

Extending High Standards Across Schools

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In this newsletter we add a new regular feature – a discussion of the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) publications.

Be sure to check out our Interesting Readings section and important dates to remember if you're involved in EHSAS.

Thanks to the six clusters who have contributed to this e-newsletter. If you would like to contribute to the next EHSAS e-newsletter please e-mail extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz with any information or photographs.

Join the EHSAS Virtual Learning Network to connect with other clusters around Aotearoa!

www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas

Project Management Team

Sylvia Burch is the Project Manager, Lynda Watson is Senior Advisor and Rebecca Sweeney is Operational Policy Advisor.

Volume 7 | March 2008



From the Project Manager

It is very exciting to have three rounds of EHSAS up and running, and the team is looking forward to making contact with you all in the course of the year. There are now over 500 schools involved in EHSAS, (around 20% of all New Zealand schools), and the range of projects covers just about every facet of teaching and learning.

Thank you to the conference committee, whose thoughts and ideas are helping shape this year's get-together in July. Rebecca is working hard at this end to make sure everything slots into place and to ensure that what's on offer matches your needs.

Thanks too to those clusters who have already submitted their reports on 2007 activities. This round of reports will be the first opportunity for us to really gauge the effect of the EHSAS project, as the reports on 2006 covered a relatively short span of time. It is important for the project, for the ministry and for schools in general that we are able to get a clear sense of what is making a difference and under what circumstances. Our challenge then is to ensure that these findings are shared with the wider education community.

Sylvia Burch
Project Manager for EHSAS



Round 1 & 2 2008 EHSAS Conference

The Round 1 & 2 EHSAS clusters will attend the EHSAS National Conference to be held on 28-30 July 2008 at the Duxton Hotel in Wellington.

Conference Committee

The conference committee met on 15 February to start planning the programme (see the January e-newsletter or visit the VLN to see who is on the Conference Committee).

We reviewed feedback and suggestions from clusters on what their current issues and challenges and needs are and found five major areas of focus:

1. Leadership, staff buy-in, collaboration and communication
2. Sustainability and time management
3. Assessment, evidence, data analysis and target setting
4. Putting research and theory into practice
5. Cluster time

Workshops and keynotes will be built around these key areas and a theme is being developed around this overarching statement:

"Building Capacity for Collaborative Professional Learning".

Some of the speakers and workshop people we have confirmed are:

Brian Annan & Margaret-Anne Barnett - MOE
John Hattie – University of Auckland
Jeremy Kedian – University of Waikato
Dr Stuart Middleton – Manukau Institute of Technology
Dr Judy Parr – University of Auckland
Mary Sinclair – Cognition Consulting
Prof. Helen Timperley – University of Auckland
Barbara Vann – UK Leading Edge Partnership Programme Practitioner
Cathy Wylie – NZCER

To keep up-to-date with conference plans or to offer suggestions to the committee, make sure you visit the [EHSAS VLN](#) and add any comments or feedback to assist us in getting this conference right for you.

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Useful Readings & References

The EHSAS Team sets aside time to do some professional reading and sometimes we come across articles or books that may be of interest to you. Below are our latest finds and while we can't provide you with a copy of the actual article for copyright reasons, we can provide you with the details you need to find the article. Most articles will be available through your local library, or you can order it through the publisher online. Where possible, we have provided the internet link to the article.

Consider The Evidence

This section of Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) provides resources and guidance on evidence-driven decision making and strategic planning for schools. There are resources for workshops with staff on data collection and analysis, and discussions around types of analysis and assessment.

Source: http://www.tki.org.nz/e/search/retrieve_search.php?&search_term_data=DC.Description%3BDC.Title%3BDC.Subject.Keyword%3BDC.Subject.Classification%3BTKI.SupplementaryTerm%3A%3A%22consider+the+evidence%22

Publisher: Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI)

Guy Claxton

"Professor Guy Claxton is the UK's foremost expert on practical ways of expanding young people's appetite and capacity for learning. His Building Learning Power approach has been tried, tested and developed in hundreds of primary and secondary schools."

Guy is available for a limited time in October / November 2008 to work with schools and clusters."

- Use the link below to find out more...

Source: <http://www.learningnetwork.co.nz/shared/products/facilitator.aspx?id=GUYCLAXTON>

Publisher:
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School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why

This is the first of a series of analyses for the Education Leadership BES development. Professor Viviane Robinson, University of Auckland, outlines the findings of the research and identifies five leadership dimensions and their effect on student outcomes. There then follows a further identification of the theoretical underpinnings of these dimensions and Professor Robinson highlights areas where more research could be done.

Reading this Monograph is an excellent way to introduce yourself to the work around the Educational Leadership BES.

Author: Professor Viviane M. J. Robinson

Source: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/ibes/13723>

Publisher: Australian Council for Educational Leaders Inc.: October 2007

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Teacher Professional Learning & Development Best Evidence Synthesis (BES)

The Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) is available at your school. It is a resource for schools which provides extensive information on findings that can inform decisions on how you might structure and implement professional learning and development in your school.

It is helpful to read through the Summary of Findings first, and where your interest or sense of need is triggered, you can refer to the main body of the synthesis for elaboration and ideas.

Engaging External Expertise

An area that will resonate with all EHSAS clusters is about engaging external expertise. EHSAS clusters are all accessing external expertise to some degree. There is often a need to do this when taking on major projects to significantly improve student outcomes. All EHSAS clusters have student outcomes at the core of their project.

The findings in the BES show that the presence of external experts does not guarantee success. For success, these experts need to know how to make the content of changes in teaching practice meaningful to teachers and manageable within the context of teaching practice. External experts need to work with teachers, involving them in discussion and the development of meaning for classroom contexts. The BES goes into more detail about the attributes of external experts that are important.

If your cluster decides it is important to change the nature and access to external expertise within your project, you may need to revise your budget and action plan to accommodate this. It is possible to re-phase your budget through your annual reporting. Contact the EHSAS Team to discuss this further.

Click on the image below to access the BES homepage:



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Cluster Contributions

Round Two

Westhaven

An afternoon of professional learning, drinks and nibbles was held on the 18th of February 2008 to launch the Westhaven EHSAS Project for the staff from each of our schools.

Our first keynote speaker was Rosemary Hipkins, Chief Researcher at NZCER. Rosemary's presentation was titled; 'Looking at Learning with "new eyes"' Questions were asked such as, 'What sort of young people do we want our students to be?' The focus was on rethinking the curriculum for deep change.

Liz Probert our project researcher from the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, gave the teachers a snapshot of the data collected so far from our teachers which will be used to inform our professional development practice.

Sandy Pasley the Principal of St Mary's College, Ponsonby, outlined the vision and goals for project including the value of information literacy skills for our students, aligning these with NCEA in the context of the new Curriculum.

Our next keynote speaker was Derek Wenmoth, Director of eLearning at Core-Education. Derek's presentation, 'Visioning and the Future of Schooling', was a fascinating look into the future of schooling for our teachers and students.

The launch was a great success for our teachers who will be implementing the project professional learning in their classrooms. Teachers have commented on the value of participating in a project that has the key focus of teaching explicit information literacy and research skills that will enable learners to succeed in the 21st Century.

Sue West - Facilitator

Round One

Tauranga City

On 9 May 2008 schools involved in the Tauranga Moana cluster for Extending High Standards Across Schools will come together, to work, to share and to continue strengthening our learning community.

The theme of the day is based on the notion that we are all leaders of learning. The day is linked to two strands within the EHSAS project –

- The Professional Learning Strand – providing professional learning opportunities for all staff within our cluster.
- The Leadership Strand – providing leadership models and experiences for leaders within our cluster.

The "Leaders of Learning" day will begin with two keynote speakers: Colin Cox and Viviane Robinson.

Colin is presently the only Master Trainer in the field of Neuro Semantics in the world and has complemented this expertise with strategies from learning Psychology and the field of Accelerated Learning. Colin Cox's presentation is based around our role as educators. His keynote will focus on the central idea that we are all leaders of learning and he will cover a number of themes.

Viviane Robinson is the co-researcher of the Best Evidence Synthesis – Leadership, commissioned by MOE. Viviane will share and discuss her findings of the research – The impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes. Nominated leaders in our schools will work with Viviane in the afternoon.

Johnson Davis – Project Manager

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GATE Boys Project

This EHSAS project aims to develop an effective gifted and talented education (GATE) programme that caters for the intellectual, emotional and cultural needs of GATE boys. It seeks to extend and develop upon the established and well recognised GATE programme at the initiating school, Hamilton Boys' High School, with the two other cluster members Hastings Boys' and Rotorua Boys' High Schools.

In the first stage (back in 2006) the cluster schools established an agreed definition of GATE: "Gifted and talented learners are defined as those who have outstanding abilities, have potential for high performances in our conventional academic subjects and who require differentiated programmes in order to nurture their talents and skills."

The schools have also worked collaboratively to clarify and improve their identification procedures – to include the triangulation of data. That is using a combination of data from three sources: standardised testing, information from contributing schools and also from parents and whanau.

Through professional dialogue amongst the cluster schools and a review of current research a model has been developed to illustrate the cluster's GATE approach – from identification to implementation and outcomes. The professional up-skilling of key staff (e.g. GATE Co-ordinators) was also critical, such as undertaking background readings and attending George Bett's workshops (in March 2007) on his Autonomous Learner Model.

Initially based upon Hamilton Boys' "Advanced Learning Programme" (ALP), Hastings Boys established "High Achievers" Rotorua Boys their "ACE" programme. These programmes provided structured programmes within their schools to support and develop GATE boys.

The three schools have also focused on how to better identify and support specific GATE special groups – these are Maori, Pasifika, Multiply Gifted and also those with Double Expectationality. For example, are the schools systems culturally appropriate? This work has also included the implementation of Linda Silverman's Visual-Spatial identifier test – a new leading initiative which has produced some revealing results formally identifying very intelligent students who also have learning problems. This data lead to some excellent professional development centring on how best to cater for visual-spatial learners.

A key focus of this project has been staff professional development – how to better cater for GATE learners. This has included work within and between the cluster schools. For example, at Hamilton Boys a new 'stepping stones' approach was developed to raise student achievement to merit and excellence. Also at the end of 2007 there was also a combined workshop with seven other boys' schools focused upon the sharing of effective implementation of differentiated teaching.

At the start of 2008 the three schools brought together their Year 9 GATE students for an intensive learning retreat hosted at Taupo Christian Camp. This included various workshops where the students were challenged in team building (e.g. raft building), learning styles, a perception activity and theatre sports. Some of the action from this learning retreat is shown in the provided photographs.

While pleasing progress is being made within this project there are issues to overcome – in particular the change/promotion of key staff out of the schools/project. Another challenge is the large range of demands upon the schools and staff that distract focus and attention from the projects on-going objectives.

Mark Wilson (Deputy Principal at Hamilton Boys' High School)



GATE Year 9 Learning Retreat

Fitzherbert

Project Goal

The Fitzherbert Cluster goal is to provide evidence of the students' achievement in the key competencies by developing a sociocultural approach to learning, teaching and assessment.

Lead Teacher Vision

Together we are enhancing achievement by creating learning communities who develop deep understandings and dispositions for life-long learning.

We are finding new ways of assessing these.

Our goal and vision statements clearly define the pedagogy we believe will better develop the key competencies. Along with using a curriculum model that is inquiry-based and the Habits of Mind, we are finding ways to explicitly engage learners with the key competencies. Our planning methodology has radically changed. With our colleagues we co-construct deep understanding goals and outcomes then break them down in a matrix describing complex performance. Using a back-ward design methodology we create lessons using the matrix indicators because they have cogent links to the deep understanding goals. The key competencies are embedded within these descriptions.

The lessons engage children holistically. The teacher facilitates learning experiences where students co-construct their own understandings. Often a continuum is created with them reflectively.

These continuums enable the students to set personal goals, gather evidence and to interpret how they are going.

Learning that is contextual in nature and embedded in authentic contexts is resulting in higher levels of motivation from both teacher and students – they feel they are all learners within the community.

The following story is about a boy (aged 6) in Linton Camp School Palmerston North.

Background

His teacher, a colleague (in the same team) and the facilitator for this cluster designed a series of lessons from a teacher created matrix which described increasingly complex performance of the Habit of Mind – Gathering Data through all our Senses. At the end of each lesson the teacher and facilitator used reflective questions to assist the children to identify what they did and to describe their performances. Using samples of their learning in conjunction with the indicators, they clarified what their performances looked like.

Vignette (from 2nd lesson)

.... he learnt to use his 'seeing eye muscles' and other senses to notice all the details and to describe what he saw as if he was a scientist.

As part of a group he popped two corn kernels into a glass of lemonade. His science drawing became an exemplar for quality performance using the above criteria. Other children in his class were able to set goals using the matrix and his model to improve their own performance.

The boy's self-esteem and confidence visibly grew, encouraging him to set new goals to further develop the disposition of gathering data through all his senses.

We heard him thinking hypothetically when he stated "I wonder what would happen if we left the glass with the corn in it over the weekend". Other children enthusiastically agreed that this would be a wonderful idea. They went on to predict what they might find when they returned to school in two days time. A chorus of predictions were made and recorded by the teacher.

We used this experience to co-construct the next layer of the matrix with children. They decided a 'Rookie' would feel restless when sharing ideas about science investigations. Children in the 'Development Squad' would show interest in the ideas of others. 'Experienced Players' would be more curious when sharing ideas with others; and may ask questions and/or make predictions. The 'Professional Player' would ask questions when sharing ideas to find out new things e.g. "I wonder what would happen if...?" A 'Professional Player' would also predict what might happen if something is changed.

As you can see all the key competencies were being developed. The children were 'Managing Self' as risks were taken and goals set. 'Relating to Others' as they socially constructed meaning and 'Participated and Contributed' (as feelings of belonging grew). 'Thinking' developed too as they analysed results and used the 'Language and Symbols' of a scientist.

Footnote: the terms ('rookie, development squad, experienced and professional') used to indicate increasing complex standards-based performance on the matrix is unique to Linton Camp School and were created by staff to reflect part of their school culture.

The planning and learning experiences described above have been very challenging. However, the value of what we are doing in relation to increased student motivation; achievement and empowerment spur us on.

Trudy Francis – Project Facilitator

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BOP Diamond

What is peer coaching? Diamond Schools' teachers are finding out!

To coach means to help convey a valued colleague from where they are to where they want to be - Costa & Garmston

Discovering the importance of that tiny phrase 'a valued colleague' has been a fascinating process for peer coaches in Diamond Schools. Choosing their own partners and having undergone a full day of peer coaching training, teachers have met to determine the focus for their inquiry and have agreed on observation and data collection techniques. They have observed each other and reported back on the chosen details. Many teachers have spontaneously commented on the fact that the success of their work in this 'no advice given' coaching system has been largely due to the high level of trust present within the working partnership.

Mary and Karen met at a café to have their pre observation discussion. They found that guidelines for deep questioning helped them to focus down to really pinpoint aspects they wanted to work on. Mary wanted to concentrate on her teaching style with a specific student who was not 'switched on' in class. As science teachers, their discussion about what data to collect was wide ranging but eventually they were able to fine it down to data which involved writing down specific teacher language and behaviour. Interestingly, within 24 hours of the discussion, they were both excitedly talking about what had already happened.

"Its amazing, since we had the discussion and really got to the point – we've changed our teaching so much already – we've already done it and we haven't even got to the observation part yet - both of us realised that just reflecting on the issue made us so much more aware of it – and it made us instinctively start to act to solve the problem."

Sean, a graphics teacher used his peer coaching partnership to look closely at his techniques for making sure his year 13 students were really understanding design analysis. He was concerned that sometimes students got through the year with a limited understanding of some of the concepts. He devised a poster model for analysis of a design object and divided his class into very small groups. He asked his peer coach to observe closely as students contributed to the poster task to ensure that everyone understood the design concepts. This data was collected in the form of a table which plotted the students' names with timed observations.

Sean also found that he had made significant changes to his teaching style even before the scheduled observation. By the time the observation date arrived, he had tried the technique with his year 10 and year 12 classes with very pleasing results. *"Its something I've always meant to do"* said Sean *"the peer coaching sessions have been a pleasure and have really improved my teaching. The deep questioning really probed into my brain and made me understand. I just wish I could do this with all of my classes."*

cont...



Trident High teachers Karen Norris (left) and Mary Thomas (right) follow up with their post observation reflection



Trident High teacher Sean Blades helps students with their analysis of a Philip Starke lemon squeezer

Teachers in Diamond Schools are keeping diaries of their stories and will be publishing them, alongside some reflective stories from students in their classes.

The Diamond Schools are Trident High School, Whakatane Intermediate, Rotorua Lakes High School, Mokoia Intermediate and Te Puke High School

Liz Stevenson
Project Leader Diamond Schools

Waikato Cluster

Seminar Day - 31/01/08

'Thinking And Action Can Change The World'

Our cluster has two goals:

1. thinking and using tools effectively in our schools to gain deeper learning
2. developing sound gifted and talented programmes within our school. We aimed to cover both goals during this seminar day

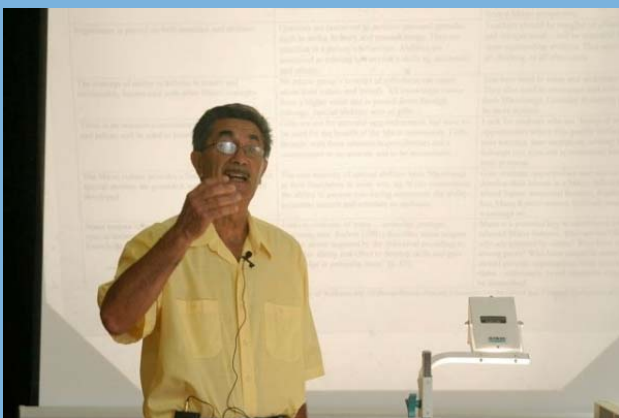
This was our second cluster seminar involving six schools on a day before the new school year started. We like this time of the year as teachers can be immersed in ideas and take them back to school right from the beginning of their teaching. Our day consisted of a keynote speaker for the 130 teachers in the morning, followed by two rounds of workshops taken by outside experts. In the afternoon we had one more round of workshops and concluded the day with a gifted year 8 student and two parents of gifted students sharing their experiences from their point of view. The teachers found this final session extremely empowering and they went away more aware of what our gifted and talented students go through socially and emotionally.

Angus MacFarlane was our keynote speaker. His address set out to explain, conceptualise, and offer responses for educators when they have difficulty recognising characteristics associated with talented students whose language, culture, and life experiences are different from their own.

When working with the outside experts, teachers from all six schools worked together on thinking activities and ideas for gifted and talented programmes. This was a chance for teachers to explore the theory of gifted and talented learning. They had time to share their ideas with others and found the break time a great opportunity for networking.

Teachers shared planning, programmes and resources that others could take back and use.

The responses we have had from the day have all been extremely positive. Teachers from these schools have now got to know a lot more colleagues and many of them now email each other about thinking and learning during the year.



Keynote speaker Angus MacFarlane



Teachers from all six schools working together on thinking activities and ideas for gifted and talented programmes

Round 3 Regional Seminars

In October this year, Round Three clusters will be about 10 months into their four year EHSAS projects. From experience, we know that most of them will be grappling with specific issues that are unique to clusters in their first year of operation in EHSAS. These clusters will come together with other EHSAS clusters in their region to address issues and share information. This one day seminar is held only for clusters at this particular stage whereas the national EHSAS conference is held for clusters that are more than a year into their projects.

Seminar format and speakers

We design the day based on the clusters' specific needs. We ask them about their issues closer to the time and workshops are designed around addressing those.

Liz Millar runs the workshops around issues. Liz is the Director of the New Zealand Principals' Leadership Centre. She has been involved in professional learning communities for many years through early involvement in Principal Mentor Programmes and now through the Principals' Professional Learning Communities Contract with the ministry. Liz has worked with us on these EHSAS seminars since the Round One clusters came on board in 2006.

Brian Annan spends the day talking with clusters and working with them during workshops. He then does a presentation covering some of the theory around Communities of Practice and links this back to where he sees that clusters are at from the day's observations. Brian is currently a Schooling Improvement Manager and has worked for many years helping groups of schools raise achievement among Maori and Pacific students. He has helped to develop one of New Zealand's most successful school improvement initiatives in Mangere and Otara.

There will also be the opportunity to connect with other clusters and find out who is doing what. We will also have a guest speaker from Round Two present to clusters about how they are going and what they have found to be useful in their first year or so.

Dates and Venues:

Rotorua	Auckland	Palmerston North	Dunedin	Christchurch
Friday 17 October	Monday 20 October	Tuesday 21 October	Wednesday 22 October	Thursday 23 October

An e-mail with this information was sent out to Round Three clusters recently. If your cluster hasn't received the e-mail, please let Rebecca know: extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz

Important Dates

28-30 July 2008

EHSAS National Conference for Round 1 and 2 Clusters

17-23 October 2008

Round Three Regional Seminars

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