



Editorial: What's in a name?

New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work, Volume 12, Issue 1, 1-3, 2015

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The 'Stock Takes' page of the New Zealand Herald (Adams, 2015) carried the headline 'Educator's stock heads south' which gets top marks for alliteration, but 'could do better' by referring to a business which invests in education as an 'educator'. The Intueri Education Group is a for-profit company specialising in the administration of several vocational education private training establishments (PTEs). Since Fonterra is not widely known as a 'dairy farmer', but as a 'dairy company', by analogy, the Intueri Education Group is not a teacher doing the actual front-line work of educating!

Intueri is the Latin root of 'intuition', which is ironic, as one has to be something of a clairvoyant to understand what Intueri actually teaches. Its website (<http://www.intueri.co.nz/>) indicates that Intueri is "a New Zealand headquartered group of private training establishments delivering vocational education to students in New Zealand, Australia and from around the world". The website is very focused on investment and governance information, and it is not easy to find out Intueri's actual educational role. Once found, it appears that Intueri is an amalgam of a number of providers offering a bewildering range of curricular options.

The schools include: **Academy New Zealand** (<http://www.academy.ac.nz/>), itself a mixture of various courses – pharmacy, floristry, and employment programmes, for instance, and able to offer NCEA levels 1,2 and 3. It is part of the 'Youth Guarantee Scheme', so substantially government funded. Other 'schools' include: **Cut Above Academy; Design and Arts College of New Zealand; Elite International School of Beauty and Spa Therapies; Information Technology Training Institute; NSIA - The Professional Hospitality Academy; NZ School of Commercial Diver Training; Online Courses Australia** – which itself is an amalgam of a bewildering array of courses, from animal health and pet care through, aviation, 'lifestyle' and security; and **Quantum Education Group** (<http://www.qegroup.co.nz/>), which offers a "wide range of globally recognised courses in the fields of business, computing, travel, tourism, hospitality, hotel management, culinary arts, English, and professional counselling, providing you with industry relevant skills and qualifications".

Those who believe in, and support, public-education will invariably be surprised that investors ever see education (even vocational education) as an attractive stock market investment: less surprising is to discover that regulatory reviews have called into question the quality of two Intueri providers. The business world, however, sees things differently: "These issues highlight how exposed private training providers are to the whims of education regulators". From a public education perspective, what is exposed is the difficulty of providing high quality education and at the same time satisfying the demands of shareholders for profit and consequent dividends. It does not require much

intuition to realise that this confusion between the 'public good' nature of education and the intrinsic demands of business is likely to create difficulties in other areas of education as well.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

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In New Zealand, and internationally, architects and governments are moving away from the cellular pattern of school-and-classroom building to an open-plan rendition of flexible spaces generally known as 'Modern Learning Environments' (MLE), Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) or 'flexible learning environments' (FLE).

Responses to these developments range from viewing them as a return to the Lancaster-and-Bell system of the 19th century, where one teacher could manage up to a thousand students through monitors, to enthusiastic praise associating these spaces with better pedagogy, improved student performance and linking them with notions of innovation and the requirements or expectations of the needs of the 21st century.

Solicited Opinion Pieces have been invited, again in response to several articles in the media (see References) that have reflected criticism of the concept of the new learning environments. The invited writers show a range of responses. The first, by a practitioner (Nikki Urlich, Deputy Principal of Campbell's Bay Primary School in Auckland), shows enthusiastic commitment to the concept. The other two are written by academics whose current research focuses on schools with the new environments. Graham McPhail questions whether the ILE and integrated curriculum can support teachers' and students' conceptual development. Leon Benade provides some contextual background to the development of these new spaces, wonders a little about the use (and abuse) of language and terminology, suggesting not only that the media reports situate themselves in some ironic language spaces, but that they cast a flawed impression based on their prioritisation of space (a point also made by Urlich).

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