



Wilkie Way Newsletter

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Curriculum Coverage, Student Learning and being a Professional Teacher

A sales rep from one of the Maths Resource providers told me that our MOE are more concerned with coverage than with learning. The policy of delivering the curriculum by age rather than student learning needs will attest to the message coming loud and clear. While I agree there must be momentum and students can be exposed to content beyond their immediate specific learning needs, unless real learning is happening students will be making very little progress.

Telling parents, they will be able to see their child's progress by looking at completed workbooks is a false message and total misuse of "observable data"

Sarah Aioni from Longworth Education said it so well I repeat her words:

When did covering the curriculum become the measure of whether children are learning

We can plan a lesson, deliver the content, complete the activity and tick the box.

But what have the children actually understood?

What questions have they asked?

What connections have they made?

And perhaps most importantly, what opportunities have they had to do something meaningful with what they've learned?

There's a difference between children being exposed to knowledge and children developing an understanding of it.

That doesn't mean knowledge isn't important. Of course it is.

But knowledge becomes far more powerful when children have opportunities to explore it, question it, connect it to their experiences and use it in different ways.



Here's a challenge for your planning this week.

Choose one learning experience you've planned and ask yourself three questions:

1. What do I actually want children to understand?
2. Where is the opportunity for children to contribute their own ideas, questions or thinking?
3. How will I know they've developed understanding, rather than simply completed the activity?

Sometimes the most important change we can make to our planning isn't adding something new. It's reconsidering what we're asking children to do with what we're already teaching.

Curriculum coverage and meaningful learning are not the same thing.

Since when did following the curriculum mean we were no longer allowed to question it?

If you believe you are a professional then being a professional means bringing knowledge, judgement, experience and critical thinking to the decisions we make every day.

That includes asking difficult questions about the curriculum itself.



1. Whose knowledge is being privileged?
2. Whose perspectives are missing?
3. Pertaining to the maths curriculum, what concept steps are missing or misaligned?
4. How does this content connect with the identities, cultures and lived experiences of the children we're teaching?
5. What opportunities will children have to explore, question and challenge ideas rather than simply reproduce them?
6. What happens when our professional understanding of how children learn sits uncomfortably alongside the expectations we're being asked to implement?

Thoughtful implementation requires more than compliance.

- We can acknowledge that curriculum expectations are mandated while still examining them critically.
- We can teach prescribed knowledge while creating opportunities for children to think beyond it.
- We can meet our responsibilities without abandoning our professional judgement.



A Wilkie Way Teacher Challenge

A Speedy problem

Aroha set out to walk a distance of 12km from home to a café.

After walking for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours at a steady speed of $5\frac{1}{2}$ km per hour, she had to slow down to a steady pace of 3km per hour, which she maintained to the end of her journey.

If she started her walk at 9am, will she be in time to meet her friend for lunch at the café at 1pm?

Maths Assessment Screens

It is great to see the number of schools taking up the digital option of the assessment screens. This is a one-off purchase. The screens are "bespoke" to your school, and you can use them as often as you want and how you want.

While the screens are provided as pdf booklets covering number knowledge (place value), addition and subtraction, multiplication & division and from screen two fractions and from screen three decimals and percentages. (Simple decimals are included on the fractions page of screen 2 to cover the introduction of one place decimals in year 4)

While you can use them as first intended, you could also make a multi-level number knowledge assessment screen by using the number knowledge page from different screens, likewise for addition & subtraction, multiplication and division and fractions, decimals and percentages.

While these screens will tell you what your students know and can do, they are primarily a screening tool to identify the learning needs of your students. The content of the screens covers the curriculum coverage by year group as set out in the curriculum. There is a small overlap between screens but essentially:

Screen One – Curriculum content from year 1 and 2

Screen Two – Curriculum content from year 3 and 4 (I agree there is quite a jump as there is a lot of content for these year groups)

Screen Three – Curriculum content from year 5 and 6

Screen Four – Curriculum content from year 7 and 8

Copies of the student booklets and teacher guides can be view at the online store under assessment screens.

Please note: Wilkie Way will NOT be offering pre printed Wilkie Way versions of the screen as printing costs for what is essentially small print runs has become too expensive to make this a viable option.

An order form is downloadable from my website: wilkieway.co.nz and the screens can be viewed from the online store section of the website.

If you are or have been a school member of Wilkie Way your school has been emailed an order form with a discount being offered to your school.

I cannot guarantee that this option will be available in future years as the software (Adobe indesign) I have been using to design and edit the screens will not necessarily be available to me. (Thanks to changes in terms and conditions by Adobe – you may have read about the lawsuits against this company!)

I hope you enjoy the new format of the newsletter – not really new, its similar to the format I used when I first started writing the newsletter in 2009 – using Microsoft word.

This newsletter is number 178