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What's happening with the Consultancy this year?

There are 244 primary and secondary schools in our region in which the consultancy has the opportunity to work. So where has the action been?

Well within these schools:

- 30 principals are being appraised and supported this year and this comprises most of the consultant's work
- There has been a significant demand for BOT training, ERO preparation, and the appraisal of management staff.
- Almost half the schools worked in during 2010 engaged the consultancy again in 2011
- Since it began 18 months ago, the consultancy has worked in 20% of the region's schools
- Up until now most of the consultancy work has come from the Hutt, Kapiti and the Wairarapa schools

Such was the initial demand from principals and boards, in the first 3 months of this year, that the commitment to visit all schools in February – March could not be fulfilled. The workload has increased to such an extent that any further significant work could not be completed without employing more staff.

To meet the existing demand of schools, and to grow the business, another consultant would need to be employed for 2012. I would quite like this to happen. Let me know if you are interested.

What's in Principal Appraisal goals in 2011?

It's always interesting to know what principals are committing themselves to in their appraisal goals for 2011. What are the issues that are affecting other schools? What's tickling the fancy of our leaders? What's rattling the cages of our Boards? Of the principals being appraised by the consultancy this year, principal personal development targets have most often falling into the following areas:

- School Self Review

- School Marketing
- Teachers as Inquirers
- Staff Appraisal
- ERO Preparation
- Community Relationships
- Strategic Planning

By far the most popular area has been the principal's pursuit of a better understanding of 'Teachers as Inquirers'.

This newsletter touches on some of these themes and gives a bit of a taste for what they might look like.

Strategic Reviewing and Planning

The development of a direction for the school over the medium and longer term (3 years) underpins the basis for all school improvement. Boards are required by law to establish and implement a plan that articulates a vision for the school. The strategic plan, supported by annual plans, identifies various initiatives from school review and community consultation. It translates these into clear achievement targets and achievable outcomes.

However most trustees look to the principal to give direction into the process of development. In doing this the principal needs to be guided by the following questions:

- Where are we now?
- What data needs to be collected to identify important information and trends?
- How will this information be used as evidence to support judgements and to explain trends?
- In what way will the information be applied to inform decisions and/or make recommendations?
- How will future directions be identified?
- Who is involved in the development of the Strategic plan?
- What might the Strategic Plan format look like?
- What will be the expectations from the plan on requirements for Annual Planning and Policy development?
- How will the plan to be monitored?

It is clear that for all the Strategic Plan is a Board document, the principal remains in the best position to influence its development.

As if you need something else to do!

Contact GAME if you want any help!

Education Review Office Preparation and Response

Preparing for and responding to an ERO review requires an understanding of ERO expectations and its review process. The school documentation, the investigation timetable, the various meetings, the classroom observations, the synthesis of results and the writing of the report are all part of their rigorous triangulated review methodology.

It can be a traumatic experience for all concerned. Find out what it looks like from someone who has been there?

Contact GAME for the good oil!

We have had some success:

Thank you very much for the two (ERO) seminars you presented on Wednesday. I have had excellent feedback from both the board and staff - they all found it very informative and useful. They thoroughly enjoyed the insight from "the other side".

Geoff Shepherd Kuranui College Principal

Governance Guidelines

Within the context of the school's operations, the Board should play a pivotal role. However without guidance and understanding the relationship between the Board and the Principal can be a fractious one. To help trustees define their role and responsibilities better, GAME has developed a set of Governance Guidelines. These provide the basis for a programme of Board training tailored to the needs of your school.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that the school's governance and management effectiveness is maintained. It provides an agreed basis by which the school's executive management can exercise its responsibilities, and enables delegated responsibilities to be monitored.

If the agreed guidelines are adopted then the Board can be assured that the terms of the Education Act 1989, the Public Finance Act 1989 and the Financial Reporting Act 1993 have been properly fulfilled.

The guidelines set out those responsibilities that can only be exercised by the Board, the responsibilities delegated to the chief executive (the Principal), and those responsibilities that the Principal can delegate to specified staff positions.

The training evening focuses on trustees developing an understanding of the following:

GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES

- Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Trustee's Code of Ethics
- Chairperson's Role
- Staff Trustee's Role
- Meeting Process

- Meeting Procedures
- Committee Principles
- Board Review of Governance

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

- School Management
- Reporting to the Board
- Community Relationships
- Curriculum Delivery
- Self Review
- Personnel
- Finances
- Asset Management
- Health and Safety

Contact GAME if you want to know more!

Teacher Accountability

There is much that can be said about this topic and many ways that teachers can be held accountable for their decision making and areas of responsibility. In this Newsletter we concentrate on one aspect ... the requirement of syndicates and faculties to record and report on their discussions and the outcomes of their meetings.

Many principals have explored ways to hold middle managers accountable for the work they do in their departments. Often senior management and teachers in other departments are ill-informed of the topics that are discussed at meetings. The development of a consistent school-wide template for 'minute taking' is gathering interest. Adapted by many schools, it is a way for the principal to ensure departments record minutes and dictate agendas of meetings that reflect practices that focus primarily on discussions related to student achievement and engagement.

A template in which departments might minute their meetings is likely to look something like this:

(this particular model comes from Randwick School)

TAHI SYNDICATE (Year 7 and 8) <i>what's happening, why, what should we do about it</i>	
Student achievement and engagement (curriculum)	Achievement data, Intervention programmes, etc
Student Issues	Family conferences, Health, etc
Syndicate planning (curriculum)	Long term plans, EOTC, etc
Professional development opportunities	Inservice courses, Teachers as inquirers, etc.
Resourcing	Sharing equipment, new resources, etc.
Syndicate planning (non-curricular)	Sports events, special events, etc.
Administration	Other syndicate minutes, Management requests, etc.

The secret to this is that the agenda is dictated to teachers by the order of the items. It is also influenced by the rigid template (cannot be shrunk or expanded) showing a bigger gap for minutes to be recorded in the important areas.

The sustainability of this model relies to a large extent on its distribution to all teaching staff, and requirement to discuss these at each other's meetings, and the commentary included on the electronics template by the principal.

A summary of the points noted across the department becomes an agenda item in Senior Management Meetings.

Let GAME help you understand how this fits into the bigger picture of Self Review

TEACHING AS INQUIRY

It sounds great!

'Teacher as Inquirer' requires educators to reflect critically on the impact of their practice and to use information to make decisions about where to go and what to do next. It refers to the need to improve curriculum design and pedagogical practices.

'Teacher as Inquirer' is a process of systematic, rigorous and critical reflection about professional practice, and the contexts within which it occurs, in ways that question taken-for-granted assumptions. Its purpose is to inform decision-making for action. Inquiry can be undertaken individually, but it is most powerful when it is collaborative. It involves educators pursuing their "wonderings" and seeking answers to questions or puzzles that come from real world observations and dilemmas.

Where has 'Teaching as Inquiry' come from?

It's pretty compelling!

- **Teacher's Collective Contract**
 - **Fully Registered Teachers** reflect on teaching with a view to improvement
 - **Experienced Teachers** continually evaluate and reflect on their teaching and act on areas where it can
- **The New Zealand Curriculum**

Since any teaching strategy works differently in different contexts for different students, effective pedagogy requires that teachers inquire into the impact of their teaching on their students.

Inquiry into the teaching-learning relationship can be visualised as a cyclical process that goes on moment by moment (as teaching takes place), day by day, and over the longer term. (pg 35)
- **NZ Teachers Council - Registered Teacher Criteria**

Use critical inquiry and problem-solving effectively in their professional practice. Systematically and critically engage with evidence and professional literature to reflect on and refine practice. Respond professionally to feedback from members of their learning community. Critically examine their own beliefs, including cultural beliefs, and how they impact on their professional practice and the achievement of ākonga.

The cyclical approach to Teaching as Inquiry

It's easy to understand!

Key questions for the teacher to ask.

What is important, given where my students are at?

This *focusing inquiry* establishes a baseline and a direction. The teacher uses all available information to determine what their students have already learned and what they need to learn next.

What strategies are most likely to help my students learn this?

In this *teaching inquiry*, the teacher uses evidence from research and from their own past practice and that of colleagues to plan teaching and learning opportunities aimed at achieving the outcomes prioritised in the focusing inquiry.

What happened as a result of the teaching, and what are the implications for future teaching?

In this *learning inquiry*, the teacher investigates the success of the teaching in terms of the prioritised outcomes, using a range of assessment approaches. They do this both while learning activities are in progress and also as longer-term sequences or units of work come to an end. They then analyse and interpret the information to consider what they should do next.

A format for Implementation

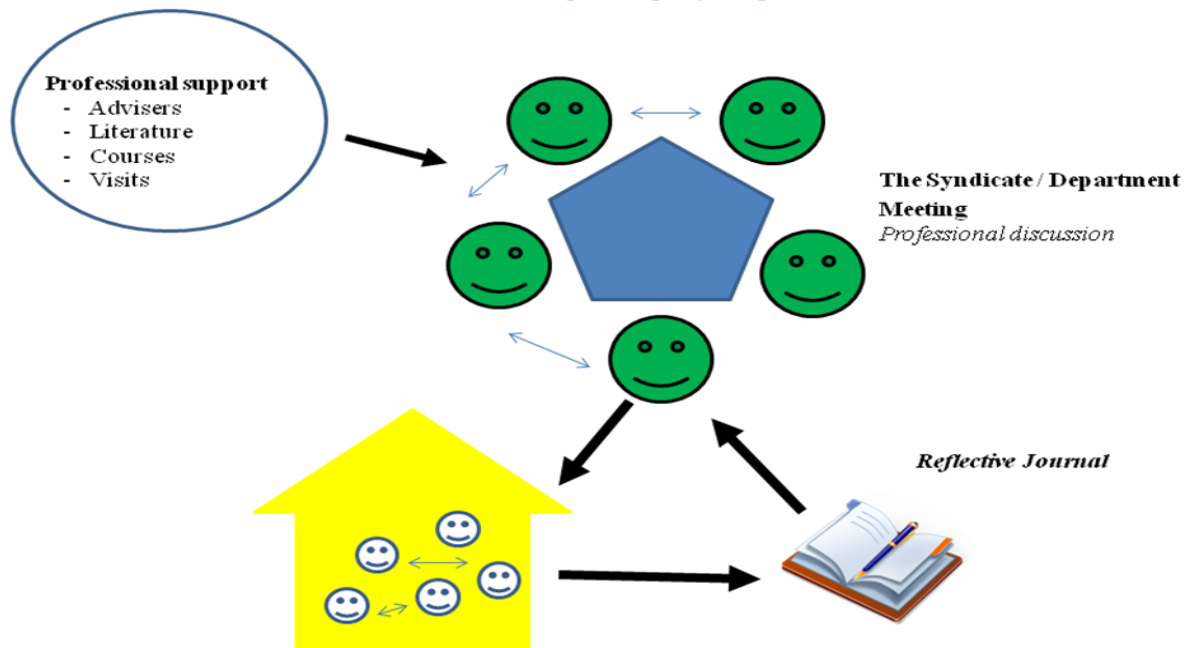
It involves kids!

The diagram below shows a way it could be developed in your school based on the understanding that students will have a strong voice in any teacher inquiry. Similarly colleagues have much to offer in the way of advice, role models and as sounding boards for new ideas. The model assumes teachers are given Reflective Journals into which the progress, achievements and successes of inquiries are recorded.

After all, if you really want to know how you can best teach kids you have got to ask them.

Let GAME show you how it can be done!

How is 'Teaching as Inquiry' implemented?



PS. That's 'one of our consultants' with his first car in 1970. Oh... those were the days.

Don't contact GAME if you want to know any more about this!

