

These are my responses to questions about what should happen in the future development of the New Zealand Education system.

If you were the boss of education in New Zealand what would you do first?

Improve provision for intellectually gifted and talented students. Evidence suggests that National Standards had a detrimental effect on many schools' provision for intellectually gifted and talented students. In focusing on getting as many students as possible achieving at the standard for their age, those who could do so easily, tended to be neglected and to have inadequate challenge. Research I have undertaken with 62 intellectually gifted Year 9 boys in 2016 and 2017 shows that 26 of them considered at some point, if not throughout their primary and intermediate schooling, their achievement had been hindered through inadequate challenge. Ten boys stated that what they termed Modern Learning Environments had been a hindrance to their learning, and indeed contributed to the lack of challenge. When the intellectually gifted students are provided with appropriate challenge, everyone benefits. The gifted students themselves benefit by being fully engaged with their learning at school. Other students benefit because they also lift their achievement. Teachers benefit from having more passionate learners in the classroom. Whānau benefit by having happier children at home.

What does a successful student of the future look like?

A successful student of the future will be creative, have integrity and will think globally. These are the three characteristics that CEOs from around 1500 Fortune 500 companies state will most define the leaders of tomorrow. Unfortunately the focus on high stakes assessment means that developing students' creative abilities is not generally viewed as an important priority. I have found Future Problem Solving is an excellent programme for developing intellectually gifted students' creative thinking, and for assisting them to think globally. I think the importance of integrity is best learned through teacher modelling. I have found UN Youth's Model United Nations unit on the nuclear issue is an excellent resource to use to assist intellectually gifted students to think globally. UN Youth also have a range of other invaluable units available for schools to use and will develop units on global issues on request from schools. In these units students take on the roles of delegates from different countries and must defend their countries' positions in debates.

What will they need to know and be able to do?

Students will need to know how to think creatively and to be able to practise using their creative skills in a diverse range of situations. They will also need to know how important integrity is to building effective relationships, and be able to build acting with integrity into their character. Related to thinking globally, students will need to know how, and be able to relate to people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

What things need to be put in place to make sure every learner is successful?

Equity and excellence need to be foundational to an educational system that provides opportunities to succeed to all students. In my view, for the

intellectually gifted student the formula for success looks like this: Engagement + enrichment + extension + acceleration x (high expectations + encouragement) = equity and excellence. This formula was developed from an analysis of data gathered from 31 intellectually gifted Year 9 boys in 2016. They were asked what had helped or hindered their achievement in at least one academic area, in terms of society, their home environments, schools and teachers, and their own intrapersonal characteristics. For students who are not intellectually gifted, most of the formula would still apply. Acceleration would not be appropriate for them but all other aspects of the formula would still apply.