



“To research the effectiveness of the College's current professional development programme and how it has aligned with programmes that operate in the Mid-Bays Community of Learning.”

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Browns Bay School
- Campbells Bay School
- Mairangi Bay School
- Murrays Bay Intermediate School
- Murrays Bay School
- Pinehill School
- St Johns School

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Professional Development Lead Group appointed six years ago at Rangitoto College formed the foundation for the changes in culture and development of skills that made it a natural progression to take part in the Community of Learning.

The leadership shown by the Rangitoto College Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees in leading those changes ultimately resulted in the College being awarded the Prime Ministers Education Excellence Award for Excellence in Governing: The Awatea Award for 2016.



PROGRAMMES: THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAD GROUP

The professional development programme came from a desire to move Rangitoto College from a very good school to a world class school. An analysis of the research strongly identified the quality of the teaching as the most significant factor in improving student performance. In addition the qualities of an effective teacher can be identified and taught. The improvement of the quality of teaching therefore became the focus. The desired outcome was to develop a culture within the College of sustained continual improvement which required a whole school mind shift to a Growth Mindset, that you can always do better, and that it is the professional responsibility of the teacher to try to do so.

Cultural change within a school of over 3000 students and nearly 200 teaching staff was clearly not going to just happen because we wanted it to and it was not going to happen quickly. A long term strategy was developed and proposed to the Board of Trustees who put considerable funds into supporting it. This resulted in the formation of the Professional Development Lead Group (PDLG) of eight staff which was established six years ago. Each person was on two management units and most significantly had an additional 8 hour per week non-teaching time allocation to give them the time to work with staff.

The eight PDLG staff were selected for their pedagogical expertise and their ability to form positive professional relationships with staff. They included a third year teacher and staff from a range of Departments. The first part of the programme was the upskilling of the eight PDLG members to place them at the cutting edge of professional development through attendance at local, National and International conferences. They were trained in coaching and mentoring techniques and in addition they were required to do wide ranging professional reading.

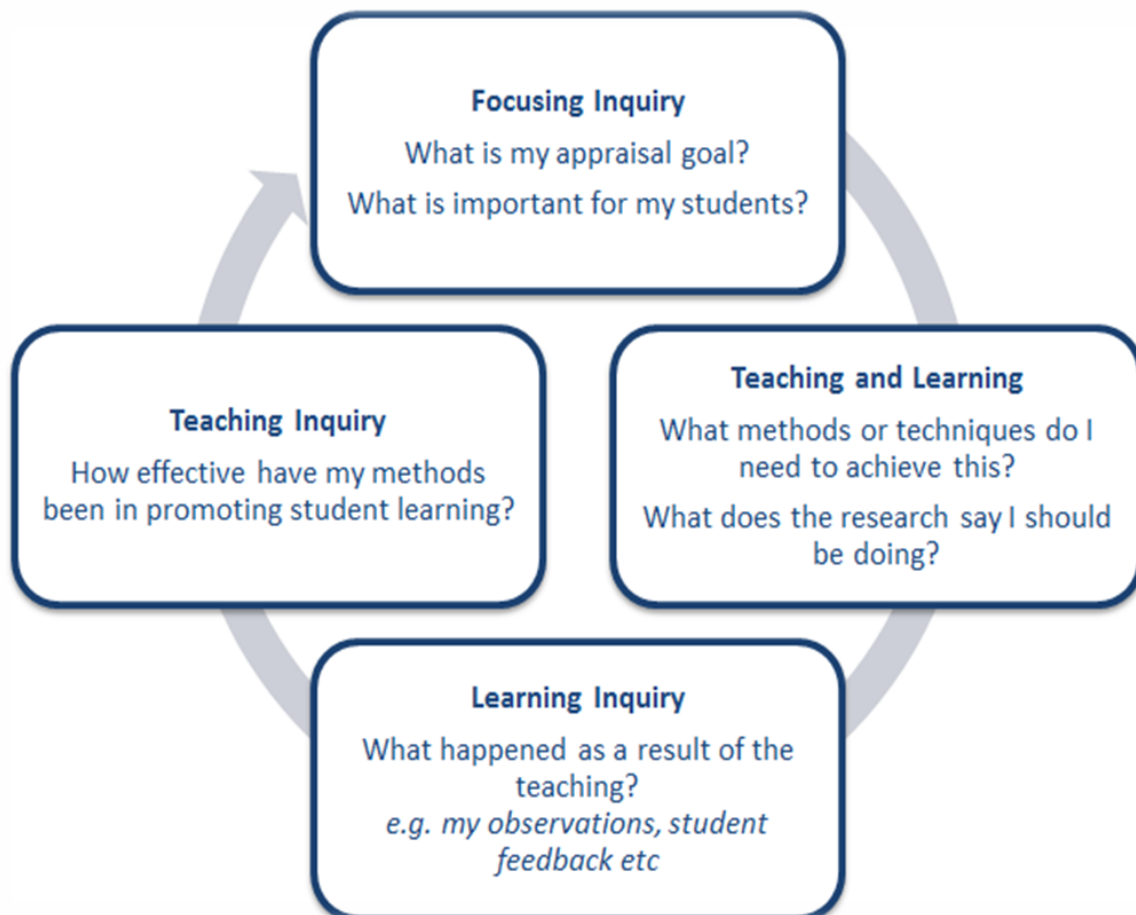
Initially the PDLG focussed on four key pedagogical areas, titled as The Thinking Classroom, E-Learning, Differentiated Instruction and Effective Practice. Two members of the PDLG staff specialised in each area. To give impact at the beginning of the programme an overseas expert was brought in for a full staff professional development. For The Thinking Classroom, Clinton Golding, then lecturing in Philosophy at Melbourne University, presented to the staff. For the Differentiation Instruction aspect, ten staff from a range of experience and responsibility were sent on a week long course with Kathleen Kryza, an International Differentiation expert. In all four pedagogical areas the programmes that were developed reflected the work of the experts and the relevant research rather than just uplifting a commercial programme. This allowed the PDLG to develop a Rangitoto College flavour to the



programmes in keeping with the culture. The PDLG involved a wide range of staff in developing the programmes which also gave them a more grass roots, hands on style and gave staff more ownership.

Once the programmes were developed they were promoted further with staff through regular professional development sessions after school. Most of these were optional and were run by the relevant members of the PDLG. The follow up was the significant difference, the PDLG staff went into classrooms to promote change through one on one professional development tailored for that staff member and that particular class. This was only possible because of the very generous time allowance that the PDLG staff had. This gave the professional development immediacy and relevance. As well as working over an extended period of time with the staff member the PDLG person would relieve their class to enable the teacher to visit other classes. They would also pass on relevant research and have regular mentoring meetings with the staff member to discuss progress. The best professional development is that which meets the teacher's personal needs in terms of pace, direction, degree of change and mentoring style.

The staff were trained in the Teaching As Inquiry process and it was incorporated into the staff annual appraisal. Rubrics were developed in each of the four areas from the PDLG so that staff could evaluate their performance and assist them in setting goals for improvement. Resources to support the professional development were available to all staff and any professional development had a strong research backing. After school compulsory professional development time was set aside for paired staff to work on their teaching As Inquiry projects. To assist this, the staff as a whole were trained in mentoring skills based on a programme from Jan Robertson from Waikato University.



The mix of Teaching As Inquiry, one on one support and an extensive professional development programme encouraged an increase in professional dialogue and an acceptance of visiting staff. PDLG staff were available to offer support, advice or to cover staff to visit other classrooms. This gradually led to an open door ethos and transparency of practice. Staff were continually assessing their performance through collecting data, making changes to their practice and assessing the effect of these on student performance. Most Heads of Department expect staff to present their Teaching As Inquiry project findings to the rest of their Department through their staff meetings. This sharing of best practice adds another layer to the professional dialogue, allowing staff to be open about areas that they are working on improving. This is not perceived as a sign of weakness rather a sign of a desire to improve, especially as it involves all staff, including the Heads of Department.



The PDLG support staff one on one on a voluntary basis where the staff member is looking for ways to improve their practice. They also have a role where under performance of a staff member has been identified through the annual staff appraisal process. In that case the support will be offered on a voluntary basis but if not taken up then may, through negotiation with the Head of Department, be made mandatory. It is important that there is a clear distinction between the role of the Head of Department as the appraiser and the PDLG person as a support person for the staff member. Any blurring of the roles makes it unlikely that an open and honest relationship will develop between the PDLG person and the staff member. Without that honesty there is little chance of genuine long term change. This has been found to be very successful as a model for improving performance. Long term support from your colleagues provides more pressure for change than the occasional Head of Department visit and it is hard for staff to complain about receiving such support. The time allocation of the PDLG means that they can visit and mentor the staff member much more extensively than the Head of Department could manage. Also any visit by the Head of Department is construed as judgemental rather than supportive and so produces a contrived lesson. The Head of Department will ultimately be the judge of whether sufficient improvement has been made.

As the professional development programme evolved so over time a wider range of staff were encouraged to offer professional development sessions to other staff. This developed as two different professional development sessions, both optional for teaching and non-teaching staff. Wednesday morning sessions of an hour where coffee and pastries were offered and Thursday 15 minute Forums where staff showcase their Teaching As Inquiry projects and other short focussed professional development. Both of these have been very popular with staff and attendance is high. The Wednesday time slots have been used to run Emerging Leaders professional development sessions attracting over 70 staff. Outside speakers on topics like leadership and motivation have been very well supported. The 15 minute Forums have provided an opportunity for professional development on a wide range of topics like gifted and talented students, dyslexia, Asperger's, and Maori achievement, all focused on effective pedagogies for differentiation to cater for those students. Some sessions have been run by the students themselves who are in those categories. That "working together" aspect of students seeing staff wanting to better understand their issues in order to support them has been hugely empowering for both sides. Rolls are recorded for all sessions and a summary forms part of the material discussed during annual appraisal. There is a clear expectation that staff attend some of the sessions offered but since there are commonly 2 a week there is



generally enough to interest anyone. Also, the Thursday 15 minute sessions allow even busy staff to quickly take on some concept or skill. These will frequently be the topic of discussion between staff in following days.

The pre-registered teachers have an intensive professional development programme run by the two specialist classroom teachers, who are members of the PDLG, in addition to other sessions. All of the pre-registered teachers are required to present their Teaching As Inquiry project at the end of their second year. These sessions are open to all staff and are well attended. Internal competition between the pre-registered teachers keeps the standard very high.

The introduction of internal professional development programme run by the PDLG has not reduced expenditure or commitment to external professional development. Staff apply for courses through a paper application which asks them to relate the request to their teaching and whether they are prepared to share what they find on their return, the relevant Head of Department signs their support. The trend has been for staff to request external professional development that relates to either their subject area or their Teaching As Inquiry project. Frequently they will then offer a session based on the professional development to their Department or through a 15 Minute Forum.

We have found that for continual improvement to occur it was necessary for professional development to extend beyond occasional one-off days with outside experts to regularly tapping into the talent present within the College. Effective professional development needs to focus on improving outcomes for students. It must be research backed and combine practice and reflection with colleagues upon the outcomes of the practice. It is most effective when practiced in the teaching context over an extended period of time. The PDLG model has given professional development the continual high profile and energy that was needed to embed it.

The effect of the professional development programme has been assessed through staff surveys which have shown a significant increase in theoretical understanding of pedagogy and effective classroom practice. The attendance at optional professional development sessions is very high, frequently over a third of staff attend Wednesday before school sessions, demonstrating an increased interest in professional development. NCEA pass rates have improved from 2011 to 2015; Level 1; 86.5% to 93.6%, Level 2; 83.7% to 95.8%, Level 3; 82.9% to 94.0% and UE from 78.8% to 85.0%. The percentages of NCEA passes with distinction have increased. This is not due to any changes in the level of difficulty of the courses.



Anecdotally Heads of Department have commented on an increase in pedagogical dialogue between staff, greater transparency of practice with more staff opening their doors to colleagues to share practice and a general improvement in student behaviour and academic focus. Early in the programme most professional development sessions were run by members of the PDLG, as the programme has evolved so increasingly sessions are being run by a wide range of other staff members. There is a degree of competition about the presentations and staff presentations are very professional. Many sessions are now run by leaders within the College, with Heads of Department and Deputy Principals sharing their expertise.

The skills that the members of the PDLG develop set them up for promotion and over the six years of the programme many have moved on to be replaced. The PDLG positions are highly regarded by staff and attract significant numbers of applicants. The classroom observation and mentoring skills and the increased pedagogical knowledge are excellent training for any staff wishing to move into positions of responsibility where they are appraising and working with staff.

The decision by the Principal, David Hodge, supported by the Board of Trustees to form the PDLG has proven very successful. The generous time allowance was a considerable cost and so had some associated risk, it is a credit to them that it was retained. The change in the culture of the College through the leadership shown by the Board of Trustees in funding those changes was recognised in the College being awarded the Prime Ministers Education Excellence Award for Excellence in Governing: The Awatea Award for 2016.



PROGRAMMES: THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

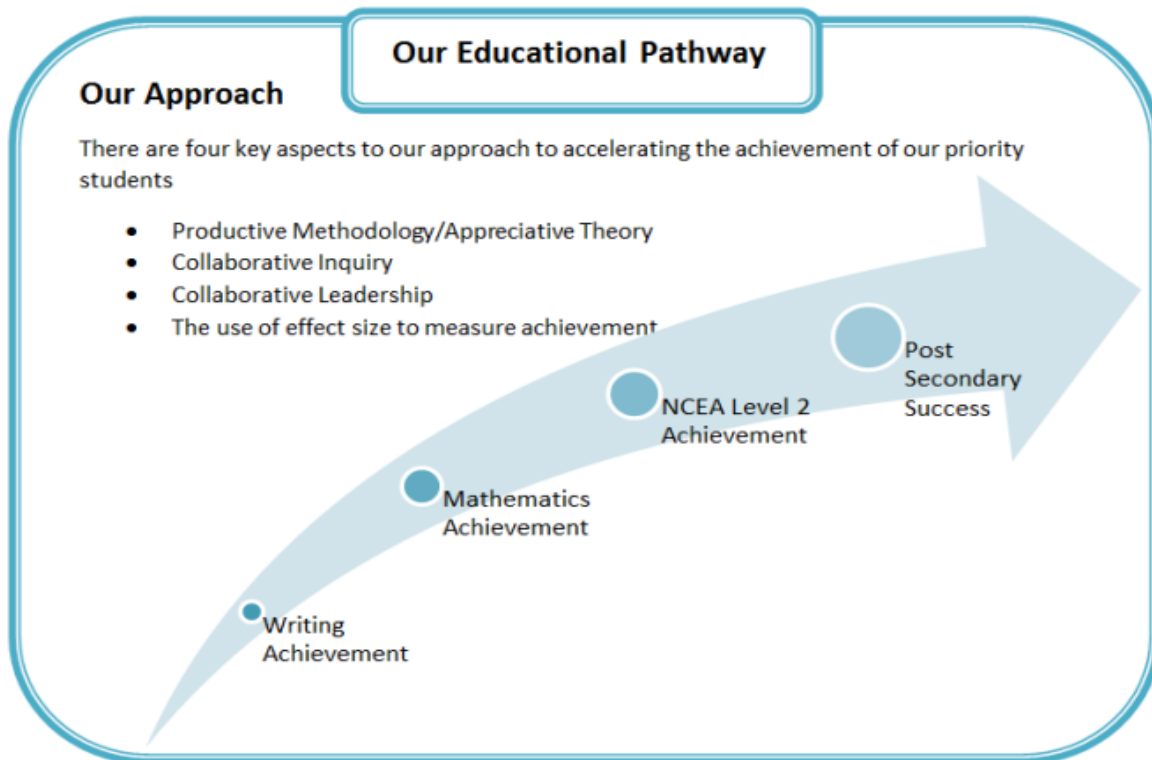
In January 2014 the Prime Minister announced the Investing in Educational Success initiative which funded schools to form groups of schools across educational levels to coordinate improving outcomes for students as they moved through the sector. In 2015 after discussions between the Principals of local schools, Rangitoto College became part of the Mid-Bays Community of Learning (COL) which includes seven other schools Murrays Bay Intermediate, Murrays Bay, Mairangi Bay, Campbells Bay, Pinehill, Browns Bay and St Johns Primary Schools.

Student numbers determine the allocation of roles to the schools within the community. The Mid-Bays Community of Learning generated 1 leadership role, 8 across community roles and 43 within school teachers. Colin Dale, the Principal of Murrays Bay Intermediate was appointed to the leadership role.

Early in 2015 goals were established based on the Ministry of Education student data on the schools making up the COL. The goals are in the areas of writing, mathematics, NCEA Level 2 and progression by school leavers to tertiary studies. These gave significant areas for the Primary, Intermediate and Secondary schools to work on. Priority Learners were to be the focus and they were defined as any child who is performing below or well below the national standards. All Māori and Pacific Island students are included as priority learners.

There are four key aspects to the COL's approach to accelerating the achievement of the priority learners, they are:

- Productive methodology/Appreciative Theory
- Collaborative Inquiry – Writing/Mathematics
- Collaborative Leadership
- The use of effect size to measure achievement and impact



Productive methodology uses a hunch from an organisation's practice, and analysis of the data and strategies that are being questioned, and then an action plan to change the teaching and learning behaviour. It relies on student and parent agency, and a skill of critiquing practice. The methodology borrows insights from appreciative theory that the most powerful force for change is a new idea. Productive methodology recommends that the leaders of the programme ask questions to establish the best aspects of what is being done and then to build on this rather than a negative focus on fixing problems.

The planning involves each school exploring by investigating a hunch as to how learning could be improved in a chosen area. Through deep questioning and sophisticated analysis each school will understand their challenge and create an action plan which will be critiqued by members of the community of schools that contributes to the communities goals. Once critique is integrated in to the plan the actions will be led by in-school leaders in each school, each with a specific area of focus. Results from formative assessment, which will be qualitative and quantitative will redirect and change as new learning emanates from the process. It is expected



that new innovative ways of probing into what is happening in the learning journey will be developed by COL staff.

A Code of Conduct has been developed by the COL people from the 8 schools to assist in addressing any issues that arise within the Community.

Rangitoto College's student numbers generated 18 Within School Teacher roles. Each role came with a non-teaching time allocation of 2 hours per week and the equivalent of 2 ministerial units. Timetabling within the College meant that the allocation of 2 hours per week of release time produced a large number of split classes which would then have two teachers. Past experience has shown that this can be disruptive to the students learning. There is some freedom in terms of the allocation of time and so to minimise the number of split classes, 9 of the staff were allocated an extra 4 hours non-teaching time per week, which meant losing a full timetabled class, and the release time for the other 9 will be in whole days release rather than on a regular weekly basis.

The number of staff involved was so large that the decision was made to give the roles some specialisation. Consequently in Term 4 2015 the following COL positions were advertised and appointed: one Teacher Across Community, and from the 18 Within School Teachers, one COL Facilitator, four priority learner Pedagogy Specialists, two Maths Curriculum Specialists, two Writing Curriculum Specialists and nine COL Within School Teachers from a range of curriculum areas.

At the time of writing, the COL Teacher Across Community was Julia Tod. This was a permanent position for the duration of the initiative (a minimum of 6 years), it has an 8 hour weekly release time allocation and the equivalent of 4 ministerial units. The COL Teacher Across Community will lead the work of the COL within Rangitoto College. They are responsible for the performance of the COL project within the College and for the performance of staff in their COL roles. This includes overseeing all of their cycles of Teaching As Inquiry, and working closely with their Teacher Across Community peers in the other schools to recognise and report on best practice within the community. They will provide a link between the needs and the practices between the seven other schools and Rangitoto College and will facilitate the exchange of best practice between schools. They will report regularly on the activities and outcomes of the project to the COL Lead Principal – Colin Dale.



At the time of writing the COL Facilitator is Anna Taylor. This is a permanent position for the duration of the initiative, it comes with the equivalent of 2 ministerial units and 4 hours of weekly release time. The role is to ensure a high level of coordination and communication between the Pedagogy Specialists; the Writing and Mathematics Specialists and the COL teachers. They will be coordinating the work done by other people in the College in respect of Priority Learners with those working within the COL. Their role includes summarising and synthesizing of the findings of all COL people within the school.

Priority Learner Pedagogy Specialists, at time of writing, are Lauren Wing (Social Sciences), Alisha Tilbury (English), Doug Udy-Bothwell (Maths) and Pete Duthie (Science). These are Fixed Term, 3 year positions, with a weekly 4 hour release time and the equivalent of 2 ministerial units. Their work will initially be within their curriculum area, but may extend to other areas of the curriculum at an appropriate time.

The Mathematics Across the Curriculum Specialists are at time of writing, Juliet Inglis (Maths) and Keegan Black (Commerce). These are Fixed Term, 3 year positions with a weekly 4 hour release time and the equivalent of 2 ministerial units.

The Writing Across the Curriculum Specialists are Melanie Van Ansem (English) and Sally Stockton (ESOL). These are Fixed Term, 3 year positions with a 4 hour release time and the equivalent of 2 ministerial units.

All of the Pedagogy, Mathematics and Writing Specialists will undertake 'collaborative inquiry' and 'action research' into best practice. They will be expected to combine theory and practice and develop a set of teaching practices for Rangitoto College priority learners that will lead to a direct improvement in their outcomes. They will be required to work alongside the COL Within School Teachers to trial new pedagogies and then to implement these across the Departments where appropriate. They will work cooperatively with the teachers of the other Departments, COL teachers from the other schools in the community, Deans, the COL Facilitator and the Rangitoto COL Teacher Across Community.

The Community of Learning Within School Teachers at time of writing, are Tara Black (English), Nicola Henderson (English), Bridget Garnett (PE & Health), Tessa Garton-Voice (Social Sciences), Penny Olson (Social Sciences), Sophie Neil (Art), Jenny McLean (Science), Nathan Collings (Music), Melanie Waugh (Maths). These positions are permanent for the duration of the initiative. They come with no weekly time allowance but still have the equivalent of 2 ministerial units. These COL



teachers will be involved in the sharing of best practice model that is central to the Community of Learning project. They will be sharing their knowledge and expertise with others through allowing observation of their teaching, taking part in group discussion and on-line forums. They will be especially making themselves available for pre-registered and provisionally registered teachers as well as other teaching staff. They will be assisting in the development, trial and review of new teaching pedagogies where appropriate. They will provide feedback and feedforward to the COL Pedagogy Specialists and the COL Mathematics and Writing Specialists.

As part of team building of the Rangitoto COL team and to gain an understanding of each other's teaching contexts, the COL people have been actively getting into each other's classrooms and then using Maslow's Four Learning Stages for reflection of practice from the feedback they received. The COL people were chosen because they are excellent practitioners that are performing at the top competence level, Stage 4. However, the practice of being able to explicitly explain to others their teaching strategies and behaviours is a real skill, especially when they are operating at Stage 4, an unconsciously competent behaviour. To assist them in explaining why they used particular strategies in the classroom it was necessary for them to be able to move back to Stage 3 to clarify their reasoning for other staff. A large part of the professional development of the COL team has been based on fine tuning these important skills. Time has also been spent on co-constructing observation protocols so that the staff know what to expect when a member of the COL team visits their classroom. This is to minimise the disruption to the teaching and to normalise the visits for the students.

The Four Stages of Learning



PROGRESS SO FAR

The Mid Bays COL has already attracted attention at a national level as leading the way and as a 'blue print' to learn from for other COLs as they are being established. We have been invited by Dr Graham Stoop and EDUCANZ to be involved in key stakeholder workshops and meetings, especially focused around the development of leadership professional development considerations for COL.

During Term 1 2016 the COL Across Community Teacher worked with the Learning Support Department, Deans and Careers Advisors to investigate the effectiveness of strategies already in place for identifying Priority Learners, how best to provide a learning pathway for them and then to form an action plan for the rest of the year.

All Rangitoto College teachers spend the early part of Term 1 doing the first part of their Teaching As Inquiry project, which is focusing inquiry, to help them to get to know their students and what level of the curriculum they are working at. This



judgement is supported by a number of formative tests that are administered and analysed. In the junior school all students complete the E-AsTTle (English & Maths) and MidYIS for Vocabulary, Maths, Non Verbal (Visual) and Skills (Accuracy and Fluency) tests. The results of these and in class formative testing helps the staff to establish the appropriate level for the curriculum based as much as possible on the students individual needs.

The COL team used this crucial early period to dig deeper into the available data on all junior students and how it could be used to identify and support the priority learners. They researched the information that is currently available for E-AsTTle and MidYIS, then created information forums to better inform students, teachers and parents about what the tests actually mean and where they can find further clarification. The drive is to increase student agency and have student's feeling more informed about the rationale and purpose of the assessments and therefore be able to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The COL Specialists (Pedagogical, Mathematics and Writing) analysed all the junior E-AsTTle and MidYIS results and worked with the Deans to help identify the Priority Learners in the junior school. Most importantly once these students have been identified the COL Specialists will be developing and co-constructing with teachers, Priority Learner learning pathways that can be used across the curriculum for these students.



E-asTTle quadrat data:

Strengths...

- Hard questions the student got correct
- Questions that were **harder** than the students overall sublevel
- Continue by giving the student similar work at this level

CELEBRATE!

To Be Achieved...

- Hard questions the student got incorrect
- Questions that were **similar** to the students overall sublevel
- Plan to teach these objectives, at their level straight away

LAY OUT NEW ROAD...

Achieved...

- Easy questions the student got correct
- Questions that were **similar** to the students overall sublevel
- Move onto new objectives or similar objectives at the next level

MOVE ON!

Gaps...

- Easy questions the student got incorrect
- Questions that were **easier** than the students overall sublevel
- Teach these quickly, but if you only teach the gaps new learning will not occur

FILL THE GAPS IN THE ROAD

All of the COL team identified the lower 'tail' in their own classes and especially the gap areas, from the E-asTTle testing, that their students need to fill. The COL teachers have then chosen their Teaching as Inquiry projects to trial different strategies to add value to a student's learning pathway. They are paired with another member of the COL team to mentor each other and to review progress on their Teaching As Inquiry projects. Successful strategies will then be shared with other teachers, especially the teachers of the identified Priority Learners.

The COL Team are looking for learning connections and ways to scaffold knowledge for student's educational pathways. Taking into account and building on the work done by the Primary and Intermediate schools and reinforcing cross curricular connections and skills.



The Mathematics Specialists are working with all Departments to establish common approaches to skills like graphing and to develop a common Mathematical language for staff and students across their core subject areas. Students will be encouraged to see a coherent teaching of Mathematics across the school, to be able to link together Mathematical content and skills that they are learning across all of their subjects and Standards in the senior school.

Students struggling in Maths will be identified as early as possible and interventions put in place to move these students forward so that they are not falling further behind and to accelerate their progress. For all students there is a focus on increasing student interest, confidence and enjoyment in Mathematics across all levels.

The Writing Specialists are working on increasing student achievement by developing a system that identifies and tracks students who are Priority Learners for writing. An appropriate intervention can then be put in place. They are providing support material for teachers on the teaching of writing and there is an across school emphasis on the importance of the skills of reading and writing, with a focus on students being expert writers in their subject areas.

Differentiated assessments are being developed so that students will be provided with assessment opportunities that correlate with the curriculum level that they are at. This will enable teachers to ascertain what Priority Learners know rather than them providing limited answers and failing full assessments. This will give students the opportunity to demonstrate that they are making progress in a curriculum area even if they are still behind.

The funding for COL includes considerable inquiry time, this is being used to allow staff to attend workshops on differentiation, literacy and numeracy, and to give time for staff to go and observe a COL Within School Teacher or other colleagues and time to work on their individual Teaching As Inquiry projects. As the programme develops then inquiry time will be used to allow greater contact between the schools in the COL and the wider sharing of best practice.

The Rangitoto COL team are trialling the use of Google Sites as a portal as a way of sharing their Teaching As Inquiry cycles within the team and with other staff as professional development. Each COL member has been paired with another for peer mentoring. The COL team meet each Wednesday after school and also on allocated professional development Monday meeting times.



HOW HAS THE WORK OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAD GROUP SUPPORTED THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNING?

The work of the PDLG has resulted in a culture of Growth Mindset where the staff believe that there is always going to be a way for them to improve their practice. That the learning of their Priority Learners can be accelerated and that the sharing of practice with their colleagues may well provide the answer as to how to do it. The sharing of practice, especially in a very large school, is the most powerful source of motivation for change. Without the development of a culture of Growth Mindset by the staff, the Priority Learners and their parents, it is unlikely that significant and permanent change will take place. If the fall-back position of staff is that there is only so much that you can do and that there is an acceptable level of failure, then they will not keep looking for new approaches to try.

The long term focus on improving student outcomes from the PDLG particularly through the Teaching As Inquiry process has been hugely influential in establishing a model of personal professional development that has transposed straight into the COL programme. Appreciative Theory starts from a hunch as to what change could improve student outcomes. This very closely parallels the Teaching As Inquiry approach. The collection of data to assess the current position and to make changes to achieve goals is embedded through the Teaching As Inquiry process and that data backed approach is essential to assessing the effectiveness of the COL programme. The inclusion of Teaching As Inquiry for all staff as a mandatory aspect of their personal professional development and their appraisal gives it the appropriate importance. The change to incorporate COL is simply that goals and hunches can be passed on from the COL team for staff to investigate and share outcomes. A sharp focus on student outcome goals is essential to COL and the well established data driven Teaching As Inquiry model fits perfectly with that.

The PDLG had over its six years gradually reduced the anxiety associated with another teacher coming into a teacher's classroom to observe their practice. At the beginning this was not the norm and staff frequently associated visits with appraisal. It was necessary to make a clear distinction between the work of the PDLG and the appraisal process. The development of an open classroom mentality has taken time but now feeds directly into an acceptance of the COL team routinely visiting classes. Such is the acceptance now that it is unusual for staff to request not to have visitors from other schools or even parents come through. Open days involve parent and potential students having free access to classes with little concern from staff or loss of focus by the students.



The PDLG organise professional development and prepare supportive resources for staff. Over time increasing numbers of staff not in the PDLG have become involved in also offering professional development. This is especially though the Thursday Forums where staff voluntarily showcase their Teaching As Inquiry projects to other staff. Having the COL Mathematics, Writing and Pedagogy Specialists organise resources and professional development is little different from the PDLG people that the staff were used to working with. In that way there was an easy progression from the work of the PDLG to the fundamental basis of the COL programme.

The mentoring training of all staff to facilitate their working with a peer on their Teaching As Inquiry project meant that the COL team had already undergone professional development in an important skill. The ability to work with other staff in a mentoring role is essential for the COL team if they are to cause change. The staff are used to working with a peer as a mentor, making it easy for the COL team to work with them. The PDLG in class, one on one support model gives much more direct relevance to suggested changes to pedagogy. The COL team will build on that already established and embedded practice in their work with staff in their classrooms.

The College has had a focus on Priority Learners for the last two years, they were the approximately 10% of students who looked like they were not going to pass NCEA Level 1 or 2. The Deans worked with the students and their parents. The teachers, careers and guidance staff formed a support network to develop individual strategies for each student. This approach has been very successful in raising the achievement of students who have fallen behind and frequently have become unmotivated. The COL programme will pick up these students earlier, in the junior school, and put in place interventions that should decrease the need later in the senior years. The integration of data and increased communication between the COL schools should mean that successful interventions started in the Primary and Intermediate schools can be built on.

The gradual embedding of long term professional development as a normal part of the teacher's role has been very significant. The acceptance of continual evaluation and change as a natural part of teaching has taken time to normalise. The COL approach is not a change in direction from the work of the PDLG merely an expanded group leading the change. We have found that long term professional development has had a great deal more effect and produced more permanent change than the usual short term professional development.



HURDLES AND ISSUES:

TIME ALLOCATIONS

The time allocations that are offered by the COL positions are minimal. The Rangitoto College's solution of having COL Within School Teachers with no weekly time allowance is not a perfect solution. The 4 hours for the COL Specialist positions is adequate but not generous. The experience from the PDLG was that the extra 8 hour time allowance was a key factor in the success of the programme. If it were an option, a smaller number of COL appointments with a much more substantial time allocation would be preferable. Working with staff in their classrooms has been found to be the most effective approach in producing sustainable change. This requires that the mentor is available not just to observe classes but also to cover for the teacher so they can observe others and to have reflective time with them. The limited COL time allocations make the programme more similar to the sort of short term interventions that have been found to have little long term effect.

DISTORTION AFFECT FROM UNITS

The number of ministerial units that are offered through the IES initiative is considerable and can have a distorting effect within a school. Deans and Heads of Department can be working with relatively few units and little time allowance. The appointment of a significant number of staff to the equivalent of a 2 unit level needs to be carefully managed. Time and money given to top teachers to keep them in the classroom has been an issue for some time. In the case of Rangitoto College, 18 staff gained 2 units and the Facilitator and Specialists were given a time allowance on a par with the allowance of a Head of a Department of around 25 staff and considerable curriculum responsibilities. There is a need for open and honest debate about the issue of parity to quell the genuine concerns of non-COL staff.

SHARP FOCUS ON THE GOALS

The COL programme is based on clear goals that have been decided by the COL schools and accepted by the Ministry of Education. The goals are required to be measurable with yearly targets. This makes it essential that the COL schools collect appropriate data on their students performance and that this is available, shared and of a common nature. Disputes over the validity of the National Assessments need to be resolved or alternative common assessments used. All of the schools in the COL need to have a clear understanding of what data is going to be collected and how it is going to be used. The identification of Priority Learners needs to be done in a



consistent manner by all schools involved. This may require changes in what is assessed by the member schools and how it is reported to parents and so may need a good deal of negotiation.

OVERLAPPING RESPONSIBILITIES

Within Rangitoto College the work of the COL team needs to be coordinated with the work of the PDLG and the Deans at the very least. It is essential that the “yet another programme” syndrome does not turn staff off. How the PDLG and COL work together to improve student outcomes needs to be clear to staff. This is still a work in progress.

The Across Schools roles involve staff from other schools within the COL working together to share best practice and to streamline interventions. The Mid Bays COL decided that the Across School positions will have a specialised focus. This may involve them influencing what is happening in classes in other schools. The independence of our schools has long been valued with each school developing their own character and culture. Some of that independence may need to be given up in getting coordination between schools. Again this will require careful negotiation.

At the time of writing not all of the Across Schools positions had been filled, they are:

- 1 Coordinator of Secondary in school leaders and secondary pedagogy (Julia Tod, Rangitoto College)
- 2 Leader of evaluative processes (Jenny Pearson, Murrays Bay Intermediate)
- 3 Leader of literacy processes and pedagogy (Claire Fisher, Murrays Bay Primary)
- 4 Leader of mathematical processes and pedagogy
- 5 Leader of digital resourcing and applications (Chloe Barrett, Murrays Bay Intermediate)
- 6 Advisor for schools in developing academic practice

STUDENT OR PEDAGOGY FOCUS?

The work of the PDLG at Rangitoto College has been to lift the general pedagogy across the board. Teachers through their Teaching As Inquiry projects focussed on specific groups to assess the effect of changes that they make to their teaching. The focus on specific individual Priority Learners came from the Deans and then involved the teachers of those students. The COL team cross both the general pedagogy and individual student areas. The Pedagogy Specialists, Writing and Mathematics



Curriculum Specialists are working on best approaches for lifting general performance but with the focus on Priority Learners. The COL teachers are to trial and demonstrate best practice passed on from the Specialists but may have few or no Priority Learners in their classes. It would seem that an emphasis on best practice is the best approach with the focus on the individual Priority Learners coming from the Deans. However this is not exactly the intent of the COL and all involved need clarity about the varied responsibilities.

At Rangitoto the identification of Priority Learners involves the students being labelled as Priority Learners and their parents informed. This can seem to run counter to the general avoidance of labelling students due to the self-fulfilling aspect. However the response from parents and indeed from the students has been very positive, with all parties being grateful that someone is taking a personal interest.

INTEGRATING PRACTICE WITH THE COL SCHOOLS

We are still early in the COL programme and it will inevitably evolve over time. The integration of practice in the COL would seem to be a desirable outcome over the course of the programme. However Rangitoto College gets students from a range of Intermediate Schools across the North Shore of Auckland. Whatever level of coordination forms within the COL approximately half of the intake will come from Intermediates other than Murrays Bay Intermediate. Murrays Bay Intermediate will take in students from Primary Schools that are not in the COL. This dilutes the potential effectiveness of the COL unless there is more integration with other Intermediate and Primary Schools, some of whom are involved in their own COLs.

The COL programme offers a very considerable resource that can be used to support the learning of students within schools. Implementation of a programme however may require significant changes to the culture of a school in order to be successful and so that needs to be taken into account when making the decision whether or not to form a COL.

Gary Hunt