

May 2012 Teacher Education in Technology Hui.

22/5/12 – Wellington

On behalf of our association, I attended the recent Technology Hui, which was arranged by Cliff Harwood. It was a two day event, although the leaders of the 4 associations were only invited to attend the 1st day, at their own association's expense. These are the main points of the Hui, at which were 40 -50 people all associated with the university schools of education, NZQA, MoE, Advisors, Techlink and representatives from all 4 of the Technology associations.

1. Geoff Keith now Lead advisor in teacher education. Not specific to technology anymore.

Geoff spoke about his involvement in the Youth Guarantee Scheme, Maori and Pasifika initiatives as well as High speed technology and its implications.

Vocational pathways. What do students know about their directions after school? Careers advice is often inconsistent.

Let's not lock students into pathways via subject choice that might limit their opportunities, we should aim for an open space of career options. A broad pathway showing stronger connections between qualifications and employment.

Universities do a good job currently of catering for the 30% of students going to university, but what about the other 70%? This is where it is seen that the new Vocational pathways initiative will be important.

Tony Turnoch now looking after the Youth Guarantee Scheme.

There are intended pathways, Primary industries, Social and community services, Manufacturing and Technology, Construction and Infrastructure, service industries. These would also help to add up to the 80credits necessary to obtain level one National Certificate.

I advised some caution at this point as the current thinking within many schools is such that time tablers would use this as a rigid plan for locking students into certain subject lines and remove the possibility for students to select subject courses of interest that are outside of the proposed ministry vocational pathways guidelines document. It is likely to be seen as a "bible" to be followed. Very dangerous for a subject like Technology where we have many courses that only exist once in a school's timetable, e.g: 1 class of Yr 11 DVC or 1 class of 11 Building ITO. It may also steer students, parents, school admin, timetablers, career advisors into thinking that an academically able student intending upon pursuing a degree in Engineering for example, must take only Physics, Chemistry, Statistics, Calculus, English and perhaps one Technology subject. In some schools at year 11 they are already forcing students to select only 5 subjects and from very prescribed timetable lines. Clearly the thought behind the creation of a vocational pathways document has its merits, but I expressed concerns that schools will see it as a firm rule rather than a flexible guideline.

2. Cliff Harwood

- Now Technology Programme national manager.
- Looks after GIF funding applications.
- Importance of Techlink, ensure that we feed case studies of ex college students and their successes to Hazel Slade for publication as well.
- BP Technology Phase 3 project – case studies of junior technology years 1 – 10 for publication on Techlink.
- Look into Programme overview of effective teacher programmes at levels 1, 2, and 3.
- The Glossary's have been developed and are in the process of all being published on Techlink.

- The Nuffield style publications from the UK, there is an intention to amend these slightly for New Zealand use.

3. Cheryl Pym and Lesley Pearce.

- National PLD advisors for Technology covering the areas of cultures and languages, literacies, learning pathways.
- They have until 2013 to prove they have been effective or they will be scrapped, no advisors in Technology. I am not at all sure how they will gather this evidence, but the prospect of there being no advisors seems unthinkable.
- Southland PLD consortium is Iwi led, not solely universities, which has the advantage of placing a raised level of cultural importance within our Professional development.
- We should regard the advisors as agents of the MoE. Let them know if we have areas of Professional development need and they will do their best to accommodate them.

They shared with us the following statistics about the level one external grades from last year.

- 35% of students failed their externals in Technology last year
- 25% in the subject of English
- 53% of Maori students failed the external, (not sure how they know this)
- 63% of Pasifika students failed the external, (not sure how they know this)
- External level one excellences in Technology 4%
- External level one excellences in English 8%
- Lesley seems to have had success with teaching literacy strategies when working with some schools which has seen progress in student's achievement.

4. Kevin Hoare – looks after external assessment of DVC

Scott Telfer – looks after external assessment of Technology

- Qualitative marking, but the grade score model doesn't apply as both are portfolio based subjects.
- They both expressed frustration of the assessors and moderators that teachers need to read the Chief assessors reports and Chief moderator's reports.

5. Vicki Compton – MoE funded NZ research on Technological Literacy.

- **Foundational Technological literacy** developed during primary schooling reflective at NZC level 1-3, (Primary school – Intermediate school)
Focused on generic technology, knowledge and skills is not expected to progress the same at this very junior level.
- **Citizenship Technological literacy**
Intermediate and junior secondary levels 4 and 5
Still focused on generics and not knowledge and skills at this junior level.
- **Comprehensive Technological literacy**
Levels 6-8, - (year 11 - 13, NCEA)
Teacher's choice of generics, extensive range of knowledge and skills opportunities.

Beacon Practice survey results.

From the base line data that was gathered, they were then in a position to chart the rise in student understanding as a result of the increased emphasis placed upon the student units of work. To be frank, it appeared they were disappointed about the poor increase in students increased demonstration of knowledge in the areas of Environmental, Economic and Ethical issues when evaluating a particular product, a simple Juice cardboard drink with straw.

The day contained several question times. As I am not shy, and knew that I had the responsibility to ask the hard questions on behalf of many, many teachers, I did tend to bring up some issues that were sometimes sensitive and perhaps controversial.

1st Question time:

I asked who we should contact regarding the amount of diversity of scholarships available across the knowledge and skills subject areas within Technology. Scott Telfer was of the opinion that it was likely that Technology would have one for the generics, DVC would have one, and that Digital Media would have one also. He felt that there would not be enough demand in the other knowledge and skills areas to warrant having any other separate Scholarships. He did state that the decision on this was not his and further discussion would be best directed to those in NZQA above his role. Richard ? Sue? Unfortunately they were not falling over themselves to give me specific contact details, no big surprise, as I was reasonably vocal and I felt they did not want a debate of the details.

I also attempted to address the annoying issue of last year's level one external submission, re the unnamed cover sheets for the externals provided by NZQA. It is clear that they have the decision making power over this debacle and it was clearly stated that they had no intention of changing this. I was cut short of any debate regarding this and was requested to address this issue further by email with specific details. He approached me during a break and I pointed out to him that his argument that not putting the students name on the front of the submission folder provided anonymity, was seriously flawed as when an assessor opened the student folder, there was their name on their work written by the student themselves. He did not seem willing to appreciate the teacher workload involved in 6 different technology subject teachers spending hours sorting out which numbers and names matched which classes and standards for the external submissions. A system definitely not dreamed up by a teacher, and hard to imagine how it would even cost anymore to put a name on the folder cover.

6. Techlink team – Glynn, Hazel, Megan, Angela

Very useful session on what benefits we are currently gaining from Techlink and also what improvements could be made. The Techlink team are serving teachers very well and are keen to hear suggestions about how they might improve their effectiveness even more.

- 7. John Williams** – about publishing a New Zealand/ Australia Technology journal. He was basically just trying to gauge acceptance of the initiative, which was unanimously in favour.
- 8.** I instigated some discussion in question time at the end of the day about the lack of year one Materials technology teachers coming through without essential Equipment handling confidence. This sparked a response from the Otago school of Education about the limited amount of time that they have to cover practical skills. The concern was shared by many about just how safe new, inexperienced teachers were in this position. I also brought to the attention of the meeting the predicament that some schools are facing where as a result of there being no large machine operators/ teachers in some schools, they had felt obliged to send their students to trades academies as part of their school courses so that students could gain experience with a wider range of equipment skills. When I attended the launch of the Youth Guarantee scheme last year, I met several principals who were experiencing this dilemma.
- 9.** I also put out a plea on behalf of Secondary schools for the University school of educations to follow Waikato's example of creating a 2 year training programme for those aspiring Technology teachers without a degree qualification before entering a Diploma of Teaching programme. We were assured that this was to be further discussed on the 2nd day of the Hui, which the curriculum associations were not invited to attend. I have asked if the association can be made aware of the results of the discussions on the 2nd day of the Hui.
- 10. Stewart Thompson**, formerly a writer of the BCITO standards, approached me on behalf of NZGTTA to see if there was anyone in our midst who he could contract to helping write a training

resource for DVC teachers and students. I have referred Ron Van Musscher and Motu Samaeli's names to him and forwarded them his contact details.

Summary.

I felt that the opportunity to put together 40 – 50 people so influential in the shaping of the Technology Curriculum in Schools was a very productive initiative. I was a little disappointed that there was not more opportunity for debate on some of the more contentious issues, but I was satisfied that even an outspoken voice like mine was listened to. Many of the others at the hui also made good use of the gathering to be more than just a listening fest, but sadly, I thought it unfortunate that having paid for the return flights to the meeting, I did not get to have been even just an observer on the 2nd day where the important details of teacher training were discussed.

I have left out some of the question time discussion that did not relate specifically to the interests of our association. Tricia Winter was also there as a representative for TENZ of which she is a senior representative and may well have additional notes.

Next Hui set down for 9th October.

Should anyone know of any potential sponsors for our association, I would very much like to be a part of any discussion to secure some funding. I currently have two sponsors interested, but am very keen to gain a couple more.

I also have a request for any photos of recent meetings that you have run for my twice a term Tnews articles. These would also be great to update our website with, a key focus to happen over the next few weeks.

Cheers,

Kevin Meyer.

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