

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

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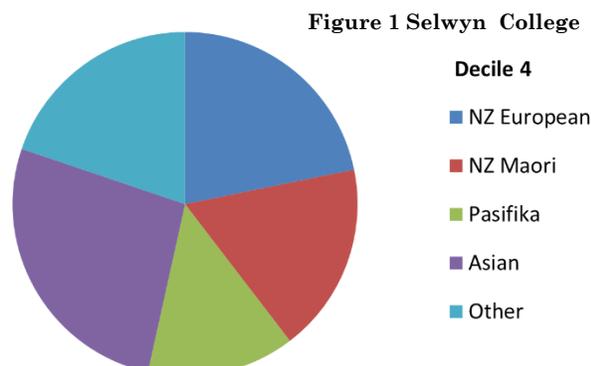
Executive Summary

What makes a multicultural school excel academically? This report summarizes the findings of a study of Academic Excellence and Community Development in fifteen Multicultural Schools. Forty seven interviews were conducted over a ten week period in the second term of 2012 at multicultural schools in seven cities; Auckland, London, Melbourne, New York, Philadelphia, Vancouver and Wellington. The purpose of the study was to visit top performing multicultural schools and investigate the factors that enabled them to succeed. The development of community both within the school and between the school and its suburban context was also considered. Each NZ school chosen for the research was between deciles 3 and 8 and was recognized for its academic excellence. The overseas schools were all top performing multicultural schools. All schools placed strong emphasis on the recruitment of quality teachers and a school wide pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. A wide range of other strategies were employed by individual schools in the pursuit of academic excellence.

CONTEXT

In New Zealand a school's ethnic makeup is linked to its decile rating.¹ Decile 1-3 schools are largely Pasifika and Maori, decile 8-10 schools are largely NZ European and Asian and decile 4-7 schools are largely multicultural.² Schools with a higher decile rating traditionally achieve greater academic success while, in contrast, the academic achievement of low decile schools is traditionally below the national average.³ However there are exceptions such as Mount Roskill Grammar School, a decile 4 school with an excellent academic record, and Dilworth, a decile 4 school whose Maori and Pasifika students (50% of students) perform above the national average for all students.⁴ Selwyn College is a decile 4 co-education multicultural secondary school situated in wealthy Kohimarama, Auckland. Selwyn has a very balanced ethnic 'wagon wheel' (see fig 1) with no single ethnic group making up more than 25% of the school population. While maintaining its multicultural flavor, Selwyn College has dramatically improved its academic standing in the last six years. For example the percentage of students

achieving NCEA Level 2 increased from 46% in 2006 to 83% in 2011.⁵ In addition the 2010 ERO report stated Selwyn students 'benefit from well led change that has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching, the learning environment and school management systems.'⁶ The November 2011 ERO report stated, 'Selwyn College has undergone a significant transformation over the past three years. It has become a school in which the academic progress and achievement of each student is now of central importance.'⁷ The transformation continued in 2012 when the school's NCEA and University Entrance results were well above the national average at every NCEA level. Professor John Hattie called the school's makeover, 'The most remarkable turn-around of any school I've seen in the last five years.'⁸



PURPOSE

The intention of this study was to examine academically successful multicultural schools throughout Auckland and other western cities to highlight factors that have enabled them to succeed. Selwyn was subjected to a similar observation to see what factors contributed to its change in academic fortune. The findings of the study could then contribute both to Selwyn's continued path to academic success and be transferrable to help other New Zealand multicultural schools succeed academically.

BACKGROUND

Selwyn is emerging from a period of decreased community confidence and poor academic results in 2006 and 2007.⁹ In May 2007 a school ground fight reported in the media brought the school into national disrepute.¹⁰ In January 2009 the Selwyn Board of Trustees were sacked by Anne Tolley, Minister of Education and a commissioner appointed. The challenge for the school leadership and commissioner was broadcast in local media,¹¹ and opinion was divided as to whether the board should have been dissolved.¹² Prior to the arrival of Sheryll Ofner, the current Principal, and myself in April 2008, the school was renowned for an emphasis on celebrating diversity and serving its wider ethnic community. In 2006 Helen Clark, Prime Minister, said of Selwyn, 'The way this school works to serve community needs is a model of what we like to see in our schools.'¹³ However the NCEA Level 1 pass rate that year was only 39%, well below the national average. In 2012 the Level 1 pass rate was 83%. Additionally, since its

development in 2008 *The Selwyn Way*, an agreed understanding of expectations for staff and students, has become deeply embedded in the fabric of the school.¹⁴

However, there is still room for improvement especially in the number of students achieving NCEA with Merit or Excellence at Levels 1, 2 and 3. This report outlines specific factors that enable multicultural schools to succeed academically. Each Auckland school chosen for the research is between deciles 3 to 8 and has consistently performed better than Selwyn according to Metro's analysis of academic results.¹⁵ Overseas schools were chosen through the recommendation of leading educationalists and my own research.

A review of strategies for teaching and learning at other schools is expected to further augment the development of student achievement at Selwyn. It is also expected that findings of other school systems, such as attendance management, will enhance building the school community at Selwyn. Finally, the exploration of strategies for community involvement will develop Selwyn's own community engagement to raise local confidence in the school.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews with staff and students of the chosen schools was the key vehicle to assess a school's strategies for academic excellence. In total fifteen schools were visited and forty seven interviews conducted during the second term of 2012.¹⁶ I also interviewed a number of leading educationalists in New Zealand and abroad to glean their perspective on how schools can develop academic excellence.¹⁷ Interviews were recorded and transcripts typed out to allow analysis and review.

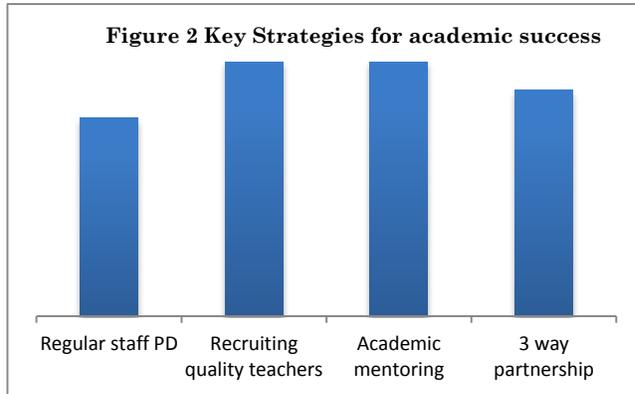
Amongst those interviewed were 6 educationalists, 14 Principals, 6 DPs, 9 HODs, 7 teachers and 5 groups of secondary students. Key questions in the study included; What strategies does the school employ for ensuring academic excellence? What makes a good quality teacher? And do teachers at the school employ any common strategies to ensure academic success?¹⁸ Through these interviews I was able to identify a number of common factors that staff and students of successful multicultural schools believed contributed to their academic excellence.

FINDINGS

School wide strategies, teacher qualities and teaching and learning.

I found teacher specific strategies employed to ensure academic excellence included weekly professional development for teachers, the recruitment of quality teachers and co-construction meetings where teachers discussed and focused on strategies to aid

targeted student groups including ‘Maori and Pasifika’ students. Specific strategies geared at students included the use of learning intention planner (LIPS) in the class room,¹⁹ academic mentoring, self - review, improving attendance, wrap around care and celebrating a culture of success. Strategies focused on parents included 3 way meetings where together teachers, parents and their child decided the student’s academic goals for the year and allowing parents access to student attendance data and homework tasks online.



The key strategies reported throughout the 15 schools visited included the recruitment of quality teachers, regular staff professional development, a common approach to teaching and learning, academic mentoring of students and the 3 way partnership built between the staff member, the student and their parents.

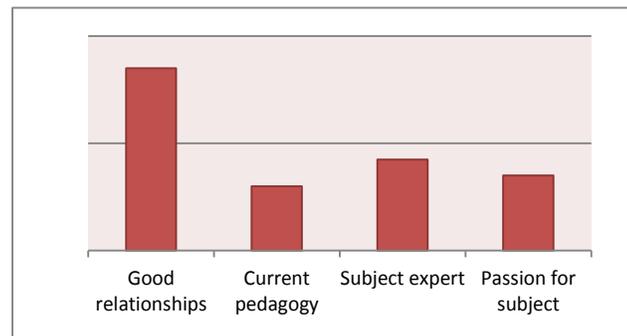
Case Study: Wren Academy, Co-education Anglican School, London.

Wren Academy is a 4 year old vibrant reconstructed Anglican school based in North West London. The library is structured like a cathedral with class rooms radiating off each of three levels drawing students to the internal study interface. The students wanted to tell their stories and were immensely proud of their school. Michael Whitworth, Principal, spoke of a clear emphasis on teaching and learning. He had been able to recruit all his own staff, many of whom he described as outstanding in their field. Together they have come up with their own curriculum, particular to Wren, a common lesson plan and a common approach to assessment. They have developed detailed schemes of learning for each department. The staff took risks and wanted to develop their professional practice. Ronnie Smiley, AP for curriculum and humanities, spoke of the art of building a lesson and the flexibility of the lesson plan. His foremost question was, ‘how will I ensure that each student reaches a level and each level is making progress.’ All planned lessons had a learning objective, a starter, differentiation for different levels of learner and scaffolding to enable students to climb levels in their understanding.

Good quality teachers:

Interviewees were united in their view of what made good quality teacher. Five attributes were utmost; teachers who had good relationships with students, who were both an expert in and passionate about their subject, who had good classroom management and who had good application of teaching and learning pedagogy. Of these attributes the quality of relationship the teacher had with the pupils was paramount. All those interviewed believed good quality teachers make a difference to academic achievement. Indigo Wolf, Director of Education, London Anglican Schools Board, said his key role was to appoint outstanding principals like Michal Whitworth who themselves 'can attract and train outstanding staff'.

Figure 3 What makes a good quality teacher?



There is a lot of negative talk in PPTA circles about charter schools.²⁰ I visited three charter schools in America because I wanted to see for myself firsthand what makes a good charter school work.²¹ Like London's Wren Academy the charter schools I visited in Philadelphia and New York had good quality teachers.

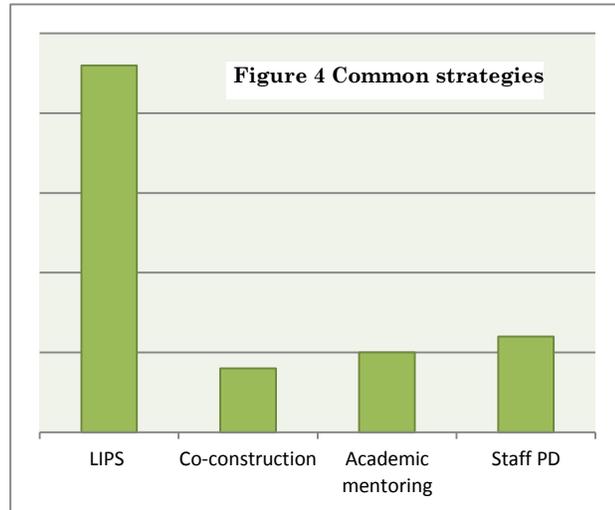
Case Study: KIPP Charter Schools.²²

KIPP Philadelphia Charter School: Eric Leslie, Principal, Philadelphia, greets his 300 middle school students by name each day. The 14 staff all share one preparation room to enhance professional development. Eric recruits staff from 'Teachers for America', an organization that attracts and trains teachers from the top 5-10% of university graduates. The KIPP mission is to develop the character, knowledge and skills of our students to prepare them for top quality high schools, college and the competitive workplace beyond. Plaques on the wall testify that this is where the KIPP graduates head.

KIPP New York College: Barbara De Pesa, Assistant Principal, New York, focuses on 'hiring really good people ... those who engage kids and those who know their content.' She is not afraid of moving incompetent staff on. In a previous job in a state school in New York Barbara assessed and evaluated staff in her mathematics department. Over a seven year period she replaced 20 who lacked competency in their subject.

Common strategies for teaching and learning:

Academically successful multicultural schools shared a number of common strategies for teaching and learning. Regular staff PD, academic mentoring, a common approach to assessment, differentiation in the classroom, teaching guides such as SOLO taxonomy, staff collaboration (including co-construction meetings), restorative practice and homework clubs were common place. By far the most widespread strategy found in schools was the use of LIPS for each and every lesson. Schools that did not currently employ the strategy said they previously had or were intending to revitalize the practice. The LIPS invariably had a do now, lesson learning intention, daily task and homework as its most important components.



Case Study: McKinnon Secondary College, Co-educational state school, Melbourne.

Pitsa Binnion, Principal, is an inspirational leader. She has led McKinnon for 4 years and formerly served as Deputy Principal. Pitsa is determined to build a culture of success with a strong sense of pride and community belonging. An annual 24 hour charity raised \$35,000 for the community in 2012. Students spoke of 'a real sense of belonging' and being 'welcomed back at the start of the year'. McKinnon is a neighborhood school full of new and aspiring immigrants eager to learn and make the most of their educational opportunity. Parents had a strong commitment and belief in the school, accepting its vision for their children and opting in. During breaks, staff were seen sitting at desks in lobbies in the hallways surrounded by students. 'The most effective teachers are those that inspire children and take them on a journey', says Pitsa. A key strategy of the school is academic mentoring – year level managers, careers advisors and key teachers all meet with students to assist them to make goals for their time at school. It is an enormous undertaking with full staff support and a goal of developing an individual learning plan for each student in year 9 to 12. Pitsa also uses every school function, email, text and website to build relationships with her supportive parental community.

When asked what was the point of difference at their school interviewees named the top four strategies as the presence of good quality staff, excellent school leadership, academic mentoring of students and a well thought out teaching and learning plan agreed to by the whole staff team. Schools without these strategies were seeking to develop them. For example one New Zealand Principal said, 'When I arrived 6 years back it seemed the only school strategy was the employment of quality teachers who had compassion for the wellbeing of the student. The other key factor was the aspirational community. There was no regular staff PD, no goal setting and no agreed learning intentions.' Remedying this was the task he set himself.²³

The value of a multicultural school community:

One of the more controversial questions of the study was 'Does the school's ethnic community enhance learning?' A number of interviewees including students, school leavers and educationalists said yes. Comments included;

'Part of academic excellence in solo taxonomy is extended abstract which is thinking outside the box, so if we listen to others who are thinking outside our own little cultural bubble then surely that enhances academic excellence,'²⁴

'Students use personal experience for learning and they bring those experiences into the classroom. Students are learning from each other – when one student is talking the others are listening and learning,'²⁵

'At Roskill people bring different experiences to the table and if they can get their experiences out in a meaningful way then others can learn from it and you have a richer learning environment as a result,'²⁶

'At Avondale I saw this best when the hill people (Titirangi students leaving Green Bay) came in. Nothing else had changed at school but the white high decile kids had a hugely positive influence on the local students – they always did their homework, and this both lifted their game and the behaviour of the incumbents'.²⁷

These sentiments were echoed by Dennis Fahey, Principal, Marcellin College, who said immigrants from the Philippines gave his school an academic edge. Likewise a Maori student at MRGS said ethnic diversity 'helped him to lift his own game because of the competition from Asian and Indian students'. Similarly a group of students at Wren said '...different ethnic groups have different views and we can help each other / we can learn from each other / we can see things from different angles'.

Many other interviewees thought the multicultural nature of their ethnic community was not significant for academic excellence. However, most felt multicultural schools prepared the students well for life after school or enabled them to get along with those of different backgrounds than themselves. For example a multicultural school;

'...helps prepare students for life in the real world',

'...sets a precedent for what you do outside of school and how you interact with strangers',

'...enhances student's enjoyments of each other's successes' and

'...helps students to be more tolerant and well rounded'.

One educationalist said his son went to a multicultural school in Auckland and found subsequently he had an advantage in job applications over people who had been to mono cultural schools. The young graduate said his multicultural school experience enabled him to feel more comfortable working with a greater range of people and he felt more knowledgeable about working in groups.

School values, student attendance, goal setting and community involvement.

Academic excellence is best achieved in a settled and holistic context where students know both their boundaries and are encouraged to succeed. During the interviews I also asked about the value system held by the school, including guidelines for attendance, and the cohesiveness of the staff team in living those values. The intervention at Selwyn College (a commissioner) over the period 2008 to 2011 was in part to ensure the embedding of improvements in the quality of education and to promote productive community engagement.

Questions such as Does the school have an agreed set of values? And does student attendance impact achievement? were universally answered in the affirmative.

School Values:

'Respect' was often the top, or at least the most common, value named by interviewees. A school wide value system worked best when the whole school community had a hand in its formation. In many schools I visited staff and students alike had a say in what the common school values should be. Many schools also invited the wider community and in particular parents to have their say. Values were often updated every few years to keep them fresh and relevant. A value system needed to be simply put in a series of easily remembered sayings that outlined clear expectations of students and staff. It worked best when rigorously upheld by staff and used in conjunction with a reward schemes. For example public commendations or certificates for achieving academic

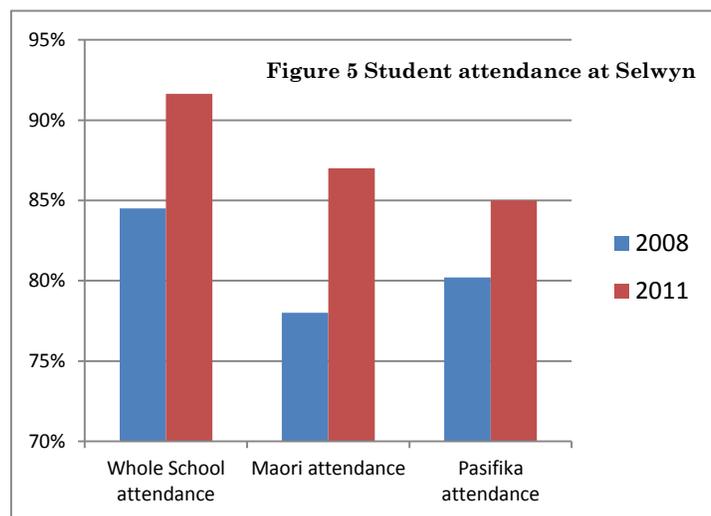
goals, attaining attendance targets or excellent work in the classroom. The significance of a cooperatively developed value system is appreciated by staff and students alike. 'The school has a settled tone,' said a student from Selwyn. 'We need consistency across and within departments,' agreed a senior Selwyn staff member, 'if the students know the rules they are more settled.' Sheryll Ofner described the Selwyn Way as 'our shared understanding of how to behave... its monitoring is part of the close relationship and putting our arms around the kids – it is getting to know the student well.'

Case Study: Marcellin College, Co-education Catholic School, Auckland.

Dennis Fahey, Principal, has a letter from the MOE saying Marcellin shows what can be done by a whanau school and its community. Dennis, who teaches a class himself, ensures some of his best staff teach the most academically challenged students in the smallest classes. He attributes this strategy with the excellent academic results for Maori and Pasifika students that are well above the national average. University students are brought in to help with one on one mentoring and teachers are often in the classroom at break surrounded by pupils talking about the lesson or sport in the weekend. Core values are central at Marcellin; parents, teachers and pupils renew them every 3 to 4 years. Together they have condensed the values to 6 simple statements of what the school is about. Dennis tells the story of a pupil who told an ERO visitor, 'This is the way you behave at Marcellin.' The student's sincerity underlined the fact that at Marcellin students had brought into the agreed code of conduct.

Student attendance:

Attendance was seen to impact achievement in all 47 interviews. At Selwyn whole school attendance improved from 84% to 92% over the period 2008 to 2011.²⁸ Of more significance was the numbers of intermittent absences (missing classes during the day) dropped from 8% to 2.5% over the same period. As already noted achievement at Selwyn improved over the same time period. Typically schools followed up on absence by phone call, text, email and letter. Many schools had an attendance officer and attendance awards to recognize and celebrate full attendance at school. KIPP schools



boast a 98% attendance record compared to 80% average in American state schools. It helps when there is one entrance and the doors are locked at 9am! Attendance is even higher at Dilworth school in Auckland.

Case Study: Dilworth, independent full boarding school for boys, Auckland.

'I know exactly what is going to happen tomorrow,' a young student told Donald McLean, Principal, when he asked the lad why he had become so settled since his arrival at Dilworth. The school provides stability and wrap around care.

Attendance is 100% as the boys, who all live on site, are a captive audience. This is one of the factors, says Donald, which catapults Dilworth to the top echelon in terms of Maori and Pasifika achievement.

Mentoring and goal setting:

A key strategy already mentioned is mentoring and goal setting. A large number of schools visited utilized some sort of academic mentoring program. Key features include helping students to think about their future direction and set academic goals, holding students accountable for those goals, giving feedback and feed forward and having one on one conversations with staff involving positive talk about achievement. Aaron O'Brien, history teacher at Selwyn says the 'main thing is the language of success' which involves monitoring a student's progress through formative assessment.

Case Study: Massey High School, Co-educational state school, Auckland.

In 2007 Bruce Ritchie, Principal, introduced academic counselling to staff and students at Massey. There was an immediate improvement in the school's academic results (5% in one year). The mentoring strategy includes two days where the entire school stops teaching to allow time for 3 way partnership conversations between the mentor teacher, the student and their parents. This is followed during the year by deans mentoring students in small groups. Deputy Principal Samantha Smith plays a vital role in providing staff with achievement data for target setting of academic goals.

The 2012 ERO report stated Selwyn College '...serves its community well'.²⁹ Given the earlier history this is a significant step in rebuilding a positive relationship between the school and its community. Several other interviewees spoke of a long history of excellent collaboration between the school and its community and in particular supportive parents. One Auckland Principal named the school's 'parent action group' as key in the schools' development.³⁰ The parents meet monthly in the staff room with

senior management and BOT support and are actively engaged in supporting the college in events such as a BBQ for new parents or fundraising events.

Other points of difference promoting academic success.

Amongst the outliers in promoting academic excellence several are worthy of a mention. To ‘celebrate accomplishment and good citizenship’ helps student to lift their effort and stay focused on success, said Jim Higgins, of his Philadelphia charter school. Roger Moses, Headmaster of decile 10 Wellington College, says his team has ‘created a culture of expectation where boys see academic success as something of value.’³¹ Kevin Land of Gladstone High School, Vancouver has developed a leadership development program that sees, amongst other initiatives, year 10 students returning to their primary schools to assist year 7 and 8 students with reading and numeracy. This also serves as an effective student recruitment tool in a competitive market.

Class size:

Class size is a controversial issue. The government backed down from announced changes to increase class size in June 2012 after mounting teacher and public pressure.³² However while education experts argue the impact of reduced class size is not one of the largest factors in raising achievement the majority of people interviewed thought smaller was good, but not too small. You need a critical mass of students to enable interactions in the classroom. Similarly mixed ability classes work better if the numbers are in the low to mid 20s.³³ For students with learning difficulties some teachers think keeping class size under 20 is a key strategy to help them achieve.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS³⁴

Good quality teachers:

This study has underlined unanimity amongst teachers, students and educationalists in the attributes of good quality teachers. Good quality teachers have excellent relationships with students and are able to get reluctant learners to learn. Good quality teachers have a passion for their subject and are experts in their field. There was also widespread agreement amongst those interviewed that good quality teachers are needed for a school to excel academically. Likewise interviewees agreed excellent school leadership is needed to attract and appoint quality teachers.

Other strategies and the ‘key’ common approach:

In addition to the importance of good quality teachers this study has highlighted that there are a wide range of strategies that schools employ to ensure academic excellence. These include professional development for staff, student mentoring by staff, goal

setting for both the school and individual students, the use of LIPS, an agreed set of values including an emphasis on student attendance and teachers working in partnership with both students and their caregivers. The study suggests academic excellence comes when a school picks a few of these strategies and works with them. More importantly the study serves to emphasize that in the pursuit of academic excellence it is a school wide approach that everyone 'buys into' which produces the best results. Finally, the findings of the study suggest that multicultural schools have an advantage in collaborative learning and community development.

Therefore the key learnings of the study were as follows:

1. Good teachers are essential and their qualities are clear: excellent relationships with students and a passion for and knowledge of their subject.
2. Schools employ different strategies to ensure academic excellence.
3. A school wide approach that everyone 'buys into' produces the best results.

Implications for Selwyn College:

The Selwyn College leadership team is committed to seeing both an emphasis on student achievement and community development. This report has sought to enhance this forward momentum. Today Selwyn College does a number of things well and has initiated many of the strategies for academic excellence this study has identified in other schools. 'A culture of learning for both teachers and students now characterises the school, which has a settled purposeful tone', notes the 2011 ERO report.³⁵ A potential risk is if the leadership team starts too many new initiatives the school may struggle to maintain them all. This may cause the current forward momentum to stall.

Sheryll Ofner introduced regular staff PD and a school wide approach to teaching and learning, including the use of LIPS, shortly after her arrival in 2008. Both strategies were aimed at improving the quality of teaching in the classroom. Since then the introduction of the vertical house system in 2009 has allowed teachers in each house to be assigned mentor groups of 15 to 17 students. The intention is to improve academic mentoring and pastoral oversight of the students.

Academic and pastoral mentoring by staff is now a key strategy to enable Selwyn College students achieve academic excellence. Mentoring of students by teachers is part of the Selwyn College 2012 Development Plan alongside effective pedagogical practices such as the use of LIPS to enhance student achievement. As Rochelle Ulrich, Learning Area Leader, puts it 'mentors have a responsibility to hold students accountable for their goals and to help them be responsible for their own learning.' Ofner agrees adding

one on one conversations are invaluable and help build positive relationship between teachers and students. However, as Ulrich notes, Selwyn College still needs consistency in the approach of teachers across and within departments to ensure our school values, so important to effective mentoring, are universally upheld. A recent mentoring review indicates while 90% of staff have monthly one on one conversations with students and regularly check on student absences only 70% talk about the Selwyn Way each week.

Therefore to help Selwyn College teachers mentor effectively we also need to hold them individually accountable. The Heads of Houses along with the Senior Leadership team have come up with two goals to aid effective mentoring that will become part of the staff appraisal portfolio.³⁶ The clear focus is to raise the quality of all Selwyn College teachers so every student is supported and encouraged in their learning journey.

¹ The Education Review Office states in a foot note in every school's ERO report that a school deciles range from one to ten. Decile one schools draw their students from low socioeconomic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives.

² Richard Thornton, Deputy Chief Executive, Qualifications, NZQA, Wellington, gave me pie charts of the ethnic makeup of New Zealand secondary schools, April 2012.

³ 'Best Schools in Auckland', Metro (July-August, 2011), pp. 43-57, Metro (July-August, 2012), pp. 42-52, and Metro (July-August, 2013), pp. 44- 53; 'How your child's school is performing', The New Zealand Herald, Monday, April 18, 2011, A10; 'Exam stats show which school are doing best', The New Zealand Herald, Monday, November 12, 2012, p. A14; 'New schools will help NZ to hit pass mark, says Parata', The New Zealand Herald, Tuesday, May 21, 2013, A15.

⁴ See articles in footnote 3 for evidence. Interestingly Tapu Misa, 'Teachers Deserve our Trust,' NZ Herald, 16 April 2012, points out Finland has little achievement gap between its schools but all are homologous.

⁵ Selwyn College NCEA results over the period 2006 to 2012 and student successes in 2012 are outlined in 'Our Significant Transformation,' a school brochure developed for the local community.

⁶ <http://ero.govt.nz/index.php/Early...-Reports/School-Reports/Selwyn-College-13-01-2010>

⁷ <http://ero.govt.nz/index.php/Earl...-Reports/Selwyn-College-21-11-2011>.

⁸ <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetoonoon/audio/2525001/the-govt's-go-to-education-expert-sets-the-record-straight>.

⁹ 'Saving Selwyn', Donna Chisholm, Metro (July August 2011), p58-62.

¹⁰ 'Police race to fight at school', The New Zealand Herald, Wednesday, May 2, 2007, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10437293.

¹¹ 'Troubled school set to show its makeover', NZ Herald, Thursday, 22 January 2009, p A15; 'Six months to Shape Up', Herald on Sunday, 25 January 2009, p. 36.

¹² 'Should the Selwyn College board have been dissolved by the Government?' http://www.nzherald.co.nz/your-views/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501154&objectid=10552724.

¹³ 'Saving Selwyn', Chisholm, p58.

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- ¹⁴ My initial tasks as Deputy Principal included oversight of student welfare and relationships, establishment of a House system, overseeing student mentoring and leadership development and establishing a student office (including the attendance officer).
- ¹⁵ "The Best Schools in Auckland", Simon Wilson, Metro (July August 2011), p44-57.
- ¹⁶ See Appendix 1 for a list of school visited and educationalists interviewed.
- ¹⁷ My intention was to glean information in conversation rather than through academic reading.
- ¹⁸ See Appendix 2 for a list of interview questions.
- ¹⁹ After Lorraine Monroe, 'Nothing's Impossible: Leadership lessons from inside and outside the classroom,' (Public Affairs: New York, 1997), pp. 120-121 etc.
- ²⁰ For example articles the PPTA News, 'Charter schools – a cheap and mean step back', Vol. 33. No 1, February 2012, and 'NZ already has what US charter schools offer', Vol. 33. No 2, March 2012.
- ²¹ I learnt about KIPP Charter schools through Malcolm Gladwell, 'Outliers: The story of Success,' (Penguin Books: New York, 2008), pp. 250 – 269.
- ²² KIPP stand for Knowledge is Power Program.
- ²³ Greg Watson, Principal, said a key feature of Mount Roskill Grammar School's success is its aspirational community.
- ²⁴ *Callum Blackmore, student, Selwyn College.*
- ²⁵ *Ron Smiley, Assistant Principal, Wren Academy.*
- ²⁶ *Michael Lorentz, Deputy Principal, MRGS.*
- ²⁷ *Richard Thornton, Deputy Chief Executive, NZQA.*
- ²⁸ Over the same time period Maori attendance improved from 78% to 85% and Pasifika from 80% to 89%.
- ²⁹ <http://ero.govt.nz/index.php/Earl...-Reports/Selwyn-College-21-11-2011>.
- ³⁰ Ken Havill, Principal, Western Springs College.
- ³¹ I visited Wellington College as it has an outstanding record of academic success amongst boys.
- ³² 'Class size has little effect, says experts,' Sunday Start Times, 24 October 2010; 'Treasury's Advice on Lifting Student Achievement in New Zealand: Evidence Brief,' The Treasury, March 2012; 'Smaller School Classes Leads to Better Student Outcomes,' Science Daily, 6 March 2012; 'Bigger class sizes announced,' <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/budget-2012/6930082/Bigger-class-sizes-announced>; accessed, 16 May 2012; 'Small Class-Size Back Down 'to Haunt National', <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/7073804/class-size-backdown-to-haunt-national>, 10 June 2012; and "The effects of class assize on teach and learning', Letter to Hon Hekia Parata, Minister of Education, from John O'Neil, Professor of Teacher Education, College of Education, Massey University.
- ³³ John O'Neil, Letter to Hekia Parata, p14, argues priority groups of learners would benefit if teacher pupil ratios were reduced in lower secondary schools.
- ³⁴ The findings of this research were presented to staff at Selwyn College as part of an ongoing weekly Professional Development Program. They were also presented to the Tamaki Principals' Association and will be made available to all schools and educationalists visited during the research.
- ³⁵ <http://ero.govt.nz/index.php/Earl...-Reports/Selwyn-College-21-11-2011>.
- ³⁶ Firstly professional development to enable mentors to sharpen the quality of their learning conversations with students and parents and secondly mentors to encourage each student to get involved in at least one co-curricular activity.

Appendix 1: Schools and Educationalists Visited.

Schools Visited:

Auckland

Dilworth School, Donald MacLean, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal.

Marcellin College, Denis Fahey, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal.

Massey High School, Bruce Ritchie, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal and deputy principal.

Mount Roskill Grammar School, Greg Watson, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal, deputy principal, curriculum leader, teacher and students.

Selwyn College, Sheryll Ofner Principal.

Interviewed: Principal, curriculum leaders, teachers and students.

Western Springs College, Ken Havill, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal, deputy principal, curriculum leader, teacher and students.

London

Wren Academy, Michael Whitworth, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal, deputy principal, curriculum leader, teacher and students.

Melbourne

McKinnon High School, Pitsa Binnon, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal, deputy principal, curriculum leader, teacher and students.

New York

KIPP New York College Prep, Natalie Webb, Principal.

Interviewed: Deputy Principal, curriculum leaders and teachers.

Philadelphia

Multi-Cultural Academy Charter School, James Higgins, Executive Director.

Interviewed: Executive Director and instruction coach.

KIPP Philadelphia Charter School (Middle School), Eric Leslie, School Leader.

Interviewed: School Leader.

Vancouver

Britannia Secondary School, Beverly Seed, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal and curriculum leader.

Gladstone High School, Kevin Land, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal.

Wellington

Wellington College, Roger Moses, Headmaster.

Interviewed: Headmaster and deputy principal.

Wellington High School, Nigel Hanton, Principal.

Interviewed: Principal, deputy principal, curriculum leader and teacher.

Educationalists interviewed:

Ken Blaiklock, Senior Lecturer Education, Unitec, Auckland.

John Hattie, Professor of Education, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Ken Rapson, Director Schools Partnership Office, Auckland University, Auckland.

Dianne Scouller, Head of School of Education, Laidlaw College, Auckland.

Richard Thornton, Deputy Chief Executive, Qualifications, NZQA, Wellington.

Indigo Woolf, Acting Director of Education, London Diocesan Board for Schools, London.

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. What key strategies does the school employ for ensuring academic excellence and community development (internal / external)?
2. What makes a good quality teacher? Do you have some at?
3. Do teachers at the school employ any common strategies? (LIPS, literacy plans, school wide procedures, outside of classroom?)
4. Does class size matter? How does it impact on student achievement?
5. Do students / the school set academic goals and how are they monitored?
6. Does the school have an agreed set of values / expectations for student behaviour? How central to the life of the school is it? And how is it monitored?
7. Does the school place any importance on student attendance (e.g. is lateness an issue?) How is attendance monitored and encouraged?
8. Does the diverse ethnic community of the school enhance student learning (i.e. the different cultural groups)? How does the school build community?
9. What importance does the school place on parent / caregiver engagement and liaison?
10. What is the point of difference for your school?