Culturally responsive practices to enhance learning and student engagement

Monette Atkinson

During the recent covid 19 lockdowns, students' academic achievement and attendance was impacted, exacerbated by challenges around some students not engaging in online learning. Alongside this, teachers have been reluctant to continue developing online teaching due to negative experiences with using digital technologies during this period. This has presented us with an opportunity to reflect on these issues and explore how we could use this experience to transform and move forward, rather than put it to the side (Hood, 2020a). The challenge which presents itself is that of how we can work with teachers to develop pedagogies which are culturally responsive so that students feel connected and engaged in learning whether it be in the classroom or in an online forum. If we want to engage our students, we first need to engage our teachers in learning about culturally responsive practices and how these can transform teaching and learning.

The purpose of this project was to work collaboratively with teachers to develop a sustainable culturally responsive framework which supported the integration of digital technologies and enhanced student learning and engagement. The main goal was to investigate how MacFarlane's Educultural Wheel (2004) could be used as a framework to engage teachers in using culturally responsive practices in the classroom. Alongside this, I wanted to investigate how culturally responsive practices and digital technologies impacted on teaching and learning and whether they enhanced student learning and engagement. The proposed benefits of this project included a collaborative approach centred around school needs, and the development of a school culture focused on fostering teacher self-directed learning, reflective practice, and sharing of expertise.

An action research methodology was used, compromising of three iterative cycles where qualitative data was collected in the form of research journal notes and semi-structured interviews. This data was then analysed to identify commonalities and repetition of concepts, resulting in the emergence of strong themes and ideas for future development. The constructivist approach taken allowed participants to engage in collaborative discussions, creating new ideas and ways of approaching professional learning for teachers. MacFarlane's Educultural Wheel was unpacked to understand how the te ao Māori values used could support a pedagogical framework for teachers in the context of this school. We began work on a collective website focused on culturally responsive practices which included resources such as academic readings, reflective questions to deepen teachers' understanding, and suggestions for further development of knowledge and practice. This website is still in its infancy but can be adapted by the school in the future to include examples of teacher practice from within their own context, as well as acting as a collaboration and sharing space for teachers.

External pressures and challenges currently experienced by many secondary schools required a flexible leadership approach to meet the needs of the participants and the school as required. These pressures had a direct impact on the implementation of this project, resulting in the re-negotiation of the focus to centre on the development of a professional learning plan for teachers which facilitated a deeper understanding the Educultural Wheel. The proposed professional learning plan created includes recommendations to support the successful implementation of practice and fostering of a learning culture where teachers are independent, self-driven learners, open to reciprocal learning and sharing of practice.

Scripts from semi-structured interviews produced some strong themes, including the need for teachers to take ownership of their own learning, for the school to develop common understandings of key concepts and pedagogical approaches, and for leadership to be clear and intentional with communication around professional learning and the direct impact it has on student outcomes. Findings indicated that MacFarlane's Educultural Wheel provided a foundational framework for the school's professional learning plan, and would support teachers to develop a consistent approach to strengthening culturally responsive practices and integrating digital technologies. Research by Lawrence (2020) suggests that the use of current research around culturally responsive pedagogies be used as a framework to build 'culturally responsive online pedagogy'. This is echoed by Kumi-Yeboah (2018) who stresses the importance of teachers being trained in culturally responsive practices for online learning so that they are aware of how cultural factors influence student performance. Findings from this action research project aligns with this research, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive approaches in engaging students in learning. However, findings also uncovered a reluctance from some teachers to integrate digital technologies as they were not convinced that this would have any noticeable impact on student learning and engagement.

Conclusions drawn from this action research project indicate that external pressures on teachers, such as the covid 19 pandemic, natural disasters and the ever-changing landscape of curriculum and assessments have impacted on secondary schools' capacity to engage in professional learning which is not deemed urgent or important. Culturally responsive practices are foundational for student engagement in learning (Hargraves, 2018) and the integration of digital technologies help to meet the needs of diverse learners, developing a culture of sharing and collaboration (McConnell, 2006). Culturally responsive practices should underpin any initiative schools are focusing on, as they are essential for building authentic relationships, developing mutual understanding and respect, and connecting students to their learning in a genuine and meaningful way. Therefore, culturally responsive practices provide a strong foundation for a range of educational initiatives, giving authentic contexts to learning.

The approach developed during this project is useful to schools who wish to implement a professional learning programme driven by teachers, facilitate the growth of experts and change leaders, and foster a culture of learning through sharing and collaboration. The culturally responsive approach taken gives teachers agency, allowing them to share their experiences through their own cultural lenses, while creating a safe space for them to trial 'mini experiments' in their classrooms, and setting the scene for future development of a local curriculum or integrated learning. As this approach is not a top-down model, it fosters authentic collaboration between teachers and senior leaders, allowing teachers to take ownership of their own learning and embrace failures, seeing them as learning opportunities.

Following on from this project, I am interested in conducting research into identifying the barriers to the development and implementation of meaningful professional learning and the challenges in being more experimental with curriculum and pedagogies which meet the diverse needs of our students and our communities.

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About the author

   Currently a Deputy Director at Southern Cross Campus College in Māngere, Auckland, I am an experienced educational leader who originally trained as a visual arts teacher. Prior to my current role, I worked at Kelston Boys' High School and De La Salle College in a range of middle leadership roles, which gave me the opportunity to work alongside teachers, supporting them to develop their practice and curriculum knowledge. My creative side means that I am always looking for innovative ways of doing things and I have a particular interest in fostering collaboration, as this is where the magic happens! I enjoy working in culturally diverse contexts and have a passion for developing learning approaches which are culturally responsive and inspire students to want to learn and explore. I completed a Masters in Educational Leadership and Management in 2013 and would like to continue my learning journey by beginning a PhD in the near future. Email: monette.atkinson@gmail.com

Professional learning for isolated Visual Arts educators

Emma Wise

This project sought to provide access to professional learning and development, for Visual Arts educators, with no means to access this within their school or immediate community.

By using a range of delivery methods, I aimed to establish which approaches worked best for providing professional learning at distance to Visual Arts educators, and hoped to build on-going collaborative connections for the isolated educators who participated in the project.

The questions I sought to answer were:

- Which professional learning experiences, provided at distance, best support the development of long-term professional learning?
- To what extent will weaving social presence into online synchronous professional learning experiences foster connections between educators?
- How supported will isolated educators feel after connecting with other educators through online learning experiences?
- This project delivered a range of online professional learning and development experiences related to the Visual Arts. The live events and recordings provided an opportunity for isolated educators to connect with other educators.

Each hui brought together educators from different backgrounds and regions, meaning that diverse knowledge, skills, and perspectives were shared as part of the project. This diversity helped to build understanding of complex issues, such as the NCEA Review of Achievement Standards (RAS), broadening perspectives, and building knowledge of forthcoming changes.

Throughout the project, I tested approaches to facilitation and sought personal feedback from my own department, my collaborative project group, and a group of Northland Art teachers. Engaging presenters to share their experiences, resources and ideas for teaching and learning allowed isolated educators an opportunity to share their own experiences of teaching and learning.

Edited recordings of some hui were published via ANZAAE online spaces, providing further access to materials beyond the live event.

My project sought to build connections for some of our most isolated educators. In completing this project, I realised that Visual Arts educators are complex individuals, with individual needs. As you would find in a classroom of students, what works for one, might not work for another, and needs and preferences constantly shift.

I discovered that whilst isolated educators have some of their needs supported within their immediate school community, they want to connect with others, particularly regarding ideas for lessons, resources, and practical skill development. However, there is no one size fits all approach. Many of our isolated educators are comfortable on the peripheral, their shift to full participants in communities of practice, will require more time than my project implementation timeline permitted.

Feedback from isolated educators confirmed that the provision of online events has created a greater sense of connection for them, they also concluded that when they were busy, being able to watch a recording online after the event, was sufficient to maintain a sense of connection.

However, they also agreed that face-to-face opportunities will always be the fastest way to build the connections to begin with, reflecting that building meaningful relationships online takes a far greater period of time.

The project has brought to light several significant challenges and opportunities as educators gear up for the full implementation of the new NCEA Level 1 in 2024. These challenges extend beyond the technicalities of the educational changes and encompass broader issues of equity, representation, and the diverse needs of educators.

One of the most valuable and in-demand resources teachers have is time. Although social presence, and engagement strategies like icebreaker activities, and breakout rooms are effective, they require purposeful facilitation and meaningful grouping of participants to be seen as worthwhile in relation to the use of time.

An outcome of completing this project is my understanding that professional learning experiences for educators need to be shared through as many channels as possible. The project has shifted my perspective regarding professional learning experiences to recognition that sharing content in a range of formats provides the greatest opportunities for connections to form. This is a significant departure from my previous belief that a face-to-face approach is the best and only option.

Perhaps this knowledge is not new for others, but it is for our association, who have long believed that face-to-face is the only option, whatever the expense. As a result of this project, not only has my own practice changed, but the practice of our association is changing. We are shifting to become more responsive to what our members ask for, assessing needs before making plans.

Recommendations regarding continuing support for isolated educators have been provided to ANZAAE. These recommendations have also been shared with the Learning Area Lead for Visual Arts for the Ministry of Education.

The project continues to evolve as the landscape of the NCEA changes continues to shift.

Appendix A.

Community of Inquiry

SOCIAL PRESENCE

Supporting Discourse

COGNITIVE PRESENCE

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Setting Climate

Selecting Content

TEACHING PRESENCE (Structure/Process)

Communication Medium

The Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison et al., 2000)

Appendix B.
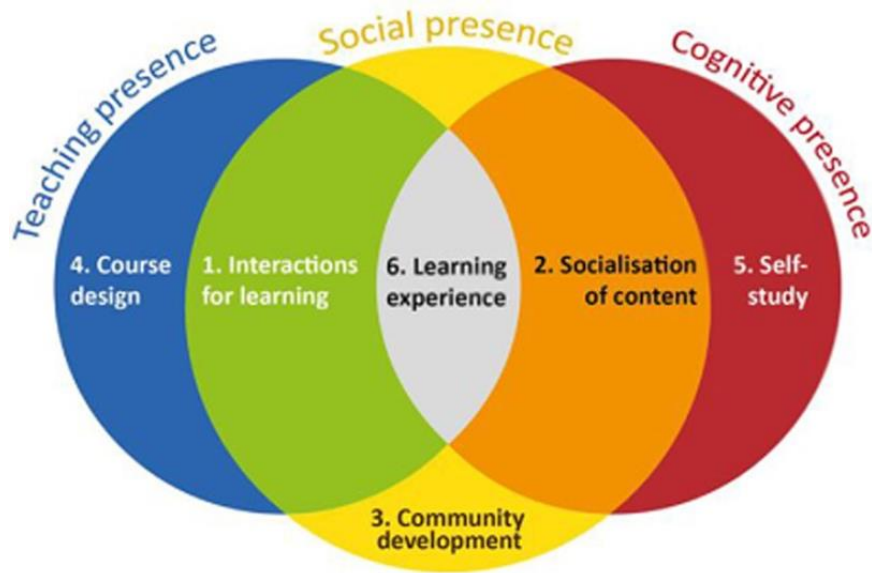
An adjustment to the Community of Inquiry framework (Armellini, A., & De Stefani, M., 2016).

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Emma Wise is currently Head of Visual Arts at Kerikeri High School. She began teaching at Kerikeri High School in 2003 and has taught Photography, Fine Art, and Design in both the UK and New Zealand. Emma is Co -Chair of ANZAAE, Chairperson of Te Tai Tokerau Art Teachers Association and is a member of the Adobe Education Leaders programme.

Video clubs: a collaborative professional development tool to make learning more visible

Charlotte Saunders

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of video technology and video clubs in making learning more visible (Hattie, 2012). The goal was to create, deliver and evaluate a professional learning model that enabled teachers to work collaboratively, de-privatise the classroom and create a community of practice aided by video technology. It was conducted in a co-educational secondary school in South Auckland. The key proposed benefit was improved classroom practice through fostering a culture of critical reflection on existing pedagogical thinking and practices and improved learner engagement. Beneficiaries include the participating teachers, the learners and the wider school community. It could also benefit other schools if the model is disseminated.

A 2022 curriculum review in my school identified a culture of strong relationships (whānaungatanga) but inconsistent levels of cognitive challenge and low levels of learner engagement. The need for a relevant, sustainable and impactful professional learning model was a motivating factor for the undertaking of this project. Evidence suggests that professional learning that is collaborative and highly contextualised supports teacher efficacy, collective responsibility and student achievement (Hattie, 2012; Timperley et al., 2014).

The project adopted an action research methodology (McNiff and Whitehead, 2005) complemented by a Talanoa approach as it had a focus on understanding the meaning that events had for participants (Vaioleti, 2006). Teachers were invited to a 'tea and biscuits' information session and four teachers signed up to participate. In the first phase of the project, the teachers co-constructed a relationships-based visible learning rubric based on the work of Bishop (2019) and Hattie (2012).

Over two iterations, teachers were filmed using an IRIS Connect kit, teaching for one hour, at a time of their choosing. A series of weekly after school facilitated video clubs, approximately 60 minutes long, allowed the teachers to engage in collaborative critical reflection of their own and each other's lessons. At the start of the second iteration, participants engaged in specific professional development on questioning using the Unity PD platform, an online professional development platform intended to "bridge the gap between theory and classroom practice" (https://www.irisconnect.com/uk/unity-pd/).

A mixed-method research approach meant that qualitative and quantitative data was collected. Participating teachers completed a survey about their prior professional learning experiences. Each lesson recording was analysed for themes and the number of open and closed questions asked by the teacher and the number of questions asked by the students. Two focus groups were held, one at the end of the first iteration and one at the conclusion of the study. Participating teachers expressed their feelings and opinions about the model and the perceived impact on their classroom practice.

Analysis of the video recordings from the lessons was used to examine the frequency and distribution of the dialogic interactions between students and teachers in the classroom, specifically looking at the frequency and type of questioning used. A thematic analysis was conducted using a deductive (theory driven) approach (Clarke et al., 2015); however, space was left for a more inductive approach in case anything unexpected but interesting arose during the analysis. Patterns were identified across the responses from the teachers to evaluate the project against the research questions.

My project consolidates the findings of similar projects as participating teachers perceived a positive impact on teaching and learning as they were able to notice the impact of their actions on the class and individual learners. This resulted in some notable improvements in pedagogical practices between the iterations. They also valued that the professional learning was highly contextualised and relevant and the opportunity for peer observations and discussion. The literature suggests active collaboration is particularly important for creating a growth-based mindset and culture and for sustaining teachers as change agents (Nielson et al. 2008; Hattie, 2012). Thematic analysis of the talanoa focus groups demonstrated that teachers valued the time for sharing, viewing other's practice and pedagogical discussion.

Hattie (2015) suggests that teachers pay more attention to the learning happening in the classroom. The use of videos allows teachers to pay closer attention to student's thinking, ideas and understanding and the asynchronous nature of the video clubs gives them space and time to engage in critical reflection (Shaw, 2022) of their routine practices and their values and assumptions (Hennessy & Deaney, 2009) resulting in the potential for a change in pedagogical thinking and in classroom practice. Analysis of the lesson recordings, field notes from the video clubs, and the talanoa supported these assertions.

My findings lead me to develop a *Classroom Practice Cycle of Inquiry: Collaborative Video Clubs* (Figure 1) model to provide a more structured approach. In any future iterations of the project, I would be interested in incorporating students into the reflection process. Finally, this project focused primarily on teacher perceptions of the value of video clubs as a tool. A longitudinal study with greater focus on the impact on student outcomes would be of interest.

Classroom Practice Cycle of Inquiry

Collaborative Video Clubs

Check

Crticially reflect on the IMPACT
Gather evidence of the impact of the change. This might include learner data, learner voice and family voice. Record a lesson to share with your collaborative video club.
‣ Has your action made ENOUGH of an impact?
‣ How do you know?
‣ What comes next?

Notice

Make learning VISIBLE
Record a lesson and watch it collaboratively as part of a video club. (The video club may include a coach, other teachers and student partners.)
‣ What is going on for learners? (Ask them!)
‣ What impact am I having on learners?
‣ What does the evidence tell me?

Act

Be EVIDENCE informed
‣ Implement change
‣ Reflect on the impact collaboratively (include learners and your video club)
‣ Deepen your learning
‣ Try again

Learn

Think AGENTICALLY
‣ Focus on an aspect of pedgagical thinking or practice
‣ Engage in collaborative and individual professional learning
‣ Observe other teachers (in person or via a video club setting.)
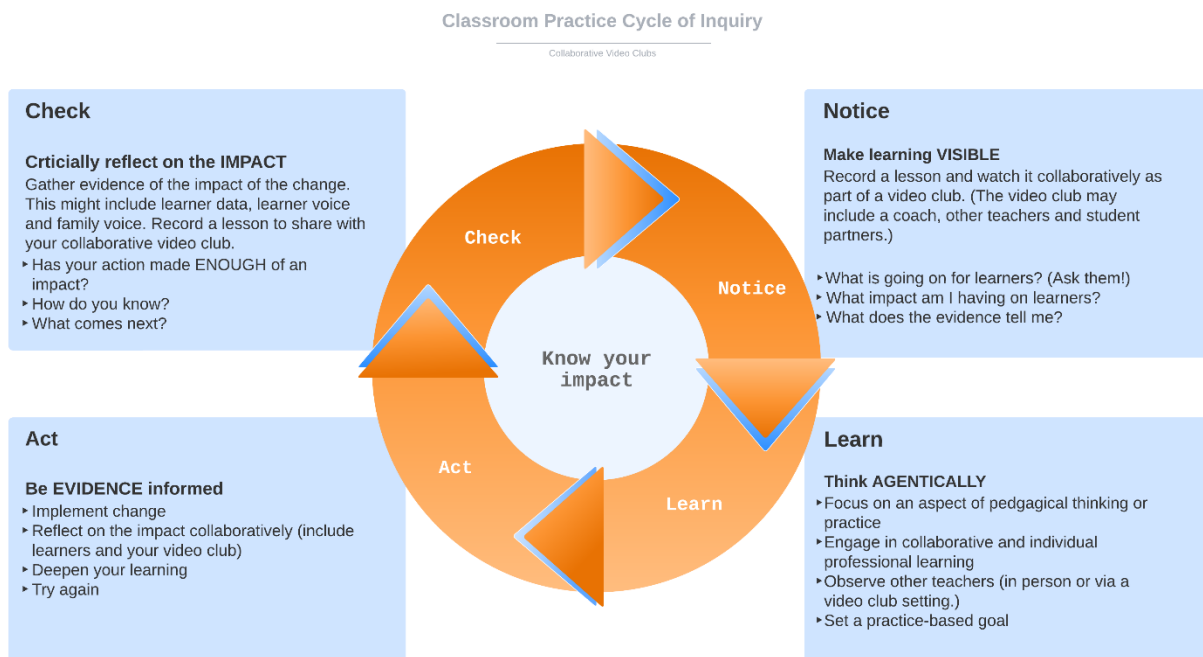‣ Set a practice-based goal

Know your impact

Figure 1: Classroom Practice Cycle of Inquiry: Collaborative Video Clubs

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About the author

Charlotte Saunders is Deputy Principal of a State Integrated co-educational secondary school in South Auckland. She was previously the Specialist Classroom Teacher for six years and is a passionate teacher of Media Studies and advocate for the role it can play in creating media literate, creative, critical thinkers.

Originally from the UK, Charlotte taught in South London state schools for ten years, with three years as an Assistant Principal.

A strong believer in a holistic approach to education, Charlotte is a Duke of Edinburgh Award leader and supporter of the Spirit of Adventure Trust. saunders.cs14@gmail.com

No one size fits all

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My research project aimed to empower kaiako by achieving three key goals: enhancing Dyslexia recognition and understanding, providing practical strategies for kaiako to support affected students, and promoting the adoption of personalised learning. The outcomes aimed to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment through personalised learning, positively impacting both teachers and students, along with their whānau.

My kura faced a growing issue of students with learning challenges like Dysgraphia, Dyslexia, and ADHD. Teachers, to no fault of their own, lacked the necessary knowledge to support these students, as revealed in discussions with our Senior Leadership Team and cohort teams. Dyslexia was particularly prevalent, and assessments by the Learning Support Coordinator uncovered more cases with a high probability of Dyslexia than anticipated. Ideally, widespread professional knowledge would have benefited all teachers. However, I opted for a smaller project group to provide focused attention and gather reliable data in a manageable amount of time for participants with already busy days. The target audience consisted of teachers who were unfamiliar with dyslexia and personalised learning.

After recognising a lack of awareness among teachers and whānau in supporting students with dyslexic traits, I proposed a solution involving workshops and Professional Development sessions alongside creating personalised learning plans that were simple and easy to use, appropriate for dyslexic students. Professional development aimed to educate teachers and whānau, fostering a mindset shift regarding Dyslexia. Alongside this mindset shift, I established foundational knowledge on personalised learning, ensuring a consistent understanding and incorporating research supporting its positive impact on student engagement.

However, before these were conducted, I needed to gather data on where teachers' current knowledge was before providing appropriate PD. Emphasising the option to work with a smaller group, the interviews and surveys conducted in my first iteration gave me a greater idea of where to begin my research project. I conducted an analysis of students' GL Ready screening results, conducted several Talanoa sessions with both kaiako and students and observed student classroom behavioural and cognitive engagement. From these insights, I identified personalised learning strategies for kaiako to implement, introducing this approach to enhance both students' behavioural and cognitive engagement.

As action research was the form of methodology that guided my research, the Talanoa framework aligned seamlessly with the action research approach in my project, as both methodologies embrace iterative cycles, collaborative engagement, and regular reflective discussions to enhance the understanding of experiences, perspectives, and continuous improvement. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) state that Action Researchers continually assess their work, making improvements as needed, and provide evidence for satisfaction if they are content. This iterative methodology encompasses planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, with a focus on maintaining records and sharing progress through regular reports. Sharing the progress through regular reports also allowed for feedback and feedforward from teachers and whānau, Talano methodology supported this goal by removing the distance between researcher and participant and providing research participants with a human face they can relate to. Talanoa can be just as rigorous as existing research approaches, although in a different way (Vaoleti, 2006). The data analysis was driven by

iterative cycles influenced by action research methodologies and the Talanoa framework. These cycles, guided by Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) approach, Stringer's (2007) interacting spiral, and the Talanoa framework by Violeti (2006), involve continuous refinement of strategies.

With these methodologies guiding my research, data collection needed to be comprehensive to ensure it met the purpose of the project on understanding how personalised learning supports dyslexic students learning and engagement. Talanoa sessions were themed and coded to ensure my conclusions were meaningful and true, and surveys and observations were analysed by identifying any trends or patterns that may support the conclusions I had drawn. The conclusions that were drawn from the research supported the project's purpose and in return found that there were certain ways to implement personalised learning to support students with dyslexia for it to be meaningful and effective.

Guided by these methodologies, I aimed for comprehensive data collection to understand how personalised learning contributes to dyslexic students' learning and engagement, aligning with the project's overarching goal. Themed and coded Talanoa sessions ensured the credibility and meaningfulness of conclusions drawn, while surveys and observations underwent analysis to identify trends or patterns supporting the conclusions. The research project not only achieved the project's purpose and goals but mainly highlighted specific effective implementations of personalised learning to support dyslexic students in a meaningful manner for all stakeholders. Firstly, collaboration between all stakeholders is a key element to personalised learning. Bevan-Brown, J., McGee, A., Ward, A., & MacIntyre, L., (2011) found that "Developing a learning plan with parents, family, whanau and caregivers that is based on their aspirations and dreams for the young person and what the family feels is important for their child to be learning" (p.78). Leadbeater (2005) explains how customising education focuses on getting young individuals and their parents to actively commit to their learning, emphasising the importance of students being deeply involved in the learning process. This supported my second finding where students as co-producers or co-investors are a key element for personalised learning. Lastly, accommodations for dyslexic students increased both behavioural and cognitive engagement was evident when observations were conducted. A significant success was the transformative shift in teachers' perspectives on dyslexic students. They transitioned from perceiving it as a behavioural issue to embracing empathy, fostering a strong desire to learn and seek effective strategies independently. This, in itself, was enough for me to recognise the value of this research project and to ensure its ongoing integration throughout the school. Adjustments to processes, artifacts, and deliverables will be made along the way to align with the evolving needs of teachers and the school. This has certainly paved the way for our school to enhance learning opportunities for all tamariki in our kura and has raised awareness not only about Dyslexia but also other specific learning difficulties

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About the author

Lisa Groot is a Teacher in the Bay of Plenty, she has been teaching for 11 years in both small and large schools. Throughout her career, she has taken on several roles that have led her to find her passion in special education needs. Passionate about offering optimal learning opportunities for all tamariki, she is committed to supporting teachers in their teaching journey. Her goal is to enhance their understanding of specific learning difficulties and help support these students without overwhelming them. Outside of school, Lisa loves spending quality time with her whānau and two beautiful children. She appreciates the benefits of what nature and exercise can do to create that work/life balance.

Improving Literacy Teaching & Understanding Personalised Learning

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After three years of lockdowns and hybrid learning, very few of my students last year were avid readers and the boys in my target writing group hated writing. The reading achievement of most students was also below expectation and had to improve. What could I do to engage my students more in reading and writing tasks and accelerate their literacy progress? What did I need to change to facilitate greater student engagement and improve literacy achievement levels?

My project's aims were to enhance my teaching practice by collaborating with in-school literacy experts, and to improve student agency. To do so, I collaborated with colleagues in professional learning groups (PLGs) while implementing a personalised literacy approach. This involved gathering student voice and selecting literacy tasks that aligned with their diverse interests and personal literacy goals to provide them with more choices. The ultimate objective was to improve literacy achievement by increasing student engagement and motivation to read and write.

My project's goals were to:-
- Find out about my students' strengths and interests.
- Implement a personalised reading and writing programme.
- Collect meaningful data.
- Evaluate the extent to which the project answers the research questions and addresses the identified problem.
- Create a presentation to outline the project's objectives, research questions, and key literature, with quantitative and qualitative data to be shared with stakeholders, including whānau, board trustees, colleagues, and other teachers within the Kāhui Ako community.

This project draws on a Māori action research methodology implemented during wānanga that began in 2013, under the leadership of Rereata Makiha, who linked Māori cosmology and whakapapa to knowledge development and growth. Influenced by him and other tohunga, Amber Nicholson developed Te Hihiri, a Māori methodological research model that is firmly rooted in mātauranga Māori. (Nicholson, 2020, p.133-135). I implemented a collaborative personalised literacy program by incorporating elements from Uncle Rereata's teaching and Nicholson's Te Hihiri model.

In 2020, New Zealand's Chief Education Scientific Advisor advocated for improving students' literacy achievement by fostering student engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy, asserting that these factors significantly impact academic success. McNaughton also recommended making reading meaningful to students by providing access to high-interest texts, encouraging choices, and promoting collaboration. Collaborative reasoning and concept-oriented reading activities with teacher support were highlighted as methods to enhance engagement, motivation, and literacy outcomes. (McNaughton, 2020, pp. 2-3, 37-39). Similarly, Bishop (2019) focused on relationships, dialogic practices, and discursive approaches to improve educational outcomes for marginalised students, including Māori, Pasifika, refugees, migrants, faith-based groups, and those with learning difficulties or neurodiversity. (Bishop, 2019, pp. xi-xv).

Stewart (2017) defined personalised learning as a shift in focus from teacher-centred to student-centred approaches, prioritising their individual needs, abilities, motivations, and desires. Common threads of personalised learning, according to Stewart, include a flexible and learner-centred curriculum, authentic assessment methods, community involvement in learning, and the use of technology tools to offer diverse learning platforms and resources. (Stewart, 2017, p.17).

Preparation for project implementation began in January 2023, by digitising reading tasks using Google Forms. A Gantt chart was used to plan the early stages and stakeholder discussions, while ethical considerations were addressed in student and whānau consent forms. Stakeholder engagement included sharing project details with parents, school leadership, and colleagues in Term 1.

Baseline data collection in Term 2 involved Google Form reading assessments and writing samples. The tasks focused on key reading strategies, with cognitive load increasing gradually. Students set goals based on their data, and insights into strengths and interests were gathered through Google Form surveys. Most parents also shared their insights and perceptions using paper surveys, indicating that some had low expectations of their children's abilities so those students were targeted during each cycle. Students explored topics of interest during Free Writing while student-led conferences at the end of Term 2 enabled them to share their learning reflections and goal-setting with whānau.

In Term 3, the focus shifted to persuasive writing aligned with the schoolwide speech competition. However my students chose their own topics of interest instead of focusing on the schoolwide theme, and my target students joined an accelerated literacy learning (ALL) writing group focused on persuasive structural and language features. Lessons included analysing exemplars, and unpacking success criteria. Unlike other classes, my students were not forced to present their speeches in class but some relished the opportunity, and one of them came second in the school speech final.

By gathering student voice termly, provocations and positive trends emerged. I noticed that some students are intrinsically motivated while others are motivated by praise, rewards or their parents' expectations, which lead me to consider how to leverage these drivers. Analysis of the data over time also indicated that my students perceptions of reading and writing improved with more identifying reading as a strength and writing as an interest. Most students made accelerated progress in literacy although others who were frequently absent or involved in different extracurricular activities did not maintain earlier gains or make as much progress as the aforementioned.

Analysis of all quantitative and qualitative data indicated that personalised literacy can enhance students' attitudes about reading and writing, leading to improved academic performance. Personalisation involves teachers being responsive to students' interests, strengths, and needs, fostering collaboration by acting on student feedback and making decisions together. Another key aspect for my students was teaching them how to set meaningful goals.

Meaningful change that benefits students, teachers and other stakeholders is a gradual process so personalising learning takes time, as most stakeholders are accustomed to more traditional practices. I use action research methodology daily to reflect, plan and adapt my teaching to support the learning of my students. They too reflect, communicate and collaborate with me as active agents in their learning. As meaningful change takes time, you must allocate more time than you expect, and regularly review practices, reflecting on their purposes and outcomes to accurately assess their impacts and benefits. I would also recommend collaborating with colleagues to encourage each other and share tasks, making the workload more manageable.

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Rona Eramiha

Of Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Pōrou ki Hauraki, and Ngāti Awa descent, Rona was raised on Waiheke Island and in Ōtara. In 2017, she began working at a small intermediate school in East Auckland, after teaching in Ōtara for 13 years. Her master's project relates collaborative teaching practices, personalised learning and student agency to improved learning outcomes. Her research interests include learning and teaching te reo Māori me ona tikanga, with an emphasis on Kaitiakitanga, Pūtaiao Māori and the history of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Towards Progressive Education: A case study of educational restructure in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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This project is a case study of the process of opening a new school in Hamilton, New Zealand. It aims to provide recommendations on key aspects of the process for educational leaders who may be involved in the establishment of a new school in the future.

There were two goals for this project. Firstly, to use the voice of key stakeholders, as well as my own personal and professional experiences to develop a framework for the establishment of new schools in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Secondly, to share the journey to establishing a new school in the form of a phenomenological study which provides recommendations and key learnings for New Zealand based educators to use as a guide if faced with a similar challenge.

In 2022 the decision to close two neighboring schools in the Waikato region was made by the Acting Minister of Education, Jan Tinetti (New Zealand Government, 2022). In the same announcement, it was made clear that the new school would open on the same site of the two old schools in 2024. The significant challenge of opening a new school on an old site is what initiated this project. The project was further supported by the lack of guidance and direction that the senior leadership team faced when they began their roles one year before the school was set to open.

The project adopts a phenomenological study approach, drawing on Max van Manen's framework (van Manen, 2016), to investigate the personal experiences of opening a new school from a Deputy Principal's perspective. Data was collected in the form of questionnaires, a reflective journal and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders.

Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method was applied to the data to identify commonalities within the data (Terry et. al, 2017). The themes are: developing a strong and positive staff culture, providing pathways for all learners, designing a rich and innovative curriculum, knowing where to turn for support and guidance, staying focused on a shared vision for the future and upholding the principles of Te Tiriti ō Waitangi. The six themes form the basis of the Framework for the Establishment of New Schools in Aotearoa.

The literature review emphasized the need for a positive and productive staff culture (Bayram Bozkurt, 2023; Getting Smart, 2016; and Rosemary Hipkins, 2011). Additionally, the literature advocates for engaging the community in the decision making process, which aligns with the Ministry of Education's vision for building relationships and creating a school that meets the needs of the community (Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, 2018). The research on the establishment of new schools in the Aotearoa context was limited and by providing a comprehensive approach to the establishment of new schools in Aotearoa, the developed framework aims to guide those involved in the process.

This project has generated novel insights into the establishment of new schools in the Aotearoa context, culminating in the development of the Framework for Establishing New Schools. The identification of six key themes crucial for success, symbolized through the metaphor of a pātaka, introduces a unique and

comprehensive perspective that advances the understanding of foundational elements in school establishment. Additionally, the project has contributed to the field by highlighting the importance of prioritizing interpersonal dynamics, conflict resolution, and positive staff culture in educational leadership, providing a nuanced approach to holistic school development. Along with the generation of new knowledge and insights, this project has led to significant personal growth and transformation, specifically in the areas of collaboration and leadership.

This research could be extended by measuring the impact of the decisions that were made during the establishment phase and adjusting the framework accordingly. Data could be collected from students as well as parents and the wider community to determine whether the decisions that have been made are having the desired impact.

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About the author

Samantha is a Deputy Principal at a newly established school in the Waikato Region. She has a Graduate Diploma of Secondary Teaching and has been teaching Science the Secondary sector for ten years. She has previously worked as a Head of Science and kāhui ako Across School Leader. Samantha loves learning, has a passion for curriculum design as well as developing and supporting teacher practice through coaching and mentoring.

Samantha lives in Te Awamutu with her husband and two energetic boys. She loves being in the outdoors as well as cooking and baking.

The Efficacy of Personalised Learning on Gifted Learners' Engagement

Rory Hughes

The purpose of this study was to implement a Personalised Learning Programme for selected Gifted students and evaluate its effectiveness at enhancing classroom engagement, with a particular focus on Māori Gifted students.

Following on from the work of Bevan-Brown (2005, 2009), the initial enquiry was to address a disproportionately low representation of Māori and Pasifika students identified as Gifted learners in New Zealand education. Scobie-Jennings (2012; 2015) has suggested altering the identification process as a necessary means of rebalancing, while NZ Gifted Education recommends Personalised Learning as the best approach towards engaging both Māori and Pākehā Gifted students alike. This study sought to practically test and provide analytical data for their respective effectiveness of both these processes. By doing so, it aimed to provide more conclusive theories of effective and culturally responsive approaches towards enhancing Māori Gifted students' engagement in Secondary education.

An Action Research methodology was utilised to identify and then support selected Year 9 and Year 10 Gifted students through a Personalised Programme, developed in conjunction with the materials provided by the NZ Gifted Centre for Gifted Education but self-directed by the individual learners. This methodological approach went through a series of stages, each allowing for some self-reflection and technical adjustment to meet the demands of collaboration.

Students were identified via a document presented to teaching staff and formally introduced through professional development, while the Whanau of each participant was communicated with to ascertain their understanding and willingness to be involved. The number of students and time given were negotiated with Senior management to ensure that disruptions on curriculum-based teaching time and the personal time of students was minimalised. 20 students from Year 9 and Year 10, respectively, were selected in two alternating groups to meet in organised weekly sessions to plan and then carry out their projects. Participants were invited to form groups although this was not compulsory. Projects were varied – music, arts, sports, electronics, game design, written speeches and social studies (psychology) were all undertaken by different students and groups – mostly at elevated levels beyond prescribed curriculum level. Discussions were ongoing with each group/participant regarding the best way to support their projects with a small team of facilitators to help resource and advise accordingly. Sessions were followed up by facilitator meetings to discuss findings and adaptations. Following on, and in accordance with some unexpected disruptions in timetabling, a final, all-day session was organised for participants to fully develop and complete their respective projects.

Engagement was rated by facilitators while making observations and participants' reports were separately assessed for engagement as part of Teachers' normal duties. These reports generated statistics that, by the end of the Term, could be analysed to ascertain if there were any significant improvements in engagement and whether they correlated. The study was rounded out with some surveys for Participants and Teachers and some targeted interviews, specifically to discuss Māori Giftedness and permutations from the statistical findings with students, parents, local Iwi leaders, governmental agency representatives and school senior management. This added qualitative context and varied perspectives to the study.

The analysis determined that there was no statistically significant rise in engagement while participating in the Personalised Learning programme and no significant difference between Māori and non-Māori on this specific measure. This can be attributed to a small sample size and a granular rating system, however, as 13 of the 20 students did show improvement while there was a disproportionately high number of Māori participants who were less engaged. There was also a strong statistical correlation between participants engagement in their projects and in their general classroom engagement during their participation.

The disproportionate number of disengaged Māori participants could be accounted for by the limited sample size but also the high proportion of newly identified Gifted students. Further qualitative research, via individual interviews and surveys, highlighted that the term 'Gifted', which remains nebulous in meaning, can cause a wide range of responses and interpretations when individuals and whānau are asked to identify with it. These are more likely to be negative when students are newly identified. Hence, if there are a higher proportion of newly identified Gifted students of Māori heritage, there is an increased risk of negative reaction to it as a personal identity. Surveys of teachers found that while the definition of Gifted remains quite well known, the associated personality traits from research are less well understood and this, along with potential apathy about Gifted education in general (Teaow, 2016), could contribute to a negative perspective of the term also.

The conclusion of this study is that the use of Māori cultural identifiers highlighted in Scobie-Jennings (2012, 2015) research does appear successful in establishing a greater proportion of Gifted Māori students that reflects the wider demographics of the educational institution. This may also be reflective of an increased attention given to the process when applying professional development to teachers. Personalised Learning can be effective in enhancing the engagement of Gifted students, including Māori students, but to be universally effective thought needs to be given towards acclimatising notions of being 'Gifted' aspect towards newly identified students. This could be done through culturally supportive means as suggested by Scobie-Jennings (2015) along with more structured school timetabling and tangible rewards for participants (like NCEA grades). Potential barriers presented by the term 'Gifted' could be overcome by altering the term itself or de-emphasising it in a culturally responsive way. This would make a good follow up study along with testing out these findings with a wider range of participants from other colleges.

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About the author

Rory Hughes has been teaching Science and Physics in New Zealand for 15 years having studied and taught in the UK previously. He has had various responsibilities throughout his teaching career, including coaching and managing roles in sports, chess and boardgame clubs. He has been a Gifted Education Coordinator and contributor to the NZ Gifted Network of Expertise since 2021.

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Redefining Professional Learning: A Teaching Sprints Approach

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Education has seen varied forms of Professional Learning and Development (PLD) in the last decade. While school leadership has embraced numerous initiatives, some follow a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach. More flexibility is required to ensure differentiation in teacher learning. There is a need for personalised PLD models that empower educators to address individual learning needs and enhance teaching practices more effectively.

Over the last five years, the school has endeavoured to enhance teacher practices through various professional learning and development opportunities. We are recognising the pivotal role of teacher practice in influencing student outcomes. Therefore, the project's main objective was to create a PLD model combining agile and lean methodologies to improve teacher learning experiences. The goal was to empower teachers to impact classroom practices and student outcomes. The project focused on improving teaching methods using innovative approaches and emphasising the importance of continuous improvement in professional learning.

The primary tasks included researching adult learning theory and agile and lean principles towards developing a Professional Learning model that fits within the current school context. The project was the implementation of one of the identified models for teaching staff.

The project explores the theories of andragogy and heutagogy in adult learning, focusing on the importance of self-directed and self-determined learning. It emphasises the role of collaboration, strong leadership, and a supportive school environment in achieving this goal.

Evidence-based models like Kelleher's (2003) and Te Kotahitanga's (2016) promote a positive learning environment. Additionally, Timperley's (2008) framework focuses on the significance of collaborative learning—finally, the exploration of agile and lean theories from the software and manufacturing industries in education.

The Teaching Sprints model, developed by Breakspear and Jones (2020), emerged as a practical application in professional learning. The model, featuring phases of Prepare, Sprint, and Review, demonstrated potential benefits in addressing the shortcomings of traditional methods.

The project focused on implementing and evaluating the 'Teaching Sprints' model in the educational context, emphasising agile and lean principles. Only seven participants/members of staff volunteered to be part of the data collection.

To achieve the goals, various data collection methods were used, such as audio recordings, surveys, and a research journal, both qualitative and quantitative. The outcomes were positive, as teachers' confidence and capability to sustain the methodology improved.

The project involved three key phases: Prepare, Sprint, and Review, facilitated by a Sprint Leader. The 'Prepare' stage involved the collaborative development of a teaching plan based on data and evidence. The

'Sprint' phase focused on implementing changes, with regular stand-up meetings for collaboration, and the 'Review' phase aimed at reflection and planning for sustained implementation.

The literature review pointed out a gap in research concerning the implementation of agile and lean concepts in the context of 'Teaching Sprints'. There was no identified research around the implementation of 'Teaching Sprints', making this project an important topic.

The survey results were positive, indicating that the participants were more engaged with the research, better understood the content, and improved their teaching techniques, increasing confidence in the classroom. All participants agreed that 'Teaching Sprints' were effective and sustainable within the school.

However, the project also recognised limitations to the study, such as the need for consistent check-ins and methods to measure improved student achievement outcomes against effective teacher practice. These limitations suggest possible areas for future research.

This Master's program has helped me gain new insights into leadership approaches in educational settings. I agree with Breakspear's (2016) view that traditional school improvement methods are no longer effective and that a fresh perspective is required.

Three types of leadership styles are important for bringing about positive change. These include Servant, Agile and Wayfinding Leadership. Servant Leadership focuses on ethical and caring behaviour that helps individuals grow. Agile Leadership involves taking initiative, finding new ways to solve problems and being open to change. Wayfinding Leadership is about analysing details and seeing the bigger picture to make informed decisions.

Building relationships was important to the project's success, as it helped create a safe environment where everyone could contribute. The Teaching Sprints program succeeded by fostering strong relationships within smaller groups and facilitating honest and open conversations. Additionally, the program designed to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of teachers, especially around workload.

In the leadership role, it was necessary to listen to the needs of teachers, understand individual strengths and weaknesses, and create an open, flexible, and safe space for problem-solving during the teaching process. The practices of Servant, Agile, and Wayfinding Leadership were important in navigating the complexities of change and promoting collaboration.

Furthermore, collaboration played a crucial role in the success of Teaching Sprints. In this regard, Morasky's (2019) foundational behaviours of sharing, co-creating, and trusting emerged as essential for achieving a collective vision.

Russell Bishop's recent (2023) text, "Leading to the North East," emphasised the importance of cultural responsiveness in education. This knowledge highlights the need for positive relationships between leaders and teachers, high expectations, and co-constructed learning plans.

The project revealed that there may be a gap in evaluating the success of teachers' implementation. Through analysing student data, we can further identify the effectiveness of teacher practice. We need to strengthen this aspect in future projects.

Success in education depends on relationships, problem-solving, tailored learning, small changes, and growth. A powerful approach to empowering stakeholders and ensuring sustained success combines servant leadership, agile leadership, and wayfinding leadership.

The Master's study covered diverse topics such as artificial intelligence, agile and lean concepts, adult learning, leadership, collaboration and cultural responsiveness. The insights gained from the Teaching Sprints project will help contribute significantly to professional knowledge in my new leadership role, focusing on teacher development. Future projects involve exploring Professional Learning Groups (PLGs), adapting Teaching Sprints to a larger context, and integrating a Māori worldview into the professional learning model.

The transformative project has provided a robust foundation for innovative solutions and continued growth as an educational practitioner.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi; engari he toa takitini
Success is not the work of one, but the work of many

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About the author

Meet Louise Fox, a dedicated education leader with a 29-year teaching journey in New Zealand, boasting 26 years in leadership. She is a Deputy Principal in the South Auckland area and is passionate about teacher

development and lifelong learning. Louise is committed to empowering teachers to benefit students, integrating agile and lean methodologies into education, and exploring the realm of Artificial Intelligence. (AI)

Alongside her professional pursuits, Louise finds joy in Minecraft, crafts and furniture restoration, creating a happy work-life balance and spending time with her family.

Recently taking on the role of Deputy Principal at a U10 Special School, Louise eagerly anticipates contributing to professional learning in this new context.

Our Voices, Our Stories – Strengthening Educationally Powerful Connections with Aiga

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This project aimed to uncover key knowledge and understandings of ways that would highlight actions, mindshift, decisions or pivots needed that would truly strengthen educationally powerful connections between school and aiga (family). The project focused on the Samoa bilingual unit in a South Auckland school, where the researcher, implemented a system of producing holiday learning tasks with the teachers over three terms using digital tools. The learning tasks focused on learning academic vocabulary in a way that encouraged children and families to share their stories related to the vocabulary they were learning. Families could select how they wanted to share their knowledge through their stories, either using pen and paper or digital devices. The researcher also implemented professional development for teachers around culturally responsive practice and collaborated on a variety of ideas to encourage storied conversations with parents and children as part of building relationships. The project was guided by the following research question: How can I use blended learning within a culturally responsive practice to strengthen educationally powerful connections with aiga in the Samoa bilingual classes?

The project used talanoa as the methodology (Vaioleti, 2006) which is a Pacific way of conducting research through informal and relational conversations. In the course of this research, the primary investigator engaged in a series of talanoa sessions. These interactive sessions involved a diverse group of participants, including teachers, parents, and children. The purpose of these sessions was to facilitate open dialogue and foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

In addition to these talanoa sessions, the researcher also employed a more structured approach to data collection. Surveys were administered to the participant children, serving as a tool to gather both quantitative and qualitative data at the start and end of the project. This dual approach to data collection ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, capturing numerical data and personal experiences alike.

Once the data was collected, it underwent a rigorous process of analysis. The researcher utilised thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) for this purpose. This analytical approach is particularly effective in identifying common themes and patterns across the transcribed set of data from the talanoa sessions that were recorded. It involves a careful examination of the data, a process of coding and categorising, and the identification of recurring themes. Through this meticulous process of data collection and analysis, the researcher was able to draw meaningful conclusions from the study. The combination of talanoa sessions, surveys, and thematic analysis provided a robust and comprehensive approach to exploring the research topic. This methodological approach ensured that the research findings were grounded in rich, diverse data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results.

The talanoa also enabled the development of a culturally responsive framework based on the afa (sennit), which is a traditional Samoan rope made from coconut husk fibre. The afa metaphor was used to illustrate the connections between the key elements of the project: relationship building, valuing identity in knowing the learner and the curriculum.

Through this project, it was discovered that the integration of blended learning and culturally responsive practice significantly strengthened educationally powerful connections with aiga. Parents, as a result of the

project, reported feeling more empowered, engaged, and valued as partners in their children's learning journey. They expressed appreciation for the opportunities provided to share their stories and cultural knowledge with the school community.

Children's enjoyment of learning academic vocabulary through storytelling was another key finding. Furthermore, the project revealed that children and their aiga were adept at using digital tools to express their learning in innovative and creative ways. Understanding that this is part of blended learning (Graham, 2006).

Building trust, respect, and reciprocity between teachers and parents emerged as a crucial aspect of the project. It underscored the importance of acknowledging and utilising the rich cultural funds of knowledge that parents bring.

The project also shed light on the significance of the afa framework. This tool proved instrumental in guiding and informing culturally responsive practice in many aspects of the project.

Insights and implications for practice, valuable for both the researcher and the school, were gleaned from the project. It prompted the researcher to introspect on their own assumptions and beliefs about home-school partnerships. This reflection led to the adoption of a more collaborative and inclusive approach to working with aiga.

Inspiration to continue developing digital skills and to incorporate blended learning into teaching practice was another outcome for the researcher. The project aligned with and contributed to the school's strategic objectives. These included enhancing culturally responsive practice, developing a local curriculum, and implementing a digital curriculum.

Finally, the project presented a model of practice with potential for wider application. This model could be transferred and adapted to other contexts and settings, extending its impact beyond the confines of the school. This adaptability underscores the project's broader relevance and potential for influencing practice in diverse educational settings.

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About the author

Marieta Morgan is a highly experienced educator of Samoan descent, known for her dedication to fostering inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. With a rich background in education, Marieta has demonstrated a strong commitment to pedagogical leadership, influencing positive change in teaching practices. As Acting Principal of a large South Auckland primary school, Marieta firmly believes in the importance of recognising and respecting the cultural backgrounds of students and their families, ensuring that this knowledge is integrated into every aspect of the teaching and learning process. She takes pride in guiding and mentoring teachers in the implementation of culturally responsive classroom practices. Her outstanding contributions to community-focused initiatives within her workplace ensures that the educational experience for children from diverse cultural backgrounds extends beyond the classroom, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Incorporating digital technology for English Language Learners

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Over recent years, Covid-driven online learning has created new opportunities to observe the developing digital skills of students in real-life settings. Observations of students working online during Covid lockdowns showed evidence of the digital divide that has been recognised for some twenty years (Howell, 2001; Kono & Taylor, 2021). It includes disparity in areas such as hardware, software and internet access, and issues related to language, time, opportunity and home situations (Deng & Sun, 2021; Kono & Taylor, 2021; Susaria, 2019).

Our English Language Learners (ELLs) demonstrated lower levels of engagement with online learning compared with students who had English as a first language. Subsequent classrooms observations indicated that foundation knowledge such as digitally-relevant vocabulary and problem-solving techniques related to using digital devices, would benefit individual users' confidence and digital capability, increasing their engagement with online learning.

These observations were the trigger for a practise-based project. Working with small withdrawal groups of ELLs in Years 3-8, digital technology was incorporated into a personalised learning programme in order to raise students' digital capability, increase their capacity to engage in online learning and better meet the needs of 21st Century learners (Learner Agency, n.d.).

Project goals included developing our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme for the effective integration of digital technology, using an Action Research Methodology for continual improvement of practice, measuring outcomes for building student capacity with digital competency, collaborating with other teachers with regard to these areas.

Based in an Auckland Decile 1 primary school, around a third of our students are ELLs[1]. As a learning assistant in the ESOL department, this project was conducted with the consented participation of 40 ELLs in Years 3-8, working in withdrawal groups.

All our students need to not only be competent users and consumers of digital technology, we need to support them to achieve the skills required to create innovative digital solutions to problems currently unimaginable (Ministry of Education–Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, n.d.). In order to break down the monocultural hegemony of the digital world, as educators we must consciously ensure our most underserved students become digitally capable of becoming innovative and creative designers (Harris, 2016; Hay, 2021; Susaria, 2019).

This practise-based project utilised an action research methodology. The culturally responsive, personalised learning increased learner agency through maintaining the centrality of the students (Reinsfield, 2019). This was enhanced through the inclusion of digital technology as a tool for building

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[1] The proportion of ELLs enrolled in the school reduced during the earlier Covid years (2021-2023) due to lower numbers of migrants.

emergent bi and multilingual students' facility with a range of English situations, and assisted in the development of relationships both with and between students (Bishop et al, 2009; Ministry of Education-Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, 2017).

The digital integration framework PICRAT uses a matrix to display threes student interactions with technology (passive, interacting, creating) against three effects on teaching practice from integrating digital technology (replacement, amplification, transformation) (Kimmons et al, 2020, building on work by Hughes et al, 2006). Applied to this project, the PICRAT model was useful in ensuring the integration of digital technology did not simply replace previous tools but that it added to the value of the lessons, as seen by the outcomes for students.

Two digital competency frameworks helped inform practice for this project. The *Competency Framework for Teachers* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2011) provided useful guidance and examples for progressing to deeper levels of competency using digital technology in teaching. The European Commission's *DigComp 2.2 - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens* (Vuorikari et al, 2022) provided guidance around progressions from foundational skill to higher levels of competency for student outcomes, again with practical examples to aid understanding of students' levels of competency.

Student observations included lesson-based engagement and interaction of the students. During implementation of the project, action research helped improve educational practice through the cyclic process of gathering evidence, evaluating and reflecting on a lesson in order to implement developmental change in my practice (Clark et al., n.d.).

Quantitative data such as comparing baseline and end data for foundation digital skills and tasks such as sentence correction, showed growth in student capability, problem-solving and expectations. Qualitative data such as Overall Teacher Judgements (OTJs) showed gains in confidence and digital facility, increased student engagement, growth in discussions and gains related to English Language Progressions. This was consistent with research showing the gains from integrating digital technology, and strengthening culturally responsive practice and personalised learning (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Mensah, 2021, Tweed, 2021).

The impact on ELLs' use of language was particularly exciting. Studies have recorded that ELLs regularly have as little as 2 minutes 'talk time' in class per day, due to various factors including teacher responses and levels of expectation (Mohr & Mohr, 2007; Si'ilata et al, 2022; Soto-Hinman, 2011, citing Diane August 2022). The inclusion of digital technology and ensuing benefits were completely in line with research findings regarding the link to, and impact from, increases in cultural responsiveness, recognition of prior knowledge, personalised learning, learner agency, and overall student confidence and engagement.

Collaboration, in particular with the ESOL coordinator, has highlighted a number of ways we can strengthen digital technology as well as ESOL systems within the school and a strategic plan for this is being developed for 2024. This will benefit the not only the ELLs but also other students and teachers (Çayır & Yolcu, 2021; Constantinou & Ainscow, 2020).

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About the author

After some 20 years in other fields of employment, the author moved into education, eventually completing a BEd(ECE). After a further 20 years in early childhood education, the author began working in a local primary school as a learning assistant in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department. Supported by some great teachers and mentors, a life-long interest in issues of equity and a passion for problem-solving have contributed to an awareness of some of the issues faced by our educationally-underserved students. It has been exciting to see the improved outcomes from this project for our English language learners.

Empowering Learner Agency in An Innovative Learning Environment: A Culturally Responsive Approach Supported By Digital Technology In A New Zealand Kura.

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This document presents a research project that aims to explore and implement a pedagogical transformation within a Kura, a school that caters to predominantly Pacifica and Māori students in New Zealand. The project's main objectives are to evolve the current educational practices from teacher-led to student-led, enabling learners to actively shape their educational experiences and fostering their ownership of learning, and to integrate a culturally responsive approach that respects and embraces the cultural diversity of the student body.

The study is motivated by the recognition that traditional pedagogical approaches no longer align with the aspirations of learners and the demands of the 21st century and is also influenced by the transition from single cell learning spaces to an Innovative Learning Environment (ILE), which represents a spatial and philosophical shift in education. The project draws on contemporary educational discourse and culturally inclusive practices to set the foundation for an exploration of pedagogical transformation within the ILE framework.

The research adopts an action research methodology, which involves collaborative investigation, reflection, and intervention to address practical problems or challenges in a specific context. It employs a mixed-methods approach that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, such as Google Forms surveys, semi-structured interviews, observational research, and Hapara Dashboard analysis. It followed ethical guidelines established by the Mindlab ethical review board and obtained informed consent from all participants.

The data analysis reveals several key findings that support the development of learner agency and cultural responsiveness within the Kura. The findings suggest that the following factors contribute to greater learner agency: independence and ownership of learning, scaffolding/releasing students from barriers, students taking on teaching roles – Ako, student as the teacher, teacher as the student, enjoyment of the learning and being engaged in the subject matter, and reflection through teacher-student dialogue. The findings also indicate that the following factors enhance cultural responsiveness: integration of students' cultural practices and knowledge, recognition and celebration of cultural diversity, alignment with the principles of Ako, and collaboration with whānau and community.

The project concludes with a discussion of the implications and recommendations for future practice and research and highlights the benefits and challenges of implementing a learner-led and culturally responsive approach within the ILE framework. It also provides suggestions for improving instructional design, assessment practices, and the use of technology in education. Importantly it acknowledges the limitations and gaps in the research and proposes areas for further exploration and inquiry.

The project demonstrates a commitment to innovative, learner-led, and culturally responsive approaches that transcend cultural boundaries and prepare learners for the complex challenges of the future. The research has the potential to contribute to the field of educational psychology and the community of practice by generating practical and actionable knowledge that can inform improvements in the specific context and beyond. It also shows how action research can be a powerful and comprehensive approach to address real-world problems and generate knowledge through collaboration and reflection.

The findings also show it has the potential to have significant implications for the broader field of education. The successful implementation of a learner-led and culturally responsive approach within the Kura could serve as a model for other schools and educational institutions that are seeking to foster learner

agency and cultural inclusivity. The use of digital technology to support learning also highlights the importance of technology and its ability to enhance educational outcomes and experiences.

The findings support the importance of creating a learning environment that is not only innovative but also culturally responsive. This is particularly relevant in the context of New Zealand, where there is a diverse mix of cultures and ethnicities. By integrating culturally responsive practices into the curriculum, the project was able to create learning environments that were inclusive and respectful of all students' cultural backgrounds. This in turn, helps to foster a sense of belonging among students and enhances their engagement and motivation to learn – The family like context (Bishop 2019).

Finally, the project's use of digital technology to support learning is important. By leveraging digital tools and platforms, the project is able to enhance the learning experiences of students and facilitate their active participation in the learning process. This not only helps to foster learner agency but also prepares students for the digital age, where technology plays a crucial role in various aspects of life.

In conclusion, the project represents a significant contribution to the field of education. It provides valuable insights into how to foster learner agency and cultural responsiveness in an innovative learning environment, and it offers practical strategies for integrating digital technology into the curriculum. The project's findings and recommendations have the potential to inform policy and practice in education, and they provide a solid foundation for future research in this area.

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About the author

With a distinguished 20-year career in the British Royal Navy, Meikle transitioned into the field of education following his retirement in 2003. His initial foray into the civilian world was marked by a tenure as the Managing Director of a full-time professional Football Club. This experience provided him with unique insights into leadership and team dynamics, which he later applied in my educational pursuits.

Meikle's journey in education began within the realm of behavioural and special education. However, upon his emigration to New Zealand in 2010, he transitioned into mainstream education. This shift was driven by his steadfast commitment to equipping future generations with the necessary skills to navigate an increasingly complex world.

His pedagogical philosophy has been heavily influenced by the works of Sir Ken Robinson and Professor Russell Bishop. Inspired by Robinson's assertion that our task is to educate students' whole being so they can face the future, he strives to cultivate an educational environment that fosters holistic development. This commitment is further reinforced by Bishop's advocacy for culturally responsive teaching, which resonates with his belief in the importance of acknowledging and celebrating cultural diversity in the classroom.

Meikle currently holds the position of Deputy Principal in a school located in West Auckland. Outside of his professional commitments, he enjoys coaching football, walking his two dogs, and spending quality time

with my mokopuna. He and his wife also share a passion for travel and exploration, which allows them to continually broaden their horizons and embrace new experiences.

Developing Student Agency through a Personalised Learning approach in writing

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The purpose of this project was to develop student agency through a personalised approach in writing for year 7 and 8 students in an innovative learning environment. This was aimed to be achieved by implementing a writing programme that underpinned culturally responsive practices, contemporary teaching approaches, and digital tools. The project sought to transform the learning environment into a student-led space, fostering self-directed learning, critical thinking, and collaboration among students. The personalised learning approach allows a shift to take place from a traditional, one-size-fits-all model of teaching and learning to placing students at the center of their educational experience. This shift was seen as crucial in developing students who are self-directed, engaged, and equipped to continue learning and growing in various contexts.

The project was motivated by the recognition that traditional methods that have shaped and influenced our educational system for decades are no longer fully equipped to prepare students for the demands, challenges and opportunities that stems from living in the contemporary world. A personalised learning approach can enhance student agency and improve outcomes in writing. The data was collected and analysed in a collaborative and iterative manner, following the action research approach. This approach involved identifying the problem; planning, and taking action; evaluating, and reflecting on the outcomes; and making changes accordingly. The latter enables the researcher to be an active participant in the research process and collect and analyse data while taking action. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. A mix of methods were used from various sources to measure the effectiveness of the project and inform the next steps. The data collection methods included observational research, semi-structured interviews, student achievement data, Google forms, Hapara analytics, photos, and videos. The data analysis methods included descriptive statistics, thematic analysis, and triangulation. It aimed to measure the effectiveness of the personalised writing programme in developing student agency and followed ethical guidelines established by the ethical review board and obtained informed consent from all participants in the study.

The analysis revealed several key findings that support the development of student agency through a personalised approach. The findings indicated that the personalised learning approach in writing had a positive impact on students' engagement, motivation, confidence, self-efficacy, ownership, and achievement in writing. Firstly, the project enhanced student agency by providing students with opportunities to set and monitor goals, reflect, collaborate, and learn from their peers, self-assess, and take on teaching roles. Secondly, it enhanced student engagement in writing by creating a student-centered and culturally responsive learning environment, where students felt valued, supported, and challenged. Next, it improved student achievement in writing by using clear exemplars and success criteria, and digital tools to address individual learning needs and progress. Finally, the project fostered self-efficacy and self-belief in writing by encouraging students to take ownership of their learning journey, celebrate their achievements, and overcome challenges. Students also expressed positive attitudes, enjoyment, and satisfaction in their writing experiences. They can benefit from having a voice and choice in their learning and from being co-designers of the curriculum.

It was revealed that personalised learning is emerging as the way forward for global education in the 21st century, as it shifts from a one-size-fits-all, teacher-led model to a student-centred, flexible, and tailored model (Stewart 2017). The system must fit the learner rather than the learner fit the system. For personalised learning and student agency to develop there needs to be a focus on culturally responsive pedagogy, student voice and goal setting, reflection, feedback, collaboration, and technology integration. There is importance in the role of the teacher. The teacher's role shifts to a facilitator and coach in learning to guide and support students' journeys. The establishment of effective student-teacher relationships are central to achieving an environment where personalising learning thrives. Teachers need to understand the student as a learner and as an individual. For teachers to be responsive to their students' learning needs, it will require them to know the learner and know what the learner needs to learn. Embracing and embedding culturally responsive pedagogy in practice, where relationship-based learning is central results in student achievement rising. Therefore, creating a family-like context where students experience a sense of belonging is pivotal. (Bishop, 2019).

The project's execution highlighted and concluded that the writing programme was responsive and flexible to the diverse needs and interests of the students, and that it supported the students to become active, collaborative, and self-directed learners. It is an effective and relevant way to enhance student learning and achievement in the 21st century. Insights and significance were provided for practice, demonstrating how personalised learning can be implemented in an innovative learning environment to enhance student agency and achievement. The project changed the practice of the researcher and teachers by shifting the pedagogical approach to be one that is student-centred, while building a culture of collaboration. It offers some implications and recommendations for future practice and research. To ensure personalised learning has an optimal impact on the student and their learning journey: continue monitoring and supporting student agency and personalised learning approaches in writing and other curriculum areas; evaluate the long-term impact of the personalised approach on student agency, achievement, and well-being; and expand the writing programme to include more students and teachers. The project contributes to the field of practice-based research by providing a practical and comprehensive example of how to design, implement, and evaluate a personalised learning approach in writing that develops student agency in an innovative learning environment. It will be useful to researchers and practitioners who are interested in developing student agency and personalised learning in their own contexts.

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About the author

Simone Shadwick, an educator with eight years of teaching experience in West Auckland, comes from Cape Town, South Africa. Her academic journey began at the University of Auckland, where she completed her Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Degree. This was followed by further studies at The MindLab and academyEX where she completed her postgraduate and Master's degree. Simone is deeply passionate about providing engaging and personalised learning experiences for learners. Central to her teaching philosophy is the importance of relationship-building; she firmly believes that the foundation of successful learning environment dynamics lies in the

strength of these connections. This is a cornerstone of her practice and essential for all students' success. Simone's approach to education emphasizes the significance of understanding and nurturing each student's individual needs and aspirations.

Place and Belonging - A Place-Based Learning Approach

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The purpose of this project was to design and implement a Place-based program for Year three and four students and teachers. The program aimed to integrate self-determined learning and digital technologies into the learning experience.

Wally Penetito (2009) emphasises that place-based education nurtures students' appreciation of where they live, its social history, and its natural settings. Schools demonstrating genuine mana recognise and respect their local context, while also acknowledging and honouring representatives from diverse places and cultures. This can only happen if schools and systems know their own identity, or what their whakapapa is about.

The main goals of the Project included:

Teacher Empowerment: To empower teachers through professional development in Place-based learning, integrating Digital technologies and Self-determined learning into their pedagogical practices.

Motivation Impact: The project aimed to investigate the impact of a Place-based approach on learner motivation, aiming to learn about the features of the local environment.

Learner Abilities: Identifying the skills required for learners to take ownership of their learning as self-determined learners.

I believe that Place-based learning has the potential to benefit all stakeholders in the education sector, creating a more engaged and empowered learning community. Place-based learning can be integrated across all curricular areas, nurturing learners, while strengthening ties with school and local surroundings.

With the Year Two and Year Three students transitioning to Year Three and Year Four 2023, a significant portion of schooling in 2020-2021 occurred at home during pandemic lockdowns. This disrupted their ability to connect face-to-face with the school and community. During my time in the Master of Contemporary Education (MCE) program, I was interested in the practice of Place-Based Education and how it could be applied in my context.

The action research unfolded through four iterative cycles. I led the professional development (PD) of Place-based Education, including aspects of Digital technologies, and Self-determined learning. As part of my literature review, I read of Malcolm Knowles (1984) who identified five assumptions about adult learning that supported how and why adults engage in the learning process. This helped me to gain perspective of how to approach sharing new knowledge to my team.

In the iterative cycles, students used effective questioning to extract information that sparked curiosity. I named by place-based project 'My Place and Belonging. In Te Ao Maori, the word turangawaewae relates to your identity and where you stand. Students were learning about the history of our context before we as a school community existed. In my Samoan culture, there is a metaphorical saying that describes how memories of my childhood in a bicultural setting are best encapsulated: "E fesili muli mai ia mua mai" which translates to "Ask the person who came first". This saying emphasises the importance of understanding and acknowledging the historical context and experiences that have shaped the present. Integrating curricula where place-based learning could be included, deepened understanding, and gave connecting ties for students and teachers in my cohort.

For data collection, I gathered qualitative data from the whole class, 16 Year Three and Four who provided consent were participants. I conducted interviews with three students and four teachers. The methods used for data collection included interviews, observations, student work, and surveys to evaluate

outcomes. I analysed the data through critical reflection, informing the next steps in iterative cycles, citing literature, and assessing the positive impact of Place-Based learning on student outcomes. Referencing Brown (2009) and Penetito (2012) in my literature review, the integration of Place-Based Learning utilised digital tools incorporating elements of self-determined learning and applying acquired knowledge to address real-life learning in maths and writing through topics related to the environment, such as water pollution, flora, and fauna of our area, and storytelling. I co-led a collaborative school-wide event, where my class partnered with a buddy class to present the story of our school's history to all stakeholders.

The data from teacher and student insights revealed that Place-Based lessons can improve engagement and learning. In alignment with the data analysed Penetito's key findings about place-based education are about knowing who you are and where you are from. It is about finding ways to be connected without losing the essence of place Tamasese (1993). Ministry of Education (2019) and Brown (2012) agree that a Place-based learning approach can integrate with the local curriculum. It encourages students to be responsible and strengthen their own identity of self.

While there is space for teachers and students to integrate Place-based learning, my observations, and student work indicated that planning and implementing Place as an integrated approach across curricular subjects does impact how learners receive knowledge. Knowles (1984) highlights the first principle of adult learning, which discusses the importance of adults being part of the planning and assessing of the learning experiences.

In my Change project, I was able to use literature to evidence how Place base learning can be utilised in a teaching environment. I had envisioned learning the Pepeha of my school in this project. Instead, I learned the Whakapapa of my school as did my students. We learned about what and who came before us. Using Place-based learning to immerse students in authentic experiences that were rooted in the school was of connection and relevance, that was honest and engaging. The essence of belonging, as understood by Tamasese (1993) in my Samoan context, transformed through iterative cycles of the Change project.

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About the author

Joyce is an experienced classroom teacher who teaches at a local Primary school in Auckland. Joyce is dedicated to establishing an inclusive learning environment marked by open communication and collaboration among students, their whanau, and the broader school community.

Born, raised, and educated in Aotearoa, she believes that creating a Place-based learning environment empowers students' sense of connection and belonging. Environments like these engage students to be curious, take risks, engage in problem-solving, and cultivate a passion for their learning journey.

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Personalised Learning and a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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This project aimed to enhance student engagement and achievement in reading for Year 6 students in a decile one school in Auckland. The primary focus involved implementing a personalised learning approach and incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy to address the challenges of low literacy levels and lack of student engagement, particularly among boys.

The study's goals were to measure the impact of personalised learning and culturally responsive pedagogy on student engagement and achievement in reading. This study has potential relevance for educators dealing with struggling readers or those interested in improving learning outcomes for Māori and Pasifika learners. It also has relevance for those interested in developing strong relationships with whānau and empowering them to support their child's learning journey.

A personalised learning approach was selected as an alternative to the traditional 'one-size-fits-all' model, emphasising student-led approaches and co-investment from both students and their whanau (Leadbeater (2005), Bolstad et.al (2012). It was also implemented as a solution to foster collaboration among students and teachers in a decile one Innovative Learning Environment (ILE).

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data, including running records, PAT data, surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, informed the interventions introduced to support personalised learning and culturally responsive practice. Data collected at the start of the year, mid-year and then at the end of the school year was used to analyse the effectiveness of a personalised learning and culturally responsive approach.

The Talanoa framework, a Pacific research methodology, played a crucial role in establishing high-trust relationships with parents and whānau. This framework facilitated culturally relevant data collection and effective collaboration, aligning with the study's focus on Pasifika cultural contexts. It incorporates four important values: Ofa/Love, Mafana/Warmth, Malie/Humour and Faka'apa'apa/Respect (Vaioleti, 2006). This methodology enabled data collection to occur in a way that was culturally relevant, appropriate, meaningful and useful.

The project involved implementing a personalised learning program. The student participants involved in the study were reading between 5 and 8 years of age. Key components included creating a Google site based on student interests, implementing a homework reading program involving parent participation, collaborating for Tuakana Teina sessions, and using culturally aligned texts in the literacy program. These interventions involved collaboration with another class, fostering continued collaboration with parents and utilising students as mentors, aligning with personalised learning and culturally responsive practice. The project aimed to foster student-led learning and align with contemporary educational approaches, with observed impacts on engagement and integration with the Manaiakalani pedagogy.

The project utilised the Action Research Model (Mcniff & Whitehead, 2002) involving cycles of data collection, reflection, and evaluation. Key steps included obtaining consent, using the Talanoa method for dialogue, collecting baseline data, monitoring and evaluating engagement, maintaining a digital journal for reflection, and presenting evidence through various means.

Data analysis revealed positive gains in reading and small improvements in PAT scale scores, indicating the effectiveness of personalised learning and whanau involvement. Out of the 15 students involved in the study, 10 students made gains of between 1 and 1.5 years progress in reading in a year. The data revealed that the greatest gains were made in the second half of the year during the implementation of the project, compared to the first half of the year.

The study supported literature indicating that personalised learning, when student-led and co-invested, enhances outcomes. Agile leadership, incorporating participant and stakeholder requirements, played a role in project success, highlighting the importance of knowing learners and using collaborative practices.

Personalised learning and culturally responsive pedagogy are intertwined and crucial for achieving successful outcomes, particularly for Māori and Pasifika students in literacy. Digital technology, integrated using the SAMR model, proved beneficial, enabling modification and redefinition stages in the learning process.

The project successfully navigated challenges, employed effective strategies, and utilised robust research methodologies to achieve its objectives. By combining personalised learning, culturally responsive pedagogy, and an action research model, the project contributed valuable insights into improving literacy outcomes for diverse learners, (particularly Māori and Pasifika learners) emphasising collaboration with families and communities.

Future plans include the creation of a Google site resource for whanau and continued engagement with the Manaiakalani COL (Community of Learning) initiative. The study emphasises the importance of effective leadership and collaboration for addressing student engagement and achievement, especially among Māori and Pasifika students.

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About the author

Sandy has 20 years of experience working as a primary school teacher at Pt England Primary School in Auckland. She is proud of her Niue culture and heritage and is a keen supporter of the Māori and Pasifika Language Weeks. slagitupu@gmail.com

Relational Leadership is the foundation for effective cross-cultural collaboration

Maila Alatasi

In a constantly changing educational landscape, school leaders are increasingly being challenged to not only strategically vision and plan the direction of their school in this evolving landscape but also still lead a school through the complexities of these changes and make decisions that meet the needs of the diverse people they lead and serve. The Educational Council state that 'Educational leadership is the practice of supporting others to make a positive difference to children's and young people's learning. It involves creating and sustaining the conditions known to enhance their learning. It requires the capability to work effectively with colleagues and other adults to support learning and to create new solutions and knowledge together. For those in positional leadership roles it also involves building and sustaining thriving teams and institutions that support ongoing professional learning' (Education Council, 2018b). The demanding nature of various priorities in the school environment makes building genuine relationships formed and built on a foundation of moments and experiences where there has been a reciprocity of respect, empathy and humility fostering trust within the team difficult because time is a luxury.

In this action research project I planned to implement culturally responsive culture of relations as defined by Bishop and Berryman (2006) to develop cross cultural collaboration in secondary school senior leadership teams. The desired impact of my project was to bring stronger awareness of one's self through a tool that could help leaders reflect on how their culture in all its complex and nuanced forms influence their understanding of their place in the world but also how they can best bring that to a team that they are collaborating with. Such an awareness of oneself would increase the open mindedness of leaders to explore the same cultural capital that others bring, interacting in dialogic learning to discover how each other's strengths can be best utilised through specific roles and responsibilities to achieve the shared goal and vision of the school. There is a Samoan saying that states 'E le tu faamauga se tagata' which literally translates to no person stands like a mountain meaning that we never stand alone and isolated – that we are part of a community that supports each other for the betterment of the community. Principals do not work effectively alone. They need the support of their senior leaders to be transformative in their priveleged positions to actively and intentionally create spaces where they can collaborate and draw out the best thinking, ideas and actions required to mobilise resources and lead people to achieve the vision of the school.

Grounded in constructivism as my research paradigm, (Creswell, 2003) I wanted to ensure that the methodology I used in talanoa and collaborative storying embodied my values of 'fa'aloalo' (respect) and the state of relations between the participants and I were one that sought to intentionally honour and 'teu le va' (Anae, 2001) or relational space. 'Teu le va' is a practice grounded in respect and humility and is a constant ongoing process not confined by time. My stories were interwoven with theirs having worked together previously, my unique position allowed me to contribute and engage in sense making of our experiences and stories together meaning that I was also viewing the data or collaborative storying from a subjective *and* objective lens. I had to be adaptive in my thinking and when I accepted that this allowed me the privileged position of being both a researcher and a participant, I could truly engage in the reciprocal giving and taking of storying, prompting or questioning each other as the interaction or talanoa progressed in understanding our shared experiences so that we could create new knowledge, generate new theories or pattern of meaning (Helu-Thaman, 2001; Creswell, 2003).

I was able to implement three iterative cycles of my change project, the data from each cycle informing the next. I interviewed eight senior leaders and observed various senior leadership meetings as a group, in smaller subgroups and one on one meetings with senior leaders and their direct reports. The interviewing evolved to collaborative storying where we engaged in a process of 'storying' our shared narrative of our leadership experiences particularly during the challenging times to identify the strengths of the team as well

as the deliberate acts of leadership that fostered a culture of collaboration. I transcribed these interviews and analysed the findings looking for common themes, patterns or experiences. I developed a framework: 'Cultivating a culture of cross-cultural collaboration' with strong foundations in Bishop and Berryman (2006) and Salazar and Salas', (2013, p.911) respective works as well as the data from each iterative cycle . Flowers can grow in the most non-ideal conditions, but they can flourish in the right environments. Each petal of the flower represented the 4 main important elements needed to cultivate a culture of collaboration: culture counts, power sharing, common vision/goal/purpose and learning is interactive and dialogic. The dark black lines that weave throughout the petals following an infinity pattern represent the interconnectedness and interdependence of each element through relational practice or leadership. It is lighter in some areas and bolder in some to represent the ebbs and flows of relationships that are constantly changing and evolving with time, context and enviornment. The middle point in which the bold lines flow together is the point in which teams have 'mauri ora' because relational practice is woven strongly throughout all four key elements to create effective cross culutural collaboration. Throughout the action research project I analysed the data on an area in the framework that the team needed strengthening and then identifying authentic ways that a relational approach and leadership practices could increase cross cultural collaboration by focusing on that particular petal in the framework.

Throughout the implementation of my project, the data that I collected and analysed, I was able to interweave the answers to my research questions with real examples of relational leadership practices that were identified and developed through the use of the artifacts as tools to strengthen genuine connectedness and relationships. In the literature, Nohe et al., (2013) stresses the importance of cultural context in followers' perceptions of an effective leader and the alignment of shared values. There is a strong perception that is supported by the leaders displayed behaviours and leadership style which increases a leader's influence. When analysing the data from the collaborative storying, observations, senior leadership workshop, talanoa with the Principal and survey data, I was able to draw 3 major conclusions:

- Genuine connectedness is foundational for meaningful relationships and purposeful collaboration
- The importance of cultivating opportunities:
- For positive relationship building practices to create a culture of cross-cultural collaboration
- For senior leaders to develop agency by being trusted to take risks in their leadership
- A common understanding of the collective goal must be established with the role of each leader clearly articulated to increase cross cultural collaboration

The data reflected positive changes in how space was created for participants to reflect on their own leadership practice, develop a growing consciousness and understanding through experiencing how some of the relational practices they trialled increased cross-cultural collaboration but also be able to articulate the values and qualities that make an effective senior leader equipping them with a tool to inform their expectations of themselves and each other as well as sustain a culture of collaboration within the senior leadership team. The framework developed to 'cultivate a culture of collaboration' creates the climate to be able to have safe conversations of accountability when one of the aspects is not being met and highlights how relational practice rooted in genuine connectedness and respectful interactions increases cross-cultural collaboration. Yes, it is about relationships but the change project has allowed me to probe further into the nature of these relationships and how our deliberate relational leadership practices can create strong synergies that promote a sense of mana orite and mauri ora amongst school leaders for greater collaboration to improve teacher pedagogy and practice and drive greater educational outcomes for all our students.

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About the author

I am an experienced and passionate educational leader. Currently, I am Director of the College at Southern Cross Campus in Māngere, Auckland where I have been in the role since 2018. Prior to my current role, I served at Massey High School in various middle and senior leadership positions focused on developing teacher practice and curriculum knowledge as well as the pastoral care and holistic wellbeing for our rangatahi. School leaders have influence to achieve better outcomes by creating more equitably and socially just schools. For those privileged to be at the table to affect change, it is our responsibility to work collaboratively to achieve better educational outcomes to grow a new future that brings hope for diverse learners so they too are able to thrive in this world. Email: malatasi2012@gmail.com

Project-Based Learning within the 6C's Framework.

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Start The purpose of the Project-Based Learning (PBL) change project is to foster a blended and collaborative learning environment in a Year 8 class, aiming to increase student agency, deepen understanding, develop higher-order thinking skills, and enhance problem-solving abilities - key 21st-century skills for success. This response addresses students' off-task behaviour by engaging them in a real-world problem: raising funds for a Year 8 camp.

Key goals include effective implementation of the project and evaluating its impact on students' success against the 6 C's learning framework (character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking). The project benefits primarily Year 8 students, equipping them with essential skills for a globalised world and providing education relevant to their real-world interests and challenges (Chalkiadaki, 2018). This approach emphasises quality over quantity in learning and encourages meaningful student connections and resource utilisation.

The identified problem addressed by the project is the increasing off-task behaviour among Year 8 students, such as playing games on devices and disrupting classes, likely due to disengagement and lack of purpose in their learning. The project encompasses a Year 8 class, focusing on developing their 21st-century skills through a PBL program centred around the real-world problem of fundraising for a camp. Spanning the academic term, it involves students, teachers, and possibly the wider school community. The main hypothesis is: "Implementing a PBL program in a Year 8 classroom enhances student engagement, leading to improved learning outcomes and reduced off-task behaviour."

The PBL change project in a Year 8 classroom was executed using an action research methodology (Cohen et al, 2018), focusing on enhancing student engagement and developing 21st-century skills. Here's a detailed breakdown of the project's implementation and evaluation processes:

We began with a brainstorming session addressing the real-world problem of fundraising for a Year 8 camp. This session encouraged creative thinking and problem-solving among students.

In the second phase, local entrepreneurs interacted with the students, providing insights into real-world challenges and achievements, thereby connecting the classroom learning with outside experiences.

Three main flexible milestones were collaboratively established with students, emphasising self-direction and autonomy in learning. Essential information and resources were made available on the class Google site, ensuring accessibility for all students, including those unable to attend classes. The project was segmented into smaller tasks to manage the learning process effectively. Students were involved in various activities, including business idea generation, market research, and learning about cost calculation and marketing strategies.

Students engaged in reflective practices to assess their learning strategies, strengths, and areas for improvement, following established educational guidelines. The project's effectiveness was assessed using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, field notes, and observations. The primary focus of the data collection was on student engagement, classroom interaction, collaboration, time management, and workload. The project was structured to run in two iterative cycles, allowing for continuous assessment and adaptation. Students were at the forefront, participating actively in brainstorming, decision-making, and execution of tasks, fostering a sense of ownership in their learning.

Teachers functioned as facilitators, guiding students through their learning journey, supporting them in their tasks, and ensuring a learner-centred approach. Emphasising problem-solving and practical

application, the action research methodology underscored the project. The project employed surveys, interviews, field notes, and observations for comprehensive data collection. Overall, the project was designed to adapt teaching practices to the evolving educational needs of students, aiming to enhance student engagement, foster responsibility, and develop essential 21st century skills.

In the PBL change project for a Year 8 class, data was analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods such as surveys, interviews, field notes, and observations. This analysis, distinguishing between raw data and meaningful evidence as per McNiff and Whitehead (2005), involved using AI tools to identify themes and assess feedback from stakeholders like students, teachers, and the school board. The findings were essential in assessing the project's effectiveness in creating a blended, collaborative learning environment and enhancing student agency.

The literature on PBL underscores its focus on student-centred approaches, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration through real-world, complex projects. The project's data analysis aligned with these aspects, particularly in student engagement and skill development. However, it also revealed unexpected challenges: diverse student responses to PBL's open-ended nature, collaboration difficulties, including uneven workload distribution, and the importance of real-world relevance and reflective practices in learning.

These insights demonstrate the project's alignment with established PBL principles while highlighting specific implementation challenges in a Year 8 classroom. The analysis contributed to understanding how to manage varied student needs and foster effective collaboration, indicating areas for future improvement in PBL application.

The PBL change project revealed significant impacts on student engagement, skill development, and fostering a collaborative learning environment. Key findings include the effectiveness of student-centred learning, the necessity to address diverse student needs with flexibility, the importance of real-world relevance, and the role of cultural responsiveness and authentic leadership (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Similar projects share these aspects but may differ in challenges faced. Future directions include broadening PBL's application, focusing on teacher training, and long-term impact studies. This project advances educational practices by highlighting adaptability, leadership, and inclusivity, offering valuable insights for educators, and illustrating PBL's potential in modern education.

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About the author

Nicola is about to start her teaching journey in Australia, helping on the startup of a new school that will open soon. Nicola has had experience in teaching both primary and secondary aged students and has developed a passion for teaching at the intermediate age. Nicola aims to empower students to improve academic quality and outcomes through fostering relationships and sound pedagogy with a focus on Project-Based Learning. She is motivated and committed to facilitating engaging Project-Based Learning opportunities for all her students. losttheknot@gmail.com

Problem based learning and creativity in year 4/5 students.

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What happens when you find your students employing the same strategies and solutions time and again, despite your efforts to promote originality? I had this problem with my year 4 & 5 students in 2023, wondering why the students repeatedly stayed with their original ideas when encountering a problem. Kampylis & Berki (2014) argued that creative thinking is the process of thinking which allows students to apply their imagination in order to generate and evaluate their ideas, questions, and hypotheses. Enhancing and developing their creative skills would hopefully accelerate their learning in various areas. Then I discovered Problem Based Learning.

The purpose of this study was to find what effect Problem Based Learning (PBL) had on creative thinking, with a sub question of how the digital delivery system of the PBL via a learning management system (LMS) affected engagement. The study employed PBL by means of 4 action research cycles over a course of 15 weeks (1.5 school terms) then compared pre and post test scores of creative thinking of 15 year 4 and 5 students at Tainui School, Dunedin. During the course of the study, I planned to create an adapted test for creativity based on the Torrance Test for Creative Thinking, which schools will be able to quickly apply in their schools, a Professional Learning Development course for teachers which will show how they can adapt practices to facilitate PBL, and a website that gives background, further knowledge, and links to other resources regarding creativity and PBL.

There were 2 hypotheses for this study, Problem-Based Learning will have an effect on the students creativity; and Digital delivery of the Problem-Based Learning will affect how it is received. By adapting the inquiry processes already implemented in the school to PBL, it would satisfy criteria for PBL set by Plucker & Nowak, (1999) who posit that "...the problem be ill-structured and complex, which requires students to search beyond the readily available information to solve the problem." (p. 69) Beginning the second term of the year, I changed from an inquiry based approach to the Problem Based Learning approach: Ask, Imagine, Create, Improve. This was based on Carlson & Bloom's (2005) phases of problem solving which were "...orienting, planning, executing, and checking" (p. 53), as well as another engineering learning module called the Wonder Project our team was involved with. Using the action research cycles allowed the PBL process to improve each iteration, which McNiff & Whitehead (2005) states that "...action research enhances [the teachers] ability to grow professionally, become self- evaluative, and take responsibility for their own practice" (p. 2) .

This research used mixed-methods, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data. This decision was made in response to Mills (2014) with a Quantitative-Qualitative research design, with the weight more skewed towards the quantitative data. This allowed the data from the Torrance test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) to take dominance in the findings, but to be influenced by participant interviews, observations and artefacts. Data in this research was collected through the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) pre-test and post-test, student interviews and student samples which were analysed for themes. These themes and data were investigated to see whether there was an effect on the students' creativity. Results showed a significant increase in both post test totals and mean scores, with a 164% increase from pre-test to post-test. There was a gain across all criteria, with significant increases in Originality and Resistance to premature closure, as well as an almost 50% increase in Abstractness of titles. This shows that PBL increases students' originality, and allows them to focus on their figures for longer, allowing for students to "...make the mental leap that makes original ideas possible" (Torrance, 2018, p. 3). Students found the LMS to have a considerably positive impact on their learning through the PBL process. Overwhelmingly, students wished to continue using the PBL process digitally which "...encourage[s]

creative processes as they allow information to be represented in a variety of modes, which other media and tools cannot offer" (Kampylis & Berki, 2014, p. 18).

The context of using PBL and its effect on creativity is relatively novel within Aotearoa schools, and especially primary schools. There have been some instances of PBL usage and research in secondary schools and universities, however the younger age of the students and the implementation of PBL into various aspects of the curriculum show how PBL can be used outside of its regular usage for tertiary higher learning. By showing that PBL can be implemented into a younger age bracket, the probability for future creativity gains is increased and will potentially flow into higher education with an end result of more creative members of our workforce.

The findings of this research clearly indicate that PBL has a positive effect on students' creativity, and using a LMS also has positive effects on the engagement of PBL. Future research may be beneficial in finding differences in gender regarding creativity, use of PBL in other curriculum areas, longitudinal research of creativity and whether it has an effect on their future schooling, or a deeper dive into use of creativity in Te Aō Māori. A larger sample size may reveal which assessment in the TTCT has the largest impact on creativity. Another example of a creativity test may yield different results. Alternatively, investigation into PBL and other 21st century skills, such as collaboration or critical thinking could be intriguing.

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About the author

Ross Bennett is a primary school kaiako based in Ōtepoti (Dunedin). He has taught most year levels in single cell and MLE collaborative environments, and enjoys the joys and challenges that spring up daily in classrooms. His experiences teaching across the motu over the years has broadened his horizons to trial and implement 21st century ideas and research to expand the experiences of his ākonga.

Mā tātou anō e hanga tō tātou whare. Together we will build our house.

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The project purpose was to intertwine elements of Te Ao Māori into the English Curriculum and provide meaningful experiences which engaged students. Te Whare Tapa Wha model provided a culturally holistic model for implementing this change.

The project's initial goal focused on the daily recitation of karakia incorporating Taha Wairua. The second goal saw the implementation of placebased learning in the library garden incorporating Taha Whenua, Taha Whanau and Taha Hinengaro. The third goal focused on Te Reo and English vocabulary extension incorporating Taha Hinengaro. The fourth goal focused on finding out which texts and activities engaged students the most. This incorporated Taha Hinengaro, Taha Ranginui.The fifth goal focused on students producing a tangible product which incorporated Taha Tinana.

The project's benefits included increased engagement, creativity, and enjoyment within the English Curriculum. The primary stakeholders were my students, myself, my colleagues, and whānau.

Escalating absenteeism rates and declining literacy levels among secondary students underscored the need to explore alternative, culturally relevant approaches to engage and instruct students effectively. My project centred around my year 9 class and the focus group consisted of 11 students, 9 of these students were Maori. The project was conducted over terms 2 and 3. Bevan- Brown (2005) noted that Māori children achieve success when their identity, culture, and language are valued. This ideology helped form my hypothesis that a more culturally holistic responsive approach could be beneficial to both my students and teaching practice.

The methodology adopted for this project centred on Action Research. Drawing from Kemmis and McTaggart's (1992, p.10) framework, the project followed a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The primary focus was to cultivate a culturally responsive learning environment.

The project's initial goal focused on the daily recitation of karakia, incorporating actions to reinforce the significance of Māori tikanga and language within the English Curriculum. Beginning the day with Te Reo Māori greetings and expressions of gratitude set the tone for the cultural integration within my classroom. Subsequently, the project expanded to develop the library garden into a whare wananga, facilitating regular planting, reading, and learning activities. This initiative was complemented by a streamlined effort to extend Te Reo and English vocabulary through rock painting, planting, and interactive quizzes (Kahoots). These practical activities aligned with the overarching goal of students producing tangible products that showcased their nature/place-based learning experiences. Lastly, the project aimed to assess the most engaging student activities and texts by utilising tools such as Kahoots, Google Forms, and direct observations to monitor student engagement.

Utilising the Action Research methodology in tandem with the Te Whare Tapa Wha model served as the foundation for shaping the Te Ao Māori approach and refining teaching methodologies. I used iterative cycles, strategically planning and designing an array of culturally responsive activities to elevate student engagement and learning experiences. The evaluation of student engagement primarily relied on various metrics such as observing engagement, assessing work completion, gauging participation levels and evaluating student feedback.

To gather comprehensive data, a range of methods was employed. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through tools like Google Forms, Kahoots, students' submitted work, Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT), and examinations. Additionally, visual documentation through photographs and videos captured student activities and documented the project's progression. Moreover, observational data

gleaned from the insights of both the Specialist classroom teacher and the Head of faculty contributed to a multi-faceted evaluation of the project's impact and implementation process.

Statistical information from the 2022 NCEA Te Reo Matatini me te Pāngarau Literacy and Numeracy Pilot Evaluation, helped inform my practice about future literacy challenges for Maori students. My baseline data started with PAT reading results, google form responses, kahoots, student work and observational data. I compared this baseline data to data collected at later intervals. My PAT data revealed a solid baseline in reading comprehension for my project group but the student google feedback forms also identified low reading engagement as a potential problem.

I collected baseline data on student views on the integration of Te Ao Māori concepts into the English Curriculum which tied in with my purpose statement. Later data showed positive feedback on the integration of Te Ao Maori concepts and improved Māori and English vocabulary by Term 4. Further data also showed that the introduction of a new karakia (prayer) improved students' confidence, and this supported the literature by Metge, (1983) on the benefits of memory, rote learning and group learning. Quantitative and Qualitative data gathered through student observations and feedback showed students experiencing enjoyment and engagement when involved in creative and practical activities such as planting and rock painting. The implementation of these activities was influenced by Krueger's ideology (2022) that creativity leads to increased emotional development, increased brain power, greater problem solving and motivates those less academically inclined students. The main findings drawn from this analysis confirmed the importance of Mason Durie's culturally holistic model as a starting point.

Te Whare Tapa Wha is an effective foundation model to use when integrating Te Ao Maori into the English curriculum. Focusing firstly on student wellbeing helped student engagement, achievement and enjoyment. A study by Rix and Bernay (2014) reinforced my findings.

My next steps will be to continue to use the Whare Tapa Wha model in my integration of Te Ao Maori into the English area. I will include this model in my planning for all my junior classes in my 2024 practice. Other educators can ensure their programmes are more holistically culturally responsive by including all elements from Whare Tapa Wha in their practice.

Mā tātou anō e hanga tō tātou whare.
Together we will build our house.

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Creating a culturally responsive learning management system (LMS) of Māori visual culture.

Katrina Lilly

There have been moments during my teaching career where I have been expected to teach content that I am not familiar with. When that content is a culture that I have little to no experience of, I feel out of my depth and disingenuous. Although I whakapapa Māori - I am Ngāi Tahu - throughout my life I have experienced a prominently pakeha upbringing. I have very little experience of te ao Māori and how to teach from this perspective in a mainstream visual art environment. I know from conversations with other art educators that they share the same concerns; Māori art and Māori visual culture are not currently being taught in a culturally responsive manner. Many visual art educators do not feel confident teaching Māori art without the proper training, knowledge or experience of Māori culture, yet as part of the 'Standards for the Teaching Profession' teachers are required to "demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand" (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2023). The result is that when trying to demonstrate our commitment, we sometimes inadvertently misrepresent Māori art and Māori visual culture in the classroom.

To address this issue, I aimed to produce a learning management system (LMS) of culturally responsive resources to assist in the teaching and learning of Māori visual culture. I collaborated with Tā moko artist Rawiri Horne, local Māori community, art educators and Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators ANZAAE. To gain the knowledge, build the relationships and develop the networks I needed to complete this project as authentically as possible I studied simultaneously towards a certificate in Māori and Indigenous Art with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Studying Māori art in a Māori learning environment gave me many opportunities to reflect on the best way to create a learning management system. The other tauira in my class and tutor Rawiri have been key to the success of this project. The final deliverable is an online learning management system based on tā moko (traditional Māori tattooing). It is called 'Pae Ringa Toi' and is available to all who would like to learn about this element of Māori art.

The design of the site reflects elements of Māori visual culture in the sense that the learner is tasked to 'climb the mountain - piki te maunga'. The mountain is created from the niho taniwha design, the teeth of the taniwha; a triangle pattern used in weaving that represents weaving new and better things. The repetitive triangles in the pattern symbolise whakapapa, stories and history passed down over time which I thought was appropriate to use in this context. Each of the five sprints the learner undertakes is termed poutama or 'step'. It comes from the stepped pattern found in tukutuku panels and weaving. It symbolises genealogies and also levels of learning and achievement. As the students progress through each poutama they learn more about tā moko until they reach the top and are tasked to create their own artwork based on the knowledge they have acquired on their journey up the mountain. I wanted the site to be easy and fun to navigate with an element of gamification. The name 'Pae Ringa Toi' roughly translates to Māori art platform.

Creating the site was not just about finding a way to bring Māori visual art into mainstream education, but also how teachers could use it to build their cultural competency through shared learning experiences. Paulo Freire commented on the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor in the classroom and the importance of learning through discussions and not dictation, "Education is suffering from narration sickness" he writes, "Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information (Freire, 1970, p.69-77). He also recognised the value of student - teacher relationships and how learning from one another's culture and lived experiences fosters a positive learning environment, "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students"(Freire, 1970, p.70). Inspired by

Friere's insight, the ethos of this LMS when used in the classroom is that the teacher removes themselves as the authority of this cultural knowledge and places themselves alongside the students. As both parties learn together from authentic holders of this knowledge (Māori artists) via pre recorded video resources they undertake a learning journey together. If the LMS is used in this way then it can serve a dual purpose; the teacher can undertake PLD on Māori art and Māori visual culture and do this during their normal contact time in the classroom.

　　The answer to this wicked problem was not going to be answered with one project, but 'iti nei iti nei ka taea' - 'small consistent steps amount to success'. What I have learned during this time is that building cultural competency is a lifelong learning journey for those who truly commit to the kaupapa. The experiences needed to shift a mindset do not come from just reading text or watching videos, but from real life cultural experiences, discussions and continuing to integrate another culture into your everyday life.

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Ko Ōtautahi te hau kainga
He kaiako ahau kei te kura tuarua Mairehau
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　　Kat lives in Ōtautahi with her family and is of Ngai Tahu and Scottish descent. She made the move to teaching Visual Arts after spending many years overseas working as a photographer. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, camping, all forms of art and craft, music, gardening and some sports. katrina.lilly@gmail.com
　　Link to Pae Ringa Toi - Tā moko

Differentiating Year 9 Religious Education

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A problem facing many Catholic Secondary schools, is the high percentage of Year 9 students bringing no or little prior knowledge of Catholic schooling, or the Catholic Church with them. Many students are unfamiliar with a Catholic environment, which makes it difficult for them to gain a true sense of belonging to a Catholic school. More students are coming to a Catholic Secondary school with no prior Catholic knowledge which forces Religious Education teachers to think and teach differently (Groome, 2014, Gleeson & O'Neill, 2018). For this change project, my goal was to create a differentiated Year 9 Religious Education programme to help all students to develop a sense of belonging to a Catholic school and create a programme where all students can grow in their knowledge. My students would then feel more connected to our school, which would bring positive results both inside and outside the classroom. Success in a Religious Education classroom can improve success in a wider Catholic school environment (Pollefeyt, 2021).

Students coming into a Catholic school for the first time in Year 9 can often feel confused and isolated when placed in a class with students with a previous Catholic schooling background. For this project, 140 Year 9 students were placed into one of three differentiated classes. These classes were designed for students with: no previous Catholic school experience, two to three years of Catholic school experience or eight years of Catholic school experience. Groupings were based on prior knowledge, not academic ability. By differentiating Year 9 Religious Education, each student was given the support that they needed to either introduce them to the Catholic faith or extend their current knowledge. Students stayed in these groups for three terms, however, there was some movement when needed, either instigated by the student or the teacher. The teachers of these groups were tasked with creating lessons, activities, and resources to help students to learn the Achievement Objectives of the Year 9 Religious Education curriculum, as well as learn the values of our Catholic school community. Students in all three classes were taught the same Achievement Objectives and sat the same summative assessments but were supported in different ways depending on their familiarity with the Catholic school environment.

Literature regarding the teaching of Religious Education states clearly that care must be taken to ensure that classroom teaching meets the needs of each and every student and that all students are given the chance to succeed (Gleeson et al., 2018). Literature also states that students must not be limited when placed into groups, instead they need to be given every chance to be challenged academically or given access to higher level learning (Bishop, 2010; Ellison & Hallinan, 2004). All groups had access to academically challenging work and were all given the chance to succeed.

The data collected largely comprised of surveys, completed three times throughout the project. The surveys were filled in by both students and the teachers involved in teaching the differentiated classes. A focus group was also formed early in the project and met throughout the year to share their thoughts. Student voice was collected anecdotally by all teachers involved. While not a primary focus for the project, assessment data was collected and analysed.

The data showed that all involved were supportive of the differentiated classes. Student voice overwhelmingly commented on feeling safe to ask questions, safe to make mistakes and to be supported in their learning. Student voice also reinforced the main project goal of helping students to feel supported in a

Catholic school environment, regardless of their prior knowledge. Students were asked at the end of each iteration if they wanted to continue to be in differentiated groups, with the vast majority answering in the affirmative.

Overall, this change project proved to be successful in supporting Year 9 students, both those new to a Catholic school environment, and those with some prior experience. Students were supported in their differentiated classes and saw their knowledge grow. Evidence of knowledge growth could be seen in summative assessment data, as well as involvement and engagement in the Religious Education classroom and in the wider school environment. The model that was developed for this project can be used and adapted in many Religious Education classrooms in New Zealand. Different numbers of groups can be created depending on the needs and number of students, and the timetable constraints. This project showed the importance of building relationships with students to ensure that their previous knowledge is celebrated, and that their immediate needs are met (Bishop, 2019).

While the students responded positively to the differentiated model and found success within the Year 9 Religious Education classroom, the follow-up for this project could explore the success of these students throughout their time in a Catholic Secondary school in both the Religious Education classroom and wider to provide further evidence of the success of this model.

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Toitū te Reo ma te Ako-ā-Tākaro

Tangihia Pouwhare

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I whakamātautauhia te Ako-ā-Tākaro hei whakawhanake te ako whakatere reo māori a ngā tamariki tau tuatahi i te kura. He kura Te Aho Matua (2008) to mātou kuratuatahi, nā reira, me mōhio te akonga ki te reo māori hei reo whakawhitiwhiti, hei reo pātai, hei reo whakamārama, hei reo māhorahora mōna. Koia nei te take i tīpako au i tēnei āhuatanga whakaako, i te mea, ko te katoa he reanga kōhungahunga, ka rua, ko te nuinga o rātou kāhore e mārama, kāhore e mōhio hoki ki te korero te reo māori.

Mo tēnei kaupapa rangahau i rapu whakaaetanga i raro i ngā tikanga o Te Aho Matua me Katoa Ltd(nd) kia mōhio ai ngā mātua o ngā ākonga ki te ngaiotanga o te whakahaere, kia mōhio ai hoki ngā tāngata whai panga ki te kaupapa he rongoa kei te haere mo tēnei take nui a te kura.

I waihanga hōtaka hei whakauru te ako-a-tākaro ki te akomanga ma te hoki ano ki Te Whāriki (2017) me ētahi kairangahau e pā ana ki te ako reo tuarua. Na te mea i tae mai te akonga me tōna reo o te kainga me whai whakaaro au mo tōna ahurea, mo tōna reo e mōhiotia nei ia. I whakataki i te rauemi Pouaka Auaha ia rua wīki, he rauemi hangarua hei whakatenatena i te akonga ki te waihanga i tāna e hiahia ana, ki te taha hoki o ōna hoa e hiahia ana. Kei te akonga te tikanga, ko tā mātou ngā kaimahi ko te mātiro, te mātakitaki, te whakarongo ka mutu ka tuhia ta mātou i kite, i rongo hei waihanga hōtaka kia pakari ake te reo māori a te ākonga. I whai wāhi ai ngā ākonga ki te taupānga Tinkercad me Mahimaina ki te waihanga taputapu, ao rānei hei whakariterite i tā rātou i hangaia ma te Pouaka Auaha.

Ko ētahi hua i puta mai i muri mai te mahi tuatahi ko te hiahia a ngā tamariki ki te tākaro hoki i te wai, ki te tākaro tunu kai, me te hanga whare. I toro atu ki roopū Pouwhirinaki o Te Huinga Raukura ki Manurewa hei pūtea tautoko ki te hoko ngā rauemi kia pai ai ngā ākonga ki te whāia i tā rātou e hiahia ana.

Ko te Hanganga i te Reo Matatini a Selby-Law (2020) i whakahaere ngātahi me te ako-a-tākaro kia pai ai te kohikohi raraunga ine mo te pakaritanga o te reo māori a te ākonga. Ko te aromatawai a te kura, ko tētahi wāhanga o Te Hau Ngāherehere e kī a nei, He Kōrero Mōna Ano (Te Manatū Mātauranga o Tūhoe,nd) me te Mātiro Ākonga mo te kohikohi raraunga kounga.

I whakahaere te katoa o te ako-a-tākaro i ngā ahiahi, e rua ngā rā o te wīki mo ngā wīki e ono. Ko te hōtaka a Selby-Law i whakahaere ia ata o te wīki mo ngā wīki tekau. I runga ano i ngā tātaritanga i kite au i te pakaritanga ake o te Hanganga i te Reo Matatini a te ākonga ki tērā o te puna reo o te Ako-ā-Tākaro. Heoi ano, he maha ake ngā wā i whai wāhi ai te akonga ki te Hanganga i te Reo Matatini i te Ako-ā-Tākaro. Ko tētahi kitenga tāku o te Mātiro Ākonga, ko te pakaritanga o te mahi ngātahi, ko te whaiwhakaaro, ko te tautoko, ko te tuakana teina, o ngā ākonga ki a rātou ano ki a mātou ngā kaimahi hoki.

Ko te Kaiārahi Tuturu e whakapono ana ki a ia ano, ki tana mahi. E ai ki a George mā (2007), na tētahi āhua pāmamaetanga ki a ia ka toko ake te whakaaro ki te rapu rongoā hei whakatika, me te rapu hoa haere e ngākau nui ana ki te āwhina i tana kaupapa. Ko tētahi atu āhua o te kaiarataki tūturu, ko tōna āhuatanga whanonga, me tōna āhuatanga ake he āhua māhorahora ahakoa te kaupapa, e ōrite ana, ehara i te tangata kanohi rua. Ka mutu he tangata whakamana i ētahi atu. Ko au tēnei, ehara taku toa takitahi he toa takitini.

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Ko wai au?

Ko Te Tāhuhu o Haokitaha te pae maunga
Ko Maringi-a-Wai te awa
Ko Tuhoe te iwi
Ko Ngāti Koura te hapu
Ko Papakainga te marae
Ko Kourakino te Whare Tīpuna
Ko Ngā Tamatoa te Wharekai
Ko Tangihia Pouwhare tēnei e mihi ana, e mihi ana.

Tēnā koe e te kaipānui. I tīmata ai taku hikoi ki te rapu mātauranga māori i āhau i Te Kohanga Reo i te tīmatanga o tēnei rautau. I reira au ako ai i te reo māori me ōna āhuatanga katoa hei poipoi te whanau ki ngā taonga tuku iho o ngā tīpuna puta noa i te motu.

Tekau tau i muri mai, ka whāia te tohu Kaiako i raro i te maru o Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, a, ka whakawhiwhi tūnga ki taku kuratuatai Te Aho Matua i Tāmaki Makaurau.

Kua noho au hei kaihautū i te reanga teina o te kura nei na taku whakapono ki te āhua o te tamaiti e whakawhiti mai ana i te wharekōhungahunga ki te kura tuatahi. E whakapono ana au hoki ki tēnei mea te mātauranga. Ko te mātauranga mo te katoa, heoi, ma te reo māori a mātauranga māori e kawea atu ki ngā tau e tū mai nei.

Ā, kāti i kōnei.

Integrating Gamification and Universal Design for Learning to enhance student engagement

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The impetus for my project was to tap into students' gaming interests to enhance their engagement in learning, based on well-researched teaching principles and practices in my classroom and the Technology Centre where I teach. Students from eight neighbourhood schools come to us for their Technology Curriculum once a week for half a day. Generally, students show great enthusiasm for hands-on "creating" and "making" in Technology, but their interest in the theoretical aspects is typically lower. While our experienced teachers can maintain good rapport with students, the traditional front-of-the-classroom teaching approach for the theoretical aspects has led to some classroom management challenges. To address this, I introduced gamification for theory learning in my Coding and Robotics class as part of my project.

My literature review has led me to this research question: How can teachers tap into students' gaming interest to boost engagement through Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?

The decision to tap into students' gaming interest in my research question was primarily motivated by the increasing number of gamers in our classrooms (Pektas & Kepceoglu, 2019). On the other hand, I am equally aware that parents and caregivers of students may have concerns about the potentially addictive nature of games. These concerns are not unfounded and educational researchers have cautioned that gamification of learning would not always yield the desired impact when it lacks a theoretical framework. Hence this underpinned my motivation to explore gamification within the framework of UDL. UDL is a pedagogical approach characterised by a comprehensive and promising set of instructional design principles that have gained increasing recognition for their efficacy in accommodating the diverse needs for students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Robinson & Wizer, 2016).

While many studies have individually investigated gamification and UDL as separate educational approaches, there is a noticeable gap in the literature when it comes to their combined synergy (Majdoub, 2022). Though my action research was carried out with a small group of students, I believe I have shed light on the collaborative potential of integrating gamification and UDL in education and possibly laid the groundwork for future research in New Zealand.

My AR project was primarily focused on the students in one of my Coding and Robotics classes. While including two additional classes from other partnership schools was a possibility, my principal had conveyed a preference for restricting the research's target participants to our own school's students. My principal also suggested that my project should be open to Year 6 students. In the middle of Term 2, my project started off with ten girls and five boys, ranging in age from 10 to 12 (Year 6 to 8) and the class was scheduled to take place every Thursday afternoon. These students' parents gave written consent for their children to participate in my study, and they were told that even if their children didn't want to participate, they could still be part of the class.

In my research project, data was gathered through the use of survey forms, my reflective diary, classroom observations, interviews, and quizzes to gauge student understanding. Research claims that combining different data collected methodically from different sources at various iterations of my project

offers a basis for drawing conclusions using a triangulation technique that boosts the validity and reliability of my research findings.

Contemporary multimedia gamification platforms deployed in my change project are Blooket and Kahoot!. These two platforms were selected mainly because they offered educators free access and had an excellent collection of pre-made quizzes created by other educators. The data gathered in my change project indicates these multimedia gamification platforms are highly effective in enhancing behavioural engagement and stimulating mental functions (Pektas & Kepceoglu, 2019).

My theory learning website for coding and robotics designed based on UDL which is a paradigm for designing instructional and learning environments that can be "customized and adjusted for individual needs" (Robinson & Wizer, 2016) is one of my project's significant deliverables. This learning website has a comprehensive range of learning modalities - reading materials, YouTube videos, worksheets, research-based activities, and gamified quizzes. It was designed to involve students in deciding on what and how they learn that resonates with UDL principles and underscores the value of student agency in shaping meaningful learning experiences. Though my research is centred on the Coding & Robotics domain, I believe that the principles underpinning the website are versatile and can be applied across other disciplines.

In addition, the data collected from students' responses through my action research clearly demonstrated that gamified learning methods like Blooket and Kahoot! have a positive impact on the behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement, three key principles of UDL. Furthermore, my research has also shown that students have described their learning experiences through gamification as 'fun'. The concept of 'fun', fostering a state of complete engagement (flow) and contributing to holistic well-being aligns with the culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers can therefore create culturally relevant and engaging learning experiences that resonate with their students' identities and cultural backgrounds through integrating gamification and UDL.

I also hope that my reflection, suggesting that kickstarting a course with a gamified activity is potentially a best practice strategy for teachers to immediately capture students' interest and excitement. This can set a positive tone for the rest of the course and influence other teachers to experiment with similar approaches when introducing new topics or courses.

In conclusion, my learning journey into gamification has not only deepened my understanding of its potential benefits, the need to address its potential concerns but also the significance of student autonomy and enjoyment in learning. These insights have reshaped my educational practice, leading to a more inclusive and engaging approach that aligns with UDL principles.

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About the author

Born in Singapore and completed her tertiary education in New Zealand, Yong Ai currently works as a team leader for a Technology Centre located in Christchurch. Previously, she led the digital technologies department in a high school in Auckland before she moved to Christchurch about three years ago.

Her master's project was on how to integrate gamification with Universal Design for Learning to enhance the learning of diverse students in our classrooms.

Outside school, Yong Ai enjoys travelling and keeping fit in her "living room gym". Her passion is to make a positive impact on every child that she has the privilege of reaching out to, both within her workplace and beyond.

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Levelling Up In Writing

Measuring the impact of a collaborative and gamified approach to sentence level writing

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This master's level research project arose in response to a decline in writing achievement, both nationally in New Zealand and within my own kura. Focusing on Year 5/6 ākonga and kaiako, the goal was to find out whether a gamified and collaborative sentence-level writing framework could enhance teacher knowledge and foster student success.

The project aimed to assess the impact of an engaging and explicit sentence-level instructional writing framework on ākonga understanding. Goals focused on analysing data to evaluate the effectiveness of sentence level writing, implementing collaborative writing instruction, enhancing ākonga engagement through gamification, and measuring application across other curriculum areas.

The research employed an action research design to investigate the impact of the project. Utilizing Kemmis and McTaggart's action research methodology (1988), the project unfolded over 15 weeks through three cycles integrating collaboration, gamification, and professional development opportunities. Quantitative data from pre/post surveys and Correct Writing Sequence assessments, along with qualitative insights from observations, field notes, gamified analytics, and focus group interviews, were triangulated to support project outcome findings. The methodology ensured ethical practices, including informed consent and confidentiality. The iterative nature of the action research facilitated ongoing adjustments in response to kaiako observations and ākonga feedback. A rigorous and comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis was employed in the hope that outcomes would inform teaching practices, enhance teacher knowledge, and elevate student understanding.

In analysing the project's outcomes, the project demonstrated degrees of success in achieving its goals:

Sentence level learning: The project created a shift in student understanding at the sentence level. This was supported by Correct Writing Sequence (CWS) data showing improvement in sentence and punctuation effectiveness and accuracy. Positive shifts in qualitative responses within survey and focus group data also supported this success. However, questions remain about the depth of content embedding for long-term recall, prompting additional opportunities for consolidation within later learning design. Participants also expressed a desire for more practice and repetition to solidify their learning within this area.

Collaboration: While it ultimately proved challenging to accurately evaluate the impact collaborative practice had on the success within sentence level understanding, there is evidence that peers supported one another to build content knowledge. However, a key take away revealed that successful collaboration requires additional time to develop the skills required to effectively succeed in partner and group work. Challenges in collaboration, such as turn-taking and dominance, were encountered, highlighting the need for ongoing exploration of collaborative learning's role in sentence-level understanding.

Gamification: While the empirical evidence on the direct connection between ākonga outcomes and gamification again remained inconclusive, the use of the Blooket platform provided a highly motivational experience for learners. This judgement was supported by qualitative survey and focus group data. Gamification was also found to support content learning through opportunities for instant feedback. Adjustments were required to subsequent cycles to address time challenges and question complexity, emphasising the importance of aligning gamification components with a particular target audience's cognitive needs.

Overall, the findings indicate positive outcomes in ākonga ability to produce well-structured and accurate sentences, highlighting the potential of a collaborative and gamified approach in enhancing sentence-level writing skills. Ongoing research is recommended to explore the sustainability of these improvements over the long term. The impact of these findings shed light on direction for pedagogical practice in three key areas: sentence-level writing, collaboration, and gamification.

Sentence-Level Writing: The study underscores the significant impact of explicit teaching in sentence-level writing on ākonga writing ability, emphasising the necessity of following a structured lesson progression. This aligned with findings from Graham and Saddler (2005), and Saddler et al. (2018), highlighting how explicit teaching of sentence-level syntax generates significant gains for learners. For this researcher it highlights a newfound awareness of the importance of sentence-level writing in their own practice and expresses a commitment to advocating its adoption within the broader schoolwide writing program. Ongoing support, reflection, and regular recapitulation are deemed essential for applying this knowledge across the curriculum and to ensuring long-term retention. While it wasn't identified in the literature, a trajectory across the primary years should support an incremental skills development approach and support embedding of knowledge.

Collaboration: The project delved into collaborative practices, revealing that successful collaboration requires additional time allocation within teaching sessions. Educational practitioners should adapt their practice to accommodate this need and gain greater awareness of activities suited to collaborative knowledge co-construction versus individual learning. The study emphasises the importance of developing collaboration skills over time and the impact of relational trust on collaborative learning outcomes. The finding that collaborative partners closer in ability range are more effective challenges random grouping approaches, suggesting a need for strategic grouping. This supported research by Saddler, Behforooz, and Asaro (2008), and Talib and Cheung (2017), which highlighted the positive impact of collaborative pairs with closer ability matches during sentence combining interventions.

Gamification: The project identifies gamification as a highly engaging means of delivering learning for ākonga. Careful selection of platforms, game modes, and consideration of cognitive load are highlighted as crucial factors within gamification implementation. This supports findings by Gonzales (2015) and Dicheva et al. (2015) emphasising the importance of well-designed gamification elements tailored to the needs of a target audience. The research also underscores a need for explicitly teaching collaborative strategies within gamified contexts.

The study contributes to current pedagogical practice within the researched context and for primary-level kaiako. It emphasises the importance of explicit teaching in sentence-level writing, urging a collective and systematic trajectory approach within schools. Collaboration is recognized as a cornerstone of innovative pedagogical practices, requiring explicit teaching of collaborative skills and trust-building. Engagement, closely linked with collaboration, is explored in the context of gamification, revealing its

potential to meet both behavioural and cognitive demands in learning design. The findings advocate for the integration of gamification as a platform for motivation and critical reflection in learning.

The research project acknowledges challenges and opportunities within collaborative and engaging educational initiatives, paving the way for future research endeavours and pedagogical innovations. This will enable collaboration and engagement to become transformative agents in meaningful learning experiences, rather than mere buzzwords in educational contexts. The study encourages continued exploration in these areas to address writing standards and make learning relevant and stimulating for ākonga at all levels within schools.

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About the author

Noel McClements is a Year 5/6 kaiako originally from Ireland, and now living in Nelson. He has been teaching primary aged ākonga for 18 years in Auckland and Nelson and is the lead teacher for Literacy within his kura. Noel is passionate about life-long learning and is committed to finding ways to bring engaging pedagogy to support the delivery of essential components of the literacy curriculum. When not doing this, he will be found covered in sawdust in his wood workshop. noelmcclements@gmail.com

Hybrid Learning In Education

Don McLean

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Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption to education, the concept of hybrid learning became front and centre for kaiako and ākonga. With little experience in this area, schools found their own way through the development of hybrid programmes that allowed students to access their learning from home whilst isolation restrictions were in place.

In my research project I wanted to investigate hybrid learning further. I could see the opportunities of it not just as an emergency measure when school closes, but as a way forward where learning becomes ubiquitous and transparent.

I identified five key goals for my project:
- Review current practices against some key pedagogical frameworks and approaches.
- Based on research, develop a new hybrid model which reflects 21st century pedagogy.
- Evaluate digital platforms for hybrid learning.
- Employ various tools, including surveys of kaiako and student voices, to measure the level of engagement in the hybrid model.
- Lead staff in a series of professional development sessions.

Our first iterations of hybrid learning tended to be teacher driven, but as it evolved teachers attempted to introduce more student focused elements. Despite this, a study into hybrid learning carried out by Derek Wenmoth on behalf of the Ministry of Education (2022) identified a number of key areas where our hybrid programmes fell short.

After spending a great deal of time evaluating current hybrid practices and looking at findings from Wenmoth's research, I identified a number of areas I felt our current programmes were lacking. Areas such as equity, pedagogy and differentiation across our school. My ideas were informed by research and by a series of surveys and discussions groups held at each cycle of the action research process. The initial cycle was the largest one, it focused on our current practice, what the research was saying as a point of comparison and what both participant groups were saying about their experience.

The research allowed me to really delve into the key identified areas. A lack of pedagogical structure within hybrid learning programmes was a major factor behind students' lack of engagement and connection. My research into Place Based Education (PBE) provided a pedagogical platform well suited to a hybrid approach. It required teachers to ensure work be relevant and authentic to the student's "Place". Cresswell (2009) provides a definition of place as more than a location but considers the concept of a 'sense of place'. It also made me consider the concept of hybrid learning as being something that isn't simply an online platform to access learning. I considered our senior camp at Golden Bay earlier in the year and how the teachers had woven the history and pūrākau into the pre-camp programme so when the children arrived in Golden Bay (hybrid location) they found their sense of place and drew on this prior knowledge.

With this research in mind I shaped a hybrid learning rubric. This focused on all the key elements identified through my research and created a tool teachers could use to measure their programmes against.

With the redefinition of the concept of hybrid learning to include the concept of a hybrid location, I redeveloped Wenmoth's Hybrid Learning Model (2022). His model focused on the online platform as a key hybrid component. In my model, the online platform became the bridge between the physical classroom and the hybrid location. That location could be home, camp, the museum, or the marae. The digital platform becomes the centre point where collaboration happens.

Collaboration was a big area of my research. I could see that the term collaboration was used a great deal but neither ākonga or kaiako could clearly define it. In surveys and, in particular, the discussion forums, it was obvious that there was confusion between cooperation and collaboration. I used Griffiths et al. (Pg 74, 2021) collaborative building blocks as the starting point of what collaboration should look like. During my first hybrid learning workshop, we had a lengthy discussion around collaboration. This was reinforced in the kaiako feedback survey following the workshop.

Using the hybrid model, I worked with our senior syndicate to develop a unit of study that would incorporate many of the concepts I had researched. It was called My Whakatū and focused on a PBE, where students learnt at school and in a hybrid location, in this case an abandoned café in central Nelson. Students worked on the Google Classroom platform with peers. They evaluated the city's strengths and weaknesses and sought feedback from their whānau on how they saw their city and what drew them to Nelson. This created a great deal of engagement from students, whānau and in the local community, even making it into the local newspaper.

Connecting and engaging with whānau was one challenge I feel I wasn't able to fully address within the time frame of this year. Although we did get some good engagement with our "My Whakatū" study, I feel we need to spend more time with Kaiako and whānau defining what engagement would look like. During the lockdowns this was defined as parents helping students with home learning, which was quite unsuccessful. Rather than having parents role as the "teacher at home", we need to consider engagement in terms of providing relevant opportunities to connect and offer 'a window in the classroom' using an easily accessible device such as their mobile phone.

From the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated a shift to hybrid learning, to today, we have come a long way. My research into hybrid learning revealed some challenges, not only in the hybrid platform but across our classrooms in general. However, it also identified some true opportunities to embrace more culturally inclusive, student driven pedagogy in a learning environment that isn't defined by the four walls of the classroom. This research establishes a foundation for transformative hybrid learning, promoting a student-centred, culturally inclusive, and collaborative educational paradigm.

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About the author

I have been in education for 35 years, 13 years as a teacher and 22 years as a principal. I have always had an interest in the evolution of pedagogy in our schools and the influences and opportunities in digital technology. I am privileged to work with a team at Hampden Street School who put the learners at the centre and are always challenging themselves to stay at the forefront of education.

I am a busy dad of four wonderful kids and love the lifestyle of sunny Nelson. I appreciate the opportunities the Mindlab / AcademyX has given this ageing educator to keep challenging myself professionally.

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Integrating Technology for 21st Century Skills: A Staff Professional *Development Project*

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The purpose of this project was to investigate the attributes of an effective staff professional development programme that could bring about a sustainable change in teacher practices on how technology (chromebooks) can be integrated into the learning programme to support students in developing 21st-century skills. This project was undertaken in response to personal observations and experiences and earlier research by Bolstad (2017) who found that a vast majority of Years 1-8 students in New Zealand use technology to practice subject-based skills, use the internet to research or create documents and slide shows. The main goal of this project was to use some effective professional attributes derived from adult learning theories together with teachers preferred learning styles and use them while designing and implementing a series of staff development sessions on how technology can be effectively integrated into the classroom programme. While this project aimed to change teacher practices in technology integration, it also provides new learning on how to effectively deliver any in-house staff professional development in any school. The ultimate beneficiary of this project will be the students as teachers will be better skilled to enhance teaching and learning. It's crucial to highlight that this project was not of a grand scale; instead, it was a small-scale initiative conducted within a specific context, engaging eleven teachers over a two-term duration.

After the recruitment of teachers as research participants, an initial teacher and student survey was conducted to establish some baseline data on the extent of the problem being investigated and what professional development attributes teachers would prefer. The project was designed to be implemented using the action-research methodology which McNiff and Whitehead (2002) describe as practitioner-based research where learning is derived through action and reflection. Two iterative cycles of project implementation were considered. In light of the feedback received from teachers via the survey and insights gained from the literature review, the first cycle of professional development sessions were predominantly aligned with the andragogical assumptions of adult learning theory. While maintaining autonomy, I facilitated the first cycle comprising five professional development sessions. Participants engaged in varied learning experiences, including participating in lecture-style deliveries and engaging in peer and group collaborations, including collaboratively designing lesson plans. During the first cycle, brief classroom observations were conducted to evaluate the changes in the teacher practices. At the end of the first cycle, students participated in the same survey they did before the start of the project and teachers participated in the focus group interviews. The focus group interview encompassed nine open-ended questions designed to identify the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the professional development sessions and to determine aspects requiring additional consideration for the second cycle of these sessions.

The professional development delivery approach in the second iterative cycle was a flip of the first cycle. During this cycle, the learners were given full agency which according to Blashke (2016) is the central principle of heutagogy enabling individuals to make their own choices in their lives and drive their learning. Each collaborative group was tasked to design a lesson plan using the TPACK framework focussing on a specific 21st-century skill in their chosen curriculum area. The collaborative groups worked together at their own pace and time, designed, delivered and reflected on the lesson and shared their learning with other members of the staff. After this cycle, all participants were sent open-ended questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery attributes of this professional learning. The students participated in the same

survey they had done twice earlier to see any further progress on how they were using technology in the classroom.

The data yielded from the mixed method was analysed. The quantitative data from the student survey showed that there was a significant shift that students using technology to support the development of 21st-century skills. The other qualitative data derived from focus group interviews, group critical reflections and independent open-ended questions was analysed using the theory triangulation strategy. Considering the principles of andragogy, heutagogy, and communities of practice theories, the data underwent triangulation, revealing new themes which were closely linked to the key elements of these theories. The derived themes formed the key attributes of an effective professional development programme. These were learner autonomy, learning being personalised, content being relevant and meaningful, ongoing coaching, opportunities for feedback, learning being collaborative, learning experiences being practical and applicable, adequate time being allocated and learning being blended. These attributes aligned consistently with the literature reviewed on andragogy, heutagogy, and communities of practice.

Overall, this project identified some effective attributes of staff professional development that will motivate and engage teachers to participate in any new learning initiative. The findings provide significant insights for me and any other staff in my school who facilitate professional learning sessions to move away from the traditional workshop-style delivery. Notably, the findings presented here are grounded in professional development aimed at fostering technology integration for 21st-century skills. The question remains as to the applicability and usefulness of these identified attributes in other professional development programs. Thus, all future in-house professional development programmes will adopt the findings of this project and incorporate them into the design and delivery of the professional development programme. Continual feedback will be gathered from participants in the professional development sessions to ensure that essential adjustments are made, optimizing the learning experience for all.

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About the author

Iqbal Hussein - iqbal.hussein@xtra.co.nz. Iqbal is currently a Deputy Principal at an Intermediate school in South Auckland. Iqbal was trained as a teacher in Fiji where he taught in Primary schools for thirteen years before migrating to New Zealand in 2004. He started his teaching career in New Zealand as a classroom teacher until being promoted to a Deputy Principal role in 2017.

Iqbal developed a strong enthusiasm for integrating technology into the classroom program following the completion of his Postgraduate Certificate in

Digital and Collaborative Learning from Mindlab. He has significantly contributed to creating a very technology-rich environment at the school he currently teaches.

Reimagining Education: Exploring the Impact of AI Chatbots on Assessment, Engagement, and Critical Thinking Skills

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This initiative targets the enhancement of literacy among Māori and Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand. By leveraging an AI chatbot to support Assessment for Learning (AFL), the project seeks to engage these students more deeply in their education, aiming to rectify observed disparities in literacy and educational outcomes (Berryman, Lawrence, & Lamont, 2018).

The goals of the project were to engage Māori and Pasifika students through the implementation of an AI chatbot. To foster the development of critical thinking skills by integrating AI-driven interactions and to assess the chatbot's impact on literacy rates within these student demographics.

The project involved the development of an AI chatbot, initiated using open-source tools like Streamlit and GitHub, and later integrated with the OpenAI API. After the pilot phase, the project transitioned to Microsoft's Power Virtual Agents for its user-friendly interface and robust features (Tlili et al., 2023). The research followed an action research methodology, employing iterative cycles for the refinement of the chatbot based on feedback from surveys and student performance data.

The utilisation of AI chatbots has been found to markedly increase student engagement and stimulate critical thinking (Goda et al., 2014). There was a noted improvement in literacy, especially when students used the chatbot to review and reflect upon their learning, indicating that AI can play a crucial role in educational settings (Winkler & Söllner, 2018). These findings support the hypothesis that technology, particularly AI, can positively influence learning outcomes.

The project offers compelling evidence for the potential of AI in educational reform.
It demonstrates that AI, when thoughtfully integrated into educational practices, can serve as a powerful tool to engage students in a culturally responsive manner, thus addressing equity in education (Berryman, Lawrence, & Lamont, 2018). These insights are significant for educators and policymakers, particularly in New Zealand, where the need for future-ready education that accommodates bicultural perspectives is paramount (Foster, 2019).

The success of the AI chatbot in this project suggests a broader application for AI in educational settings, extending beyond literacy to various aspects of learning and teaching. It also highlights the critical role of teachers in mediating the use of AI, ensuring that it aligns with pedagogical goals and addresses the diverse needs of students (Bolstad et al., 2012).

The project's findings align with the wider discourse on the need for digital fluency amongst educators and students, emphasizing the importance of developing critical skills for navigating and utilizing digital technologies effectively (Miller & Bartlett, 2012). Furthermore, the research corroborates the emerging view that AI can personalize learning, providing students with individualized feedback and support that can lead to improved educational outcomes (Lin & Chang, 2020).

The significance of these insights for practice cannot be overstated. They suggest that AI integration into the curriculum can be a catalyst for educational transformation, provided it is implemented with a clear understanding of its potential and limitations. As AI continues to evolve, its responsible and ethical use will be crucial, requiring guidelines that safeguard student data and privacy (Llama 2 - Responsible Use Guide - Meta AI).

In conclusion, the project serves as a beacon for the potential of AI to revitalize and reshape the educational experience, making it more inclusive, engaging, and effective. The AI chatbot initiative in Aotearoa New Zealand is not just a testament to innovation in education but also a call to action for continuous, reflective practice and research in the integration of emerging technologies in teaching and learning processes.

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About the author

I am Michael Puhara, and over my 15 years as a secondary school teacher, my interest in technology has grown into a cornerstone of my educational philosophy. I have embraced the digital revolution in education, seeking to leverage the latest technological advancements to enrich my teaching and enhance my students' learning experiences. I firmly believe that technology, when integrated thoughtfully into the curriculum, can transform the learning environment, making it more interactive, engaging, and accessible.

I am passionate about preparing my students for a world where digital literacy is not just valuable but essential. To this end, I continually pursue professional development opportunities to refine my tech-savvy teaching strategies, always aiming to stay ahead of the curve. For me, technology is not just a teaching aid; it's a vital component of education that inspires creativity, critical thinking, and a love for lifelong learning.

Transition

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The purpose of this project was to create a transition procedure for students who come into class programmes mid-year, mid-term, mid-week.

The idea for this project occurred when I was having difficulty with a student who had arrived mid term and had been in my class for a couple of weeks. There had been a 'honeymoon period' where this student had been compliant and willing. Then suddenly I was dealing with a belligerent student shouting "You don't know me." I had had no information about this student before they had joined my class. It made me think that if I or the school had done things differently at the beginning this outburst may not have happened. Looking at data about other students who had come into our school environment through the year, showed that every one of those students had had several behaviour incidences and enough absent days to cause concern. Researching transient students and how they were coping in New Zealand cemented the idea of developing an induction procedure which might negate some of the negative behaviour and strengthen the students desire to come to school.

The idea for the project change stemmed from my experiences but 'struck a chord' with my colleagues. They too had had incidences of negative behaviour from students joining their class mid-term and having to make decisions about these students with no prior information about their strengths or weaknesses. Colleagues were aware that some decisions made had been to the detriment of the new student because of a lack of knowledge about family or the values they held.

The new induction procedure would help students connect more easily with the new environment and enable the teachers to make more informed decisions about how to work with the new individual.

To measure the effectiveness of the new procedure, after ten weeks in the school, student data (absences and behaviour) plus replies from a student and parent interview would be analysed. Absence and behaviour data was chosen because this data was already kept for each individual student. It was readily available, and it would be easy to see a decrease in absences and negative behaviour. The interviews would provide qualitative data to help interpret the effect of the induction procedure on the student and family. Analysis would provide reason to add, delete or modify the steps in the procedure process. The analysis would also help redefine the google slide presentation and the conversation prompts in the student and parent booklets (the deliverables for the new transition procedure.)

Readings around sense of belonging, community involvement and Place-Based Education contributed to what was included in the induction procedure. Ideas from teachers, parents and students were taken into consideration.

Leading this project, to some extent, was easy. The principal gave me time at staff meetings to share how the project was progressing and colleagues were willing to discuss the project with me at other times. Leadership literature guided my actions, helping me successfully gather ideas from students, parents and teachers. I showed adaptive leadership by stepping back and letting others decide, among other things, how to present the interview information. I adapted and changed my approach when needed to ensure the progress of the project. I showed authenticity as I listened and added ideas from others to the induction procedure. Finally, I collated all ideas and wrote an induction procedure outlining a series of steps to be taken when enrolling a new student.

Collaborating using the Talanoa framework calls for warmth and respect to guide discussions. So, when a fellow teacher disagreed with the step that the teacher should ring the previous school to find out the academic levels and anything else of importance about the new student, I respectfully questioned so she might explain her reasoning. To my mind and others sitting there, talking with the previous school would have solved some of the problems around settling in students. This teacher explained that she thought it was unnecessary, not possible time wise and irrelevant in the induction procedure. She wanted to take the student at face value and not let possible issues from the previous school influence how we dealt with the new student. Discussion resulted, leading to the collaborative decision to change the wording in the induction process to make the choice to ring or not an individual one.

The new procedure was trailed with three families. After each interview the google slide material was refined, making it easier for teachers to follow. The booklets were also altered as some pages worked better than others.

There is no evidence to show that the induction process is effective for students. As I analysed the information about one transient student, who had been at school for ten weeks, I realised that the gathering of behaviour and absence data offered no insight as to how effective the induction procedure was. Negative behaviour and absences have many attributing factors and could hardly be solely attributed to the way students were welcomed in the school.

However, the project has generated discussion around a topic taking precedence in the world i.e. How to re-engage students after covid and how to effectively transition refugees from different cultures.

Work needs to continue around the understanding that providing opportunities for a new student to work positively in a community is important. Possibly more important than having lots of information about that student.

Knowing the student and their families though cannot be discounted. As it is knowledge about a student's culture and family values which will help decide an appropriate way the student can contribute. The deliverables in this project contain ideas which early childhood centres and high schools could use to deepen discussions with new students and their families. The prompts are only that, prompts. It is the time taken to meet and discuss each other's expectations which will lead to better understanding between cultures and diverse learners.

Understanding the correlation between contributing positively to a community and building self-worth is where this project should head. The goals underpinning Place-Based Education have a place here for the transient student.

In the future, policy may dictate that all students engage in some giving back project to the new school environment they arrive in.

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About the author

   Miriam Henderson is a teacher who has had 40 plus years experience teaching in New Zealand classrooms. She has undertaken study through the years and has a Post Graduate Diploma in Literacy and Mathematics. She is a trained Reading Recovery and Specialist Mathematics teacher. In her current school Miriam has been the coach of PB4L and taken workshops to implement it across the school. She is always interested in improving learning for her students and encouraging student agency. Teaching has changed through the years and Miriam's role as a teacher has changed also. Her current study with academyEx has kept her thinking and refining her class programme.

Enhancing collaboration and connection to cultivate a thriving community of practice.

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Communities of practice form around a shared domain and involve members learning with and from each other as they develop a shared understanding of best practice (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2023). The aim of this project was to use the communities of practice model to address the issue of long-term sustainability of Positive Behaviour for Learning – School Wide (PB4L-SW) in the schools that I work with. The existing operating model in my region positioned myself (PB4L-SW Practitioner for the Ministry of Education) at the centre as the expert. It was my hypothesis that enhancing collaboration and connection across the cluster by developing the cluster into a thriving community of practice would support the sharing of best practice. Therefore, the purpose statement for this project was to create an online community of practice for the PB4L-SW schools in my region in order to increase collaboration and connection, which will support the sustainability of PB4L-SW in schools long-term. My project goals included the establishment of an online space to layer on our existing community of practice, where synchronous and asynchronous connection and resource-sharing could occur. This would then be developed as a model that could be shared with other school-wide practitioners, as well as other kaimahi working with clusters of schools.

Conducted over two five-week iterations, the project utilised Action Research methodology, leaning heavily on "learning in and through action and reflection" (McNiff, 2013, p. 15). Mixed methods as detailed by Cohen et al. (2002) were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data, with surveys, focus groups, website analytics and field notes being the main data collection tools.

The first iteration involved the launch of a google chat space and resource drive. Review of relevant literature had identified four key themes that contributed to thriving communities of practice, both online and in person, these being cultivation, connection, trust and value (conceptualised in diagram 2). My initial assumptions were that connection and value would be the priorities of this project. However, these assumptions were challenged by the data collected during the first iteration. Website analytics showed that interactions in the online space were still heavily practitioner-centric, and despite the option to connect and seek support being available, the space was under-utilised. It became clear that I needed to remove myself as the connecting point and centre of interactions, and to do this, I needed to build relational trust between my members. Goel et al. (2010) and Usoro et al. (2007) both discuss how the establishment of trust and relationships can depend on the knowledge base and skill capacity members have in the subject domain. While I could see the capacity in our cluster, I had not created the conditions for others to recognise expertise in each other and build relationships from there.

Therefore, my next project iteration was very different to my initial plan for the project. I planned a face-to-face Expo over three days, aiming to connect, affirm practice and showcase expertise within our region. Post-expo survey and focus group data showed that participants felt more comfortable reaching out to others in the cluster now that they had connected face-to-face and shared their stories, suggesting that a shift had begun away from the practitioner-centric model to a more collaborative one (see Diagram 1). Activity on the online platform after the Expo also indicated that more collaborative connections were emerging. In addition, survey data showed that participants were more likely to join the virtual space now that they had been exposed to the value of the cluster and connected with the members.
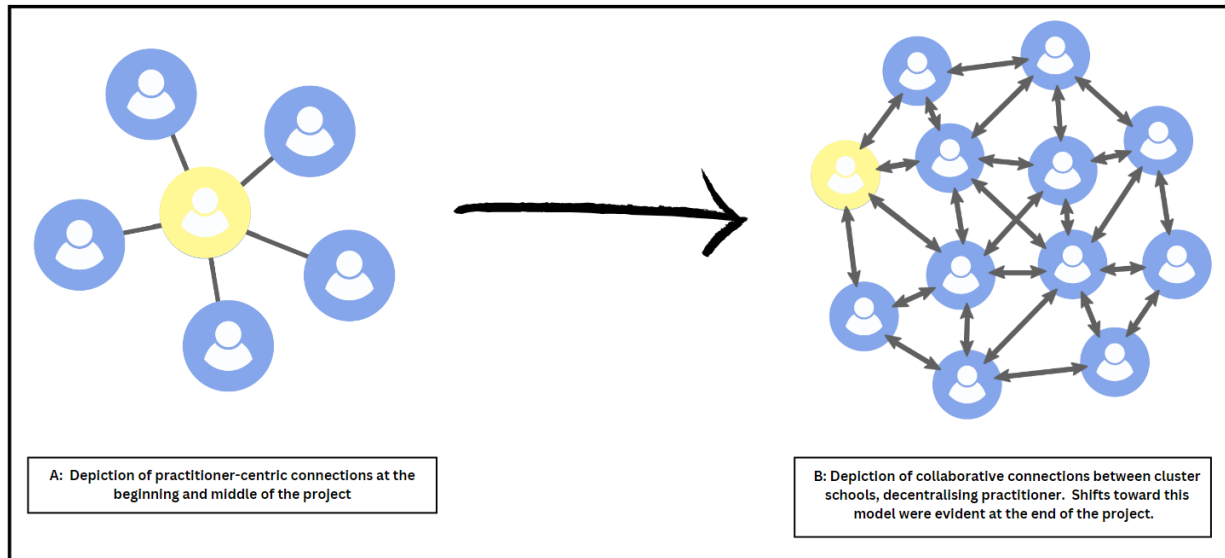
Diagram 1: Models of connections within the PB4L-SW cluster of schools

One unexpected trend to emerge from both iterations of the project was the critical importance of the way a community is cultivated and the impact this has on the health of the community. Cultivation had been identified through the literature as a key feature of thriving communities of practice (Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). However, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) of the focus group interviews highlighted the influence cultivation had on the key features of trust, connection and value. One participant likened it to kaitiakitanga, meaning guardianship or stewardship along with resource management and protection (Spiller et al., 2011; Webber-Dreadon, 2020). They asserted that what was needed was not a leader as such, but a kaitiaki who set up the conditions for success, which led to my reconceptualisation of the four key features (see Diagram 2). This model also identifies the importance of collaborative connections by placing them at the centre.

The critical importance of cultivation has been one of the greatest learnings for me. Understanding that collaborative connections, relational trust and community value can fall short of their potential without effective cultivation will change my future practice significantly. It is also a key message for other practitioners working with communities of practice. In addition, shifting the connections away from myself as the centre will positively impact the collaborative nature of our community of practice. Instead, I aim to grow mentors from within the community, safeguarding our cluster for the future and ensuring long-term sustainability.
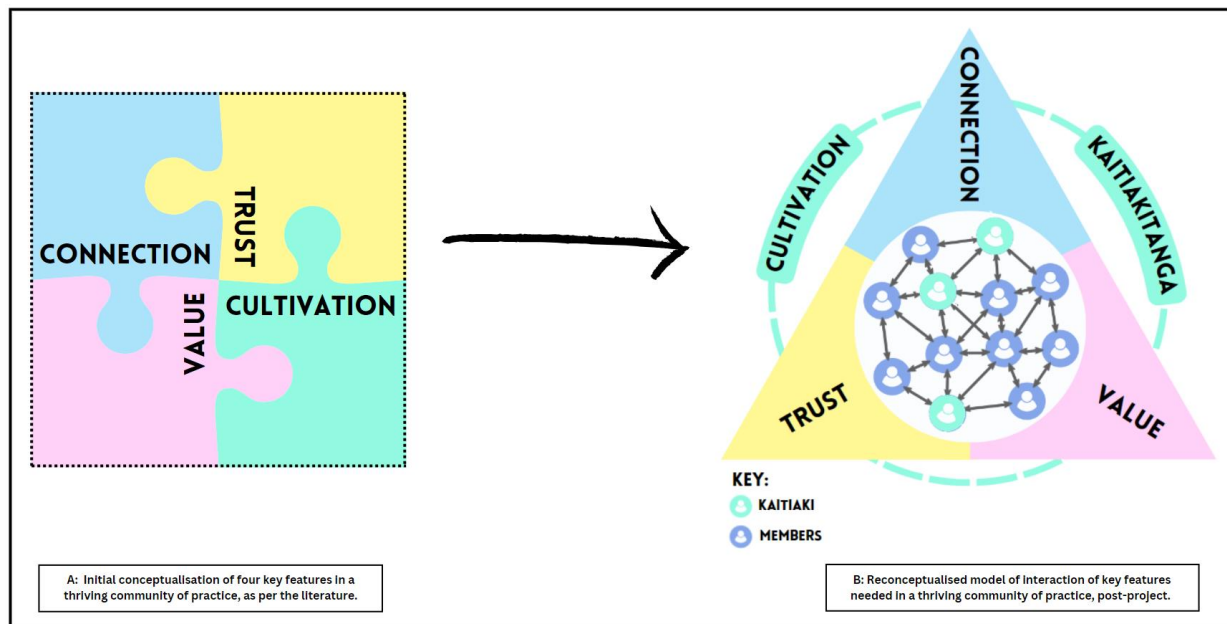
Diagram 2: Models of key features required in a thriving community of practice.

Knowledge of how to grow communities into thriving and self-sustaining entities will be greatly received by many in my workplace alone, but will be particularly useful to my School-Wide Practitioner colleagues as we transition to a new model of PB4L-SW. Currently undergoing a refresh, PB4L-SW will operate as a partnership model, meaning practitioners will be engaging with schools individually rather than in groups. This means that communities of practice will need to be stronger than ever to ensure that connections are made between schools, and siloed practice does not take root.

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About the author

Ko Parihaka te maunga
Ko Hōteo te awa,
No Whangārei ahau.
Ko Gina Kitchen toku ingoa
Tihei mauri ora.

Gina is a third-generation primary school teacher and spent 16 years in the sector before moving to the Ministry of Education to work as a Positive Behaviour for Learning – School Wide (PB4L-SW) practitioner. Gina is passionate about empowering educators to create positive, supportive and inclusive learning environments for their ākonga. She feels privileged to work in partnership with schools to take an inquiry-based approach, exploring ways they can improve their systems, practices and data to ensure their students thrive.   Relationships are at the heart of her practice, both in the classroom and in her current role.

Gina loves reading, camping with her family in Northland and planning her next overseas trip.
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Joyful Reading Journeys: Fostering a Love for Literature in Year 9 at James Cook High School

Sanjay Prasad

This project aims to cultivate a love for reading among Year 9 students at James Cook High School by through an inquiry-based approach. Through the use of an e-platform, the project seeks to engage students in reading through a variety of mediums, including graphic novels and traditional hard copy materials. The ultimate goal is to spark a domino effect of joy in reading, with students creating and sharing their own reading materials, providing online reviews, and contributing to a vibrant reading community within the class. The online platform and its successful strategies will be shared with the English faculty to further enhance the reading experience for students.

Project Goal: Foster a Joyful Reading Culture among Year 9 Students through an Inquiry-Based Approach are as such:Conduct a comprehensive literature review to identify student interests in reading materials, exploring both hard copy books and digital versions."...traditional picture books might include words, pictures, and graphics, e-books may also include multimodal features such as sounds, animations, videos, and narrations." (Schugar et al. page 1).Implemented the Oliver ebook platform in two terms of 2023, selecting books based on student interests"... in Aotearoa New Zealand indicates that Maori student achievement is affected the degree to which their culture is represented by the education context, and by the degree to which there is congruence between the culture of the community and the values of that context (Nash, 1997)(Macfarlane, Sonja, and Angus Macfarlane. "Culturally responsive evidence-based special education practice: Whaia ki te ara tika." *Waikato Journal of Education Te Hautaka Mâtauranga o Waikato*, vol. Volume 18, no. Issue 2, 2013.)

and encouraging them to share reviews to inspire fellow students.Utilize an Action Research approach to expose students to ebooks, understand their preferences, and continuously adapt the reading experience to enhance joy in reading.A good collection of reading material is a good start point. This will not create boredom and readers will be able to self select their own text of choice. Therefore, it is crucial to offer pupils a wide variety of reading material. In other words, an array of books representing a variety of topics, levels of difficulty, and genres of literature is necessary (Cole, 2002, p. 335). (Merisuo-Storm* page2)

Facilitate student creation of reading materials and book reviews, incorporating diverse ebook options and establishing an online space for sharing and recommendations.Expand the availability of diverse reading materials on the Oliver online platform for broader school use, integrating it into the reading response standard for increased student engagement.

Implemented an Action Research project to cultivate the joy of reading among Year 9 students. "Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners in every job and walk of life to investigate and evaluate their work."McNiff and Whitehead (2012) Action research in my curriculum area is important as it will enrich the lives of both the learners and the teachers of English in creating joy of reading to the learners. McNiff and Whitehead (2012),"...action research allows teachers to ask What am I doing? How can others and I learn together?.Introduced self-selected print texts, particularly graphic novels, and encouraged regular library visits. Students provided book reviews, fostering a culture of book recommendations for their peers. Utilized Google Classroom for ebook exposure, highlighting challenges with the Sora Reading app. Students also created their own reading materials to inspire joy in reading. Data collection, including pre and post surveys and interviews, shaped ongoing strategies to enhance the reading experience for Year 9 students.

Conducted action research to explore and enhance the joy of reading through E-reading platforms among Year 9 students. Utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The study involved Year 9 students, English teachers, and the school librarian. Data collection methods included interviews and surveys, focusing on experiences and preferences related to E-reading. Thematic analysis was employed to extract insights from the collected data, ultimately contributing to the development of strategies for cultivating a love for reading in the curriculum.

The project revealed that understanding students' reading interests and preferences is crucial for fostering a love of reading. Creating joy in reading is a gradual process, requiring time and strategic approaches. Talanoa sessions and verbalizing book reviews proved less intimidating than written reviews, fostering a supportive class environment. Insights showed hesitancy among students to visit the school library, leading to the creation of outdoor school libraries with donated books. Students engaging in creating their own stories emerged as a powerful catalyst, sparking enthusiasm for reading and sharing within the class. Overall, the project highlighted the significance of adapting teaching practices to cultivate a joyous reading experience.

Continuous dialogue with students is essential for effective communication and understanding their needs.Recognizing and accommodating diverse learning preferences and processing styles is crucial for promoting joy in reading.Offering a wide variety of reading materials and providing options, rather than directing specific texts, helps develop a love for reading.Follow-up activities, particularly Talanoa group discussions, prove effective in sustaining interest and understanding after reading a text.Written book reviews can be perceived as monotonous, hindering students' enjoyment of reading; therefore, verbal responses should be encouraged.Providing opportunities for students to create and share their own reading materials fosters interest and engagement in reading.

The insights emphasize the importance of adapting teaching practices to cater to diverse learning preferences and removing constraints that hinder reading enjoyment. Encouraging verbal responses, incorporating diverse reading materials, and fostering creative expression contribute to creating a more joyful reading experience for students. The findings have practical implications for English teachers and school librarians, promoting a student-centered approach to reading instruction.

⬇	Kowing the students.
⬇	Talanoa engagement on reading materials with the students.
⬇	Provide text according to the needs of the students.
⬇	Books to be representative of students. Students should be able to see themselves.
⬇	Help analyse the reading habits of students.
⬇	Digital reading tools to be taught.
⬇	Quite reading space needs to be provided.
⬇	Students to be empowered and not to feel shy.
⬇	Outdoor library to be considered.
⬇	Verbal book reviews to be encouraged.
⬇	Students to illustrate what their read.
⬇	Create own reading materials to be shared with the class.
⬇	Run book clubs, Reader of the term and year competition.

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PROFILE

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Current study in progress: Masters of Contemporary Education (Thesis- an inquiry-based approach to develop joy in reading) ➢ Postgraduate Certificate in Digital and Collaborative Learning (digital technologies, collaboration, contemporary pedagogy and new approaches to the leadership of learning) ➢ Bachelor of Education, major in Language and Literature (Double Major) ➢ Diploma in Education, majors in English and Social Science (Double Major) ➢ 21 years of teaching experience.

Building Technology Fluency and Capability for Junior School Teachers (DT Project)

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The *Building Technology Fluency and Capability for Junior School Teachers* (DT Project) aimed to improve the capabilities and confidence of Year One and Two teachers in using digital technology in their teaching practice.

The project aimed to implement and embed digital technologies in meaningful and relevant ways to equip teachers to participate, create, and thrive in this fast-evolving digital world. It aimed to achieve three objectives. Firstly, increase the Year One and Two teachers' capability in the digital technology curriculum to enhance their teaching practice. Secondly, determine how much coaching can increase the Year One and Two teachers' capability and use of digital technology in the classroom. Lastly, understand how the approach to professional development meetings can contribute to or hinder the willingness of teaching professionals to collaborate.

Education Minister Chris Hipkins first announced compulsory digital technology learning from Years One to Ten in 2017 (New Zealand Government, 2017). The purpose of implementing the digital technology curriculum is to ensure young people discover digital technologies throughout their education from as early as year one. The curriculum intends to understand how digital technologies work, develop critical thinking skills, and learn 21st-century skills, such as communication, collaboration, problem- solving, and ethical and safety awareness. Developing these skills in the early yearsgives learners the foundations to build upon (Parents.Education.govt.nz, 2022; Gander et al., 2013; Wylie & MacDonald, 2020).

As an experienced junior school classroom teacher with 15 years of expertise, the project lead observed a need for more explicit use of digital technology in the Year One and Two teaching hubs. After investigation, four primary factors contributing to the issue were identified:
The digital curriculum had yet to be discovered, and there was a belief of not being "digitally savvy." Cost constraints limited digital device access and applications, resulting in inadequate functionality. Digital skills are needed to function effectively in current and future society. Developing these skills in the early years gives learners a foundation to build on. Explicit digital technology skills are required to meet the learners' future needs. Schools should provide ongoing professional development opportunities, including workshops, webinars, and coaching programs, to help teachers improve their digital literacy skills and stay up-to-date with the New Zealand Curriculum and technological advancements.

The four participating teachers from the Tairāwhiti region teach in the junior school, years one to two, and have various experiences and lengths of time in teaching.

The project's planned deliverables included professional learning development sessions crafted for Year One and Two teachers, addressing their specific needs and areas of improvement. The sessions were strategically based on the e-Learning Planning Framework (Ministry of Education, 2014) dimension rubric placement and pre- questionnaire results, providing a highly effective approach to professional cyclic growth (Luna Scott, 2015; Stringer, 2007). Session one focused on the Digital Technology Curriculum, reviewing data and video/voice recordings. Sessions two and three focused on Digital Technologies in the classroom and across the curriculum, building on previous sessions, unplugged activities, digital activities,

data review, and data questionnaire check-in mid-way through professional growth sessions. Seesaw was introduced as an online learning and sharing platform to connect school and home. Google Site Dynamic Digital was used to connect to professional learning development and encourage a pathway to 'heutagogy' learning (Hase, 2009).

Subsequent goals that still needed to be completed in the project timeframe were to continue Professional Development, building Junior school Digital Technologies Pathways, connecting with the senior school and the wider community to share Professional Development and work with Kahui Ako further to share Professional Development in the broader community of schools.

The *Building Technology Fluency and Capability for Junior School Teachers* (DT Project) was led using three leadership styles - Authentic, Agile, and Transformational Leadership. Prioritising the well-being of the participants and implementing a Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1994) model to ensure their stability and wellness. Kotter's (1995) eight-step framework was applied for successful change-making to guide the project timeline and ensure effective implementation of the DT curriculum. Additionally, self- awareness, personal growth, and a commitment to continuous improvement through Authentic Leadership. Opportunities were provided for participants to learn new material and fully understand how to apply it before changing their teaching methods.

In conclusion, the *Building Technology Fluency and Capability for Junior School Teachers* (DT Project) aimed to improve the capabilities and confidence of Year One and Two teachers in using the Digital Technology curriculum in their teaching practice. The project aimed to implement and embed Digital Technologies in meaningful and relevant ways to equip students to participate, create, and thrive in this fast-evolving digital world. The planned deliverables included professional learning development sessions for Year One and Two teachers, addressing their specific needs and areas of improvement through cyclic ongoing professional development. The successful completion of this project instilled confidence and competence in teachers when it came to incorporating the digital technology curriculum into their lesson plans and classroom practice. Teachers have the necessary skills to design their lessons and integrate an approach to teaching digital technology. Moreover, they comprehend the benefits ofworking collaboratively and co-constructing with their colleagues. Overall, the project demonstrated the relevance of reflective, cyclic, ongoing professional development to implement any new curriculum with an integrated approach.

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About the author

Janine Fiebig (pronounced Fee-big), comes from Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland. Over the years, her family and have lived in various places, including Morrinsville (Waikato), Rarotonga, and most recently, Tairāwhiti (Gisborne).

Janine has been an educator for over 15 years and is passionate about making a positive difference in children's lives through education. She is commited to building strong collaborative relationships with colleagues, home and school partnerships and collaborating with students, staff, and whānau to support the whole child and meet each student's unique needs. Janine believes that digital technology integration in education has multiple benefits. It is crucial to use it purposefully, and educators play a vital role in guiding young learners to navigate the digital learning landscape responsibly.

Janine resides in Tairāwhiti and is a junior school teacher and team leader in a Gisborne primary school.

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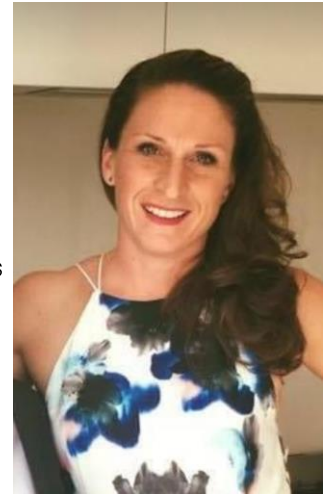
Developing a professional development program for teachers in integrating culturally responsive 21st Century Skills in New Zealand Curriculum Mathematics

Lillianne Ah Mau

The New Zealand Curriculum helps teachers to plan, create, and design lessons to guide and deliver what they are meant to be teaching and learning across to their students in New Zealand Aotearoa (TKI, 2023). The New Zealand Mathematics Curriculum is what drives the mathematics education for students. According to Hunter and Hunter (2018), "Mathematics education that meets the needs of students in the 21st century involves a vision of students and teachers actively engaged in constructing their knowledge of mathematics through exploration, discussion, and reflection" (p.1). The vision for Mathematics education to flourish, is for both teachers and learners to co-construct the knowledge of mathematics together. However, the content knowledge primarily starts with the teacher.

The purpose of this practice-based change project was for I, the researcher, to implement and impart 21st century skills of the following Four C's: Collaboration, communication, critical thinking skills and culturally responsive approaches for five primary teachers to use and support their understanding of the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum as well as other teachers within their own cohort teams. The central focus was on New Zealand Mathematics Curriculum Levels 3 and 4.

The project set out to achieve the main aim and goals. The main aim of this project was to support five primary teachers to understand the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum for themselves. The three project goals were the following: Goal 1: To implement 21st century skills for the teachers to use to understand the New Zealand
Mathematics curriculum content. Goal 2: Design a Framework of the Four C's, for teachers to implement the 21st century skills to understand the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum for Level 3 and 4. Goal 3: Develop a program for Junior School teachers to demonstrate the use of the Four C's when learning about the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum.

The main literature for this project was research around the 21st Century skills and the importance of curriculum content knowledge. Saavedra, & Opfer (2012) states that 21st Century skills are essential skills for learning. According to the 'Great Teaching Toolkit' Teacher curriculum content knowledge, is of high importance to help teachers and students to improve schools, pedagogy in learning for all subjects. (Coe, Rauch, C.J, Kime, Singleton, 2020).

This research study and project provided mainly qualitative data. The key research design for the implementation of this project was Action Research. The methods and data tools used were Talanoa (Vaioleti, 2006), Online Google Survey forms,
Semi-structured interviews, Teacher Video journals of precision information that assists learning and reflections, two team meeting observations and including a personal research reflective journal of my leadership.

The project examined what the teachers were currently doing to understand the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum for themselves to how using 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking skills and culturally responsive approaches can support teachers to understand content from the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum. Throughout the implementation of this project, I worked

with the teachers on a one-to- one basis and frequently on a weekly basis. I introduced the project to the stakeholders; the principal, school Directors, and to the five participants. The five participants each taught in different areas of the Primary school ranging from Years 5, 7 and 8. I met and discussed the aim of this project with the five teachers through the frequent and timely meetings online and with face-to-face discussions.

The school mathematics focus in Term 3 and 4 was Number. This developing program of integrating 21st Century skills, was the teachers and I working together to understand the mathematics curriculum they were currently using. I modelled how the Four 'C' skills would be used with the teachers, in a class lesson, plan, unit, delivery and looked specifically at teacher practice, content and knowledge, in adjacent demonstrating how this would look like when modelling and working with another teacher. I also discussed the definitions of the Four C's with the teachers, to make sure everyone was clear with the meaning of these terms and how it can enhance learning. I then referenced and explained the importance of the video recording of themselves as a reflective tool and change tool to empower, enhance and evolve teaching practice. The video journals could also be uploaded in their Professional Growth cycle that the school is currently using for appraisals.

The first skill used and modelled with the five participants, was collaboration. As the researcher, I collaborated with each teacher on the curriculum content they were using at the time. This was through talanoa, explaining, clarifying, transferring of knowledge, modelling. As I collaborated with the teachers individually, we had to solve the mathematics Number problems Level 3 and 4 together, which they initially planned to teach. I had anticipated how the students would solve the problem together with the teachers, and we had to understand the main strategies to teach the students so that we, both researcher and participant, understood what the curriculum is asking for and demanding.

Throughout, this collaboration process, the communication and critical thinking skill came in naturally and overtly. I asked specific type of questions to understand the teacher and they could ask themselves. I modelled the talk moves of 'repeat' and 'revoice' when and how they would speak to another teacher when communicating with another teacher, to understand the curriculum. I also provided the teachers with YouTube clips, websites, Numeracy booklets for the teachers to search up when thinking critically. For culturally responsive pedagogy skills, I already had a learning- focused relationship established with the teachers, so this made it easier for I to work with them to use the learning skills for this project. I observed one teacher working with another teacher and then asked to video the session. The skills they focused on was collaboration and communication skills. Throughout this observation, there was some coaching, guidance and prompts to assist them to gain the best outcome for the learning of the New Zealand mathematics curriculum, for their team of teachers. I created an online Google Form Survey for the teachers to show what they have understood about the New Zealand Mathematics curriculum and what skills for this project they currently used to understand it. The teachers used this Survey at the start and conclusion of the project.

Results showed from the Online Google Surveys and semi-structured interviews that the collaboration process is the most important 21st century skill to use when understanding the mathematics curriculum. The five participants found that the collaboration process with their own team members, experts in the school and external mentors helped them the most, to understand the mathematics curriculum content knowledge. Saavedra, & Opfer (2012) describes through collaborating the transfer of learning can happen. It is through clarifying and working with others, is where the knowledge of understanding was built. I found that during the collaboration process when working with all five of the teachers individually, the other three C's of communication, critical thinking skills in a culturally responsive way incorporated and was immersed and integrated into the collaboration process naturally. The Video journals results showed the key words "learning in a safe space" occurred frequently where the five teachers mentioned that learning as an adult, it needs to take place in a culturally responsive space in a school setting, so that teachers were not perceived in a way where they felt inadequate or discouraged, for not understanding

the curriculum. All the Four C's were interweaved in the program to support the teachers understanding of the New Zealand mathematics curriculum.

Central to my own learning, being an authentic leader and showing the teachers that you are a learner and make mistakes too, makes it easier for the teachers to relate to. Upon reflection, another learning that is extremely important is building relationships. I learnt that relationships are about understanding the teachers and who they are as people rather than colleagues.

For future study, this project has found that effective leadership styles notably Authentic, Agile and Adaptive are essential and important to lead a program like this, for teachers to understand. This practiced-change project was about teachers becoming confident mathematician teachers themselves before they could help anybody else. In addition, the conclusions were the four themes: Collaboration, Communication in a safe space, Growth mindset and Change. This project and findings can also aid to the ongoing body of research for such projects in improving teacher practice, offer guidance in change and development and innovation in using 21st century skills in our New Zealand mathematics curriculum, teaching and learning programs, and classrooms.

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Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum and the Jack Morgan Museum

Dianne Henwood

My project is about incorporating the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories Curriculum (ANZHC) into my local museum, Jack Morgan Museum (museum). The ANZHC isnew to schools with the implementation only beginning term 1 2023 (Ministry of Education, 2023). The museum has a focus on local farming settlers and the ruralland that is Hukerenui. This is my Grandfather's museum and I am a committee member and volunteer.

My focus was on the museum being a place based learning environment. By using aplace based education system according to Sobel (2021) you are using the local environment and community to support students' understanding about the world and community around them.

I contacted local schools and talked to them about my project. 3 schools were involved, each with a different topic of inquiry. Upon initial contact with a school I asked them what their topic of inquiry was. I consulted with museum stakeholders and discussed what the museum had that could show students a pioneer side of life.I was then able to link the topic of inquiry to the ANZHC and asked teachers to give students different aspects of prior knowledge to support their museum visit.

I created activities that had collaboration and critical thinking skills attached to them.I wanted to incorporate these 21st century skills as a support to classroom learning and place based learning (Saavedra and Opfer, 2012). The activities I created couldbe used by other small museums and can be adapted to attract schools to their museum's artefacts using the ANZHC. I wanted these activities to be engaging for students and include artefacts in the museum context that create new knowledge and linked to students current topic of inquiry.

By museums knowing what they have to offer schools in relation to the ANZHC theyare also able to relate to other curriculum areas as well. I found that museum volunteers are generally older citizens and unsure how education documents relate to what their museums offer. By sharing my learning with the Northland Museums Association education person, she was able to help guide museums on what to do.

I used an action research cycle to inform my project and reflect on what happened and how it could be made better (Stringer, Christensen, & Baldwin, 2009) . I startedby 'Thinking' about what I wanted to learn, how I was going to collect the data, andwhat my end result might look like.

Visiting students were placed in groups that were decided by the teacher, as I did nothave knowledge of students and some of the activities required specific skill sets i.e. reading (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). These groups rotated around the activities provided using their collaboration and critical thinking skills. It was interesting to watch the students participate in the activities. Students were open to discussion and willing to ask questions to support their learning.

The second part of the cycle is 'Look'. Look is the aspect of gathering information. Iused a quantitative engagement survey. Students participated in an activity and filled out an engagement survey after the time allocated was up. I used a qualitativesurvey on collaboration and critical thinking for students which

was completed at theend of the museum visit. Teachers filled in a qualitative survey after their museum visit.

Using the data I gathered from the student and teacher surveys I was then able to 'Act' on the collated data. As I collated the data I was then able to compare similar activities I provided for the different schools. When reflecting on the data I was ableto adapt the activities to make them more engaging as each different school visited.

I modified the treasure hunt activity for each school. Under the topic of migration thetreasure hunt was looking around the museum to find items settlers would have usedto clear bush clad land. When looking into settlers' jobs, the student completed a treasure hunt finding different kauri gum creations. The final school visit was about transport and travel and the students did a treasure hunt around the museum lookingfor items that settlers might have bought with them when travelling from Europe.

I created a blog on [Substack](#) to track my project journey. All of my ideas and planchanges are being recorded for future reference. This blog can be accessed by anyone who has an interest in what I am doing.

I produced a list of digital resources students could use to show their learning. The list was shared with visiting teachers prior to their visit so teachers could decide which was the best recourse for their students. I used ThingLink as a way for museums to show this digital learning on their webpages (Thinglink, n.d.). ThingLinkallows for photo or video input that is related to a museum's artefacts and stories.

My project has shown that the activities I provided to visiting schools were engagingto students. Students learnt new knowledge which they then shared with whanauand were able to use to complete their inquiry topic. The visits linked to the ANZHCand other curriculum areas. The teachers also said they would visit the museum again and let other schools know how great the visit was.

I was also able to share my learning with the Northland Museums Association so other museums in the area could use and adapt the activities I created for their ownmuseums. I also shared digital resources that can be used by museums and schools.

My project allowed me to gain insights on how to incorporate the 21st century skills of collaboration and critical thinking into activities that would be engaging for students and allow them to learn new knowledge. These activities could be adaptedand used in other museums or a classroom environment to support students' learning.

I became more aware of how to incorporate different learning styles into the activitiesI provided as all students learn in different ways. Most of the activities I provided included visual, kinesthetic and auditory aspects (Halupa, 2015). The activities can also be adapted to suit other museum environments.

My focus now is to create more activities for the museum to use in the different areasof learning visiting schools may require. I want to look at the war history the museum has and compare those that went to war and those that stayed home. I want to be able to link this learning to the ANZHC to make it easier for visiting schools to relate to the curriculum and what the museum has to offer.

I also want to look into updating the museum website and include ThingLink to allowvisiting schools to share their digital learning with the museum. The museum can then share this digital learning on their website.

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About the author

My name is Dianne Henwood. I was born and raised in rural New Zealand. I became a teacher later on in life after enjoying learning in a Playcentre environment.Although I did not take to learning in a digital way at the beginning of my career, aftercompleting the Mindlab's Digital and Collaborative Learning postgraduate course I was inspired to carry on and do my Masters in Contemporary Education.

Blog site link https://diannehenwood.substack.com/

Building a Sense of Belonging through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Suzanne Cameron

A noticeable increase in our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) student population in our school prompted an examination of my teaching practices. This reflection aimed at ensuring both academic and holistic requirements were met for this diverse student group. Despite notable academic achievements facilitated by dedicated ESOL teacher aide support, concerns arose regarding the potential isolation experienced by some ESOL students and their families. My own concerns were echoed by other colleagues within our primary school,indicating that this seemed to be a schoolwide issue.

Local observations were substantiated by research from Massey University (2017), affirmingthat ESOL students often grapple with a sense of disconnection and a distinct lack of belonging within the school environment. Furthermore, domestic students were found to be somewhat reticent in establishing authentic friendships with their ESOL peers. Prominent researchers such as Berryman (et al, 2018), Bishop (2019) and Ladson-Billings (2021) highlight the bias in our education system whereby the needs of diverse students are not met in a way that is either responsive or sustaining of their culture, which in turn fuels the feeling of social exclusion.

Acknowledging the importance of 21st Century skills for global citizenship (Bolstad, 2012), the initiative sought effective strategies to facilitate interactions, fostering confidence and connection among all students.

The project's foundational goals included gaining a deeper understanding of the diverse cultures represented within our school, enhancing the sense of belonging for ESOL students and their families, developing communication and collaboration skills for all students, and integrating a digital component to augment the learning experience. Implementation of this project would provide a solid foundation from which to develop culturally responsive pedagogy across the school to meet our student needs.

In collaboration with a Year 2 class, the participant group consisted of six ESOL and two domestic students. A comprehensive sense of belonging survey was distributed to both studentsand parents. Survey results illuminated crucial insights, indicating a lack of understanding around student emotions between peers, and a perceived absence of a cohesive classroom community. Parents similarly expressed a lack of community and suboptimal parent-to-parent relationships.

To address these issues, the project incorporated a multifaceted approach. ESOL families were invited to actively participate in the learning process, sharing aspects of their home countries, including cultural nuances, traditions, and language. This hands-on engagement aimed to foster mutual understanding and appreciation among students. The first iteration centered around a volunteer ESOL family, revealing valuable insights into home-school collaboration,teacher-student relationships, and student-student interactions.

Concurrently, explicit teaching of communication and collaboration skills was integrated, guided by the co-construction of a rubric using kid-friendly language and a traffic light system.

While the first iteration proved to be very successful in meeting the project goals, concerns emerged about the sustainability of this positive impact, prompting the introduction of identity portfolios in the second iteration.

The second iteration coincided with the entire school embracing the Identity topic in their Term 4 Inquiry. While the inquiry's control somewhat deviated, the positive energy surrounding the project

encouraged adaptability. Within our syndicate, each and every culture was explored, while somewhat briefly, culminating in a schoolwide cultural celebration day.

The students' digital portfolios, created as Google slideshows, not only served as artifacts chronicling students' cultural identities but also facilitated the development of digital skills and collaboration with family members. Further development of communication and collaboration skills continued, with increasing challenges in complexity based on a mastery system.

Following the conclusion of the second iteration, a sense of belonging survey was reissued, capturing the evolving perceptions of students and parents. The data demonstrated definitive improvement across various parameters, showcasing an overall increase in the sense of belonging for both students and parents.

Beyond the anticipated impact on cultural understanding, the project advanced students' communication and collaboration skills to a significant degree. Teachers noted the remarkable development of digital competencies among Year 2 students, exceeding conventional expectations. The identity portfolios created by the 2023 Year 2 cohort will serve as a valuable introduction for subsequent teachers, fostering continued understanding and connection. For educators within the syndicate, the project yielded profound benefits. Deeper connections with students and their families enhanced empathy within the classroom community. A heightened sense of community and mutual support among students was observed. The ongoing focus on communication and collaboration skills aims to sustain these positive outcomes.

While acknowledging that culturally responsive pedagogy encompasses more than just learning about culture, the project provides a robust foundation. Looking ahead, the guidance of Tapasāand Tātaiako will inform the ongoing efforts to affirm students' cultural identities and integratediverse worldviews into daily classroom experiences. The imperative is to maintain the momentum and build upon this powerful start, ensuring a continuously enriched and inclusive learning environment for all students.

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About the Author:

Suzanne Cameron is a primary school teacher based in Invercargill. Her experience is primarily in the junior area of the school as she enjoys laying the foundations for a successful journey in education. Suzanne has an interest in personal growth and continued study after her Master of Contemporary Education. After focussing on developing the holistic side for culturally diverse students, Suzanne is beginning study towards a TESSOL qualification to provide the best possible outcomes for her students.

Sustainability: My Journey Within the Realm of Staff Professional Development

Anjila Kumar

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The purpose of this project was to implement a professional development programme for primary school teachers to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards sustainability education, with a focus on reducing, reusing, and recycling (RRR) practices. The project aimed to address the problem of poor waste management and lack of environmental awareness at Glen Innes School, a diverse and low-decile school in Auckland, New Zealand. The project was guided by the following research question: How can a staff professional development programme enhance teachers' enabling their learners to practice Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle in their classrooms and school?

The project was carried out using an action research methodology, which involved the researcher being directly involved in the situation being researched. The researcher was a teacher at the school and the leader of the project. The participants in the project were seven colleagues, 43 learners from years three to eight who formed a focus group, and their whanau (families). The project also involved collaboration with external stakeholders, such as Tamaki WRAP (Waste Reduction Action Project), a local initiative supported by the Auckland Council, and BLAKE NZ, a non-profit organisation that promotes environmental education.

The project consisted of two iterative cycles, each lasting for one school term. The first cycle involved the researcher engaging her own class in teaching and practising RRR for two weeks, followed by a series of professional development sessions for the staff, where the researcher shared her strategies and resources. The second cycle involved the researcher and the focus group working with the Tamaki WRAP coordinators, who visited and educated individual classes, conducted rubbish audits, and assisted with various activities and events related to RRR. The project also included other components, such as creating and labelling rubbish bins for the whole school, borrowing books from the National Library, writing and recording a rap song, making a movie, attending a climate festival, and signing up for a virtual reality experience.

The project increased the awareness and understanding of the importance of RRR among the teachers, learners, and whanau. The participants demonstrated improved knowledge of the concepts and practices of RRR, as well as the benefits and challenges of sustainability education.

The project led to behavioural changes in terms of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. The participants adopted more sustainable behaviours, such as using less stuff, giving things a second chance, and sorting rubbish in the right bins. The project also resulted in a significant reduction of waste generated by the school, as evidenced by the rubbish audits.

The project empowered the teachers, learners, and whanau to take action to improve the environment. The participants were given the tools and opportunities to engage in various activities and events that fostered environmental stewardship, such as writing a rap song, making a movie, attending a climate festival, and experiencing virtual reality. The project also nurtured leadership skills among the participants, especially the focus group, who became role models and advocates for RRR in the school and the community.

The project faced some challenges and limitations, such as time constraints, lack of resources, resistance from some staff members, and difficulties in involving the whanau. The project also encountered some unexpected outcomes, such as receiving tickets to a FIFA game, creating a bin

label for a lunch company, and the researcher becoming the national library coordinator for the school.

The project concluded that a well-designed and implemented professional development programme can enhance teachers' enabling their learners to practice RRR in their classrooms and school and contribute to a more sustainable future. The project also provided some insights and implications for practice, such as: the need for a holistic and integrated approach to sustainability education, that involves not only the teachers and learners, but also the whanau, the school management, and the external stakeholders. The importance of using appropriate educational theories and pedagogies, such as constructivism, social learning theory, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning, to support active, collaborative, and real-world learning. The value of using various data collection and analysis methods, both quantitative and qualitative, to capture the complexity and richness of the project, and to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The potential of using digital technologies, such as Google Forms, Google Sites, and virtual reality, to enhance communication, collaboration, and creativity in sustainability education. The necessity of continuous improvement and evaluation of the project, based on feedback and reflection, to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

The project also suggested some recommendations for future research and practice, such as: expanding the scope and scale of the project, to involve more teachers, learners, and whanau, as well as other schools in the cluster and the region. Exploring other aspects and dimensions of sustainability education, such as rethinking, refusing, and repairing, as well as the social, economic, and cultural aspects. Developing and implementing a school policy and a strategic plan for sustainability education, that aligns with the national curriculum and the local context. Providing ongoing support and resources for the teachers, learners, and whanau, to sustain and enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards RRR and sustainability education. Conducting further research and evaluation of the project, using more rigorous and robust methods, such as experimental design, longitudinal study, and meta-analysis.

The project demonstrated that sustainability education through RRR is a relevant and meaningful topic for primary school teachers and learners, as well as their whanau and the community. The project also showed that action research is a suitable and effective methodology for conducting and facilitating professional development programmes for teachers. The project contributed to the existing literature and practice on sustainability education, professional development, and action research, and offered new insights and implications for future research and practice.

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Anjila lives in Auckland with her husband Aslen and children Aarav and Aashvi. She is an experienced primary school teacher and has taught overseas and at a few schools in Auckland. She is a committed educator who pursues modern pedagogical practices to set ākonga up for the 21st Century learning. Since moving to Auckland, she has constantly upgraded her qualifications to provide the best practices for her kura and her ākonga. Anjila proudly holds a Diploma in Primary Education, a Bachelor of Education (Primary), a Postgraduate Diploma in TESSOL, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Digital and Collaborative Learning. All this motivated her to complete her Master of Contemporary Education in January 2023. ashanj@xtra.co.nz

Bridging the digital divide: An action research study exploring personalised learning forprimary school educators aged 55 and older

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The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the effectiveness of a personalised learning programme, including flipped and blended learning, in improving the digital capability, fluency and teacher agency of a small group of primary school educators aged 55 and older (55+). This was achieved through the lens of critical educational design and action research. There is a risk that certain groups face a digital divide, including those aged 55+. The digital divide is not just about access to or awareness of technology but also about ongoing education in the rapidly evolving digital climate. Educators aged 55+ bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise that benefits not only students but teaching teams.

Personalised learning can be beneficial for teachers aged 55+ as this approach allows educators to work at their own pace and on their terms (Leadbeater, 2004, 2005; Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012). This approach can advance a teacher's personal and professional growth, allowing for self-directed learning, developing meaningful digital literacy strategies and maintaining a motivating learning environment (Leadbeater, 2004, 2005; Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012).

The goals of this project were to:
- Develop knowledge and workshops on digital technologies and personalised learning for educators aged 55+
- Integrate a personalised learning tool and utilise digital technologies to support personalised learning, while modelling its use and setting up collaboration systems with colleagues
- Conduct action research and implement three iterative cycles to improve personalised learning practices for learners aged 55+
- Gather qualitative and quantitative data through interviews, surveys, and assessments to measure the impact of technology and collaboration on teacher engagement and competency
- Create a personalised learning profile for teachers and establish systems and processes to support collaboration and sharing of best practices within and beyond the school community

The methodology utilised Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (1996) eight-stage model of action research, along with Vaioleti's (2006) Talanoa framework. In the future, the inclusion of participatory research will be essential to address power imbalances and ensure the long-term sustainability of the project. This study utilised both qualitative and quantitative methods to
gather data, including pre-and post-surveys, semi-focused interviews, focus groups, observations, and reflective journals (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002; 2005; 2012). Limitations were present in the small sample size, understanding of personalised learning on the digital divide, and time constraints. The artefacts produced for this study included a personalised learning template, an information booklet, and a Google Site and Drive filled with flipped and blended learning content. The dissemination of this information to

relevant stakeholders was limited due to unforeseen circumstances such as the researcher changing schools and roles.

Three iterations were conducted, each with a duration of five weeks. The first iteration involved getting to know the participants and creating personalised learning profiles for each of them. The second iteration incorporated the participants' feedback and requests for more visuals and repetition in the online learning material. The third iteration included repeating the initial surveyto assess the effectiveness of the personalised learning tool and the flipped and blended learning approach (JISC, n.d; Magana, 2017). A celebration was held at the end to recognisethe participants' progress in the six digital capability areas.

The participants, with an average age of 61 and an average of 16 years of teaching experience, came from diverse backgrounds and brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The personalised learning profiles helped to accurately reflect their strengths and limitations, which was crucial in developing a tailored approach to their learning. The use of a mixture of face-to-face and online communication allowed for a flexible and individualised learning experience (Leadbeater, 2004, 2005; Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012). The authentic, adaptive and affiliative leadership approaches helped to build trust and support among the participants (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Goleman, 2000; Heifetz, Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

The data collected was analysed using a thematic analysis approach wherein the interviews, surveys, open-ended responses, observation and field notes, and reflective journal entries were inductively coded. Google surveys were conducted and performance data tracking software andanalytics were utilised on the Google site. The data showed that while the majority of participants had a beginning to moderate level of overall digital capabilities, there was a needfor further development in certain areas, particularly in confidence in professional development and support. While educators reported using technology frequently and expressing confidencein their use of devices such as laptops and iPads, there was a need for more support in selecting and using appropriate technology and collaborating with colleagues to build face-to-face and online communities for professional development. Significant gains were seen in the first element of the JISC (n.d) framework - ICT proficiency and productivity, which has a positive impact on the other five elements being that it is functional skills. There was a slight improvement in participants' ability to generate new online spaces and share their approaches with others in the digital creation aspect. The study showed a negative impact on digital identity and well-being, which could be attributed to an increase in knowledge and awareness of digital literacy.

From the study, three key findings were identified, including a significant increase in skills and willingness to integrate technology, a positive impact on digital experiences and confidence, anda newfound openness to trying new technology. The personalised learning programme, which incorporated flipped and blended learning, was well received by participants and allowed for a more personalised and interactive approach to developing their digital capabilities. The study showed that personalised learning is effective in improving digital capabilities and fluency and can be applied to support educators in the age band of 55+.

Moving forward, it is crucial to incorporate digital skills and capabilities in the curriculum and provide ongoing support and training for teachers to develop their digital capabilities in a safe and responsive environment. This requires addressing digital identity and well-being and continuously evolving and improving digital learning opportunities for both students and staff. Itis important to involve and support teachers aged 55+ who may not be as familiar with technology because they not only makeup

one-third of the teaching population but also offer experience and knowledge that can enhance professional development and teaching teams. All need to understand and remember that technology is just a tool and that the teacher, including those 55+, is the greatest resource.

In conclusion, the study highlights the value of personalised learning in increasing digital capabilities and fluency among educators 55+. It is essential to continue developing and evolving in this area to prepare students for the digital world and create a well-rounded team of educators.

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About the author

Sina Edwards is a second-generation New Zealand-born Samoan. She has dedicated her career to teaching and is passionate about learning. Sina is the first in her family to pursue tertiary education and is the proud granddaughter of Adeline and Jim Edwards and daughter of Karen and Derek Edwards. Sina's interest in supporting her colleagues stems from her deep respect for her elders and their valuable contributions to her life and that of society. She currently serves as a deputy principal in East Auckland and aspires to continue her studies with a PhD in the future. With a people-focused and driven approach, Sina is also passionate about supporting and promoting bilingual education.

Tōku Tūrangawaewae

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Ko te pūtake o taku mahi rangahau ki te kite te ngaro haere a te tamaiti e noho taone nunui ana. Kua whai kore mōhio kei whea ana waewae e noho ana. (Penetito, 2010) Ko tāku, ko te whakahau anō, whakapiki i te tamaiti ki tōna tūrangawaewae i waenga i te taone nui.

Ko te whainga matua ko te aha te whakaaweawe a te Ako ā-wāhi mo aku tamariki Tau 7-8? He aha hoki te whakaaweawe a te Ako ā-wāhi i ngā tamariki e kore whai wāhi atu.

Ko ngā whainga ā te rangahau kia whakatinana a ako ā-wāhi me ngā hangarau matihiko hou. Kia whakapakari i ngā tamariki e kore whai wāhi ana. Kia rapu hononga a te Whānau ki te tamaiti. Kia aro ki te taha Māori a te Māori. Kia rapu i ngā taupānga
hei awhi. Kia waihanga he whakangungu ngaiotanga a ngā Kaiako.

Ko ngā whaihua o tēnei kaupapa ko te whai hononga a ngā tamariki ki tā rātou Kura, ki a rātou taiao. Kia rongo e te mana whenua i ā rātou akoako, i akongia e ngā tamariki hei koha. Kia whakapakari taku hononga ki aku tamariki, ngā whānau, me te hau kainga.

Kua māroke haere aku mahi whakaako tamariki. I whakaaro au me rapu i tētahi
huarahi hei whakapakari i taku ngaiotanga whakaako a te kaiako. I te tuatahi i pōhēhē au mo te 'Personalised Learning', engari, i te mutunga iho o taku hiahia ko te ako ā wāhi. I tōku nei whakaaro kei roto tēna te ako ā wāhi. Ko te Ako ā-wāhi te kaupapa
huarahi ako e kore whai wāhi atu, he huarahi anō mo te hononga a te tamaiti ki te taiao, te taiao ki te tamaiti hoki.

Ko ngā take i puta mai ko:

He uaua ki te whakahaere mēnā kore mōhio, kore mārama i te hunga Kaiako i tēnei momo ahuatanga ako.

Te tere pau te wā whakaakoranga ki ngā tamariki

Kei hemo ngā taputapu hangarau matihiko i tāu akomanga ka tere pau te akoako Te Whakatinana i te Ako ā-Wāhi
I whai au i te Action Research (McNiff), te Kaupapa Maōri Research Methodology(Katoa Ltd) mo taku kaupapa rangahau, nā te mea, he huarahi ki whai whakaaroaro, kia whai āhuatanga ako anō mo aku tamariki.

Ko ngā mahi i whakamahi au kia whai hua ana i te whakatinana i te ako ā-wāhi ko te
tuatahi ko te wānanga i te taha o aku tamariki kia whakawhanaunga. He tino kaupapa tēnei wānanga. Ka wānanga hoki au i te taha o Mana Whenua, ēhara te wānanga e pā ana ki te kaupapa nei, engari, he wānanga ako i ngā mīharotanga ā rātou. I takoha mai e te Mana Whenua i ngā kōrero, ngā pūrakau, me te mea

nei i whakarite hui e rātou ki noho ngātahi e te hāpori. Ka whai wāhi a te whānau kia hono i ngā akoako a te tamaiti mai i te pūnaha Akomanga Kūkara. Kia whānui rawatia i te hononga a te pepeha i roto i ngā marau katoa a te Kura.

I whakamahi au i ngā raraunga tatau me ngā raraunga kounga mai i ngā tatauranga, kia aromatawaitia i ngā whainga matua. I tango au, hei taunakitanga, i ngā whakaahua, i ngā kiriata, i mātaki au aku tamariki, i tuhi au i ngā kōrerorero a aku hoa mahi.

Ko ngā kitenga mai i ngā raraunga, kua piki te whai wāhi ā ngā tamariki, mai aronga i te pepeha, mēnā i mahi takirua, tuakana/teina, me te mea hoki i whai atu au i ngā āhuatanga ako a te tamaiti, arā, te mahi ā-ringa, te mahi me tana kotahi rānei. Ko te taiao hoki he wāhi anō hei whangai i ngā akoako, i ngā wheako, i ngā pūkenga a te tamaiti. (Sobel & Smith, 2010)

Ko ngā whakaaro i puta mai i ngā Kaiako, i hiahia rātou ki te ako i te kaupapa nei, te ako ā-wāhi mai i te whakangungu kaiako. He rongoa mo tēna kia tono atu ki ngā mātanga ki te kawe te kaupapa nei i roto i te kura. Ki au nei, i te taha a ngā Kaiako, i ako au ki te toha i aku wheako, aku mōhiotanga kia whakatauirahia e rātou i ro akomanga.

Hei whakakapi, he kaupapa tēnei mo ngā Kaiako katoa o te motu, o te ao hoki, hei aro ki a mana whenua, ki te hāpori tū atu i te akomanga kia hono ngā kōrero a te hapū i au whakaakoranga i tau akomanga. Ehara tēnei momo te whakawhanaunga i te mana whenua he mea māmā, he uaua mēnā kāore koe i whai wā, kaōre i roto i a koe hoki.
Kia kaha ra kaiako mā. Mā ngā huarahi whakaako katoa hei akiaki i koe e noho ana i ao kaiako. Nā reira, ko taku hiahia, nā te panonitanga kei taku Kura, ka aro atu au kia pēhea te whakatinana i te ako ā-wāhi i te taha Wharekura. Mauri ora kia koutou, mauri ora kia tātou.

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About the author

Ko Pirongia te maunga
Ko Waipa te awa, Ko Kāwhia te moana Ko Tainui te waka
Ko Waikato te iwi
Ko Ngāti Mahanga-Hourua, ko Ngāti Maniapoto, ko Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti Pourngā hapū
Ko Te Papa o Rotu, ko Aramiro, ko Rakaunui, ko Waipapa, ko Horahora ngā marae He piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwha rau

Addressing underachievement of learners in a high performing traditional educational institution

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Student achievement has long been a topic of debate as educators, politicians, researchers and the Ministryof Education have struggled to provide appropriate and consistent measures to combat the growing tail of non- achievement across the country (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, 2004).

The purpose of this project was to identify and address underachievement of learners using data to create learner centred interventions by tracking and monitoring academic achievement and engagement. Due to thehigh performing nature of my traditional educational institution the gap between the highflyers and the academically less inclined continues to grow. The aim of this project was that identified students were able toexperience academic success and to leave school with a qualification (NCEA L1-3 or UE). By using school terms as iteration cycles the implementation of a student-centred action research approach was used to collect data and design strategies and interventions to support academic achievement for 17 students hypothesized to leave school without a qualification.

The following project goals were formulated to achieve this purpose:
- Establish a process to identify underachieving students using consistent and robust data practices.
- Create and implement personalized learning opportunities for students.
- Follow an action research approach through iterative cycles.
- Evaluate the extent of participant process and academic achievement (talanoa, student voice via Google surveys, KAMAR and NCEA data etc.)

Student achievement is a multifaceted construct consisting of many contributing factors however, at secondary school this becomes even more complicated due to atendance, cognitive engagement, school culture, pastoral issues and a wide variety of individual learning needs (Fredricks et al., 2004). When students are engaged in their learning, they are more likely than not to experience academic success. (Gallup, 2013). Byusing an action research approach, incorporation of data and student-centred interventions this tail of underachievement was addressed for the 17 participating students with the end goal being an academic qualification achieved (Daly, 2012; Lai & Schildkamp, 2013, p. 21). The action research model suited the project as the school term acted as iteration cycles where qualitative and quantitative data could be used in real time to adapt strategies and interventions for students moving forward.

To address underachievement, it first needed to be understood why learners were falling through the gaps and what preventative measures needed to be put in place (Grudnoff et al. p.5 - 34). One of the biggest tools in helping to identify these learners was the fortnightly consistent use of quantitative data. Many secondary schools in New Zealand use KAMAR data, however, data is often not used for individual learners on a regular basis. In the case of my kura this data is not utilized to lead or influence change for

students at the highest risk.Here I argue that teachers and management at lower decile schools are more adept in this space as often it is of a qualitative, holistic and culturally responsive nature.

By using data throughout this project, I argue that this is central to school improvement processes which is inextricably linked to identifying and creating interventions for underachieving students (Daly, 2012; Lai & Schildkamp, 2013, p. 21). Fortnightly use of quantitative data was used to screen students at regular intervals and by using term assessments as iterations this proved an effective way to track, monitor and support thestudents (Elliot & Fuchs, 1997). This supported the research project acknowledging that students who were tracked, monitored and supported on a regular basis did not have the opportunity to fall through the gaps and therefore were successful in gaining a qualification (Alton-Lee p.18). These students were now noticeable in asea of nearly 3,000 and would no longer contribute to the statistical tail end.

Moving forward given what literature says teachers and school leadership need to ensure such valuable and reliable information is available periodically to all school personnel so that such data can be accessible to inform next steps (Wanzek et al., in press). Throughout the project this was an identified gaping hole with inconsistent and incomplete information from teachers. Furthermore, this is also agreed on by (Astin, 1984) that this information is lacking in the secondary school achievement space and something that nationally needs to be addressed.

The implementation of addressing underachievement with this small group of students will not solve the myriad of reasons as to why they continue to sit at the tail end of national achievement data. However, this is a start in the journey to support students to engage and achieve through interventions and opportunities to be successful in gaining a qualification. This project serves as a stepping stone towards school-wide and potential community-wide (Kahui Ako) engagement for the purpose of strengthening student success in the geographic area our students live in. Next steps for this project are discussions at senior management level on how this can be incorporated consistently and meaningfully into the core business of how our school functions and operates with a roll of nearly 3,000 students.

In conclusion, addressing underachieving students and providing strategies, interventions and opportunities is necessary to ensure we are not only creating successful qualified students but lifelong learners. What this project has shown is that when students (and colleagues) are given the opportunity to rise to the challenge they are able to do so. A key takeaway from student talanoa was that they were happy about their overall achievement and qualification but more fulfilled in feeling that their mana was enhanced throughout the process.

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She is a self-proclaimed 'fruit salad' with European, Samoan, Fijian, Scottish and Italian heritage.

Academically Bessie has a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in History, three postgraduate qualifications in Teaching (Secondary Education), Applied Practice and Collaborative Learning and Leading Change for Good. Bessie is completing her Master of Contemporary Education through the Mind Lab.

Bessie is an educator who is commited to providing students with all the opportunities necessary to engageand encourage success.

Bessie describes her study as organised chaos as her projects had to withstand job changes which saw 3 different iterations prior to completion. However, despite challenges Bessie believes this is a step in the right direction to providing educational equity for students at the highest risk.
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