



President's Comment 24

5th August 2010

Dear Colleagues

Recent Research Study: Are Particular School Subjects Associated with Better Performance at University?

A recent study by Ralf Engler (Senior Research Analyst, Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis and Report July 2010) yielded some interesting results. These include:

- Higher performance at university is more closely related to how well students performed at school rather than to the particular subjects they studied at school.
- There are some skills and knowledge that do appear to be important to performance at University. Mathematics at a school is associated with better performance in mathematical science, chemistry with chemical science, English with studies in law. The strongest effect was for accounting students taking courses in accountancy.
- The study raises questions about the need to prescribe the subjects a student must take at school, as a general pre-condition for entry to university. A better approach is to consider how well a student achieves at school. In other words, it is the number of excellences and merits a student gets that is more indicative of how well they will do at university, rather than the subjects they have chosen, with a few exceptions. This brings into question the utility of an approved list for University Entrance. It is of course, one study but for schools and universities, it does raise an interesting debate.
- The study found that the largest difference in university performance occur between students with different school achievement.
- The research also found that personal attitudes and traits such as motivation, study habits and time management skills also contribute to the basis of successful learning, whether it occurs in school or at university.

Teachers and Criminal Convictions

Last week, in the Sunday Star Times (1st August 2010), it was misreported that I was advocating a blanket ban on teachers with criminal convictions.

The two key issues I raised, which got lost in the media translation were:

1. The NZ Teachers Council has a set criteria for registering teachers with criminal convictions. This policy becomes operative when those who have completed a course with an approved ITE provider. ITE's for their part, have

Previous Comments

Comment 23-29.07.10

Student Car Safety, ERO Report on Students with High Needs, Orewa College Sentencing on Boiler Incident, Cybersafety Policy.

Comment 22-22.07.10

Secondary Principals Collective Agreement Negotiations, Asia New Zealand Foundation.

Comment 21 - 16.07.10

Bargaining Secondary Schools Collective Agreement.

Comment 20 - 01.07.10

Professional Standards, Credit Card Policy, Teach Like a Champion, Lessons From Abroad, Winter Months for Caretakers.

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their own criteria on accepting candidates for teacher training who have criminal convictions. It seems to me the NZTC and ITE's should, as far as possible, have the same criteria accepting that it is not possible to codify them and there must be an element of discretion in applying them. There is however, a small number of people who are accepted into ITE's providers who are subsequently declined by the NZTC based on their criminal record. This is unfair on the people involved and a waste of tax payer's money. It also denies another person of that place at an ITE provider.

2. A blanket ban on all teachers with criminal convictions is both unreasonable and unfair. Those convicted of minor offences or historic ones, ought not to be deprived of a career in teaching. Clearly the NZ Teachers Council must weigh all mitigating and aggravating factors of the conviction, which I believe they do. My concern is that Principals report to me that some teacher trainees on practicum have disclosed, or have been discovered, to have what they consider serious convictions, including drug related offences, domestic violence and assault. The issue here is that if we are a profession charged with the care of children, has the bar been set too low? I don't know the answer but it is important to raise the issue!

Minister of Education Review

I have been asked to participate in a review of the Ministry of Education next Thursday. I have my own thoughts which I will share, but if you would like to pass onto me your experiences and opinions, I will collate them as part of my feedback. Please email them to me by Wednesday August 11th.

Time to Ponder

"In the good old days, it was the student, rather than the teacher who had to explain why s/he couldn't read." - Anonymous

"It is like trying to hold 35 corks under water at the same time". - Teacher on the first day of school

"Those who educate children well are more to be honoured than those who produce them; for these only gave them life, the other the art of living well " - Aristotle

*"A teacher should consider not so much what a student is today, as what s/he may become tomorrow.
"Anonymous*

Kind regards



Patrick Walsh
President