Table of Contents

Editorial, Editorial Board and Contact Details .................................................................................................................... 2

Expanding on the Meanings of Empathy in the Classroom: Seeing Through a Cultural Lens
Wayne Duncan, Angus Macfarlane, Kathleen Quinlivan and Sonja Macfarlane
Research paper ........................................................................................................................................................................ 3

How Do Interprofessional Practice Teams Work Together to Identify and Provide for Gifted Students with Multiple Exceptionalities?
Jilly O’Brien, Tracy Riley, and Wendy Holley-Boen
Research paper ........................................................................................................................................................................ 14

Results from a Longitudinal Early Literacy Intervention Study: Expected and Unexpected Outcomes
James W. Chapman
Research paper ........................................................................................................................................................................ 23

Teachers’ Cultural Capital: Enabling Factors for Māori Teacher Success
Anne-Marie Hunt
Practice paper ........................................................................................................................................................................ 31

Supporting Positive Behaviour Change for At-Risk Students: A Best Practice Checklist for Schools
Abby Martin
Research paper ........................................................................................................................................................................ 37

Supporting Learners Within a Secondary School Context Using the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life Programme: Five Participants and Their Experience
Jeanne Currie
Research paper ........................................................................................................................................................................ 43

Kairaranga Book Review .................................................................................................................................................... 51

Submission Guidelines .......................................................................................................................................................... 53

Kairaranga is a New Zealand Journal of Education Practice
Kia ora tātou

As educators with a concern for the rights and well-being of children and young people, the recent (30 September, 2016) report by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child into how New Zealand is fulfilling its obligations in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be of particular interest. New Zealand is signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations General Assembly, 1989) which is an international human rights treaty that defines the principles and standards for the treatment and status of children. This year, New Zealand submitted its fifth periodic review, which reported on how we are fulfilling our obligations in regard to this treaty. In response to this, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child have made a number of recommendations which, while recognising how much progress has made in some areas, highlights just how much work is still to be done to ensure that all children growing up in New Zealand get the best deal in life. In particular, areas of inequity in relation to minority and marginalised children were highlighted, both in and out of school and particularly in relation to disparities in access to education for these students (United Nations, 2016, C, 15[a]). The New Zealand government has been urged to “strengthen its measures to combat negative attitudes among the public as well as other preventive activities against discrimination and, if necessary, take affirmative action for the benefit of children in vulnerable situations, such as Maori and Pasifika children, children belonging to ethnic minorities, refugee children, migrant children, children with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and intersex children ...” (United Nations, 2016, C, 15[b]). The full report can be accessed at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/NZL%20INT_CRC_COC_NZL_25459_E.pdf

Here at Kairaranga, we welcome articles that address the inequities that some students and groups of students face when accessing their right to education. In the current edition, we begin with an article by Wayne Duncan, Angus Macfarlane, Kathleen Quinlivan and Sonja Macfarlane who explore the meanings of empathy in the classroom through a cultural lens. They explore the factors that may influence the social and relational development of empathy in a Year 13 classroom from a kaupapa Māori perspective, and discuss how these factors compare with a Western perspective of empathy. The third article explores how interprofessional (IP) practice teams work together to identify and provide for gifted students with multiple exceptionalities. In this article, Jilly O’Brien, Tracy Riley and Wendy Holley-Boen report on a study that investigated the experiences and understandings of IP teams who were supporting students with multiple exceptionalities in New Zealand.

In the next article, James Chapman, reports on a two-year longitudinal study involving the Quick60 Foundation programme for beginning readers. The results are discussed in terms of the benefits of explicit, code-orientated literacy instruction from the outset of schooling. Article five, authored by Anne-Marie Hunt, explores factors for Māori teacher success in Aotearoa/New Zealand with a particular focus on one pre-service teacher education programme. These factors are described in relation to how they can support Māori teacher success, and how they can enhance the design and delivery of teacher education programmes. Next, Abby Martin reports on the literature regarding Tier-Two behavioural interventions for children aged 5 to 13. She identifies the core components that the research suggests are important to their effectiveness and/or social validity. Finally in this edition, Jeanne Currie reports on a project that supported learners within a secondary school context using the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life Programme.
Expanding on the Meanings of Empathy in the Classroom: Seeing Through a Cultural Lens
Wayne Duncan, Angus Macfarlane, Kathleen Quinlivan and Sonja Macfarlane

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the factors that may influence the social and relational development of empathy in a Year 13 classroom from a kaupapa Māori perspective, and discusses how these factors compare with a Western perspective of empathy. Understandings of empathy are widely documented in the conventional literature and, while the realities pertaining to empathy have been part of the fabric of Te Ao Māori (the Māori World), there has not been satisfactory levels of understanding by Western social scientists. It is proposed in this study that viewing empathy, through a bicultural lens, may provide relevant and meaningful understandings of empathy within their face-to-face classroom interactions. The understandings of 14 students and their teacher were analysed through the Māori concepts of manaakitanga, kotahitanga, rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga and pūmanawatanga; constructs that underpin Macfarlane’s (2004) Educultural Wheel. Adopting a qualitative case study methodology, the participants engaged in an iterative dialogical research strategy based on Gadamer’s hermeneutics (1975, 2001). This iterative research strategy enabled the students and their teacher to co-construct their developing understandings with the researcher, over time. Data collection occurred over a six-month period and comprised: 14 initial one-on-one interviews with students and the teacher; one student focus-group interview, and individual respondent-validation interviews with, respectively, 12 students and one teacher. Classroom participant observations, students’ written diaries and researcher field notes enriched the interview data. Factors identified by the research participants affecting the development of empathy from kaupapa Māori perspectives are presented, and the relation to Western perspectives are discussed. The findings indicate the importance of social engagements that are founded on an ethic-of-care (manaakitanga) and are duly focused on taking an interest in the individual. The findings of the study may be helpful in informing the development of more equitable and culturally-responsive educational practices (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Research paper

Keywords:
belonging, empathy, kaupapa Māori principles

PRINCIPLES OF EMPATHY RECONSIDERED

Within a Western perspective, empathy is understood to be the ability to interpret and understand others, or to attempt to see as they see, feel as they feel, or ‘be in their shoes’ (Rogers, 1977; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). The capacity to show empathy – to be able to empathise – is seen as an essential relational mechanism for effective social interaction and learning (Iceks, 1997). Empathy describes the ability of an individual to perceive another’s frame of reference, enabling interpretive accuracy and, in turn, constructive responses. When successfully achieved, empathic communication continues as a back-and-forth engagement in which successful social interaction and learning can occur. Without the ability to interpret others successfully, Iceks (1997) argues, the social fabric of human interaction unravels, interpersonal engagement fails and learning is either totally lost or severely affected.

While the importance of empathy in a learning environment is a well-established construct in educational literature, it appears that not the same level of consideration has been given to linking kaupapa Māori understandings of social/relational mechanisms to this body of knowledge. Kaupapa Māori is literally defined as ‘a Māori way’ and, as such, is connected to Māori principles, philosophies and practices. Māori pedagogical practices have a strong emphasis on ākonga (concurrent and reciprocal teaching and learning) and whanaungatanga (establishing relationships in a Māori context) (Macfarlane, 2004; Pere, 1991). It is not surprising, therefore, that positive classroom relationships and interpersonal engagement have
been identified as being very important for Māori students (Bishop, Berryman & Wearmouth, 2014; Macfarlane, 2004; Macfarlane, Cavanagh, Glynn & Bateman, 2007).

Given the challenge of disproportionately lower academic achievement levels for Māori students, a consideration of the synergies between Māori constructs and Western notions of empathy may create an opportunity to increase understanding of the imperatives that underpin relational environments where Māori are able to succeed – as Māori. This research links understandings from some of the existing, conventional literature with kaupapa Māori concepts, and analyses input from Māori and non-Māori in a learning environment by way of a kaupapa Māori framework. It highlights culturally-responsive approaches that develop sensitivity and sensibility towards the cultural backgrounds and experiences of not only Māori students, but of all students.

It needs to be emphasised that the few kaupapa Māori principles listed above cannot alone describe a Māori perspective of empathic understanding and learning. He tirohanga Māori (a Māori worldview) has an emphasis on wholeness and the importance of the inter-relatedness of particular concepts wherein one concept cannot be fully understood in total isolation from the others. One well-established example of this is Durie’s (1994) Te Whare Tapa Whā model, where holistic wellbeing comprises four domains: taha tinkana (the physical domain), taha hinengaro (the psychological domain), taha whānau (the social/relational domain), and taha wairua (the spiritual domain) – all of which are interconnected (Durie, 1984, 1994).

THE EDUCULTURAL WHEEL: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Two further constructs were used in the development of this study. A set of Western-identified manifestations of empathy, as acknowledged in international literature, was required as a foundation for identifying similarities in understanding empathy. This was provided by the work of Duncan (2011), which identified several manifestations of empathy relevant to this study, including, but not limited to: a sense of belonging, a strengthening bond, a supportive environment, compassion and caring, feeling as others feel, and the spontaneous spread of emotion. A kaupapa Māori overview, specific to a learning environment and relational dynamics, was required to explore the synergies and distinctions with Māori principles. This was provided by the work of Macfarlane (2004) and the Educultural Wheel. The Educultural Wheel comprises five key cultural concepts, showing their interconnections by presenting them as a wheel (see Figure 1). At the hub of the wheel is the concept of pūmanawatanga (heartbeat, pulse) which breathes life into the other four concepts. The surrounding four concepts are: whanaungatanga (building relationships, learning cooperatively); manaakitanga (the ethic of caring, creating a safe environment); rangatiratanga (teacher effectiveness and leadership, and communicating their enthusiasm to learners); and kotahitanga (the ethic of bonding, building a cohesive group dynamic, being inclusive of individuals). For Māori, and also for other indigenous cultures, the depiction of empathy includes the building of positive relationships, and asks much of those involved. This understanding is indicated in the five concepts comprising the Educultural Wheel.

---

**Figure 1. The Educultural Wheel (Macfarlane, 2004).**

---
METHODOLOGY: THE RESEARCH DESIGN

It is believed that hermeneutics and, in particular, Gadamer’s hermeneutic circle, provide a useful research strategy by seeking to understand the whole through reference to individual parts and vice versa (Gadamer, 2001). This approach assists in unpacking the complexities of kaupapa Māori understandings of inter-relatedness. Hermeneutic enquiry (which involves dialogue and iterative engagement over time), it is believed, may provide a process to explore kaupapa Māori concepts of empathy and classroom social interaction (Walshaw & Duncan, 2015).

This study used a hermeneutic research approach, guided by the seminal work of Gadamer (1975), and others who followed, which supported the use of an interpretive research strategy. The hermeneutic approach enabled participants to build their understandings of separate parts to comprehend the notion of a collective (the whole) over time, with iterative dialogue between the researcher and participants (Charmaz, 2003; Dostal, 2002; Gadamer, 1975, 2001). This approach aligned with Māori contentions of inter-relatedness and was culturally-responsive in further ways. The participants were actively engaged in the research process and were given the autonomy to co-construct their own understandings within the partnership rather than be subordinate to the research process or researcher (Smith, 2012). The objective was to undertake research with, and not on, the research participants (Herda, 1999).

The research was conducted using a single case study design, based within a classroom setting in a low socio-economic, culturally diverse, Year 9 –13 secondary school in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. The case study was purposely selected from Year 13 classes where the principal believed effective social/relational interaction was occurring. The case study involved a Year 13 class (students aged 16 –18 years) and their teacher. Three students and the teacher identified as Māori. The Board of Trustees, principal, teacher and students were provided with information letters and consent forms as part of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics consent application process. Confidentiality of data was ensured through research participants receiving personalised transcriptions, the use of pseudonyms in reporting, as well as personal details and transcripts being held in a password-protected and secure location.

Initially, one-on-one interviews were undertaken with 14 students (three male, 11 female) and their teacher. Semi-structured interviews explored research participants’ experiences and understandings of empathy within their classroom. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the typed transcripts were returned to the research participants to be checked for accuracy. The transcripts were then uploaded into the NVivo® data analysis software. The NVivo® software enabled the organisation of the large quantity of qualitative data and subsequent thematic coding of that data into increasingly finer-grained data sets (Ozkan, 2004). Previously identified (Western) manifestations of empathy within learning and teaching contexts were used to identify and group the students’ and teacher’s experiences of empathy within this particular learning context (Duncan, 2011; Rogers, 1977; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). These data sets were then used to develop key discussion points for a subsequent focus-group interview with the students, and another one-on-one interview with the teacher. The focus-group interview enabled participants to re-engage with themes that emerged from the initial one-on-one interviews, providing the opportunity for research participants to explore these themes at a greater depth of understanding through discussion with other participants. The focus-group interview and teacher interview were recorded and once again transcribed, with the transcript checked by research participants and then thematically coded via NVivo®. Students maintained a written diary in which they could record observations or views that they thought of after or between interviews. The diary also enabled them to record their views as and when they occurred, rather than having to wait until the interview. The teacher, too, maintained a research diary to record thoughts and observations. In addition, throughout the research, the researcher recorded observations and emerging themes. These research diary notes were all also uploaded into the NVivo® software.

The research participants’ experiences and observations of these (Western) manifestations were aligned by the researcher to the Educultural Wheel. The identified manifestations and their alignment with the model were validated (or not) by research participants within subsequent interviews. By employing this strategy, numerous themes were identified, analysed and reorganised into the Educultural Wheel categories that were, in turn, used to re engage research participants in deeper dialogic engagement. Factors affecting these kaupapa Māori concepts were then identified and are presented in this paper’s findings. This led to the development of the final respondent-validation interview agenda and further thematic data coding and analysis.

Within the final respondent-validation interviews, research participants were asked to share a visual metaphor representing how they believed the Māori concepts of manaakitanga,
kotahitanga, rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga and pūanawatanga, as presented within the Educultural Wheel, gave meaning for them of relating to others. The research participants’ descriptions of their visual metaphors were interpreted and recorded by the researcher while participants were developing/drawing/describing the development of their visual metaphor. These visual metaphors and associated descriptions were validated by participants when the final respondent-validation transcripts, which included their drawings, were returned to them for checking.

The research methodology is summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Outline of the research methodology.
FINDINGS (STAGE 1): WESTERN AND KAUPAPA MĀORI CONSTRUCTS ABOUT EMPATHY – SYNERGIES AND DISTINCTIVES

The findings from this research are interpretations from participants' lived experiences, and therefore are dependent on the personal frames or histories of participants and that of the researcher (Crotty, 1998; Dostal, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The findings may be contextual to the setting in which they were generated. Due to the dynamics of focus-group interviews and an iterative research strategy, the understandings developed by participants emerge inter-relationally through the interactions between them (Creswell, 2002). It should be acknowledged that the understandings drawn out by the work of Duncan (2011) are not internationally recognised and, thus, interpretations made within this case study must be considered in this context.

The discussion in this section is presented under four headings (derived from the Educultural Wheel) to show synergies and distinctive between kaupapa Māori principles, Western constructs about empathy from selected literature, and the data provided by research participants. A brief description of each construct (kaupapa Māori and Western) is provided. Following that, the Stage 1 findings from the case study are presented. These findings are discussed in relation to the emerging synergies with kaupapa Māori principles, while also noting that some Māori distinctives did not explicitly emerge.

1. Manifestations of empathy related to the ethic of relationship-building and interdependence

The kaupapa Māori principle of whanaungatanga references the establishing of relationships in a Māori context based on kinship, common locality and common interests. Whanaungatanga involves building the framework of social groupings – such as a family (whānau) – and is facilitated through cooperative activities, shared experiences and participating in larger, external events as a group. In a school and classroom environment, teachers engage in whanaungatanga by getting to know each student as an individual, and by generating opportunities to build mutual trust and respect. Students learning about the teacher’s interests and concerns is also important. Cooperative learning strategies, involving parents and families in the classroom and engaging the support of community people as resources, are all ways of building whanaungatanga.

Whanaungatanga can align with Western literature constructs of empathy such as experiencing a sense of belonging, a strengthening bond, feelings of a supportive environment, and feelings of compassion and caring.

The case study data indicated that having similar experiences, events or tasks – such as school camps or shared tragedy or challenge – had a big effect on building a strong sense of relationship. For some respondents, similar shared experiences with others enabled them to engage empathically. The increased socialisation occurring at school outdoor education camps and through cooperative learning tasks assisted this process. Socialisation beyond the classroom also assisted students in feeling part of the group. Familiarity and predictability of relationships was also seen as assisting in building empathy.

This case study occurred during the aftermath of a severe earthquake in the city of Christchurch and there were multiple references to this tragedy and the resultant challenges to family, whānau and the school. Research findings indicated that, for many, these challenges brought them closer together into more personalised interactions and, therefore, more empathetic engagement, which generated a positive spiral. However, the stress associated with the earthquake appeared to have had an effect on social/relational processes, creating a lower motivation to engage sympathetically, which hindered this positive spiral. Respondents indicated they believed that, even throughout the stress during and post this event, interpreting others was something they did involuntarily. Interpreting others empathically, they felt, just happened – even before they had a chance to think about not interpreting others. Respondents indicated they believed stress and workload had the greatest effect on their responses to empathic interpretation of others; respondents reported feeling burned-out, and felt that this inhibited their motivation to engage in an appropriate sympathetic response. They were too tired to care on occasions; they had become more ‘hardened’ about showing sympathy, rather than less empathic.

Cooperative approaches to tasks and socialisation beyond the classroom that made participants feel more part of the group are also implicit in whanaungatanga. Consistency and predictability in relationships also align strongly with whanaungatanga. Relationship-building characteristics, implicit in whanaungatanga, but which did not emerge from the case study, include: engaging with wider family members; connections to members of the local community, and reciprocity of sharing – for example, a teacher sharing aspects of his or her background.

2. Manifestations of empathy related to the ethic of care

The kaupapa Māori principle of manaakitanga embodies a type of caring that is reciprocal and
unqualified, based on respect and kindness, and encompasses a ‘duty of care’ (Macfarlane, 2004). It includes the unqualified caring and respect for others and humanity, expressed through extending hospitality (offering food and refreshments), consolidating friendship, and creating safety and a sense of belonging, comfort or ‘feeling at home’. Manaakitanga is reciprocal in the sense that “... there is simply faith that one day that which one has contributed will be returned” (Ritchie, 1992, p. 75). It is unqualified in the sense that “… you are obliged to support, to care for, be concerned about, to feed, shelter and nurture your kin, and especially when they are in need ...” (Ritchie, 1992, p. 78).

Manaakitanga can align with (but is not the same as) Western constructs of a supportive environment, extending compassion and caring for others.

Research findings from this case study indicated that the students and teacher believed that empathy is developed through the ethic of care and is supported when: they feel valued by others; they feel happy in the environment, and they are comfortable and trusting of others. The importance of the personalisation of the interaction was expressed strongly by students. The more interest the students felt teachers or other students took in them personally, the more they believed they experienced empathy. The more interest teachers showed in individualised, personal interaction was expressed strongly by students. The more interest the students felt teachers or other students took in them personally, the more they believed they experienced the ethic of care.

These findings appear to align with the kaupapa Māori principle of manaakitanga. Empathy was associated with heightened levels of comfort, trust and feeling valued and cared for. These characteristics reflect the expressions of kindness, safety and sense of belonging inherent in manaakitanga. However, there is also added richness in the Māori expression of manaakitanga which was not emphasised in the research participants’ commentaries. Examples are the development of empathy through extending hospitality, the sense of nurture and the emphasis on reciprocity and an obligatory duty of care.

3. Manifestations of empathy related to the ethic of bonding and unity

The kaupapa Māori principle, kotahitanga, is a concept of becoming one out of many, where a sense of unity and inclusiveness is sought by recognising everyone’s mana (status, pride, honour) (Macfarlane, 2004). Kotahitanga is inclusive of individuals while developing a group dynamic. For example, in a learning environment, kotahitanga might be expressed through the development of person-to-person relationships (expressed as kanohi-ki-te-kanohi in Māori vernacular) between teacher and students, between students and students, and the use of shared experiences and activities. Macfarlane (2004) reports on several examples of how this principle translates into reality and these include: giving awards to the class as a community; engaging in rituals or routines, and forming a class treaty.

Kotahitanga can align with (but is not the same as) Western literature constructs of empathy such as: a sense of belonging or identity with a group of members within a group; feelings of a strengthening bond; a supportive environment; feeling as others feel, and the spontaneous spread of emotion.

Analysis of the case study data on the ethic of bonding indicated that the more personalised the interaction, the more predictable other interactions were, and the closer the bond became. There was a strongly-held assumption among respondents about the need for a perception of an investment in the relationship by the teacher or other student. When present, this perception enabled the bond to become closer. Data showed that the more personalised the interaction, the more accurate the empathic interpretations and, therefore, the stronger the bond. Participants also indicated that they felt their motivation to engage in empathic interpretation of others was motivated by a desire to belong to a group or to avoid a negative emotional response as a result of incorrectly interpreting others’ feelings or intentions. A contention is that ‘feeling as others feel’ may help students avoid negative physical, emotional or social experiences from misinterpretation of others as the result of misreading a social situation.

The case study findings show some synergy with the kaupapa Māori principle of kotahitanga. Belonging to a bigger group was important to participants, while individualised, personal interaction was critical to that ‘belongingness’ occurring. Elements such as predictability and being correctly interpreted enabled group bonding to occur. This can align with kotahitanga characteristics of building group dynamics while including individuals and recognising their mana (earned respect). Through the expression of kotahitanga, rituals and routines allowed the predictability and consistent interpretation of behaviour which was emphasised by participants. Students identified the positive role of the teacher in facilitating both an ethic of care in the classroom and their own visibility. Often, the teacher just being there gave the students a sense of security. The whakatauki (proverb), ‘Ehara tuku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini’ (which translates as ‘succeeding not individually but collectively’), has relevance in the domain of kotahitanga. Studies of effective schools and classrooms have consistently drawn attention to
the importance of strong educational leadership. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2006), one of the more difficult dimensions of leadership is the part that provokes teachers to look beyond their own classrooms and themselves. Aspects of kotahitanga that did not emerge in the findings were a sense of the importance of the wider group (that is, the whole class), and the use of class treaties or commitments.

4. Manifestations of empathy related to autonomy, leadership, teacher effectiveness

The kaupapa Māori concept of rangatiratanga (autonomy, leadership, teacher effectiveness) relates to the expression ihi (confidence, assertiveness) and, in this context, it relates to a person’s mana, their chiefly presence (body language), leadership, personal magnetism, their inspirational demeanour, passion and enthusiasm.

Rangatiratanga appears to align with (but is not the same as) Western constructs of empathy such as: the ability to predict the behaviour and attitude of others; compassion and caring; experiencing encouragement, and helping.

Studies of effective teachers have consistently drawn attention to the importance of strong classroom leadership, as contrary to ‘control’. This is in line with Glasser’s (cited in Charles, 2005) notions of ‘lead teachers’ as being preferred over ‘boss teachers’, and the Prochnow and Macfarlane (2010) descriptions of teachers being assertive and simultaneously warm.

The case study data showed that students noticed differences in the ability of teachers to interpret accurately the students’ emotions and propensities. The predominant cues students used for their own interpretation of others were facial expressions, body language and tonal inflections in the person’s voice. Respondents indicated they also believed that more accurate empathic interpretation is achieved through experience with individual patterns of behaviour for individuals, rather than through predetermined rules. Respondents also indicated that, when interpreting others, they felt that disturbances and stress resulted in empathic inaccuracies through the misinterpretation of cues, or from missing cues altogether. The perceived genuineness of the encouragement given was significant in building friendship and trust. Helping was experienced most where there was personal investment in the relationship. Students also commented that they believed some teachers needed to be aware of their own emotional states and to recognise that, potentially, other students were interpreting these states.

These case study findings have some multiple commonalities with the kaupapa Māori principle of rangatiratanga. Participants reported noting the body language of teachers along with facial expressions and use of tone in their voice. The enthusiasm of the teacher was identified in the participants’ commentary on genuineness being associated with encouragement and building trust. The passion and inspiration of the teacher are evidenced in the amount of personal investment experienced by the student in the helping relationship. While participants did comment on the confidence and ability of their teacher to be firm and relational, they expressed the opinion that this was specific to some teachers. The data did indicate the presence of a chiefly presence or mana, but the specific use of these terms to identify these characteristics did not emerge.

DISCUSSION: STAGE 1

The Stage 1 data on empathy from the case study participants shows some commonality between their understanding of empathy and the kaupapa Māori principles (and strategies) as described in the Educultural Wheel (Macfarlane, 2004). However, there are also distinctive themes within the Educultural Wheel which did not emerge in participant commentary, such as whole-class rewards. It is likely that many of these distinctions were simply outside of the participants’ experience of developing or describing classroom empathy, rather than being a concept that either they could not grasp or thought did not develop empathy.

Stage 2 of the research, where Māori (4) and non-Māori (11) participants were given the opportunity to engage with the kaupapa Māori principles expressed in the Educultural Wheel, created an opportunity to test this thinking.

FINDINGS (STAGE 2): PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE KAUPAPA MĀORI PRINCIPLES EXPRESSED IN THE EDUCULTURAL WHEEL

In Stage 2, participants were asked to share a visual metaphor representing how they believed kaupapa Māori concepts of manaakitanga, kotahitanga, rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga and pūmanawatanga related to, and may or may not contribute to, the facilitation of empathic interaction.

All the participants indicated that they believed these concepts contributed to the facilitation of empathic interaction. They all also indicated that they felt these concepts provided a useful framework to share their understandings of empathy. This was evident when observing the ease with which the participants were able to develop their visual metaphors of how these kaupapa Māori concepts related. Of further interest was the ease with which participants were able to integrate their own
histories, traditions and cultural backgrounds within these kaupapa Māori concepts.

The visual metaphors provide a window into participants’ understandings of empathy from a generalist (Western conventions perspective) and a culturalist (kaupapa Māori perspective). The following section uses four selected (there were 10) diagrams to show the participants’ responses to, and understandings of, manaakitanga, kotahitanga, rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga and pūmanawatanga after engaging in the research process. It is proposed that these visual metaphors demonstrate a wide range of deeper understandings of a kaupapa Māori perspective and that their inclusion is important within the findings.

Figure 3. The Wise Oak Tree.
(Drawing and text developed by Participant 11, 24 September 2013)

Respondent Description: Empathising is all about being able to draw water up to nourish the leaves. The ethic of care or Manaakitanga forms the foundation for this model through the roots. This ethic of care is spread out in the soil in a fine network of roots to soak up the moisture. From there it is the larger roots and trunk that is bonding or Kotahitanga – that draws the water up to the families of branches or Whanaungatanga. It is on these Whānau that the Pūmanawatanga (fresh green leaves) grow and absorb energy from the sun or Rangatiratanga. Therefore, for this model, it is the Rangatiratanga that provides the energy. If the tone or pulse (leaves) look dead or stressed then there is not enough light from the Rangatiratanga, the Manaakitanga is not deep and dispersed enough, or there are problems with the roots trunk or branches.

Figure 4. The Soccer Team.
(Drawing and text developed by Participant 13, 25 September 2013)

Respondent Description: Although the overall Rangatiratanga is the coach, there is also distributed leadership in the team with the on-field captain and senior players. The relationship/bond between the players and their motivation to understand each other’s play is Kotahitanga. Whanaungatanga is represented by the overall team and groups within the team such as the forwards and the backs. In this model, the ethic of care or Manaakitanga is the team spirit or shared motivation to win. It is by the team strip or dress that the team shows the tone or pulse of the team, the Pūmanawatanga (a professional playing strip). Although the team is guided by the Rangatiratanga, each member of the Whānau is a leader in some respect to ensure the success of the team.

Figure 5. The Waka.
(Drawing and text developed by Participant 2, 4 September 2013)

Respondent Description: Care for those paddling the Waka is provided by the Waka itself. It is the rhythm or beat of the paddling that is the ethic of bonding or the Kotahitanga. Effective leadership is provided by the Rangatira who is steering the Waka.
Whanaungatanga are the crew and their relationship as a Whānau. The calmness of the water represents the Pūmanawatanga or the tone or pulse.

**Figure 5. The Orchestra.** *(Drawing and text developed by Participant 7, 24 September 2013)*

**Respondent Description:** The conductor (Rangatiratanga) conducts (Whanaungatanga) groups within the orchestra. Each of the musicians needs to develop relationships between their own instrument and other player/s instruments as represented by Kotahitanga. There needs to be an ethic of care (Manaakitanga) or interest about working together for the ultimate outcome, the music. The quality of this music is measured by the sound or the tone, therefore Pūmanawatanga really tells how well the orchestra is working as a Whānau. Rather than Pūmanawatanga creating a culture of care and ethic of bonding, it is successful bonds, care and chiefly control that lead to the establishment of Pūmanawatanga.

**DISCUSSION: STAGE 2**

Participants’ diagrams from Stage 2 appear to indicate that the students were able to make clear associations with the kaupapa Māori principles as expressed in the Educultural Wheel. The associations were innovative and thought-provoking. The selected examples outlined above also appear to illustrate and discuss how empathy may be developed through the kaupapa Māori concepts and show that students acquired a grasp of the principles themselves.

Individual diagrams further demonstrate an understanding of cultural concepts. Figure 3, the Wise Oak Tree, brought out the richness of manaakitanga – nurture and care. A further diagram, the Pyramid (not shown for reasons of space), also focussed on manaakitanga, highlighting “the large stable foundation” it provides to build the other qualities needed. Figure 4, the Soccer Team, brought out wisdom around the varied roles and uses of rangatiratanga. Figure 5, the Waka, makes kotahitanga central through the emphasis on the rhythm or timing used to paddle the waka. Finally, Figure 6, the Orchestra, commented that the pūmanawatanga, the tone or pulse of the group, cannot just be invoked; rather, it has to be built up through the ethics of care, bonding and leadership. A breadth and depth of understanding about group dynamics and how empathy develops are revealed through the diagrams. The diagrams also show keen insights into how it is that the interconnections of multiple factors together enable empathy to become the tone or pulse of a group.

The Stage 1 commentary on empathy by case study participants showed areas of convergence between Western and Māori principles. However, that commentary left out some elements inherent in the kaupapa Māori principles and focussed less on interconnections that promote empathy in a group. The visual metaphors used in Stage 2 of the research showed the understandings participants had made with regards to traditional Māori insights about empathy. Some cultural distinctives which did not emerge in the Stage 1 data were apparent in the visual metaphors. This suggests that some distinctives were simply initially outside of the participants’ experience of developing or describing classroom empathy, rather than being concepts that were irrelevant or inconsistent with their awareness of group relationships.

Through engaging with the Educultural Wheel, research participants appear to have been able to express richer and broader ideas about empathy. Importantly, this included the ability to show awareness of the inter-relatedness of the parts which work together to bring empathy to a group of people; in this case, a class of students and their teacher.

**CONCLUSION**

In this case study, the Educultural Wheel appeared to enhance awareness about the social and relational development of empathy, regardless of the ethnicity of the participants. For broader contexts, it seems reasonable to assume that the Educultural Wheel would have the resonance and breadth to bring more deep-rooted understandings of the development of empathy (manaakitanga) to enhance the learning environment for all learners and teachers.

Research suggests the need for teachers and school leaders to consider with more earnestness the voices and thinking of their students, given that they are considered to be the most discerning consumers of education. The lack of knowledge and awareness that many teachers may have about the cultural meanings...
residing in Māori students raises important questions for equity and democracy.

Banks (2004) introduced five dimensions for the cultural enhancement of education: content integration; knowledge construction; equity pedagogy; prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture. Although the five dimensions of multicultural education are highly inter-related, each requires deliberate attention and focus. This study enabled an interaction with, in particular, the first two dimensions, in a simple way. Content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, generalisations and issues within their subject areas or disciplines. The knowledge construction process describes how teachers help students to understand, investigate and determine how the biases, frames of reference and perspectives within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within that discipline. Students also learn how to build knowledge themselves in this dimension.

The exercises carried out in this research project adopted a recognised Māori cultural framework – the Educultural Wheel – to explore, explain and discuss the meanings that secondary students may derive from some of the quintessential concepts that operationalise the Māori world.

REFERENCES


Weaving educational threads. Weaving educational practice.


AUTHOR PROFILES

**Dr Wayne Duncan**

Wayne Duncan is a deputy principal at Northern Southland College, Lumsden, New Zealand. His research work focuses on empathy within learning and teaching environments. His doctoral research focused on understanding the nature and function of empathy within synchronous multimedia conferencing. This report formed an outcome of a research grant from the Nuthall Trust.

Email: wduncan@nsc.school.nz

**Dr Angus Macfarlane**

Angus Macfarlane (Ngāi Whakāue) is Professor of Māori Research at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. He has published seven books and has been the recipient of prestigious awards for his academic achievements and contributions to Māori education. His research explores cultural concepts and strategies that influence professional practice.

Email: angus.macfarlane@canterbury.ac.nz

**Kathleen Quinlivan** is an associate professor in the School of Educational Studies and Leadership in the College of Education, Health and Human Development at the University of Canterbury. She researches and writes in the field on critical sexuality education studies, with a particular focus on school-based sexuality education programmes, and how they can more actively engage with the sexuality, gender and race politics of diverse young people’s lives. She puts contemporary theory to work in order to reconceptualise the epistemological and pedagogical implications of this project.

Email: kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

**Dr Sonja Macfarlane**

Sonja Macfarlane (Ngāi Tahu; Ngāti Waewae) is an Associate Professor at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Her work focuses on Māori education, and developmental and cultural psychology. Her research explores culturally-responsive evidence based practices that enhance the social, cultural and educational outcomes achieved by Māori learners.

Email: sonjamac@waikato.ac.nz
How Do Interprofessional Practice Teams Work Together to Identify and Provide for Gifted Students with Multiple Exceptionalities?

Jilly O’Brien, Tracy Riley, and Wendy Holley-Boen

ABSTRACT

Priority learners in New Zealand include those who have special educational needs, yet gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities are variably identified, understood or provided for in our schools. International research advocates the use of interprofessional practice (IPP) teams, with competency across shared values, roles and responsibilities, communication, and teamwork, to support gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. This study explored the experiences and understandings of IPP teams supporting students with multiple exceptionalities in New Zealand. The study found that IPP team identity is still in its infancy and core competencies are still evolving. Shared values towards inclusive practices were hampered by limited knowledge and expertise across the IPP team. Limited understandings of teamwork processes and limited recognition of the importance of communication within the IPP team were also common themes. Parents and students were typically not recognised as part of the IPP team identity and processes. The article concludes that gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities may not have adequate support at a systems level, and development of interprofessional practice competencies may be one way to ensure their full inclusion in our education system. Implications for policy and practice are described.

Research paper

Keywords:
gifted and talented education, gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities, inclusive education, interprofessional practice, twice exceptional

SETTING THE SCENE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Gifted students whose performance is impaired, or high potential is masked, by one or more specific learning disabilities, physical impairments, disorders, or conditions. The difficulties inherent in turning potential into performance may necessitate support for positive socio-emotional affect, as well as support for learning (O’Brien, 2014, p. 3).

One of the defining characteristics of gifted students with multiple exceptionalities is the extreme asynchronous profile presented, what Tannenbaum and Baldwin (1983) describe as the ‘paradoxical’ learner. Gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities may display greater uneven development across developmental domains than other gifted children (Baum, Dann, Novak & Preuss, 2009; Singer, 2000). It is the discrepancy between intellectual ability and performance (and often the efforts to mask this) that create the frustration, learned helplessness and negative self-affect common to this group of learners (Bets & Neihart, 2010).

When the precocious perceptiveness and heightened sensitivity of the gifted child coexists with a debilitating learning difficulty, the stage is set for significant social and emotional dysfunction because the GLD student adopts a range of maladaptive perceptions and behaviours in the struggle against this perplexing condition (Hill, 2011, p. 22).

Not surprisingly, gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities are considered a vulnerable school population (Hill, 2011; Silverman, 2007). If they are not recognised as a unique group of learners and offered teaching and learning strategies that meet both their academic and socio-emotional needs, the risk of underachievement is high and pervasive (Moon, 2002). Although inclusive education is the process by which schools transform themselves to meet the needs of all learners (UNESCO, 2005), gifted learners have often been outside of this shift as an underserved population in our schools (Tannenbaum, 2000). O’Brien’s (2014) study sought to investigate, at a systems level, the interprofessional practice teams that may contribute to the inclusion of gifted learners with
multiple exceptionalities in efforts towards fairness and equity in schooling.

Since 2005, New Zealand schools are required (as per National Administration Guideline (NAG) 1iii(c)) to identify students who have special needs (including gifted and talented), and to develop teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of those students (Ministry of Education, 2012a). However, national studies have consistently found that while some positive change is evidenced, schools generally fail to adequately identify and provide for the needs of their gifted students (Education Review Office, 2008; Riley, Bevan-Brown, Bicknell, Carroll-Lind & Kearney, 2004; Riley & Bicknell, 2013). The Ministry of Education (2012b) recognise there are gaps in New Zealand research around the best way to meet the needs of gifted and talented students who have special needs, despite these students being identified as more vulnerable than either students with special needs or gifted students (Barber & Mueller, 2011).

A successful approach undertaken overseas is one which is multidisciplinary - a collaborative taskforce able to take a multidimensional view, and individualise a plan for the gifted learner with multiple exceptionalities (Fetzer, 2000; Landrum, 2001; Nielsen, 2002; Rogers, 2010). This multidisciplinary approach has been adopted by some New Zealand schools under the guise of interprofessional practice. However, there is scant research on interprofessional practice for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. The study we report in this article, undertaken by O’Brien (2014), examines the interprofessional practice values of teams working to identify and provide for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities.

**LITERATURE REVIEW: INTERPROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (IPP) TEAMS**

Interprofessional practice is “a highly integrated framework for collaboration among professionals” (Geva, Barsky & Westernoff, 2000, p. 3). An IPP team is defined as two or more professionals working together towards a common goal, learning with, from, and about each other (Mentis, Kearney & Bevan-Brown, 2012). IPP teams supporting gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities may include gifted and talented (G&T) coordinators, guidance counsellors, health professionals, special needs coordinators (SENCO), parents/whānau, resource teachers of learning and behaviour (RTLB), and class teachers.

An interprofessional practice (IPP) team requires development of certain core competencies to be effective. According to the Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel (IPEC) (2011), these four competency domains consist of: values and ethics; roles and responsibilities; interprofessional communication, and team work. Developing effective teams with these competencies should create a more child-centred, effective, efficient, and equitable education for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. IPEC make it clear that how delivery occurs is as important as what delivery occurs, and this is particularly important for students who are gifted with multiple exceptionalities.

The literature highlights some aspects of IPP competencies and teams for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. For example, Rogers (2011) presented 11 strategies for what works in identifying gifted children with multiple exceptionalities in school districts in the US. Five of the 11 strategies are related to interprofessional practice, specifically the use of professional teams and their expertise. Literature also attests to the need for pre-service education and professional development opportunities across both gifted and special education paradigms, if these students are to be included and have their needs met in school (Kalbfleisch, 2013). However, there have been limited publications in New Zealand literature that share knowledge of gifted learners interprofessionally. Cathcart (2002) urged RTLB to use their position to demystify giftedness. Blackett and Hermansson (2005) argued that developments in the mid-2000s in gifted education required a complementary response from school guidance counsellors; however, there had been no overall policy to bring this about, and counsellors have had to “respond as they see fit” (p. 281) with limited local research, no pre-service training, and few specialist providers. More recently, Hurst and Riley (2014) highlighted the need for more research exploring the multipotentiality of gifted learners in New Zealand to be undertaken by and for counsellors.

Based on the literature reviewed, and derived from the core competencies for interprofessional practice (IPEC, 2011), are several important research questions:

1. How do the differing values of various IPP team members fit with identification and provision for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities?
2. What knowledge is there of roles and responsibilities within the IPP teams, and how much confidence is there to identify and provide for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities?
3. What aspects of interprofessional communication assist, or do not assist, in identification and provision for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities?
4. How does previous professional development in the area of teamwork (collaboration, consultation...
and communication, team roles, conflict resolution) affect identification and provision for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities?

Delving into these questions gives researchers and practitioners an opportunity to explore and understand how things happen in interprofessional practice teams, and why they happen the way they do (Anderson, 1998). By looking at particular differences and similarities between interprofessional practice teams, general ways interprofessional practice teams work can be illuminated (Denscombe, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

O’Brien’s (2014) research, reported in this article, used a qualitative case study methodology (Yin, 2014) to explore the practices of interprofessional practice teams, defined as two or more specialist personnel who have worked with one or more gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities over the last two years. Data collection techniques included an online questionnaire, complemented by follow-up email responses and interviews. Participation was invited through three websites that serve gifted and special needs educational communities in New Zealand: the Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) Gifted and Talented Online listserv, giftEDnz: the Professional Association for Gifted Education’s online newsletter; the NZ RTLB association, and the TKI online RTLB page.

Because case studies are often ‘close up’ qualitative accounts, they may be more intrusive and involve reactivity more than quantitative methods (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the research was assessed by our team under Massey University’s code of ethical conduct, and through our discussions, it was deemed to be low risk (and this was confirmed by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee who accepted our review and notification).

Seven IPP teams agreed to participate in the online survey. Teams had between two and four members, were from rural and urban areas across the country, and were focused on a primary, intermediate or secondary age child. All teams indicated that their student was academically gifted with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder, specific learning difficulties, or cognitive processing difficulties. Whilst the study was open to other forms of giftedness and exceptionality, such as cultural giftedness, spiritual giftedness, or students with a physical disability, these were not evident in the teams that agreed to be in the study. Schools were private, state and state-integrated, and both single sex and co-educational.

The online questionnaire asked questions related to interprofessional practice core competencies such as: respondent attitudes to provision of, and access to, services for gifted students with multiple exceptionalities; knowledge of their and others roles and responsibilities; methods of communication and access to information, and information about specific skills in collaboration, consultation and conflict management. Of the seven respondent teams, three teams also agreed to be interviewed by phone, Skype or in person with as many team members as were available. The interviews took between 45 minutes to an hour. Open-ended questions from the survey were analysed for emerging themes, topics, threads, and contradictions. These themes formed the basis for the interviews, which were later analysed inductively and deductively. Themes were identified and refined within and across the transcripts, and then considered with reference to the interprofessional practice core competencies (IPEC, 2011). The study was mainly descriptive, exploratory, or revelatory, in that, to our knowledge, it was the first research completed on interprofessional practice teams and gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities, in New Zealand.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION IN RELATION TO CORE COMPETENCIES

Research findings were examined against the four competencies of interprofessional practice, namely: shared values and ethics; roles and responsibilities; communication, and teamwork.

Shared Values and Ethics

All IPP teams recognised that gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities require additional support, and on an equal footing with special needs learners. One team member noted, “I believed there was an acceptance that he wasn’t going to fit the norm and there was a willingness to set up an individualised programme which is really the main step”. Some, but not all, of the IPP teams espoused or enacted an understanding that the social and emotional needs of gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities were an important factor that must be addressed. A third of survey respondents thought performing at the norm academically was an indication that the gifted learner with multiple exceptionalities was being well-catered for. Just over a third of the survey respondents either disagreed or did not know that gifted learners need challenge first, followed by accommodation strategies (such as reducing a written requirement), and remediation as the basic structure to their curriculum. These respondents had focused solely on remediation, which had not been successful in ameliorating behavioural problems or reducing anxiety.

In order for a team to work collaboratively around a student, shared values must develop within the interprofessional practice team, and there must be a
cultural mismatch of mutual respect (IPEC, 2011). Specifically, teams working with gifted students with multiple exceptionalities must share values about inclusive education as a process to meet the needs of diverse student populations, rather than being used as a synonym for special education (Kearney, 2013). Gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities require teaching strategies that focus on the strengths and interests of the child, rather than on what they cannot do (Bettis & Neihart, 2010; Olenchak & Reis, 2002). By providing a teaching environment that fits the child in terms of their high ability, social and emotional problems and negative behaviours can be reduced significantly (Baum, Owen & Oreck, 1996; Neihart, Reis, Robinson & Moon, 2002).

Findings suggest that there was a willingness amongst IPP teams to find a place for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities within inclusive education. There was no support for Siegle and McCaslin’s (2005) findings that special education teachers (taken here as SENCO and RTLB) tend to have a negative view of the gifted – if anything, specialists in special needs education had an understanding and knowledge that contributed positively to understanding giftedness within inclusive education.

Inclusive values were not, however, shared comprehensively across and between IPP teams, and concerns were expressed that beliefs do not always translate into practice. Of greatest concern was the limited knowledge and understanding of the unique needs of gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities, in terms of classroom provision, social and emotional needs, variance in required day-to-day support, and evaluation of the support in terms other than academic scores. This means that these students may still not be experiencing inclusion, despite the positive intentions of support teams.

Roles and Responsibilities

Those from a special education background (RTLB, SENCO) tended to have received some formal training not only in special education, but also about gifted learners and gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. This trend was not evident in the opposite direction. Gifted and talented coordinators typically had no formal training in special needs education or about gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities – and half had no formal training in gifted education either. IPP team members recognised that their own limited knowledge and the lack of knowledge within the IPP team affected the team’s ability to meet the needs of gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. Comments from team members illustrate their challenges in not having the skills and knowledge to define their roles and responsibilities:

“This whole 2E area is a minefield, and I have had to educate myself”.

“I’m trying not to say I am flummoxed, but I am challenged because I have never worked with a 2E child before – in the normal course of events RTLB would be dealing with learning or behavioural problems”.

“I have never had a child in my class with this label before”.

This limited knowledge also impacted on the willingness of team members to take primary responsibility for the gifted learner with multiple exceptionalities. Most teams gave conflicting answers as to who had responsibility, with respondents rarely accepting the responsibility themselves, preferring instead to nominate someone else in the team or not nominate anyone. As one respondent said, “I don’t think we named anyone for that, there was no one specific”. Only one IPP team out of seven agreed on a shared responsibility. This may indicate limited coordination and teamwork within the IPP team, or limited confidence and knowledge to be the specialist key worker or stakeholder for the student.

In this study, most teaching strategies used for gifted students (e.g. activities for creativity, independent study, higher-order thinking, curriculum compacting, values education) were also recognised for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities, but were not seen as portable to all students or students with special needs. Similarly, strategies recommended for special needs students (e.g. drill and practise, workbooks) were rarely recommended for gifted learners or gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities.

When professionals share their expertise in team situations, all members grow in confidence, expertise and understanding, and outcomes for students are positively impacted (Dettmer, Thurston, Knackendorff & Dyck, 2009). Being competent in your own role and responsibility area, and knowing the roles and responsibilities of other IPP team members, is a core competency for interprofessional practice (Suter, Arndt, Arthur, Parboosingh, Taylor & Deutschlander, 2009). Being able to complement one another professionally is critical for child-centred educational provision. If team members lack individual expertise, this can limit the work of the whole team (IPEC, 2011).

Despite an ERO recommendation that school leaders should “promote specialist training and development for people specifically responsible for gifted and talented education” (ERO, 2008, p. 54), the findings
of this research show a considerable lack of formal training in the area of gifted learners, with or without multiple exceptionalities. It would appear that the findings support the claim by Riley (2013) that gifted education teachers do not access inclusive research, policies and practice, and are becoming increasingly isolated. However, the findings do not support Riley’s other claim that special needs educators do not access information and knowledge about gifted learners. Therefore, without clear team roles and responsibilities based on individual expertise, gifted education teachers and coordinators may inadvertently limit the work of the whole team by lacking individual expertise in their own area.

Baum, Owen and Dixon (1991) state that gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities are usually identified when parents or teachers suspect a problem. Parental involvement in identification is key, as they can provide insight not readily accessible to the teacher (Baum et al., 1991; Rivera, Murdock & Sexton, 1995). Even though parents were involved in identification in all seven cases, they were only considered part of the team in two cases. In an inclusive process, the people most knowledgeable about the issue (the family and the student) would always be included.

Communication

Findings show that four of the IPP teams met regularly for identification and provision for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. The other three teams did not meet all together, face-to-face or virtually, at any stage of the process. Respondents indicated that either it was not necessary to meet as a full team, or that it was not possible to find time or space to do so. One class teacher explained that “… to find that time was near impossible, it meant three or four people had to do major juggles to make it happen. And if it’s not easy it won’t happen and won’t happen regularly”.

IPEC (2011) regard communication as a core aspect of interprofessional practice; team members must work towards a common understanding of the issue by expressing their individual knowledge and opinions to the team clearly, confidently and respectfully. Bennett- Emmslie and McIntosh (1995) identify the single, most important factor to foster collaborative teamwork is the frequency of team meetings, which enable more dialogue to occur between team members. Poorly-established dialogue can lead to deteriorations in service provision, because IPP team members do not iron out their differences enough through discussion to put the client in the centre (McCallin, 1999). For the three out of seven IPP teams who never met all together, this may indicate that teams have not communicated their readiness to work together (Baggs & Schmitt, 1997), or it may mean time and organisational factors made it impossible. Teams may need to use time- and place-saving communication tools and technologies if interprofessional practice is to be effective (IPEC, 2011). None of the IPP teams in this study used videoconferencing tools (e.g. Skype) in order to communicate, and we need to try to understand the challenges for professionals making use of technologies that could enhance team function by increasing the ease of communication.

Teamwork

In this research, some education professionals had received formal training in teamwork skills. Special needs educators (SENCO and RTLB) had received training in teamwork skills, and were recognised for using that expertise to get the team together, keep the team together, and lead a systematic process for the team to follow. Comments related to team work demonstrate the difference this background made to practice:

“The RTLB was good at being non-threatening and she did validate each person so they felt secure and able to contribute and she was highly skilled in that area”.

“She (RTLB) facilitated the first meeting and she said who would do what and it was all colour-coded. She lets you know where she is up to and you’re not left in the dark. It is all quite systematic”.

In contrast, gifted and talented coordinators and class teachers had not received the same level of teamwork training. Respondents did not appear familiar with the concept of interprofessional practice teams, with three teams expressing the feeling that although they acted as a team, they probably would not have seen themselves as a discrete unit or called themselves a team. A culture of interprofessional practice teams was not yet evident. Teachers and gifted and talented coordinators noted:

“You keep using that word ‘team’ and my initial question was, ‘what is this word team and what team are you talking about and who are these people?’”

“I have a close working relationship with my colleagues and I see us as working together, but I am realising through my conversations that maybe my colleagues don’t! This is clearly an area for future development”.

Teamwork is necessary in any setting where professionals have shared goals (IPEC, 2011). Teamwork relies on other key competencies of shared values: being clear about roles and responsibilities, and practising effective communication. Teamwork also requires specific training in what McCallin
to Interprofessional Practice and Whānau (IPW). Terminology matters, and a name change student would enable effective identification and appreciating the expertise brought by the parent and own and others’ expertise. Understanding and all educators to have clear understandings of their ongoing interprofessional education would enable teamwork, function as major barriers to effective of specialisation and the roles of others on the Limited understandings of one’s role, the area appraisal schemes within the education sector. Evidence-based competency for all professional that interprofessional teamwork becomes an at the pre-service stage. It is therefore recommended beneficial to developing effective teams, beginning disciplines rather than within them would be communication, team roles and processes across together. Training in collaboration, consultation, communication between the team, specifically in overcoming time and location constraints to be all together. Training in collaboration, consultation, communication, team roles and processes across disciplines rather than within them would be beneficial to developing effective teams, beginning at the pre-service stage. It is therefore recommended that interprofessional teamwork becomes an evidence-based competency for all professional appraisal schemes within the education sector.

Limited understandings of one’s role, the area of specialisation and the roles of others on the team, function as major barriers to effective interprofessional practice. Formal and informal ongoing interprofessional education would enable all educators to have clear understandings of their own and others’ expertise. Understanding and appreciating the expertise brought by the parent and student would enable effective identification and provision. Terminology matters, and a name change to Interprofessional Practice and Whānau (IPW) teams, may invite inclusion of all parties.

The limitations of this study are centred around the fact that the sample may not be representative of the range of diverse views and practices in IPP teams within the education sector. Not all education sectors were represented; for example, there was no data from early childhood or tertiary centres, or importantly from Kura Kaupapa Māori-medium schools. IPP teams may not represent a cross-section of all teams working with gifted students with multiple exceptionalities, as all teams in the study referred to academically gifted children, rather than a multica­tegorical approach to giftedness.

FINAL THOUGHTS
Interprofessional practice teams may be one way to support the paradigm shift to inclusive education within schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As McCallin (1999) states, potential difficulties with interprofessional teams can be overcome when a team adopts a client-focused, pluralistic, worldview. Teams therefore need to ask and answer the question ‘what will it take for this child to succeed?’ together, as an identified team, inclusive of the student and whānau. This will be an iterative process throughout the student’s school life. Continuing development of interprofessional practice core competencies by all education professionals would appear vital for genuine inclusion of all diverse school populations, including gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities, within New Zealand schools. What is also critical is further empirical research on New Zealand-based practices showing the processes interprofessional practice teams use, and more importantly, whether their effectiveness improves outcomes for our students.

REFERENCES

(2001) calls the concept of collectivity, the bigger picture, and citizenship skills. In the healthcare field, McCallin asserts that few professionals are taught these teamwork skills and thus they are not part of their professional identity.

A parallel may be drawn with education to assert that, similarly, few education professionals see teamwork skills as part of their professional identity. Hall (2005) asserts that teamwork skills do not always focus on communication across professions, and so individuals are prepared only to work within their own profession. In this research, it was clear that those education professionals who had been taught teamwork skills were able to use them across professions, and were recognised for using their expertise for the benefit of the team.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES AND PRACTICES
Implications for practice include developing interprofessional communication strategies (including growing digital competencies to increase the frequency and effectiveness of team meetings), interprofessional teamwork skills, interprofessional education, and reconceptualisation of IPP teams in ways that include students and families. Participants concurred with the research evidence that attests to the importance of frequent, targeted meetings that are genuinely collaborative and involve the whole team. This could be achieved through Individual Education Plan (IEP) processes set in motion as a matter of course and at the earliest opportunity for gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities. Further research is recommended on the benefits and barriers of using new technologies to enhance communication between the team, specifically in overcoming time and location constraints to be all together. Training in collaboration, consultation, communication, team roles and processes across disciplines rather than within them would be beneficial to developing effective teams, beginning at the pre-service stage. It is therefore recommended that interprofessional teamwork becomes an evidence-based competency for all professional appraisal schemes within the education sector.

Weaving educational threads. Weaving educational practice.


Rogers, K.B. (2011). Thinking smart about twice exceptional learners: Steps for finding them and strategies for catering for them appropriately. In C. Wormald & W. Vialle (Eds.), *Dual exceptionality* (pp. 57-70). Woollongong, Australia: AAEGT.


**AUTHOR PROFILE**

**Jilly O’Brien**

Jilly O’Brien works at the Ministry of Education, Special Education in Dunedin. She is currently completing the Educational Psychology internship programme at Massey University. Jilly has an interest in gifted learners with multiple exceptionalities, inclusion, and challenging behaviour (together and separately). Prior to this, she taught gifted children at primary and secondary level in Central Otago.

Email: obriensnz@gmail.com
Tracy Riley

Tracy Riley is an associate professor in the Institute of Education at Massey University. She is passionate about the education of gifted and talented learners, of all sorts. Tracy is committed to the ongoing professional learning and development for those working with gifted and talented learners, especially through their postgraduate studies and research.

Email: T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz

Wendy Holley-Boen

Wendy Holley-Boen has been a registered educational psychologist for nineteen years, and works as a lecturer on the Specialist Teaching Programme at Massey University. Her interests include ecological and interprofessional practice, professional identity, wellbeing, and mentoring.

Email: W.Holley-Boen@massey.ac.nz
Results from a Longitudinal Early Literacy Intervention Study: Expected and Unexpected Outcomes

James W. Chapman

ABSTRACT

Findings are presented from a two-year longitudinal study involving the Quick60 Foundation programme for beginning readers. This programme is a 32 week whole-class literacy curriculum that systematically and explicitly teaches key early literacy skills. End of Year 2 literacy performances of students receiving this programme during their first year of schooling were compared with students who received “regular” literacy instruction. Participants were in low decile Auckland schools, with large numbers of Māori and Pasifika students. At the end of Year 2, Quick60 students outperformed comparison students on reading book level, word knowledge, and reading accuracy; results for reading comprehension were not statistically significant but in the expected direction for Quick60 students. Surprisingly, students from home backgrounds rated by teachers as “normal” did not perform considerably better than students from “difficult” backgrounds. The results are discussed in terms of the benefits of explicit, code-orientated literacy instruction from the outset of schooling.

Research Paper

Keywords: early literacy instruction; explicit instruction; low decile students; phonemic awareness; phonic skills; Quick60 Foundation Programme

INTRODUCTION

Despite efforts by different governments over the last 15 years or so, New Zealand continues to have a literacy problem (Tunmer & Chapman, 2015). One of the key indicators of the extent of the problem is the high level of variability in scores from international surveys of reading achievement (Tunmer, Chapman, Greaney, Prochnow & Arrow, 2013; Tunmer, Chapman & Prochnow, 2003, 2004, 2006).

Concern over the literacy learning outcomes of young students in primary schools was noted in the Ministry of Education briefing document to the incoming Minister of Education following the 2011 general election. The Ministry wrote that:

... the gap between our high performing and low performing students remains one of the widest in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These low performing students are likely to be Māori or Pasifika and/or from low socio-economic communities. Disparities in education appear early and persist throughout learning, (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 8).

The briefing concluded that producing equitable outcomes for students was “the greatest challenge” facing the schooling sector (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 23).

The most recent international literacy survey of primary school students was the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012). The general results were similar to those reported in 2001 and 2006 (Prochnow, Tunmer & Greaney, 2015). No improvement in key literacy skills had occurred since the 2001 PIRLS survey, despite substantial increases in targeted funding designed to decrease disparities in learning outcomes.

A key reason for the continuing disparity in literacy learning outcomes is a rigid adherence in New Zealand to the view that learning to read is essentially like learning to speak, where both abilities are thought to develop “naturally” (Smith & Elley, 1994, p. 81). The effect of this general view is that the importance in literacy acquisition on developing word-level decoding skills is downplayed or ignored because of the view that these skills are acquired naturally. The emphasis is placed instead on acquiring meaning from the story. This perspective is strongly promoted in publications, such as Reading in Junior Classes (Ministry of Education, 1991), The Learner as a Reader (Ministry of Education, 1996), Reading and Beyond (Ministry of Education, 1997), and Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4 (Ministry of Education, 2003). Effective Literacy Practice (Ministry of Education, 2003), for example, states that “fluent readers … draw on their prior knowledge and use all available sources of information simultaneously and usually
unconsciously” (p. 30) when trying to identify unfamiliar words in text. Teachers are told to show beginning readers how to “cross-check predictions to ensure that they make sense and fit with other information” (p.130) in the story; “for beginning readers, cross-checking usually involves checking that their prediction of an individual word fits and makes sense (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 130, emphasis added).

The major shortcoming of this approach is that it stresses the importance of using information from many sources in identifying unfamiliar words in text without recognising that skills and strategies involving phonological information are of primary importance in beginning literacy development. As Pressley (2006) pointed out, “the scientific evidence is simply overwhelming that letter-sound cues are more important in recognizing words ... than either semantic or syntactic cues” (p. 21), and that “teaching children to decode by giving primacy to semantic-contextual and syntactic-contextual cues over graphemic-phonemic cues is equivalent to teaching them to read the way weak readers read” (p. 164).

There is now a large body of research indicating that explicit, systematic instruction in the code relating spellings to pronunciations positively influences reading achievement, especially during the early stages of learning to read (Brady, 2011; Hattie, 2009; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow & Juel, 2005; Tunmer & Arrow, 2013; Tunmer, Greaney & Prochnow, 2015). After examining a wide range of sources, Snow and Juel (2005) concluded that explicit attention to alphabetic coding skills in early reading instruction is helpful for all students and crucial for some.

Although there is anecdotal information to suggest that some schools include explicit attention to the development of alphabetic coding skills, Ministry of Education publications, including Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4 (Ministry of Education, 2003), do not reflect such an emphasis. Given that this publication is now out-of-date in terms of contemporary research-based approaches to literacy instruction, it is timely for New Zealand schools to consider alternatives that reflect the significant developments that have occurred in our understanding of how children learn to read and why some struggle. Numerous literacy programmes have been developed overseas to take into account research developments in literacy acquisition and development (e.g., Jolly Phonics, Letterland, Multilit). Such programmes are used in a number of New Zealand schools in place of, or as a part of, the ‘regular’ (whole language) approach to literacy instruction. At the same time, some New Zealand programmes that are firmly based on contemporary scientific research on literacy learning are emerging and warrant examination.

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of an explicit literacy teaching programme, Quick60 Foundation (Iversen, 2013), for young students in low decile schools. The Quick60 Foundation programme was designed in New Zealand by Iversen for use with New Entrant/Year 1 students, especially those who start school with few literacy skills, limited vocabularies and relatively little word knowledge. These students may or may not have English as their first language. The programme was developed to teach all of the necessary early literacy skills in an explicit and systematic way, including alphabet letter names, sounds, and formation, plus a bank of high-frequency words. Early phonemic awareness skills and comprehension strategies are taught alongside a progression of phonic skills for use in both reading and writing.

This paper focuses on specific aspects of a larger two-year longitudinal project. The following research question provided the focus for this paper: Does the code-orientated Quick60 Foundation programme lead to improved literacy learning outcomes of New Entrant/Year 1 students when compared with outcomes for students who receive their “normal” literacy instruction?

**METHOD**

**Selection of Schools**

Eighteen low decile (1-3) schools in the Auckland region with significant populations of Māori and Pasifika students were contacted towards the end of 2013 and invited to participate in the research project. The nature of the literacy programme was outlined, and they were asked to commit the New Entrant/Year 1 teacher following the programme for the 90-minute literacy block each day throughout 2014. Schools were given the choice of using the Quick60 Foundation programme (intervention) or serving as a comparison school with the option of receiving the Quick60 programme at a later time if they chose to. Five schools agreed to participate in the study. Three schools indicated that they were not interested in using the Quick60 programme but that they were willing to serve as a “comparison” group as they continued with their normal literacy programme.

**Students**

At the start of the project in February 2014, the sample comprised 104 students from eight schools. Seventy-five students were in the Quick60 group and 29 students were in the comparison group. In terms of gender, 40 boys and 35 girls were in the Quick60 group; 17 boys and 12 girls were in the
comparison group. In each of the eight schools, the students in the study constituted the whole class group at the start of the study. Other students were phased in as New Entrants during the first year of the project but data were not collected for them.

The mean age of the total sample at the start of the project was 64.3 months (SD = 4.0), which is around 5 years 4 months, and the modal age was 63 months (5 years 3 months). For the *Quick60* group, the mean age at the start of the project was 65.25 months (SD = 4.25), and for the comparison group the mean age was 62.31 months (SD = 2.11). This difference of 3 months is statistically significant, \( t(102) = 3.55, \ p < .01 \). An examination of the distribution of ages revealed that 67 percent of the students in the project were younger than 5 years 5 months. The remainder were older, with the oldest student 6 years 8 months. More students 5 years 5 months or older were in the *Quick60* group than the comparison group: 41 percent (\( n = 31 \)) versus 10 percent (\( n = 3 \)).

The majority of students in the *Quick60* group were Māori (56 percent), with Pasifika (25 percent), Pākehā (13 percent), and Asian (4 percent) representing other ethnicities. For the comparison group, the majority of students were Pasifika (59 percent), followed by Māori (31 percent), Asian (3 percent), and “Other” (7 percent). No Pākehā students were in the comparison group.

Fifty percent of students were in decile 1 schools, 24 percent in decile 2 schools, and 26 percent in decile 3 schools. *Quick60* group students were spread across the three decile rankings: 1 = 39 percent; 2 = 25 percent; 3 = 36 percent. Students in the comparison group were from decile 1 (79 percent) and decile 2 (21 percent) schools.

**Quick60 Foundation Programme**

The *Quick60 Foundation* programme is underpinned by the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Both the instructional sequence within and across lessons and the *Foundation* materials are designed to move learners from where they can achieve with assistance to where they can function independently, continually raising the baseline bar. The student reading books steadily increase in difficulty. Scaffolding of skills is provided by lesson demonstrations followed by joint participation, guided practice and independent learning, leading to internationalisation. Multiple opportunities are provided to promote overlearning within and across the instructional strands.

The *Quick60 Foundation* programme is a 32-week whole-class literacy curriculum that systematically teaches all the necessary early literacy skills in an explicit way. Students are taught the vocabulary for basic science, social studies and maths concepts and how to compare, contrast and group objects with similar attributes. They are also taught alphabet letter names, sounds, and formation, plus a bank of high-frequency words. Eight early phonemic awareness skills and eight early comprehension strategies are taught alongside a progression of phonic skills for use in both reading and writing. Students learn simple sentence writing including print conventions, how to hear and record the sounds in words in order, and how to generate new words from known spellings. In addition, they practise how to write short passages covering a variety of factual and narrative genres.

The *Quick60 Foundation* programme was designed for teaching in the 90-minute literacy block. Components can be taught in any order. While teachers are working with groups for guided reading, other students are provided the opportunity to work independently at learning centres.

The programme incorporates a variety of teaching methodologies. These include oral language through language experiences, shared reading using “Big Books”, guided reading, and interactive and guided writing. Time is provided for independent practise, consolidation, revision and extension.

The guided reading lesson follows the same format each day and is based on previous research (Iversen & Tunmer, 1993; Iversen, Tunmer & Chapman, 2005). Both these studies adapted the Reading Recovery format by including phonemic awareness activities into the daily lesson (Iversen & Tunmer, 1993), and by teaching this adapted lesson to two students at a time rather than one (Iversen et al., 2005). The *Quick60* guided reading lesson has been modified further for use with groups of up to six students and the in-class model has two 20 minute sessions rather than one 40 minute session.

Teacher resources include a programme overview, daily lesson plans that contain daily and weekly ongoing assessments, colour-coded check sheets to record oral reading behaviour, data point sheets to summarise data, and various blacklines to copy for teaching and to support independent student work.

Teachers in the *Quick60* schools were supplied with all the materials they needed to implement the programme, including detailed daily lesson plans. However, they were not provided with any additional professional development. Fidelity of programme implementation was not considered to be an issue. Rather, teachers were viewed as professionals who were capable of best-deciding how to use the programme materials for their students. Specific details of the programme’s scope and sequence, together with a description of the
materials are included in a more comprehensive report on this research project (Chapman, 2016).

Assessments
A number of assessments were administered to students by an independent research assistant at the beginning of Year 1 and end of Year 2. Assessments at the start of Year 1 included alphabet knowledge, receptive vocabulary\(^1\), onset and rime awareness\(^2\), and phonemic awareness\(^3\). At the end of Year 2, assessments included reading comprehension and accuracy, word knowledge, spelling, reading book level, pseudoword pronunciation and sounds, and receptive vocabulary. Full details of the assessments are available in Chapman (2016).

RESULTS

Start of Year 1
Of considerable importance was the finding that there were no significant differences between the Quick60 and comparison groups in regards to receptive vocabulary. Based on raw scores for the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (a measure of receptive vocabulary: Dunn et al., 2009), the Quick60 group mean was 57.08 (SD = 15.20) and the comparison mean was 58.69 (SD = 15.13); \(t(65)=0.43, p=.67\). The general language knowledge of the two groups was similar at the start of the study.

Because the Quick60 group included a larger number of older students who had received more schooling than the younger students, I compared the means of the older Quick60, younger Quick60, and comparison students using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results for receptive vocabulary, rime awareness, and onset awareness were not statistically significant. Summary data are presented in Table 1.

Statistically significant results were found for letter knowledge \((F(2,96)=11.38, p<.001)\) and phonemic awareness \((F(2,88)=6.33, p=.01)\). For letter knowledge, the older Quick60 students had higher scores than both the younger Quick60 and the comparison students, and the younger Quick60 students had higher scores than the comparison students. The higher scores for the older students may be a function of having been at school longer. In addition, the higher scores for the Quick60 students compared to comparison students may be due to teachers working with Quick60 from the start of school in February 2014, which was before the completion of the baseline assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Younger Quick60</th>
<th>Older Quick60</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter knowledge</td>
<td>39.23 31.34</td>
<td>63.24 38.02</td>
<td>22.77 24.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive vocabulary</td>
<td>53.64 13.58</td>
<td>61.81 16.44</td>
<td>57.04 14.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset</td>
<td>3.09 3.61</td>
<td>4.19 3.95</td>
<td>4.26 4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rime</td>
<td>2.75 3.59</td>
<td>3.90 3.90</td>
<td>2.27 3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic awareness</td>
<td>4.02 7.15</td>
<td>13.39 22.58</td>
<td>1.12 5.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Receptive vocabulary refers to the words a person understands when hearing or reading them.

\(^2\)Onset awareness is understanding and identifying the initial consonant or consonant blend in a word before the vowel (“c” in cat). Not all words have onsets. Rime refers to the vowel and final consonants in the word (“at” in cat).

\(^3\)Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words; it is not phonics.

\(^4\)Pseudowords are fake words which have no meaning but are pronounceable. They are considered to be the best measure of phonological processing skills, and therefore ideal for identifying difficulties in understanding and manipulating the sounds in spoken language.

End of Year 2 Data
The final assessment phase of the project occurred in November and December 2015. Data were available for a maximum of 58 Quick60 students and 26 comparison students (see Table 2).

Statistically significant effects were not found for pseudoword phonemes\(^4\), spelling, and reading comprehension. One significant effect for a reading process variable was found for pseudoword pronunciation, \(F(2,76)=3.67, p = .03\). Both younger and older Quick60 groups outperformed the comparison students.

For the reading outcome variables, the word knowledge test resulted in a statistically significant effect, \(F(2,78)=3.15, p = .05\): younger Quick60 students obtained higher scores than comparison students, with a relatively large effect size of 0.79. Reading book level also resulted in a significant effect, \(F(2,78)=9.28, p < .001\). Both Quick60 groups of students obtained higher book level scores than the comparison students, and the younger Quick60 students obtained marginally \((p = .06)\) higher levels than the older Quick60 students. The effect size for the difference between the young Quick60 students and the comparison students was approximately 1.5, which is very large.
Reading accuracy also produced a significant effect, $F(2,76)=3.80$, $p=.03$. Both Quick60 groups significantly outperformed the comparison students. The effect size for the younger Quick60 students contrasted with the comparison students was approximately .84.

Table 2
Summary Data for Time 5 (End of Year 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Younger Quick60</th>
<th>Older Quick60</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive vocabulary</td>
<td>83.30</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>84.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo pronunciation</td>
<td>12.79</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>12.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo sounds</td>
<td>74.55</td>
<td>25.41</td>
<td>67.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading book level</td>
<td>20.42</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>17.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burt word test</td>
<td>37.58</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>32.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>10.34</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>9.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading accuracy</td>
<td>31.48</td>
<td>12.91</td>
<td>29.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>20.97</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>20.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End of Year 2 reading outcome variables were examined in relation to home circumstances by means of a two-way (group x circumstances) ANOVA. More students in the Quick60 group were rated by teachers as having difficult home circumstances (58 percent) than in the comparison group (19 percent).

Statistically significant differences were observed between the ‘non-challenging’ and ‘challenging’ background groups for word knowledge and reading book level, but not for the tests of comprehension, accuracy or spelling. None of the group (Quick60 vs. comparison) by circumstances (non-challenging vs. challenging) interaction effects was statistically significant. Although students from challenging home backgrounds in the Quick60 group tended to lag behind those from more normal backgrounds, the differences are relatively small (see Table 3).

Table 3
Summary Data for Time 5 (End of Year 2) Reading Outcome Variables as a Function of Home Circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Non-Challenging</th>
<th>Challenging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading book level</td>
<td>18.09</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burt word test</td>
<td>35.64</td>
<td>11.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comp</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading accuracy</td>
<td>29.13</td>
<td>15.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>20.42</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that the Quick60 Foundation programme is effective with students in low decile schools, which include large numbers of Māori and Pasifika students. At the end of Year 2, Quick60 students significantly outperformed comparison students on reading book level, word knowledge, and reading accuracy. Although results for reading comprehension were not statistically significant, they were in the expected direction, with younger Quick60 students obtaining higher scores than the comparison students. By the end of Year 2, the younger Quick60 students were reading on average at their chronological age level of seven years, whereas the comparison students were close to one year behind in terms of reading book level, and six months behind in terms of word knowledge. Given that low decile students tend to lag behind students in higher decile schools from the start of schooling and beyond (Tunmer & Chapman, 2015), the results from this study are very promising.

The results come with a note of caution. Students in the Quick60 group had higher scores than those in the comparison group on some variables at the start of the project. These differences were partly due to the older students in the Quick60 group who had already received more schooling, during the previous year than the other students. However, there are two factors that address this issue.

Teachers of students in the Quick60 group began using the programme at the very start of the school year and often before the initial assessments were completed. From the outset of schooling the Quick60 programme provides explicit and systematic exposure to the basic language skills required for reading acquisition, together with the rapid development of alphabet letter knowledge. This approach is likely to result in reasonably rapid foundational literacy learning (Snow & Juel, 2005).

The second factor relates to the different age distribution of students in the Quick60 group. The younger Quick60 students started at the beginning of Year 1 with lower scores than the older Quick60 students on the key variables of letter knowledge and phonemic awareness. By the end of the project, however, the younger Quick60 students “caught up” to the older Quick60 students on most variables. This finding suggests that explicit and systematic teaching of key language-related reading skills from the time of school entry is associated with significant reading development outcomes over at least the first two years of schooling. These outcomes were superior to those normally achieved by students in low decile schools.

There was one unexpected finding. Students from complex and challenging home backgrounds, often involving poverty, poor housing and health, parental...
unemployment, crime and substance abuse, frequently do not achieve age-appropriate learning outcomes (Boston, 2013; Gibb, Fergusson & Horwood, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2016). There was only a relatively small degree of evidence in this study for a negative impact of poor home circumstances on literacy learning. Over half of the Quick60 students who remained in the study at the end of Year 2 were rated by their teachers as having complex and challenging home circumstances. Although there were statistically significant effects for word knowledge, reading level, and spelling, the differences between the means were relatively small. Further, the means for Quick60 students from difficult home backgrounds were higher than the means for comparison students from home backgrounds not rated by teachers as challenging. These differences were not statistically significant, but they suggest that participating in the Quick60 programme appears to have been beneficial and may have helped to offset the disadvantages associated with challenging family circumstances.

An important question relates to the performance of students from non-challenging home backgrounds: why did they not perform much better than those students from challenging home backgrounds? Students from non-challenging home backgrounds had higher school attendance rates, according to their teachers, than those from challenging backgrounds. If quality instruction is provided, being in school should lead to considerably better literacy learning outcomes than having erratic school attendance.

CONCLUSION

This study provides evidence to suggest that the Quick60 programme has contributed to beneficial literacy learning outcomes for students, especially for those who were New Entrants at the start of the project. The programme materials used by teachers from “Day 1” are consistent with research showing the benefits of explicit and systematic instruction in foundational skills. Further, the programme was in place only during the students’ first year of schooling. This appears to have set the groundwork for gains that were made during the second year of schooling, a finding that is consistent with other studies (e.g., Kimmel & Griffith, 2010; Porche, Pallante & Snow, 2012; Stahl, Keane & Simic, 2013; Tunmer, Chapman, Ryan & Prochnow, 1998).

To overcome the high variability in literacy learning outcomes, with disproportionately large number of Māori and Pasifika students disadvantaged at the outset of schooling, new approaches to literacy instruction, based on an overwhelming consensus of scientific research, are needed. Such approaches have been developed in other countries, such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, with considerable success. The Quick60 Foundation programme developed in New Zealand provides a promising alternative to traditional literacy instruction that appears to benefit students in low decile schools, and particularly those from Māori and Pasifika backgrounds.

These results from this study are compelling in the context of low decile schools with large numbers of Māori and Pasifika students. Such students often start school with limited amounts of literate cultural capital (Tunmer & Chapman, 2015). Programmes, such as Quick60, that are based on scientific evidence and that emphasise the importance of developing appropriate language and code skills for reading acquisition, provide a promising alternative to the status quo for those schools that are highly motivated to overcome inequitable literacy learning outcomes among their students. As we know, doing the same thing typically gets the same results. This has been the case for literacy instruction over at least the last decade and a half. To change the generally negative direction of literacy learning outcomes for many New Zealand children will require changes to the nature of literacy instruction. The Quick60 programme is a good, research-based example of a positive change.

REFERENCES


Tunmer, W.E., Chapman, J.W., Greaney, K.T., Prochnow, J.E., & Arrow, A.W. (2013). Why the New Zealand literacy strategy has failed and what can be done about it: Evidence from the progress
in international reading literacy study (PIRLS) 2011 and reading recovery monitoring reports. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 18, 139-180.


I am grateful to MSA Charities for their financial support of this research project. Without this support, the project could not have been undertaken.

This research project was undertaken because the developer of the *Quick60* programme, Dr Sandra Iversen, is a Masters and PhD graduate of Massey University. The programme she has developed provides an example of theory and research from her post-graduate study being used to develop a programme designed to enhance literacy learning outcomes of school students.

I declare that I have no financial or other interests in the *Quick60* programme or any related products developed and distributed by Iversen Publishing. My interest is solely academic and the pursuit of better literacy learning outcomes for New Zealand students.

**AUTHOR PROFILE**

**Professor James Chapman**

Professor James Chapman is Professor of Educational Psychology in The College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University. He received his M.A. (with distinction) in education from Victoria University of Wellington, and his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Alberta, Canada, specializing in cognitive-motivational factors associated with learning disabilities. Professor Chapman trained as a secondary school teacher and taught for two years before undertaking doctoral studies in Canada. Following the completion of his PhD, he joined Massey University in 1980. He served for 8 ½ years as Head of the Department of Learning and Teaching, and 10 years as Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Education. He has published over 100 journal articles, book chapters and books on learning disabilities, special education, literacy learning difficulties, early literacy development, reading intervention, and self-concept factors in academic achievement. He has served on the editorial boards of numerous academic journals, and completed a 4-year term as President of the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities. In 1999 he was co-winner of the International Reading Association’s Dina Feitelson Award for Excellence in Research. He is currently Co-Principal Investigator of a New Zealand Ministry of Education-funded longitudinal literacy research project (Enhancing Literacy Learning Outcomes for Year 1 Children) focusing on literacy learning in Year 1 children and professional development for teachers of Year 1 children.

Email: J.Chapman@massey.ac.nz
ABSTRACT
Five factors for Māori teacher success in Aotearoa/New Zealand are identified in the success narratives of alumnae of a pre-service teacher education programme: whānau support, collegial working environments, feeling valued, risk-taking, and pursuing ongoing learning opportunities. Strong links to key Māori values are evident within these factors. Using a kaupapa Māori approach to qualitative research design and implementation, the interplay of these factors is described in relation to how they can support Māori teacher success, and how they can enhance the design and delivery of teacher education programmes.

Keywords:
Māori teacher success, Māori values, narrative inquiry

INTRODUCTION
A Kaupapa Māori approach and Narrative Inquiry Framework are used to share and understand the stories of four Māori teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The aims of this research included exploring the different pathways chosen to achieve professional success, providing role-models to aspire to, and identifying factors contributing to Māori success. Five factors for Māori teacher success that have strong links to Māori values are evident in each of these stories. The success factors are whānau support, collegial working environments, feeling valued, risk-taking, and ongoing learning opportunities. Employing these success factors and the associated Māori values could support Māori teachers and attract more young Māori to the profession of teaching. For example, the Rotorua region has a low proportion of Māori teachers (21 percent) to Māori students (42 percent) (Education Counts, 2015), highlighting a need to attract more Māori to the profession of teaching – especially in light of almost no change in the percentage of Māori teachers since 2004.

KAUPAPA MĀORI PRINCIPLES AND NARRATIVE INQUIRY
Kaupapa Māori research (Bishop 1999) principles such as culturally-relevant practices, collective ownership and benefit, self-determination, and connectedness guided this qualitative case study. As I had a long term relationship with the participants, a “whānau-of-interest approach” (Bishop, 1999, p. 4) was used to engage participants. Our relationship-based collaborative partnerships maximised the breadth and quality of Māori participation and were guided by the Treaty of Waitangi principles of “partnership, participation and protection” (Durie, 2000 as cited in Thomas, 2000). This collaborative model seeks to gain advice through consultation with the participants about the ways this research benefits Māori, and about ways to ensure the author maintains cultural integrity and culturally-safe interactions (Bishop, 1999).

A collaborative approach with an understanding of collective ownership, the co-constructed development of the stories that the four teachers shared with consented publication of the findings through a journal and conference presentation, was paramount. Collaborative storytelling fits well within a Kaupapa Māori research paradigm; it facilitates a “measure [of] Māori phenomena in its own terms” (Macfarlane, 2006, p. 42). All parts of this research strive to embody whanaungatanga (sense of family connection), manaakitanga (care for others), kōtahitanga (unity), rangatiratanga (leadership, autonomy), and wairuatanga (spirituality), which Macfarlane (2006) identifies as central to a Kaupapa Māori approach. Including these Māori values throughout the design and research phases of the project ensured the participants felt safe to share their narratives and that the resulting research outputs maintain and embody the project’s kaupapa.

Narrative inquiry is a process of collaboration, involving mutual storytelling and re-storying. It is the study of experience as story, and is constructed within a caring community of researchers and practitioners. The stories told within these research-practitioner
relationships are often stories of self-empowerment for participants (Connelly & Claudinin, 1998). The analysis of the language of narratives allows us to make sense of stories and to examine meaning-making. Wells (2011) points out that “Narrative analysis is a particularly strong tool for unpacking the experience of populations that are often silenced research” (p. 542). As such, narrative inquiry fits well within the context of a Kaupapa Māori whanau-of-interest approach to this research. I feel privileged to retell the stories of four successful Māori teachers, with whom I have a long-term relationship as their past Professional Inquiry Lecturer, as we explored the theory and practice of teaching together for the first three years of their initial teacher education. Their stories and mine have merged to create new stories of collaborative success. The narratives of participant and researcher become a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through the inquiry. The sample of Māori teachers in the target population is small and relatively under-represented in research to date focusing on factors contributing to teacher success. The opportunity to hear and share these four Māori women voices made this Kaupapa Māori narrative inquiry approach feel authentic.

**PARTICIPANTS**

The four research participants were selected from a database of Māori teachers who graduated from the University of Canterbury’s Rotorua Centre’s teacher education programme, lived nearby, and were currently active in a leadership role. The research participants are all female. One is in her early thirties; two are in their forties, and one in her mid-fifties.

Katie has 15 years of teaching experience, the last five years as principal of a rural school with four teachers. Hinei has 12 years of teaching experience at an intermediate school with a 65 percent Māori roll where she has been the deputy principal for the past eight years. Liana has 14 years teaching experience, seven years at the same large primary school where 61 percent of the roll identifies as Māori. Liana had two years as a team leader at this school before moving to an intermediate where she has been a team leader for the past five years. Kristina has seven years of varied teaching experiences. Her first two years of teaching were at a primary school with 11 percent of students Māori. Kristina was then employed in the Pacific Islands, as the deputy principal of a bi-lingual school and then within the Islands Ministry of Education by a newly-established Digital School. Kristina returned home to Rotorua early in 2015 as a deputy principal at a primary school with a school roll that is 96 percent Māori.

The selection criterion that participants be currently active in leadership positions assumes those positions as indicators of the teachers’ successes. The four participants and their current principals were firstly contacted by phone and provided with a one page information letter entitled ‘Celebrating Māori Teacher Success’, which included the purpose/aims of the research followed by a one page consent form for the participants to sign. All consented, and the participants accepted the invitation to tell their success story to me individually, beginning at their graduation from the teacher education programme through to their present contexts. An open-ended, semi-structured interview approach was used with a warm-up prompt being, “Tell me about your teaching journey since graduating”, prior to asking the overarching research question, “What factors do you as a Māori primary teacher attribute to your success?”

The following section details the common factors that emerged from the participants’ narratives.

**FINDINGS**

A ‘Māori values’ lens identified in literature regarding Māori success was used to identify success factors for the Māori teachers (Simmonds, 2011; Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014). Five factors for success were identified within the analysed narratives: whānau support; collegiality; feeling valued; risk-taking, and professional learning opportunities.

**Whānau Support - Mana Whānau (a sense of ‘familiness’)**

The importance of family was evident within all narratives. The four participants are married and have children. Each mentioned that the support of whānau (including extended family) was a factor contributing to their success.

Katie’s husband encouraged her to pursue the leadership opportunities at her school when she was “looking for excuses not to”. Katie’s immediate response to the prompt regarding her success as a Māori teacher was her parents: “my dad always had high expectations of us”. The ripple-effect of parental role-modelling and high expectations was very evident from listening to the participants’ storied experiences.

Hinei’s example of the ripple-effect of parental role-modelling is directed at her own children. “My husband and I have put a lot of effort into our tamariki […] we say nothing is going to stop you […] so definitely success has drizzled down to our kids as well”. The participants’ successes are now positively affecting aspirations and the achievements of the
next generation of their whānau. Hinei illustrates the support of her husband, children, siblings and parents living in the area, “I would not only say my husband but our extended whānau as well […] at a drop of a hat they will come and pick up the kids, they’ll come wherever, whenever”.

As well as having a supportive husband, Liana shared that she is ‘God-led’. Her sense of wairuatanga (a Māori value of spirituality and well-being) is evident as she calmly and proudly shares her successful transitions and experiences in teaching that she felt guided by spiritually.

Kristina recalls her mum having passionate conversations with her about solving problems within her profession as an accountant. As a teenager, Kristina admitted not appreciating at the time that her mother was role-modelling both passion and the enjoyment of challenge. However, with age and perspective, Kristina now feels privileged to have since found passion and the enjoyment of challenge within her chosen profession.

Supporting these stories, the Education Review Office in 2010 argued for required targeted approaches such as embracing the wider whanau in order to bring about successful education outcomes. By adopting this strategy, all affected parties will become instrumental in the development of closer relationships resulting in positive outcomes that include a renewed commitment by both school and whanau to work collaboratively (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014, p. 27).

**Collegiality - Kōahitanga (unity) and Manaakitanga (respect and caring)**

Collegiality within their school teams presented as a strong and consistent factor for these Māori teachers, along with mentors who supported them early in their careers. The values of kōahitanga (unity) and manaakitanga (respect and caring) are evident throughout the teachers’ collegial experiences, as are mana tangatarua (sense of navigating success in two worlds) and mana motuhake (a strong positive self-identity) (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014, p. 174-175).

Just prior to graduating, Hinei accepted a teaching position at her local intermediate school. The principal of that school was, in many ways, responsible for her pursuing and accepting the position, and their 13 year working relationship has been highly constructive in developing not only Hinei’s professional skills but her own identity as a Māori teacher. Hinei says, “[…] being Māori I felt really comfortable, I felt almost homely [… ] we had a connection, a kind of synergy of some kind to be able to work together”.

Hinei’s development has positive downstream effects on the tamariki, staff and community. For example, Hinei has collaboratively redeveloped successful school-wide physical education and mathematics programmes as well as a transition programme for Year 6 contributing students. *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* states, “successful transitions occur when students develop a strong sense of belonging in the new setting and feel proud and supported in their identity, language and culture” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 23). Such success is evident within Hinei’s narrative of her lead role working within her intermediate and their contributing schools. Furthermore, Hinei shared, the opportunities to learn about leadership and about mentor coaching, especially in the context of organisation management, expanded her own professional capabilities and practices, and put her in a position to pass that knowledge on to team leaders within her school.

For Liana, her first deputy principal quietly guided and encouraged her. Liana says much of her success stemmed from working within a team, using individual and collective strengths to build safe learning environments for the children. Liana remained in this supportive environment for seven years, where she found herself “growing as a teacher and learning the practice of teaching”.

Kristina acknowledges the exemplary models and support she received within her first two years of teaching. “My first two years […] everything was so beautifully structured … exceptional practice”. Kristina attributes the book *Ancient Wisdom Modern Solutions* (Bidois, 2009) encouraged the identification of her ‘eagles’. She says “Eagles are people who lift you up […] give you just aroha really […] also to give that back by telling them that they were my eagles and why”.

**Feeling Valued - Manaakitanga (care and respect)**

Collegiality seemed, for all participants sharing their stories, to segue naturally into the importance of feeling valued as Māori. Feeling valued as Māori supported these teachers’ growth into leadership roles. The values of kōahitanga (unity) and manaakitanga (care and respect), including self-care, were evident within their stories. Each participant’s narrative included personal and institutional support structures that enabled the development of a strong positive self-identity (mana motuhake) as pathways to sustainable success and to meaningful achievement.

Vital components contributing to their successes were communities and schools’ Board of Trustees’ governance. Katie shared how responsive and supportive her current Board of Trustees are to
her needs and requests to support her teaching team’s and community’s visions for improving learning and teaching at their school. A current focus for Katie and her rural school is community engagement. Katie notes, “You always go back to the whānau concept, [...] high on our list at the moment is our community engagement and getting my families into the school”. Katie’s leadership “actively encourages, supports, and where appropriate, challenges [...] community to determine how they wish to engage about important matters at the school” (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 6). Katie points out that nurturing and growing community engagement requires consistent, skilful and timely communication, which requires using communication skills that she developed on the pathway to becoming a confident leader of her school while personifying, living and modelling what it is to be Māori. Katie “actively acknowledges [...] community as key stakeholders in the school as expected of culturally-competent school leaders” (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 12).

One of Hinei’s many examples of feeling valued was the financial support of her post-graduate study from the Board of Trustees of her school. Without that support, Hinei says, she could not have achieved as much or as far as she has. She characterises the Board as ‘always there to listen, acknowledge and celebrate’:

As a Māori, I think that is so important that you feel supported, you feel valued ... even it is something to provoke me, to make me ask questions, something to make me uncomfortable.

Feeling valued and looked after emerged as common factors contributing to the participants’ sustained success. Participants noted that they felt valued not just as leaders in their respective schools, but as Māori persons. This atmosphere of inclusiveness of cultural history and background embodies respect and care, or manaakitanga, for the participants. Also, it facilitates unity around a common vision and purpose, kōtahitanga, that can be alternatively characterised as a sense of belonging.

**Risk-Taking - Mana Tū (a sense of courage and resilience)**

All the participants are self-disciplined, self-determined opportunists and innovators who carefully selected their pathways as learners and as teachers. Their narratives demonstrated that they are risk-takers, exhibiting “Mana Tū”, a sense of courage and resilience (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014, p. 174). This is, perhaps, most easily exemplified by Kristina’s willingness to shift her employment context to gain valuable experience. Kristina proactively sought professional opportunities within the Pacific Islands. During this time Kristina became heavily involved with Integrating Communication Technology (ICT) to ameliorate isolation and limited resources of her school and to enhance learning. As a result of her efforts, the Islands’ Ministry of Education approached Kristina to lead a digital school for 2013-14.

**Learning Opportunities - Mana Tū (a sense of courage and resilience)**

Mana tū is also reflected in the participants’ persistence in seeking out learning opportunities and, in Hinei’s case, pursuit of professional degrees. It was often the case that undertaking learning opportunities required that participants exhibit high degrees of resiliency, for example, when Hinei undertook a fulltime Masters programme in addition to fulltime employment from 2011-13. A self-determination to consistently reflect and learn, with the aim of ensuring ongoing personal and professional growth, was a vital factor attributing to these teachers’ success. All four teachers demonstrate Ako in that they are “personally committed, and actively work on their own professional learning and development” (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 14).

**DISCUSSION**

Given the ubiquity of the factors in each of the participants’ narratives, it makes sense that other Māori teachers could benefit from support structures that include these factors and their associated values.

“The vision of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013–2017 is ‘Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori’. This vision means ensuring that all Māori [...] participate in and contribute to an engaging and enjoyable educational journey that recognises and celebrates their unique identity, language and culture’” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 12).

It should be noted that ‘culture’ should be taken to mean a natural inclusion of Māori values, given that they have the potential to contribute to the enablement of Māori teacher success.

Evident within all four participants narratives are: whanaungatanga (sense of familialness), kōtahitanga (sense of unity), manaakitanga (sense of caring), mana tū (sense of courage and resilience), mana tangataunga (navigating success in two worlds) and mana motuhake (positive sense of Māori identity). The potential benefits of a shared understanding of these Māori values, for teachers and for schools’ Boards of Trustees within Aotearoa/New Zealand, needs further work. Collaborative efforts between Pākehā and Māori are essential to developing values-based kaupapa
within schools and educational communities. Within *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013), a goal for organisational success is that “evidence of what works for and with Māori […] are embedded into all education sector agencies’ planning and accountability processes” (p. 50). The inherent benefits of *Ka Hikitia* (and other programmes raising Māori achievement) requires effective professional development that, according to Smith et al. (2006), needs to include a prevailing culture of trust, collegiality and risk-taking, all within a climate of support.

This paper argues that mana whānau is a fundament for Māori teacher success. Mana whānau (extended family) was found within the Ka Awatea research project (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014) as vital for Māori student success. Whānau support comes in many forms. For example, the participants each noted the positive affect of (intergenerational) whānau role-modelling is difference-making, not just for themselves, but also their children, their extended families and their ākonga (Māori and non-Māori children).

Teacher education programmes could include and build upon the success factors and values discussed above. Māori values need to be modelled and explicitly practiced in and across programmes and in courses as encouraged within *Tātaiako Cultural Competencies for Teachers [...]’* including on entry into initial teacher education and for graduating teachers (Ministry of Education, 2011). Orientation programmes should be inclusive of whānau. Programmes should ensure that there is appropriate staff, and peer pastoral support for student teachers. *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–17* supports this in expecting tertiary education providers are “integrating or exploring different models of pastoral care [...]” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 47) to apply the critical factors for success.

Teacher education providers can leverage their relationships with local schools to press the importance of collegial environments where students undertake the Professional Practice parts of their study. Risk-taking and learning opportunities could be included in both theoretical and practical courses, with the aim to give students perspective and encouragement to continually pursue improvement of their knowledge and skills. Using a Māori values ‘lens’, to reflect on and to evaluate learning and teaching experiences within teacher education programmes, can be the norm.

The participants’ narratives highlight the important role of management and of school governance in enabling and in facilitating learning opportunities for teachers; whether it is formal post-graduate study or professional development opportunities with the local, national and even global educational communities'. Furthermore, the dispositions and attitudes of *mana tū* (a sense of courage and resilience) were integral to the successful pursuit of learning opportunities amongst the participants.

The successful Māori teachers who shared their stories for this research have a strong sense of self-identity. They manifest mana motuhake, “to be bold and to have a strong will; a belief in and knowledge of one’s self” (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014, p. 3). Future and ongoing research is needed to ensure that we continue to celebrate and learn from Māori success as we strive for more Māori to aspire to a career in the profession of teaching.

**CONCLUSION**

Drawing on Kaupapa Māori principles and a Narrative Inquiry framework, this case study sought four Māori teachers’ perspectives on the factors that contributed to their success. Using a Māori values ‘lens’ to analyse the four participants’ narratives, five broad themes emerged: whānau support; collegiality; feeling valued; being risk-takers, and ongoing learners. From a Kaupapa Māori perspective, several Māori values associate with the identified success factors. Both factors and Māori values need to be nurtured and practised within our educational communities, not only for Māori student success (Macfarlane, Webber, Cookson-Cox & McRae, 2014), but also for Māori teacher success.

**REFERENCES**


---

1 *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* strategic document (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 23) identifies governance and support of teacher learning as the first critical factor for successful schools through, “Quality provision, leadership, teaching and learning, supported by effective governance.”


**AUTHOR PROFILE**

Anne-Marie Hunt

Anne-Marie Hunt is a lecturer and the regional co-ordinator at the Rotorua University of Canterbury (UC), College of Education Centre. She teaches in the Professional Inquiry and Practice courses. Her research interest areas are within blended e-learning and Māori education.

Email: anne-marie.hunt@canterbury.ac.nz
ABSTRACT

The current study aims to review the literature regarding Tier Two behavioural interventions for children aged 5 to 13, and identify the core components which the research suggests are important to their effectiveness and/or social validity. Trends within the research indicate schools are more likely to adapt interventions to fit their own school context or meet what is socially valid to their teachers, students, and community, as opposed to implementing an intervention with excellent (empirically-based) fidelity. Through compiling the best-practice components of Tier Two interventions, a checklist has been created for schools to use when they are making adaptation to interventions, or developing their own. This supports the approach schools are already taking, promotes flexibility, and allows schools the space to develop cultural and social relevancy in Tier Two interventions; while still incorporating the components of what the wider literature advocates is effective with at-risk students.

Keywords:
- at-risk students
- behaviour interventions
- positive behaviour intervention and support

BACKGROUND

School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning

Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a model of promoting positive school behaviour and was developed by Horner, Sugai and others at the University of Oregon in the 1990’s (Hoyle, Marshall & Yell, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2016). PBIS is based on the concept that positive behaviour can be taught and the school environment adapted to promote this. There is sufficient research to suggest that PBIS is an evidence-based approach to preventing and addressing problem behaviours at school (MOE, 2015; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Positive Behaviour for Learning - School Wide (PB4L-SW), based on PBIS, has been adapted for the New Zealand context and has been implemented with the support of Ministry of Education specialists in 600 New Zealand schools (MOE, 2016). The goal of PB4L-SW is to provide a positive school environment which fosters pro-social behaviour and academic skills, and decreases problem behaviours (MOE, 2015). To achieve this, the school environment provides clear expectations for behaviour, which are taught explicitly, and children receive consistent feedback for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Response to Intervention

PB4L-SW uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to guide systematic, proactive, and evidence-based decision making in terms identifying and supporting students based on their needs (Hoyle et al., 2011; Sugai, Horner & Gresham, 2002). RTI consists of three levels of intervention which increase in intensity and provide a continuum of behaviour support (Hoyle et al., 2011). This model ensures that students who do require support are identified quickly, and the least-intrusive strategies are employed to promote positive behaviour (Lane, Kalberg & Menzies, 2009). The first tier of intervention used in PB4L-SW is preventing problematic behaviours through developing, and teaching, rules and routines which reflect school-wide expectations for positive behaviour (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Approximately 15 percent of students will not respond to primary intervention and will require more targeted support (Sugai & Horner, 2006). These students are identified by collecting school-wide behaviour data (usually the rate of minor and major incidents recorded by teachers), and are considered ‘at-risk’ for developing severe behaviour problems (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Tier Two interventions intend to prevent serious behaviour problems. They are usually delivered in small groups to targeted children, and involve the teaching of specific academic, social, or behavioural skills (Lane, Kalberg & Menzies, 2009; Cook & Tankersley, 2012). Sugai and Horner (2006) estimate that approximately 5 percent of students will not respond to secondary intervention and will demonstrate severe and challenging behaviours. This
group of students will then become eligible for tertiary intervention which involves the implementation of individualised, wrap-around evidence-based intervention (Sugai & Horner, 2006). The RTI model supports the Ministry of Education’s focus on inclusive practice in New Zealand as it guides the delivery of appropriate support, accurate identification, and reduces exclusions through teaching and reinforcing positive behaviour (Sugai and Horner, 2002; Hill & Brown, 2013).

Gaps in Knowledge
There is considerably less research on Tier Two interventions in comparison to Tier One or Three interventions which have received extensive evaluation (Hawken, MacLeod & Rawlings, 2007). Reviewing the literature reveals schools are largely using strategies without an evidence-base at the Tier Two level; and that those who are using empirically-supported interventions are implementing these without fidelity (Hoyle et al., 2011). Other common findings were a lack of standardised processes for selecting evidence-based interventions, and the rarity of routine data collection to monitor student’s progress is uncommon (Debnam, Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Hawken et al., 2007; McIntosh et al., 2009). Without robust Tier Two interventions, schools run the risk of providing ineffective support leading to ongoing behavioural issues, or wrongfully identifying eligibility for Tier Three intervention. It is concluded that schools have a need for accessible research on what works, support around how to identify the best-fit intervention, and the development of tools to assess their implementation. The current study seeks to support schools in this area by providing a summary of the research base and a practical checklist to guide development and implementation of Tier Two level interventions (see Table 1 below).

BEST PRACTICE COMPONENTS OF TIER TWO INTERVENTIONS CHECKLIST
This review of literature on Tier Two interventions reveals several components contributing to successful outcomes. Through compiling these components, a checklist has been created to guide schools in developing, adapting and evaluating their Tier Two interventions. The checklist supports schools to access the research base in a user-friendly way and guides the integration of strategies and processes grounded in empirical evidence into their practice. Another benefit of this tool is that it is non-prescriptive and promotes flexibility. Schools are able to capitalise on their knowledge of what is socially and culturally relevant within their school and wider community, and are encouraged to adapt interventions to be meaningful within their context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist of best practice components of Tier Two interventions</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear process developed for systematic and data-driven identification of students in need of Tier Two intervention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention builds upon well-established school-wide expectations for behaviour (Tier One).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention is able to be implemented with small groups to reduce cost and use of teachers’ time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention is able to provide support to students quickly after identification – readily available, and without any need for further assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional behavioural assessment is used to guide selection or development of the intervention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention includes a (low-burden) component of family involvement/communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention builds/develops positive relationships between students and school staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention provides regular opportunities for students to receive positive feedback regarding their behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate training for school personnel involved in the delivery of the intervention to increase buy-in from staff and improve implementation fidelity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School able to provide different types, or adaptations, of the interventions in order to meet the varying needs of students – based on functional behavioural assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where skill acquisition is contributing to behaviour problems, the intervention teaches the skills required to perform desired behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic process in place for on-going data collection of students’ progress. Data to be reviewed regularly (every 2 weeks suggested), and used to inform decision-making around intervention maintenance, fading, adaptations, or increasing intensity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REVIEW OF TIER TWO INTERVENTIONS
In order to develop the best-practice checklist (Table 1), a review of the literature focusing on evidence-based interventions targeting at-risk students was undertaken. The publications were analysed for components of the interventions which were reportedly instrumental in promoting positive behaviour among at-risk students. The literature revealed that the most common and most widely-researched interventions are: The Behaviour Education Plan, Check and Connect, and various social skills training programmes including anger and anxiety management. Below is a summary of this research. Unfortunately, very little research from the New Zealand context was available to be included within this review.
The Behaviour Education Plan

The Behaviour Education Plan (BEP) is a check-in/check-out (CICO) system developed specifically for students requiring targeted behaviour support (Taylor-Greene, 1997, cited in March & Horner, 2002). The programme is “designed to clarify expectations, increase the student’s daily structure, increase contingent social praise from teachers/staff members, and promote communication among the school, family, and student” (March & Horner, 2002, p. 160). The intervention involves each of the target students (identified through a certain number of office referrals or teacher nomination) engaging in the following process: each morning the student “checks-in,” for which they are reinforced with social recognition, provided with a daily BEP card which breaks the day down into classes (or however it is feasible to break the day down into shorter periods). The child gives the card to the teacher at the start of each period, and at the end the teacher provides written feedback on whether the student has met, partly met, or did not meet each of the school-wide behaviour expectations during that time. At the end of the day, the child “checks-out” by handing in the card - they again receive social validation and possibly a small tangible reward if they have got the card completed. The card is then sent home to get a parental signature and then brought back and data recorded (March & Horner, 2002). A review was conducted consisting of 28 group and single-subject CICO studies. It was discovered that in 82 percent of the studies students demonstrated positive changes to behaviour following participation (Hawken, Bundock, Klidis, O’Keefe & Barrett, 2014). Several other publications reviewed in the current study found BEP to be effective in reducing problem behaviours in the significant majority of students referred (Filter et al., 2007; Hawken et al., 2007; Hawken & Horner, 2003; McCurdy, Kunsch & Reibstein, 2007; March & Horner, 2002). Furthermore, it was found that BEP has been implemented with high fidelity by school personnel following training, and has scored highly on social validity rating scales among the teachers who administer it (Filter et al., 2007; Hawken et al., 2007; McCurdy et al., 2007). There is a consensus among the authors that BEP is an efficient use of resources; it is able to be implemented to a group of students at the same time, it uses up limited amounts of teachers’ time, is successful for the majority of students referred, and it is able to implemented quickly after identification of the need for Tier Two intervention.

A number of additional studies have also found that the function of the students behaviour can moderate responses to the intervention and should therefore be considered during design and implementation (Lane, Capizzi, Fisher & Ennis, 2012; March & Horner, 2002; Todd, Campbell, Meyer & Horner, 2008). McIntosh et al. (2009) used FACTS (Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff) to determine the function of the behaviour for each of the 36 target children in their study. It was discovered that there were significant differences in students’ responses to the intervention based on the function of the child’s behaviour. CICO was found to produce statistically and clinically significant outcomes for children engaging in problem behaviours in order to gain attention, however no significant effects were found for the escape-maintained behaviours (behaviour which functions to avoid certain tasks or interactions). Additional studies have also supported this argument in their findings. March and Horner (2002) found that CICO was effective for 69 percent of students whose behaviour was attention-driven, and only effective for 27 percent of children whose behaviour was escape-maintained. Similarly, Campbell and Anderson (2008) first implemented CICO with two normally-developing intermediate boys and found the intervention had little to no impact. It was then modified based on an analysis of the function of the behaviour and significant results were then observed. The theme continues in both Lane et al.’s (2012) study, and Todd et al.’s (2008) research. Both studies found that the intervention produced a higher rate of positive outcomes when paired with children whose behaviour was maintained by gaining adult attention, as determined by a Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA). These findings make sense given that CICO provides students with a high rate of adult attention for appropriate behaviours. It is argued that without an FBA, the student may not respond to the intervention and then it is unknown whether they require a different Tier Two intervention, or to progress to Tier 3, potentially leading to inaccurate referral to special needs services.

Check, Connect and Expect

Check, Connect and Expect (CCE) is based on the CICO system and is recognised in the What Works Clearinghouse report as an effective evidence-based method for reducing problem behaviour (Cheney et al., 2009). Similar to the BEP described above, the intervention consists of checking in and out each day, gaining feedback regularly from teachers throughout the day, and taking home the daily report card for parents to sign. The point of difference in this intervention is the person with whom the student checks in and out with is a mentor. The relationship formed between at-risk students and the mentor is an important component of the intervention (Cheney,
Flower & Templeton, 2008). The student and the mentor go over the student’s goals (in line with school-wide expectations) at the beginning of the day, and then during check-out they develop goals for the next day based on the feedback. Another difference is that on the report card teachers rate the students' behaviour on a scale (as well as providing a positive behaviour-specific comment) which is reflected in a point system. In CCE, students are considered successful each day if they obtain 75 percent of available points. The mentor is responsible for administering positive reinforcement and recognition daily, as well as negotiating and distributing tangible rewards for agreed behavioural goals, for example, five days in a row of 75 percent or higher. In a study conducted by Cheney et al. (2008), CCE was implemented with 93 students. After 16 weeks of the intervention it was found that 75 percent of the students reached the 75 percent achievement bench mark and were considered responsive to the intervention. The authors conclude that CCE is an effective technique to support students within mainstream, and that is able to meet students’ social, emotional, and behavioural needs. Its success is attributed to providing students with access to positive caring adults, opportunities for success, positive feedback from teachers, greater overall adult acceptance at school, and reinforcement for use of positive social skills. It is noted that training teachers how to give specific positive behavioural feedback is an important component, and that the data collected on the card should be tracked and reviewed every two weeks to allow for adaptations to be made if required.

Social Skills Training

Social skills programmes aim to deliver intervention to small groups of students and promote social competence, which has been linked to long-term academic achievement and success across many domains of life (Cook & Tankersley, 2012). Students who lack age-appropriate social skills have disproportionate experiences of poverty and come from cultural minority groups. Their behaviour at school often impacts upon their relationship with their teacher, further slowing the development of pro-social skills and also impacting upon learning (Utley & Obiakor, 2015). A meta-analysis conducted by Gresham and Elliot (2014) found that, over all, social skills interventions produce a medium effect size, where two out of three children will benefit. It is reported that a factor mediating the success of social skills interventions is whether the intervention is matched to the child’s specific social skills needs. It should be determined whether the child has not yet learned the social skills, and the issue is therefore skills acquisition; or whether the child has the skills to perform the desired behaviour however is not engaging in it due to lack of motivation.

A literature review conducted by Elliot and Gresham (2007, cited in Gresham & Elliot, 2014) identified six components of skill acquisition training interventions which have been empirically supported as effective techniques. These are: Tell (coach), Show (model), Do (rehearsal), Practise (repeat), Monitor progress (self-evaluation), and Generalise (practise behaviour in related environments). An example of a Tier Two skills acquisition intervention is The Cool Tool (Utley & Obiakor, 2015). This strategy emphasises behavioural expectations and systematically teaches students social skills to reach these. The target students are identified as from vulnerable home situations and have not acquired necessary social skills for school. Pro-social behaviours are explicitly taught across different school contexts (classroom, hallway, etc), rehearsed (role plays), and reinforced through prompts, pre-correction, and praise. In this study, significant outcomes were achieved for increasing on-task behaviour.

Where the child possesses the particular social skill however they are not engaging in it, research suggests that adapting antecedents and consequences in order to illicit positive behaviours is an effective strategy (Cook & Tankersley, 2012). Replacement Behaviour Training is an intervention designed to promote pro-social behaviour where the child’s performance, in particular social skills is the concern (Cook & Tankersley, 2012). The first step is to complete a functional assessment to determine the child’s motive for using the behaviour, then to teach the child to use a replacement behaviour instead, which is already in their repertoire. The replacement behaviour must have the same function as the problematic behaviour in order to meet the child’s needs (Cook & Tankersley, 2012). The environment can then be adapted to decrease the probability of the problem behaviour occurring through reducing antecedents and providing reinforcements for successful use of the replacement behaviour. Positive outcomes of replacement behaviour training addressing social skill performance needs have been reported in various studies including Todd, Hornor and Sugai (1999), March and Hornor (2002), Christenson, Young and Marchant (2004), and Maag and Larson (2004) (all cited in Cook & Tankersley, 2012).

By adapting the content, the techniques described above can be applied to a range of common issues including anxiety, peer pressure, and anger management or aggression prevention training (Leff, Waanders, Waasdorp & Paskewich, 2014). Anxiety management and relaxation training are the
most commonly-used methods and have the most empirical support (Cook & Tankersley, 2012). These interventions are able to be delivered to small groups by school mental health professionals over six to eight weeks. Effective programmes have been based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques (Evans, Rybak, Strickland & Owen, 2014). CBT-based interventions involve explicitly teaching students to recognise the link between their thoughts and behaviour, and their experiences of negative emotions such as anxiety, stress and depression. Students are then taught alternative ways to respond to stressors which reduces negative feelings and improves their resilience (Evans et al., 2012).

An example of this approach within the New Zealand context is the Travellers programme. This programme is targeted at Year 9 students who are experiencing challenging life events such as transitions or loss, and are at higher risk of experiencing emotional distress (Robertson, Boyd, Dingle & Taupo, 2012). The programme involves a series of small group workshops focusing on teaching strategies for how to cope with challenging life events based on a CBT model. An evaluation of the Travellers programme has been conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. The evaluation found that overall there was evidence of a moderate improvement in a range of protective factors including access to appropriate support, increased resiliency, and connectedness to the school. There was strong evidence of improved help-seeking skills and more positive relationships with peers/teachers/families (Robertson et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

Many schools using a three-tiered model of intervention to meet students’ behavioural needs, such as PB4L-SW, are facing challenges when implementing evidence-based Tier Two interventions for at-risk students. The current study has reviewed the literature regarding interventions targeting these students and identified strategies and components emphasised in the literature as important to intervention success. These components have been developed into a checklist to guide schools in their development, implementation and evaluation of Tier Two behaviour supports. The intention is to promote evidence-based practice within schools, whilst also facilitating a flexible approach to be able to meet the needs of individual learners and their families within diverse school settings.

REFERENCES


**AUTHOR PROFILE**

**Abby Martin**

Abby Martin has a Masters in Educational Psychology from Massey University. Her previous research topics have included the impact of an alternative education programme on outcomes for homeless youth, including life satisfaction, housing stability, and employment status. She is currently completing her educational psychology internship through Massey University and has a placement on the severe and challenging behaviour team in Auckland central.

**Email:** avf.martin@gmail.com
ABSTRACT

The My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme is a group cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) based programme and was used with a group of five young secondary students who had previously experienced difficulty with emotional regulation, peer relationships and discipline at school. A mixed method approach was used and included screening questionnaires, school record data and participant feedback. Themes identified include emotional regulation, peer relationships, discipline, and classroom referrals. The mean result for emotional regulation did not reveal substantial change, however, on an individual level, one participant improved and one reduced. Peer relationships demonstrated an overall improvement. Discipline and classroom referrals reduced and the participant’s recognitions (acknowledgements) increased at school. The results of the research project indicate that the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme assisted participants with developing life management skills, namely emotional regulation, developing peer and teacher relationships, and problem-solving.

Research Paper

Keywords:
emotional regulation, My FRIENDS Youth, peer relationships

INTRODUCTION

Students exhibiting emotional and behaviour difficulties have a wide variety of behavioural and mental health needs. These needs may present as anxiety, low mood, experiencing difficulty with concentration, and reduced school and classroom engagement (Schoenfield & Mathur, 2009). Research has shown that anxiety disorders are among the most common psychiatric disorders in childhood and adolescence (Rodgers & Dunsmuir, 2013). According to an article written by Farrell and Barrett (2005), one in six children in Australia experience clinical levels of anxiety at any given time. In New Zealand, the Ministry of Health report that more than 15,000 children were diagnosed with anxiety, which increased from 2800 children five years ago (Hill, 2013). Although children and adolescents experience episodes of anxiety as part of their typical development, for some these feelings may intensify and significantly impact their everyday activity, peer and family relationships, and academic work (Farrell & Barrett, 2005). Some adolescents experience difficulties with low self-esteem and there is a link between self-perception and social behaviour (Barrett, Webster & Wallis, 1999). Adolescents may have developed the appropriate skills for peer interaction, however their self-perception may cause a barrier for this interaction to occur effectively (Barrett et al.), the result being some adolescents develop unhelpful thinking styles about themselves and their relationships and are at risk of developing low mood or anxiety-related difficulties.

Young people at school learn through interactions with people, namely the teacher, their peers and family. The emotions that the young person may be experiencing can impede these interactions (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). Social emotional learning programmes “provide a foundation for better adjustment and academic performances reflected in more positive social behaviours, fewer conduct problems and less emotional distress” (Durlak et al.).

Group cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) programmes can be used as an effective tool to provide young people with support as they create opportunities for peer interaction, sharing, providing feedback, modelling positive behaviours, problem-solving, and normalising the difficulties experienced by young people (Rodgers & Dunsmuir, 2013). Research indicates that up to 70 percent of young people who have completed a CBT-based programme have reduced anxiety and therefore do not meet diagnostic criteria for anxiety disorder (Schoenfield & Mathur, 2009).

The My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme is a group CBT programme developed by Dr Paula Barrett at the Pathways Institute of Australia (Rodgers & Dunsmuir, 2013). The word ‘FRIENDS’ is an acronym to assist young people with remembering the social and emotional learning skills of the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme. The following skills are taught in the FRIENDS programme: F – Feelings (learn to recognise and manage your feelings and also
show empathy for other’s feelings), R - Relax (quiet time and focus on the present, become more aware), I - Inner helpful thoughts (change unhelpful thinking to helpful thinking), E - Explore solutions and coping step plans (learn to find solutions for problems and face challenges), N - Now reward yourself (you have tried your best and therefore can reward yourself), D - Do it every day (practise the skills each day), S - Stay strong inside (share your skills with your family and community as they are the support groups).

This is a 10 week structured programme consisting of three components based on CBT principles: learning and behaviour; cognitive, and physiological development (Rodgers & Dunsmuir, 2013). The learning and behaviour component involves demonstrating coping step plans and problem-solving techniques to create solutions. The cognitive component encourages young people to use positive self-talk and to start challenging the unhelpful thoughts, changing them into positive realistic thoughts. The physiological component strives to create awareness with body clues and uses relaxation techniques to foster self-regulation. Table 1 outlines the objectives and desired outcomes for the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives and Outcomes of the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life Programme (Barrett, 2012)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Session 1 | Introduce participants to each other and discuss the rationale and outcomes of the programme. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | The skills taught in this programme are life skills. Understand that people are different and to learn to tolerate and empathise with others. Personal goals from each participant are set. The Te Whare Tapa Wha model (Changing Minds, 2014). |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 2 | Discuss the first letter of the FRIENDS acronym, F - feelings. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Develop physiological awareness; participants become aware of their bodies and emotions when they feel a certain way. For example, happy, sad or angry. Gain awareness of verbal and non-verbal communication. |
| Outcomes | Develop further empathy for others. |

| Session 3 | The focus is on developing confidence and friendship skills. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Gain an understanding about what confidence is and how they can build their own confidence. Reflect on the qualities in friendships. |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 4 | The next letter of the FRIENDS acronym is R - Relaxation. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Understand the concept of positive attention and self-talk. Become aware of inner thoughts and that there are different ways to think about the same situation and some ways of thinking about a situation are more helpful than others. |
| Outcomes | Introduce the group to the CBT Skateboard model. Each wheel has a theme e.g. feelings, thoughts, physical reaction and behaviours. These influence each other and ways to improve these are explored. |

| Session 5 | Using the FRIENDS acronym the ‘I’ is used next; inner helpful thoughts. This is an introduction to attention training. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Understand the concept of positive attention and self-talk. Become aware of inner thoughts and that there are different ways to think about the same situation and some ways of thinking about a situation are more helpful than others. |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 6 | Continue with ‘I’ inner helpful thoughts. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Further understanding of the positive self-talk concept. Continue challenging young people to think about situations that are distressing in a way that may be helpful. |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 7 | The ‘E’ explores solutions and step plans. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Learn how to set realistic goals for their problems. Learn how to break down the problem into smaller, manageable steps. |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 8 | Continue with the letter ‘E’ and exploring solutions. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Continue exploring solutions and using coping step plans. Problem-solve situations using the step plan. Understand and identify the importance of social support teams. |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 9 | Continue exploring solutions to solve problems and discuss the ‘N’ - Now reward yourself. Discuss challenging situations and how remaining calm could be used to solve problems. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Learn peace-making skills to reduce conflict and build better relationships. Understand how communication can benefit conflict resolution. Understand the concept of self-reward. |
| Outcomes | |

| Session 10 | The final letters ‘D’ and ‘S’ include: Do it every day and Stay strong inside. |
|-----------|
| Objectives | Practise and continually implement the FRIENDS skills. Understand that sharing their skills with family and the community is on-going and enriches everyone’s lives. Understand that helping others can make them feel good about themselves. |
| Outcomes | |
Studies have shown that this programme reduces anxiety both at course completion and at longer-term follow up. The FRIENDS programmes include: Fun Friends, Friends for Life, and My Friends Youth Skills for Life which are school-based anxiety prevention and resilience-building programmes developed by Dr Paula Barrett. The World Health Organisation (WHO) cites ‘Friends for Life’ as the only evidence-based programme for anxiety in children that is effective at all levels of intervention (WHO, 2004).

The Intern Psychologist (IP) trained in facilitating this programme provided the preventative programme as an option of support and intervention to the school for students with mild to moderate emotional and behavioural concerns, considered at-risk of developing more significant mental health or behavioural difficulties. The My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme was used to determine the effectiveness of this programme in a New Zealand high school.

METHODOLOGY
Design
The My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme is a 10-week CBT-based programme which consists of objectives outlined at the start of each session. A trained facilitator conducts the session; in the case of this group, the IP facilitated the programme. It is recommended that group sessions are conducted one to two times per week over half an hour or hourly sessions (Barrett, 2012). In the case of this group, one hour sessions were held weekly. The objective of the research project was to determine whether the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme is an effective group intervention for adolescents in a New Zealand high school.

Participants
The school was invited to select six to eight participants for this group and a total of six participants were referred. One participant attended three sessions and then withdrew from the programme. Each participant referred to the programme demonstrated various difficulties, namely: forming and maintaining positive peer relationships; emotional regulation; poor self-esteem, and behaviour difficulties at school - for example, defiance and poor teacher-student relationships.

In the first instance, students identified by the school pastoral care team to participate were informed of the programme and an informed consent form was sent home to their parents. The consent form included a section for participant consent and the option to withdraw from the programme at any stage. At the end of the programme, the facilitator discussed the possibility of using the data from the group for research submission, and outlined that their anonymity and the school’s anonymity would be provided. An additional consent for research publication form was sent to the parents, and both parents and participants provided consent for this. Five participants in Year 10 (14 years old) completed the programme. The participants included four males and one female. The female reported that she felt comfortable being the only female as she has a few brothers.

The group was led by a trained facilitator of the My FRIENDS Youth for Life programme and was co-facilitated by a youth mental health practitioner. The co-facilitator was male, specifically chosen as the group consisted primarily of male participants.

Data Collection
This project used mixed-methods to measure the effectiveness of the My FRIENDS Youth for Life programme. The qualitative component of the research project included facilitator observations of participants throughout the programme as well as participant and teacher feedback at the end of the programme. Quantitative baseline and post-screening measures were used as comparative data, and the school records based on referral data and student recognitions were reviewed.

The feedback form asked participants to rate some questions from one to ten and some questions asked for YES or NO responses and comments (see Appendix One for feedback form). The teacher feedback asked the teacher to reflect on each objective of the FRIENDS acronym pertaining to one participant, noting any observed change or continued difficulties.

Two screening measures were used with participants pre- and post-programme. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used as it is a brief measure for three to 16-year-olds which can be completed by parents, teachers or youths. This measure includes five self-report scales, namely: Emotional Symptoms Scale; Conduct Problem Scale; Hyperactivity Scale; Peer Problems Scale, and the Pro-Social Scale (Goodman & Goodman, 2010). The second measure includes the Outcomes Rating Scale (ORS). A preliminary study of the reliability, validity and feasibility of the ORS conducted by Miller, Duncan, Brown, Sparks and Claud (2003) reported “the ORS was designed for use by clinicians to assess change in clients following psychological intervention. Although a short measure cannot be expected to achieve the same precision or depth of information as a longer measure like the SOQ-45.2, this study found that the ORS has adequate validity, solid reliability, and high feasibility (Miller, Duncan, Brown, Sparks & Claud, 2003). The participants completed the SDQ and ORS individually.
Data Analysis
Themes were outlined from qualitative anecdotal data as well as quantitative data throughout the programme to monitor the participants’ progress. Qualitative and quantitative baseline and post-programme data were compared which included participants’ feedback forms; school records pertaining to discipline, class referrals, and recognitions (acknowledgements or rewards). The school record data included baseline, during and post-programme data using the school data system. Two students were interviewed individually and the teachers completed feedback of the participants’ progress. The feedback from teachers related to peer interactions, engagement with learning, and students following school rules. Themes relating to data sources included ‘emotional regulation’, ‘peer relationships’, and ‘discipline and classroom referrals’.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
As a frame of reference, Table 2 and 3 have been included as a brief explanation of the SDQ and ORS scores:

Table 2
Description of SDQ Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Borderline</th>
<th>Abnormal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Difficulties Score</td>
<td>0 - 15</td>
<td>16 - 19</td>
<td>20 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Symptoms Score</td>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Problems Score</td>
<td>0 - 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactivity Score</td>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Problems Score</td>
<td>0 - 3</td>
<td>4 - 5</td>
<td>6 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Social Behaviour Score</td>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0 - 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Description of ORS Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Total (scores closer to 10 indicate improvement)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individually</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonally</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following dimensions emerged as the data was collated and analysed:

Emotion Regulation
Emotion regulation includes becoming aware of one’s emotions and being able to manage and modify them accordingly. Emotion regulation skills develop over the course of infancy and childhood, and continue to mature during adolescence. These skills are critical to mental health, academic achievement and good social relationships (Broderick, 2015).

Table 4
Baseline and Post-Programme Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDQ (total difficulties score)</th>
<th>ORS (Total score)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline number of participants (n)</td>
<td>5 (completed the questionnaire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline scores mean</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-number of participant (n)</td>
<td>5 (completed the questionnaire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-scores mean</td>
<td>16.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five participants were selected for this programme. At baseline, three SDQ questionnaires were completed and two ORS. Four SDQ and ORS questionnaires were completed post-programme.

Table 5
SDQ Total Difficulties Baseline and Post-Programme Based on Two Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDQ total difficulties baseline score</th>
<th>SDQ post-programme score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant A</td>
<td>19 borderline range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>15 normal range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6
SDQ Total Difficulties Baseline and Post-Programme Based on Two Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORS baseline score</th>
<th>ORS post-programme score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant A</td>
<td>29.5/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>17.4/40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant A’s baseline score indicated that his total difficulties post-programme increased by one point, demonstrating that Participant A continues to experience difficulties. After reviewing Participant A’s SDQ questionnaire at baseline, the ‘Emotional Symptoms Scale’ and the ‘Conduct Problems Scale’ were both in the normal range, and post-programme these scores revealed they were both in the borderline range. Participant B’s baseline SDQ score decreased by one point, indicating a slight improvement. Participant B’s ‘Emotional Symptoms’ at baseline and post-programme was in the normal range and ‘Conduct Problems’ remained in the
borderline range. The scores may increase as the participants develop awareness and insight into how they feel and respond to situations. Participants were able to become more self-reflective and honest, and therefore, for Participant A, the scores have increased slightly and Participant B’s score indicates a slight decrease.

Participants were invited to complete a feedback form and comment on the following:

Name and make a comment on two things that you thought was good about this programme.

Participant B wrote: “The skateboard, it will help me to calm myself and mindfulness”.

Another participant wrote: “I think the most helpful thing for me is learning how to deal with problems better”.

During the group sessions, the participants were invited to reflect on what skills they used during the programme. Some participants reported that breathing and having some time alone was helpful, and others identified exercise as a calming strategy. This indicated that participants started developing self-reflection and awareness of their body cues as well as strategies to support them when required.

The ORS score for Participant A remained the same, however Participant B’s ORS post-score demonstrated a vast improvement in his overall score.

A larger group size and the inclusion of all baseline data may have yielded better results for research purposes. A further limitation to consider is that the participants completed self-report questionnaires and therefore accuracy relies on their assessment of themselves and a trusting relationship with the facilitators. As the participants’ rapport with the facilitators and group members developed throughout the programme, they were able to share openly and honestly. This will be discussed further in the next section.

Peer Relationships

During the first session of this programme, the facilitator observed that the group members experienced conflict with each other. One participant reported that he did not want to attend this group and another antagonised a particular participant during the first three sessions. During Session Three, the group interacted more and contributed to the discussion. Participants who did not share previously, started talking about being confident, and the difference between being confident and arrogant was discussed, and how being arrogant can prevent relationships from forming.

Peer Relationships

During the first session of this programme, the facilitator observed that the group members experienced conflict with each other. One participant reported that he did not want to attend this group and another antagonised a particular participant during the first three sessions. During Session Three, the group interacted more and contributed to the discussion. Participants who did not share previously, started talking about being confident, and the difference between being confident and arrogant was discussed, and how being arrogant can prevent relationships from forming.

The SDQ Pro-Social mean score post-programme indicated an improvement with Participant B’s score. Participant A scored within the normal range at baseline and within the abnormal range at post-testing. One other participant’s score remained the same within the abnormal range and the other two participants scores have been excluded from this as they did not complete baseline data. The ORS Social Scale mean score indicated a slight reduction. This may be due to Participant A’s self-reflective evaluation. During the second half of the sessions, Participant A was asked by another participant if he had depression, at which stage Participant A said “Yes”. The group acknowledged Participant A for sharing this with them, and this question provided an avenue for further exploration on empathy, problem-solving, peer relationships and support networks. It is important to note that Participant A was disliked and misunderstood by some of his peers in this group, and that adolescents use the word ‘depression’ colloquially at times rather than in the clinical sense. During Session Eight, we continued the discussion on exploring solutions and increasing support networks. During this session, Participant A revealed that he used to be bullied by some of the participants in the group and this had stopped. One participant in particular had said that they did not have to be “mates”, but they can respect and acknowledge each other. Participant B was another group member who did not like Participant A and reported, “I’ll have your back if anyone bullies you”. Participant A’s physical education (PE) teacher reported the following feedback post-programme:

“I would like to add that Participant B and Participant A’s relationship seems to be stronger and has been positive in PE”. 
“Participant A has been less edgy in PE. Working well in his group”.

The mathematics teacher provided feedback on one participant in the group for I = I can do it (challenging negative thoughts and developing more confidence):

“Participant X can be quite positive towards work and asks questions willingly”.

The graph and feedback from teachers, as well as the peer discussions in the group, indicates that the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme provides an opportunity for improved peer relationships and support networks. A six week follow-up period on this group may provide further evidence of the sustainability of peer relationships and support networks.

**DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM REFERRALS**

The school where this programme was facilitated has a classroom referral system whereby students are referred out-of-class for breaking the school rules. An example of some of the referrals that the participants in the group may have been sent to the Head of House for include not listening to instructions, for example: not removing headphones; students must remove their jacket in class; not sitting at the table as the lesson starts; wearing the incorrect uniform. Discipline includes occurrences where the participants’ parents may have been consulted or have attended a meeting to discuss their son/daughter’s continued lack of discipline. Recognitions are acknowledgments or rewards that students receive from the school. The school uses FAITH cards to reward students as it is a catholic school. For example, if a student is respectful, they receive a FAITH card called ‘Respect’.

![Figure 3. Baseline, During and Post-Programme Data on Discipline, Classroom Referrals and Recognitions.](image)

These scores are based on all five participants, derived from the school record system. A mean was calculated for each category. At baseline (Term 1), the graph indicates that the participants were receiving discipline and classroom referral (sent to the Head of House/Dean of the school) incidents and no recognitions. When the programme started (Term 2), the discipline and classroom referrals reduced slightly and recognitions started to increase. As the programme ended, the post-programme data-based at three weeks (Term 3), indicates that the discipline and classroom referrals have reduced and recognitions have increased.

During two individual interviews with participants who completed the programme they were asked how Term 3 had been going:

“I have not been sent to the Head of House this term and this term has been better than the previous terms”.

The same participant rated his behaviour 3/10 (10 = good) at the start of the year and 7/10 for the second part of the year.

One teacher provided feedback and reported the following:

“He has not been as disruptive, always sits in his allocated seat without question, following my procedures for entering the classroom without incident”.

A teacher provided feedback on Participant B:

“He is doing really well in class, being cooperative, polite and responsive. He is also working hard and completing all tasks given. I am really enjoying him”.

The data indicates that the participants have all improved in the area of discipline and reduced classroom referrals, with an increase in recognitions. Further evidence is required to determine whether these improvements will be sustained.

**FRIENDS for Life Programme Outcomes**

The feedback from participants of the programme are summarised below; a mean score was calculated for each scale below:

Please indicate on a scale of one to ten (one = poor and ten= fantastic)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facilitators were a good fit for me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learning activities were thought-provoking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores indicate that the participants were satisfied with the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme.

The second part of the feedback form asked participants to circle YES or NO and include a brief comment. Four feedback forms were received and two participants circled YES to all the questions in that section and
one participant indicated the programme helped her become more social. Another participant highlighted that he learnt how to calm himself.

One participant reported that he would not use the My FRIENDS skills in his life as he did not think it would work for him.

The group was asked to comment on one thing that could be improved and three people commented: “More food”; “[Participant C’s] behaviour” and “Listening”. The participants did not elaborate on these.

The facilitators provided rewards in the form of chocolates, and the group sometimes started before morning tea. This may indicate why food, as a comment, has been highlighted. Participant C attended five sessions as he was absent on the other days; due to reduced participation of sessions he may not have learned some of the skills by the end of the group. With the comment “Listening”, it may have been more helpful if the facilitators met individually with each participant, and once they completed the feedback form some clarifying questions could have been asked. Two participants reported that they would recommend this programme to their friends, one said “Maybe” and the other said “No. He would not like it”.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this project was to determine the effectiveness of the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme in a New Zealand high school. Five 14-year-old participants in a New Zealand secondary school completed the programme: four males and one female. Participants who were referred experienced difficulties with forming and maintaining positive peer relationships; emotional regulation; poor self-esteem, and behaviour difficulties at school: for example, defiance and poor teacher-student relationships. The My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme develops life skills that assist adolescents in effectively coping with challenging situations; furthermore, it encourages peer learning and promotes positive relationships.

The Emotional Regulation overall SDQ and ORS mean averages did not reveal substantial changes; on an individual scale between two participants, one participant improved and the other reduced. These results may be due to the participants developing further self-awareness. A larger sample size with baseline data would be required for future study.

This group demonstrated that it assists in developing and improving peer relationships. A six-week follow-up period on this group may provide further evidence if peer relationships and support networks are sustained. A similar recommendation is required for the ‘Discipline and Classroom’ referral data, although there has been a marked improvement. Further post-programme data may reveal how effective this group is at sustaining the skills learnt.

Overall, the participants indicated that they were satisfied with the programme. Facilitators could consider meeting with participants individually to clarify certain questions and discuss some answers further; caution would be required to prevent directing the research. Positive pro-social changes at an individual level are evident, and, as a group, the participants’ Discipline, Classroom Referral and Recognition data indicate improvements. This research project indicates that the My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme assisted participants with developing life-management skills, namely emotional regulation, developing peer and teacher relationships, and problem-solving. Research, utilising a larger sample size and collecting baseline and post-programme data, may reflect the effectiveness of this group further.

REFERENCES


**Appendix One:**

**Feedback form**

Please indicate on a scale from one to ten (one = poor and ten = fantastic)

a. The overall My FRIENDS Youth Skills for Life programme.

b. The facilitators were a good fit for me.

c. The learning activities were thought-provoking.

Please answer YES or NO to the following and provide a brief comment:

d. Do you feel you have learned about the FRIENDS skills?

e. Would you use the FRIENDS skills in your life?

f. Has the programme taught you how to problem-solve when difficult situations arise and handle situations better?

g. Would you recommend this programme to a friend?

Please comment on the following:

h. Name and make a comment on two things that you thought was good about this programme.

i. Name and make a comment on at least one thing that could have been improved.

**AUTHOR PROFILE**

Jeanne Currie was born in South Africa and worked as a teacher in primary education for seven years. In 2011 Jeanne immigrated with her husband to New Zealand and continued studying in the field of educational psychology. Jeanne has worked with young people experiencing anxiety related difficulties in an individual and group context. Jeanne is currently completing the Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Psychology Internship at Massey University.

**Email:** jeannecurrie15@gmail.com
TEACHING AS INQUIRY WITH A FOCUS ON PRIORITY LEARNERS

LINDSEY CONNER

Reviewed by: Graham Jackson

Given the low levels of uptake of Teaching as Inquiry (TAI) in New Zealand schools, particularly high schools (ERO, 2012), research and publications in this area should be more than welcome. Lindsey Conner, in her book *Teaching As Inquiry, with a Focus on Priority Learners* (Conner, 2015), sets out to “… address the question of how teachers might manage TAI as part of their everyday work, and how they can be supported to make a difference, especially for priority learners” (Conner, 2015, p. vii). Teaching as Inquiry is one of the seven effective pedagogies recommended in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The book reports on how the Secondary Student Achievement (SSA) project fared over a three year period in three secondary schools in the central and southern regions of New Zealand. In these three schools, the project was described as ‘working well’ in its endeavours to embed TAI in the hearts and minds of school leaders, middle managers and teachers. The purpose of this Professional Learning and Development (PLD) initiative was, of course, to raise achievement for groups of students identified as priority learners.

The SSA project used a modified version of TAI that promotes “decision making and action as core elements” (Conner, 2015, p. 3) which will ensure all phases of the inquiry process are enacted. It was this version of TAI that subject specialist facilitators were tasked with seeding into the mindsets and practices of the participating schools. A chapter on developing the process in schools is followed by a chapter on each of the three case study schools.

It is in the first of these chapters that the five enablers of professional learning promulgated by ERO (2014) are introduced and used as a yardstick for organising thinking about what was happening in each school. These enablers are external drivers, structural and procedural, developmental, achievement, and contextual. A blend of quantitative data showing progress against NCEA levels and anecdotal success stories from teachers, leadership and facilitators in the schools helps chronicle the intervention, all the while being interwoven with adumbrated commentary from the author on findings and insights.

In my view, the book performs a service to educators and learners by casting into bas-relief issues that confront all who see professional development as necessary for healthy educational institutions. How do you get buy-in from a profession that sees itself as time-poor and overloaded? In these three schools, which are the success stories of this project, some teachers voted with their feet (23 percent of staff leaving in one school). Others clearly dragged their feet, and probably some stamped their feet. Successful implementation took commitment from senior and middle leadership, and firmly anchored structural and developmental enablers such as committees, policies and monitoring. In the first year of the project there was probably more confusion and resistance than buy-in. It became apparent that the kind of systemic change necessary for TAI to be effective and self-propelled would occur over several years rather than one. Worth thinking about though, is that in one school in the second year of the project, greater release of responsibility to staff was accompanied by some teachers taking the path of least resistance in failing to develop clear goals (Conner, 2015, p. 61).

Another of Conner’s key findings was that initially the way TAI was unveiled caused a certain amount of the confusion and resistance. Seen as something layered over the top of existing practices that involves research, more data gathering (and probably more meetings), it was unsurprisingly demotivating. When TAI was represented as something that good teachers do and have always done, there was greater uptake of the process. This of course begs the question of whether TAI is simply what good teachers have
always done. A possible area for further investigation now appears: how do you create a thirst in the horses of instruction (McArthur, 2011) such that they willingly drink? The contextual enablers (see p. 36) may be the place to start that search.

There are issues raised in this book which deserve some critical appraisal. It may be useful to shift away from the stone tablet notion that it is a moral imperative (p. vii and p. 8) that will drive teachers to want to improve the life chances of their students and to address the needs of priority learners. In the sense that morality relates to a personal adoption of principles and values, the idea of a moral imperative is somewhat oxymoronic. Conner may have been better to seek justification in professional ethics, and needs to look no further than the Teachers Code of Ethics (EDUCANZ, 2015). Ethical positions and practice can be mandated by professional organisations, and therefore can be considered imperatives.

There is a timely opportunity created by this book to interrogate the discourse around priority learners. Employing TAI to address the learning needs of priority learners may seem to occupy the ethical high ground. The Ministry of Education and its Minister would no doubt laud any attempts by academics to lead teachers to greater focus of energy, time and resources on this group, and it is therefore understandable that researchers might want to draw such connections between successful pedagogies and priority learners. However, the priority learner label may not only serve to box in the very students that we seek to liberate, it may also detract from looking at how and why these students became so “needy” in the first place (Hotere-Barnes, 2015).

I wonder if these realisations, that students are being problematized, and that there is something distinctly non-inclusive about the way that the SSA project was conceived, are what triggered some of the resistance from some of the teachers in the three case study schools. The teacher voice in all of this was illusory. It may also detract from looking at how and why these students became so “needy” in the first place (Hotere-Barnes, 2015).

If further thinking is stimulated, then there is value in this book. Secondary teachers embarking upon their own TAI may find the case studies and examples of interventions informative, and senior and middle leadership in schools at all levels will find the discussion of the enablers and the barriers in each of the case studies enlightening in designing and executing any form of school improvement. This book adds to the TAI conversation and should trigger further inquiry into a range of issues, some of which are alluded to in this review.

REFERENCES


REVIEWER PROFILE
Graham Jackson was a primary school teacher and principal in a past life, and is now a senior tutor in the Institute of Education, Massey University, Albany. He lectures in literacy, professional studies, and teaching as inquiry.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA
Title: Teaching as Inquiry with a Focus on Priority Learners

Author: Lindsey Conner

Publication Date: 2015

Price: $39.95

Publisher: NZCER Press