



## **Principals Sabbatical Term 3 2015**

### **Engagement of Whanau & Students in a Learning Change Network**

*“Whakatau matauranga mo nga tamariki hei ara ki te ao”*

*To provide for our children an education that will prepare them for life*

## Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank first and foremost the Pukepoto School Board of Trustees for supporting my application for sabbatical leave.

I also acknowledge my teaching staff, support staff and especially my Senior teacher who fulfilled the Principals role efficiently and successfully during my school absence.

I would also like to acknowledge the Far North Principals and school leaders associated with the Muriwhenua Learning Change Network who willingly shared their thoughts and ideas around whanau engagement, student voice and collaboration within and across schools.

Lastly, many thanks to the Ministry of Education and Teach NZ for making this opportunity available to myself and other Principals to examine a key area of practice and management to promote and progress student achievement in our kura and community.

## Purpose

The purpose of this sabbatical was to investigate the level of participation of whanau in student learning and how the potential use of digital technologies can support student /whanau engagement to achieve better learning outcomes.

## Executive Summary

Parents families and whanau want their children to feel they belong at school and experience success. They want to be involved in their child's learning—to understand what is expected and to know how they can contribute. This involvement contributes to each child's learning and success and is vital for children at risk of not achieving.

## Background & Rationale

The shift towards greater collaboration and engagement of whanau is occurring in response to evidence that shows that there are significant disparities in learner achievement in the New Zealand system. Too many learners are not being supported to achieve the outcomes in school that allow them to continue learning and earning in an increasingly knowledge based economy. Maori learners, Pasifika learners, learners with special educational needs and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to be underserved by the system.

Pukepoto School is a decile 1 school with 96% Maori roll and is a cluster school with the Muriwhenua Learning Change Network. The Learning Change Network is defined as a group of schools/kura/communities working together to accelerate student achievement in a culturally responsive way recognizing the diversity of 21st century learning.

There are four important ideas that need to be integrated by the school leader with our participation with the LCN cluster. The first two ideas are task focused around **working together** and **improving practice** that will benefit student learning. The other two imperatives of **cultural responsiveness** and integrating **new technologies** are intended to ensure that learners feel supported and good about themselves and are also excited about their learning in authentic contexts.

## Methodology

My programme was based around three focus areas

1. Student Agency
2. Collaborative and collegial co-construction within and across schools
3. Developing learning relationships with whanau.

Each key area will involve a **Probe Survey**

**Probe Survey 1:-** "Making Changes" student survey, learning maps

**Probe Survey 2:-** Survey for teachers focus on current priority learners & own teaching practice

**Probe Survey 3:-** Preparing to plan Reflective Survey

**Probe Survey 4:-** Understanding the Achievement Challenge

**Probe Survey 5:-** Parent/Whanau Involvement

Each survey will be collated and analysed and reported to the BOT, a staff, students, other schools and to our Parent Community at school hui

Visit other cluster school leaders to share trends and patterns- learn what to change-plan change-implement change

Visit Manaiakalani Learning Change Network (Point England School)

Meet with School ICT technician-discuss Digital Tools appropriate to our school's needs

Investigate funding avenues for purchasing/leasing options for digital tools for students

Facilitate staff meetings/BOT meeting/Parent around the action plan & follow up reporting on target group priority learners

Review charter 2015 Annual Plan to incorporate digital school environment needs and curriculum needs for 2016

Reflect and identify leaderships practices that promote positive relationships with whanau

Identify articles /literature which will support the planning and implementation of the programme

## Summary of Findings

At Pukepoto School there is a sharp focus on achievement challenge opportunity in relation to Maori learners and learners with special needs.

As a leader the most important part of the leadership role is to grow the LCN from inside – the - classroom out where student voice and adult/learner partnerships are fundamental.

Through our schoolwide PLD for 2015 with Leadership and Assessment all teachers and 2 Board members were part of the change team along with the MOE facilitator. The team were able to identify the change mechanisms that were to be utilized by our school community to address the identified priority learner achievement challenge.

Strengthened use of data is evident to identify learner teacher, and leader needs. Evaluative probes were undertaken on a capability matrix:

1. Cultural & Linguistic Responsiveness
2. Educationally Powerful Connections with Parents ,Families,& whanau
3. Instructional Capability
4. Evaluative Capability
5. Organisational Capability

### Change Dimensions

1. Leadership
2. Systems
3. Processes
4. Knowledge & Skills

### Reflections

- Focused attention for all students
- Attention required in developing understanding of teaching as inquiry
- BOT understanding of effective pedagogy, teaching as inquiry National Standards
- Focusing on target student has been immensely valuable
- Consistent reflective practice enables positive changes to be made
- Systems are developing but still some attention is required so that all school systems are clear and well structured
- Strong leadership development will support the continuation of positive changes in student achievement.
- Teachers are much more aware of their target students and the critical need for close tracking of their progress

- Teachers are also more aware of tracking their own practice and identifying the changes they need to make in order to better address the needs of their target students
- Increased positive leadership action has occurred

### **Raising Student Achievement of Target Students through engaging of teaching as inquiry**

- Regular self- reflection by all staff
- Identify own professional needs (linked to appraisal)
- Goal setting and relevant PLD
- Researching appropriate teaching strategies
- Videoing each other's practice followed by professional critiquing
- Continuing to use PLC
- Close scrutiny of target students
- Consistent tracking of target students
- Close work with appropriate Lis and SCs for target students
- Using WEAP with target student families

### **Collecting accurate reliable and valid student achievement data**

- Select appropriate assessment tools after thorough evaluation of those being used currently
- Create an appropriate assessment schedule
- Accurate OTJ decision- making – triangulated data
- Create a kit of assessment tools for each level

### **Analysing and moderating student achievement**

- Use PaCT
- Use e-asTTle
- Thorough internal moderation
- Engage in external moderation
- Participation in Far North COL
- Use external expertise

### **Using collected student achievement information to plan appropriate student learning programmes**

- Early identification of student needs

- Using different types of programmes to better address student needs (TKI)
- Regular use of formative assessment

**School Leadership management and governance are executed with all tasks being completed in a timely manner**

- Open transparent communication
- Clear agenda for staff meetings
- Appropriate and manageable distribution of leadership tasks
- Clear agenda for staff meetings
- Minutes recorded for a staff meetings

# Ref: Evaluation Plan for Learning and Change Networks

Prepared by Helen Timperley and Lorna Earl

Page 3:

## LCNetworks Conceptual Model

The evaluation process is guided by the following Conceptual Model, which has been derived from LCNetwork documentation and interviews with LCNetwork Programme leaders.

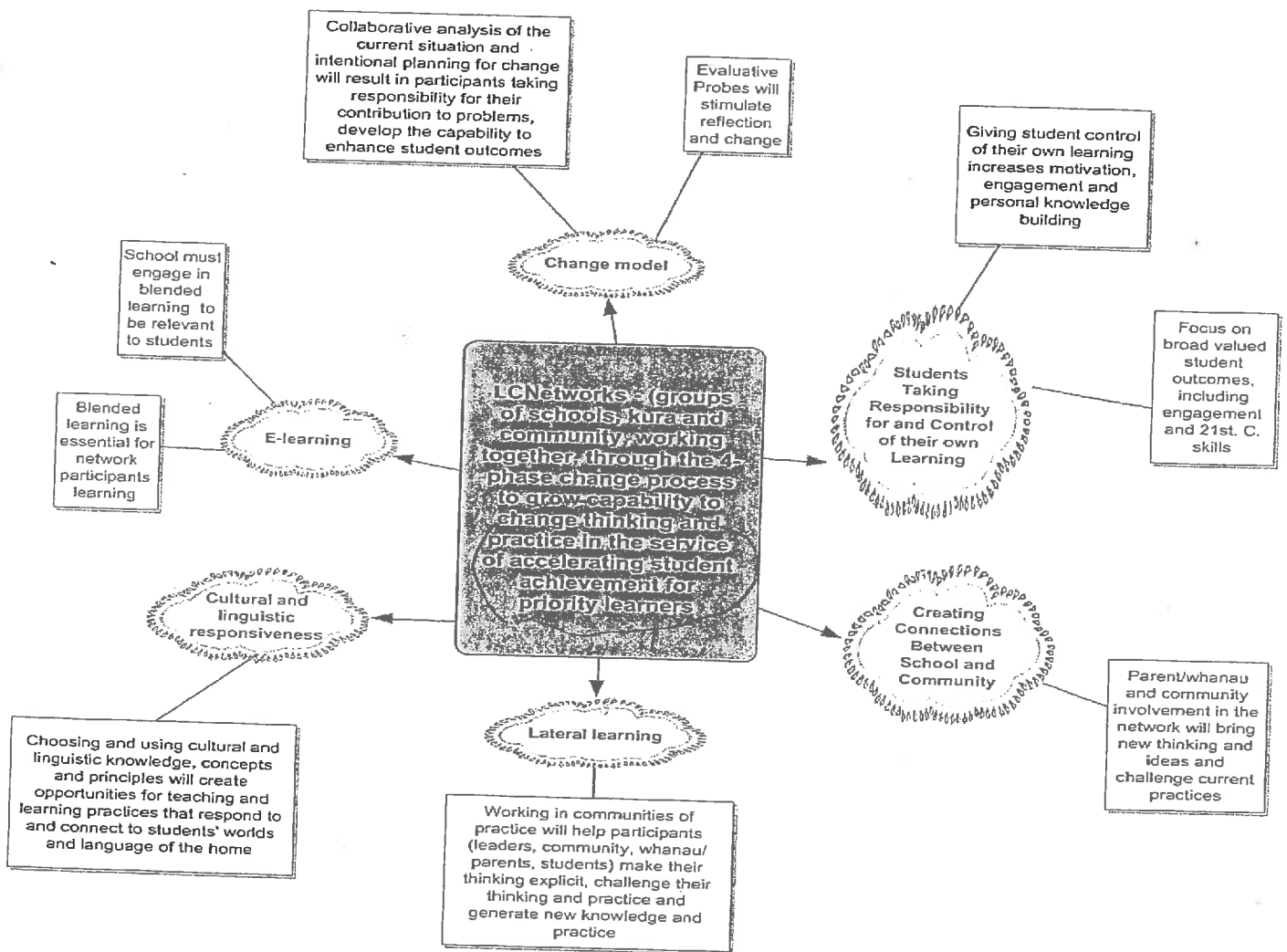


Figure 1

Conceptual Model Underpinning the Evaluation Framework

## Definitions of Dimensions in the Conceptual Model

In order to develop data collection instruments and analysis protocols each of the dimensions in the conceptual model (Figure 1) needed to be defined. We have drawn on a range of sources to do this and the definitions follow.

## **Benefits of the Sabbatical**

### **Issues Important to the school**

A high percentage,(95%) of Maori students in a low decile school. Many families have limited access to a computer technology limited learning resources and limited quality learning experience outside of school. The parents have a strong desire for their children to succeed but they need guidance and support to compliment the student's school learning at home. 90% of our students live 10kms or more away from school and many do not have transport or financial resources to visit the school on a regular basis.

### **Schools Strategic Plan**

Our school Charter strongly reflects our priority to engage and consult with our school/parent community and local iwi. Raising student achievement and improving progress of priority target groups, teacher practice, pedagogy and staff PLD are priorities for 2015 and 2016. Strengthening our home school partnerships is pivotal to meeting our school charter goals and student achievement targets.

### **Personal Professional Development**

This sabbatical enabled me to initiate and implement positive strategies and actions to promote better learning outcomes for students. To achieve this I needed to continually reflect on my practice, collaborate with school and professional leaders and implement appropriate learning change within my school for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This was an opportunity for me to refine and strengthen my leadership skills by developing strong partnerships within the school across the school and between schools



# Opportunities for community engagement

## Whanau Day Week 8 in Term Three

- Preparing kai for the whanau day
- Performing for the whanau
- Inviting local speakers
- Hand on learning experience



## Summary of Findings

At Pukepoto School there is a sharp focus on achievement challenge opportunity in relation to Maori learners and learners with special needs. The Muriwhenua Learning Change Network has 3 focus areas

1. Student agency
2. Collaborative and collegial co- construction within and across schools
3. Developing learning relationships with whanau

Raising student achievement and accelerating Maori student progress and achievement are the key challenges. Maori students are not achieving as well as students nationally in relation to the National Standards.

As a leader the most important part of the leadership role is to grow the LCN from inside – the - classroom out where student voice and adult/learner partnerships are fundamental.

Through our schoolwide PLD for 2015 with Leadership and Assessment all teachers and 2 Board members were part of the change team along with the MOE facilitator. The team were able to identify the change mechanisms that were to be utilized by our school community to address the identified priority learner achievement challenge.

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### **Whanau Engagement**

Findings from Parent/Whanau surveys/ interviews/ teacher interviews

#### **Forming partnerships with parents and students to share information about learning, progress and the school**

A range of methods are used to communicate and share important information between families /whanau and the school.

Parents are informed about school programmes

Parents and teachers share ways they can support the child's learning

School reports to parents about their children are timely and clearly explain progress and achievement and how the parent and child can contribute to future improvements.

Parents receive reports on progress of their children that are specific in relation to National Standards and next steps for learning.

The school communicates effectively with parents concerning particular education needs including special education and gifted and intelligent students.

### **Sources of Evidence**

School charter, handbook for new students and parents, home – school communication notebooks, school and class newsletters, surveys and interviews, students portfolios, parent/student/teacher 3 way interviews,

### **Engaging parents and whanau**

The community identifies with the school and our vision

Parents feel they are in a partnership with the school to support their child's learning

The school has effective processes for engaging parents when they are enrolled

School documentation shows how parents will be partners in their child's schooling

Parents actively participate in the school in a variety of ways

Parents needs are considered when arranging times/venues for meetings

People in the community feel they are listened to and valued

Data is monitored and analysed on parent involvement, such as parent- teacher meetings, parent help

### **Sources of evidence**

Collated and analysed surveys of staff, students and parents

Meetings and discussions

Information about parent attendance at school events

Documentation passed on to receiving schools

Student profiles

### **Using information in making decisions**

The views and opinions from the community are considered , and, where appropriate are acted upon

Concerns from parents are responded to

The process for complaints is clear, regularly publicized and used effectively

### **Sources of evidence**

Board minutes, evidence about how community views are incorporated into the charter, strategic plan and other documents, records of complaints and actions, agenda ,notices and minutes of meetings

## **IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS**

Research indicates that when schools develop educationally powerful connections with whanau and their Maori communities there is potential to significantly improve learning outcomes for Maori students.

At Pukepoto School we presently have a high level of parent/whanau involvement but a low – medium level of engagement. Our parent community give huge support to school events e.g sports days ,fundraising events, whanau hapu days, kapa haka but their engagement with their children’s learning is at the low to medium level

Although we have parent meet teacher evenings and 3 way parent/student/ teacher interviews to talk about student achievement and progress, there are strategies which we are implementing to strengthen parent/whanau learning - centered relationships.

At school those relationships are between teachers and students, and students and students. But we must consider the “whole child” who spends most of their life outside school. Every child brings valuable life experiences to school and as teachers we must tap into these and utilize these in student learning.

We want to improve our home and school partnership, because that is a critical opportunity for the mutual support of all children’s learning. Encouraging community/whanau involvement is one of the key goals for the Learning Change Network.

## **REFERENCES**

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Educationally Powerful Connections with Parents and Whanau – Education Review Office  
Nov. 2015

Focus on Engaging Parents and Whanau – SET Research for Teachers No.3 2015

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Muriwhenua Learning Change Network – Terms of Reference Document