

Principal's Sabbatical Report

(May-July 2014)

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“Titiro whakamuri, hoki whakamua -reflecting on the past and present clears the way for the future”

Grey Main School

Te Kura Matua o Māwhera

The Grey Main Way is a journey of discovery, respect and knowledge resulting in a love of learning.

Kia mau ki tō Māoritanga.

Hold fast to your culture.

The focus of my sabbatical was to inquire into what schools who offer dual medium educational opportunities do to implement and facilitate success for all learners (children, staff and whānau).

Purposes

1. To review and reflect on what leaders/tumuaki of established successful dual medium schools have learnt during their journey.
2. To gain a deeper understanding of Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki and at what stage to implement/assess and how these documents along with The New Zealand Curriculum and National Standards are managed in dual medium schools.
3. To highlight the strategies used by successful dual medium schools to keep the momentum, the enthusiasm, the learning alive and at the forefront to ensure student achievement is not affected.
4. To establish guidelines to ensure the implementation and development of Te Hiringa (our Maori Medium class at Grey Main School) reflects the vision, the beliefs and the values of our school whānau.

Key Questions.

1. Tell me about your journey that resulted in you being here.
2. School history, decile, reasons for opening a bilingual option for the learners, key factors such as outside support and what makes this school what it is?
3. What is your personal beliefs/values/vision for bilingualism?
4. Successes.
Maori medium?
English medium?

5. What is the key to maintaining the cohesion, unity within the school/whanau/community?(Us and them mentality)
6. What curriculum documents are used to develop learning programmes?
How is this managed within the school?
7. Staffing and recruitment?
8. How do you keep that momentum going? Whanau, Iwi and community backing he shared beliefs of the school.
9. Where to next for this school?
10. Our journey ...suggestions for me as we establish our Maori Medium class at Grey Main.

Introduction

I visited eight dual medium schools in both the South Island and the North Island. These schools were recommended to me by an advisor at The Ministry of Education as dual medium schools who have effectively established Maori Medium classes at Level 1 and 2.

One school is decile 1(a), two schools are decile 1(b), one is decile 2, one a decile 3, two decile 4 and one school is decile 7.

Schools had more than one Māori Medium class with the exception of one. The largest school I visited had 8 classes at level 1 and 8 classes at level 2. The smallest Māori Medium unit had 24 learners with numbers building to open another class mid-way through the year.

One school began their journey to bilingualism as far back as 1985 and the most recent established Māori medium class began in 2011.

The principals I interviewed with the exception of one had been the tumuaki in their school since the initial establishment of their Māori Medium classes and providing this option for the learners at their Kura.

One principal had dis-established the bilingual class after one year at the school and the following year started right from the beginning after consulting with school whānau to align the vision and beliefs which resulted in the establishment of a new Māori medium option for the learners. The board made the commitment to open two classes which has now grown to five classes at Level 1.

All the schools I visited had a uniform with one school allowing variations to the uniform (different coloured polo shirts) for the learners in both Māori and Samoan Medium classes. This was to give individuality and easy identification to those learners. One principal reintroduced a school uniform to create pride within the school prior to establishing a Māori Medium class.

The Schools' Journeys

Underpinning dual medium schools is the sound pedagogy and the tumuaki shared their philosophies based on their individual beliefs.

Bilingualism is being able to think, read, write and speak in more than one language.

In order to become bilingual we must value the learners first language as this sets a strong platform for learning and enables them to learn and understand a second language.

One principal stated “If the first language is English, build on that, feeding new language alongside English.”

The younger the child, the more success they will have in accomplishing bilingualism and if the programme is well implemented and the whānau committed to supporting their learners both at school and in the home learning both languages may take five to six years to achieve both target languages.

All principals were united in their voice when they reiterated how important it is to ensure that all teachers both English and Māori medium teachers must share the same expectations and show consideration for all mediums. In one school, the teachers in the English Medium came on board after seeing the benefits from learning as Māori. Behaviour improved, less transiency, student engagement and achievement were the result of providing Māori Medium education.

All the schools with the exception of one stated that the Maori learners in Māori Medium classes achieved at a higher level than their Māori peers in English Medium classes. In the one school where the learners made the same progress in Maori Medium and English medium, the school provided Level 3(7.5-12.5 hrs. a week) tuition in all the other English Medium classes and was also a decile 7 school. The school was also situated very near a marae where they whakapapa to and are very involved in the protocols and proceedings associated with marae. The learners at this school are very much in touch with the Māori world.

The principals who manage Māori Medium opportunities for their learners all had varying philosophies depending on their individual communities but all spoke with passion with the consensus they want their Māori learners learning as Maori and to be given opportunities to achieve to their potential and beyond.

One principal believes “The way to make Māori achievement better is to get more Māori kids into Māori context especially our secondary schools. These are white spaces quoted from Ann Milne’s thesis entitled ‘Colouring in the White Spaces. Cultural Identity and Learning in School’”.

After reading this article I agree with the main recommendations that mainstream schools become culturally responsive to Māori and other ethnicities so it is not considered alternative to the norm. This reiterates one principal’s drive to change the name from mainstream schools to dual medium schools. The term mainstream refers to the changes in Special Education when learners with special needs were returned to mainstream schools. Dual Medium Schools gives Māori Medium the same status as English Medium and not an alternative to the norm. Ann Milne wants principals and senior leaders to develop an understanding of being culturally responsive, critical and inquire into social justice pedagogy. She believes that Ka Hikitia be fully resourced so all schools can access professional development. She also states that we as educationists ask different questions of our Māori and ethnic communities about their aspirations for their children, then don’t allow our own agendas to influence the answers or reinterpret the answers to

fit our preconceived ideas. We also need to give our Māori parents genuine choices. In order to provide authentic cultural learning environments, Section 156 of the Education Act should be supported in the way it was designed to. The Ministry of Education should not put insurmountable barriers in the way of schools trying to provide an education that fits the needs of the community.

This was expressed by many principals I visited, with one principal stating, “We don’t let little things get in the way.”

There was an overwhelming feeling that dual medium schools were the poor relation, often forgotten about, underfunded and had missed out on appropriate professional learning.

The Ministry had been into a number of the schools I visited to clarify the assessment tools schools were using and there is a misunderstanding around the use of Nga Whanaketanga versus National Standards. As you will see further in this report schools are managing this on an individual basis meeting the needs of their learners and their communities.

One of the greatest attributes in all the schools I visited was the relationship the principal and staff had with whanau. Consultation, communication and robust discussions were paramount to the success of the Māori Medium classes.

“The strength of our school is holding onto our beliefs. Use kaumatua to guide you.”

“Bring whānau together and as we grew we had to ensure everyone remained on the same waka.”

“The success has been the involvement of our whanau through fundraising and discussion. Having that’ buy in’!”

“Your kaumatua directs you but we also use our own people because they have a lot of knowledge.”

“It’s about building relationships, working with people who share the same kaupapa/vision.”

“It’s important to have that conversation with whānau, as it is what they want for their tamariki.”

Curriculum Documentation.

All schools were using either Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum to implement their own school curriculums.

The schools own curriculums were very much driven by whanau, staff and student voice. Although schools were at varying stages of curriculum development these were reviewed constantly and development was ongoing.

“The biggest difference between Te Marautanga and New Zealand Curriculum is the graduate profile and spending more time looking at the Maori perspective. They align quite well really.”

Table 1. Curriculum Documents used by schools to develop own curriculums

	Māori Medium L1	Māori Medium L2	English Medium
NZC			4
Te Marautanga	2	2	
NZC and Te Marautanga	2	3	3

Reporting student achievement (Nag 2b).

This area was a mire of confusion for someone who just wanted to know exactly what the requirements were. Some schools reported solely the National Standard data for all students.

One principal stated, “We report National Standard data as we don’t want to suddenly find that our students have fallen behind their peers and we use Ngā Whanaketanga assessments for internal data to ensure we are making progress in Māori Medium too.”

For the schools who haven’t reported Ngā Whanaketanga data Ministry advisors have questioned the reasons behind the schools decisions and one school held a meeting for all dual medium schools in the area to clarify the requirements.

The Ministry of Education would like schools to report using Ngā Whanaketanga but consensus of the principals I interviewed was to gather internal data using Ngā Whanaketanga to guide teaching and learning and to report using the National Standards.

Table 2. Reporting Student Achievement

	Māori Medium L1	Māori Medium L2
Nga Whanaketanga	2	1
National Standards	1	3
Non reporting	1	1

To develop school curriculums which include Ngā Whanaketanga, schools have developed graduate profiles with guidance from all stakeholders. Schools have then filled in the ‘what and how’ between the graduate profile and the Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum.

Principals and Resource Teachers of Māori suggested ways to assess Māori Medium learners initially would be their oracy (Kupu). E.g. Vowels, word lists, karakia, Pepeha/mihi, listening tests etc and only begin this after one year in the Māori Medium setting.

In schools where learners learn in Level 1 Māori Medium classrooms more emphasis is put on teaching English Medium from about Year 5

and principals found that in many cases learners who had been exposed to Level 1 Reo for their formal education accelerated their progress by going up 3 year levels in just one year.

Gaining Momentum

All the principals I spoke to thought it is necessary to have some criteria around enrolment into a Māori Medium class.

Two schools asked whānau to sign a written agreement. Others ranged from an interview with the principal when whānau requested for their tamariki to be enrolled in the Māori Medium class and verbally committed to supporting the programme. One school assessed the parent's ability in Te reo although was not a prerequisite for inclusion but a commitment to ongoing learning.

All schools were committed to ensuring whanau had access to learning Te Reo by providing either classes within the school or outside agencies such as Te Wananga o Aotearoa. All schools asked for at least one years commitment to the Maori Medium class but in all cases the bilingual option had expanded and very few learners had returned to English Medium classrooms.

Three of the schools I visited had recently successfully recapitated becoming Year 1-8 full primary schools and were providing their own technology programmes. These programmes reflected the Maori perspective and included carving, art, cooking technology, sewing etc.

Only two schools had a Kohanga Reo Early Childhood Provider onsite. Two schools had close connections with Kohanga Reo Centres. These links were paramount to ensure transition was smooth and transparent. One school had recently set up transition plan where a new learner was assigned a 'big brother' or 'big sister' (Tuakana/Teina). Prior to visiting the kura/school the big brother/sister would visit the 4 year old at their Early Childhood Education Centre and get to know them. The last visit would be their last day and the big sister/brother would then meet up

with them at school from the first day. This was for both Māori and English Medium learners.

Every school I visited had at least one whānau hui per term. This usually took the form of a short performance, a korero followed by kai. Some schools who were reviewing their school curriculums were holding several hui to gauge whānau and get their opinions.

One school reported how important it is to report back to whanau regularly to ensure that they have been listened to.

Schools have varied the time they hold their hui. Sometimes they are held at breakfast time, or after school or in the evening. One school held a hui in the first week at school offering a lucky ticket for a free stationery draw which encouraged whanau to attend and this was extremely successful.

One principal spoke of the importance of gathering information through a variety of ways other than hui. They used surveys, questionnaires, phone calls etc. but was also known to take a clipboard to the gate.

Associating with local iwi and the marae was also important. This gave tamariki and their whanau a sense of belonging even though a number of schools reported they were pantribal.

Recruiting staff seems to be only a problem in the South Island. Schools in Auckland were spoilt for choice and as Māori Medium classrooms have grown so have the staff. Boards of Trustees have been flexible and generous to ensure the staff are given ample opportunity and encouragement to pursue further study. Schools support for Dual Medium schools is growing and The Ministry of Education have listened to Principals in the upper North Island and a group of enthusiastic leaders are meeting to drive for the establishment of a collective Dual Medium Principals. This in time will provide the vehicle to ensure that our Māori learners (presently 15% are in Māori Medium Schools) are given more opportunities to learn as Māori in Dual Medium Schools. “Our traditional schools are failing Māori nationally and we need to work together to ensure we reverse this trend,” said one passionate principal who is leading the way with dual medium schools.

Conclusion

Every school I visited had its own school ethos or culture and the learners were engaged and happy. All the schools had strong articulate principals who are passionate in their belief that dual medium schools provide their learners with learning opportunities to ensure their graduates leave holding their heads high and really proud to be Māori. Along the journey to bilingualism I have faced many barriers but this sabbatical has reinforced my philosophy that Māori should learn as Māori and providing Māori Medium options will give learners different pathways for the future in a country where we should be providing and celebrating our indigenous language.

As a school community we need to regroup and look at the future for our learners. We will have some robust discussions about what our aspirations for our learners are and what we want for our graduates and ensure the needs of our whanau are met and documented using both Te Marautanga o Aotearoa and The New Zealand Curriculum.

Making connections with the our new marae and engaging with Kati Waewae to ensure our learners are given lots of opportunities to experience Māori protocol and Tikanga is another aspect that is paramount to the success of Dual Medium Schools.

All schools have experienced the feeling of going alone. However these principals have believed in what they are doing and continued to soldier on regardless of what has been put in the way. Belief in what they were doing and knowing their learners were getting the best opportunities to learn as Māori drove their passion.

I have a much deeper understanding of how schools have used both The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa to develop their own school curriculums.

Recruitment and retention will remain a problem until there are opportunities and incentives for teachers to pursue further study. By providing this the Board can continue on its crusade to bilingualism and have a succession plan to ensure we can provide Māori Medium for our learners well into the 21st Century and beyond.

The benefits for all learners both Māori Medium and English Medium are endless. Having onsite experts on the staff provides other not so fluent staff members to be supported and guided when teaching Te Reo in English Medium classrooms. An awareness of things Māori was very prevalent in all the schools I visited.

Personally I want to up skill my knowledge of Te Reo and Tikanga and plan to study at Tai Poutini Polytechnic in 2015. I would like to see the whole staff given the opportunity to engage in professional learning in 2015.

Finally a quote from Ann Milne talking to other principals, 'The greatest barrier to each of us making this sort of change in our own school is our own thinking-which we do have the power to change'.

Toku reo toku ohooho.

My language, my awakening.

Recommendations/Action Plan for Grey Main School

This will be included in this report once I have consulted with whanau and staff in the first couple of week in Term 3.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I want to say how much I enjoyed the opportunity to learn through my sabbatical. My visit to Southern Ireland reinforced my belief that as a nation we have to do something to save our Te Reo and schools need to be able to provide opportunities for our Māori learners to learn as Māori. Schools in Southern Ireland are dual medium with both Gaelic and English. The signage is Gaelic and in villages and pubs Gaelic is spoken everywhere and the people are extremely proud of their heritage and their language unlike Northern Ireland where the Republicans are fighting to regain their language.

On my return home I undertook readings, visits to schools and interviews and I was able to do this knowing that Grey Main School was being ably led by Terrye Drake and the Leadership Team. During this time I could concentrate solely on dual medium education and relate it

to my own context without having to worry about the day to day running of a school. For that I am very grateful!

Others I wish to thank are:

*The entire staff who have supported Terrye and the Leadership team and taken on new roles and responsibilities.

*The Board of Trustees who also have the belief that providing Māori Medium education will benefit our learners in the short term and provide them with future pathways.

*Our school family who have supported the school in my absence but also shown a great interest in my inquiry.

*The kura/schools and principals I visited. You are all amazing and inspired me not only with wisdom but also with your presence. I feel rejuvenated just thinking about you!

Woolston School(Janeane Reid), Finlayson Park School(Shirley Maihi), Kihikihi School(Andy Morgan), Hokitika Primary School(Kath Martin), Tuahiwi School(Sue Ross), Roscommon School(Christina Patea), Westport North School(Sharon Marsh), Clendon Park School(Sue Dawson)

*Tania Tawhi from MOE for her guidance and support to kick start my inquiry.

*My family who have been with me through some pretty difficult times prior to the sabbatical but had to put up with me reliving each and every new learning experience. I am excited about the opportunities for our tamariki and want to share it with the world!

* My relatives and friends who accommodated me in various parts of New Zealand. I was able to save the school some money!

*Lastly TeachNZ for this opportunity. I cannot emphasise enough to my colleagues out there just how rejuvenating it has been. I am inspired by the energy out there beyond the Southern Alps.

