

Principals Sabbatical Report

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To find out what makes true collaboration and better understand how professional collaboration can make a difference to student achievement. As a result of this have the knowledge and understanding to develop collaborative learning environments with a stronger personalised partnership between tamariki and kaiako.

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Acknowledgements

It is with great thanks that I would like to acknowledge the opportunity of a ten-week Principal sabbatical made possible through the TeachNZ scheme. This time was invaluable as it gave me the opportunity to undertake professional reading, reflect, and talk to other educational professionals.

I would also like to acknowledge the St John Bosco Catholic Primary School Board of Trustees for supporting my application. A special thank you also to my amazing management team and staff who continued to live, breathe and act the ethos of St John Bosco whilst I was away.

This sabbatical allowed me the wonderful opportunity of visiting schools, reflecting, reading and thinking deeper into the concept of collaboration. I am sincerely grateful as it allowed me the opportunity to breathe and take the time to clear, refocus my mind, affirm and plan to lead the school confidently in refined practices.

To the schools, teachers, leaders and Principals that gave their time to share their experiences and learnings with me, I am extremely thankful for their openness, honesty and willingness to share.

Most importantly, however, is that the sabbatical allowed me to stop, step back and recharge my energies.

Executive Summary

My investigation shows that collaboration is very complex, and requires a deep understanding and complete commitment to be truly effective. It requires participants to meet regularly and to take the time to develop a professional collective responsibility. Effective collaboration calls for interdependence and for participants to be accountable for their own learning, while supporting the learning of others.

Through my investigation, it became evident that there are essential elements required for rich collaboration to take place: a clear vision and purpose, relational trust & effective communication, being brave and innovative, Collective Inquiry, collective responsibility, time allowance (pace), Resourcing Support (Release - Funding - Technology) and monitoring and evaluation for improvement.

These essential elements will be discussed in more detail within this report.

It is essential to have buy-in from all parties involved, and their full commitment to ensuring a continuous cycle of collective inquiry that is focused on a shared purposeful challenge aimed at positive outcomes for student achievement.

Rich collaboration therefore calls on participants to share and examine their values and beliefs, and to build strong relationships of trust and respect. In collaborative processes, all voices are heard, and innovative solutions generated to bring about changes in practice and pedagogical approaches that will impact positively on student learning. Rich collaboration requires the collective group to continuously make and remake meaning, and to be committed to investing the time and energy into the attainment of a specific and clear vision.

Rationale and Background Information

St John Bosco School has undertaken a whole school modernisation, creating modern-collaborative teaching environments to be underpinned by collaboration and co-teaching. Teachers in 2017, 2018 & 2019 alongside myself have undertaken Teaching as Inquiry focuses on collaboration, co-teaching and use of technology to enhance and accelerate learning. This has been worked in collaboration with Ed Lead Consultants and Carol Lynch.

Our Charter in 2017, 2018 & 2019 has focused largely on creating innovative, collaborative teaching pedagogy and environments. This in itself is an indicator that one of the key aspects linked to collaboration, “Time” is accurate and a key to achieving well embedded practice and philosophy.

In 2018 we begun piloting collaborative / co-teaching methods within our junior and senior school. Teachers based this around the pedagogical model of co-teaching and are collaborating in a small variety of ways currently, but mainly through shared planning and the creation of school wide shared sites for Numeracy and Literacy. This has in the short space of time significantly changed the engagement of our tamariki and also proven to us that it is a great model allowing us to enhance and accelerate the learning of our Maori & Priority students. Student agency is empowering these tamariki to take ownership and have clear pathways of progress in front of them.

As the Ministry of Education is strategically committed to building all new schools with innovative, flexible learning environments by 2021 (Ministry of Education, 2011), it is increasingly important for school leaders to develop a clear understanding of collaboration.

Furthermore, in 2014, the Government introduced the *Investing in Educational Success* policy (Ministry of Education, 2017), with the aim of raising student achievement through effective collaboration between schools and aligning student learning pathways. This policy requires clusters of schools to work collaboratively in a Community of Learning/Kahui Ako focused on a collectively agreed student achievement challenge that will make a difference to student learning outcomes in the cluster. Understanding what climate and skills are required to be able to effectively collaborate professionally now and in the future has therefore become paramount.

The purpose of my sabbatical was therefore to deepen my understanding of what what makes true collaboration and better understand how professional collaboration can make a difference to student achievement. As a result of this have the knowledge and understanding to develop

collaborative learning environments with a stronger personalised partnership between tamariki and kaiako.

Collaborative learning is an approach in which systems and school leaders build collective capacity; create new, energising knowledge together; and move schools from being places of 'plans and good intentions' to centres of 'purposeful practice' on the part of all teachers who then empower students to do the same. (Sharratt & Planche, 2016, p. xxiv)

Methodology:

The focus of my inquiry was to find out what makes true collaboration and better understand how professional collaboration can make a difference to student achievement. As a result of this have the knowledge and understanding to develop collaborative learning environments with a stronger personalised partnership between tamariki and kaiako. So therefore my intention was to research, see in action and reflect on what effective collaboration within a school looked like and to better understand how this process could enhance and influence student achievement. I wanted to understand what effective collaborative leaders do to set the conditions for rich collaboration.

My investigation included visits to schools in the Manawatu, Waikato and Christchurch regions, where collaboration has been underway for some years. I spent time talking to and reflecting with Principals, Team Leaders, teachers and children of the successes, big learning points and benefits of collaboration between the Kaiako and Akonga.

It is well known that Principals and school management teams are key to leading and creating a culture of collaboration within and across schools. They must firstly have a vision, in-depth understanding of and be able to articulate what rich collaboration looks and feels like. But it is our highly skilled Kaiako that bring the essence and success of collaboration to the forefront in our schools.

Findings Theory:

My school visits and interviews showed great variance and in some instances similarity as to what is required to effectively collaborate within schools in order to raise student achievement. This was quite rewarding as each community was uniquely different from each other meaning I had a lot to process and consider. Professional readings also gave great substance to reflect on from within both educational and business contexts.

Eight essential characteristics crucial to creating a collaborative climate emerged through my professional research. These eight essential elements are:

- Clear Purpose & Vision
- Relational Trust & Effective Communication
- Collective Inquiry
- Collective Responsibility
- Being Brave and Innovative
- Time Allowance (Pace)
- Resourcing Support (Release - Funding - Technology)
- Monitoring and Evaluation for Improvement

Clear purpose & a shared vision

All parties must firstly have a vision, in-depth understanding of and be able to articulate what rich collaboration looks and feels like. This occurs through shared understandings in relation to changes in practice and pedagogical approaches that will impact positively on student learning.

This allows us to move our schools from being places 'of plans and good intentions' to centres of 'purposeful practice' on the part of which all teachers who then empower students to do the same.

Just bringing staff together is not enough - deliberate, specific and task focused working together creates a broad communal brain. This communal brain is far more powerful than an individual and more attuned to greater variety of inputs and outputs.

Appropriate tools and methods need to be used to gather, store and retrieve a range of valid data. Leaders and teachers must become data literate: asking focused questions, using relevant data, clarifying purposes, recognising sound evidence, developing an understanding of statistical concepts, engaging in thoughtful interpretation and evidence-informed conversations.

Leaders must have a strong sense and understanding of their inspiring visions and, in turn, need to share contexts so all parties within the community can join in and work towards this vision and common goals. This also needs to be supported with structure.

Rich collaboration requires the collective group to continuously make and remake meaning, and to be committed to investing the time and energy into the attainment of a specific and clear vision.

Relational trust & effective communication

“Effective communication and high levels of relational trust create the conditions for successful organisational learning and change.¹⁴ Developing relational trust goes hand in hand with collaboration, and both take time. In the early days of a community, leadership should provide formal and informal opportunities at different levels for purposeful, joint work with a shared focus”. *ERO COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE LEARNER OUTCOMES*

Well-developed communication channels facilitate the exchange of ideas, synthesis and use of new knowledge. These communication channels need to be based on your community's values and ethos.

“Happiness is when what you say, what you think and what you do are in harmony” Ghandi

Rich collaboration occurs when communities shared understandings are based on the framework of everyone having the safety to speak up and not be judged as a result of doing so. This happens best when all members know and understand the whole picture. Conversations are therefore more meaningful, deliberate and purposeful. This in turn creates a culture of wanting to belong and being comfortable to share.

Rich collaboration leads to a shared understanding that we may have to learn to let go of traditional hierarchical structures at times. Hierarchical barriers must be taken away - leaders are no longer the dominators in a conversation and will often not be the leaders of a project. Their role, instead, is through the conversations they facilitate and how they keep the group focused on the core task. “Okay, here’s where we are going...” “How do we get there?” This detracts from any issues coming first and foremost to the leader. Instead the teams problem solve together and come to a shared resolution and have greater ownership and desire to follow through.

Collaboration creates the atmosphere where “I am not being hired for a solo performance or part”. Rather “I am a key member of the group and my contribution will impact on the outcome and where we end up”.

Research shows that framed conversation is essential in a collaborative environment to keep focused on the right topics. Framed conversations also reduce meaningless, time wasting meetings. Instead conversations are directed straight to the heart of the matter asking. What's the need? What do we want? What needs to change? What actions will we take? Meaning a collaborative conversation can be completed in 10 - 15 minutes allowing members to focus on the agreed outcomes and their core roles.

How we collaborate can change and take many forms depending on the focus or the need. For example a collaborative team could be

- a few hand selected individuals with special synergy
- a syndicate or teaching team who teach the same age
- a group with interests in the issue from across the school
- everyone working with everyone.
- a group from different settings

Rich collaboration, therefore, calls on participants to share and examine their values and beliefs, and to build strong relationships of trust and respect. In collaborative processes, all voices are heard, and innovative solutions generated to bring about changes in practice and pedagogical approaches that will impact positively on student learning.

As an individual you need to consider and reflect on your approach to collaboration. Collaboration requires 100% buy in and commitment. Therefore you really need to consider

- Being true to yourself
- Being true to others - connection to work colleagues
- Being true to the work - deciding on the best ideas
- Being true to school goals

Trust-based relationships foster connectedness and collective purpose among the members of the community. You need to trust your colleagues and everyone has to hold accountability for the entire project

Collective responsibility

Rich Collaboration requires a culture of collective responsibility which is fundamental in working towards success. The six characteristics of collective responsibility outlined in the book 'The Power of Collaboration' are

1. Drive to succeed
2. Desire to contribute to something meaningful
3. Persistence
4. Acceptance of differences

- 5.Desire for genuine communication
- 6.Connection to school wide goals

A collective responsibility naturally increases employee intelligences successfully and at a greater rate of acceleration. Better ideas and sounder solutions can be a result of many focused minds. Deliberate and specific task focused working together creates a communal brain, this communal brain is far more powerful than an individual and hence more attuned to a greater variety of inputs, outputs and planned actions.

Rich Collaboration and collective responsibility leads to greater group success. It brings an opportunity for practitioners to teach and share understanding and provides a chance to learn from others. All of this Networking leads to a greater sense of collective ownership

Collective responsibility allows us to ensure...

- We are clear about which students need focus to ensure equity and excellence of outcomes.
- What aspects of practice need to improve and how they might be improved.
- We select viable options in light of the evidence about what will make the most difference.
- We Know where the capability and capacity to improve lies and identify what if any external expertise is needed.
- Which actions should be taken, and why, and what success looks Like.
- We allocate resources to support the chosen actions.

Shared Goals, aspirations and desired outcomes underpin all that occurs in a rich collaborative environment.

Collective inquiry

Effective collective inquiry engages participants in ongoing cycles of inquiry. Identifying what is going on for students in relation to valued outcomes. Participants are required to use credible evidence, identifying a problem of practice that will stretch existing knowledge and capacity but also be manageable.

This leads to designing, trying out and testing changes in practice that are aimed at solving the identified problem. During the inquiry it is important members accumulate evidence of impact, refine or discard ideas based on evidence of their effectiveness and embed changes that prove

to be effective into daily practice. To continue the cycle identifying the next student-related challenge.

Consider your team as a jigsaw. Each piece of the jigsaw needs to connect with and be aligned with at least 4-5 other pieces intimately for the jigsaw to work, progress or come to an endpoint. Collective inquiry leads to sharing of knowledge, experiences, skills, thoughts and hence greater transparency which is important in allowing people to see the bigger picture and finer details of what we are trying to achieve or excel at higher rates of success.

Collective inquiry leads to greater valuing of results and outcomes. It allows us to adopt others knowledge and honestly and respectfully engage in robust conversations that result in better conditions for all involved. It allows a tenacious team to solve problems that others thought were unsolvable.

For collective inquiry to be successful it is essential to have buy-in from all parties involved, and their full commitment to ensuring a continuous cycle of collective inquiry that is focused on a shared purposeful challenge aimed at positive outcomes for student achievement.

Task specific collaboration or Inquiry means that it is also perfectly normal on occasion for collaborators to have an amount of freedom to decide when, how and with whom they will collaborate with and what length of time.

Team tools are required to inquire may look like a...

- Prompt or leading question
- Reflection of what I know or need to know
- Creation of an action plan
- Critique on outcomes

“Effective collaboration is characterised by dense, frequent sharing of knowledge among participants, with the aim of addressing the identified challenges. Members of highly effective groups interact frequently among themselves, focusing on refining and consolidating professional practice. They also connect outwards, to gain new knowledge that will complement what they already know and to maintain connections with, and actively participate in, larger networks. *20 ERO COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE LEARNER OUTCOMES*

“Educators experience increased efficacy and agency when leaders provide opportunities and support for engaging in collaborative inquiry and when they ensure that participants at all levels have a voice in how inquiry processes are set up and work”. *21 ERO COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE LEARNER OUTCOMES*

Being Brave and Innovative

Our curriculum has, over the years, become crowded, meaning time has become even more paramount and change is evident. With this in mind, this is our chance or opportunity to be brave and courageous, looking within other industry or business for innovation, the future skills or attributes our children will require in the future. It is time to look at our pedagogy, our environments, our content, our delivery and what actually best suits our community's aspirations in relation to education. Modern Learning Practice (MLP) is built upon a foundation of collaborative practice.

Collaboration and authentic agency maximises teaching and learning time. It frees the facilitator/teacher to focus on deliberate acts of teaching. Agency, and having scaffolds or pathways in place, truly supports learners needing support and allows multiple opportunities to master the concept, but it also gives scaffolded freedom to allow others to pick up the pace of their learning and achieve far more than we often achieve in a typical traditional classroom.

Demand for innovations is constant. Thankfully innovation and collaboration go hand in hand and they are in fact more powerful together.

“Pedagogy is the driver, technology the accelerator, culture is the runway.” Michael Fullan

Rich collaboration is central to understandings around school development and teacher professional learning. This is where people are so inextricably linked that they couldn't function without the others. The effect is much bigger than the sum of the two parts. In MLP this is the thing that makes the difference. Teachers share and organise the programme in ways that mean you couldn't split the ways of working back into its parts again.

The key thing here is the reliance on each other and rich sharing of understanding, knowledge to achieve the shared goals. No one person could do it on their own.

Time allowance (Pace)

Although number 6 on the list, time is a key element to effective collaboration and a key determination of the sustainability of effective innovative practices. What we spend time on is what we will bring into being. Collaborative practice only happens with time. This includes spending time on relationships, systems, practices and reflection. These need to be valued and therefore given space and time during a busy school year.

Time is key to achieving well embedded practice and philosophy. Leaders or early adapters need time to explore, discuss, refine and then eventually share their effective practice.

Organisational matters need to be dealt with efficiently so there is more time set aside for innovative and reflective practice. It requires participants to meet regularly and to take the time to develop professional collective responsibility. It is essential to rethink what we value and therefore what we will devote time to. We need to consider what elements of traditional practice will go.

Time also refers to pace. In an innovative environment, where people take risks, reflect and work together, pace is very important. Having one teacher working quickly and one slower can cause frustrations. In addition, collaborative teams must always be accountable to one another. If one agrees to prepare a resource by a certain date, then they must ensure this happens or communicate otherwise. It is these small frustrations that can build and cause collaborative practice to break down.

Time also impacts on students. Students need time and space to develop their learner agency, to explore the learning behaviours required of a 21st Century learner, to collaborate together, to think metacognitively about their learning. In a busy schedule, teachers need to ensure that they provide this space in the timetable. It's not about doing more but doing what we do well.

Resourcing support release - funding - technology

To enable effective collaboration the school must commit to resourcing. Resourcing includes money spent, equipment and materials bought, staffing, release time, and professional learning.

Coordination of resources and the provision of a supportive infrastructure are critical leadership responsibilities in a collaborative Community.

Resourcing should always reflect the vision or purpose. It should include discussion with staff, so that it does not become a top down decision but is co-constructed.

Ultimately, it is by strengthening the resource that resides in the people and leadership of a community that a foundation is laid for ongoing improvement and sustainability. Therefore allocation of resources must be clearly aligned to the community's vision, goals and targets.

Monitoring and evaluation for improvement

Monitoring and evaluation is key to a tight, accountable and clear pedagogy. Innovation is not about simply playing in the sandpit or taking risks with little regard for outcomes. Any change in practice needs to be evaluated with the student at the centre. Continually ask yourself, "Is what we are doing better and/or more efficient than what we did before?" If the answer is no

then more time needs to be spent on refining the innovative practice or it needs to be discarded.

In a collaborative MLE, it is integral to regularly reflect on data and outcomes. There needs to be clear formative assessment practices and accountability on students, monitored by teachers. This truly shows whether your structures are having an impact. Doing this collaboratively is one way of ensuring moderated results.

Monitoring is also exponentially more efficient and more accurate when done digitally or through the use of management systems that are aligned with your pedagogy.

The ultimate outcome through collaboration is needs of individual or groups of learners being more specifically and deliberately catered for and this leading to accelerated learning.

Findings Practical:

The following is a brief summary of the findings within the eight essential conditions for rich collaboration I collected during my visits through conversations with leaders, teachers and students.

Clear purpose & a shared vision

A strong, shared vision is required. This vision should be co-constructed with the learning community. It must be understood and seen throughout all that the school does. It must be displayed. It must reflect the community and the local cultural landscape.

Clear purpose should align with vision. This purpose (the why we are here) should be seen in all the school does. Teaching should be balanced equally around:

- Knowledge,
- Learning behaviours to promote learner agency
- Foundational skills.
- Collaboration between teachers and students and students with students.
- Collaborative values and behaviours.

Metacognitive opportunities for reflection (for teachers and students) to identify clearly: what type of thinking are we doing? From which lens are we approaching this task/responsibility? Is what we are doing adding benefit to the learning? Is what we are doing efficient and aligned to vision and purpose?

Staff meetings are distinguished as either 'operational' focused or 'change' focused. Change meetings provide a chance to delve into vision and purpose. They allow for teams to work collaboratively. They are set in an environment of trust and challenge.

Meetings centre around monitoring of students' progress and include sharing and devising of innovative practice. In the background of change meetings is the vision and purpose. Change meetings are run by a variety of people, depending on the purpose: this is part of shared leadership.

Vision and purpose informs teaching as inquiry projects.

Vision and purpose informs resourcing and staffing.

Schools who have a clearly articulated Why, What and How are better prepared for collaboration.

Relational trust & effective communication

Collaborative teams are discussed, negotiated and then assigned based on one or more of:

- Aligning of strengths and/or skill gaps.
- Teachers who share similar classroom cultures, ways of teaching.

Time is devoted at the beginning of the year to collaborative teams to work on shared understandings about how their collaborative team will work. These are explicit, recorded and agreed upon.

You've got to be open to challenge from your support team. Questioning and clarifying shouldn't be seen as a personal attack - it should be seen as an opportunity to grow, clarify and solidify what and why you are doing what you do.

Conversations are framed around identifying and brainstorming the challenge. They are less about the personal but rather solution focused. Structured frameworks for having these conversations are used.

A framework for working through disagreements, challenges and difficult conversations is provided for teams to access. This supports the philosophy that: It's okay to disagree with each other initially, but you need to come to an agreed outcome. You've got to be open to challenge from your support team. Questioning and clarifying shouldn't be seen as a personal attack - it should be seen as an opportunity to grow, clarify and solidify what and why you are doing what you do.

Work alongside meetings occur where teams work next to each other after school. The team has regular quick informal check ups with each other.

CRT is at the same time for each member of the collaborative team.

Staff know and celebrate the strengths of other staff. Responsibilities are actively shared.

Staff relationships are nurtured through wellbeing initiatives: social club outings, retreat days... A clear code of conduct is co-constructed and communicated.

Planning templates which include places for reflections and prompt questions are used collaboratively and shared. These are digitalised allowing for efficient and collaborative planning.

Systems for communication used: google docs day book, emails, SMS, curriculum site, shared drives, class sites, School App, SeeSaw.

Breed a culture of: we're all in this together. Everyone does their part. Encourage the sharing of duties, stepping in when people need help, getting to know the teacher's whanau.

Collective Responsibility

Children are seen as belonging to all of us, not just classroom teacher.

Collaborative teams: co-plan, co-assess, co-teach, co-report, monitor and analyse data.

Strong pedagogy is key. Keep asking yourselves "what are the benefits to the students? How is this improving my teaching and learning / skills / attitude outcomes?". If each teacher wants the best for all students then the drive to succeed is already embedded.

Learner agency is explicitly taught, prompted and expected from every child, at every age, at differing levels.

Learning is not the result of teaching but if the children aren't willing to or motivated to put in the work it's not going to happen. Our students are now exposed to new learning when they feel they are ready. They're not having to wait for the teacher. We also encourage students to try the next level up, and they are rewarded for working hard. We celebrate learning from our mistakes. We can be relentless because we have the structures in place. We talk a lot about consolidation and really embedding the learning.

Rigour is expected by teachers and students. We strive to do what we do well. Expectations of teachers and students are high.

Growth mindset is explicitly taught. Growth Mindset is not just about being positive but also acknowledging the practice and hard work brings about progress.

Growth Mindset is integrated with our Graduate Profile matrix and our School Values.

Students identify where they are at and work towards improving on a key area each term.

Inclusiveness and respect for differences is a part of the school community.

Appraisal goals are co-constructed and there are no surprises.

Collaborative teams play to the strengths of their members. We move away from a deficit model, focusing always on weaknesses and instead focus on strengths and co-constructed next steps.

If conflicts arise, the collaborative team is encouraged to work it out themselves. Leadership is only brought in as a support. Questioning and getting to the root of the problem is key. Using frameworks for discussion helps this process.

Classroom practices such as behaviour management, gaining attention strategies, etc. can be different but the culture of collaborative classrooms needs to be consistent.

Meeting notes are shared and worked on collaboratively by every staff member.

Collective Inquiry

Inquiry works best when outside agencies are brought in to support TAIs. This creates a sense of accountability. It lifts the significance and importance of the inquiry.

Teaching as inquiry is embedded in our practice. It is not an add on (another thing to do). Instead it is a part of our plans and reflections. Time is given in collaborative meetings and staff meetings to update TAI documents. All staff contribute to TAI and strategies are implemented and then reflected on as a whole team and not as individual classrooms.

TAIs are based on target groups. They involve looking deep into data, student voice and whanau voice. Actions are recorded on individual support plans and in TAI documentation.

TAI's are shared with the whole staff during Change Meetings. This is a great form of internal professional development and can really accelerate progress across the school. The art of having to articulate ensures sustainability.

TAI's are shared with the Board of Trustees. Allowing them to see and hear the impact makes any governance decision relevant, meaningful.

We need to be comfortable that syndicates, collaborative teaching teams, individuals may inquire into different parts of practice, innovation or knowledge. Inquiry works best if there is a schoolwide focus but there is flexibility to take a variety of different paths in relation to this focus. It better meets the needs of each team.

TAI format promotes data analysis, actions and reflection.

Being Brave and Innovative

It's taken or seen as normal practice that teachers will innovate and look for smarter, more efficient ways to meet the needs of their class, team syndicate. 'If we see fires being lit by teachers that will impact on children's learning we will feed that fire and keep it blazing. If we think a fire needs to be lit, we will light it and invest time to make sure it continues to burn.'

'At some point in time we will only continue to feed fires that are being lit by teachers...'

Technology is seen as The Accelerator; it enables us to better provide personalised learning through blended learning:

- to remove the ceiling for students and support them to accelerate their learning.

- more collaboration both between teachers and between teachers and students.
- to prepare our students, in particular, on deep learning competencies.
- students to know in a deep way where they were at, what they should learn next, how they could best learn this and how to reach beyond what they think they can do (growth mindset).

Staff are encouraged, through reflections and TAI, to innovate in their practice, using data and student voice to reflect on success. Taking risks is encouraged and expected.

Regular “aspiration conversations” with Principal are conducted to discuss aspirations.

Digital technology implemented into the school, using a balance of BYOD and school provided creating a 1:1 school wide situation.

Learner agency model used:

- Giving clear pathways that students can follow which are guided by the teacher and monitored by students and teachers and shared with parents.
- Giving students scaffolded choice of contexts, next learning steps, and different ways to embed learning.
- A focus on foundational skills and learning behaviours for successful, personalised learning.
- Students working at their own pace and teachers getting out of the way.

Hubs for learning in maths and literacy integrated with school-wide trackers utilises the “flipped” model of blended learning.

School-wide decisions on effective apps and tools: e.g. Hapara for seniors, Mathletics, Book Creator, Google for Education, Spelling City.

Modern learning environments are aligned to a clear pedagogy for learning and the school’s vision.

Staff encouraged to seek out professional learning to enhance innovation: PLD, conferences, online courses, internal PLD plans (e.g. Digital Roadmap), MOE contracts. Staff expected to share their learnings at staff meetings.

Change meetings will occasionally focus on a piece of research or an innovation to explore.

Staff are expected to use research to underpin innovation. This is collated in Professional Portfolios.

Time allowance (Pace)

Pace is an important element to recognise. Teachers work at different paces, at different times of the day. An acknowledgement of these differences is important and shared understandings about how this impacts each collaborative team member is important. E.g. when teachers plan best needs to be identified and worked with. The pace they work at is identified and then discussed. The key is developing a clear shared understanding.

Leadership places value and time on collaborative meetings. Staff meetings are reduced so that there is more time for collaborative and team meetings. Leaders need to acknowledge and understand that at collaborative teaching team meetings is where the real agency and action takes place, not necessarily whole staff meetings.

When a new initiative is introduced, the challenge is to decide what will be dropped. This is a way to ensure that responsibilities are not overloaded. At the front of our minds is, does this make our core role easier, more streamlined and meeting immediate needs or can we transfer what we already do into a more streamlined, responsive initiative.

Teacher Only Day themes are aligned with the vision and purpose. These incorporate actions not just PLD discussions.

PLD can be and is provided digitally. Staff can work their way through PLD at their own pace.

Release time is given to staff with additional responsibilities.

Resourcing Support (Release - Funding - Technology)

Units are allocated based on vision of school and strengths of staff: recognising innovation and additional workload.

Resourcing of equipment, materials, books, digital devices is aligned with the vision and purpose.

Having a budget to support collaboration, agency or innovation allows us to spend more time thinking and creating the experience and not finding resources etc.

Funding is put aside for teacher PLD.

Release is given for teacher run lessons (e.g. PE lessons run by a teacher allowing classroom teacher some additional release).

Teachers are resourced with laptops and ipads, allowing them to use the technology that the students use.

The school works on a mix of BYOD (ipads) and school provided ipads.

Monitoring and evaluation for improvement

You need to regularly reflect on data and outcomes. There needs to be clear formative assessment practices and accountability on students, monitored by teachers. This truly shows whether your structures are having an impact.

Data analysis and student monitoring is done in together in collaborative teams.

SMS is used to collect, analyse and monitor data.

All teachers have a system for formative (responsive) assessment linked into shared plans.

Students have access to all trackers, next steps and matrices allowing them to look ahead to next steps and drive their own learning.

Discussions about students include data, background, culture, family life, strengths.

School wide next steps are developed for key learning areas.

Progress matrices are developed for other key learning areas.

Whanau have access to data and work produced via LincEd, SeeSaw and google drives.

School-wide data analysis is conducted regularly by the leadership team and shared with teachers and the BOT.

Systems are constantly discussed and refined.

Benefits:

All members of learning communities benefit from effective collaboration in the following three ways.

- Learners benefit from collaborative teaching because teachers take collective responsibility for the progress of all learners. Teachers who know how to collaborate effectively model skills of collaboration to their learners.
- Collaborative teaching environments provide opportunities for teachers to learn from and with each other on an ongoing basis. Teachers can observe other teachers in action, engage in professional conversations about the impact of different approaches, and get feedback on their own teaching.
- Collaborative teaching teams capitalise on each other's strengths, support each other's professional growth, debate ideas, and problem solve together. This creates synergy, allowing teams to achieve more than they would if teachers work independently.

Conclusion:

During my research, visits and conversations I have continually identified that collaboration is a key factor in

- accelerating achievement
- consolidating best practice across school
- robust conversations that result in better conditions for all parties
- rigour to get the best conditions for learning.
- ensuring shared ownership

In our schools today the demand for innovations and change is constant. The world is rapidly changing, our communities are changing, our children are changing and as a result we have to look at how we can best change to meet the vast array of social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of our tamariki. The great news is innovation and collaboration go together hand in hand and together as one they are incredibly powerful.

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