

How leadership organisation and practices in dual medium schools support improved outcomes for students and teachers.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the Board of Trustees of Maungatapu School for supporting my term of sabbatical leave which has provided a much valued opportunity to step outside of my own school to visit other dual medium schools and to speak with other principals and staff. I wish also to acknowledge my own leadership team and staff who deputised for me with utmost professionalism during my term of absence.

Dual medium schools that I visited, have their own unique qualities and their own journeys travelled towards establishing a dual medium provision for teaching and learning. It was refreshing, affirming and humbling to speak with leaders and staff, who in many instances, have faced and continue to face, barriers and obstacles associated with resourcing, staffing and growing their dual medium dimensions. Each school expressed pride in their dual medium status and I saw and heard evidence of tremendous energy and commitment from all stakeholders continuously seeking ways to strengthen and develop systems and organisation to support improved outcomes for students and teachers in both rumaki and auraki.

Outline of my inquiry

As Principal of Maungatapu School for 15 years, I have experienced many challenges in ensuring that both rumaki and auraki contexts for learning and teaching have had access to consistent and effective opportunities for professional learning and leadership. In particular, it has been challenging to provide strength through leadership to support our Maori students to learn, achieve and succeed as Maori.

The school had always operated a traditional leadership structure of Principal, DP, AP, and team leaders. Historically, leadership within our long established rumaki included full time teaching responsibilities. The leadership role also encompassed maintaining connectivity with families, whanau and the wider community. This proved to be a daunting and challenging situation due to the complex demands of the combined teaching and leadership role in an environment with limited resources and external supports for second language learners. Following this model of leadership for our rumaki, frequently resulted in lead teacher burnout with personnel having very little time to support the school's intention to develop its capability to improve outcomes for Maori students.

As well as a rumaki, Maungatapu School has a large number of Maori learners within auraki, and a need to guide and support these learners towards achieving to their full potential, was identified as an aspect of educational leadership capability that needed to be considered. In 2014, I presented a proposal to the board of trustees to consider, in the form of a new leadership position for the school, someone who could inspire teaching, learning and educational achievement for all of our learners, with an emphasis on our Maori learners in both rumaki and auraki. At the time, this position was titled, "Curriculum leader, Maori student achievement".

The key requirements for this role included the ability to:

- Work with BOT, whanau, community and school leadership to foster and maintain an inclusive learning culture and systems that support Maori learners to achieve success.
- Build staff capability in the development of teaching and learning practices that maximise learning opportunities and success for Maori learners.
- Assist to strengthen and support school wide capability in teaching and learning in te reo Maori and developing awareness and understanding of tikanga.
- Assist the school to develop strong whanau and community partnerships to achieve desired school and community goals.

The idea for this new leadership position was received very favourably by the board and community. In late 2014, our Curriculum leader – Maori student achievement, was appointed. The position is seen as being unique within our community and has been retitled Pou Arataki, which is a more accurate title befitting the mana and purpose of the position. Although it is still early days and the roles and responsibilities for the Pou Arataki position are still evolving, I feel confident that this is a pathway that is strengthening leadership, teaching capability, and interaction with our whanau and wider school community.

Having opportunities to meet with Principals and leaders to consider their leadership structures and organisation, during my sabbatical leave, will provide knowledge of alternative pathways and solutions that will assist our school to strengthen and sustain the Pou Arataki leadership role.

Key findings

Leadership structures with associated roles and responsibilities vary from school to school. Most tend to follow a structure of Principal and DP/ AP with a team leader or teacher representative to assist with liaison between community, kaumatua and school. There is acknowledgement of the value in having staff fluent in te reo Maori present within the school. An example was shared by a Principal who discovered a mainstream teacher was a fluent speaker of Maori. Arrangements were made for this teacher to make the transition to teach in the rumaki. Succession planning has supported the notion of this teacher applying for a study leave to support her knowledge of teaching second language learners within an immersion context. An alternative direction has been adopted to enable rumaki leadership to be enacted through various layers that includes not only school leaders but kaumatua, kaiawhina, whanau members, and partners of teachers and school staff. This serves to ensure that decisions made and directions followed are a fit with the school community and incorporate identified important events in Te Ao Maori.

Leadership hui are conducted in a variety of ways in schools visited, acknowledging the dual nature of teaching mediums. Most occur at a whole school level, as described in one principal's words, "different languages discussed, but we are still in the same waka".

All schools value leaders having opportunities to discuss priority learners irrespective of what part of the school they learn in. Identifying and supporting additional learning needs was a varied component of leadership structures in dual medium schools visited. One school had two people contributing to SENCO support, one for mainstream and one for rumaki. Generally, SENCO input is sought for some aspects of identification of needs, with schools relying on RTM and Learning Support for assistance with design of specific learning interventions for addressing pupil needs within a Maori medium context. Under numbers, names, and needs, one school identifies whose needs are most urgent by referring to achievement data and seeks to access support required – this may be in the form of PLD to grow future teacher capability to better support students.

Recruitment of teaching staff with knowledge and skill in teaching in te reo Maori, continues to be a challenge for dual medium schools. One school has approached the difficulties of teacher recruitment by actively aiming to appoint beginning teachers with potential. Excellence in the reo for this school, is not seen to be the most important critical factor for rumaki appointment. The school has determined that a person who is open to learning and prepared to develop and grow their knowledge and use of the reo is a good fit for their community and support is accessed for such teachers to receive guidance and tuition from within the community.

Accessing quality PLD for the Maori medium component of schools is seen as a crucial step towards raising student achievement and strengthening effective teaching practice. While an RTM service is available, several schools have not experienced consistent support from RTM personnel. It is the thought among some leaders that dual medium schools are not “Maori enough” to be factored into regular communication and visits from RTM.

Managing the provision of PLD that addresses teacher and student needs in one school was represented as a parallel pathway structure with professional discussions around effective teaching practice, classroom observations, and teacher inquiries occurring between all staff within common learning areas (e.g. reading and panui) with opportunities to then transfer discussion to either the auraki or rumaki sectors. Schools did share that segregation between staff and pupils of rumaki and auraki can be a challenge that emerges from time to time, therefore, providing flexibility and opportunity for combined teacher development and collaborative engagement is very important for maintaining a cohesive school culture.

With a more structured support framework in place for schools to apply for PLD provision that meets their needs, and a bank of endorsed facilitators from which to choose from, a more robust and effective platform for PLD is available for dual medium schools. This is seen as a positive change from the inconsistent and fragmented PLD delivery of previous years.

Principals spoke of the importance of being aware of the specific learning needs of teachers who are teaching second language learners in what is frequently their own second language. Some teachers attend summer school, after school, or evening sessions, to extend and strengthen their knowledge and use of the reo. These teachers and leaders see the importance of devoting considerable amounts of their own time to support their personal learning as a necessity and value the opportunities that are available for additional adult learning.

Role of leadership liaising with community, and whanau to establish and communicate vision, values and expectations for teaching and learning across both learning mediums.

Community consultation and connection is a highly valued aspect of all dual medium schools I visited. Some schools have a long established rumaki, and over time have worked with generations of community members and whanau in consultation and communicative roles. Dealing with historical issues arising from previous leadership and BOT decisions can be a challenging factor to be addressed in long established dual medium schools and can pose barriers when introducing new ideas, systems, and personnel. Leading change within staff in long established units can present a challenge, when staff and leaders have experienced previous ineffective and inconsistent PLD support and do not always approach new ideas with openness and trust.

Schools that have responded in more recent times to community desire for the provision of a full immersion or bi-lingual option, have been able to progress strategically to structure a teaching

option that can be sustained and supported by staff, high quality PLD and funding. Principals describing the process of establishment that they have been actively involved in during recent times, have started small and sought assistance and guidance from both community and kaumatua as well as knowledgeable and accessible personnel from MOE and advisory services. Several principals referred to experiencing “white flight”, and negative attitudes from parts of the community when introducing a dual medium teaching and learning opportunity. Being able to access support and guidance to navigate through negative reactions to new ideas is seen as a challenge that is usually shouldered by the principal.

Schools place high value and priority on whanau, hapu, and iwi providing access to essential knowledge and the identification of opportunities to further the learning of students in ways that are relevant and specific to them. The role of liaison with these community personnel is commonly enacted by the Principal, assisted by rumaki leaders and other staff members.

One Principal mentioned the interest and support actively shown by parents and whanau towards being open to supporting their child’s learning in the home and in the school. Within his parent cohort, many parents are studying to further their career pathways and also extending their own fluency in te reo Maori. This has been acknowledged by the school offering classes in te reo after hours for staff and family members.

In all schools visited, the Principal was a key driver for community liaison. It would seem that a Principal who is Maori has an advantage of being able to connect with key community members, be they parents, whanau, kaumatua or kuia, through their own cultural connectedness and understanding of the protocols of knowledge sharing within a Maori dimension. Non Maori Tumuaki recognise the importance of community connection and seek out staff members, local community leaders, iwi representatives, and family and whanau members, to work with them to establish links with community and whanau.

Ways that vision, values and expectations for teaching and learning are communicated and shared, demonstrate the creative thinking and commitment that leaders apply to this aspect of school practice in dual medium schools.

Some of the successful aspects of school and community practices shared from dual medium schools visited include;

- Holding parent teacher learning conferences at the marae for rumaki whanau. If immediate whanau cannot attend, the expectation is that they send another family representative. The learning conferences include the students showcasing their learning both individually and collectively and include kai hakari. To date, attendance from families is 100% at marae based learning conferences.
- The school leadership team visiting all local marae and establishing a direct link with each hapu. This process has paved the way for including local knowledge authentically in the structuring of the school’s local curriculum.
- Selecting ways to assist parents to support their child’s learning in the home – “Reading Together” and Pangarau parent sessions using card games to support patterning and number knowledge have been successful initiatives.
- Hosting “Curriculum in action” / “Learning in action” hui. These were described as a forum where a particular aspect of curriculum focus was selected to be modelled by

teachers working with groups of students and observed by parents who were also invited to join in. This was followed by opportunities for Q and A afterwards with teachers rotating amongst groups of parents noting what was shared and discussed. These hui were concluded with kai hakari. Parents were able to see the learning in action and seek additional information in a small group discussion format. This was viewed as having great potential for developing whanau engagement across both learning dimensions of a dual medium school. This school has also used the same model to review and clarify their vision, inviting whanau and community members to attend, with a positive level of representation achieved.

- School Productions that involve many people from across the school and community and reflect local content within the presentation, were seen as a highly successful way to involve community and whanau and to showcase the array of pupil talents across all sectors of the school. Inviting the local hauora group to attend ensures kaumatua and kuia are acknowledged by the kura.
- Providing visual icons within the school environment, that signify vision, values, expectations, local taonga and history, and metaphors for learning, inform the visitor that promoting a Maori identity is a highly valued aspect of the school's core purpose.

Ensuring that the dual medium nature of the school is reflected within the charter and strategic plan as an integral part of teaching and learning and school operations, is most strongly enacted through the establishment of the Pupil Graduate Profile. The Pupil Graduate Profile, Te ahua o a tatou akonga, as described in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, is a collective vision for student learning that is shaped by whanau, hapu, iwi and the kura.

Ensuring that community and whanau input is gathered to lay foundations of the Pupil Graduate Profile, provides a purpose for community gatherings to be initiated and is a networking dimension of leadership responsibility within dual medium schools. The graduate profiles are supported by evidence gathering mechanisms to ensure they have endurance and ongoing relevance – gathering the voice of pupils, teachers, whanau and the wider community. Ensuring that the desired elements of Maori whanau aspirations are stated and visible are regarded as vital considerations in dual medium schools. Schools visited, have implemented various ways of establishing their graduate profiles in their dual medium settings.

- In one school, graduate profiles exist for auraki and rumaki. They are not translations of each other but sit side by side. They relate to the values and key competencies identified by the community as being significant to each dimension of the school. They are presented visually with examples of indicators for each that reflect each learning medium.
- Having one graduate profile for the whole school was tried by one school, but has since been revised to allow for both similarities and differences between mainstream and full immersion learning contexts to be considered.
- The key competencies from the New Zealand Curriculum and the cultural competencies from Taitaiako were core elements of one Graduate Profile structured as an overarching statement for a whole school graduate profile.

Leadership and Curriculum design

Acknowledging that there are two national curriculum documents expressed and enacted in different ways influences the structure of curriculum design within the dual medium schools visited. One school has selected a blended curriculum for both auraki and rumaki, selecting the Key Competencies from NZC and embedding them within the school's local curriculum. School leadership in this instance has accessed external support to assist the school with this process.

Other schools have NZC and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa as the foundations for the teaching and learning programmes in auraki and rumaki respectively, with opportunities for teachers and classes to come together to share some common learning experiences. For example, a typical staff development meeting with a focus on reading, could be attended by all staff, capturing general trends across the school. This would be followed by opportunities for staff to break off into discussions, allowing Maori medium staff to engage within their own full immersion context on follow up points, such as whether their teaching practices are effective for their learners. This can pose a challenge for Maori medium staff who may not have the presence of a leader or practitioner to facilitate robust discussion around puzzles of practice.

Ensuring that the overall school curriculum includes common elements for all learners, reflected in the acknowledgement of local history, environmental features, and learning experiences that promote learner potential and success in both English and Maori medium, were common features of all schools visited. Curriculum design tended to be driven by the Principal and immediate leadership team, utilising teacher strengths and knowledge to assist with programme planning and design. Providing teachers and leaders with opportunities to upskill and develop teaching approaches was seen as a crucial factor to be considered. Not all learning experiences for dual medium teachers are necessarily delivered by Maori medium providers, and experiences gained by leaders representing both aspects of the school, provide opportunities for leadership and teachers to engage in robust discussions about student learning across the school as a whole. Securing experienced leadership personnel able to display qualities and practices that extend the potential and achievement of Maori students was viewed as a priority by schools, but not always possible to access or retain.

Data gathering and reporting in dual medium schools assists the school to make informed decisions about "where to next" for students in whichever medium they are learning.

All schools visited, had methods of capturing assessment and achievement data from both mediums of teaching and learning for the purposes of;

- Analysing progress of students
- Identifying trends within each medium, and across the school setting
- Setting targets supported by programmes responsive to the needs identified
- Identifying professional learning needs for kaiako in both learning mediums
- Identifying resourcing implications to ensure learning needs are met appropriately and expediently.

The role of presenting the data to the BOT and community varies but in most cases is the domain of the Principal and DP, or a designated leader or teacher, supported by the Principal and DP. Being able to respond to questions about data trends and patterns with full knowledge and understanding, is a highly valued aspect of reporting to the BOT. When this role is designated to a staff member who also has classroom teaching duties, the onus can feel quite overwhelming. Having visual

representation of data trends assisted one school to present information from both mediums of learning that was easy to understand and clearly showed where the strengths and needs were.

A Board of Trustees of a dual medium school is interpreting achievement data based on National Standards and Nga Whanaketanga, and needs to fully understand that the tools and progressions are not translations of each other. The aspect of building board knowledge and understanding of pupil data varied across the schools visited and depended upon either the Principal or a senior leader sharing the responsibility of data sharing – not always feeling confident about speaking to the data from the Maori medium context.

With regards to teachers engaging with student data, teachers in dual medium settings expressed a desire to be able to network with other rumaki staff to engage in data moderation and the validation of information that they access from a wide range of sources. Having experienced leaders on hand to support teachers to articulate their professional judgement and ability to describe the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of students in Maori medium, with the ability to challenge and support such discussion, is seen as a highly valued leadership component, but not always easy to provide within a single school. Being part of a local cluster or network group was voiced as being extremely worthwhile and effective where it existed, and being a much needed forum where it was not yet established. What signifies as successful outcomes for Maori students in some of the schools was strongly linked to an holistic approach to learning and teaching connected to achieving the sort of cultural, academic and social growth desired by the communities that the students come from. The focus of the leaders and teachers therefore, was not on measuring knowledge but rather fostering learning as a way of life.

Creating a leadership role to promote Maori student achievement prompted interested and intrigued responses amongst the principals I spoke with. Reviewing the intent of this appointment in my own school has confirmed for me that leading a dual medium school requires specific leadership qualities that are not always possessed by the existing school leaders or understood by the wider school, BOT and community. My discussions with other dual medium Principals and leaders affirms that our decision to create a specific leadership role within our school to assist us to improve outcomes for our Maori students has been a positive and appropriate move. It is supported by the framework of Tu Rangatira; Maori Medium Educational Leadership, that advocates investing in strengths, opportunities and successes to promote cultural regeneration, kaupapa Maori philosophies, aspirations, and valued learner outcomes. Consideration of these investments has enabled us to re- imagine and restructure our previous leadership structure.

Each dual medium school I visited, acknowledged in its own way how its leadership organisation and practices contribute towards maximising success for students and teachers. In a dual medium education environment, it is a challenge to ensure that the learning journey holds a steady course amidst numerous obstacles that can impede progress.

Kaua e rangiruatia te hapai o te hoe; e kore to tatou waka e u ki uta.

“Do not lift the paddle out of unison or our canoe will never reach the shore”.

Our journey continues.

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