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## *Schools may come in many guises, but are the staff user-cuddly?*



**W**HILE it is true that young people are growing up in a time of rapid change that would not be believed by their forebears, how much of this change makes good sense?

The recent trend to give new labels to almost anything and everything associated within the education domain is somewhat contradictory, when clarity in communication for shared common understanding is an underlying principle of education.

The newly opened Remarkables Primary School in Queenstown has provided a new lexicon for its pupils. The teachers are known as expedition leaders, not teachers, and the school secretary is the director of first impressions. Pupils do not learn in classrooms, but in teaching spaces and "da Vinci" room areas within learning pods. There is no Parent Teachers Association – instead there is a CSA, or Community Service Association, to support the school.

All pupils embark on a learning pathway – they are expeditioners, and, although the teachers are expedition leaders, the board of trustees is the expedition planner.

Members of the leadership team are known as community leaders rather than head or lead teachers. Teaching spaces are known as campfires, watering holes and caves, the latter being one-to-one learning areas. Predictably, members of the public have been scathing in the face of this relabelling project, referring to it as gimmicky, contrived pedagogy, and PC-gone-mad. Part of the problem with relabelling is that it can be exclusive – excluding members of the public who should feel part of a school community.

Remarkables Primary School is

not the only educational institution to be generating new labels.

A researcher in the New Zealand Dictionary Centre has been tracing changes in New Zealand education lexis over the past three decades and has made some intriguing discoveries.

In 2005, *The New Zealand Education Gazette* sported advertisements for religious studies teachers with wild new roles. One school required a teacher with "enthusiasm and skill for faith brokerage", and another advertised for a DORS – a "director of religious studies who can walk on water to join the spirited team at this Catholic school". Another school required a "quality teacher who will wow children . . ."

Schools advertise in the gazette for data managers or for a deputy principal who "will do CRT 18 days per term and is walking the rest of the time". Other staff "float". Will these positions have their own avatars?

For years now, school prospectuses have not included cooking and sewing, and no longer is home economics offered. Today it is food technology and fabric technology. Technology teachers also teach hard materials and graphics. No technical drawing any more. Some staff combine soft materials and food technology, and others offer just plain "materials technology". Then there's "resistant material technology".

Some teachers are IMS teachers – they teach information management studies – and others are SENCos (special educational needs co-ordinators) who look after CWSN (children with special needs).

In the education domain, initialisms and acronyms are rife.

Teachers have not had the status of PRs for some years – they have MUs or, sometimes, floating units. They might be trained in a NUMP – which is a numeracy project. Some schools are enviroschools, some are variable space schools, and others are iPainT schools, and belong to a cluster. iPainT stands for integrated powerful adventures in thinking – to assist GKP (gifted kids programme) teachers or those involved with GATE (gifted and talented education).

These pupils will probably not enrol for a Gateways or STAR programme – the secondary tertiary alignment resource – which help pupils move successfully into work or courses beyond school. Education these days involves NEGS, NAGS, TICs, WTHDs, AsTTle, digital classes, satellite classes, pods, pursuits academies attached to schools, and pilot classrooms.

In the *Education Gazette*, schools are called magnet schools, socially diverse schools, and renewal schools. But are they user-cuddly?

In 2004, the Victoria University School of Education, then known as the Wellington College of Education, and earlier as a teacher training college, advertised in the *DomPost* for staff who were "user-cuddly". "The successful applicant will have . . . a high level of computer literacy with the ability to be 'user-cuddly'."

Maybe there's something in returning to the cave, campfire, or watering hole – they'd be user-cuddly.

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## **LANGUAGE QUERIES?**

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