

2019 Secondary Senior Managers' Sabbatical

Nick Larkin

Hutt Valley High School

Sustainable Networks And Pathways (SNAP) for Supported Learners

Sabbatical Focus

To plan and implement a realistic, collaborative transition programme that comprehensively prepares the school's Supported Learning Students for life beyond school, and subsequently helps to provide them with purposeful, meaningful long term work and participation within the Hutt community.

Acknowledgements

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| 1. Heather Lear | Head of Hutt Valley High School Supported Learning Centre |
| 2. Anne Hynds | Ministry of Education (TLIF Mentor/Advisor) |
| 3. SNAP Students | Six HVHS SLC (Supported Learning Centre) students |
| 4. Student Mentors | Twelve (Year 13) Students from the wider school |
| 5. Staff Mentors | Six HVHS Staff (Teaching and Support Staff) |
| 6. Professor Jeff Sigafos | Victoria University Education Lecturer (Critical Friend) |
| 7. Susan Arrowsmith | Coaching Consultant and PD Provider (Critical Friend) |
| 8. Craig Braun | HVHS Executive Officer |
| 9. Dr Colin Gladstone | Education Advisor and Researcher |
| 10. Linda Leishman | Canterbury DHB 'Project Search' Lead – Burwood Hospital |
| 11. Carolyn Stuart | Weaving Futures Consultancy |
| 12. Michael Gray | Buzz Café Lower Hutt Valley High School |
| 13. Ginny Anderson | Labour Party MP for Hutt South |
| 14. Chris Bishop | National Party MP for Hutt South |
| 15. Margaret McNully | MOE Lower Hutt (Transition) |
| 16. Lucy Knowles, Matt Reid | Lower Hutt Hutt City Council |
| 17. Bruce Gough | Hutt City Rotary Club |

Education Providers Visited During Sabbatical

- Victoria University - Term 1 and 2 2019
- Bayfield High School – Dunedin 6 June 2019
- Kaikorai Valley Collage - Dunedin 7 June 2019
- Sara Cohen Special School – Dunedin 8 June 2019
- Riccarton High School – Christchurch 17 Sept 2019
- Burnside High School – Christchurch 18 Sept 2019
- Burwood Hospital 'Project Search' – Christchurch 18 Sept 2019
- Waitaha Special School – Rolleston 19 Sept 2019

Acronyms:

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| - HVHS | Hutt Valley High School |
| - SNAP | Sustainable Networks And Pathways (HVHS's programme to transition students into the community) |
| - TLIF | Teacher Led Innovation Fund - for transitioning SLC students (Gained in the same year as the Sabbatical) |
| - SLC | Supported Learning Centre |
| - MOE | Ministry of Education |
| - HCD | Human Centered Design - collaborative, reflective problem solving approach |

Purpose, Background and Rationale

The purpose of the sabbatical in terms of professional learning was to investigate the transition process of students in Hutt Valley High School's Supported Learning Centre (SLC) into work, study, and community involvement beyond school, and to ensure that we are doing the very best for our students and their families. The ultimate aim is to use a Human Centered Design approach to provide students with purposeful learning experiences and opportunities that led to meaningful and purposeful work and engagement in activities post school. A programme has been developed, in conjunction with Heather Lear the HOD of the SLC.

I have been fortunate that my sabbatical coincided with a successful TLIF (Teacher Led Innovation Fund) grant that I secured, with Heather Lear, on the transition of Special Needs Students from High School. Together we devised (in 2018) and are implementing (in 2019) a programme called SNAP – Sustainable Networks And Pathways. At a school level, it involves a greater integration of the SLC students and the wider school, class innovation in teaching to student interests, and a lot of coaching so the students, staff, and eventually the community all benefit. The participants include 6 SNAP students, 12 Student Mentors (from the wider school), 6 Staff Mentors and staff from the SLC.

The sabbatical and the TLIF have provided time and resources for concentrated strategic planning and research, and for forward planning. Specific research was carried out in Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch into the enablers, barriers and issues that such key transition programmes are dealing with. It has been extremely valuable, but has unfortunately reinforced the fact that as a school we need to be proactive in helping students and families in the transition process. The historical issues, present day restrictions on transition of Special Needs students, and the lack of cohesiveness among agencies and Ministries has been an eye opener and as such the SNAP programme will continue in 2020 and beyond with the full backing of the school. The ultimate aim is that we have a successful, purposeful programme that meets the current and future needs of our most vulnerable students.

I have a personal interest in this area of education as I worked with severe and moderate learning needs students in the UK in 2000, and I have worked on and off with the students in the SLC at HVHS, and for the last three years I take the students for cooking weekly, and I volunteer as a teacher aide in their Science class. It was evident that in conversations about the lack of transition opportunities for students in the SLC that the need for a better, more collaborative, personalised and direct system was required.

The Current Situation and Realities

In the last few years 75% of SLC students that have left HVHS are not involved in work or meaningful vocational or volunteer work. This is despite of there being transition courses at Weltech, work experience during the last year, and the best efforts from SLC staff to prepare families and students for their time beyond school. Various factors are at play from the lack of outside providers for the students to family dynamics that impact transition possibilities.

Students who leave school without a clear pathway often try to maintain links with school by 'popping in' to talk to familiar adults and engage with their old classmates. One student who left us at the end of 2016 is spending his days wandering aimlessly around the community and has the potential to be coerced into negative behaviours. We have concerns for non ORS funded students who leave without external support and a clear pathway beyond the first few months.

Supported Learning Centre students, while at school, are able to take part in taster work experience, some generic opportunities in school and the community and leave with a broad range of skills and credits. However, there are very limited opportunities for students to participate in further training and employment due to outside influences on providers and vocational courses. The transition services in the Hutt Valley are not extensive, and many are closing down or full. This leaves families with very few opportunities, and often none, especially if they do not have family connections to assist their child into the wider community.

As our students often join us in Year 9 and may stay at school until they are 21 years if they have ORS funding, they can be working with the same staff for up to eight years. By the time they leave school, they can be very reliant on interacting with the same adults. Once they begin with working with transition providers, they often find it difficult to articulate their own ideas about what they want to do with their lives. It has been noticeable that in their final year of school, student engagement often drops off. Student anxiety often increases as the realization that they are in their final term at school hits them. They, historically, may become more withdrawn and less willing to engage in discussions about their future plans. What we are finding, already, is that the SNAP programme (even in its infancy) has reversed many of these trends due to the greater integration between the wider school and the SLC.

2019 has been a year to build strong structures internally before developing the greater business and community links. We have been fortunate that of the six students that intended to leave in 2019, four have decided to return in 2020. This means that greater research was allowed during the sabbatical period to get things right internally and to prepare for the focus of developing greater

external links in 2020. Visits to Dunedin and Christchurch schools facing similar issues, and having to develop their own links with the communities, has been very worthwhile from a planning perspective, but also from a teaching and systems perspective.

Students leaving school often become reliant on disability benefits if eligible and do not have the opportunity to feel that they are earning their own living. We need to provide them with ways in which they can use their time productively by gaining new skills and potentially supplement their own income. The SNAP programme is hopefully a proactive approach to the lack of pathways on offer to students with special needs, and to barriers that are prevalent in this Special needs area of education and life. It draws on the Social Capital of the community to foster greater inclusion of SLC students in a realistic and sustainable manner, built on a foundation of collaboration and the needs of the student, but as importantly the needs of the business or community groups we are in partnership with.

The basic idea is that we take a Human Centred Design approach with both the students, families and providers (businesses and other organisations) and marry the two needs so that a strong relationship is built and realistic commitments are made from all sides. Thus to ensure the student is ready for work, and the business or organisation is ready and has realistic expectations so their involvement will go beyond work experience opportunities and actually result in longer term employment (or engagement if in a volunteer situation). For the students part time work, whether paid or not, is seen as work. The hours per day and days per week will vary between students but the sense of purpose is the same regardless of the scale of involvement. By achieving meaningful community relationships and alternative pathways into study and employment, students' resilience, confidence and life skills for the future will be stronger. For a SNAP student, a sense of purpose for each day at school, and for each day and week beyond school is the goal, as is the desire to make a meaningful contribution to the community and be recognised for this.

Executive Summary

At Hutt Valley High School, using a Human Centred Design approach to develop the SNAP programme. The results that have been seen to date are in areas of greater self-confidence, personal ownership, perseverance and engagement. Each SNAP student has two Student Mentors. The 6 SNAP students and 12 Student Mentors make up one Mentor (Form) Class this year. Their Mentor Teacher is the HOD Special Needs, and they were all based in the Supported Learning Centre.

An addition to the SNAP student and the two Student Mentors, is a Staff Mentor. This becomes a coaching team of four that aimed to work collaboratively with the school and families to achieve the best possible outcome for the SLC student. 2019 is a year to embed these programmes, train students and staff in coaching and to build and foster greater relationships among the key players. As mentioned, in 2020 we will include more community providers (Businesses, Councils, Volunteer organisations) as we look to build some long lasting partnerships.

What has also developed this year, is the unintended consequence of the 12 Student Mentors own development, skills and knowledge in the area of Special Needs. Three of the senior students have indicated a desire to work in this sector post school. This was not their intention at the start of the programme, but is now one of the aims of the programme as well. Putting resources into developing the coaching skills of the Student Mentors, and involving them decision making has been extremely positive and a great leadership opportunity for many of them.

Findings to Date - Outcomes for all Students and Families

- Students will feel empowered to make their own decisions, and there is less anxiety experienced by students and whanau
- Students maintain motivation and focus in the lead-up to them leaving school
- Programmes are tailored to meet individual student needs- backed up by appropriate unit standards
- Greater integration into the wider school through the Mentor Class (includes SLC and Student Mentors)
- Students have the opportunity to work with a range of adults, therefore developing more self-confidence
- Student Mentors have developed a greater insight into this area of education, potentially wanting to work in this area
- Student Mentors and Staff Mentors have developed advanced coaching skills.... (more on page 11)

SNAP students meet with their mentors on a regular basis - both formally and informally. Student Mentors give up one or more study spells a week to work with their student to enable them to explore potential career and community options. There have been examples of reciprocal learning e.g. SNAP student has participated in a Year 13 Dance class and her mentor has attended the SNAP student's mainstream Art class. The SNAP student subsequently joined the Year 10 Dance option with her mentor's help. The SNAP student was welcomed beautifully into the class and as a result has led the class in warm up dances and been an active participant in lessons. Other Student Mentors have also supported their SNAP student in developing road safety, travel training and accessing community facilities such as Hutt Library and Huia Gym. SNAP students have enjoyed informal events where they

are able to spend time with their mentors, at fortnightly morning teas and team building activities such as indoor rock climbing and bowling. They have particularly appreciated developing these peer friendships that they often otherwise miss out on.

Staff and Student Mentors have completed a coaching course with Susan Arrowsmith (Ministry Certified Coach) which has enabled them to work more effectively with their SNAP student and these skills can also be applied to other aspects of their lives. Student Mentors have gained confidence in communicating with the families of the SNAP students, providing an alternative voice and being able to state some of the challenges they have faced working with the SNAP student. In all cases these contributions are readily accepted by families – as they are seen as feedback from their child’s peers.

I visited a range of schools in Dunedin to find out about their experiences of transition from school for their students. Overall, it appears that there is more successful transition support from external agencies down south and a wider range of day bases whereas in Lower Hutt, over the past few years, there has been a reduction in agencies providing transition support and a very limited range of day bases.

Schools in Christchurch were also visited where ‘Enabling Good Lives’ has been introduced. This provides families with the funding to organize their own transition support and appears to be a more positive way forward. There is no indication yet if, or when this initiative will be introduced into the Wellington region. There is also another initiative called Project SEARCH which is being piloted with Canterbury Regional Health Board. They provide an internship programme for students with disabilities based at Burwood Hospital. However, they are also finding that it is still the links to job opportunities that are hard to find – however this is the best transition to work example I have seen, as it links schools and providers in the final year of schooling to a greater degree. The issue, apart from finding work at the end of the internship, is that these are all ORS funded students who’s funding goes with them to the course. At HVHS most of our students in SNAP are not ORS funded. There is potential for this to be implemented as a similar model in Lower Hutt, either with Hutt City Council who we already have good links with, or Hutt Valley District Health Board. However, this is beyond our scope of thinking at present as the sabbatical research & TLIF is focussing on immediate school links.

Methodology

The specific professional activities that I undertook during the sabbatical included professional reading, and visiting specialised learning units in High Schools in Dunedin and Christchurch. In Christchurch meetings with Dr Colin Gladstone and Linda Leishman of Project Search, were particularly valuable, reinforcing that the SNAP programme is on the right track, as well as gaining further tips and insights into transition realities. Such as the fact that employer engagement, empathy and contributions need to be more than just spreading some initial Social Capital, but need to be long term mutually beneficial relationships. This is particularly the case in small businesses where the ‘bottom line’ is always a factor. Therefore the importance of HCD planning, protocols and implementation is vital.

Consultation also occurred with some community businesses (e.g. Buzz café), the Hutt City Council, the Local MPs (Chris Bishop – National, and Ginny Anderson – Labour). In addition consultation also included meeting with Professor Jeff Sigafoos, Victoria University. He is an advisor on inquiry cycles. Professor Sigafoos (our TLIF critical friend) has authored numerous journal articles and books describing the results of his research on educational and behavioural interventions for individuals with developmental and physical disabilities. Coaching Mentor Susan Arrowsmith and advice from Carolyn Stuart on Human Centred Design have been vital parts in the sabbatical investigation as well.

Relevant research that was consulted was be the 10 Best Practice Principles from the Ministry of Education 2011. They are the national guidelines of specialist educators, schools and parents. While this is a great document, it is big picture, lacks detail and examples of how to and did not add anything that was not already in place.

Finally, consultation with the students, staff, and whanau of the HVHS SLC to help produce a robust programme that incorporates intense personalised pedagogy via a collaborative community based coaching and mentoring system was and still is crucial.

Applying a Human Centered Design approach to the programme, and securing the Sabbatical and the TLIF in 2019 allowed fast tracking of findings and implementation of strategies based on data from students, mentors and families. Data based on surveys, observations, and coaching sessions was analysed with critical friend involvement (namely Jeff Sigafoos and Susan Arrowsmith). Susan’s coaching sessions played a big part in where to next. The six SNAP students all had different levels of capability and needs. The best way to get the most out of the students was to be totally transparent. This meant that SNAP students, Student Mentors and Staff Mentors all met regularly and all underwent coaching. There was a shared philosophy and many trial and error coaching sessions to help assist the needs of the SNAP students. For example one SNAP student would not cooperate in direct coaching, but if it was done with him sitting in the back of a car while being driven around he opened up and contributed well to sessions.

Our Critical Friend, Professor Jeff Sigafoos, provided us with an Autism Programme Quality Indicators (APQI) survey which we adapted to assess the quality of our current transition programme pre- SNAP. We met with Jeff to discuss the findings. The results of this were generally positive but there were several areas where there was room for improvement. This tended to be in terms of formalising information collected which we improved by developing the SNAP milestone data tracking sheet. This sheet is used in once a Term IEP meetings.

Reporting SNAP Findings in 2019 and 2020

- BOT copy of Report
- Staff at HVHS – Especially Senior Leaders
- Supported Learning staff contributing schools and to staff at schools we visited in Dunedin and Christchurch
- ILP meetings with caregivers
- LOOP presentations (Wellington school collaboration of 10 schools)
- Lower Hutt City Council and other Hutt businesses and providers
- Local MPs, MOE Lower Hutt and Minister of Education (meeting pending)

Findings

Students: After discussion with Professor Jeff Sigafoos, we collected data from the SNAP students on their attitudes towards working with their Mentors. This was conducted through informal, one-to-one interviews to gain a more genuine response than a survey which often results in them selecting what they perceive as the “correct” answer. Most responses were very positive, although there were two comments about finding it quite challenging to be asked so many questions and also that the mentor would at times talk too quickly and not allow them time to think of a response. As a result of this, we met with the Student Mentors to share this information, discussing the need to allow for the slow processing of the student. We also requested that this be covered in the follow-up coaching session with our coaching expert, Susan Arrowsmith.

Student mentors had found that the formal GROW model was too confrontational for their SNAP student in a face-to-face, formal situation. They had found that their student would often shut down or be unable to come up with their own ideas without a lot of prompting.

Feedback from the Student Mentors after a coaching session:

- The challenge of getting the SNAP students to verbalise their ideas - Given two options, one student would always go for the second option, whether it was applicable or not. Two other students would shut down if they felt under pressure to respond. And there was the every present challenge of finding time for the Mentor group to work together
- The difficulty of providing a reality check for students whose goals would be difficult to achieve, and how to make them more achievable goals. One Student Mentor said, “How can I be realistic without crushing their dreams?”
- Through careful planning Student Mentors could deliver these tougher conversations in such a way that it was a gentle but effective reality check for SNAP students and their families and at the same time discuss alternatives. An example of this, is that one student was focussed on becoming a Policeman. After some research and many coaching sessions and conversations about other possibilities in the field of law/rules enforcement, the student happily went on CCTV monitoring work experience with the Council, and Parking Warden duties for the day with the Hutt City Council. It was coached out of the student that what they really wanted was to drive a car and wear a uniform.

Issues: An issue with some caregivers has been the mismatch between school and parental expectations for their student. One set of parents in particular were very protective of their son and have provided very limited opportunities for him to develop his independence and life skills. Whereas at school there is an expectation that he will assist with chores, complete food preparation tasks and be as independent as possible. SNAP Family meetings have involved them agreeing to work in partnership to develop life skills. The Student Mentor voice was huge here, and the two mentors for this students have focussed on very basic life skills. It has been amazing to watch his confidence grow as he is given more responsibilities and achieves subsequent successes.

We have also found that the GROW coaching model often needs to be used with the caregivers and students at the family Hui to support the family developing a way forward. In another case, caregivers agreed to support the programme by providing a cell phone, Snapper card or library card for their child but then delay providing it which made progress difficult. Only last week, after three terms of convincing the caregivers, did they allow their child to have a phone. The student’s sense of really being a senior student and of being an adult was evident immediately. Spreading the coaching method to caregivers is a real possibility in 2020.

An issue that is out of our control is that our Friday Food class is under threat as the wider school Food programme is being disestablished with the loss of kitchen facilities. This has been a key element of our programme for the development of life skills and for training students in preparation for the workplace - our partnership with Buzz Cafe has seen the manager there be very impressed with the food preparation skills of our students. Plans are in place through annual budgets to develop the SLCs own kitchen facilities.

Teachers: Feedback from staff on their confidence and attitudes towards coaching after two sessions with our coaching expert, Susan Arrowsmith was that they felt positive about the idea of working with their student and following the GROW model. Some staff had had extra coaching practice with their peers as part of the HVHS professional development programme.

After a midyear session of coaching, some of the realities of time management had made them question their role in the process. They did not feel that they had been able to commit as much time to the programme as they would have liked, which made them feel somewhat disjointed and questioning of their roles as mentors. They felt that the Student Mentors were in a more advantageous position as they were able to check in with their SNAP student on a regular basis whereas, for some Staff Mentors, the only time that they were able to spend time with their student was during the fortnightly morning teas and at the team building events. They also wanted clearer goals to work towards and more idea about the expectations of the programme. These concerns will be addressed in 2020 when a new timetable allows for a one hour Mentor spell per week. In 2020 we will use 7 Support Staff as Staff Mentors - time commitments are easier to work around and they can come to the Mentor sessions.

An unintended outcome has been the key Teacher Aide involved in the programme having more confidence and a feeling of really being part of the SNAP management and planning team. She has been included in planning and coaching sessions with our coaching expert, Susan Arrowsmith, Heather (Head of the SLC) and myself. She has also been provided with time to source placements, research and buy resources and create vlogs for students for the Facebook page.

Caregivers: We collected data from caregivers about their future aspirations for their child and got them to complete a life skills checklist. This was particularly valuable information for one SNAP student whose family hoped that he would go into supported living but the range of household and community tasks that he had been involved in was extremely limited. This provided a good talking point for discussion at his SNAP team meeting as the focus was then on ensuring that all life skills that had been recorded as "not attempted" would now be practised and reinforced both at home and in the school environment.

Coaching: The SLC Teacher Aide who had completed the coaching training, was keen to develop her coaching skills with a wider audience. She was able to coach several of the Student Mentors. She supported two students in particular to devise their own strategies to manage issues with school workload and personal problems.

One Student Mentor took their role as a mentor very seriously and decided to tackle the issue of a SNAP student's poor attendance head-on, giving him reasons for him to be in school and complete the programme. As the SNAP student did not respond in the way that he wanted and became more withdrawn, the Student Mentor became more direct with his questioning, resulting in the student shutting down completely. However, after reflecting on this with the support of the Staff Mentor and gaining more experience with adapting his own coaching skills to a less direct style, he is now able to interact more positively with SNAP students, and realized that an informal approach where the answers come over a longer period of time, and in various settings is far safer and more productive.

Another example was when another SNAP Student showed she was more willing to talk about her aspirations while involved in a food preparation task or practising her barista skills. With experience, all the Student Mentors have found that they need to be more adaptable with the manner in which they conduct a coaching session with their SNAP student. Sitting down, face-to-face does not often achieve positive results with the student finding it too confrontational and shutting down. The response that they receive may also vary according to how tired the student is, so not after PE or any other sporting activity and not when the student has other issues on their mind, such as family problems at home.

In terms of sustainability in 2020 and beyond, we believe that we now have the coaching expertise within the school to work with students in the SNAP programme. The three staff most closely connected to SNAP are all trained coaches. Also, 10 other staff have been trained by Susan during 2019 and this is a great resource for the school to tap into. In terms of new Staff Mentors in 2020, they will be trained by Susan Arrowsmith initially as well.

SNAP Student Interests: SNAP students have been able to explore areas of interest and consider new avenues, for example the student that wanted to become a policeman. This student is currently also doing a weekly work placement at Huia Gym in Lower Hutt which also includes private training sessions. He has found that having a drivers' licence is a key component of his areas of interest and also realises the importance of keeping fit. This provides two areas to focus on during Terms 3 and 4.

To encourage the students to be more open to new ideas about future options, we have created a Job Exploration Task (JET) which requires the student to select three new areas of interest that they can investigate in terms of the tasks involved, skills and qualities required and compare these to their own skills and qualities. Developing the ability to self-reflect is a key component of this and one which the students often find difficult. But with support and coaching their areas of interest can be clearly targeted.

Coffee making and Lego have been two areas of interest for some students. With these we could concentrate on a specific skill and soft skills. Students who completed the barista training programme have been able to regularly practise their skills making coffees for our fortnightly SNAP morning teas. During Term 2 of 2019, they have been able to refresh and develop their skills with further training with Ripe Coffee. We have been able to include a new SNAP student and an extra teacher aide in this training. One of the more confident SNAP students is now able to pass on her knowledge to new baristas. Also, weekly Lego social skills sessions with three SNAP students have been really beneficial in developing turn-taking, understanding the limitations of a specific role, and giving and receiving information. For example, one SNAP student spends a lot of his leisure time playing with Lego but tends to lack tolerance of other people and needs to work on his patience. By working in a team of three where he is only able to take on one of three roles- engineer, supplier or builder, he has been learning to respect the roles of others, to wait patiently for each element to be completed and to show empathy towards students who are not as experienced as he is.

One area that we are going to develop during Term 4, and into 2020 is to use the expertise of one of our Staff Mentors. He is the school Property Manager and will work with students to introduce some DIY skills sessions. We have recently purchased some power tools and equipment to support this. This will enable him to develop a more hands-on, practical approach with his SNAP student (and others) and will build up the student's self- confidence and introduce him to new activities. It is also hoped that it will encourage the student to be more willing to verbalise his ideas using an informal approach to coaching.

SNAP students have been able to work on tailored life skills programmes with their mentors, such as developing social skills in the community by ordering drinks etc., using public transport and accessing facilities such as Hutt Library. As their Year 13 Mentors are of a similar age, this has seemed more natural than going out in a contrived set-up with a teacher aide. As several SNAP students have expressed an interest in work roles which require a drivers' licence, this provides an incentive for students to work towards getting their Learner Drivers Licence. During Term 4, these students will be able to work with their Mentors to develop an understanding of the Road Code which will also develop functional literacy skills. It is also intended that work on resourcing all student interests in food preparation and exercise will be put in place in Term 4 and into 2020.

Student Mentors: The Mentors have participated in three dedicated coaching sessions with Susan Arrowsmith, using the GROW model to practise their coaching skills. They have learnt the stages of the coaching process and the philosophy behind it and have had opportunities to practise their skills both with each other and with their SNAP student. The intention being that they develop the questioning and listening skills from coaching that will assist in their transition from high school and possibly even future employment in this area.

One of the Student Mentors had found school difficult in 2018 as she had transferred schools late in the year and found it difficult to make new friends and interact with her peers. She has mild autistic traits and would often isolate herself in class and at break times. Providing her with the opportunity to join the SNAP programme as a leader has been a huge boost to her self-confidence and given her a sense of belonging. She now often chooses to spend many of her break times with the SNAP students, participating and leading the Board Games club with them. She has shown an increased self-confidence which was demonstrated in the confident and insightful way that she spoke to caregivers at her SNAP student's team meeting.

The family of another Student Mentor have been so impressed with the SNAP programme and how their son has grown in confidence since his involvement that they are going to provide a trophy to our top SNAP student at prize giving.

The Student Mentors have had opportunities to challenge their own experiences and perceived limitations during the team building activities. One had not been ten pin bowling before and didn't know what to do so needed support with this activity. She got assistance and guidance from her SNAP student which was a great moment for all involved. Also, a few of the Mentors were really challenged by the prospect of indoor rock climbing but were able to face their fears once they saw the most reserved SNAP student climb so well. These examples demonstrated the various reciprocal leadership roles and role modelling in the programme.

SNAP Leavers 2019: One SNAP student left the programme at the beginning of Term 3 as his very limited school attendance made it impossible for him to make any progress. He is currently working with external agencies to enable him to become more mentally prepared to investigate pathways outside school. This was unfortunate for the school despite the programme providing him and his family with a range of support strategies and adapting his school programme several times to meet his needs.

The issues for him were wider and more complex than our systems could work with. Through a coaching session for SNAP Staff and Student Mentors this realisation was important. As it put into perspective that each student's needs, influences and issues are very different and may not always result in the idealist vision of the programme. For the Student Mentors, in particular, it was a good life lesson that idealism is unfortunately often trumped by the realities of the day.

Only one SNAP student will now be leaving school at the end of 2019. The other caregivers have decided that it would be beneficial for their child to return to school in 2020 to maximise their experiences and skill development in the SNAP programme. This is a great opportunity to refine the SNAP process for these students and build on the trials and inquiries that we have put in place for each of these very different students.

Looking Forward: In 2020 three new SNAP students will be in the programme, joining the four that are returning. This means that there will be 14 Student Mentors to select and train.

Areas of focus for the rest of the year and early 2020:

- More team building activities
- Indoctrination of the new Student Mentors for 2020 so they can learn from our findings and the 2019 Student Mentors
- SNAP student exploration of alternate career areas
- Organize group coaching sessions on how to have difficult conversations
- Development of identified community and life skills e.g. road safety and travel training.
- Adopt cyclical coaching observations to develop skills
- Identifying equipment and planning needed to support activities in food preparation, DIY and fitness
- Start greater community engagement with potential providers using a HCD approach

S.W.O.T ANALYSIS OF SNAP PROGRAMME TO DATE

STRENGTHS

- SNAP students' self-esteem has increased and connection with the rest of the school
- Having a combined SLC wider school Mentor class
- Initial goal of helping the 6 SNAP students spread to helping the Student Mentors as well
- Mentors contributions
- Using outside experts e.g. Coaching and critical friend
- Using a HCD approach
- Freedom to thinking outside the square. Mentors to know that they have opportunities to share ideas
- Visiting schools and organisations across NZ facing similar issues
- Team building outings
- Greater family involvement
- Coaching skills for the students and staff
- SLT inclusion and support
- Barista programme
- Teacher Aide inclusion in planning and up skilling
- Hutt City Council relationship
- Hand picking mentors
- Parent of Mentor is donating a top SNAP student cup
- Lego skills programme and DIY skills programme

WEAKNESSES

- Family involvement for some students
- Teacher Mentors not having enough time to fully commit
- Time consuming at the moment, but this will be addressed to a degree with the weekly one hour Mentor time in 2020
- Student engagement for one student in particular
- Data tracking is hard, and open to interpretation, dependant on the student on the day, family perceptions
- Tracking students who have left, getting feedback, keeping it front of mind
- Having to start the community engagement from scratch, but this is also an opportunity

OPPORTUNITIES

- To use Support Staff only as Staff Mentors
- To broaden the leadership capacity in the SNAP programme beyond myself and Heather Lear (HOD SLC)
- Hutt City Council - link in with Project Search in Christchurch for further ideas
- Local businesses knowledge of the programme
- Local MP support
- To make SNAP the way we do things, not on top of what we do
- To promote more widely beyond Facebook, website, and school prospectus
- Secure some SNAP funding from school once TLIF ends
- SLC Teacher Aide coaching development
- Staff Mentor being more of a support for the Student Mentor – develop a greater sense of team

THREATS

- Too many students at one time in the programme especially without the resources for higher numbers
- Funding long term – school needs to move a small amount of funds to SNAP when TLIF is complete
- Not selecting the right Student or Staff Mentors
- If Heather Lear or I leave, will the programme be established enough to continue
- Maintaining the drive of the Mentors come internal and exam time
- Student Mentors becoming too 'kind' eg. afraid to have a reality check in with SNAP student
- Not knowing when the outside expert has been used enough

Immediate Implementation for 2020

As well as the greater focus on a Human Centred Design approach for community groups and businesses in 2020 we are also focussing on keeping internal structures strong. We have enlisted for 2020, only Support Staff as Staff Mentors from the wider school to work with SNAP students. This is because time commitments from Teaching Staff meant they could not always show to SNAP meetings and activities – despite the best will.

The selection for the 2020 Student Mentors to work with the 7 SNAP students for 2020 has gone out to students in Year 12 and selections are currently underway. Below is what students received regarding the SNAP programme, as well information in assemblies.

SNAP Student Mentors 2020 – Overview and skills required

SNAP stands for Sustainable Networks And Pathways, and is a programme that started in 2019 to support SLC (Supported Learning Centre) students to transition from school to the workforce, vocational studies and programmes. As a SNAP Mentor you will be in a combined Mentor class with approximately 14 Year 13 students from the wider school, and 7 students from the SLC – these students will be leaving at the end of 2020.

You will be in a Mentor pair working with one SNAP student to support and coach them through the year so they are confident, capable and ready to leave at the end of their High School year. As well as working with the SNAP student you will work in a collaborative team with the SLC staff and one Support Staff member of the school. This Support Staff member will be there to support the student and you.

The skills that you will learn will be transferable to all areas of life and you will receive similar professional learning to what the HVHS staff get. For example coaching and mentoring, and Education Outside The Classroom, and being part of IEPs (Individual Learning Plans) where you are working in tandem with the adult staff members, families and the community to provide a sustainable network and pathway for our SLC students. Student Mentors are expected to give up at least one study spell a week to work with their SNAP student, and be prepared that there will be other commitments such as Family Hui to attend, also possible workplace visits and trips in the community to support their SNAP student with valuable life skills.

Empathy, patience, reliability, calmness, initiative, the ability to learn and implement new skills, and being a team player are the key attributes that we are looking for in a SNAP Mentor. This is a rewarding and potentially life changing role for Year 13 students to be a part of and one that is as important to the SNAP students as it is to the Year 13 Student Mentors.

Below are some of the roles mentioned and a few additional ones that a SNAP Student Mentor can expect to do in 2020

- *To maintain a productive mentor/mentee relationship.*
- *To maintain a productive and collaborative peer mentor and staff mentor relationship.*
- *To demonstrate initiative in developing the skills and opportunities provided for SNAP students.*
- *To develop the students' social skills and self-confidence.*
- *To enable the student to clarify ideas about their future.*
- *To support the student to carry-out their PATH plan.*
- *To provide one to one and group coaching skills.*
- *To complete self-awareness exercises with students and discuss findings.*
- *To support the student in researching potential career areas and refining choices.*
- *To work with the student on setting, practising and achieving goals.*
- *To accompany students on work placements and community visits.*
- *To support students to access facilities within the school e.g. clubs, events.*
- *To sit alongside the student in class if required.*
- *To take the student out for morning tea, life skill exercises (e.g. using the buses) etc.*
- *To act as an advocate during SNAP team meetings with caregivers.*

Implications Moving Forward

Ethical Considerations

1. We will continue to seek advice from Professor Jeff Sigafos on how to conduct an ethical investigation and inquiry cycle
2. All stakeholders will be clearly informed of the aims of the SNAP programme
3. Consent to participate in the SNAP programme will be gained by students and their whanau
4. All SNAP programme participants will be treated with dignity and respect at all times
5. An awareness of students' anxiety levels, sensory and learning needs will be paramount at all times
6. Participants' confidentiality will be maintained and will not be able to be identified in the publication of findings
7. Data will be stored confidentially and securely, with information only available to approved parties
8. Community providers can withdraw from the programme if they do not feel the experience is mutually beneficial
9. If any participant makes a disclosure that requires investigation, this will be followed up using HVHS policies

Identifying Risks and Unintended Consequences

- Regular contact will be maintained between all stakeholders in the SNAP programme, to ensure a regular flow of information and the ability to sort out any issues before they escalate
- Whanau will need to be consulted each Term so they feel they are working in partnership and have input
- Build capacity in other staff around SNAP, as this will help to ensure that if one person leaves they can be replaced
- If a relationship between a student and mentor proves to be unproductive, support will be provided as required and/or terminate the mentoring relationship between the two parties
- Students will need to have regular check-in sessions with staff to ensure that they are feeling positive about the opportunities provided and are coping with any possible anxieties
- If a student decides that a potential pathway being explored is not right for them, it will be important that they feel able to express their opinion (by themselves or via Mentors), and look to adapt and refine their pathways
- Teacher Aide support will be provided for students on work placements and engaged in training, to meet health and safety requirements. A safety plan will be carried out prior to the placement starting, to identify potential hazards

Benefits of the Sabbatical (SNAP Project)

The benefits of the investigation are wide ranging from a professional and personal point of view. From a professional point of view the investigation and subsequent development of a refined transition system is having positive outcomes for the future prospects of HVHS students in the SLC. The findings and value added practice can then be shared with the schools that were consulted during the investigation, and with all schools in the Wellington region and in NZ via web based articles, visits, LOOP presentations and schools visiting HVHS, as potentially we will be seen as a possible flag ship for other regions in NZ to duplicate.

Personally, the benefits were that I was able to thoroughly investigate an area of interest for a section of the school population that is often unrepresented. Also, to be able to have time away from school based day to day duties and teaching, and to spend more time with family, ensured that the research, development of ideas and subsequent actions, reflection and sharing of best practice was not rushed and more comprehensive. The time to investigate and concentrate only one area of work was enjoyable, rare and meant that I returned refreshed and excited about the next steps in the investigation and its possible pathways in 2020.

For my development as a Senior Leader it provides a more comprehensive avenue into another part of the school and meant that I continue working with different staff from the traditional 'mainstream' Learning Areas. It also means that I develop and refine skills in terms of dealing with and supporting parents that have a unique and huge stake in their child's education.

The leadership development has also been beneficial in terms of networking with other schools and private and public entities, and seeing the potential systems, ideas and philosophies that are working outside of the education system, and what HVHS can adopt as best practice. At HVHS, key values are being welcoming, kindness, perseverance and success, and the sabbatical investigation incorporated these perfectly.

For the students, the confidence that is being gained, the positive relationships with peers and staff outside the SLC and with adults in the community (potential employers) is extremely important and valuable. It means they may have a more certain alternative pathway into employment that previously was unavailable to them. It will provide agency, a sense of real purpose for the students and the family, and take away the huge anxiety that we see students and families exhibit as they are about to leave school.

By Implementing the SNAP programme, HVHS staff....

- Have more flexibility to adapt and refine their plans, and are encouraged to take calculated risks
- Have developed a greater understanding of the needs of local employers and providers
- Place a greater emphasis on teaching as inquiry to meet the needs of individual students
- Have developed innovative ways of supporting students in their transition and improve pathway outcomes
- Will be able to maintain a mentoring and support role in the year following students leaving school
- Have worked more collaboratively both within the school and in the community, and developed relationships as a coach
- Have provided another voice for SLC students and families

By Implementing the SNAP programme, students (SNAP and Student Mentors)...

- Feel more empowered to make their own decisions, and have a coaching team around them that knows them well
- Have shown less anxiety when preparing to leave school, or thinking about transitioning from school
- Maintain motivation and focus for longer periods and have programmes tailored to meet individual needs
- Have work experience and skills development backed up by appropriate unit standards.
- Have the opportunity to work with a range of adults, therefore developing more self-confidence & communication skills
- Will be able to maintain supportive links with trusted adults in the year post-school

Conclusions and Next Steps

This year has been a time of setting up the new systems, coaching programmes, teaching programmes, researching, trialling, reflecting, adjusting, and developing meaningful relationships within the school and community for the sole purpose of benefiting the students in the SLC and their Student Mentors. It has been an interesting and successful year to date and the sabbatical thinking time and research has played a big part in the SNAP programme's sure and considered implementation.

In 2020 there is a need to introduce a model that puts greater structure around the SNAP programme to comprehensively develop the links with the wider Lower Hutt community. A carefully managed Human Centered Design approach will be key for the school to effectively tap into their social capital in a mutually beneficial way.

In terms of in school developments, using a structure similar to the Waitaha Special School model in Rolleston is a possibility, with a HVHS twist. For example we could have a SNAP Transition Structure that overtly focusses on these five areas at its core.

1. **Social & Physical Skills** – developing confident & socially acceptable interactions, and a joy for physical/leisure activities
2. **Work and Life Ready** – developing pre-employment skills and functional life skills –both soft and hard skills
3. **Community Experience** – engaging long term with community providers, based on mutually agreed criteria and outcomes
4. **Technology** – develop confidence and skills with relevant and accessible technology to enhance student’s lives
5. **Curiosity** – developing a curiosity to act independently, be brave and persevere

10 key thoughts from the sabbatical findings

1. Secure the last cycle of funding in January from the TLIF, as the need for HVHS to build its own relationships with the business community, vocational providers and volunteer organisations requires time and money
2. A collaborative, Human Centred Design approach is vital between all parties – school, student, home and community. This Agile design approach of being collaborative, designing and trialling, and failing fast, reflection and improved planning and implementation needs to continue – especially as each student’s circumstances and supports are so unique
3. Continue Coaching with staff and all students and potentially offering this to families and key community points of contact
4. Outside providers to schools are limited, closing down, inadequate, full or non-existent in certain areas and there is no oversight from the MOE or MSD, and no consistency across the country. Unfortunately schools Supported Learning Units need to do the job themselves in the short term
5. There is a lack of funding, or knowledge of how and where to get funding for transitioning Special Needs Students. There are pockets of potential (Project Search) in the country, but they are still hamstrung by lack of structure once students leave school. Areas where there is a contact (navigator) between home and the school (e.g. Enabling Good Lives) has seen success and purpose for families and students – this needs to be pushed with MPs in the Hutt and with the MOE
6. Concentrate on the front end of the curriculum for building functional skills for the work force and community and concentrate on specific skills for each student and start that journey from age 14
7. Micro business route is interesting and can give real life skills to the students while still at school. It is like they are creating their own Gateway/Young Enterprise Programme
8. Work skills in the school are important – gardening, cleaning, flatting skills, retail skills can be vital skills to learn before getting community work experience
9. Employer Education is vital, as is employer commitment to part time work - work experience is not enough. Part time work might be 3-4 hours a day for 2-4 days a week. Hence the importance of the solid relationship with employers
10. With continued focus and collaboration the SNAP programme will deliver on its original vision

Specific contact to continue with Critical Friends and visits to education providers and key people in the community

1. Critical Friend relationships to continue
2. Coaching to continue with Susan Arrowsmith 2020
3. Visits to schools in Melbourne Term 1, 2020 and Auckland to a cluster of 5 special schools (Oakland School) in Term 2
4. Contact with Chris Hipkins (Minister of Education) & Andrea Williams (MOE Head & Regional Manager) to share findings
5. Regular meetings with Hutt City Council, and MPs Chris Bishop and Ginny Anderson to push the Enabling Good Lives programme in the Hutt Valley
6. Continue connections with The Hutt Rotary Club, Lower Hutt Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, volunteer organisations and vocation providers

Professional Readings

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| 1. Ministry of Education | Guidelines for specialist educators, schools, parents |
| 2. Grant Cleland, Colin Gladstone, Caroline Todd | Wayne Francis Charitable Trust Transition Project, May 2008 |
| 3. Dr Colin Gladstone | Project Search Articles ‘Flexible Pathways’ |
| 4. CEO Update | Canterbury District Health Board, January 2019 |