

Principal Sabbatical Report

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Deliberate Acts of Tātaiako.

Ako - Practice in the classroom and beyond

Wānanga - Communication, problem solving, innovation

Manaakitanga - Values – integrity, trust, sincerity, equity

Tangata Whenuatanga - Place-based, socio-cultural awareness and knowledge

Whanaungatanga – Relationships, with high expectations

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Nature of Sabbatical Study.

The intention of my sabbatical study was to explore ways that schools could use their unique school curriculum in order to support staff to successfully build positive learning-focussed relationships with Māori students, through engaging with the cultural competencies identified in the Tātaiako document.

In terms of Fraser Crescent School where I am currently the principal, I was hoping to find a number of initiatives and activities that we could adopt, unpack and initiate throughout the year that would help our teachers to become more culturally competent. Over the course of my sabbatical, I came to discover that this approach was going to be more complex than I first thought.

Rationale and Background Information

Tātaiako is the educational cultural competencies model that the Ministry of Education launched in 2011. It was created in order to support teachers and school leaders throughout the sector in regards to building effective relationships with Māori learners that would lead to improved and positive outcomes. The five cultural competencies (whanaungatanga, ako, manaakitanga, tangata whenuatanga and wānanga) are seen as key elements in supporting teachers to build learning relationships and increase engagement with Māori students.

Strong links have been made between the cultural competencies within Tātaiako and the Practising Teacher Criteria. The Practising Teacher Criteria (PTC) identified 12 capabilities

that teachers should demonstrate on an ongoing basis in order to be effective educators, as well as maintain their teacher registration status. In more recent years, the requirements for teachers to keep evidence in relation to achieving or demonstrating each of the 12 areas has become more rigorous. The responsibility in documenting and providing this evidence is that of the individual classroom teacher, not the responsibility of the school.

In my experience, this shift in responsibility from the school to the teacher occurring with the Practising Teacher Criteria, has caught out a number of educators, particularly relieving teachers. Teachers are often unaware of their individual responsibility to demonstrate and gather evidence in the 12 categories of the PTC. There is an assumption that these 12 skills or attributes are things that all teachers are capable of, fundamental to the basic role of a teacher. With the introduction of Tātaiako in 2011 and its strong links to the PTCs, there was a subtle assumption that there were another 5 cultural competencies or capabilities that teachers should suddenly possess. Very little support or Professional Learning and Development (PLD) was offered to schools or teachers to unpack the competencies within Tātaiako.

It was almost assumed that teachers would suddenly acquire 5 more skills and be effective in engaging and building learning relationships with Māori students. Some teachers were very capable at doing this. Factors such as their own life experiences and background, their ability to build rapport and relationships with all students, and their own knowledge of Te Ao Māori (the Māori World) would have really supported them in being culturally competent educators. But other teachers were less skilled at acquiring these cultural competencies. Once again, factors such as their upbringing, country of birth, and their own experiences may have resulted in them struggling to be a culturally competent educator.

Our teaching workforce in Aotearoa is becoming increasingly more diverse. Foreign-trained teachers make up a large proportion of our staff in many schools and these teachers would have had little, if any, understanding about the education of Māori students prior to teaching in New Zealand. Even teachers who grew up and were educated and trained in New Zealand, would have had vastly different experiences and exposure in relation to being able to engage and build successful learning relationships with Māori students.

The intention of my sabbatical study is to find ways in which schools can regularly undertake various initiatives and activities that will support teachers in becoming increasingly culturally competent. In doing this, providing some of the support that was lacking in 2011 when the Tātaiako document was released.

Fraser Crescent School – Our Current Practice

My sabbatical focus on cultural competencies did not arise due to my own school being significantly deficient in this area. In fact, there are many effective approaches and initiatives that we have adopted over the years that reflect sound practice in terms of the competencies identified within the Tātaiako document. This being said, I do feel that what we offer across the school is more of a 'smorgasbord of some effective approaches', rather than a deliberate, planned, school-wide understanding in terms of culturally competent practice. Approaches in classrooms in terms of what teachers are doing is variable, documentation detailing effective culturally competent practice is limited and support for teachers is often provided on a reactive, rather than proactive basis. Therefore depending on the conditions identified in the Rationale

and Background Information section of this report, factors such as teachers' own life experiences, upbringing, ethnicity, country of training and so forth, has resulted in the teachers at Fraser Crescent School having a diverse capability in being culturally competent educators. In fact, the same can probably be said for most schools.

At a staff meeting towards the end of 2017, teachers at Fraser Crescent School identified programmes, strategies and approaches that were used within the school, which aligned with the five competencies in the Tātaiako document. In term of Te Ao Māori (the Māori World) this shows our Te Kore (or potential) that we currently have as a staff. The list below captures a number of the 'offerings' that the school provides in this area, demonstrating some of our capacity in terms of culturally responsive practice.

- Professional Learning and Development opportunities for teachers, such as Universal Design for Learning, Collaborative Teaching, Play-Based Learning etc, which supports teachers in catering to different learning styles.
- Offering our children a broad curriculum. Allowing students to find areas of strength, passions etc.
- Tuakana Teina programmes supporting children with Kapa Haka etc. Children running Fraser Time Clubs and groups within the school. This is also promoted through the Buddy Time programme.
- Fraser Quest home learning programme having been reviewed and a number of cultural options added. Also the provision of 'Pop-up' Quests such as Matariki.
- Cultural Fraser Time being offered to students, as well as opportunities such as flax weaving and bone carving.
- Different programmes to increase engagement and cater to the various learning styles of students including Daily 5, Activation Stations, and Learning Maps.
- Student led learning and student ownership of work through the way some classroom programmes are structured.
- Use of the 'All About Me Sheet' which are completed by whanau at the start of the year, helping to identify children's passions, goals, strengths, challenges etc.
- Integration of regular Te Reo into classrooms.
- Participation in activities during Māori Language Week.
- Term One inquiry based on our FRASER Values, with students engaging with and exploring their whakapapa and pepeha.
- Student Achievement Targets monitoring a number of Maori Students as well as tracking overall Māori Student Achievement, with a focus on accelerating progress of learners.
- Use of social media and Seesaw to connect with whanau in different ways.
- Use of NZCER Me and My School Survey providing some student voice about different aspects of the school.
- Introduction of a Māori Student Googledoc which contains various information about Māori students to support their learning.
- Targeted groups for before and after school learning programmes which Māori students are often a priority.
- Liaison with various agencies to support students and whanau out of school.
- A number of Māori students were included and the focus of Teachers' Inquiry work.
- Marae trips and teaching local tikanga to students and staff.

- Using a more personal approach with whanau, such as home visits.
- Providing lots of different opportunities for whanau, staff and children to meet.
- New entrant relationship with preschools in terms of supporting student transition and the Pathway to Fraser programme.
- The establishment of a Whanau Liaison role aimed at supporting a number of whanau whose children have some sort of barrier to learning.
- The establishment of a social services budget to purchase kai, bus passes etc, supporting children and whanau in need.
- Daily Karakia and Waiata in classes.
- Termly Pōwhiri to welcome new students, whanau and staff.
- Holistic focus on Hauora and wellbeing as a school.
- Involvement in Polyfest, Kapa Haka, and the Upper Hutt Cultural Festival.
- Regular inclusion of Māori games and sports into programmes

Additional to the programmes, strategies and approaches listed above, the school Board of Trustees had engaged with the Ruia Tool a number of years previously and is in the early stages of reviewing the school's practice in relation to the Hautū Tool, a Māori cultural responsive self-review tool for Boards of Trustees.

The list above demonstrates that there are a number of initiatives going on within our school. However, as mentioned previously, not all programmes, strategies and approaches were being effectively used across the school. More importantly, I have come to realise that a teacher can do a number of 'things' on the list above, while not actually demonstrating effective culturally responsive practice. This is something I will cover in more detail later in this report.

Learning from School Visits and Discussions

As part of my sabbatical research, I was keen to visit a number of schools to investigate different ways in which they were looking to develop culturally competent teachers within their schools. Additional to the school visits, I also contacted a number of other educators within Aotearoa in order to challenge and support my thinking in the area of culturally responsive practice.

Visiting other schools is a real privilege. Principals and teachers in our country are very welcoming and keen to show other educators around their schools. I visit a number of schools each year around the country and have found this to be one of the best sources of professional learning and dialogue, as well as a great way to get new ideas and inspiration. I have often selected schools with a particular focus in mind, and I have always found a number of positive unintended outcomes occur as well, as a result of these visits. The same was true with the schools I visited during my sabbatical term away from my own school. I discovered some interesting approaches to developing the cultural competencies and numerous other informative things to follow up, which fall outside the area of cultural competencies.

In this section of my report I want to highlight some of the approaches that I discovered while visiting some schools in the central North Island and Bay of Plenty regions. There were three particular schools which I visited that were doing some thought-provoking work around developing the cultural responsiveness with their staff. What follows in this section is a brief description of some of the work these schools were undertaking.

School 1.

The first school I visited was recommended to me as it was doing some different things in terms of developing cultural competencies. Their approach was unique from the majority of schools who have used the Tātaiako document as the basis of their cultural competency work. This school had chosen a personalised learning approach as a means of developing culturally competent teachers.

Their main goal was targeted around building learning focussed relationships and they were using Michael Absolum's work, detailed in his book *Clarity in the Classroom*. The school had also been working directly with Michael, who was providing some ongoing professional learning and development with the staff. The approach the school was using detailed 6 elements, which if used appropriately, contribute towards effective learning. The 6 areas are:

1. Building learner focussed relationships
2. Clarity about what is to be learnt
3. Assessment literacy
4. Promoting further learning
5. Active reflection
6. Shared clarity about next learning

Underpinning this approach was a belief that through teachers really getting to know their learners, this would achieve culturally competent practice. To a certain degree, I do think that there is a lot of sense in this approach, but with some exceptions. Competencies such as Ako '*Practice in the classroom and beyond*' aligns strongly with the six areas identified by Absolum's work. This competency is about effective pedagogy, knowing the learners' needs, feedback/feedforward and the like. Clear links can be made between the Ako competency and the six areas highlighted above. At my own school, we use a number of similar approaches that resonate with Michael Absolum's six areas of effective learning, and also align with the Ako competency. This includes initiatives such as our Māori Student Googledoc, and the use of our 'All About Me' sheets (which both identify goals, strengths, interests, learning styles, barriers, etc). Furthermore our broad curriculum, choice based programmes and children participating in the writing of their own reports align with many aspects of Michael Absolum's six elements.

The other cultural competency that I felt the school's work aligned strongly with, was Whanaungatanga '*Relationships with high expectations*'. For a teacher to have a positive learning focussed relationship with a child, the teacher really needs to know the child. This was evident in a number of things the school was doing. The school was using a matrix for each of the six areas and a key component in the 'Building learner focussed relationships' area was about involving whanau in a partnership to support learning, which is central to the Whanaungatanga competency.

From a brief visit, I felt that the school was doing some really sound work in terms of addressing some of the competencies through their unique approach. What I couldn't see from my visit or through looking at their matrix, was clear links with how the other cultural competencies (Manaakitanga, Tangata Whenuatanga and Wānanga) were being developed with the staff, to positively impact on the students. The school had leading approaches in terms of relational pedagogy, but in my view, they didn't have as much capability in terms of cultural pedagogy.

I was able to visit many of the classrooms throughout the school and was surprised to note that I didn't see any Māori displays, artworks or signage. This got me thinking about the importance of having various Māori imagery and language on display within a school. The principal also made an interesting comment during my visit when he said that he felt a teacher could be culturally competent, without knowing a word of Te Reo. This statement really got me thinking as it conflicted with my own viewpoint. This statement is something that I will revisit later in the Te Reo section of this report.

This school also had an interesting approach in terms of receiving feedback from its students (hearing student voice). They contracted a person who worked across a number of schools within their local area. This person would regularly visit the school and ask the students what it was like to be a learner in this school. Not all students were involved, but a number of students were selected to take part in these sessions. Particular children were often selected as they were considered to be 'touchstone' children, representative of certain groups of students within the school. Significant emphasis was put into gauging the student voice of Māori learners within the school. The school is looking to capture information about the children's experiences at the school, in order to really 'illuminate' things from a child's point of view. The principal at the school spoke considerably about various programmes and change initiatives that had occurred within the school over recent years. He was keen to point out that unless the changes were visible, noticed and spoken about by the students, then they likely had little or no impact where it really counts. This is an easy trap to fall into in education as teachers and school leaders implement changes, without carefully monitoring the effectiveness of those changes directly with students.

The key learning that I took away from visiting this school is about making sure that student voice is captured in relation to changes that impact (or should impact) on students. Furthermore this gathering of data doesn't necessarily need to involve every student, or involve the use of surveys or questionnaires. Instead, aim to target some key students and spend the time discussing with them what they have noticed about particular programmes or changes within the school. It was also affirming to see evidence of the strong links between Michael Absolum's work which largely depicts effective teaching, and how this relates to a number of areas within the Tātaiako competencies.

School 2.

I visited a school in the Tauranga area which for several reasons, was very similar to my own school. The location of the school and its zone meant that the children who attended the school came from a diverse socio-economic group. About 40% of the students who attend the school identified as Māori. The principal shared with me that his school often had to respond to challenging issues and social problems relating to students and their family/whanau. A few years ago the school had started the Ministry of Education's Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) programme and was beginning to see the affirmative impacts of this initiative. They had identified six core values which were woven into almost all aspects of their school. The school worked with a local artist to provide a pictorial image for each of the values. These were images that the students could relate to. In most displays around the school, their values were written in both English and Te Reo, and were displayed in many different formats including posters, wall displays, mosaics, newsletters etc.

Identifying key values and building a school culture around these values isn't a unique approach, and is often a key strategy within the PB4L programme. What was different in this particular school, was the way that the values almost became their cultural competencies. I felt that this was achieved due to a number of factors. These included:

- The values chosen by the school had some philosophical alignment with a number of the cultural competencies.
- The way that often the values were displayed in both Māori and English, as well as having a brief description of the values in both languages.
- The imagery the school used for the values was very 'Kiwi', with a strong New Zealand flavour.

Furthermore, the way the school continually lived its values was supportive for students, staff and whanau. The principal shared a story about employing a young teacher at the school who had grown up and trained in Australia. This teacher initially struggled to get to grips with the school, in particular building relationships with a group of Māori boys within his class. The principal said that through unpacking the schools values with the new teacher, he was able to get a sense of some culturally response practice that would help to build positive relationships with his students. It was the school values that the principal used as a starting place, rather than the Tātaiako document. This was an effective example in which a school has infused many of the elements within Tātaiako, into its own school processes and values. They have unpacked the Tātaiako document and made it part of their own school culture, as it relates to their school context and values. I believe that an approach like this would be beneficial to adopt within my own school.

School 3.

In terms of my shifting my own thinking, the most valuable school I visited was Allendale Primary School in Whakatane. Allendale is a large urban primary school in central Whakatane with approximately 75% of its students identifying as Māori. The school has been working for a few years exploring Culturally Responsive and Relational Pedagogy (CRRP). This has been a part of the work of their Kahui Ako (COL) which involves many of the local schools in the Whakatake area. Allendale is seen locally as a leading school in the area of developing CRRP.

The school has worked extensively with staff and outside Professional Learning and Development providers to unpack behaviours that lead to being culturally responsive within their own setting. Over a number of staff meetings, the school has now developed a matrix which details basic culturally responsive practice, through to higher integrating levels. This matrix is used in a number of ways.

- Staff self-reflect and assess themselves against the statements within the matrix.
- Formal classroom observations are made against a checklist which aligns with the CRRP matrix.
- Students and whanau also provide input into how staff perform in relation to the matrix. This is achieved informally through conversations and questioning particular students and whanau, however feedback is provided on the school as a whole, rather than about individual teachers.

The leadership team collates this information and looks for patterns and disparities between the data. The school principal shared that sometimes there are significant anomalies between

the results of different groups. He mentioned that some staff felt they were doing an effective role as a culturally responsive teacher, while other sources of evidence conflicted with this. This was challenging for some staff. From this triangulation of data, teachers identify goals in relation to the areas they felt needed further development. These goals were often linked to teachers' appraisals and were regularly revisited during coaching sessions which occur throughout the year.

This approach to developing culturally responsive teachers at Allendale School has helped to illuminate areas of both individual and collective capability across the school. The way in which they have interpreted the competencies within their own setting and made them integral in much of what they do, has kept culturally responsive practice at the forefront of their approach as a school. This change has seen a number of actions emerge from this work, which are now starting to become incorporated into the school's annual and strategic plan. I was highly impressed with my visit to Allendale School and feel that there is much to be learnt from their thoughtful approach.

Future Focussed Curriculum Thinking

My sabbatical gave me uninterrupted time away from my school to think about and reflect on many other aspects relating to education. One area in particular that I spent a lot of time thinking about, was the need to lead Fraser Crescent School in providing a more future focussed curriculum for our students. When I use the term 'future focussed curriculum' I am referring to a school curriculum which promotes the development of soft skills or learning dispositions such as confidence, leadership, resilience, collaboration, self-management etc, as opposed to a curriculum which focusses primarily on curriculum areas, in particular reading, writing and mathematics. During my sabbatical term I read Tony Wagner's book - *The Most Likely to Succeed*, which both clarified and challenged my thinking in this area.

The subject of designing a future focussed curriculum could easily be a sabbatical topic on its own, however I did spend some time considering the impact of a future focussed curriculum on Māori Learners. It is noteworthy here to point out that this is simply my viewpoint that I am sharing and is supported more by my own experiences in education and a few readings over the years, as opposed to being backed by the latest research on this topic. I have however shared with section of my sabbatical report with a number of educators who specialise in the education of Māori students for some guidance. Here are a couple of thoughts that I would like to share.

The first point I wish to make (and it is a sweeping generalisation), is that educational approaches and initiatives over the past twenty or so years have not catered well to the needs of many Māori learners. If they had, documents such as Tātaiako, Ka Hikitia and Te Kotahitanga wouldn't exist. What excites me about the possibilities of a future focussed school curriculum, is that the approaches and possibilities for learners are diverse and almost endless. Furthermore, I see there are some very strong links between the Ako competency within Tātaiako and the potential offerings of a future focussed curriculum. The traditional 'one size fits all' model of education didn't work well for a lot of learners, particularly Māori learners.

Modern learning or future focussed approaches often provide flexibility in terms of the task, the method of learning, and the output to demonstrate achievement. This is a key philosophy of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which encourages educators to look at the needs across their class and cater to all ends, rather than targeting a lesson for those 'average' learners in the middle.

Future focussed education also allows for significant student led learning, which is underpinned by approaches such as Ako Māori (reciprocal learning) and Tuakana Teina (elder teaching younger and vice versa) approaches. Student led learning or student agency also involves students engaging with topics which they are passionate and motivated to learn about, as opposed to a more traditional method of curriculum 'coverage' which can result in children learning about subjects which they struggle to relate to. Keeping students engaged and excited about their learning is one of the most important roles we play as educators, and this is also an area in the past where we have failed many of our Māori students, particularly as they get older within our education system. The term 'Ako' which is one of the cultural competencies, comes from three words, one of which is 'Ahi' which means fire or passion. The 'Ko' part of the term refers to the purpose or the feeling. The 'O' also incorporates the term Omau, which is about our gifts and talents which we have handed down to us. I believe that it is vital for our students to explore and develop their passions and talents, a philosophy which is often central in modern learning approaches. If our students have the opportunities to develop their talents through play, passion and purpose, this can ignite the Ahi (fire) within them that will burn for a lifetime. Aligning children's passions and talents with potential future careers is a commonly held philosophy of modern education.

My own school is about to embark on a major rethink of our curriculum, and it is critical that throughout this process we make changes that maximise Te Kore (the potential) of our Māori learners. Providing regular opportunities for our Māori students to be involved in making these changes and sharing their feedback (reciprocity within Whanaungatanga) is also essential.

The Role of Te Reo

My sabbatical gave me the opportunity to ponder the relationship between a teacher's ability to speak Te Reo and how this may, (or may not), impact on their capability as a culturally responsive teacher. Earlier in this report I mentioned a primary school principal who said that 'Someone could be a competent culturally teacher, without knowing a word of Te Reo'. Another colleague I shared my thinking with informed me that he had some Māori teachers on his staff who spoke fluent Te Reo, but who didn't necessarily demonstrate high levels of culturally competent practice. I am also willing to guess that the opposite could be true, however some understanding of the Māori language does help. While on sabbatical leave I returned to my own school for a professional learning and development session, as the learning focus for this learning (which was part of a series of staff meetings) was the continued unpacking of Tātaiako. This session was led by an external facilitator, (Gaye McDowell) who has been working with our school since the beginning of 2018, and will be continuing to support us in the foreseeable future. One of the activities that Gaye led with the staff was a reading of

the story of Roimata's Cloak, with a follow up activity involving identifying the values and competencies of the various characters within the story. What struck me through participating in this activity, was the added meaning that Gaye brought to the story through her knowledge of Te Reo. Gaye was able to describe the direct translation for the terms in the story, while also providing an in-depth breakdown of the 'whakapapa' of the words. The terms often had a double meaning, or may have been made up of a few words combined to tell a new story. Gaye's understanding of Te Reo helped provide a far richer understanding of the story than if our staff had read Roimata's Cloak on their own. This deeper understanding helped to change our thoughts and perspectives about the characters and events in the story. To unpack the essence of this last sentence, 'greater understanding leads to changed perspectives'. The critical element required for most teachers and school leaders to become more culturally competent is simply to start changing their perspective. To imagine what it might be like for a young Māori learner within their own school. In closing this section about the role of Te Reo in supporting educators to be culturally responsive, I am now a firm believer that some understanding of the Māori language is a critical component.

Summary and Next Steps

The school visits I undertook during my sabbatical allowed me the opportunity to see some diverse ways in which schools were going about developing culturally responsive teachers. I also came to realise on this journey that developing the cultural competencies is more complex than I first thought. Some schools were doing leading work targeted at building learner focussed relationships as their 'vehicle' in catering to the specific needs of their Māori learners. Other schools had fully unpacked the Tātaiako document and were responding to it within their own unique context. Two vastly different approaches, both of which have a lot of merit.

In terms of my own school setting, it has become clearer that there are a number of areas that we need to further develop, in order to become a more culturally competent and responsive school. All of which goes beyond implementing 'things' and 'quick fixes', and will take a more planned, thoughtful and ongoing approach.

Identified below are a number of next steps and areas for further consideration for the leadership team and staff at Fraser Crescent School.

- Consider implementing a matrix of culturally responsive practice in my own school, similar to the way in which Allendale School has done. Many of our staff have participated in a self-reflection process evaluating their capability against the various criteria within the Tātaiako document. As a school we could take this further by 'unpacking' the competencies to make them more meaningful within our own context. Teachers could self-asses and reflect on their own capabilities in relation to the various levels within the matrix. More importantly, we should use the data from these reflections and link them into our school processes such as observations, coaching/mentoring and appraisals, so they are constantly revisited and reflected on. I believe that this would lead to many positive shifts occurring in terms of our teachers' culturally responsive capability.

- Investigate ways that we can better hear and understand Māori student voice within our school. Some past methods of gathering information from the children's perspectives have used approaches which have been less personal, mass survey style methods. These approaches do have a place in gathering data, however we need to be able to really understand how our students see things. We need to review in a way that we can see the impacts of change from their perspective, adopting a more 'do-with' approach as oppose to a 'do-to' approach (Ako Māori). Exploring approaches such as informal discussion groups with particular 'touchstone' students and whanau will likely give our school's teachers and leaders some really useful insights, particularly as we start to consider making changes with our future focussed school curriculum.
- Ensure that changes being made within our upcoming school curriculum redesign, maximise the potential (Te Kore) for our Māori learners. This could be achieved by having a culturally responsive curriculum principle included as one of our guiding principles within our curriculum. Part of our curriculum review will involve putting all of our current practices, processes and initiatives that we have as a school, through a filter made up of our curriculum principles. This filtering process will sort everything that we currently do as a school into three areas. These areas are 'Keep', 'Modify' or 'Scrap'. By having a culturally responsive principle sitting at the heart of our curriculum redesign, this will help to ensure that we apply a Te Ao Māori (Māori World) lens over all elements of our school. As mentioned above, we need to undertake this process with our tamariki and whanau in order to have both student and whanau voice shape our school curriculum.
- Explore ways in which our staff can be supported to improve their understanding and use of Te Reo within the school. This needs to be undertaken in a meaningful way and align with our school's FRASER values and the cultural competencies. Teachers need to be proficient in their understanding of Te Reo to say things like 'Ka pai Frank, I like the way you showed Manaakitanga to Sally in the playground when you helped her after she was hurt'. Teachers need to be able to use Te Reo to add value to the learning experiences for our students, particularly using the language relating to the competencies and our school values.
- Modify some of our key school resources, particularly our FRASER Values, to be more reflective of a Māori perspective. This would require both translating the wording of our values into Te Reo, as well as giving descriptions of these values from a Māori perspective, providing a whakatauki (Māori proverb) that aligns with our values. An example of this is weaving terms such as Kaitiaki (guardian) into our Resourceful value. We then need to go beyond just the terminology, and actually alter the ethos of the value to reflect that of a Kaitiaki. In light of our school's upcoming curriculum review which may result in the changing of our values, it would be prudent to confirm our values before commencing this process.

Closing words

The sabbatical journey that I undertook has resulted in my thinking in terms of developing the culturally responsive capability of teachers, going through three distinct phases. Initially, I had intentions of finding a number of 'things' we could adopt as a school that would support our staff to become more culturally competent and responsive teachers. I quickly came to realise that this wasn't an effective approach and that a more in-depth understanding of each the competencies should be where we focus our energy as a school (this was my second phase of thinking). Now, as I am writing this summary section of my report, I am starting to enter my third phase of thinking. I now believe the key to meaningful culturally responsive practice lies with a staff-wide understanding of Te Ao Māori (the Māori World). This is a more holistic approach, which is underpinned and support by engaging and combining all five of the cultural competencies. The challenge is that my own understanding of Te Ao Māori is limited. I have started to collect and read a number of resources which will support my knowledge and capability in this area. Ultimately, being a culturally responsive educator is about seeing a school through a Māori lens. Creating a physical, academic, social and spiritual environment that meaningfully connects with Māori learners and their whanau. Collaborating on meaningful Ako Māori (reciprocal learning) opportunities with students that activates their senses and unlocks their Te Kore (potential). Engaging both the hearts and minds of Māori learners, to ignite the Ahi (fire) of feeling and knowing success.

One of the real gems that emerged from my school visits came from Drew Manning, the Principal at Allendale Primary School in Whakatane. Drew is a Canadian born and trained educator, who speaks fluent Te Reo. More impressive than this, is the way in which Drew has worked continually to be both aware of his own cultural basis, and change his perspective to see things more through a Māori lens. I am keen to replicate this changing of perspective that Drew has undergone to shift my thinking more along the lines of our Māori learners. Changing my perspective also needs to be done in synergy with ongoing kōrero (discussion) with our students and whanau at school and within our community, to ensure that my understanding of their perspective is on track. In achieving this, I also need to remember the wise words of Gaye McDowell who has supported our staff this year with our cultural competency PLD. Gaye has read over this report and provided some much-valued feedback, including that understanding Te Ao Māori is an ongoing journey and to keep on taking small steps.