding for prevention; make immunisation delivery ‘watertight’ by increasing resources for providers, infrastructure of locating children, accessibility and acceptability. Provide free health care for children under 18 years, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Housing;** extend healthy housing programmes to all low income households. For landlords whose tenants get the accommodation allowance, offer an adequate government subsidy to retrofit these homes with insulation. Introduce a Warrant of Fitness for insulation for all rental homes.

**Education;** improve access to education and educational resources for the most disadvantaged children.

**Incomes;** extend payment of what is now called “In Work Tax Credit” and is part of “ReStart” to all children, beyond those children whose parents meet the work test or who have been made redundant.

**Benefits;** ensure that benefits are available to all caregivers of children at a level which ensures an adequate standard of living.

Other examples of successful interventions could be the Reading Recovery programme and the supportive work of Resource Teachers.

**What does this look like in your school and community, and what are the implications for taking your school from great to excellent?**

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <http://tvnz.co.nz/health-news/research-shows-schoolchildren-failing-through-poor-4140835> on 27 Apr 2011

14%

86%

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE PISA RESULTS 2009

How well do our 15 year olds read?  
Only two OECD countries and two non OECD partner economies were better than New Zealand

### PROFILING 14% OF NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS

14% New Zealand students were low performers in reading c.f. OECD average 19% other lower performers in high achieving countries 14% Australia, 8% Finland, 10% Canada

15% New Zealand students were low performers in mathematics c.f. OECD average 22% other lower performers in high achieving countries 16% Australia, 8% Finland, 11% Canada

13% New Zealand students were low performers in science c.f. OECD average 18% other lower performers in high achieving countries 13% Australia, 6% Finland, 10% Canada

Pakeha/European (71%), Maori (19%), Asian (14%) and Pasifika (10%) of sample  
Pakeha/European 541, Asian 522, Maori 478, Pasifika 448, OECD mean 493 in reading  
Pakeha/European 537, Asian 529, Maori 476, Pasifika 446, OECD mean 496 in maths  
Pakeha/European 555, Asian 530, Maori 487, Pasifika 448, OECD mean 501 in science

### HOW DID NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS PERFORM?

- New Zealand performed much better than OECD average (521 of 493); also better compared with US, UK and 26 other OECD countries; another 36 countries performed significantly lower than NZ
- There was no change in New Zealand's reading performance between 2000 and 2009 overall
- New Zealand had three percent fewer top performers
- No top-or high performing country, including New Zealand, succeeded in reducing the proportion of students at the lower level

### WHAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR EVERY STUDENT?

#### AN EXAMPLE: A WELL RESOURCED INTERVENTION

Learning in Mathematics Exploratory Study was a pilot study that aimed to accelerate the mathematical performance of low performing students. It was an exploratory evaluation conducted by NZCER for the Ministry of Education in 2010.

## **Supported teacher professionalism and professional Learning**

Schools built on the project design and each school determined how the project would best work in their school for their students. Each teacher and facilitator developed the particular form of the intervention for their own school.

Intervention teachers received release time (0.2FTTE) for a term while the intervention was underway and each school was allocated a numeracy facilitator (20 hours per school) to assist in the intervention. The teacher and facilitator worked together with students to develop a specific programme to match the learning needs of each student involved with the goal of accelerating the learning quickly. The teachers initially received two days training.

## **What had a positive influence on achievement**

Well planned, structured, regular lessons emphasising repetition of ideas and consistency, effective use of equipment, fun activities, opportunities for discussion and student involvement, the use of small groups, specifically targeting student needs and pitching teaching at the appropriate level along with good formative assessment practices and quality feedback to students, all had a positive influence.

The teachers and facilitators were optimistic that students would retain the learning benefits from the programme because of the positive change in students' self belief and attitude to mathematics.

## **Conditions needed to sustain learning**

Many facilitators viewed continued planning, monitoring, school leadership commitment to the intervention group, and to some degree who lead school involvement, as important to sustain the learning gains. Teachers and facilitators also noted the importance of either involving the classroom teacher during the intervention or maintaining ongoing communication to support the classroom teacher to build on the learning from the intervention.

In a number of cases the intervention teacher was the classroom teacher and this may well support this continuity. Other conditions given were the need for ongoing professional development, informing or involving parents, and teacher belief in the intervention.

**What does this look like in your school/community and what are the implications for taking your school from great to excellent?**

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <http://tvnz.co.nz/health-news/research-shows-schoolchildren-failing-through-poor-4140835> on 27 Apr 2011

14%

86%

## GOING FROM 'GREAT' TO 'EXCELLENCE'

### PROFILING 14% OF NEW ZEALAND STUDENTS

- Majority of Maori/Pasifika students are in mainstream setting
- Lack of targeted professional learning for mainstream teachers
- Lack of access to targeted resources to support their identified needs
- Restrictions on levels of support to meet need
- History of contestable professional learning in literacy, numeracy and assessment for learning
- Progress in learning across broad curriculum not acknowledged/celebrated
- Limited access to professional development for ESSOL, special needs

## HOW WILL THE NEW ZEALAND SYSTEM MOVE FROM GREAT TO EXCELLENT

Creating improvement requires

- discipline and constant forward momentum
- having a map of how all the changes fit together as a coherent whole
- adopting a set of interventions appropriate to their needs and adjusting the elements to the specific local context
- moving from 'contractual' accountability to 'responsive' accountability including evidence of performance assessment and self evaluations
- enhancing teacher professionalism and creativity across and within schools
- establishing collaborative practices between teachers within and across schools
- actively fostering the development of leadership and career paths.

## WHAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR EVERY STUDENT?

### AN EXAMPLE: FINLAND - A HIGH ACHIEVING AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Finland has is considered a world leader in building a high quality education system for all students. While there are some obvious differences between New Zealand and Finland, such as history, culture, student intakes, there are also similarities with how the systems are operating. It is worthwhile examining the features of the Finnish system to learn how one country has addressed problems that New Zealand is still struggling with.

The selected information below has been taken from the National Education Association article ‘Why American schools should be more like Finland’s’ based on Linda Darling-Hammond’s work.<sup>3</sup>

## **Background**

- After 40 years of systematic development Finland has created a culture of diversity, trust and respect within its society and education system
- Ninety-eight percent of the cost of education at all levels is covered by the government rather than by private sources
- Although there was a sizeable achievement gap among students in the 1970s, strongly correlated to socio-economic status, this gap has been progressively reduced as a result of curriculum reform in the 1980s
- Schools are generally small (fewer than 300 students) with relatively small class sizes (in the 20s) and are uniformly well equipped
- Despite new immigrants to Finland, achievement is increasing and growing more equitable.

## **Strategies**

- Intensive investment in teacher education; all teachers receive three years of high quality graduate level preparation completely at state expense; preparing teachers for a research-based profession is central; only 15% of those who apply are admitted
- Teachers’ preparation includes extensive coursework on how to teach, a strong emphasis on using research based on practice, at least a full year of clinical experience in a school associated with the university; teacher education models what teachers will plan for their own students; ie emphasises learning how to teach students in different ways including those with special needs
- Finnish core principles are-resources for those who need them most
  - high standards and supports for special needs
  - qualified teachers
  - evaluation of education
  - balancing decentralisation and centralisation
- Over the past 40 years, Finland has shifted from a highly centralised system emphasising external testing to a more localised system in which highly trained teachers design curriculum around the very lean national standards; one exam prior to attend university
- Equitable distribution of resources rather than competition, intensive early interventions for prevention
- All students receive a free meal daily, as well as free health care, transportation, learning materials and counselling in their schools
- Elimination of the practice of separating students into very different tracks based on their test scores and then by eliminating the examinations themselves so as to equalise educational outcomes and provide more open access to higher education
- The current national core curriculum guides teachers in collectively developing local curriculum and assessment. There are no external standardised tests used to rank students or schools, most teachers’

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/40991.htm> on 4 May 2011.

feedback is in narrative form emphasizing the student's learning progress and areas for growth; the national core curriculum provides teachers with recommended assessment criteria for specific grades in each subject and in overall final assessment of student progress each year.

- Local schools and teachers use guidelines to craft a more detailed curriculum and set of learning outcomes at each school as well as approaches to assessing benchmarks in the curriculum; the main purpose of assessing students is to guide and encourage students' own reflection and self assessment; Inquiry is the major focus of learning and assessment is used to cultivate students' active learning skills
- Students determine their own weekly targets with their teachers and choose the tasks they will work on at their own pace
- Schools provide time for regular collaboration among teachers on teaching issues; at least one afternoon each week to jointly plan and develop the curriculum, share materials; collective planning and cooperation with parents which allow schools and families to work closely together
- School of municipality-based longer term professional development opportunities provide continuous upgrading of teachers' pedagogical professionalism as a right rather than an obligation
- Lateral capacity building is the widespread adoption of effective practices and experimentation with innovative approaches across the system
- Social welfare programmes that have reduced child poverty rates from nearly 20% to 3%
- Unconditional right to full day, full year childcare from the end of paid parental leave through entry to primary school; parents pay fees to cover about 15% of the cost.

**14%**

**86%**

## **OUR SCHOOL'S SUCCESSSES**

Add your own information

### **PROFILING YOUR STUDENTS**

### **WHAT IS WORKING IN OUR SCHOOL**

### **WHAT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR SCHOOL FOR EVERY STUDENT**