

**Sabbatical Report Term II 2019**

A leadership focused project that examines the contextual shifts required to craft future leaders in a modern school environment and the possible range of strategies that arise from women who are the change agents in a single sex learning environment.

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## **Acknowledgements**

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- Tara Kanji - Principal at Tauranga Girls and the young women of the senior prefect body of 2019
- Ngaire Ashmore - Principal of Auckland Girls Grammar
- Jackie Smith - Deputy Principal, Faith Tautuhi - Head of Kaupapa Māori and students of Waikato Diocesan School for Girls
- Dame Georgina Kingi - Principal of St Joseph's Māori Girls College, whānau and students of St. Joseph's Māori Girls College

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And finally I want to thank Ally Gibbons former principal of Rotorua Girls High for encouraging me to pursue this sabbatical leave pathway, Sarah Davis the current principal for managing the logistics of this opportunity and Rotorua Girls High Board of Trustees for their ongoing support.

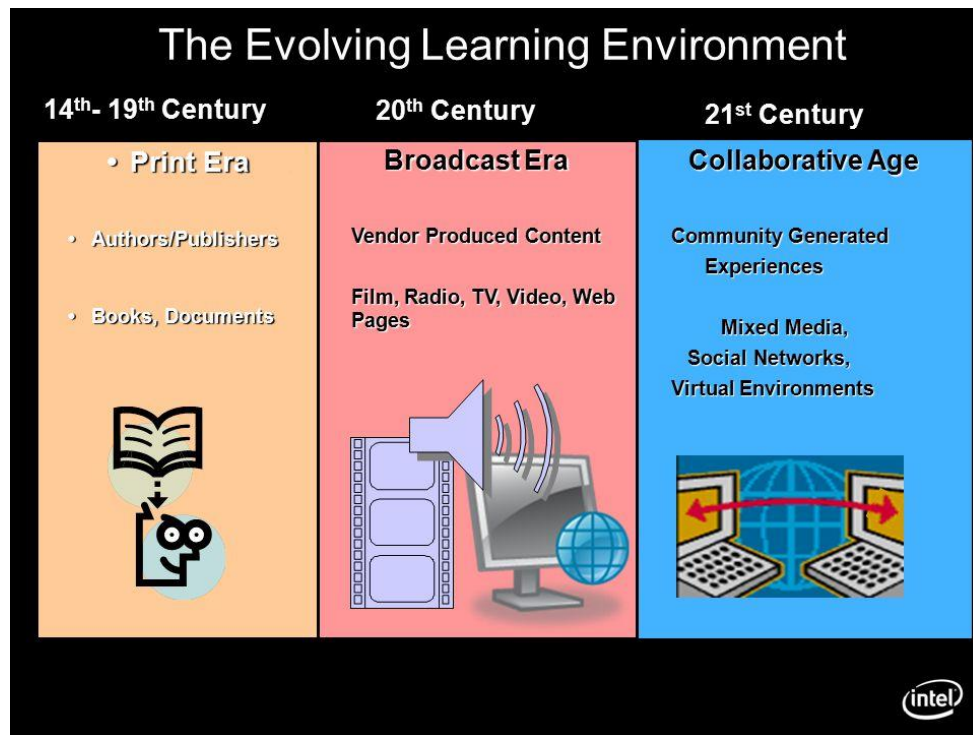
## **Executive Summary**

This report seeks to examine the nature of leadership and how it is nurtured in an all girls learning environment. An important area of focus was to identify a range of effective and sustainable deliberate actions that enhance the leadership experiences of the learners. A collective view of leadership was also sought to ascertain the criteria of a leader and if there was any differentiation between strategies to meet the needs of specific target groups, namely Māori and Pasifika. Moreover, leaders were also asked to consider the links between their leadership strategies and student achievement to see if there was a direct correlation between achievement and leadership experiences. The study found that each of the change agents involved in the project could clearly articulate a set of leadership characteristics and were in essence a range of synonyms for the same attributes. Furthermore, they were able to clearly discern a range of deliberate actions that essentially required a shift in the teaching and learning pedagogical pathways across the school however they were contextualised in ways that were relevant to their community of learners and the hopes and aspirations of their whānau. Interestingly, the responsibility to grow leadership was shared and no participant in this study was willing to accept the leadership strategies as work undertaken by themselves alone however, the findings of this study acknowledge the importance of change leadership and management practices and who each of these leaders are as change agents. Teacher disposition and mindset were critical to growing reflections of leadership across the school and wider community and that a core component of growing their students as leaders also meant growing the leadership capacity of staff. Connectedness through relationships and placing the learner at the heart of all that transpired in each of the learning environments that participated in this study were the founding principles of each change agent's approach to crafting future leaders. In each learning environment, the school's overall vision linked powerfully to the development of leaders through deliberate and strategically designed actions.

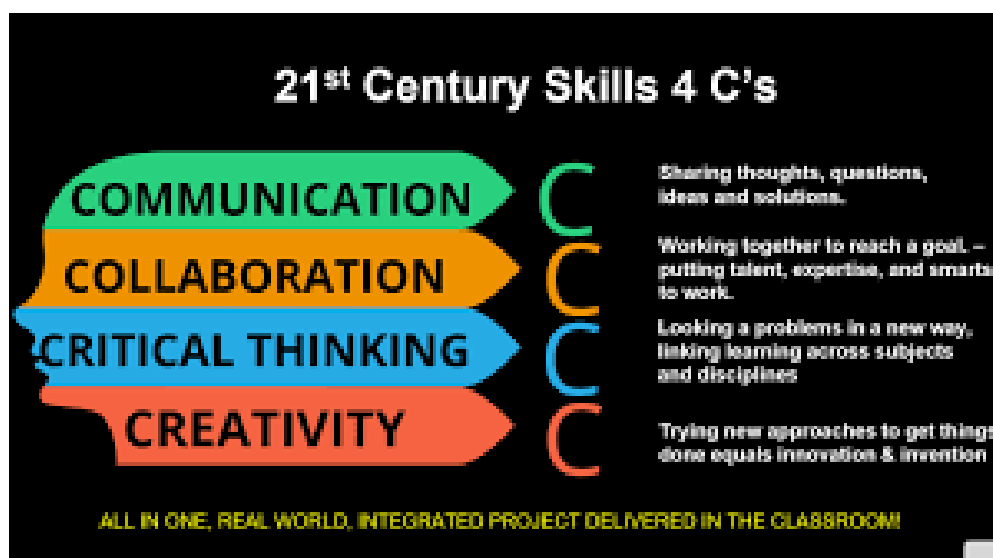
For the purposes of this particular project, research provided by Lippl (2013) (as cited in Zulama 2010) contextualises the modern school learning environment through a set of common skills; communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. This set of common skills is woven throughout the learning school environment and is dynamic and forever evolving which has at its core, the learner. This reflects a 21st Century model that is consistent with the intention to develop actively involved lifelong learners and appears alive and vibrant in each of the schools visited - what is even more relevant is that while there are similarities that can be drawn across the range of deliberate actions, they have been consistently designed to meet the hopes and aspirations of the learner, their whānau, and community at a regional, national and ultimately global level.

## Background and Rationale

In his 1-1 Master Class, Bruce Dixon, co-founder of the Anytime, Anywhere Learning Foundation The Good, the Bad and the Ugly delineates the evolving learning environment and offers a snapshot of the progression of the learning environment over the last seven centuries.



The 21<sup>st</sup> century is known as the 'Collaborative Age' and the skills required in this century can be summarised by four key skill areas that are offered by Lippl (2013) (as cited in Zulama 2010).



This particular skill set will enable the learner to actively participate in the Collaborative Age and demonstrates the unique nature of the learner while also highlighting the correlation between the learner and who they can be as a leader in the modern learning environment. Therefore the intention of this sabbatical project is to discern the growth and nature of leadership development within environments that are modern in terms of this particular skill set.

It would seem then that leadership is the domain for change and while we may not see the leader in ourselves – others will see it in us and create the clearing for leadership to occur. In these moments, we get to stand outside of our comfort zones and do something that is greater than ourselves. We are stirred by our beliefs and the difference that can be made.

The 'Tu Rangatira' framework provides a structure that defines the key roles of leadership and is rich in core values that resonate from Te Ao Māori and expressed by English equivalents.

***'Tu Rangatira is intended to sharpen the focus of leadership and to expand the potential and achievement of Māori' (TU RANGATIRA. Māori Medium Educational Leadership. Pg8)***

While it was primarily designed for Māori Medium schools, the New Zealand Education Council now offer an 'Educational Leadership Capability Framework' based on the 'Tu Rangatira' structure. It has been designed to 'support the intention of the *Leadership Strategy for the Teaching Profession*,' and focuses on leadership development based on shared understandings of what leadership in different spheres of influence looks like in practice.

This report applies the framework as a two-tiered approach. The first component of the framework focuses on the creation of the criteria of a leader according to the framework and the change agent's embodiment of that particular criterion based on action or perspective. The second part uses the framework as a construct for leadership in each of the modern learning environments on offer and seeks to provide, where possible, a further lens to demonstrate the impact of these practices or deliberate actions on the learner and their whānau.

The application of the Tu Rangatira framework may be a challenge for us all – in mainstream as it is in Māori Medium schools; however, this study evidences the type of leadership that can enable empowerment and inspire the type of leadership that will inform change at its deepest level.

This sabbatical project draws its impetus from the current process of change facing Rotorua Girls High. The appointment of a new principal and the opportunity to explore current Year 13 leadership opportunities as well as a leadership review have been identified as priority foci for the school. I also want to grow my understanding of 'Women as Agents of Change' and step outside of my own worldview and seek greater learning through others and the practical application of those ideas. This project also takes cognisance of the previous five years of work at Rotorua Girls High which culminated into finalists in the 2018 Prime minister's Excellence Award for 'Teaching and Learning' and the winner of the 'Governance' section.

## **Methodology**

Given my current school environment, this sabbatical project focused on visiting schools that were primarily single sex secondary schools. The schools chosen were not specific to a decile band nor geographically linked but were chosen because key leadership roles were held by women and they were generally well placed to provide experience of a range of approaches to growing leadership for their student body and had either recently undergone change at the most senior level of leadership or had anchored themselves in a set of traditions that had kept the school current in the evolving learning environment. Moreover, key leadership roles were not necessarily defined as principal to enable greater insight on the impact of leadership strategies across the school environment. School's had a varying percentage of Māori and Pasifika student base to provide a variation of the strategies at play and their particular emphasis, if any on the target ethnic groups. Initial contact was via telephone with leaders or with Principal's PA's which was then followed up by an email. The email stated that the intention would be to discuss their criteria of a leader and look at the range of leadership strategies used by their school to grow students and staff. The email also indicated that through this project, I would seek to identify what approaches created success and the impact of those leadership experiences.

Interviews were conducted with:

- Tara Kanji Principal of Tauranga Girls and five of the most senior prefects including the current Head Girl.
  
- Ngaire Ashmore Principal of Auckland Girls Grammar
  
- Jackie Smith Deputy Principal of Waikato Diocesan School for Girls, Faith Tautuhi Head of Kaupapa Māori and students of Senior Reo classes
  
- Dame Georgina Kingi Principal of Saint Joseph Māori Girls College, current and observation of ex-students onsite on the day of the interview

Interviews were based on four key areas:

- The criteria of a leader
  
- The deliberate strategies in place to accelerate the leadership experience
  - Facilitation and implementation of these strategies
  - Specific strategies aimed at those who are at risk of underachieving
  - The differentiation if any in these strategies to meet the needs of Māori and or Pasifika
  
- The shifts in student outcomes as a result of the strategies
  
- The potential to grow staff as leaders

Notes were taken during each visit. These notes were reviewed after each visit and then at the end of the entire interview process. Responses were considered, ideas and patterns noted. Findings were then applied through the lens of the Education Leadership Capability Framework and the criteria of a Leader was also aligned to the Tu Rangatira Framework to evidence both staff and student leadership experiences.

## Findings

A review of notes taken at each of the interviews reveals a range of synonyms for key leadership characteristics. These characteristics emerge from a strong moral purpose evident in each of the change agents and driven from a desire to serve the learner and her whānau to ultimately make a difference for future generations.

*‘A leader is more effective when they have that heart connect’  
Senior Prefect body of Tauranga Girls 2019*

Moreover, this type of moral leadership ethos causes a connect through a shared value base that is best implemented through the use of the 21st century skills that are more conducive to the evolving Learning environment which, at this current time is the ‘Collaborative Age.’

*‘Moral leadership is about service to the people. We are doing it altogether for all of us.  
It’s leading by example.’  
Jackie Smith Deputy Principal of Waikato Diocesan School for Girls*

### The Criteria of a Leader

Criteria of a Leader	Skill set of a Leader	Evidenced by
<b>Visionary</b> (summarises synonyms such as shared vision/clarity of purpose/strategic direction/inspire not forced/range of networks and skills)	<b>Communication</b>  <b>Collaboration</b>  <b>Critical thinking</b>  <b>Creativity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The articulation of a clearly stated vision</li> <li>• Deliberate actions to bring vision to fruition</li> </ul>
<b>Role model</b> (summarises synonyms such as ‘walk the talk’/won’t ask of others what I wouldn’t do myself/authentic/integrity/lead by example)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sees themselves as learners</li> <li>• Works alongside students and staff</li> <li>• Will act on feedback to improve outcomes for learners</li> <li>• Great way of finding out things without pushing</li> <li>• Showing not telling</li> <li>• Reciprocal respect</li> <li>• Relatable</li> <li>• Approachable</li> </ul>
<b>Strong belief system</b> (summarises synonyms such as Tikanga driven/commitment/inspired by/dedication/clear/based on experience/courageous/)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to make the hard calls</li> <li>• Willing to take risks after careful</li> </ul>



<p>sense of humility/service</p>		<p>consideration and research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared responsibility but will continue to move forward</li> </ul>
<p><b>Altruistic</b> (summarises synonyms such as greater good/moral purpose/servant leadership/shared responsibility/empowering - grows leaders/advocate)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong knowledge of systems</li> <li>• Puts others before self</li> <li>• Works for greater good</li> <li>• Holds learner at the heart of all they do</li> <li>• Looks to grow the leader in others</li> <li>• Uplifting. Did not take anything away from another person</li> <li>• Give opportunities to allow others to go</li> <li>• Heart connect</li> <li>• Shows empathy</li> </ul>

Consequently, Page and Wong (2003) offer seven Servant Leadership traits that summate the criteria offered by each of the leaders:

1. *Empowering and developing others*
2. *Vulnerability /Humility*
3. *Serving others*
4. *Open Participatory Leadership*
5. *Visionary Leadership*
6. *Courageous Leadership (Integrity/Authenticity)*
7. *Inspiring Leadership*

and each participant was able to clearly articulate each of these traits throughout the interview process and more importantly students, whānau and staff who shared their perspectives were also able to identify their leaders as people who demonstrated these traits.

*'It's really great that I have her (Jackie) because she helps me make sense of stuff and I can suggest things too. It's about our kids. We can talk about anything. We work stuff out and we give things a go'*

*Faith Tautuhi Head of Kaupapa Māori Waikato Diocesan School for Girls*

In terms of the 'Educational Leadership Capability Framework' offered by the New Zealand Education Council, further consideration of the notes reveals a range of deliberate actions that are common-place across the schools but tailored specifically to the learners', their whānau and the wider community of each school setting.

*'Leaders are unique.*

*They have similar characteristics but the impact they have on others is what drives them - they land in different ways because they have different styles for different people.'*

*Tara Kanji Principal at Tauranga Girls College*

'Evidencing the Educational Leadership Capabilities Framework through Leadership Practice.'

	<b>Educational Leadership Capabilities</b>	<b>Deliberate actions</b>
<p><b><i>He kaitiaki</i></b> <i>(The Guardian)</i></p> <p>Leaders protect and nurture a caring environment where people and ideas are valued, health, safety and well-being are enhanced and relationships are strong</p>	<p>- Building and sustaining high trust relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special character leads all actions</li> <li>• Student led events</li> <li>• Tutor programmes</li> <li>• Prefect mentoring system</li> <li>• Restorative practice processes</li> <li>• Peer support</li> <li>• Peer tutoring</li> <li>• Wrap around support and tailored to student need               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- e.g. learning support line in timetable</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Focus on leadership at Year 12 with Head Prefects only at Year 13 and they mentor Year 12 Prefect body</li> <li>• Year 13's in flatting situation on site to prepare for life outside of school (budgeting, cooking etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>He kaikōtuitui</i></b> <i>(The Networker)</i></p> <p>Leaders network, broker and facilitate relationships that contribute towards achieving organisational goals</p>	<p>- Building and sustaining high trust relationships</p> <p>- Contributing to the development and wellbeing of education beyond their organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating teams of students and staff that fit together for the greater purpose</li> <li>• Mentoring throughout year levels</li> <li>• Key staff working with students</li> <li>• Year 13's in flatting situation on site to prepare for life outside of school (budgeting, cooking etc)</li> <li>• Individualised Professional Learning pathways</li> <li>• Kāhui Kaumatua role and skill base to facilitate relationships</li> </ul>

		across the community of the school
<p><b>He kaiarataki</b> (<i>The Advocate</i>)</p> <p>Leaders promote the development and implementation of strategies, plans and policies to realise learners' potential and their educational success as Māori</p>	<p>- Ensuring culturally responsive practice and understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural heritage, using Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nga whare a Mereaira</li> <li>• Tikanga driven</li> <li>• Role of Kāhui Kaumatua anchored in a varied faith base but Māori in its implementation and design</li> <li>• Working smarter rather than harder             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- e.g. providing avenues for staff to make stronger connects about their teaching and learning pedagogy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Creating opportunities to connect across the school because conversations are often 'siloed'             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PL communities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>He kaimahi</b> (<i>The Worker</i>)</p> <p>Leaders 'lead by doing': upholding collegial practices that build capacity in others in pursuit of the goals of the organisation</p>	<p>- Building and sustaining collective leadership and professional community</p> <p>- Embodying the organisation's values and showing moral purpose, optimism, agency and resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective practice             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working alongside staff and students to use tools for growth (e.g. reflection through journaling/ logs/ tuakana teina)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Kanohi ki te kanohi             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build collegiality by providing Morning tea and lunch for staff</li> <li>• Staff and students eat together</li> <li>• A face in and around the school in classrooms/ Grounds and events</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Student leaders as teachers</li> <li>• Focus on outcomes not just checklists             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraisal system focus on how they evidence values/know their learners and their whānau</li> </ul> </li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>He kaiako</b> (<i>The Teacher and Learner</i>)</p>	<p>- Building and sustaining collective leadership and professional community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-wide foci             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-wide literacy focus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evidence based data to inform change             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Leaders understand that reciprocal learning and exemplary modelling of innovation leads to the effective creation, development and delivery of high quality authentic learning contexts and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluating practices in relation to outcomes</li> <li>- Attending to their own learning as leaders and their own well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing ourselves to ourselves to improve outcomes for learners</li> <li>• Reciprocal opportunities to have students as the leaders of learning</li> <li>• Share tasks but clear delineation of roles</li> <li>• Helping people through languaging to create authentic connections             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• '80% your work now we need to make sure it's 100%' (authenticity rather than plagiarism)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><i>He kanohi mataara</i></b> (<i>The Visionary</i>)</p> <p>Leaders are innovative and visionary to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values to succeed in the 21st Century as Māori and as citizens of the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategically thinking and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic visioning through Board as whānau. Charter and goals then brought back through staff</li> <li>• Kāhui Kaumatua</li> <li>• Board of Trustees</li> <li>• Values based ethos             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special character</li> <li>• Women as leaders</li> <li>• Focus on a particular value (term/year)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expectations are clearly defined and regularly referred to</li> <li>• Reviewing structures and building staff to fill roles</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>He kaiwhakarite</i></b> (<i>The Manager</i>)</p> <p>Leaders are effective and efficient managers of people, environments and education that transforms teaching and learning communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adept management of resources to achieve the vision and goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured times locked in calendar</li> <li>• Woven through PL opportunities</li> <li>• Active in the mentoring of staff and students</li> <li>• Understanding the perspective             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who us your cohort? Principal/SLT Principal/ Student/ whanau etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Providing avenues for other staff</li> <li>• Leader of Learning             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the classroom to ensure own pedagogy is evolving and improving</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Interestingly, notes also reveal other leadership theories of practice that emerge as these leaders cause shifts at the very core of their organisations. One particular leadership theory of note was Pedagogical leadership. The role of Pedagogical Leadership (Coughlin and Baird, 1972) demonstrates the nature of the relationships between the leaders and staff to measure the success of outcomes for leadership initiatives across the school.

*'If you grow your teachers you can grow your students - make sure what is invested in them  
can influence students'*

*Ngaire Ashmore Principal Auckland Girls Grammar*

Moreover consistent references were made to the required skill set to effectively operate inside of these leadership spheres. Without exception, these 21st century skills featured as baseline operating practices to grow leaders across each of the schools though the discerning difference was also the clarity of purpose and the willingness of these leaders to make 'hard calls' and anchor themselves in a fundamental belief system and commitment to a vision that did not waiver.

*'I am driven by tikanga.*

*There is a certain level of energy that comes from being raised by nuns.*

*They taught me commitment, passion, service and strength and that's what it is all about.'*

*Dame Georgina Kingi Principal St Joseph's Māori Girls College*

## **Implications and Conclusion**

Leaders are those who understand that “the growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.” (Firestone (n.d) as cited in McKinney 2016). For Educational Leaders, this is further spearheaded by their commitment to their students and their learning outcomes (ERO, 2013). While the notion of serving others is not new, Greenleaf Center for Servant for Student Leadership (2013) offers the theory of “servant leadership” which encapsulates the notion that a natural desire to serve others causes a conscious shift towards aspiring to lead others. Moreover, those they serve are those who have high priority needs. Sergiovanni (1992) further adds that servant leadership is driven by purpose, values, and beliefs which, in an educational context, can transform a school from an organisation to a community and inspire the kind of commitment, devotion, and service that can make schools great. Wheatley (2000) also validates the theory of servant leadership and notes the potential of the theory and the transformation it can cause which is clearly evidenced by the leaders who have participated in this study. While this study is limited, it does in fact support the research on offer and each of these leaders are indeed change agents in the modern learning environments that they lead. These women are vibrant, passionate, authentic and at the heart of all they do are their learners and their whānau. They bring a wealth of experience that suits the community they lead and their courage is matched by their vulnerability and humility. Furthermore, the strategies used by these leaders while seemingly generic are in their own way pathways to supporting the development of all their learners but in particular Māori and Pasifika. These change agents were active in nurturing Māori and Pasifika voice, identity, language, culture and a sense of succeeding as Māori and or Pasifika. As a result, learners (including staff) were purposeful and confident in their expressions of leadership. The importance of being able to connect to each other culturally and as leaders in normalised situations within the school settings has enhanced their learning experiences. Again within the limits of this sabbatical project, the question then arises that, as each of these change agents is connected to their own cultural identity does this influence their deliberate choice of which strategies to implement? There is no answer as this was not a prerequisite to being in the interview sample; however, the richness of leadership that is being crafted for the future is indeed cognisant of what it is to be Māori and or Pasifika in this ever changing world.

It is apparent that the Servant Leadership theory does work in the context of how each of these leaders cause shifts in the very culture of their organisations however there are other leadership theories that they implement to shift outcomes for their learners grow leadership. Pedagogical Leadership sits comfortably alongside Servant Leadership as this causes the shifts in the achievement of the outcomes as staff can inquire and reflect on their teaching and learning to improve achievement outcomes for learners and themselves. In doing so, a rich array of expressions of leadership are on offer and enable learners to understand who they can be as their own change agent in their communities and how they can both share their learning and grow others around them.

Furthermore, consistent themes emerge and in fact the range of strategies are the same but how it is applied because of the context is different and ultimately determines the sphere of influence - this is the point of difference for all change agents and I am inspired by the shared commitment of the change agents interviewed. Our young women will be leaders in the domains they find themselves in - active, vibrant, passionate and authentic - much like those who lead them now and more.

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