



Aoraki

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Editorial

It has been a busy year in the NZCEO office, and so this publication is coming to you a little later than I had originally planned.

This time we have a somewhat different range of articles from usual, which I hope you will find of interest. They cover a significant range of topics, and I will let them speak for themselves.

As a follow up to a very interesting seminar at the 2015 Catholic Education Convention I asked Msgr Brendan Daly to write about the preparation for working with Catholic schools that seminarians receive. The message is clear - new priests, particularly those who did not go through the New Zealand Catholic education system, are eager to be part of schools, and eager to learn. We have a complicated system and responsibilities in state integrated schools, and it will be helpful if principals and Board Chairs help new priests to understand how it all fits together.

The Catholic primary principals responded to an invitation to consider how we can nourish the next generation of leaders in Catholic schools by an article which makes quite explicit some of the challenges we face. Some of these matters we may not be able change, or not in the immediate future, other suggestions are worth much discussion and implementation. We will continue to discuss them in our office. We know, however, that the best way to get younger teachers onto the path to senior leadership and principalship in Catholic schools is for principals to mentor them and help them to gain the necessary breadth of experience to make them ready to take on principalship. We praise you for the work many of you do in this area, and thank you.

Perhaps secondary principals, or a secondary principal, might like to provide an article on how nourishing the next generation of leaders looks to them.

I would welcome articles on any aspects of Catholic schooling that you care to send me.

Thank you, as always, for the work you do. We are deeply appreciative of the wonderful treasure we have in you, our senior leadership, who make our Catholic schools such wonderful places.

May the Year of Mercy continue well for you all.

Susan Apáthy

New Priests and Schools

Msgr Brendan Daly, Principal Good Shepherd College

In my experience newly ordained priests coming from Holy Cross Seminary and Good Shepherd College have very positive attitudes towards Catholic schools.

Training to be a priest takes six and a half years. Seminarians are on pastoral placement in their home dioceses during their Fifth Year of training.

While at the seminary in their first four years, they will have had some experience of teaching in schools and sacramental programmes. It is impossible to generalise too much about the backgrounds of the seminarians because there are transitional seminarians who have had some training in seminaries overseas, seminarians who have all their training in New Zealand and foreign priests who are wholly trained overseas. Some seminarians are Kiwis, and others come from countries like Vietnam where Catholic schools were nationalised in 1975 and where priests are not allowed near schools.

In their sixth or seventh years, seminarians will learn about Catholic education, integration, preference cards in canon law and New Zealand Church history classes.

Since they have good will, it is important when seminarians come to parishes on pastoral placement or when as priests they arrive in a parish that their involvement in the school is immediately encouraged. They will want to meet teachers, to be involved in planning the programme of school and class masses for the year, and fit in with the system in that parish for integrating sacramental and school programmes. Encourage them to take religious education classes, and especially when they first start, some wise advice about lessons from an experienced teacher, DRS or principal is helpful. I certainly appreciated that when I was first ordained. Board of Trustee meetings will be a whole new experience for them. Orientation programmes vary from diocese to diocese, but the more they can see they are making a valuable contribution to the school and the board, the better it will be for all concerned.

Religious Diversity

Paul Morris, Victoria University

Welcome speech at the launch of the Religious Diversity Centre in Aotearoa New Zealand. 30 March 2016 noon Grand Hall, Parliament, Wellington

What is religious diversity? It is used by scholars, adherents and commentators in two distinct ways and it's important to distinguish them. Firstly, it is used descriptively, that is, religious diversity is simply the fact of different religious and non-religious communities. So reflecting our Census realities, New Zealand is a religiously and culturally diverse nation. I'll return to how diverse and the trends in just a moment.

The second way in which religious diversity is used is normatively, that is, the fact of religious diversity is understood to be a good or desirable thing. When we are called on to "celebrate" our religious diversity, this is a normative usage. The research on religious diversity is much more problematic than we might imagine and the value of religious diversity to a particular society is not just a given good but has to be consciously and positively developed. Where the positive values of religious diversity are not developed diversity can be a threat or challenge to social cohesion and social solidarity rather than being something to celebrate. But when and where the fact of religious diversity is the basis for conscious development, religious diversity turns out to be an enormous positive resource for social harmony and cohesion.

Our New Zealand religious, ethnic and cultural diversities are advanced, we might call it hyper-diversity where ethnicity and immigration patterns intersect with religion to generate a complex map of solidarities, values and global connectedness. But how diverse are we? The Pew Research Centre's recent report "The Global Religious Landscape" is an analysis of national census and demographic data from more than 200 countries and territories to create a database and develop a "Religious Diversity Index" (this is a version of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index commonly used in environmental and business studies to measure the degree of ecological diversity or market concentration). The main difference is that Religious Diversity Index scores are inverted so that higher scores indicate higher diversity. The 10 point scale Religious Diversity Index is divided into four ranges: 7.0+ (top 5%) have a "very high" degree of religious diversity. Countries 5.3 to 6.9 (the next highest 15%) have a "high" level of diversity. Scores 3.1 to 5.2 (the following 20% of scores) indicate "moderate" diversity, while the rest have "low" diversity. The scores are based on the percentage of the population that belong to the world's largest religious categories: Buddhists, Christians, folk religions, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, other religions considered as a group, and the religiously unaffiliated.

The results for the 232 countries and territories are interesting. The US for example - so often regarded as having a high level of religious diversity - actually has a score of 4.1 and is thus place 68th out of 232. The US has 95% of its population as being either Christian or religiously unaffiliated while the percentage of all other faiths is less than

5%. Again, the UK, with a score of 5.1 and in spite of oft repeated claims of high religious diversity, is actually only moderately diverse. In fact six of the twelve highest countries on the religious diversity index are in our own Asia-Pacific region (Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Korea, China and Hong Kong).

New Zealand's 6.2 score makes us the 19th out of 232 on the most religious diverse index, placing just below Japan and Malaysia and just above France and Nigeria. We are considerably more diverse than Australia, Belgium, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Sweden, Germany, Canada and much more so than Russia, Israel, US, India, Spain and Indonesia.

And the trends? In the 1961 NZ census approximately 90% declared themselves Christian. That figure is now around 50%; the number with non-religion was less than 5.5% and is now getting towards 40%. Regional differences too - in Wellington more than 45% of those under 45 declare no religion compared with less than 30% in "godly" Auckland! This huge transition is what I call the "new religious diversity". Christians in 1961 were 93% European and 7% Maori. In 2016 New Zealand's Christians are from the Pacific Islands, Australia, South Africa, the UK, South America, Korea, Taiwan and the Middle East. That is, the diversity is intra-religious as well as inter-religious. In 1961 there were tiny Jewish, Muslim and Hindu communities. Now there are sizeable Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Sikh communities and nearly a quarter of a million members of non-Christian religions.

Our religious landscape has changed almost beyond recognition. We are becoming ever more religiously, linguistically and culturally diverse as a nation. The new religious diversity reflects an increasing "no-religion" sector (although these "nones" are often deinstitutionalised religiously but studies show that few are Dawkins-type atheists and many claim to be spiritual and often interested in religious issues). Alongside this there is evidence that the adherents of religious communities are registering greater commitment.

In 1990 I attended the first meeting of what was to become the Wellington Interfaith Council. I can see some of those here today. The meeting was called to address the issue of Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses and to foster more positive relationships with the Muslim community. Since then successful and enduring interfaith councils and networks have been established across the country fostering meetings between people of different faith groups, and these have allowed for robust relationships to develop at the individual and communal levels; for communities to get to know each other and support each other when one group is threatened; and to collectively address matters of shared concern. This critical mass highlights that while tolerance and respect are vital we now need to do something more - the next development.

The new Religious Diversity Centre (RDC) is not designed to replicate the existing interfaith networks but to do something as yet not being systematically undertaken. Why does increasing religious and cultural diversity matter? Religion sometimes seems to bring out the very best and worst in people. It reflects people's deepest hopes and aspirations, values and commitments, perceptions of security and safety, community and values: values and commitments that are brought into the individual and communal lives

of religious (and non-religious) New Zealanders. Religious diversity impacts on education, health outcomes, in the workplace, on public moral debates, on global linkages and solidarities, on our sense of ourselves. Religious affiliation makes significant differences in people's lives and it needs to be reflected in our local and national policies. Recent work in my department based on the NZAVS survey data for example: members of religious communities are more likely to be open to, and less negative about, those of other faiths than those who do not identify with a religious group. At every level from charitable donations and volunteering to statutory welfare requirements, educational needs, and community building, perceptions of safety and security, and social and community values, religion is a vital ingredient that needs to both recognised and understood. Just as an aside it is the case that religious people are also happier than their secular counterparts!

The EU president recently acknowledged that interreligious and intercultural understanding was at the very top of the 2016 EU agenda along with the related migration and Euro crises. Heiner Bielefeldt, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, insists: "It is the responsibility of the Government to take the lead in developing a more inclusive understanding of national identity." We need to develop a more inclusive understanding of New Zealand national identity that reflects our bicultural heritage and increasing religious diversities. As Bielefeldt stresses, every nation's priorities should include "preventing feelings of stigmatization and exclusion among religious minorities" and most importantly "working for more mutual understanding between different religious and non-religious groups and currents in the society".

Simply, we cannot understand our society without understanding the role that religion plays in our historical and present populations, that is, understand our past and present religious diversity.

What the Religious Diversity Centre will do.

The RDC will firstly engage in new and cutting edge research on religious diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are fortunate in NZ in having excellent data bases both historical, longitudinal and contemporary, that will increase our understanding of our religious diversity and its implications for our society and all New Zealanders. We will build existing links between the Centre and the leading international religious diversity research centres such as Pew and the Centre for Religious Diversity at the University of Ottawa. We are focussed on the research on impact on New Zealand society of our increasing religious diversity. In addition we will give a public voice to those religious minority communities that are part of our national community.

Secondly, this research will inform and undergird our contribution to informed and evidence-based policy recommendations and expert advice based on our unique bicultural and religious diversity context and the best international benchmarking. This will allow our religious diversity to be positively and effectively reflected in our local and national policies, and in our media.

Thirdly, the Centre will offer high quality religious diversity training and resources for professional training for companies, local and national agencies, unions, media organisations and others. The Centre will also offer educational opportunity in religious diversity for teachers, students, and the general public.

Fourthly, the Centre will work closely with religious communities and interfaith networks engaging them in their research networks and involving them in professional training, and most importantly in promoting inter and intra religious dialogue and co-operation.

Lastly, the Centre will be in a position to offer independent, accurate and informed public comment on issues of religion and religious diversity in the to the media and more generally in the public sphere.

How exciting this development is of the first national centre for religious diversity and what a significant contribution it will potentially be able to make to our nation.

Shoulders to the Plow: Nurturing Pathways towards Catholic Primary School Leadership in New Zealand

Danny Nicholls, on behalf of the NZCPPA executive.

A significant challenge facing Boards of New Zealand Catholic primary schools and indeed the Catholic education system as a whole is the recruitment and retention of Principals and DRs.

The New Zealand Catholic Primary Principals Association Executive regularly discusses this concern and enters into dialogue across the system as and when appropriate.

This article synthesises the experiences of Principals, diocesan advisors and boards from across New Zealand. It does not seek or claim to be a definitive snapshot but does bring into focus some common concerns and challenges. The findings affirm good practices already occurring in many schools and dioceses but also may reignite debate and questions requiring deeper analysis than is possible in this article.

The contributors to this article are thanked for their frank responses and in light of this their wishes to remain anonymous are honoured. The opinions shared here are experiential and do not necessarily reflect the position of either the author or NZCPPA executive.

Current Realities

By comparison to state schools, applications for senior leadership roles in Catholic schools have always been significantly lower. This leads to reduced choice for boards considering appointments. While this is not a new phenomenon and is perhaps to be expected, many contributors to this article (experienced, long-serving leaders in Catholic Education, who often serve as consultants to boards on appointments) confirmed that the situation has noticeably tightened in recent years. The comments below are directed specifically at issues unique to the Catholic system and therefore references to general recruitment and retention issues (e.g. the workload of a teaching Principal; scarcity of applicants for remote roles) have been discarded where possible.

The following recurring themes and emerging questions were offered by respondents:

- Significant numbers of practicing Catholics who choose to work in state primary schools have no intention of considering working in Catholic schools. **Has any work been undertaken to find out why this is so?**
- Conditions for determining acceptability are considered by some to be too stringent and are dependent on a close and/or positive relationship with a parish priest or a highly visible role in parish life. NZCPPA acknowledges the Bishops have determined the conditions and that they have the right to do this. **With priests now often involved in multi-parish ministries, and many having less**

time to build personal relationships within a single parish, is this still an appropriate primary referee source for determining acceptability?

- In the experience of some, there appears no incentive to take the traditional country service approach to Catholic school principalship. Teachers appear comparatively better off to stay in a city school in a middle management role and apply for a city Principal role. Some rural Principals feel they are given no recognition by employing boards and their experiences in rural communities as faith leaders are downplayed. It is a concern to see experienced Catholic school leaders, many of whom have completed additional qualifications and study, passed over in appointment processes in favour of less qualified "city" candidates. This issue raises two key questions: **a) What weighting is Catholic Character leadership given by employing boards, and b) Do consultants appointed to boards fully appreciate that Catholic Character leadership is not just one of many "tick boxes" but is central to the ethos of a Catholic school leader?**
- The emerging generation of Catholic school leaders (aged 20-40) express and live their faith in different ways to older generations. **Are the realities of modern life and faith experiences being considered in a positive light when evaluating suitability for positions or are they viewed as barriers?**
- There is often not enough value placed on the role of a DRS - in terms of management units, release time and seniority in a school hierarchy, the DRS is often not given a prominent role. **What value and enhancement can be placed on the role of a DRS as a long term career option?**
- The isolation of being the only Catholic school Principal in a small town or being outside a main centre. Accessing professional and collegial support is challenging, costly and time consuming. There is always a "point of difference" with other local state school colleagues which can lead to feelings of distance. **How can digital mediums and other networks (such as NZCPPA) bridge this gap?**
- Additional Principal workloads created by challenges unique to the Catholic system including: scarcity of applicants for tagged positions; managing difficult and inconsistent enrolment processes; interfacing professionally with challenging parish dynamics; proprietor's appointees to boards who may not have an interest in the full life of the school; leading and encouraging an evangelising the community towards full involvement with the local parish. **How are Principals (especially first time Principals) supported to manage these unique challenges?**
- Potentially strong applicants may not consider themselves "holy enough" or "qualified enough" - they may in fact be strong candidates but be put off by their own misconceptions about Catholic school leadership. **How can information on criteria for Catholic school leadership roles be more widely shared?**

Some specific items raised by respondents are listed below for further discussion and consideration

- In a small community it is very difficult to separate personal and public life and Catholic school leaders are under scrutiny from not only the school community

but also the parish community, who can be the backbone of the entire community.

- One negative experience of an S form being declined or critique of faith commitment may lead a person away from the Catholic system forever.
- Regular and visible involvement in parish life is an expectation as is availability and visibility in the life of the community. By the time parish obligations are completed this can mean only one clear day off from the school/ parish community per week. (n.b. while this issue goes directly towards the notion of "vocation" in our work, it can also be viewed as a disincentive for aspiring DRSs/Principals.)
- Single people may have more freedom and flexibility to move communities for their career; those with families and/or dependents may not be able to do so, or may be unwilling to leave the security of a "safe" position for a new town and promotion.
- Non-Catholic partners/ spouses can be a challenge when considering the time commitment required to be present to school and parish sacramental life.
- In some instances a change in personal circumstances leads to a long-serving person's suitability for a job which they have been doing successfully for years being questioned. It is hoped that the synod on Family Life has raised some discussion regarding divorced Catholics who have remarried and how they can be accepted in our Church. Perhaps in time it will be possible for these people to be accepted for tagged positions.
- Scarcity of applicants for tagged positions means a roll-on effect on many fixed term positions, as tagged roles must be kept open even when they can't be filled. This is questionable employment practice but Principals and Boards have no other choice when quotas can't be reached.
- Public scrutiny of DRS and Principal roles can blur personal and professional boundaries.
- National consistency of interpretation is needed when evaluating tagged forms.
- A strong recent emphasis on tertiary qualifications deters people from taking positions.
- Some qualifications are seen as only "useful" in Catholic schools - i.e. why do an RE paper rather than a general leadership paper which carries more value in other settings?
- An extra unit allocation for DRS role should somehow be provided - otherwise schools are in fact having less resource than state schools to remunerate leaders.
- Better understanding of recruitment and retention units provision may help smaller schools.
- Board governance/ appointment processes could do with more scrutiny, particularly the selection of consultants.

While some of these issues are outside the realm of local communities to solve, and some vary from location to location, there are examples of good practice in many schools which could be shared and provide guidance and fresh thinking to others:

Current Successes and Strategies that Could be Promoted

- Provision of secondment opportunities to schools for aspiring principals
- Promotion of aspiring principals programmes
- Subsidised teaching scholarships promoted to secondary pupils and then bonded to Catholic schools for their first few years teaching - getting them "in the system" early
- Diocesan offices run information sessions for Catholic teachers in state schools
 - establish a database for future opportunities
- Pooled sharing of a DRS working across a cluster of schools
- Mobile reserve Principals for Catholic schools - develop a database of people suitable and interested (similar to NZSTA scheme)
- NZCPPA website - share positions/ secondments/ people available etc.
- Explore the Trinity Schools model of leadership and governance
- First time Catholic Principals being offered Catholic mentors through First Time Principals programme.
- Pairing up of experienced/ established Principal with a school in need to strengthen leadership and stability
- DRS mentors network established
- Resource aspiring leaders and FTP's to spend time immersed in established Catholic schools so they can shadow and experience 'hands on' leadership learning.

Conclusion

This article provides a forum to air current thinking among Principals rather than to solve issues facing the system. There will always be challenges of recruitment and retention and with creative thinking there will always be solutions to local issues generated.

Perhaps the most powerful solution rests within each of us currently involved in Catholic school leadership. As leaders we have the power to influence our own communities in many ways. As we consider the future development of Catholic school leadership pathways we might begin by considering our own modelling and influence. Do those we lead see our position as a DRS or Principal as something that they might also aspire to? By our actions, do others see our enjoyment, passion and energy for our work? Do they sense something of our vocation in our daily work?

If we as leaders can present and model a vision of authentic Catholic school leadership which inspires and empowers our communities, then others may also be attracted to the role(s) and consider them worth aspiring to.

If we as leaders can take the time to nurture, mentor and encourage our staff towards leadership roles, then we are making a positive contribution and future investment in our system.

If we can get beyond the daily frustrations and limitations of leadership, and truly view our work as transformative and a ministry within the wider Church, then we begin to live the vocation.

If we as leaders can engage sincerely, respectfully and openly with the structures and systems that at times may seem to stymie our work, then we can make progress for those who will come after us and build a stronger system for the future.

We will till our soil together, with our shoulders to the plow.

Wayne Kelley

Joining the Dots Competition



'Joining the Dots Competition' is 2016's iteration of Anglican Advocacy's 'Civics Competition in Schools'. Each year, the competition is shaped around a contemporary civics issue as a way of engaging, teaching and mobilising students. Anglican Advocacy have been running the 'Civics Competition in Schools' for the past five years. Past years have focused on solutions to child poverty, cold rental houses, inequality in NZ, and welcoming refugees to our neighbourhoods. We've had the delight of partnering up with different groups like UNICEF, Amnesty, Child Poverty Action Group, ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, and the NZ Red Cross among others. This year's 'Joining the Dots Competition' is an opportunity for students to learn more about the climate through the lens of a specific government agency, and to learn more about the government through the lens of climate change. Because climate change isn't just about the environment, we want students to explore its range of impacts on all areas of life, whilst becoming equipped and empowered to speak out on these issues.

To enter, students (as individuals or in groups) will need to create a piece of artwork which illustrates how climate change connects with, and impacts a government agency of their choice. This piece of art can be in whatever form they best feel conveys their message. From a clay model to a painted picture - it's their choice.

This nation-wide competition is open to primary and secondary aged students, and is free to enter. In addition to the competition, a teacher's pack is available. Each year, this pack will contain: background information on the topic, links to the NZ curriculum, classroom activities and games, and ways of engaging with civic decisions. Plus there are some pretty neat prizes up for grabs!

For more information and to download your own Teacher's Pack email Grace at joiningthedots2016@gmail.com or visit our 'Joining the Dots Competition' Facebook page. Closing date: 21st October 2016

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand believes this would be a worthwhile competition for schools to offer to students.

Exciting new Schools Programme for Respectful Relationships Education

Elaine Dyer, Project Leader, Jade Speaks Up - Violence Free Classroom Communities

Have you seen the animated movie 'Inside Out' yet? In the movie a young girl faces the unknown when her family shifts to a new town. The movie shows us what happens to her emotions in this new and potentially scary situation for the girl.

'Inside Out' was developed in America yet it speaks to people universally. Here in New Zealand an animated movie resource has been developed for teachers, therapists and parent educators working with children aged between 7-12 years of age. 'Jade Speaks Up' is an 8 minute DVD and set of manuals, focused on the issues of family violence and other frightening situations that may arise in the lives of children. It was developed by Violence Free Communities (was Violence Free Waitakere) and has been getting considerable interest nationally and in Australia. Its website is www.jadespeaksup.co.nz

Currently ACC is considering commissioning a pilot to evaluate its effectiveness with 10-12 year olds, so following its monitored application in 3-6 schools in Auckland and Whakatane, the plan is to roll it out nationally.

One success story resulted from collaborating with [The Logos Project](#), Marist Youth Development in Auckland. Logos works with young people enabling them to make a positive contribution within their communities.

The Logos team responded to a request from St Paul's College, Auckland for support with increasing student resiliency around the issue of violence in the wider community.

The Logos youth workers became aware of *Jade Speaks Up* and trained to deliver the school programme. Subsequently, the programme has been run, with support from the Catholic Caring Foundation, in St Paul's College in 2014 and 2015. At St Dominic's College, Henderson 150 Year 7 students have participated in the programme over five weeks.

Activity-based learning reaffirmed the students' learning of trust, seeking for help and effective communication.

Important learning for the students included the following:

- 'I have the right to be safe and I will take away my Personal Safety Plan'
- 'That violence isn't the answer, to breathe, think and do and to help others'
- 'Violence free begins with me, this is because I know that for a fact I can have the opportunity to have a violence free life'
- 'To not be afraid to ask for help. I know what to do if I do not feel safe or others are in danger'
- 'Looking after myself and keeping myself safe is just as important as looking after other people.'

Staff at St Dominic's College, noted that the programme created a safe space for students to explore topics that would otherwise remain unspoken. Staff received positive feedback from students on how useful it was to learn practical ways for keeping themselves safe.

Schools interested in being involved can email Elaine Dyer (Project Leader) at hui.tahi@gmail.com or phone her at 09 4168774.

Guitar Teacher Classroom



Logos Training



Best Practice in the Inclusive and Whole School Teaching of Thinking.

Dr Dorothy Howie, University of Auckland

All New Zealand schools are required to teach thinking, as it is a key competency in the National Curriculum. We are a world leader in inclusive practices, and in line with the 2006 UN Declaration of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, schools need to 'ensure an inclusive education system at all levels' and 'the full development of human potential'. Teaching thinking in an inclusive and whole school way meets these obligations. 21st Century Learning includes enhancing the learning of all students, for equity and inclusion.

There are many approaches available for the teaching of thinking. In my 2011 book *Teaching Students Thinking Skills and Strategies: A Framework for Cognitive Education in Inclusive Settings* (London: Jessica Kingsley) I cover a number of internationally renowned approaches for the teaching of thinking, and how they can be used within a three tiered framework, as follows:

1. Tier 1: Teaching thinking for all
2. Tier 2: Working with small groups of learners with shared learning needs, needing further support for the teaching of thinking, but within a whole classroom programme for teaching thinking.
3. Tier 3: Providing further individualised support for unique and complex learning needs.

Each school will have its own unique profile of needs for the teaching of thinking. I am seeking to engage as a partner with schools in a research project on how schools can inquire into these needs, identify them, and meet them, so as to deliver best practice in the inclusive and whole school teaching of thinking.

Although I have had experience with a number of approaches to the teaching of thinking, my most extensive research and training work has been with the Feuerstein approach, from the 1980s. I and my colleagues carried out a set of rigorous research projects into the value of the Feuerstein approach to teaching thinking in New Zealand, when the approach first came to international attention. I obtained a Churchill traveling scholarship to study with Reuven Feuerstein in Israel, and with his blessing carried out the research projects with the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment programme in New Zealand. The work with these projects was reported in my book published in 2003 by NZCER, called 'Thinking about the Teaching of Thinking'. Reuven Feuerstein was in New Zealand when we launched an authorised training centre for Feuerstein training by New Zealand trainers.

Although it is now used widely internationally for all learners, the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment programme for teaching thinking was developed initially to meet the needs of traumatised and disadvantaged learners coming into Israel after the Holocaust. As such, it is particularly suited to learners from differing cultural situations, and to immigrant learners. It is based on Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience, which highlights the qualities of learning mediation which are

important in effective thinking and problem solving. It has the unique aim of 'structural cognitive modifiability' with Feuerstein believing that cognitive ability is not fixed, long before this was shown by new findings from brain research. The programme requires intensive mediation, usually two to three times a week, over a period of two years, through a complex interactive process between the mediator (e.g. teacher) and the learner, working in partnership through the carefully structured 'Instruments'. These instruments address both the cognitive processes and motivational/emotional needs for addressing learning and problem solving in any curriculum task, as well as real-life problem solving. They also address very strongly the metacognitive or 'executive' strategies needed to carry out these processes effectively.

The effectiveness of the programme, particularly for lower achieving students, has been shown through a very extensive international research literature, and my own New Zealand studies, to be dependent on:

1. The quality of the mediating relationship. This theory of Mediated Learning Experience is very similar to Vygotsky's social interaction theory, with the importance of the human mediator. Feuerstein has from extensive dynamic assessment work identified qualities of this mediating relationship. Central to these, in all cultural situations, are three criteria:
 - Mediation of intentionality and reciprocity. It is of note that 'reciprocity' is central to our Ka Hikitia Māori learning strategy, and to our Pasifika strategy.
 - Mediation of meaning
 - Mediation of transcendence. This linking of learning to the past and the future is larger than just generalisation to new learning. But teachers using the Feuerstein approach have to bridge effectively to academic learning and real-life problem solving.
2. Rigorous use of the programme in terms of length of intervention. Learners with complex learning needs require both intensive and prolonged intervention for new strategies to be embedded and transferred to new learning. For example, in John Thickpenny's project with Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment programme with learners with hearing disabilities at the then Kelston School for the Deaf, the 'control group' acted as a control for only one year, then received one year of intervention, for ethical reasons, while the 'experimental group' received the full two years of intervention. Students generally made notable shifts in their verbal cognitive abilities, but the longer intervention was more successful for bridging to more 'far transfer' tasks, such as academic tasks.

In my project with learners with mild to moderate learning disabilities at the then Kowhai Intermediate Special Class, the Instrumental Enrichment programme was used for two years, and students were making notable shifts in cognitive abilities and achievement towards the end of the intervention and subsequent to it.
3. Teaching of the Instrumental Enrichment programme by the learners' own classroom teacher, in an ordinary classroom environment, so as to maximise

opportunities for 'bridging' from the programme to other curriculum activities. For example, in my four year project with lower achieving Māori students at the then Ngā Tapuwāe College, their Māori teachers, who worked in true partnership and team teaching with me, expressed their pleasure in being able to use their mediational skills and strategies not only in the new intervention, but in their other subjects with these students. They also expressed appreciation of the way in which they could enrich their mediation with their own Māori cultural values. Māori learners made significant gains in their verbal cognitive abilities, which transferred to reading.

I am sure that there are qualities of Catholic schools, such as their holistic nature, and the qualities of compassion and social justice, that make the Feuerstein approach an appropriate one as schools seek to ensure that all children develop their potential. The approach is all about learning partnership and respect, and was developed for those learners who most need it.

Contact me for more information on the best practice project at:

D.Howie@auckland.ac.nz