

## Sabbatical Report 2017

# Accelerating Learning Through Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

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## Executive Summary

This report describes my findings and personal reflections on accelerating learning through culturally responsive teaching practices.

What becomes clear through my findings is that teachers must be culturally competent to be able to design and put into action culturally responsive practices in our schools. This competence involves them knowing and understanding themselves and their own cultural being – understanding their own cultural lens that they see the world through and having the disposition and value for the cultural lens' and cultural identities of the students they teach.

Principals play a critical role in creating and sustaining a school culture that values,

nurtures, and grows culturally responsive teaching practices and pedagogies. Principals who demonstrate, value, plan for, and have deep knowledge and understanding of effective cultural responsiveness in schools have high expectations that all staff will do the same.

I found that a number of the schools in the study unpacked, discussed and shared perceptions of Culturally Responsive practices to clarify beliefs and actions. Where the practices were limited to surface knowledge teachers' personal views were explored in depth to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and knowledge of their own identities and understandings of why they behave the way they do in order to support them to be more culturally reflective and responsive in their teaching practices.

These discussions were not one off, once a year , but ongoing and deliberate.

## Purpose

The underlying aim of this study was to learn more about how we grow culturally responsive teaching practices and pedagogies in schools to support the acceleration of learning for priority and target learners.

It is hoped that information from this study will be useful for principals and education leaders in the New Zealand context, to accelerate learning for target and priority learners through culturally responsive contexts.

## Background and Rationale

**During our Senior Leadership Team inquiry in 2016 into the ways we could support acceleration of our target learners progress we noted that our target/priority learners were from diverse cultures. This led me to want to find out whether culturally responsive practices could make a difference to the learners rates of progress.**

The cultural make up of Target Road School is diverse. With 37% of the students from ESOL backgrounds and 33 different cultures within the school, **cultural competencies of understanding, respecting and valuing culture, and knowing how to teach within the cultural context is vital.**

This report is based on the belief that culturally competent and responsive teachers are crucial to the acceleration of learning for all learners.

### So what is cultural responsiveness?

*“Cultural responsiveness is much more than introducing myths or metaphors into class. It means interacting with families to truly understand their reality; it means understanding the socio political history and how it impacts on classroom life; it means challenging personal beliefs and actions; and, it means changing practices to engage all students in their learning and make the classroom a positive learning place for all students”.*

**R.Bishop, M.Berryman, T.Cavanagh and L.Teddy, (March 2007)**

In order to unpack the behaviours around cultural responsive practices it was important to determine key questions to motivate thinking

- What is culture?
- What are the successful actions culturally competent teachers put into practice in order to be successful responders to the needs of their students?
- Are these competencies a set of technical skills or is there more to being a culturally responsive teacher?
- How can others grow their own skills, knowledge and understandings of culturally responsive teaching practices in order help learners accelerate their rates of progress?
- If cultural competence requires teachers to be culturally responsive, what, then, does this look like?

## Activities I undertook

The professional learning activity took the form of reading relevant materials, visiting schools and talking with Principals, teachers, students and whanau to identify the actions of culturally responsive teachers, gathering information from questionnaires and discussing with Principals their views on cultural competency and how they grow culturally competent staff. Common themes emerged from this information that can form a set of possible actions for others to take.

Documents and online information available from the Ministry of Education, Education Council, and NZEI were read to gain an understanding of the system definition of cultural competence and cultural responsiveness.

- Tataiako- Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners A resource for use with the Graduating Teacher Standards and Practising Teacher Criteria
- TKI: <https://goo.gl/5YEC5C>
- <https://goo.gl/vUZpzY>
- Tataiako : <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/required/Tataiako.pdf>
- Ka Hikitia Accelerating Success 2013-2017 The Maori Education Strategy
- Te Kotahitanga
- Core Education : <https://goo.gl/HqpbH1>
- Tu Rangatira
- <https://goo.gl/kmVjmq>
- Tapasa <https://goo.gl/HNvz1N>
- Pasifika Education Plan <https://goo.gl/oivez5>
- Hautu
- MAC/ MASAM- <https://goo.gl/taiTeH>
- <https://goo.gl/HqpbH1>

These documents and websites set a platform for me to grow knowledge and understanding about culturally responsive teaching practices.

## Findings

Differences found in teachers practices were linked to their own understandings of culture, their own knowledge of the types of cultures represented within their classrooms and schools, their understanding of how to engage with families from diverse cultures, the time they spent with each student in developing knowledge and understanding of their culture and their own personal belief in the importance of doing this.

Other differences found were linked to cultural values and beliefs about the importance of these in relation to our learning behaviours. Not only cultural but ethnic identities. The knowledge of Culture and how it is transferred to others was strong in some schools and in others only surface. One teacher described 'Culture' as software for the brain'. This teacher recommended I read Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain by Zaretta Hammond. This book became my 'go to' reference for this report.

So, What is culture?

Culture

- Is the way that our brain makes sense of the world
- A software for the brain's hardware
- The brain uses cultural information to turn everyday happenings into meaningful events

It's important to understand that students are culturally located in different ways - often in ways different to their teacher.

Culture, Hammond infers, can be viewed in 3 dimensions: Surface, Shallow and Deep.

Surface Culture:

Observable and concrete elements-

- Food
- Dress
- Music
- Holidays
- Low emotional charge so that changes don't really create great anxiety in a person or group

Shallow Culture

- Unspoken rules
  - Courtesy
  - Attitudes towards elders
  - Nature of friendship
  - Concepts of time
  - Personal space
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Rules about eye contact
  - Appropriate touching
- This level has a strong emotional charge

Deep Culture

- Tacit knowledge

- Unconscious assumptions that govern our world view
- View of good, view of bad
- Governs how we learn new information
- Intense emotional charge
- Mental models at this level help the brain interpret threats or rewards

Look at the iceberg pictured below. If we look at the Surface features of culture these are observable, the Shallow is just below the water line and can be seen in our emotional state however the key to our behaviour is hidden in the deep culture well below the surface.



Culture can be also described in terms of both its visible and invisible elements:

*“The visible are the signs, images and iconography that are immediately recognizable as representing that culture and that theoretically create an appropriate context for learning. The invisible are the values, morals, modes of communication and decision making and problemsolving processes along with the world views and knowledge producing processes that assists individuals and groups with meaning and sense making. Hence the notion that the creation of learning contexts needs to allow for the existence of both visible and invisible elements.”*

Zaretta Hammond, in *Culturally Teaching Practices and the Brain* 2015, explores the intellectual capacity of the brain - which is the increased power the brain creates to process complex information more effectively. Hammond states that Neuroscience tells us that ‘culture’ plays a critical role in this process.

Using these frames as platforms for developing understanding of culture and how we become the way we are, teachers can gain a perspective of the complexity of culture and why cultural responsiveness is necessary.

*“When we are able to recognise and name a student’s learning moves and not mistake culturally different ways of learning and making meaning for intellectual deficitis we are better able to match those moves with a powerful teaching response.”*  
Zaretta Hammond, 2015.

So it became clear it is important that Teachers know what Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is and looks like in practice.

I designed a questionnaire for teachers to share their ideas. 31 Teachers responded.

## **Teacher Views**

Question 1  
Culturally responsive teaching pedagogy. What do you think this means?

### **Response 1**

Being aware of the varying cultures within your class, accepting and valuing the various cultures, being aware that differing cultures view education in different ways, Treat the children in your class as individuals, encouraging and supporting them in their learning. Get to know them as learners and as children, their interests, hobbies, strengths, weaknesses. Ensuring there are good lines of communication between child and whanau. Using a range of strategies and teaching methods to teach to ensure that chn are able to learn in a way that best suits them, provide opportunity for small group/workshop type lessons to help consolidate understandings.

### **Response 2**

Inclusion of different cultures within the classroom. Teacher and other students making an effort to learn about the other cultures that are within the classroom, including any cultural celebrations as they happen (e.g. Ramadan).

### **Response 3**

Being culturally responsive is knowing the different cultural backgrounds of students in your class and adapting your teaching style to suit your students needs. Not only in the classroom, but also teaching out side the class and how you communicate with parents.

### **Response 4**

Understanding that students are culturally located in different ways - often in ways different to the teacher. Being responsive means appreciating and valuing these different perspectives - beyond tokenism. In the New Zealand context, this particularly means respecting the bi-cultural heritage of New Zealand - the crown and Tangata Whenua - and respecting the tiriti o waitangi. However, responsiveness also need to appreciate diversity within groups and the unique position and perspective of each individual student.

### **Response 5**

Knowing where students come from and what culture they identify with. Finding out what the cultures represented in your class value and what values that attribute to education. Connecting with families and their communities and using this information to formulate your learning and environment.

### **Response 6**

Acknowledging, responding to, and celebrating the many different cultures of students in my classroom. Ensuring that all students, from all cultures, have equitable access to education. Culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. Culturally responsive pedagogy recognises the importance of including students cultural references in all aspects of learning.

### **Response 7**

The way I engage/create/form learning for a learner in relation to a learners cultural identity/beliefs.

### **Response 8**

**Acknowledging and incorporating your students culture and language within their learning. Its about celebrating diversity and recognising that all students have different needs to reach their full potential.**

#### **Response 9**

**In all honesty you cannot avoid being culturally responsive. One of the things I love about the school, is the spread and ethnic make up of our school; we have such a broad, interesting range. I think being culturally responsive means welcoming everybody in, in such a way, that we become one team, with different strengths permeating through the room, as well as finding ways to best meet the needs of the learner.**

#### **Response 10**

**Recognising the right and need for eg Maori to learn as Maori Valuing the student's culture, language, ethnicity, experiences in this context as key elements that influence and impact on the student's ability to access learning for themselves. Respecting the student's culture as the framework that supports students to make connections with their learning. Authentic and purposeful embracing of the ethnic and cultural identity of students builds into their sense of self, who they are etc. This supports their positive self image and this enhances their ability to build a positive learning disposition. It also gives the message that difference is to be celebrated and is desirable**

#### **Response 11**

**- relating well to people of all cultures - showing a real interest in what students from all cultures tell us about their culture - respecting people from all cultural backgrounds - sharing knowledge of other cultures with everyone in the class - learning about other cultures - being aware of cultural practices - celebrating other cultures festivals eg Matariki, Chinese New Year, Divali -**

#### **Response 12**

**- Knowing what culture each of your students/families are - Knowing about those cultures - Giving opportunities for students to share their knowledge of their culture - Listening, responding and building on what they know - Celebrating important dates and times over the year - Encouraging students to feel proud of where they come from - Seeing the world through many lenses**

#### **Response 13**

**\* Being able to identify and relate to the diverse cultures in your classroom. \* Making cultural awareness part of your teaching practice (pedagogy). \* Having an awareness of others' identity. \* Acknowledging that some cultures view things very differently compared to New Zealand culture.**

#### **Response 14**

**The student is the centre of all learning. Culture is crucial for the child to have a sense of well being about themselves. They will have cultural strengths that we need to recognise and utilise in their learning processes. They need to feel safe in their cultural identity. As teachers we need to build worthwhile communication skills with our students' families.**

#### **Response 15**

**Teaching that is centered around the student's unique cultural strengths and where these are nurtured to promote achievement and a sense of well being about their cultural place in the world.**

#### **Response 16**

**Building and maintaining good relationships with students and family is key. This helps to create a supportive learning environment where every student feels valued. Included in this is to identify cultural strengths and identity which are used within the classroom to help promote student achievement and a sense of self worth for every student.**

#### **Response 17**

**Tuakana/teina, small group work, plan with cultural lens infused through all learning, high expectations, contexts reflect and affirm identity, culture and language**

**Response 18**

**Response 19**

**Bringing in different cultural experiences, strengths based on the cultures within the classroom.**

**Response 20**

**Teaching students based on the strengths they bring from their cultural background**

**Response 21**

**Making allowances in the programme to embrace the similarities and differences of people from different cultures. Be empathetic.**

**Response 22**

**That a learner's cultural background impacts on them as a learner and that as a teacher I can help make learning positive and more meaningful if I am aware of the learner's culture and respond to their needs in culturally appropriate ways. 'The culture of a child cannot enter the classroom until it has entered the consciousness of the teacher!'**

**Response 23**

**Taking note of the students in your class or group and trying to incorporate something from their culture into a lesson or lessons.**

**Response 24**

**Being open and honest**

**Response 25**

**understanding students culture, background and relating their learning to them. Having a student centered approach and using their cultures uniqueness as a tool to nurture and help strengthen student learning and knowledge.**

**Response 26**

**Celebrating diversity and being sensitive towards students and families of all cultures. Thinking how to tailor your program to suit the needs of students from all cultures. Considering ways to celebrate their culture and adjust teaching in response to their needs and experiences.**

**Response 27**

**Be considerate to the cultural background of children, beyond just acknowledging their origins, attempt to understand the values of the culture, how do people interact on a daily basis -what is the heritage they treasure --> include and integrate into learning programme as well as daily interactions**

**Response 28**

**Your aware of the range of ethnicities in your classroom and customise your program to accomodate**

**Response 29**

**Teachers knowing their students and their backgrounds, interests. Students involved in making decisions about what they want to learn - their passions - their interests. Students teaching each other, sharing and learning together.**

**Response 30**

teaching in a way that respects the cultural identity and knowledge of the learner.

**Response 31**

To get to know who the children are, their family and cultural backgrounds. Then learn about their cultures from them, other teachers who share the same cultural background and their whanau. Use this bank of cultural knowledge to understand the child's perspective in their thinking when responding to their learning behaviours.

**Question 2**

Describe a culturally responsive teaching practice you use with your students.

**Response 1**

Use a range of greetings in differing languages to acknowledge the various cultures in the class. Be aware that for some children, speaking in a large group or making eye contact can be challenging.

**Response 2**

We have learnt to say hello in a lot of different languages, including languages belonging to the students in our classroom. We have a rule that bottoms do not touch the tops of tables because it is tapu and we have done some learning around this.

**Response 3**

I ensure I can say students names correctly. I communicate with parents in a different way depending on the culture, for example with Pacifica students I always ensure I send positive feedback home. I have always found this breaks down any barriers whanau may have about education, the school and teachers. I try and communicate with parents regularly and am very open with them so there are no surprises. With my Filipino and Asian students I find academic information is very important to parents and try and send data home at least quarterly.

**Response 4**

Ako - viewing teaching relationships as involving reciprocity. The teaching is informed and changed in response to what the child brings. Learning is not seen in the deficit (i.e. as a 'filling in the gaps') but about seeing where a child is on the landscape of learning and building upon what the child brings.

**Response 5**

Having a strong focus on caring and engaging with students. Developing strong relationships. Using different strategies for different individuals.

**Response 6**

**Allowing students** to choose reading texts that interest them. Asking the students 'What would you like to read about?' Connecting learning to cultural experiences - **Matariki unit / Te Reo/ Supporting the whanau class visiting to see what they students have been learning. Co-constructing learning activities with my students for example inquiry learning - providing choice for students based on personal experiences and backgrounds. An inquiry that they are interested in pursuing. Allowing students to construct their own learning timetable once a month. Try to use cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them. Ref. Gay 2013**

**Response 7**

In relation to our school values I ensure class lessons around PB4L have cultural aspect. i.e What would this look like for someone from Samoa? How could these values link to someone from Korea? What would you see respect like in China? Ensuring the children reflect.

#### **Response 8**

Use Te Reo language, learn, share and celebrate other cultures celebrations, I personally learn about my students cultures, ask questions, and am interested in the different ways my families do things.

#### **Response 9**

Ula (Tongan) and Queenie (Filipino) lead the class in a karakia every morning. This talks about binding the people together.

#### **Response 10**

Songs, greetings, other phrases in different languages. Stories, Big books, poems etc where characters, themes, settings are from a range of cultures and ethnicities. Prioritising the teaching of Te Reo and Tikanga Maori. Bringing whanau on board to share experiences from their culture with students eg food, dance, weaving, crafts etc. Teach respect for different cultural protocols in the class and accomodating different ways for students to access learning and the learning environment ( eg ESOL strategies/ ELP stages). Use of learning maps, compare and contrast etc templates, identifying on a world map chn's place of origin.

#### **Response 11**

Greeting students in languages spoken by students in our room. Encourage students from all cultures to share any cultural celebrations or activities or artefacts with the rest of the class.

#### **Response 12**

- Encourage students to make links to culturally responsive texts, pictures and videos - Refer to a world map often to build an awareness of the global world - Give students opportunities to use their first language - counting, labelling pictures, singing songs (and teaching others) - Recognise and celebrate Matariki, the Chinese New Year and Diwali each year. - Found books from the public library in Korean and Chinese

#### **Response 13**

\* Use different greetings at roll call; saying 'thank you' in that student's language (i.e. sheer, sheer); having a worldwide map visibly available to discuss countries of origin. \* Have my own pepeha available to model my country of origin. \* Using the pepeha format for students to write their own, to glue our class community together (i.e. to share our pepeha's all together). \* To learn songs from other cultures - not just Maori, but Chinese, Pasifika, Korea, South African and whatever other cultures are in your classroom. \* To encourage students speak freely to other students in their native tongue. \* To build good relationships with students and their parents. If parents do not speak English, talk to the parents with student or sibling as an interpreter. \* To slow down in speaking when communicating to student - as English is not their first language. Simplify language for ease of communication until their confidence/ability grows. \* Take advantage of questions raised, and use it as a teaching moment. \* Create resources that will be beneficial to specific students. \*Take time to explain what is required - rephrase where necessary, or have another student describe to the student in their words, what is required.

#### **Response 14**

Identifying their cultures and using them as an expert to tell us about it and help us to understand where they come from. Maybe their celebrations, food, home etc. It can begin with greetings from all their different cultures that are used at the start of the day. Include parents and whanau in their child's learning. Put the child's culture at the centre of the learning in the classroom and talk respectfully about it with the student. Make sure the learning environment is responsive to their different cultures too. Quite a number of cultures have oral traditions an learn best that way. Make learning into a game, or put it to music or a rhyme etc. This will wake up their brain's memory system. Also, being active in the learning is helpful for lots of cultures.

#### **Response 15**

Teaching opportunities are created with reference to the children's communities and beyond school lived experiences. This practice must have a respectful classroom culture where we for example share learnings about cultural events that have involved the child i.e. Matariki, Diwali, Chinese New Year, White Sunday (Samoa), Kiribati Gatherings.....

**Response 16**

Knowing my students. Talking to them, listening to them about what is happening in their lives other than just learning. Ask them questions about their learning day. Use this knowledge to introduce things into their learning which they can relate to either culturally or just things that interest them.

**Response 17**

Include students in the planning and evaluating the learning. Support students to question, question the teacher, question each other and justify, explain their thinking and their learning.

**Response 18**

Celebrating different cultural celebrations as they happen in the year. Using texts in reading that students can relate to culturally Allowing students to offer their own cultural perspectives and strengths

**Response 19**

Setting math and reading tasks that my students can relate to and apply their prior knowledge to. Greetings, simple instructions in appropriate languages. Incorporating visual and performing arts into the programme.

**Response 20**

Culture, Language and Identity. Get to know my students by getting to know who they are, where they come from, what language/s they speak at home, how to pronounce names correctly, get to know their families/ siblings and what they are interested in and try to include these into their learning.

**Response 21**

With a writing group, I have tried to include a unit of work every other time, from their culture. eg A Maori legend on how the paua gets its' colours on the inside of its' shell. A unit on Matariki. With my ESOL group this led on to a celebration they could write about as a description and share with the group.

**Response 22**

Knowing the names and ethnicities of my learners parents

**Response 23**

For maths word problems I always make sure the students can relate to the questions so they understand and can make connections to their learning. i.e. Jimmy and his family have a vegetable garden with a perimeter of 12m<sup>2</sup> how many kumara's can they plant in the his family plant.

**Response 24**

Encouraging Pasifika students to question myself and their peers.

**Response 25**

implementing many hands on activities for Pasifika students - boys, involve them in physical activities, teaching phonics in an active tactile way- implementing music--rap and traditional music, knowing a few words + greetings, finding reading text that describes their culture, allowing them to "roam"

**Response 26**

Giving range of choices that will accommodate the needs and interests of all ethnicities

**Response 27**

**Maths inquiry - working together to solve real life problems, discussing and sharing their ideas, listening to each others ideas and revoicing them. Asking questions and learning from each other. Learning maps - as a tool to think about what helps them with their learning and how they help others with their learning.**

#### **Response 28**

**talking about how they might experience or celebrate an event such as New Year, birthdays, deaths etc. - sharing this knowledge with the class and talking about similarities and differences with other cultural experiences.**

#### **Response 29**

**When children are ESOL learners and you observe that they confused with simple instructions then you allow time for them to process and observe other children who understand the process. Peer help is also key. Children from similair cultural backgrounds could translate into their native tongue for a clearer understanding of the expectation.**

The responses to the these two questions highlighted the depth of some, see Response 6.

### **Students views**

Students were given the option of talking one to one or in small groups.

All opted to talk in small groups however I have recorded individual student's voice.

When talking with some students I noted the basis of some their views on their teacher's cultural responsiveness sat with whether they thought their teacher 'liked' them. Other Students described the simplest of acts where teachers pronounced their names correctly while others described the deliberate designs of learning opportunities where teachers had included aspects of students' cultural backgrounds in the context of learning.

Students from one school said their Principal often talked with them about things they did with their families like going to church outings, family events, family visitors from the Islands, sports events and birthday parties. At this school talking about culture was deliberate and a normal practice. The students were able to confidently explain what they believed culturally responsive teaching was.

At this school students spoke of their teachers making sure they knew their own culture and why they needed to know about it. Their teachers deliberate acts of teaching helped them to unpack their cultural knowledge.

At one school students shared their belief that the school values had a big impact on how culture was perceived by others.

#### **Student views**

Student 1

"It's like when our teacher cares about us and likes talking with us. Like our teacher lets us talk to each other and like let's share our ideas. Like she always asks us about our families and like what is going on at home but like not because she's nosey but like because she's really interested in us.

Student 2

We talk about culture alot in our class eh. Our culture is um important um because it 's what's makes us different about all of us. But our teacher told us that what our culture is, is what makes us the same too.

Student 3

I think Culture teaching is important because we learn more about each other and about where our families have come from and what's important about our families that we want to know. My friends call me by my real name but it took my teacher a few weeks to get it right, now she always gets it right. I, I, I think that's important.

Student 4

At our school our values are Respect, Resilience and Responsibility. My teacher says that these are everyone's values at school even hers. She respects our cultures and she likes to know about the things we do that are different to the things what she does. I really like my teacher. She likes to make our learning interesting.

Student 5

I think I work more in class when my teacher talks about things I know about. Like when we looked at why we celebrate things I could talk about Diwali. I really liked that.

### **Whanau views**

The views of whanau varied.

Responses ranged from ... *"I just want my child to learn at school, we can help them to be culturally strong at home".....* to..... *"our school understands the importance of our child's culture, language and identity in his learning and provides him with opportunities to confidently grow as a learner."*

Whanau members all agreed that they wanted their children to be successful at school and in their lives. The majority wanted their children to be good and listen to the teacher. One whanau member felt that the school's job was to help their children to do well at school and did not want the school to help their children to understand their culture. He felt that was his and the church's job. He definitely wanted his children to have a better life than his and to go to University.

One family member was concerned that the teacher may have students from multiple cultures and ethnic backgrounds. How are they expected to be culturally responsive to all the different groups in the class?

The discussions focussed mainly on being Culturally aware and then moved onto culturally responsive teaching practices. Once whanau realised the difference they were keen to understand how this could make a difference to their children's learning engagement and acceleration of learning. The discussion led to whanau from one school wanting to know more about how they could be a part of the support for their school in sharing knowledge.

At one school whanau felt they were already a strong voice at their school and that connections with teachers and the Principal were welcomed and valued.

The importance of connecting with community through their cultural being is vital for the ongoing growth of the school.

### **Accelerating Learning Through Cultural Responsive Practices**

Cultural responsiveness is a way of being and of thinking that requires teachers to confront their own personal beliefs and their relationships with students and with communities, as well as to learn new customs and new languages. So how can this support students to accelerate their learning?

What do teachers think?

Question 3

Acceleration. For students who are below where we expect them to be in relation to the curriculum it is vital they accelerate their learning. What do you think acceleration looks like for these students?

#### **Response 1**

It is important to look for the small steps of progress that these children make. Encourage and support their efforts to ensure they feel valued as learners and can see themselves as learners. Discuss next steps and what strategies they are already using - after I do a running record or maths testing, talk about what strategies they have used and then give a next step so they know where they are heading. I may write this in home learning books or email parents so they are informed of progress and how they can help support learning at home.

#### **Response 2**

We celebrate small successes for these target students and try to find areas within the curriculum and key competencies that they are consistently successful. This is in order for the student to view their learning and schooling in a positive light because, as recently learnt via Nathan Mikaere Wallace PD, having a positive disposition towards your learning allows better cognitive abilities, therefore it is most important that first and foremost students see themselves as capable learners.

#### **Response 3**

Acceleration means celebrating every goal they achieve immediately. This includes behaviour, academic and other - like sports, helping at home etc. Celebrations are celebrated in class. What this creates is an environment of positive achievement instead of always saying they are well below.

#### **Response 4**

Acceleration is making progress that exceeds the progress expected in a certain timeframe. E.g. if a student is at the National Standard Y4, then accelerated progress would be after one year achieving at Y6 beyond, since Y5 would be normal progress.

#### **Response 5**

Using different strategies for individuals. Engaging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Involving families and communities. Individual help.

#### **Response 6**

Intensive support for those students who are at risk of falling behind. Small group instruction Individual instruction Communication with whanau – bringing parents on board to support and help students accelerate their progress. Modeling Scaffolding Clarification of challenging learning – working alongside

those students. Using student strengths as starting points. Having high expectations for students to progress and succeed. Sharing power in the classroom – students voice/students having a say in their learning. Sharing learning goals/success criteria with students Giving feedback Sharing/discussing with students their next steps and progress

#### **Response 7**

Acceleration is to move them beyond the expected norm. In the classroom these students should know where they are at, where they need to be, and how they are going to get there. Teachers then impose deliberate acts of teaching and more than the required learning for example writing - the learner need to write twice a day.

#### **Response 8**

I think it is important to acknowledge the progress they do make rather than looking at the fact that they are below. Show them where they are at and when and how they move up. It is important to involve families and try your best to form close relationships with them. Use things they are familiar with to

motivate their learning for example: writing, they could write about things that are special to them and their families.

#### **Response 9**

Building confidence through repetition and routine. Meeting more often with the teacher. Finding buddy readers, helpers/assistants to be available when the teacher is not. Teaching them ways to be independent. Being consistent in their attendance, or if they can't be, then they are consistent in practising when not at school. Finding ways to bring in interests to help give them something relevant to learn from / with.

#### **Response 10**

Supporting them to be in charge and have ownership of their own learning through building into them a positive learning disposition, always supporting them to know next steps, awareness re their more long term goals ( eg by end of term 2 I want to be reading yellow books etc), sharing with whanau and the student the "why" of the sense of urgency built into the need for acceleration, getting whanau on board with the process, giving specific feedback from assessments ( eg running record info) re next learning steps, lots of celebration of achievement and success, chn being able to talk about their goals, next steps, clarity around success criteria, tracking of progress ( eg share wedge graph progress), responding through student's culture and language- eg: get a bi lingual assessment, encourage writing and speaking, counting in first language- making this part of class culture. Using the visual writing icons which are a " universal " tool . Also visual progression matrixes where chn track themselves and have ownership over this.

#### **Response 11**

- Informing/ showing the students where they are in their learning and where they should be. Get students to talk about their learning and reflect. - Ensure the students know what they are learning, what/who can help them, how they are doing and the next steps in their learning. - Getting their family involved so that the students see it as a 3 way partnership- student, family, school- all working together for the same goal. - Lots of small group work targetted to their needs. - Celebrate effort and successes.

#### **Response 12**

- Increased support from the teacher - Effective feedback in Reading, Writing and Maths each day - based on observations of current learning - Individualised program that suits their needs - Increased support from home - Regular communication between home and school - Closely tracked and regularly assessed - info shared and transparent - Teacher showing a genuine interest in students - friends/family, likes/dislikes - Frequent reflection about what is and isn't working well

#### **Response 13**

\* making learning fun, through songs and lots of oral language situations. \* giving them feedback on their learning. \* making sure they know where they are 'at' and where they need to 'be'. \*Creating a variety of opportunities to assist with their learning. \* Bringing in specialists when needed (i.e. ESOL teacher). \* Clear communication with parents as to what is required to help their child. \* Mixed ability grouping. \* Lots of modelling.

#### **Response 14**

Acceleration will look like a greater involvement in their own learning, being motivated to learn, taking responsibility for home tasks (involve whanau). Making learning slightly competitive can be useful, even if they are only competing against themselves. Celebrating success is huge. Feeling like they are 'readers' or 'scientists' is great. Use the game approach, making rhymes, songs etc, socialising the learning. Use the stories that the brain will remember. Use these things consistently not just occasionally.

#### **Response 15**

Acceleration to achieve the presentation of the curriculum to be directly responsive to the students background. Attention to this being meaningful, child centered and connected to the child's real life.

**This utilises a variety of learning strategies as cooperative learning, whole language and diverse learning styles.**

**Response 16**  
progress

**Response 17**

**Acceleration, not remediation. Working them at expectation but heavily scaffolded e.g. prior learning about upcoming topic through visuals, videos clips, easier texts so this new knowledge becomes their prior knowledge when they approach the new topic. Making learning visible through multiple ways- unpacking models, modelling, tuakana/teina opportunities.**

**Response 18**

**Students making more than the expected amount of progres**

**Response 19**

**Time with small groups and teacher conferencing to understand what they need to do in order to progress with their learning. Also, encouragement to apply themselves to the best of their abilities and believe that they can do it!**

**Response 20**

**Knowing where they are at. Knowing what next steps to take.**

**Response 21**

**Faster rates of progress to ensure students reach expected levels**

**Response 22**

**Small group situations, ideas and lessons targeted to allow them success with some challenges in there as well.**

**Response 23**

**Setting realistic and managable goals while still having high expectations**

**Response 24**

**Progress from when they first started. Teachers need to look at their personal achievement and not look at their progress in relation to the NS. All learners learn at a different rate.**

**Response 25**

**Providing students with targeted support to how positive outcomes for their learning. Thinking about ways to best support that culture - i.e. focus on pasifika students getting them to ask questions when unsure.**

**Response 26**

**well , I will need to accept that they are not necessarily academically minded - often they excel in other areas such as sport or the Arts , particular drama and dance - I aim to use these gifts as a vehicle to get them interested in core curriculum activities**

**Response 27**

**Extra teacher time**

**Response 28**

**Students knowing where they are at and what their next learning steps are - being able to articulate what they are learning, why they are learning it (the relevance of the learning in their lives), and how they are going to learn it. Taking responsibility for learning.**

**Response 29**

**making more than 1 years progress in 12 months of learning.**

**Response 30**

Acceleration is the accumulation of all the baby steps that they take to reach their goals. The students will be making little gains with the support of their teacher, peers and whanau. These students will show more confidence with new learning, offer peer support, participate in discussions and most importantly make gains with their learning.

**Question 4**

How do you think being Culturally responsive impacts on learning acceleration?

**Response 1**

It ensures children feel valued for themselves as individuals, recognising where they come from and that that is important to them and their family. Children need to feel respected and valued and supported to do the best that they can in a positive encouraging environment.

**Response 2**

Being able to connect with my students based on their culture and moving the learning focus onto their culture for a short time has shown students that I am interested in them, where they come from, and who they are as a person which in turn helps them to feel comfortable with me and open to new learning experiences.

**Response 3**

It creates an environment of trust this means students are not afraid to make mistakes and take more risks.

**Response 4**

Students are not passive recipients of learning, but learn and develop through their own active engagement. If a teacher is not responsive to a student's perspective and position, then the student will have no buy in to the learning experiences. Without any buy in, the student will be less engaged, and therefore will not be able to take ownership and initiative in their progress. Therefore, unresponsive practice hinders progress, let alone acceleration.

**Response 5**

Anything that builds a strong positive relationship with the learner will impact acceleration.

**Response 6**

Students are more likely to achieve when they see themselves, and their experiences and knowledge reflected in teaching and learning. Improvements in achievement result when schools and kura integrate elements of students' identity language and culture into the curriculum teaching and learning. Ref. Kahikitia accelerating success.

**Response 7**

The cultural responsiveness cements the relationship and trust. The learner knows you as the teacher has an understanding of them and values their ideals, beliefs etc. This forms a high trust learning model. The learner feels valued. Therefore engagement in learning is higher.

**Response 8**

I think it positively impacts on learners because you as the teacher get to know these students and their families and create a programme of learning that supports them to reach their full potential, the learning tasks interest them and mean something to them and support them to make outside connection with what they already know.

**Response 9**

When they know that you are interested in them and all that that entails, there is the that they will be more engaged in their learning. The hope being that in knowing they are valued, they will value what they do and who they are.

**Response 10**

Authentic and purposeful embracing of the ethnic and cultural identity of students builds into their sense of self, who they are etc. This supports their positive self image and this enhances their ability to build a

positive learning disposition. It also gives the message that difference is to be celebrated and is desirable. It supports them to see where/ how they fit and to realise their potential. It unlocks the wholeness and individuality of students which naturally enhances their ability to access learning

#### **Response 11**

Being culturally responsive shows students that you are interested in them, their backgrounds and their learning. Showing an interest and celebrating cultural activities demonstrates respect and a desire to learn from others. Inviting and involving families from all cultures into school to discuss their children and their backgrounds, their children's learning and getting them involved in their child's education can only be positive. Building relationships with families, keeping them informed of progress and working together impacts on learning acceleration.

#### **Response 12**

- Students feel safe, supported, relaxed, calm and ready to learn - Students feel proud of themselves, unique, special and capable of learning - Students have a sense of identity and see themselves and others as important and valued - Students are more confident to take risks, be creative and generate new ideas because they see diversity and difference as a good thing. - They can make links to their cultural background to build new knowledge and understandings - Being culturally responsive allows you to form genuine relationships with your students and their whanau by seeing things through their perspective.

#### **Response 13**

\* by building a relationship with the student whereby you believe in their abilities, regardless of where they come from, and instill in them to do their best. \* by encouraging a positive approach to their learning, engaging students in their learning and backing them all the way to their success. \* through acknowledging their identity and being respectful.

#### **Response 14**

It is hugely important. We can try to emulate the ways they learn in their cultures that have been successful. Pride in their culture and their 'place' within that culture is important. They will be motivated and excited about their learning. This will be shared with parents and whanau. Using some of the methods mentioned above on a regular basis will accelerate their learning.

#### **Response 15**

Culturally responsiveness directly impacts student engagement and achievement. It is usually evidenced by strong engagement and contribution from students and those best placed to support them - parents, families and whanau, hapu, iwi communities and businesses

#### **Response 16**

I think that being culturally responsive will help impact on learning acceleration as any knowledge about your students will help create and maintain a good relationship between student and family. You will probably have more interaction with family which will hopefully improve the school home partnership which in turn will help the student learning

#### **Response 17**

When teachers don't have high expectations for Maori and Pacific learners (they may be unaware of their feedback sending low expectation messages) students stall in their learning.

#### **Response 18**

If students are engaged and motivated within a context that they can relate to it can only have a positive impact on their progress and acceleration

#### **Response 19**

I think that being able to associate curriculum areas with students' prior knowledge, allows them a stepping stone to build connections between new information and make it more meaningful and engaging to the student.

#### **Response 20**

Students feel more empowered when their culture is embraced and this leads to self confidence, which is a prerequisite to positive learning.

**Response 21**

Knowing the learner and responding to them in culturally appropriate ways supports them to feel valued and more able to feel comfortable enough to be challenged to learn

By providing added motivation and relevance for the students. They feel they have something to add which is of value.

**Response 22**

Knowing your learners

**Response 23**

It helps students to gain understanding through prior knowledge and personal experiences. This helps them to relate their learning to things and experiences out side of the classroom

**Response 24**

Being aware of their culture, and thinking about what would best support those students.

**Response 25**

enourmously

**Response 26**

totally dependent on the skills and knowledge of the teacher

**Response 27**

It helps them to take ownership of their learning. They see themselves as the drivers of their learning.

**Response 28**

a child who is culturally confident , connected or values feels greater engagement with their school, their class and their learning. Once you have an engaged student they have a much greater chance of making learning progress

**Response 29**

When you respond to learning as a multi- faceted approach then the impact on all the students will be evident. There is no one size fits all approach. Valuing each child's contribution and catering to the needs of the diverse cultures will enhance accelerated learning on the long run. Accepting that all children bring their cultural learning with them on entry into school.

## Conclusions

The information gathered during my sabbatical has helped me to understand the possible ways in which deep cultural responsive pedagogy and practice can be developed and put into practice in our schools and has left me with more questions about ensuring this happens across our schools.

- How do teachers meet the needs of students who may represent 15+ cultures and ethnic identities?
- What support is available to schools to build on their practices in cultural responsive teaching?
- What do we need to know about the brain in order to further develop our practices in this space?
- What skills, knowledge and understandings do teachers need as a baseline?
- How can others grow their own skills, knowledge and understandings of culturally responsive teaching practices in order help learners accelerate their rates of progress?
- If cultural competence requires teachers to be culturally responsive, what, then, does this look like? How can they show this?

The documents listed in the report are available to all but unless they are discussed and shared and made into practical actions educators cannot benefit from the information within.

Cultural Responsiveness is not about a list of technical skills or a checklist of actions, as students described it's about having teachers who really care about them and want to know them in order to grow them. For teachers it's about knowing themselves, unpacking who they are and why they behave the way they do; why they think what they think about others' behaviours and decisions and truly wanting to connect and understand how these are different to their own. Not on a judgement level but within a space that accepts each others' thoughts, beliefs and actions.

In order to accelerate learning for our target/ priority learners it's about providing them with the environment for learning that doesn't see who they are or what their cultural make up is a deficit or detrimental but as a starting point for building a connection and understanding them.

Connecting with whanau in meaningful contexts that grows trust and respect is a vital part of the connection for learners. Recognising that in order to accelerate learning everyone connected to the learner has an important role to play.

Being deliberate in unpacking the child's cultural being and ethnic identity as a learner and giving them the mana that links to the respect required to truly care about them as a learner in the process of developing meaningful learning relationships.

Providing learners with contexts that are relevant to their lives and that of their family to support them to connect in more meaningful ways.

Teachers must be culturally competent to be able to design and put into action culturally responsive practices in our schools. This competence involves them knowing and understanding themselves and their own cultural being – understanding their own cultural lens that they see the world through and having the disposition and value for the cultural lens' and cultural identities of the students they teach.

Principals play a critical role in creating and sustaining a school culture that values, nurtures, and grows culturally responsive teaching practices and pedagogies. Principals who demonstrate, value, plan for, and have deep knowledge and understanding of effective cultural responsiveness in schools have high expectations that all staff will do the same.

Schools that unpack, discuss and share understandings of Culturally Responsive practices to clarify beliefs and actions give true meaning to learning for their teachers, students and whanau. If teacher practices are limited to surface knowledge teachers' personal views need to be explored in depth to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and knowledge of their own identities and understandings of why they behave the way they do in order to support them to be more culturally reflective and responsive in their teaching practices for others.

If learners are to accelerate their learning doing this in a culturally responsive school involves the school developing a long term, with staff, students and whanau. Real understanding and valuing of others cultures and ethnic identities must be a part of a teacher's default. Teachers need to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of culture to support implementation of this vision through changes in behaviour, developing a stronger understanding of why they behave the way they do; be adaptive,

responsive, creative and culturally competent and truly care about the learners they are growing.

## Other References

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