



“Asia is going to have a big impact on our lives if you think about it!”

Longitudinal research on Asia Awareness in New Zealand Schools – interim report: Elody Rathgen



Overview

The full paper is in three parts:

- a rationale
- parts two and three (the focus of the presentation) contain preliminary findings from the research:
 - leadership and how it contributes to the schools' journeys,
 - some issues schools face as they implement Asia awareness.

Introduction

- Asia awareness requires an effort from schools in re-making learning, cultural, social and relational reforms within the educational context.
- It asks New Zealand teachers and students to broaden their knowledge about and attitudes to Asia, and to think about their futures as a people who will actively travel to, trade and interact with that diverse region.

Importance of school leadership

Educational leadership in this paper includes three levels:

- principals
- senior and middle leaders within a school
- the school's board of trustees.

Findings of this research indicate some important aspects of educational leadership at all three levels in terms of increasing Asia awareness in the schools.

Leadership style of principals

- Not “pushy”
- A clear articulation of vision
- Are we preparing our students for a changing New Zealand, and for the growth taking place in Asia?



Senior and middle leaders

- Significant network of middle and senior leaders who are on board.
- Aware of the needs of their students, and of ways in which Asia is important to the future of New Zealanders.

Governance and boards

- Setting policies, vision and commitments that enable action to occur.
- The principal then able to put into action the policies, spending, resources, staff and student support.

Issues for schools to overcome

- Lack of teacher awareness and of professional learning opportunities.
- Racism and bullying (community, teachers, students).
- Curriculum innovation and resource availability.
- Communication within the school.
- Adolescence (senior primary and junior secondary).

Looking ahead

As the research progresses we will watch how schools resolve these issues, and assist other schools to devise plans for implementing school change that leads to increasing Asian awareness.