

Sabbatical Report

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To investigate what an effective culturally responsive approach to the implementation of New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa might look like.

I approached this investigation on 5 levels:

1. Developing my own knowledge of teaching and learning in a Maori medium environment and the challenges faced by teachers to raise student achievement.
2. Increasing my understanding of cultural responsiveness required in English medium classrooms to raise Maori Student achievement.
3. Investigating nationally how schools similar in nature to Forest Lake meet the demands of delivering two unique curriculums.
4. Identifying how to establish, nurture and sustain genuine partnerships with our community, local hapu and iwi.
5. Gaining insights into the strengths, challenges, similarities and differences when working within a different cultural framework and exploring strategies to enhance Maori student potential.

Introduction:

Forest Lake Primary School offers education in two mediums: English and Te Reo Maori through a mainstream (known as General School) and the Rumaki ( Total Immersion Maori Level 1). During the 1990's the school also provided bilingual education at Level 2. Bilingual education was withdrawn in 2000 and parents were only offered two educational settings for their children.

Since this time we have been on a journey implementing Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, developing our marau-a kura (localized curriculum) and more recently implementing Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki Maori.

What is most important to us is that we retain our 'oneness' while accepting our cultural differences and philosophical differences in how we deliver our school curriculum in each area of the school. We want to entwine these differences for the benefit of all students who are educated at our school.

As part of this journey it was identified in my Appraisal of 2010 that I needed to make closer links with iwi and hapu as well as further develop how we consulted with our Maori community. I was also aware on a personal level of the need to learn more about the students and the families that were in our school.

Hence my journey begun in earnest in 2012. The topic was so broad I identified the five key areas of investigation that were most relevant to me and would have the greatest impact on Forest Lake Primary School for that time.

1. Developing my own knowledge of teaching and learning in a Maori medium environment and the challenges faced by teachers to raise student achievement.

I am not Waikato born and so did not have a good knowledge of the history, in particular Maori history of the Waikato and so I began this journey by reading key books:

*The Maori King; Gorst J E Sir;*

*Te Puea, King Michael,*

*Tainui, Kelly L G*

*A Place to Stand: A History of Turangawaewae Marae. An Occasional Paper No. 15; King M*

These readings provided me with a picture of the historical past of Waikato, the important and inspirational role Te Puea and the establishment of Turangawaewae Marae *'She came back to her people when they were fragmented and demoralized. ...she had restored to them their system of rural-based extended families, their communal patterns of living, their traditional leadership and their cultural activities....she had won a large measure of European acceptance for the King movement and helped secure compensation for the confiscations., '* and the establishment of the Kingitanga movement which *' provides a section of the Maori people with a societal and cultural background in which to frame their lives in a wider society.'*

Armed with this knowledge I now feel more confident to take the next step of connecting with our local hapu; determine which local marae we can affiliate to and establish a working relationship to establish a foundation to enhance the school curriculum which reflects not only the aspirations of Maori but of all ethnicities at the school.

During this time I also reflected on the challenges faced by the teaching staff in the Rumaki. All staff are second language learners. For example, while having a good command of te reo, this can mean that prior to teaching a new topic they need to learn new terminology to be able to teach it in an immersion setting.

Resources can also be challenging. While many are now commercially made, teachers still spend considerable time creating their own but this is probably more on a par with mainstream now. What I see as more challenging in this area is translation of English resources such as planning templates that are not yet commercially available. This can be time consuming for staff.

What I have seen as principal is that English medium development occurs and changes are implemented which is then followed by changes for the immersion unit. Some examples of this was New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) was implemented followed later by Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (TMOA). Our school curriculum was written based on NZC and now is being reviewed to include TMOA. National Standards reporting templates were published and 1 month from reporting deadlines Te Waharoa (reporting templates for immersion student achievement) are available online. This creates pressure and undue stress on staff to meet requirements.

Another major challenge is that staff are meeting parents' aspirations to educate their children in an immersion unit but this can be without commitment from the parents to support by learning the language.

My next step is to become more involved in the professional development that Rumaki staff are involved in so I have a full understanding of what is expected in delivery of the curriculum in an immersion environment.

A leadership team is established made up of staff from Rumaki and general school. The key role of this group is to understand how well students are achieving and what we can do to make a difference no matter what area of the school they come from. Through these dialogical conversations the leadership team's knowledge of both areas of the school is growing.

Increasing my understanding of cultural responsiveness required in English medium classrooms to raise Maori Student achievement.

Ka Hikitia's strategic intent is "*Maori enjoying education success as Maori.*" This documents intent ties closely with Tataiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Maori Learners. High quality teaching is most influential on outcomes when strong relationships are formed between teachers and students and whanau. These relationships need to be genuine to have effective teaching and learning to occur.

There are five key aspects to be understood when working with Maori students. The five key aspects are: **Ako** Practice in the classroom and beyond; **Whanaungatanga** Relationships (students, school-wide, community) with high expectations; **Wānanga** Communication, problem solving, innovation; **Manaakitanga** Values – integrity, trust,

sincerity, equity and **Tangata Whenuatanga** Place-based, socio-cultural awareness and knowledge.

Kia Hikitia – Managing for Success states that we need to change our focus from a deficit model to one of a potential approach where we believe that Maori can achieve as Moari. To do this, Ako is essential if we are to achieve success.

Te Kotahitanga Professional Development Programme suggests there are 6 elements that are essential to effective teaching. Manaakitanga extends to mean that teachers care for their students as culturally located human beings; Mana motuhake is that teachers care how well their students perform; Nga whakapiringatanga or a secure, safe environment is created; Wananga teachers are engaging in effective teaching relationships; Ako teachers using strategies that promote effective teaching and builds positive relationships and Kotahitanga where teachers reflect on the outcomes that in turn lead to improvements. These elements relate more directly to the teacher and their engagement with Maori students.

Building teacher capacity to incorporate the above elements will strengthen teacher student relationships, impact on the effectiveness of teachers and raise outcomes for students.

Investigating nationally how schools similar in nature to Forest Lake meet the demands of delivering two unique curriculums.

There are very few schools I have found that have a Rumaki unit based in a general school. It was for this reason that I looked instead at a delivery model that could meet the demands of using two curriculum documents to deliver the curricula.

*'Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, maths, social sciences science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.'* (Sobel,D).

This was my starting point for how we could integrate Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and the New Zealand Curriculum. Our students are drawn for the same community therefore this was the first commonality and on arrival at school why did we need to separate them depending on which language medium they were taught in.

*'Place-based education immerses student's in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, uses these as a foundation for study across the curriculum and emphasizes learning through participation in service projects for the school and / or community.'* (Penetito, W)

I did not have the local knowledge of our local heritage and therefore have sourced key personnel that will be able to assist me to build this.

The concept of place-based-education fits in with the traditional Maori view of the constructs of a child. It is holistic and multi-layered; while embedded within the community, connecting with the family in past, present and future.

Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini. (I come not with my own strengths but bring with me the gifts, talents and strengths of my family, tribe and ancestors.) This whakatauki encapsulates my view of not only Maori but all ethnicities. We are becoming a diverse multicultural society and this belief that all children come to school with many gifts needs to be acknowledged, captured and used to benefit all students learning.

For the element Tangata Whenuatanga to be embedded we need to discover our roots and our immediate heritage for Forest Lake School. Place based education is merely a vehicle to deliver a curriculum which has potential to improve outcomes not only for Maori students but all students.

Identifying how to establish, nurture and sustain genuine partnerships with our community, local hapu and iwi.

This is the most challenging aspect of the journey. Forest Lake School sits on a boundary of two different marae. Through conversations with key Maori elders I hope to establish which marae we can affiliate to and then record significant historical information that can be used for teaching different curricula.

Gaining insights into the strengths, challenges, similarities and differences when working within a different cultural framework and exploring strategies to enhance Maori student potential.

*(These are my personal views of what I experienced and saw while visiting schools in Northern Territory. They are not meant to be inflammatory or derogative nor are they based on any research.)*

For this part of the journey I visited schools in the City of Palmerston, Northern Territory Australia.

By visiting the Northern Territory I was hoping to be able to explore strategies that would enhance what was being implemented at Forest Lake Primary School to raise student potential.

What was gained in this journey was confirmation that Maori Medium education in New Zealand is further down the continuum than indigenous education in Australia.

I visited several schools in the region and the most significant impact was the difficulty schools had in engaging students for a sustainable length of time. Indigenous students were very transient, travelling to outlying camps for cultural events. It was not uncommon that they could be away for up to six weeks at a time. If attendance dropped below 70% for any student the Department of Education was then responsible for locating the student and assisting them to return to school.

Dialect was an issue. English is their second language. Students from different camps could not be accommodated in one school. The indigenous students are boisterous, loud and have no real boundaries.

A school I visited in Darwin had a transition class or family room for indigenous students. The class had a range of ages as well as adult support. This support was teenage indigenous people from the same camp. The classroom teacher had established positive relationships with families in a neighboring camp. She collected the students from the camp daily to ensure they came to school.

The programme focused on expectations of behavior in a school and basic literacy and numeracy in English. At breaks the students played in the general playground. Once students had learned school expectations and how to behave in a class situation they were transferred in to a general class.

In other schools the students were catered for within regular rooms. However there was an emphasis on at risk centers in each school which provided interventions to assist students.

Schools supported the total well-being of the student and their family. Canteens, vegetable gardens, opportunity shops, preschools, adult education centres were all offered in the schools. There was very strong evidence community partnerships which also provided significant funding levels to each school.

Maori medium education was established less than 30 years ago and is still in a developmental stage. It has a strong community base and has been established to ensure te reo Maori and Maori culture survive.

While Maori Medium education in New Zealand is still developing, with resources and assessment tools still being developed, my journey has confirmed that at Forest Lake School we are moving forward to provide an education that strengthens te reo Maori and Maori culture but this would be further enhanced by establishing strong community ties.

## So What?

Current practices at Forest Lake Primary School that enhance the school culture and have a positive impact on raising student achievement for Maori are:

- Our culture of tikanga that is embraced school-wide ( karakia, powhiri, basic te reo instructions for all, waiata, school signage )
- Promoting of tikanga in school-wide programmes( understanding and knowing what is culturally acceptable – no sitting on tables, don't touch the head)
- Leadership team is developing a big picture view of student achievement throughout the whole school and an understanding of assessment tools being used.
- A vision Kawe Ake te Manuka – Rise to the Challenge' that embraces all members of the community.
- A real desire to keep our 'oneness' and not be separated into two schools.
- Staff modelling

Further practises that could be introduced to Forest Lake Primary School that enhance the school culture and raise Maori student achievement are:

- Developing school wide practises based on 'Tataiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers. Unpack this document and develop a continuum for our school.
- To support staff build their capability in using te reo correctly, particularly pronunciation. Using our Rumaki staff to support others become more competent in everyday use of te reo.
- To raise the level of te reo being used in authentic contexts in general classrooms.

Authentic ways to engage the local community and iwi to enhance the student curriculum are:

- To have a school kaumatua / kuia that works actively in the school and assists to build links to the local community and iwi.
- To establish relationships with a range of stakeholders such as links to our local marae.
- Through relationships understand our local heritage and determine how that can lay the foundation for our school curriculum.

## Where to for our School?

This report outlines what I have achieved to date on my journey of discovery. Much of my own personal development has been established but will be on-going as further research into raising Maori student achievement is completed but I have a foundation on which to now move out into the wider community.

My next steps to action will be:

- connect with local Maori elders to establish significant history relating to the Forest Lake School Area. To share this information with staff and incorporate it into our school curriculum.
- To unpack the document Tataiako with staff to build teacher capability and effectiveness when teaching Maori students.
- To complete the contract Poipoia te Reo, an inquiry based contract based on the principle of nurturing the language and making it sustainable for all.
- To have an identified Kaumatua or kuia for our school.

As long as I'm leader of Forest Lake School I can see my journey continuing on this pathway in the future. My sabbatical has allowed me the opportunity to start this journey and identify where to next.

### **Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi**

*With your basket and my basket the people will live*

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