

Sabbatical Report

Tom Hullena - Makoura College

Term – 2 of 2014

Overview

This report will cover the two key aspects of my Principal's Sabbatical. The first will outline my experiences at Harvard University in Boston where I attended a course at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) entitled "The Art of Leadership". The second will outline an investigation and resulting plan to better meet the needs of a growing number of Year 13 students returning to Makoura College but not wanting to pursue a University pathway (Te Kura Tuakana).

Part 1 - The Art of Leadership (Harvard University)

This course was inspirational in terms of not only its content, the quality of the lecturers and their delivery but also in terms of the connections and rich discussions had (both formally and informally on a daily basis) with many different Principals from a range of school types, from a range of countries, and from a diverse range of ethnicities.

In essence the course was divided into seven themes and each day presentations would be given in relation to these themes. The themes included:

- Taking an adaptive leadership stance
- Building teams through experiential learning
- Supporting change in yourself and others
- Promoting high academic expectations for teachers and students
- Leading teams through decision-making
- Establishing communities of practice
- Creating a culture of aspiration and hope

Outlined below are some of the key messages from the various presentations.

1. Leadership Challenge – Dr Pamela Mason

- This part of the course required each participant to present and address a leadership challenge identified prior to the start of the course. Based on the view that effective leaders reflect on their practice and engage others in constructive dialogue in order to constantly improve their impact, course participants were required to reflect on their leadership style and skills, the various course presentations, their colleagues feedback, and their group leaders insights prior to representing their leadership challenge inclusive of proposed action steps.

2. Leading Inclusion – Dr William Henderson

- This session addressed two key issues in education. Firstly, the various ways in which leaders respond to life's challenges in order to manage and improve their effectiveness as leaders was explored and discussed, as was the process of how to better integrate students with significant disabilities in schools. With regard to the latter, strategies for ensuring the

meaningful participation and successful performance of students with and without disabilities were elicited for use in inclusive schools.

3. Essential Tools for Adaptive Leadership – Irma Tyler-Wood

- These sessions concerned themselves with the two key foundations of adaptive leadership. They included the concept of “Inner Work” – the capacity to engage in deep inner exploration and reflection for the purposes of developing increased self-awareness, empathy, insight and self-mastery. The other foundation is referred to as “Adaptive Skill” – the ability to engage the people who have the problem in order to solve the problem when the problem is complex and the answers aren’t clear or easy to resolve.
- This session also introduced an adaptive tool for building consensus known as the “One-Text Procedure” – a systematic, third party approach for shifting a negotiation away from concessions, eliciting underlying interests, and simplifying the process both of inventing options and jointly deciding on one. Apparently, this approach has been used successfully by people such as Henry Kissinger to defuse not only complex but also high stakes international issues in places such as the middle east.

4. Including ourselves in the Improvement Equation – Dr Robert Keegan

- This was an experiential and interactive session allowing participants to explore new concepts and practices related to initiating change using themselves and their personal change goals in a “first-person” case-study.
- In effect the session considered why change is actually so difficult despite people being genuinely committed to it. It examined the operation of the mind and the need for those wanting change to pay closer attention the mind’s own powerful inclination not to change. This topic looked at a process whereby we as leaders can do a better job (given our own aspirations and those who work for us) at closing the gap between what we genuinely intend to change and what we actually bring about.

5. Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation – Kim Marshall

- Kim argued that the traditional process for supervising and evaluating teachers is one of the least effective ways of improving teaching and learning and therefore not a good way for school leaders to spend hundreds of hours of their time each year. This necessary work needs to be done more efficiently and more quickly. Marshalls sessions covered the following aspects of teacher supervision:
 - i. Short, frequent, unannounced mini-observations with face-to-face feedback conversations followed by a very brief write-up
 - ii. Getting input from students from well constructed student perception surveys
 - iii. Working with teacher teams to backwards design high quality curriculum units
 - iv. Working with teacher teams analysing and following up on interim assessments, and
 - v. Using an evaluation rubric to sum up each teachers’ performance at the end of each year.

6. The Impact of Efficacy on Student Achievement – Dr Jeff Howard

- These lectures introduced individuals to the idea that proficiency for all children, in all subjects, is the proper mission of public education, and explored a method of self-directed improvement as the primary means to achieve this mission. The first step in this was to look at the “Innate Ability Paradigm” which portrays intelligence as fixed and given, and not

subject to further development. The second step was to explore the more empowering alternative, the Efficacy Programme, the belief that effective and focussed effort controls intellectual development, and should be the basis of policies and practices that mobilise students' efforts toward academic proficiency and character development. Participants were also introduced to the Self Directed Improvement System (SDIS) and how it has been used to transform the Efficacy paradigm into policies and practices that accelerate student achievement.

7. School Improvement through Writing across the Curriculum – Dr John Collins

- This session focused on the art of leadership as applied to writing and thinking across the curriculum – an area of concern in the USA made more dramatic by the move to Core State Standards with a heavy emphasis on literacy in all subjects. In particular this session described how highly effective writing across the curriculum programme (used in grades K – 12), along with specific time-effective strategies, can be used to ensure that any writing programme can be implemented. The programme focussed on sustained rather than promiscuous change and presented specific detailed strategies for ensuring leaders would be able to:
 - i. Describe in detail how teachers use writing in and outside of class as a tool to involve students in discussion and / or to engage
 - ii. Describe the types of writing assignments students should be able to complete, and
 - iii. Describe the types of teacher feedback students should receive on assignments.

8. Strategies for Creating, Leveraging, and Fostering a Culture of Literacy in All Schools – Dr Samuel Betances

- This session was framed by the personal journey of Dr Betances, a student from an ethnic minority, background of poverty and English as a second language learner, who moved from being a High School dropout to earning his Master's and Doctorate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He claims that not all students in our schools are middle class but all of our assessment tools are, and that's a problem. His presentation looked at strategies for increasing the cultural competencies of educators in schools in order to increase the achievement and graduation rates of students from poverty. His session also explored strategies for creating, leveraging, and fostering a culture of literacy in schools necessary to close the achievement gap.

9. Leading Educators in Using Data Wisely – Dr Kathryn Parker Boudett

- This topic involved investigating the "The Data Wise Improvement Process" and how to engage teams of educators in using a wide range of data sources to improve teaching and learning. Protocols were shared for showing participants how to introduce this process and how to identify where they are in the work of improvement. A case study was used to exemplify this, as was discussion regarding the habits of mind necessary to support this work and the challenges of leading school improvement.

10. Orpheus – Dr Monica Higgins

- This session began with insights, informed by research in the areas of organisational behaviour and social psychology, with regards to team leadership. Individual and collective experiences were then drawn on to critique these insights.

- The second aspect of this session involved participants watching and discussing a video case study of the chamber orchestra – Orpheus. As part of this discussion participants were required to consider and debate their own experiences, styles, strategies, and preferences for leading groups and teams in relation to the Orpheus leadership approach.

11. Professional Learning Communities: Transforming professional Development and School Culture – Dr Pamela Mason

- This session addressed the growing impact of professional learning communities (PLCs) in promoting organisational effectiveness. Dr Mason presented a strong argument in favour of PLCs stating that one significant standard of effective school leadership is a positive school culture that encourages collaboration among adults in the service of improved student achievement and the role PLCs have played in many schools to better meet this standard. She warns however that without the active engagement and support of the school leader effective implementation is unlikely. The second part of this session explored the characteristics of effective PLCs and how these communities enhance professional learning that advances student achievement.

Part 2 – The Makoura Year 13 Initiative (Te Kura Tuakana)

Following discussions with students, parents and colleagues, and consideration of a range of educational articles and readings identifying approaches to schooling that make it more meaningful and engaging for students, the following model evolved and will be implemented for trial in 2015 at Makoura College. It will be referred to as “Te Kura Tuakana” and specifically designed to enhance motivation and engagement and strengthen pathways beyond school for those students returning for a Year 13 year but not interested in following a University pathway.

Programme Overview

Background

Over the last six years Makoura College has worked very hard to turn itself around from being a low performing school (scheduled for closure in 2008) to one that is more effectively meeting the needs of its clientele and community. Significant progress has been made with regards to school and student culture, staff attitudes, student achievement and community partnerships.

One existing area of real concern relates to student transitions into further education and training or career-based work beyond Year 13. Despite improving figures for students leaving school with NCEA Level 2 (ART figures are 72%) approximately 70% of all leavers (based on available data) are not going onto further education and training. For example, of 55 leavers in 2013, 30% went onto to further education, 40% went into the workforce locally (but almost all into relatively low-skilled work with doubtful future prospects), while 30% of leavers cannot be accounted for.

Accordingly, despite a growing number of students leaving the College with NCEA Level 2, concern remains with regard to student transitions beyond school. Most currently do not aspire to go to University (about 10%) and most prefer not to leave the area. Having said this, our senior curriculum and in particular our Year 13 curriculum is still very much a pre-university course which clearly doesn’t meet or support the beyond-school needs of the majority of our Year 12 and 13 leavers. It certainly doesn’t scaffold the majority of our students into purposeful and meaningful beyond-school opportunities.

Furthermore, given the economic status or nature of our community it tends to be one that is not well linked or connected to the mainstream world of work and in particular career-based or professional work. Not only do these lack of connections disadvantage our students when they are looking for jobs beyond school but it also means they are more likely to lack in their understanding regarding the world of mainstream work, how to access it, and how to be successful in it.

General Purpose of the Homeroom

Our desire as a school is to restructure the provision of learning in our senior curriculum (starting with Year 13) so that it provides students with a great deal more meaning, substance, coherence, and certainty in their final year and succeeding year/s beyond school.

Accordingly, in 2015 the school (with MOE & BOT backing) would like to establish a Year 13 Homeroom. This room will be set up to accommodate multiple IEPs for our Year 13 students and perhaps those Year 12 students at risk of leaving before Year 13. This room will be fully staffed all periods of the week where staff and the Careers Counsellor will facilitate students learning via multiple course options such as: the normal timetable options, special courses on-line or off-site, STAR and Gateway, Trade Academies, work experience, and courses via “The Open Polytech” and various Whare Wananga. In addition, Homeroom-based programmes related to developing important people skills, effective life skills, and employment skills (e.g. relationship skills, a sense of service, resiliency, flatting skills, financial literacy, digital literacy, driver’s licenses, work experience and so on).

General Role of Homeroom Staff

The fundamental role of the Year 13 Homeroom staff members will be to mentor and guide students through their final year and in a manner that leads naturally to a productive and meaningful pathway beyond school. Accordingly a key priority for Homeroom staff will be the requirement to develop, with students and their whanau, a deliberate but comprehensive learning and career plan with strong coherence between their final school year/s and their first few years beyond school. Such pathways will be individualised according to students’ interests, abilities, and needs and this will be managed by the Year 13 Homeroom teachers and staff.

Values Framework

Motto:

Kia Manawanui - Be of a Courageous and Compassionate heart

At Makoura College, ‘**Kia Manawanui**’ embodies the way we want to ‘be’; caring and supportive of others and courageous in our approach and attitude to life.

Mission/Value Statements:

Wahaia te Tika – *Develop strength to do what is right by:*

- being respectful (act positively towards self, others and the environment)
- being fair (support your own rights, support the rights of others)
- being honest (telling the truth)
- being trustworthy (being someone others can trust)
- being responsible and dependable (by making choices that are in the best interests of self and others)

Wahaia te Pono – *Develop wisdom through learning by:*

- believing in yourself and your innate talents

- being passionate and positive about learning and life
- being persistent despite challenges and difficulties
- applying new skills and knowledge positively

Whaia te Aroha – *Develop care and concern for others by:*

- caring and helping those within our families, school and wider community

Relationships:

Positive and purposeful relationships need to underpin all interactions at Makoura College. All teacher-student interactions including learning interactions should exemplify the concept of whanaungatanga. This involves teachers showing genuine care and respect for students both for who they are but also for the purpose of strengthening students learning, achievement, and on-going positive growth as a well-balanced person and citizen.

Key Principles

Qualifications:

- ❖ To ensure all aiming for University (and holding the NCEA level 2 pre-requisites) complete NCEA and their University requirements.
- ❖ To ensure each student (not aiming for University) has at least NCEA Level 2 as a qualification inclusive of a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy (preferably UE Literacy).
- ❖ To ensure all leavers (non-university) have a Vocational Award in at least one Vocational Pathway.
- ❖ To ensure all (non-university leavers) are prepared to take on tertiary study at least Level 4 of the NZ Curriculum Framework.

Pathways:

- ❖ Ensure each student has a well-designed IEP that is based on where students have come from, where they are now, and where they are going. That is it has been built on knowledge related to the students background, culture, prior experiences, prior learning, strengths, interests, and needs. Accordingly, it will have high levels of personal interest for each student and it will align closely with their future ambitions.
- ❖ Ensure IEPs are endorsed by family and whanau.
- ❖ Ensure students (non-university) are provided with (6 – 8 days) of relevant and real world learning experiences (inclusive of the “Key Competencies” - thinking, using language, managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing).
- ❖ Ensure students are familiar with relevant future study, training or employment opportunities.
- ❖ Ensure students understand how their Year 13 programme of learning leads onto their desired/planned future tertiary study, training or employment opportunity.
- ❖ Ensure each student has or knows how to access their next study, training, employment facility or opportunity.
- ❖ Ensure students (non-university) leave school with the requirements for entry and success in a Level 4 qualification.

Knowledge, Skills, Competencies:

- ❖ Build on existing skills and competencies to ensure learners are able to meet the challenge of deeper and broader learning.
- ❖ Integrate key knowledge, skills, and competencies so that students learning programmes are relevant, coherent, and seamless beyond school.
- ❖ Equip learners with the values, foundational knowledge, skills and competencies to be active participants in school, in the working environment, and to be life-long learners.
- ❖ Support learners to become resilient learners, independent and self-managing learners, and able to work effectively with others.
- ❖ To develop independence and interdependence within an attitude of “continuous learning and continuous improvement”.
- ❖ To ensure that each student leaves as a positive citizen (i.e; as good future husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, family members, iwi members, community members, organisation members etc) committed to their own advancement, that of their families, their friends, their iwi, and their communities.

Learning Programmes:

- ❖ Learning experiences should connect to students prior learning, prior experiences, culture and be relevant to their own lives, and world beyond school.
- ❖ Learning experiences should be interesting, purposeful and challenging.
- ❖ Learning experiences should affirm the language, culture and identity of learners.
- ❖ Learning experiences should involve choice and relevance.
- ❖ Learning experiences should provide flexibility in the way learners can access knowledge, skills and understanding.
- ❖ Learning experiences should involve explicit goal setting, reflection and mentoring.
- ❖ Learning experiences should involve students, teachers and whanau in regular reflection on progress and next steps.
- ❖ Learning experiences should involve a clear assessment schedule and a prompt turn around of internally assessed results.
- ❖ Learning experiences should include the clear tracking and use of data for formative purposes.

IEPs

Students' courses will be developed individually. All students will have a very clear, explicit, and detailed IEP. The IEP will be developed following an open, honest, and evidenced-based meeting consisting of the student, whanau and Homeroom facilitator. The IEP will be very closely aligned with each student's needs, interests, strengths and abilities and future pathway.

IEP Reflection, Review, Remodelling

Each IEP will be officially monitored and reviewed (Week 3, 6, and 9 of each term) by the student, Waka Huia Teacher, and the Year 13 Facilitator. In the last week of Term 1, 2 and 3 students will formally report their progress to whanau and to the Waka Huia Teacher. Courses will be remodelled if and when required.

Course Types

Three general course types are envisaged at this stage. They include:

- A traditional Year 13 course involving a full NCEA Level 3 qualification and University Entrance (UE). This course type is for students clearly wanting to go to University in their following year/s. This course option must be supported with learning that will facilitate student understanding of the University system (e.g. courses offered, entry requirements, enrolment processes, student loan processes, accommodation processes, and study techniques for University). This will be supported by University presentations and visits and early decisions about which University and which course students will be studying.
- A Vocational Pathway Course involving NCEA Level 2 or 3 inclusive of a strong foundation in literacy (Level 2), numeracy, and a clear vocational direction (e.g. via a Trade Academy or other vocational course) ideally leading to a National Certificate or endorsement in a particular Vocational Pathway. This course option must provide a direct link/pathway to further training at the tertiary level or on-the-job training in career-based employment.
- A bridging course to University (either full or part time) for Year 14 students involving the completion of University Entrance via school-based instruction. This course type might also involve extramural tertiary study that will contribute to each student's future tertiary qualification or success. Students choosing this option will be required to meet all other university learning requirements as outlined in course type one above.

Other Course Requirements

In addition, all students will be expected to participate in some relevant "Life Skills" course components. These include:

- A course of high interest or a passion project (e.g. learning the guitar, a fitness programme, coaching or teaching something, learning to draw, paint, dance, sing, play an instrument; learn Te Reo or other language; support a charity or community group; etc).
- 8 days of real world experience in the adult world of work (ideally linked to one adult mentor).
- 2 days of community service or participation in a community project for equivalent time.
- Participation in a / or several short courses including: inter-personal relationships; assertiveness; problem solving and conflict resolution; resiliency.
- A good parenting course.
- A finance/budgeting literacy course.
- A digital literacy course.
- A flattening skills course including a basic healthy cooking course.
- A recreational or fitness programme.
- Getting their driver's license.
- Mentoring and being mentored.

Student Responsibilities

Students key responsibility will be to monitor, review and report on their personal progress with respect to their IEPs in support of the key focus - "continuous learning and continuous improvement".

On-Going Data Collation

Data will be gathered by the Year 13 Homeroom Facilitator with regard to qualification achievement, attendance, engagement and transitions. Further, in-school self-reviews on aspects of the programme will identify areas of success and areas in need of further work. As a new initiative it will need to be monitored closely, modified and adapted as part of its natural evolution.

Measures of Success

Three key measures of success will be used. They include:

- Student qualifications achievement (e.g. NCEA L3, UE, NCEA Level 2 with a strong literacy component and a Vocational Award)
- Beyond-school participation in study, training and
- Beyond-school participation in career related work (as opposed to paid work that offers little in terms of career advancement and career development).

Staffing

The Year 13 Homeroom will be supported by the following staff:

- ❖ Year 13 Homeroom Leader / Careers / STAR / Gateway Co-ordinator
- ❖ Year 13 Homeroom Facilitator/s
- ❖ Year 13 Dean / Waka Huia Teachers / Pastoral and Academic Guides
- ❖ Teaching staff of students in-school subjects (as required by job description)

School Day

Each day will involve:

- ✓ 15 minutes Waka Huia time
- ✓ 3 x 1.5 hour lessons
- ✓ 30 minute whole-group reflection / discussion; completion of daily learning logs; completion of planning for the following day; catch-up.

Summary Drivers & Outcomes:

- A fit for purpose and learner-centred Year 13 curriculum.
- Relevant and meaningful future learning, vocational, work-pathways, destinations are identified.
- Year 13 subjects/courses/experiences align closely to the identified future pathways/destinations.
- Year 13 qualifications provide entry to the identified future pathways/destinations.
- Year 13 programmes provide work-related qualifications/skills/competencies and relevant work experiences.
- Year 13 programmes provide life-skills programmes (e.g. budgeting, inter-personal skills, self-confidence, etc).
- Year 13 programmes will consist of three pathways (qualifications):
 - A University Pathway (University Entrance)

- A Tertiary Study Pathway (NCEA Level 2 or 3 with a relevant National Certificate or Vocational Pathway Award permitting Tertiary study at Level 4 on the NZQF in that pathway)
- A pathway designed around career-based work (NCEA Level 2 and a specific Vocational Pathway Endorsement)