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Dear Curriculum draft writers Steve Maharey and Howard Fancy,

Thank you for the most wonderful draft broad curriculum outline it is a real window to the world with all the most exciting things to be discovered, compared and interrelate. It states all to well the expectations of the pupils, teachers and school. It states it all most too well as we are expected to do more then ever before with the making of our own school curriculum. We have always had to do our own curriculum topics but some how you putting it down as having to do it will mean ERO will have something else to criticise. I just need to give warning that teachers well being depends on them not being pushed to hard with expectations of magical proportions.

What is it then that frightens me? Here I am with 26 children ages 5 to 8 years locked into a nice class room with one computer that gave up the ghost the other week and we cannot afford to maintain it as well as our computer suite. The kids are great but four of them think they should upstage the teacher and everyone else all the time, especially when anyone is addressing the class. We have lovely books to read but it is a pity that quite a number of the boys and girls have to struggle so at reading and writing that it makes you wonder at the progress results being worth the worry and toil. They put their all into their work yet it is agony. How can you escape learning to read and write when literacy is the number one focus for the age group. Like it or not be suited to it or not. It's not an encouraging way to start life long readers though.

We can do our own school curriculum to suit the needs of our children. I suppose schools can decide to delay teaching reading till some children are ready for it. We can expect ERO to be jumping up and down wanting maximum amounts of paper work in the consultant style which once flowed in the quadruple of Curriculum, Curriculum Implementation, Long Term Plans, Daily plans. Now they will also want a School Curriculum, and Assessment Plans, visual Feed Back notes, children's assessment data notes of three kinds diagnostic, formative, summative, notes on changes to the programme after diagnosing testing results are evaluated, notes on adaptation for special needs, progress comparisons from last times results and student self assessment write ups were done. But then ERO will always come looking at new expectations and never a nice word like you might like to try this or that might help. We are worn out by the time ERO arrives with there endless expectations and agendas. Look after your teachers don't go hounding them with your watch dogs.

What I am saying is this: Example from last two weeks. We had been given release time to do the Maths diagnostic surveys. Four and a half hours out of the class room to see what children can do. You have to go bat-out-of-hell to get through the all the children, you can't get them all because you have children away. After school you need to do a summary sheet of all your children results. You have four different meetings after school this week, staff, syndicate, team and school. You need to file all the result papers back into individual files because next week you have parent interviews. The summary sheet needs looking at to see who has progressed up two sections one or stayed the same

over the year. You have to consult with your buddy teacher on the children's progress for interviews next week so the data need to be ready. Not so blow. You have not got all the data written up on the Maths data base yet, for you need to go on line and need to know passwords, codes and the like that you have not used for 12 months. You have all this wonderful data to pass on to the teacher next year. This year there is still a fifth of the year to go. I should analyse the data and see where the needs are and plan to teach to the gaps that have appeared in their number knowledge. I should take my data regroup the class in to those that can read up to 20, 100, 1000, and work them from there. I must sort all those that are not counting backward from 20 and work with them. Teach all of them that can't add additions sentences from those that can remember addition facts and work them as different groups. They could all add 4 and 10 one by ones but had that shown me that they do not know addition facts in times tens. Can they not understand 10s and 1s that's maybe for next year. I have planned to do measure of time, money, length, weight, fractions, stats and need to revise algebra, geometry which we have only just touched on. I forgot to pick up the summary sheet in the rush to get out at 6:05pm so I can't do all that over the week end. Next week is a short week and parent interviews. May be I can get some reflective thinking in during the holidays. What have we done this year? We have progressed yet I feel there is so much to do.

Get the message the teacher has been too busy to think. They are forced to do too much in an all mighty rush with too many major projects on at once. Assessment for better learning is a lovely true slogan. But if you can barely diagnostically assess your children yet alone think about the results, you can therefore never get to change groups and focus when you are dealing with 25 – 35 children. Catering for our children is so individual with my 5 to 8 year olds yet research says teachers spend less then 2 minutes per child per day working with them. We simply have to work from our wits with children where they are at when you introduce at topic. Trail and error will pick up needs. But what use is it identifying all the needs when you have no hope to deal with them all. Do this; do that pressures are being put on teachers not only by children but also administrators in Wellington, tutors, parents, ERO and the school. Teachers are frustrated and get tire at the thought of what always needs doing.

You get the message there is less time to get organised for lessons and actually teach then ever before. No wonder the young teachers are leaving. And some of the best of experienced teachers prefer day to day relieving as you are not expected to do all the endless useless paperwork. The pressures at the junior level to do everything are immense I would hate to think what it is like for teachers with older children for they can produce so much more work and therefore need more feed back..

I have pie in the sky ideas too. I have got this proposal that teachers spend three weeks teaching children and the next week they evaluate with one on one interviews if necessary for youngsters who can't write, we can work on catch ups, plan the next learning steps and make new lessons. We do this while the children are at home doing their E learning. This would make it a true shared home and school support system. At present 30% of parents can not cope with home work and getting their children's tea and bed time organised. All the work we put into homework so as to feed ideas in to the home about what we are working on gets lost 30% of the time. Parents need more time with their children to work on education if a true partnership is to exist. Parents and

teachers need to have that time to communicate with the school if they are to develop a school curriculum with teachers. If there is no time to work on partnerships because we are all too busy then why go on about it in your combined school / community focus at achieving shared curriculum development.

If the school loses or changes 1/3 of its pupils every year is that not a waste of time tracking their progress from one year to another across the school. We are continually asked to do this and that by parents via surveys of parents by the ministry. The more that is asked for, like reporting back to parents and screeds of planning the less time we can spend on the basics of making learning interesting.

A student nurse on children at school observation said did you realize that you have 8 children at a time waiting to see you for feed back. Yes such it is, nurses are only expected to have 8 patients to care for at a time in the hospital but we have to give feed back to 25 or 34. The expectations on teachers this curriculum document presents are not more than teachers want to aspire to at present it is just that expecting it officially makes for complications when you can't achieve all you would dearly wish to. Teachers might have one minute of for feed back time per pupil on a good day.

To actually get most of the children to respond to 2 and 2 takes some doing. To actually get deeper thinking takes bigger build ups and you can expect greater loss of concentration from larger numbers of children. Youngsters can be driven up the wall if they have to wait too long for some to respond. After a week, introduction and three days of support just about all the children have a spring question. They are extremely sophisticated questions not that the children realize this. "How do baby's come out in the spring?" is not given coverage in the farming and animal library books written for children. Children need videos and audio feed back. Some of the questions may take a life time to answer so I will have to do assessments when they are thirty. Three weeks is not going to do the trick.

Support: This curriculum document is filled with **expectation of E learning** there are some good programmes on the internet for little kids. It will be the job of the ministry to organize / parcel them up so young kids can have them at their finger tips. Programmes that are interactive, videos, audio, in subjects, topics, age related and with automatic feed back need to be on line in a second to get the most out of student's limited time and ability to hold the attention and expectations of success. At present our class rooms are so cluttered we need space to work with ICT machines as well as work away from them. Under the AO system we have been demanding too much of young children. We have been pushing adult agendas. It's time children have some more fun learning. Our kids don't know what Social Studies means, nor PE yet that is how it is all packaged. For them the cross subject emphasis is great yet we can't lose focus on the main basic big ideas & understandings we need to know.

For all the improvement and simplification in the wording of the A.O. they are basically the same intent so we need not worry if all our topic plans don't get changed in the wording. No one will hold it against us will they? English focus outlines are much improved. Purposes and audiences, structure are still quite high brow ideas for little kids. All the changes could mean a lot of work for us if the powers that be think we have to update everything in a hurry as they probably will do. Change and change again as if we aren't busy enough.

Support: The biggest help will be that the ministry keeps up dating all the web site programmes for us. All the units that support the broad out line of curriculum and all the activities are the most important aspect of curriculum. Junior teachers need to have more activities & units available to them and teachers need to have more time to research them. You could give us specialist teachers in things like languages, especially Maori.

Yes we need focus to support our children to think and learn that is great in this curriculum. Yes we need to learn the processes to learning that knowledge will give life long learning. Just make it plain that teachers can only do such small steps at times to give the skills and knowledge which enable children to tackle the basic of communication and understanding needed for absorbing the understandings of our universe and society.

Yours sincerely. Hugo van Stratum.