ECE for profit
Putting business before education?

Susan Devoy, Ivan Snook on
The Purpose of Education

Teachers say NO to the IES
and what this will mean
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**CONTINUENCIES**

Michelle Nixon edits Education Aotearoa. She has worked as a journalist, ESL teacher and for NZQA.

Emiritus Professor Ivan Snook is an internationally regarded educationalist and author.

Freelance journalist Diana Clement specialises in writing on technology and related topics.

Henri Collins (Ngāti Raukawa) is a freelance writer and researcher. Her book Ka Mate, Ka Ora! was published by Steele Roberts.

Jane Blackie is an award-winning freelance writer and editor.

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- Give it to your Board of Trustees
- Leave it out at school for parents to read
- Donate it to your local library or information centre
- Add it to the pile of magazines at the gym

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Growing concerns in ECE

NOW THAT THE election is over, the government has the opportunity to turn its attention to what is happening in early childhood education (ECE) – where the future of New Zealand is currently being determined.

The number of very young children in centres has risen steeply over the past decade as many parents face little choice, through economic pressures, but to return to work soon after the birth of their children.

The government is to be commended for its decision to extend paid parental leave. That is a step in the right direction. But an immediate and pressing issue is the quality of care being extended to their oral language and to learn the skills needed to thrive in a classroom. Unfortunately, the evidence is mounting that quality care and education are not happening in some for-profit centres.

Children living in deprived communities are especially affected by poverty. They desperately need quality ECE both to boost their oral language and to learn the skills needed to thrive in a classroom. Unfortunately, the evidence is mounting that quality care and education are not happening in some for-profit centres. I look forward to the government becoming involved in this area.

Paul Goulter
National Secretary
NZEI Te Riu Roa

FOLLOWING THE 2014 General Election, NZEI members are now in a position to help the government with its blind spot on education.

Prime Minister-elect John Key said immediately following the election that he does not want his third term in office to be mired in arrogance. He wants to lead a centrist government.

For two terms, his government has pushed education policies that effect a top-down managerialist approach onto schools and early childhood education centres, in line with the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) and its policies of greater accountability and competition.

The GERM ignores the advice of professionals and the overwhelming amount of research that clearly shows poverty and inequality as the root causes of underachievement.

It is time for teachers, principals and support staff to dig in. Every conversation in the community must put at its heart the idea of greater accountability and competition.

I look forward to the government becoming involved in this area.

Judith Newotarski
National President
Te Manukura

Time to shed light on National’s blind spot

Letters to the editor

Carol Parker remembered
Thank you for your obituary for Carol Parker (EA winter 2014). Cathie Penetito (who wrote the obituary) recalled that Carol in 1991 convened a Special Meeting of NZEI which agreed to work with other unions on how to protect education from the attacks it was under. That meeting set NZEI policy on the bulk funding of teachers’ salaries. I remember this campaign as an immense struggle. I remember it more keenly because I was one of the “strugglers” who fought alongside Carol at meetings, protests and marches with banners held high. Carol was truly a devoted servant to NZEI Te Riu Roa and I’m so gratified that she has been celebrated in this way.

P Morissette
Waiteke Island

Chic McConkey is back
It’s been a long-time recovery all for the sake of a bucket of plums but I can laugh now! Chic’s battle to return to work as a teacher aide featured in EA autumn 2014. An accident in the garden led to three operations on her shoulder and 18 months off work.

My physio applied for the Stay at Work programme for me through ACC but, because I’m past the use by date of 65, I can’t get it. But the good news is that ACC has reinstated some home help.

I have started back at Gonnville School doing eight hours a week. I still have pain and restrictions in movement – but I am back!

Chic McConkey
Whanganui

Below: Chic McConkey with the offending plum tree.

Send your letters to
educationaotearoa@nzie.org.nz

In this issue’s winning letter writer receives a $100 book voucher!

Former ‘cluster manager’ queries IES

After my experience working as a “cluster manager” in the Middle East, I have to ask if the government’s Investing in Educational Success policy will be effective.

About two years ago I returned from 18 months in Abu Dhabi, where I was responsible for supervising, mentoring and evaluating the principals of 12 schools.

It was a full-time job and I had no other responsibilities. I didn’t have to run my own school. Even so I felt I needed more time to walk the journey with individual principals.

I was employed by the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to mentor the principals and senior management teams so they understood how to be effective. It involved monitoring school improvement, ensuring that principals understood policies and procedures, and ensuring that staff were compliant with all of those things.

My role was also to facilitate productive relationships between the principals, so that when we provided professional development, they were all on the same page, from kindergarten right up to secondary school.

I also had to ensure they understood how to manage and administer ADEC directives, and how to collect and analyse good solid student data. My role was “You need to do this, you will follow this policy, you will do this” – it was quite directive.

It’s totally different from New Zealand, where we’ve got self-managing schools – boards of trustees have their own vision of where they want to go, so I am concerned about what the IES will mean here.

If you have a principal being released from a school, what will happen to their school? And also, how would you get the right match between the cluster manager, who might be principal of a school with 400 pupils, and a sole charge principal? Trying to advise, direct and guide someone who works in a completely different context would be very difficult.

I personally love the idea of a mentor, guide, facilitator – but everyone would have to buy into it. I believe you’ve got to build relationships and work alongside each school to fully understand their direction, because they are all self-governing. My question is, how do you do that with eight or nine schools just two days a week, to really do the job well?

David Cripps
Principal,
Stratford Primary School
Ed Act changes afoot
A taskforce to consider Regulations Affecting School Performance is recommending that a purpose be developed for the Education Act that is “enduring, inclusive, student-centred” and encompasses the diversity of pathways and visions of success for all students, including those with special learning needs. While NZEI welcomes this, the union is wary about other recommendations in the Ministry of Education’s report to Cabinet. The ministry says the government’s bottom line is that Communities of Schools must cover the whole “pipeline”, from year 1–13 to be considered as a potential community. And ECE may be dragged in as well, despite a lack of consultation.

TPDL assists existing and new teachers of languages improve their language learning needs. While NZEI welcomes this, the union is wary about other recommendations in the Ministry of Education’s report to Cabinet. The ministry says the government’s bottom line is that Communities of Schools must cover the whole “pipeline”, from year 1–13 to be considered as a potential community. And ECE may be dragged in as well, despite a lack of consultation.

TPDL is a year-long programme funded by the Ministry of Education. More than one teacher per school may apply. For enquiries and applications contact: tpdl@auckland.ac.nz. 

TPDL is a year-long programme funded by the Ministry of Education.

TPDL is a year-long programme funded by the Ministry of Education.

Four new schools to be built as PPPs
The Government has announced a shortlist for four new school builds, all to be built through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). They are Aranui Community School and Rolleston Secondary School in Christchurch, Wakatipu High School in Queenstown, and a new school in Auckland, yet to be announced. A PPP school at Hobsonville Point in Auckland has already failed to produce the expected savings promised by the involvement of a private firm.

ToleyOil? – attacks on principals explained
In the wake of the publication of Nicky Hager’s book Dirty Politics, Kelvin Smythe’s Networkorneret has an explosive post detailing bullying attacks on principals who disagreed with former Education Minister Anne Tolley. He read at http://tiny.cc/cgavemu. Unpleasant things happened to principals who spoke out against National Standards. Those targeted said that the speed with which some emails were posted on WhaleOil’s website suggested their computers had been broken into. Some principals ended up facing constructive dismissal or intervention by commissioners.

End in sight for Novopain?
The government has finally announced it is bringing Novopay back into the public sector. From 17 October a government-owned company will take over payroll – hopefully putting an end to all the stress and wasted time and money. Secretary of Education Peter Hughes said while the new model will improve payroll delivery and school support, this won’t happen overnight. But he says the new arrangements will lead to a “simpler, more user-friendly service”. Talent2 continues to own the software and is still responsible for fixing the glitches.

UK schools may be forced to join clusters
Ofsted – the UK equivalent of the Education Review Office – wants all schools to be forced to join a cluster led by a new “pipeline”, from year 1–13 to be considered as a potential community. And ECE may be dragged in as well, despite a lack of consultation.

There are calls for a review of the charter school experiment as its costs continue to spiral higher. The Quality Public Education Coalition (QPEC) says two schools’ rolls have fallen this year and three remain below their “guaranteed minimum roll” for funding purposes. One charter school has reported 66 students with each student receiving funding of $24,000 a year – more than three times the average funding for pupils in state schools. Shortly before the election, the government announced four new charter schools to open next year at a cost of $15.5 million over four years – three of them primary schools. Broadcaster Willie Jackson is sponsoring one in South Auckland.
In survey after survey of voter opinion, education rated as one of the most important issues facing the country.

Unfortunately, in the latter days of the campaign, education was shouted out – but the good news is that some gains were made. Parental leave will be extended, there will be more teacher aide hours for special education needs students and there will be free medical services for six to 13-year-olds. NZEI members throughout the country took part in dozens of successful initiatives to stimulate a wider debate about education.

There is greater public understanding about the damage that GERM-based policies are causing to our system. There is less tolerance for charter schools and a growing unease with policies that rely on the continual testing of young children.

Probably the greatest gains were made in the awareness of the extent of child poverty in New Zealand and its long-term effects. Many more New Zealanders are now aware of the huge structural changes that have taken place over the last two or three decades in our society.

The new government might choose to downplay the increasingly entrenched inequality but it will be hard-pressed to ignore the situation.

Implications of the new government

Given its election win, the government will try to push through its IES policy (see story pp 10 – 11). Other reforms, based on National Standards, will continue, including the signalled extension of national assessment to years 9 and 10. Another disturbing element of the new government’s platform will be its planned changes to employment law. Employers – including the Ministry of Education – will no longer be required to conclude collective bargaining. They would be able to walk away from the bargaining table. This would considerably weaken NZEI members’ collective strength and our ability to win gains for members through bargaining.

One thing is for sure, NZEI members will continue their efforts to work collaboratively both on behalf of their profession and their students.

NZEI Members can take heart that education became a central issue during the 2014 election campaign.
Teachers have given an overwhelming No Confidence vote to the government’s proposed Investing in Educational Success policy, which is a GERM version of what many already practise. They say the $359m of IES funding would be better spent on students. Michelle Nixon reports.

But we already have clusters...

After months of debate on the proposed policy, NZEI members met to vote on the IES and 91 percent voted No Confidence. The policy proposes a one-size-fits-all, top-down management structure across “communities” of 10-12 schools, creating the most radical shift in schooling since Tomorrow’s Schools in 1989.

It was proposed without involving schools or parents and with no evidence that it would boost student learning. “Giving a few principals and teachers huge pay rises but taking them out of their schools and classrooms for two days every week is more likely to disrupt children’s learning,” says NZEI Te Riu Roa president Judith Nowotarski.

Many primary schools already work collaboratively (see box), and the government has been unable to shift the impression that the IES is designed around National Standards and that it will undermine child-centred learning. It fits with the Global Education Reform Movement’s agenda of greater accountability and competition, at the expense of high quality public education.

As a result of the vote, held by secret ballot, NZEI has withdrawn from all consultation groups associated with the IES and will lobby the government to start from scratch by genuinely consulting with the profession and parents about how to spend the $359 million for the benefit of the children.

Despite government claims of consultation, its discussions with some in the sector between January and April were kept confidential, with no opportunity for wider talks. The final model presented in June was the same in substance as the original policy announced out of the blue in late January. In contrast, before members voted on whether and how to support the IES, NZEI Te Riu Roa organised weeks of discussion and debate, based on thorough research. Teachers and principals were given comprehensive information on the pros and cons of the policy, including the government’s Cabinet papers and the final report of the Ministry IES Work Group. NZEI is encouraging members to talk about the IES proposals with their school communities, fellow teachers, support staff, principals and Boards of Trustees.

It is likely that the government will now attempt to push ahead with the policy, regardless of opposition. The Ministry of Education has issued “expressions of interest” forms and officials are approaching individual schools to try and persuade them to join a Community of Schools (CoS) cluster.

The new executive principal and lead teacher roles may also be offered by way of individual contracts. However, if schools refuse to participate in the policy it may be problematic for the government to try and impose it.

The ministry is also circulating a survey about the Teacher Led Innovation Fund, which is open to all teachers, not just those in CoS. It is technically part of the broader IES policy but members are not boycotting the survey.

Although the government has said the PFTA supports the IES, the secondary teachers’ union interim agreement on the IES has not yet been voted on by members— that will happen this term. NZEI says the very fact secondary and primary organisations have taken different views of the IES shows that it is not the right model for the whole sector, and needs re-thinking.

On 5 September members protested against IES and in favour of the “Better Plan” outside MPs’ offices across the country. They called for the $359 million to be spent on programmes that more directly help students: smaller class sizes, 100 percent qualified ECE teachers, more funding for special needs, sustainable funding for support staff and support initiatives that make a real difference for Māori and Pasifika students.
Another unfortunate experiment
The rise and rise of corporate childcare

The current boom in large-scale for-profit early childhood centres is shaping up as a disastrous experiment in the care of the very young. Jane Blaikie investigates.

Teachers raise the prospect of a social time bomb as children in their most critical years of brain development spend long hours in care that is little more than “crowd control”.

However, Monteth thinks that private providers per se aren’t the problem – “If you’ve a mum-and-pop operation, they can be quite nice. If the people are really committed to early childhood education and they’re working in it themselves, it’s a different quality than a large private provider.”

Big-screen TVs
In South Auckland, two former professional rugby players are opening centres. A parent visited one and found that each year-age room features a big-screen TV. A teacher later visited to confirm the report and found there were relatively few other resources or activities for children.

To entice parents to enrol in the new centres, the operators ran events outside a supermarket offering free food to families and large free toys to the children. Parents at the new centres pay no fees and their children get free nappies, formula and lunches. A door-to-door pick up service for children means parents do not have to go to the centres – breaking a cardinal rule of good practice in the sector: positive, ongoing, daily relationships with parents.

But even with no fees, government funding means the new centres are very profitable, says Monteth, who’s done some back-of-the-envelope calculations – if you employ a minimum of qualified teachers and plenty of low-paid, unqualified relievers.

“These centres are like supermarket chains,” says Monteth, who many years ago worked in retail. “You have a core of professional staff and they’re usually reasonably well paid because you’re exploiting them severely, and outside of that is a casualised, unskilled workforce, working on what are essentially ‘zero hours’ contracts.”

These contracts are just one way that operators “extract value” from centres (see box p16).

Complaints
Not surprisingly, confidence in the sector is plummeting. An online survey by the Child Forum Early Childhood Network found that 63 percent of respondents believed things would get worse in the coming 32 months – and most of the 7 percent who thought things would improve believed this because they had anticipated a change of government at the election.

A large number of official complaints has also been made against centres. Information released by the ministry under pressure from the sector last year showed that in 2012, 247 complaints were made against services, mostly about fees but 26 alleging physical or verbal abuse.

But the actual number of complaints is likely to be much higher because centres are not required to report complaints against unqualified staff. A recent Education Review Office (ERO) report called on the government to investigate how services might report on the conduct and competence of unqualified staff.

The ERO report also found that 41 percent of education and care services had “minimally effective or ineffective practices for managing and developing staff” compared to just 4 percent of kindergartens. Some 91 percent of kindergartens supported staff development “very well” compared to 37 percent of education and care services.

“It’s all a long way from what the pioneers of early childhood education had in mind when they fought tooth and nail through the latter part of last century so they could offer parents high quality education for their young children and the chance for parents to learn more about child development and parenting. “Early childhood has been gutted,” says Janet Dixon in Wellington. “I reckon we’ve lost 30 years of work in the last few years. We were just beginning to get the status – the recognition of our degrees and specialised training to work with children in their most formative years of life.”

A long-time teacher, Dixon worked for Victoria University in Wellington delivering professional development to early childhood centres, but when the funding was cut, she lost her job. She now facilitates Professional Networks, for groups of non-profit centres. “Most teachers find it hard to get PD – it’s quite scattered and it’s often watered down primary stuff.”

She says, “We are having a big social experiment without considering the possible outcomes. Why are we not taking any notice of the reliable research which is very clear about the need for strong ongoing attachments and trusting relationships for healthy brains?”

No time for PD
In for-profit centres, teachers appear to be struggling against impossible odds to keep up their professional practice. According to Peter Monteth back in Tauranga, and the NZEI survey, the norm in large centres is for 38–40 hours of teacher contact time a week.

“We have a maximum of 26 hours a week of...
**The atrium test**

Monteith also backs concerns noted by staff about the small size of the outdoor areas at new centres. He has what he calls the “atrium test” – if there’s a big atrium in the front for parents then it’s time to worry.

He visited a new centre in Auckland with a big atrium (one is reported as having a machine dispensing coffee, popcorn and slushies for the small size of the outdoor areas at new centres. It was so ridiculous. But it worked.”

**Terrible ratios**

Brice has a lot of sympathy, however, for the teachers working at for-profit centres, having mentored several for their registration. “Those teachers are as passionate as we are about providing quality, they’re just not able to. They’re overworked, they’re undervalued. They have terrible ratios. They’re legal on paper but in fact they operate nothing like that. I say to them that it’s actually illegal and very bad for you and the children.

“Maybe there can be two people with 12 or 13 kids on or infants, stressed out and they can’t get breaks and they can’t provide any quality for the children. I get upset thinking of them working like that and thinking of the children and what their days are like.”

These centres are too, who need the best quality, says Brice. They are often behind in oral language, as is well recorded in research on children living in poor communities – and in desperate need of quality, small-group interactions in ECE.

*Those teachers [in large, for-profit centres] turn themselves into robots but there aren’t enough of them on the floor to provide any of those small group interactions. They feel like they’re just policing.*

They also fear losing their jobs if they speak up. So what about ERO then – isn’t the Education Review Office able to weed out poor quality? Apparently not. ERO looks at how “well-placed” a service is to deliver learning – it doesn’t actually monitor whether the learning is going on. **There are no spot checks, and it is that some licences are being given to new operators to open centres without regard to local need. New centres are opening where good centres already exist and where these have capacity.**

*That doesn’t seem to be any planning – there might already be four within walking distance of where they choose to open. What we think is happening is ‘recycling’ – children who already go to centres are just moving to the new ones.*

*And if you get families in by offering free stuff and a pick-up service, how do you prove that your childcare is a quality service? Are parents ever going to know that – if they use the pick-up service? You can’t see their staffing levels. You can’t see interactions between children. To my way of thinking, they’re actually short-changing those families.*

**Support for staff development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergartens</th>
<th>Education and care services</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported staff very well</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate support for their staff</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not provide adequate support for staff</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*From the Education Review Office’s report Improving quality – employment responsibilities in kindergartens and education and care services May 2014.
seems easy enough to wing an ERO review as centres are given plenty of notice of a visit. You make sure your paperwork is in order, all your resources are tidy and out, and you’ve got your staff ratios there on the day,” according to one practitioner.

Otago University Professor Richie Poulton has put it this way, “You’ve got people out there who are not monitored carefully enough, doing whatever they please, and they may put a poster of [the curriculum] Te Whāriki on the wall – and do something completely different. If you’re a consumer – if you’re a parent – you’re thinking your child’s getting X yet they’re getting Y.”

Good business
How then has this situation has been allowed to develop? For most of last century, progressive groups promoted ECE while conservatives tended to resist the idea of ECE, preferring a more traditional model of at-home mothers. However, when the Labour government introduced the 20 hours free policy, with the intention of not offering the funding to for-profit services, it came under immediate and intense pressure to do so, and it succumbed.

In turn, the National-led government elected in 2008 swallowed any remaining doubts it might have had about mothers in paid work and now appears to see the sector as a good business opportunity.

This attitude certainly favours the large private providers. A series of Official Information Act requests and Google searches by EA indicate the government has close and positive relationships with the private ECE sector. They also show that private providers are extending their businesses into neonatal care, with one opening a publicly-funded birthing centre. Another has extended its ECE Information programme to include six-year-olds in at least one of its centres, with “primary education” beginning for children at four and a half years. This appears aimed at parents who want to keep their children in a centre for longer rather going to school at age five.

A senior ECE professional who worked for a large private provider said the experience was “a long way from the early-childhood focussed, ethical and collaborative world of most ECE organisations.” She said the company put business priorities ahead of education.

ECE is rocket science
Private providers are strong advocates of what they call the “nana factor” in defending the use of unqualified staff in ECE - a sentiment that often goes hand-in-hand with the idea that ECE “ain’t rocket science”.

But that’s exactly what it is, says NZEI’s president Judith Novotarski, herself a kindergarten teacher. “The workings of brain development still defeat researchers involved in neuroscience – yet ECE teachers are tasked with developing those minds in their most vulnerable stages.”

The “nana factor” is essential, says Novotarski, “but loving and emotionally warm relationships are just the beginning. Then you get to the important stuff like engagement and exploration – and in quality centres that happens in small groups with qualified teachers. That’s where you get the learning in numeracy and literacy but more importantly in the competencies that will set children up as lifelong learners.”

Novotarski shares the profession’s concerns about the undermining of quality in the sector and believes an independent inquiry is needed in order to safeguard very young children. ■
Teachers deserve better!

Hard-nosed media personality Duncan Garner is best known for his verbal stoushes and political scalp-taking, but he is surprisingly soft on teachers.

“I completely value what teachers do,” are Duncan Garner’s last words in a short interview with EiA. “I understand how tough it is – I have four children – and I see it on a daily basis so I want to make sure that gets across. Have a good day. Bye.”

It’s the equivalent of a finger-jabbing moment – something he was accused of a few years ago when contradictory accounts had him confronting a beleaguered former Cabinet minister.

As a political journalist, Garner has led the pack in scandals that claimed the scalps of, among others, John Banks and John Tamihere. Yet on teachers, he’s almost effusive – with a few reservations of course.

“My two daughters have gone through kohanga reo and my son is at an early childhood centre. I’ve seen what you guys do – and I think it’s phenomenal. I mean you do remarkable jobs under enormously pressured and stressful circumstances.

“You guys really make a difference. And I wonder whether we treat teachers well or whether we reward them enough compared to jobs that other people do in society where they get paid three or four times as much.”

His own memories of the education system are almost all positive – he attended kindergarten in Northcote, then Willow Park School, Birkenhead Primary and Westlake Boys High.

“I have fond memories of coming second in a talent contest singing ‘You are my sunshine’. I remember running all the way home with a one-dollar note. I remember being really engaged by teachers at Birkenhead. I don’t remember any bad things happening.”

But then he balances the story with a couple of less flattering anecdotes. He had a teacher who was very good but a bit stern. He recalls making up a rhyming poem about her that doesn’t bear repeating.

And it sounds like he’s really only just forgiven his primer four teacher “who treated us like she was our mum, she was really warm to us, but I did lose a little bit of faith in her.”

“She was so good to me and so good to all our class. But one day, I’d been outside and my pants had got really muddy, and she made me take them off and do the rest of the class in my underpants. That wasn’t a great call.”

He would also have liked more music. “I wish I’d been pushed more into music. It was more, ‘you go and play rugby’. I would have also liked to have been a singer, you know what I mean.”

At secondary school, he was grateful to a journalism teacher, Paul Ferner, who told Garner, “the world’s your oyster mate, you clearly need to do this.” Garner credits him with creating “a framework and environment where I could achieve.”

Nowadays Garner fronts TV3’s current affairs programme 3rd Degree as well Radio Live’s late afternoon Drive with Duncan Garner.

But he’s no shock jock. He says he likes to look at the best and worst of every policy or political party and call the big issues as he sees them.

“I think parents need to be more engaged in their kids’ education. And I’m by no means perfect – I should be doing a lot more with my kids and I wish I had the time to do it.”

“I do wonder if we’ve become too busy in this massive capitalist society so we’re leaving everything to teachers and not doing it ourselves. That’s the discussion we need to be having.”

— Jane Blaikie

“The thing that worries me is inequality, is the gap between rich and poor, and I see this in the gap between rich schools, which are phenomenally resourced. “Then I can be in places like South Auckland and also in the provinces and to be honest it’s like a different New Zealand. Parents are simply struggling to make ends meet and that means they cannot raise the money or pay fees for the extra resources.”

He says inequality means not all children get the same education. “The wealthy schools have the ability to pull the lever. That worries me about our education system.”

He’s critical too of politicians who treat their job like a game – “and some of the most important things, that is education, aren’t properly debated and discussed.”

He thinks the only way a proper debate will happen is on a one-to-one level. “It’s got to happen in lounges and houses. It’s not a collective conversation. I think it’s an individual conversation.

“I think parents need to be more engaged in their kids’ education. And I’m by no means perfect – I should be doing a lot more with my kids and I wish I had the time to do it.”

“I do wonder if we’ve become too busy in this massive capitalist society so we’re leaving everything to teachers and not doing it ourselves. That’s the discussion we need to be having.”

— Jane Blaikie
Congratulation

Henry Gregg

Henry Gregg’s milestones might seem quite normal.

He will finish primary school soon and then head off to a high school where he can pursue an interest in cooking. He will catch the bus by himself. He plays 12th grade soccer for a club.

Yet Henry has autism and when he started school, he didn’t talk or use the toilet and meltdowns weren’t uncommon. Henry’s mum Jo Gregg credits good early intervention and schooling with enabling his remarkable progress. “It wouldn’t have been possible without mainstreaming.”

Find Parents with Children in the Same Boat

Jo shares her Top Tips for parents and teachers on how to support high needs students to reach their full potential.

1. **Find out everything** I took Henry for a hearing test as a toddler because he didn’t respond to my voice. It took months to get a diagnosis (free special education services are overwhelmed by demand) but Henry did get some hours with a speech-language therapist almost straight away so we could learn picture exchanges and sign language. Those early years are critical. There are quite a few free programmes and services. Don’t be shy or ashamed. Ask questions and talk to everyone – teachers, Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Social Development, IHC, Flunket, health practitioners, WINZ. One person might not tell you everything that you’re entitled to. Keep asking.

2. **They don’t “pick it up”** Autistic kids need to be taught absolutely everything. There’s no learning by osmosis.

3. **Find parents with children in the same boat** I went to a support group early on and was almost overwhelmed by the gloomy stories. But I met another parent and we became friends. You need other parents and children to hang out with who “get” your kid. They can draw on a pool of knowledgeable teacher aides around, because the money is rubbish. As parents, principals, teachers and even school aides, we turn ourselves inside out trying to get the letters and words, although he had no idea what they meant. So he lost his ORS funding - I was in a complete panic because I knew he would go backwards really fast without a teacher aide. We had to reapply making it really clear all the things that Henry couldn’t do. It pays to have someone with experience help you fill out the forms. Teachers and principals need to ask for advice in completing the forms to get the extra resources and facilities that special education kids need.

4. **Become strategic** Special education advisors aren’t allowed to give recommendations on particular early childhood services or schools or developmental programmes. You’ll need to work out what’s best for your child.

5. **Beware of snake-oil merchants** Some people are out there selling magic-bullet solutions - they can be really expensive. Some might help a bit.

6. **Take what you can get** Sometimes by the time the specialist arrived to help with something, we’d fixed that problem – once we used the behavioural specialist to help with toilet training instead. When Henry was older, a couple of teenagers who had been at school with Henry did their community service for the Duke of Edinburgh programme by playing soccer and just hanging out with Henry after school for an hour a week.

7. **When it all goes belly up** You have to have a break. I separated from Henry’s dad when Henry was three and his sister five and we moved to rental housing. I asked – too politely – for respite care and was allocated five days a year. When things really went belly up, I was referred to a programme called Strengthening Families. Our paediatrician, speech language therapist, Mock person, teacher and a social worker met and they were able to get us extra respite care. Sometimes it is about being the squeaky wheel.

8. **Choose your teachers** I chose a small school for Henry that advertised itself as A Country School in the City. I looked at the ERO reports and saw this school had a good report for special needs. ERO is a good place to start too, for early childhood centres. You’re looking for a receptive principal or head teacher – someone who will talk to you, someone who is open to ideas and suggestions. Henry’s school sent all their teachers on a Sue Laxley course to learn more about autism. That helped.

9. **Find the right teacher aide** It can be really hard to find a qualified teacher aide who is going to stick around, because the money is rubbish. That’s another advantage of going to a school with experience of special need students – they are more likely to have a pool of knowledgeable teacher aides they can draw on.

10. **Learn the art of form filling** Before Henry was eight he “learned to read” – he could sound out the letters and words, although he had no idea what they meant. So he lost his ORS funding - I was in a complete panic because I knew he would go backwards really fast without a teacher aide. We had to reapply making it really clear all the things that Henry couldn’t do. It pays to have someone with experience help you fill out the forms. Teachers and principals need to ask for advice in completing the forms to get the extra resources and facilities that special education kids need.

11. **Make sure other children and parents know what’s going on** Henry’s sister Olivia stood up in assembly and gave a talk, “My brother has autism.” She was so proud and it meant all the kids and some of the parents knew about autism and what to expect. I joined the school’s “Friends” group so I could get to know other parents and they could get to know us. For Henry’s first few years at school, I had a flexible job so I could run up to school when he had a meltdown. It could take a while for people to get to know his cues.

12. **A buddy system** The school set up a rostered buddy system so another child was with Henry at morning tea and lunch. It can help if the school puts in an incentive – but sometimes kids were competing to be the buddy. For two or three years, Henry had a bus buddy – they caught the bus together into town so Henry could come into my work. Now he goes on his own.

13. **Learning doesn’t happen in a straight line** Henry used to only eat five or six crunchy foods. We tried a programme at the hospital to get him to try new foods. We tried lots of things. Then he started watching Masterchef with Olivia. One day when he was about 10 we had the idea to put some different foods on a plate and for Henry to be the judge – “now you say Henry which is the best!” And he started munching on them. From there, he started cooking. Now he’s interested in working in hospitality.

14. **Sport is great** Henry joined the class soccer team. I spent the first two or three years running up and down the pitch with him, saying, “This way Henry. On the pitch Henry.” Now I watch from the side while he plays for a club. He’s turned into a good little defender.

15. **Medication** Don’t be afraid to try medication, and don’t be afraid to not try medication. We got through without. But it’s an individual choice.

16. **Other kids don’t have to be like him** I used to want Olivia to talk to Henry like I did – slow and simple. But she refused. Looking back, I see it was a good thing. He had to come up to her level, and it pushed him.

17. **One for the politicians** Special education and teacher aide funding needs to be ring-fenced. And don’t make it so damn hard to get this funding. As parents, principals, teachers and MoE support workers, we turn ourselves inside out trying to get adequate funding to support our special kids. If you could look further ahead and see the money you invest in mainstreaming has now ensured Henry will become a tax-paying adult you’ll realise you’ve made a great investment.
NZEI HERITAGE ONLINE NOW

Members now have access to 130 years’ worth of New Zealand’s educational and social history.

The new website NZEI Heritage provides easy online access to a rich archive of journals, photographs and objects. The site showcases both the history of NZEI and of education in Aotearoa.

As well as the photo collection, members can access historical film reels, videos and audio tapes. There are images of memorabilia and items used in past campaigns such as pens, buttons, stickers and flyers.

This content is also available to researchers with an interest in educational and social history. Everyone who has been to school in New Zealand will find something they recognise on these pages.

Content reflects changing policies, trends, people and events. It shows how history unfolds through the impact of world wars, changes in fashion, changes in the curriculum, and new technology. Hear the discussions on whether or not computers are here to stay, for example.

NZEI members can contribute to the site. Log on via your “MyNZEI” account and it will automatically log you into the heritage site. You can add tags, identify people, and share stories and memories about events and people in the photos as well as create personal albums of your favourite images.

Later, at the next upgrade, members will be able to add their own material such as photos of protests, campaigns, significant events and groups.

The site is open to the public here – heritage.nzei.org.nz.

From the Archive

PHOTOGRAPHS: NZEI TE RIU ROA COLLECTION. CRICKETERS PACOLL-2647-04-020, LARGE CLASS PACOLL-2647-04-075, SWIMMING SPORTS PACOLL-2647-04-074 COURTESY OF ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY, WELLINGTON, NZ.
What is the Purpose of Education?

Every child needs to believe they have potential. This requires teachers to inspire and motivate young people to become lifelong learners, problem solvers and develop enquiring minds.

Not everybody can be a world champion but we can all be champions at our own level; we can all be Einstein, but we can achieve if we are given the motivation to learn and extend ourselves.

Giving children the self-belief and skills to approach learning as a gift rather than just a means to find employment will encourage them to find their passion. A one-size-fits-all approach will never achieve that.

Dame Susan Devoy – Race Relations Commissioner

Education is all about connecting people to people, to place and to purpose. To thrive in an uncertain world our children need to understand how to learn. Our role is to foster curiosity, build resilience and teach children to handle complexity and change with compassion, thoughtfulness and generosity.

Lani Evans – philanthropist and entrepreneur

By the time they are adults, our children will be living in a vastly different world to the one we live in now: one that is compromised by the effects of climate change, population growth and rising sea levels. It will be more important than ever for them to be resourceful and creative problem solvers; to discover new and better ways to use the resources we have, to have a regenerative mindset, to be waste free and to live with less. I hope that education will facilitate both their individual and social needs and encourage them to find the unique ways that they can contribute to one another and to the world we share.

Malcolm Rands – Ecostore founder

True education is critical, especially of grand claims advanced by people in power. True education poses questions of value: Not “will this work?” but “will this lead to the welfare of people?”

Pat Sneddon – business advisor and Treaty claims negotiator

Education’s purpose is to support effective citizenship by guiding kids of any background to grasp the tools of learning to be effective participants in a rapidly changing world. Citizenship means belonging, the right for your personal voice to be heard, with access to the tools to impact on your world.

Emeritus Professor Ivan Snook compares two classic models of education to determine the true purpose of education.

Since the beginning of the Western tradition there have been two rival models of education.

The first, exemplified by the Greek Sophists, demands that schools prepare young people to be uncritical workers and conforming citizens. In recent years this model has been advocated by the prevailing philosophy of non-liberalism (and its political servants) with its demand that the schools serve the market and protect the wealthy. The purpose of education is to prepare people for jobs.

The second, emphasised by Socrates, who despised the Sophists, looks to the development of autonomous and critical human beings. This is done by introducing students to the traditions of human thought and feeling preserved in the sciences, humanities and arts. The purpose of education is to prepare people for life in all its richness, not only as workers but as parents, spouses, neighbours, community members and citizens.

A democratic purpose

This, in my view, captures the true purpose of education: particularly in democratic societies where, it is presumed, all citizens (not just an elite) are involved in governing; this requires that all citizens are fully educated, totally rational and committed to the Common Good (“the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily”). Thus democracy requires an education system which produces knowledgeable, rational and moral citizens.

The basic issue can be exemplified in relation to the current government stress on literacy and numeracy. Of course these are important but they are merely requirements for education not education itself.

A lifetime of engagement

Literacy is important as a tool for living. It would be tragic if the stress on numeracy were to be accompanied by a reduction in scientific understanding. (Overseas, there is some evidence that this is happening.)

At the present time there is a fixation on narrow and immediate outcomes from schooling but the true outcomes of education are manifest only in later life when people live more critically, more creatively, more ethically. True education opens minds – sometimes dangerously so – that is why it is so often feared.

True education is critical, especially of grand claims advanced by people in power. True education poses questions of value: Not “will this work?” but “will this lead to the welfare of people?”

This vision of education is totally absent from the narrow, skills based, and utilitarian model of education which drives our politicians and those who support them in business and the media.

Read the full version of this essay at www.educationaotearoa.org.nz
Law student and RockEnrol campaigner Zoe Russell sees curiosity-driven learning as vital for our democracy.

For their views, and don’t react well to aggressive debate or criticism.”

Education needs to foster curiosity-driven learning. With curiosity and open-mindedness comes a respect for new ideas and an interest in rather than a distrust of difference. As New Zealand society becomes increasingly diverse...and our economy and culture become more globalised, our education system needs to keep pace. All students should feel safe and accepted within their learning environments.

Following this, I have seen how the new focus on Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the NCEA history curriculum has made young people more interested in our heritage, and more understanding of the continuing relevance of Te Tiriti in current politics. This synthesis of important issues and classroom learning should be developed as a vital part of modern education.

It has been frustrating as a campaigner to see so many people become uninformed or frustrated with the topic of climate change as soon as science is mentioned.

Engaging and challenging figures like Neil deGrasse Tyson can spark lifelong interest and knowledge. Engaging and challenging figures like Neil deGrasse Tyson can spark lifelong interest and knowledge. Engaging and challenging figures like Neil deGrasse Tyson can spark lifelong interest and knowledge.

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Below what? While she knows of some parents at other schools who like the idea of comparisons, others find it disturbing. “Their children are getting these reports, showing their children are below – below what? It’s sad when you hear these stories from parents.”

Whānau of tamarkin at her kaupapa have little or no benefit to the child. There are workload issues, especially in low decile schools.”

The kura kaupapa Māori philosophy Te Aho Matua is a publicly available document which has six components including Te Tira Tangata (a child-centred, holistic approach to learning, focusing on physical and spiritual education), te reo, nga tiki and te aro (nature and the universe).

According to the Education Review Office, the effect of section 155 is to “specify and empower the special character of Te Aho Matua Kura Kaupapa Māori.” Further, “in ERO’s experience, high performing kura that operate in accordance with Te Aho Matua meet the expectations for children’s high quality education as set out in legislation, specifically in the National Education Goals and National Administration Guidelines.”

“Ngā Whanaketanga involves lots of extra work, of little or no benefit to the child. There are workload issues, especially in low decile schools”

Te Runanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa (TRN), which leads the kura kaupapa movement, has negotiated concessions from the Education Review Office in recent years, including four (rather than three-yearly) reviews for certain high-performing kura and more reviews for schools where need was greatest; methodology which is performing kura and more reviews for schools fewer (than three-yearly) reviews for certain high-medium and one in mainstream, and they wanted both to be moving in the same direction. That curriculum fits the profile of our community,” she says. Te Marautanga emphasises Te Whare Tapawhā, a holistic approach including he hingararoa, wairua, tinana and whānau, and supports strong partnerships with local hapu, marae, whānau and aiga. “The tamarkin respond, and whānau are happy.”

Only literacy and maths are based on the New Zealand Curriculum.

Both National Standards and Ngā Whanaketanga are used within Merivale School. “The two Māori medium classrooms use Ngā Whanaketanga, and the mainstream classroom uses National Standards. I like Ngā Whanaketanga better than National Standards, as it’s more child-centred,” says Jan Tinetti. With National Standards, the kanokino – ki- te-kanokiti meetings with teachers were important as means of providing a more balanced picture, of which the National Standards reports were only a very small part. Overall, she experiences much more flexibility within the curriculum than within the standards, which she laments.

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The ministry is trying to introduce Ngā Whanaketanga as the equivalent to National Standards in the Māori medium sector. But that wasn’t the intended objective – they were supposed to be less of a snapshot and more about progress made by each child,” she says. “They involve lots of extra work, of little or no benefit to the child. There are workload issues, especially in low decile schools.”

The Education Counts site also shows high variability in the numbers of students for which there is data across the subject areas in the Māori medium sector (pātai, tuihuia, kōre, pāngarau), suggesting reporting is being done in relation to only selected students. Interestingly, some mainstream schools also use Te Marautanga a Otoroa, the Māori version of the National Curriculum. An example is Merivale School in Tauranga, roll 144, 80 percent Māori and Pasifika. The school has a bilingual class and a Māori immersion class. Soon after she arrived at the school, principal Jan Tinetti realized that Te Marautanga was the best curriculum for the school. “We didn’t want to develop two curriculums. We had whānau with siblings – one in Māori
What’s the best use of your time in the classroom? Is it delivering face-to-face lessons to the class as a whole? Or is it facilitating the activities that use that learning? These are the questions that drive the flipped classroom concept.

Traditionally a teacher would teach subtraction or adjectives or the lifecycle of the butterfly in class and then children would use workbooks or assignments to do exercises on the topic. With flipping, students do the basic learning for homework and cover the applied learning and any problems in class. The theory is that there is less passive learning in class and more active and personalised learning.

In a flipped classroom the teacher becomes a guide, says Leigh Hynes, learning with digital technologies facilitator at the University of Waikato. Or as J Wesley Baker, who is seen as the godfather of flipped learning, once said: “The guide on the side, rather than the sage on stage.”

The concept really got underway when Colorado-based teachers Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams started sending videos home for students to watch and dedicated time in class to inquiry-based learning. In other words the class became the homework and the activities the classroom.

Although gaining popularity in secondary schools, the flipped classroom has been slow taking off in New Zealand primary and intermediate schools and may just be on the cusp. In part, says Hynes, teachers have been distracted by issues around National Standards and haven’t had the time to dedicate to the learning and use of new technologies.

One intermediate school teacher who is sold on the concept is T H Biddle of Maeroa Intermediate School. Biddle, with the help of Hynes, has just started flipped lessons in his bilingual class.

The great thing was that the students were able to stop and rewind the lesson as often as they needed until they understood the concept. The children who took longer to understand were able to watch the video more times until they did.

Biddle adds: “They could stop and go back ten or twenty times to get it.” In many cases the whānau were learning alongside the student. “It keeps the whānau informed with what is happening and they are there to support the student.”

The outcome was that the learners understood the concept by the time they got to school the next day and were able to understand and be more involved in the activities, which consolidated the learning.

There wasn’t a single incident of bad behaviour during that lesson. Biddle adds that the students found the flipped lesson less challenging than if he had taught the concept in class and moved straight on to the activities.

Biddle spoke to a number of parents who also enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in their children’s learning.

More than one way

There is more than one model of flipped classroom around now, says Hynes. But one thing that it’s not is Khan Academy videos. Research has shown that students identify with clips of

KEY POINTS
• A new way of teaching that uses technology to reverse the usual order of teaching a topic is taking hold in New Zealand.
• It may have certainfad-like qualities but it’s also making a dramatic improvement in some classrooms, particularly around behaviour.
When we have confident students, it minimises behavioural problems – they engage in activities rather than thinking: ‘I don’t know what I am doing so I’m just going to muck around.’

Above: Maeroa Intermediate students doing preparatory work at home.

The reality is that it’s no easier for many students to watch a video than to do other homework. It requires the children and their parents to be more responsible about the learning.

Other issues that teachers need to consider in New Zealand include:

1. We still have to bridge the digital divide. New Zealand isn’t at the stage yet where every child has access to technology away from school. On the other hand, when digitally disadvantaged students don’t have technology at home they can often use friends’ devices, go to the library where the resource would be available, or stay after school to do their homework. Or the pre-lesson can be done before school.

2. Flipped homework is still homework. Some educators don’t believe in homework. There is a strong argument that children should play and do physical activity out of school, not homework.

3. It takes time for the teachers to create the resources. Creating the clip can be time consuming, although it can be used again in subsequent years.

Not every flipping time

There is of course no need to flip every lesson. One can be flipped here and there. In a survey of the teachers in the United States by the SOPHIA online community only 5 percent of teachers who were using flipping got their students to watch a video clip every day. About 20 percent assigned videos four to five times a week, and almost half assigned a video once or twice a week.

There are many formal and informal ways to learn more about flipping. Informally teachers can simply read blogs, websites and Pond discussions on the subject, says Hynes. Twitter hashtags such as #flippedclassroom and #flippedlearning are also good. There are numerous videos about flipping on YouTube. Schools may be able to access professional development through the PLD team at the Ministry of Education.

ULearn provides modules on classroom flipping and it is likely future Edcamps will offer professional development on flipped classrooms.

Hynes also is able to offer assistance through the Institute of Professional Learning at the University of Waikato.

Kids ask the trickiest questions. On an average day at Stardome, the education team near all sorts of questions, from the big existential universe questions to curious about how many stars in the sky, to pouring water on the Moon. It’s a topic that includes the beginning of everything, billions of stars, and an ever-changing and developing field of expertise. It’s little wonder that astronomy can be seen as a challenging topic to teach.

Over 34,000 students from Auckland and beyond visit Stardome each year to learn more about the solar system, space, and space exploration. From spaceships to some of the educators who accompany them, it became clear to the education team there was a need for additional material so astronomical learning could carry forward in the classroom.

To help teachers and education professionals include astronomy in the classroom, Stardome Observatory and Planetarium created free educational material for teachers.

The aim of the resources is to demystify astronomy and space science. Each month a new teacher resource is created with an accompanying class activity. These can be downloaded on the Stardome website.

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Curriculum strands together — Numbers and needed a maths resource connecting all the and the online resource makes teacher latest teaching resource to be added to the with over 440 full colour pages — are the resource.

New Zealand Curriculum Mathematics series for Level 3 and Level 4 is Caxton — a 100 percent New Zealand-based and student mathematic resources come from and other books, and the extra task sheets for what students should already know, links to

Research shows children’s literacy levels can drop dramatically over the summer holidays, to the extent that learning goes backwards and some struggle when school resumes. Halting this can be as simple as reading five books over summer. Public Libraries of New Zealand, the National Library, and the School Library Association of New Zealand (SLANZA) are working to combat this — building relationships between schools and libraries to help children get involved in summer reading programmes. For the past three years, Auckland Libraries has run Dare to Explore, which lets children borrow books and check them in at any of the city’s 55 libraries. (See http://www.publiclibrariesofnewzealand.org.nz/ http://www.slanza.org.nz and http://schools.slib.govt.nz/creating-readers/)

The latest international research not only supports the commonsense notion that teachers can better manage smaller classes, it also highlights the crucial importance of small classes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, who suffer disproportionately more from larger classes. Advocates for quality public education say much smaller classes are needed in low-decile schools, especially in the early years. Researchers at the University of London studied several hundred real classrooms and schools of very different sizes and found that larger classes had negative outcomes for curriculum coverage and learning; teacher’s time with individual students; support for learning, behaviour management and stress or wellbeing; students’ interactions with the teacher, time on task and peer relations. Benefits of smaller classes are especially strong at the beginning of both primary and secondary school, with the strongest effects for students at risk of disengaging. Australian David Yeung has investigated education systems across several countries. He says smaller class sizes in the first four years of school have a lasting impact on student achievement, especially for children from culturally, linguistically and economically disenchanted communities. http://tinyurl.com/pjzyoe

Resources

• Summer readers leap ahead National library organisations have teamed up to offer “The summer slide”. The aim is to stop the “summer slide”. Research shows children’s literacy levels can drop dramatically over the summer holidays, to the extent that learning goes backwards and some struggle when school resumes. Halting this can be as simple as reading five books over summer. Public Libraries of New Zealand, the National Library, and the School Library Association of New Zealand (SLANZA) are working to combat this — building

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Schools can now access a new maths resource that covers all the strands and offers both online and resource book support for teachers and students. The “Connecting All Strands” series for Level 3 and Level 4 is Caxton Educational’s latest and most comprehensive New Zealand Curriculum Mathematics resource.

Levels 4A and 4B student books — each with over 440 full colour pages — are the latest teaching resource to be added to the extensive line-up of Caxton student books, workbooks, teacher resource CDs and blackline masters from Caxton Educational. It is already proving a big hit with schools and the line-up makes teacher planning quicker and easier.

Authors Maryanne Tipler and Susan Timpson say teachers told them they needed a maths resource connecting all the curriculum strands together — Numbers and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics.

Literally hundreds of extra tasks have been developed for teachers to be able to pick and choose, to cater specifically to their class or individual students needs. Each of the tasks has themes that apply to interesting situations, e.g. a baking context, designing a futuristic vehicle, or designing a flag and then taking it around New Zealand to show everyone.

The online resource for teachers includes extra tasks or questions that can be projected onto a screen, interactive whiteboard or Apple TV at the click of a button, giving teachers additional tools for group, extension or class work. Also, having the ‘Check-ups’ at the start of each chapter online gives the teacher the opportunity to introduce devices as part of their programme.”

Joshua Kemp, a year 6 teacher from Aberdeen School, Hamilton, says the book gives both teachers and students clear learning intentions and vocabulary for the unit of study. He says it has been really beneficial to have the check-ups for the previous level included at the start of each chapter and has found the online teacher support resource extremely useful and easy to use. “The black

line masters are fantastic. I like just having to click the one you want and print it off. Other helpful aspects are the links to what students should already know, links to other books, and the extra task sheets for early finishers and students who need that additional challenge.”

With the first book for Level 3 due out in term 1 2015 and Level 3B following in later in the year, we can expect to see more teacher and student mathematics resources come from Caxton — a 100 percent New Zealand-based publisher of NZ Curriculum Mathematics which has been publishing educational materials for 20 years.

• You can request the resources on approval for 30 days at www.caxed.co.nz

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Powerful narrative of poverty and education

South Auckland principal Frances Nelson describes a new book on the impact of poverty in New Zealand classrooms and centres as a “must read”.

Twelve Thousand Hours: Education and Poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand
Vicky Carpenter and Sue Osborne (eds)
Dunmore Press 2014
This book is both impressive and timely, says Professor Roger Dale from the University of Bristol, in the foreword. Having delved into its chapters, I wholeheartedly agree.

The book draws on the research, knowledge and wisdom of a wide range of New Zealand academics, researchers, practitioners and commentators to bring depth and breadth in connecting education outcomes and the impact of poverty in a way that is truly impressive. The writers speak to the New Zealand context and focus on uniquely New Zealand problems. They also examine the potential we have for finding solutions – as find them we must.

Over time, the understanding that poverty and inequality are deeply entrenched in Aotearoa has become accepted within mainstream thinking. The rising number of initiatives by the third sector – KidsCan and other philanthropic partnerships which provide food for schools that ask for it – signal that the need for action is acknowledged.

The power of this narrative is in the bringing together of a broad range of interwoven challenges that need to be part of any enduring solution. It paints a detailed picture of the challenges New Zealand currently faces. For the reader, the opportunity to have access to the thinking of this well-rounded and social justice issues. They also examine the potential to both challenge and enlighten makes it an important contributor to the debate on poverty and education.

One very important message is that while quality teaching and teacher efficacy are critical components in raising student achievement, on their own they are unlikely to significantly change current outcomes. The impact of life in the world outside the school gates is of critical importance to what happens inside them.

This is a “must read” for teachers, parents and even policy makers. It is an opportunity to broaden and deepen your understanding of what poverty looks like, how it impacts on the life-chances of students has come at a critical stage in our history. The writers debate the multi-faceted and extremely complex relationship between structural and social justice issues. They propose a “joined up solution.”

These first chapters pose both challenges and solutions. In the second and third parts, the writers tackle many difficult or contested issues. Moreover, they tackle these head on and bring forward a range of solutions. More than a few sacred cows are challenged.

This book is our story with no punches pulled! Its title refers to the 12,000 hours children spend in compulsory schooling. Its potential to both challenge and enlighten makes it an important contributor to the debate on poverty and education.

The opportunity to have access to the thinking of this well-rounded and stellar group of experts is what makes the book particularly attractive.

Best new books for kids

One Sunday
Pamela Allen
Hardback $30
This wonderful Pamela Allen, now resident in New Zealand, delivers a delightful, offbeat story about grandpa and grandma cooking roast lamb for the family on a stormy day. Ages 3+

Punctuation Mark
Belinda Ellis
Paperback $20
Regarded as a bit of a dingo by his mates, Mark loves the joys and quirks of language. Miss Take explains how punctuation can even save lives. Ages 6+

I Am Not a Worm!
Scott Tulloch
Paperback $20
A mischievous chameleon taunts a grumpy caterpillar, with a dramatic but not unexpected ending. Ages 3-7

Speed of Light
Joy Cowley
Paperback $20
A splendid mystery story with fascinating mathematical facts. Jeff’s family is in crisis and he finds refuge in the safe world of numbers while facing up to the challenges. Ages 11+

Time to debate the internet’s ‘faux outrage’

Roald Dahl was recently sent to the naughty corner in Australia in a debate about the extratitling of new meanings to old words. His offence, belatedly, was to use the word “slut” in his 1982 retelling of Cinderella in “Revolting Rhymes”, a word that had one customer complain. Aldi supermarkets then pulled the book from its stores.

Dahl died in 1990 but I’m sure he could have whipped together a great parody on this silliness, and there is a serious discussion to be had around the anonymous “faux outrage” that the internet encourages.

Language is dynamic. To quote E B White from The Elements of Style, “Language is perpetually in flux; it is a living stream, shifting, changing, receiving new strength from a thousand tributaries, losing old forms in the backwaters of time.”

Can we still say a flowerbed looks gay, or someone is in a gay mood? Is a slut now a derogatory term for amoral behaviour only, rather than an entirely person? Does a troll live under a bridge, or in a dark room with a computer and a bad attitude? Should you actually know a person before you call them a friend? Is tag still a playground game, or a photo identification tool? Tweet, tablet, surf, post, mouse, wall, spam … the list goes on.

– John McIntyre is a children’s bookseller and commentator: childbkgs@xtra.co.nz
Great books for classes and centres

To enter, email educationaotearoa@nzei.org.nz with the title of the gorgeous publication you’d like in the subject line. Send separate emails for each title.

• **Little Bo Peep and More**
  Favourite nursery rhymes get a Kiwi makeover by Donovan Bixley in this gorgeous new book. Published by Upstart Press.

• **Survive The Night: Minecraft Beginner’s Guide**
  Win one of ten e-books that will help you craft, mine and survive the gaming phenomenon that is Minecraft. This book is designed to help educators and parents keep up with and support the young ones.

• **Little Truff**
  This book and its sequel, Little Truff and The Siamese Cat, is told from the point of view of a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and has an animal rights perspective. For ages 10+. Visit the author’s website at www.annrussellwriter.com

• **Creative Coffee For Dads**
  A great resource for dads by Fred Robertson who has spent almost 30 years as a parent and educator. His website (www.creativecoffeefordads.com) and the book will help dads everywhere discover the joys of being an active fun-loving parent. Fred is also planning a newsletter.

**DVD – The Finishers**

Win one of two copies of an amazing movie The Finishers, a 2013 French drama, directed by Nils Tavernier. Julien is 17, has a great sense of humour, bags of charm, and is wheelchair-bound due to cerebral palsy. Despite their love for Julien, his family is falling apart under the strain of his disability – until Julien makes a surprising request. A moving portrait of love between a father and his son.

**Resources for my students**

Win one of two $150 vouchers to spend at Modern Teaching Aids – explore their website and order online. The site features a huge range of resources from art and craft supplies, to maths and literacy resources, to boardgames and Lego, to dress-ups and music, to outdoor and sports gear – the list goes on and on. www.teaching.co.nz

**Great prizes to be won!**

Be in to win these great prizes by emailing educationaotearoa@nzei.org.nz with the headline of each prize as the subject line by November 30. Send separate emails for each prize, including a separate email with the title of each book in it. For The Purpose of Education prize, write a 50-word statement – see box for details.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Competitions are open to New Zealand residents only. Only one entry per person per prize category. Prizes are not transferable or exchangeable and cannot be redeemed for cash. Sorry for this competition is limited to NZEI Members or NZEI Honorary Members. The prizes will be drawn on or after November 30, 2014. Winners will be notified by email. If winner is unable to be contacted or is unable to receive the prize, another winner will be chosen at random. Any personal information collected will be held by NZEI in the same way as NZEI holds information collected from other channels. NZEI makes no representations or warranties that personal information entered into a competition will be held, used or disclosed in a manner consistent with NZEI’s Privacy Policy. NZEI takes no responsibility for any loss, damage or expense incurred in participating in the promotion or in connection with winning a prize. NZEI reserves the right to change these terms or cancel the competitions. By entering, you are deemed to accept these terms.
Reducing school arsons

Every November the number of school fires doubles.

Schools are four times more likely to be targeted by fire-setters than all other buildings. Most school fires are started by young people using nearby rubbish and combustible items.

All schools can take these simple, low-cost steps to improve fire safety and reduce likelihood of arson.

1. Keep rubbish bins and skips well away from outside walls
   - Lock and secure bins so they can’t be moved up against buildings.
   - Empty bins and clean up loose rubbish so it can’t be used to set fires.
   - Lock away all combustibles.

2. Install/increase security lights
   - The largest fires are set at night.
   - Additional security lights have reduced fires and vandalism in British schools.

3. Watch for an increase in vandalism and graffiti
   - Consider increasing night security patrols.
   - Be extra vigilant with rubbish clearance.
   - Increase visibility around the school buildings by cutting back vegetation to reduce fire risk and hiding places.

4. Take action when you see suspicious behaviour
   Educate all children about the consequences of fire.
   - Confront the fire-setting behaviour and contact the free New Zealand Fire Service Fire Awareness Intervention Programme (FAIP) on 0800 FIREINFO for further advice. This programme has a 98% success rate* in ending fire-setting behaviour. The intervention can be directed at known fire-setters or to school groups when it is not known who is lighting the fires.
   - Record all information about fire-setting incidents for possible use by FAIP/Fire Service.

5. Involve the community
   - Ask neighbours and parents to keep an eye on the school and report any fires and serious vandalism to the police immediately.

More information:
New Zealand Fire Service Fire Awareness and Intervention Programme (FAIP)
New Zealand Fire Service Get Firewise programme for school children

* An Outcome Evaluation of New Zealand Fire Service Fire Awareness and Intervention Programme, October 2009, Auckland University

www.fire.org.nz/FAIP
www.getfirewise.co.nz