

Teach Best New Zealand - A Bold Idea by Zack Ramsey

The Problem: Alternative pathways into teaching are jeopardizing some of our most vulnerable students. Abridged programs and call-and-response style strategies are not sufficient for students who are and have been traditionally underserved in educational settings across the globe. *Teach First New Zealand* is not the original offender, and it probably isn't the worst one either, they just happen to be the alternative pathway in which [my professor](#) is an expert.

- The "if you can't beat 'em..." approach
 - But what if we could beat them?
- I propose that I could train teachers in 6 weeks that are more than twice as prepared as the Teach First program.
- I'd partner with the same local schools and recruit from the same colleges.
- I'd tie in local culture and my brand of pedagogy.
 - In 6 weeks my students will be more prepared than the Teach First students and in three years, my students will be indistinguishable from their university-prepared counterparts, and the Teach First people will have already quit and moved on to admin or some other position of authority where they can perpetuate bad reform ideas and neoliberalism.
 - I would need a two year follow up program. Maybe one weekend a month or quarterly for continuing PD to grow the teachers and continue to support them part time.
- I want to partner with [Flying Nun Records](#) (or one or more of their artists) to teach the kids about the musical heritage of Dunedin's alternative scene from the late 70s through the 90s. I want them to teach me (and the Pre-service Teachers and other non-indigenous community members) about Maori music and culture. I want to see them [the Ss in NZ] add to NZ's musical legacy in new and exciting ways that I can foster via my pedagogical practices (mostly by presenting a driving question and some encouragement combined with an expert or two).
 - Really, I want to teach our pre-service teachers to do this, and I could probably do it in about 6 weeks of full time course work.
 - With consistent and well planned follow-up PD, this could be way better than the Teach First model, which appears to rely on conditioning and behavior modification techniques, AKA teacher gimmicks, as the basis of their pedagogy.
 - My pedagogy relies on community, collaboration, revision based on feedback, and demonstrable (often public) academic/intellectual growth.
- The foundation: Focus on the 4Cs of 21st century education and explain how to build on from there to incorporate global citizenship, entrepreneurial spirit, community involvement, etc. I can give them the tools using the 4Cs and they [the preservice Ts] can use the same synthesis strategies to include relevant "soft-skills" for their classrooms.
- The goal: Create pedagogues who are expert lead-learners first and content experts second. If they know where they need to grow in terms of their content knowledge, and they have lead-learner skills, they can better grow their craft in the first few years while educating their students.
- What if: Instead of teaching theory first, which is the standard Western practice of teacher education, we started with practice? I mean, cut out most of the readings and turn the classroom over to the students. We could invent student-centered teacher preparation through immersive, hands-on lessons about pedagogy. This way students can see the need for the theory before we try to give it to them. We can give them the bulk of the theory piece in the follow-up PD sessions after the 6-week training.