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SUMMER 2023

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52



20



30



44



08

AKO

# CONTENTS

THE AKORANGA ISSUE | SUMMER 2023

## REGULARS

**06**  
EDITORIAL

**18/42**  
OPINIONS

**60**  
BOOK REVIEWS

**64**  
GIVEAWAYS

## LONG READS

**08**  
WHIRIA TE TĀNGATA  
*How learning to weave is supporting hauora*

**20**  
CAPTURING COMMUNICATION  
*Enhancing intentional teaching in early childhood education*

**30**  
TE WHAKATIPU TOA REO  
*Experiences of learning te reo Māori and NZSL*

**44**  
LEARNING FOR LIFE  
*Personal stories of professional development*

**52**  
LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS  
OF A CHILD  
*Reimagining the role of physical education*





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# EDITORIAL

## *Learning from others*

Kia ora koutou.

It is a pleasure to bring you the latest edition of *Ako* journal. As the new national president, I know I have a lot to learn, so the theme *akoranga* is not without relevance to me.

Currently in Aotearoa we are seeing a renaissance of te reo Māori and with it a growing understanding of te ao Māori. The mahi of the people who have created this movement are also leading us into our own Age of Enlightenment.

This Aotearoa enlightenment is diversifying opportunities of professional learning for teachers from all sectors. New ways of approaching learners, as well as different values of what is important to learn, are there to explore and grow into.

In my new role as Te Manukura, I'm hoping to learn how we as an organisation could be a leader in this area. We need to show people that we don't have to be afraid, that there are amazing opportunities to be had by learning from other people, other ways of doing it, rather than the good old Westminster style of business and governance.

This edition highlights some amazing shared learning experiences. I couldn't help smiling as I read about a community-led learning initiative in Whangārei where a local kuia is teaching both students and staff the traditional skill of tāniko weaving. I found out how kindergartens in Wellington's Hutt Valley are enhancing their intentional teaching with a community of learning. And it was refreshing to see how two schools in Tairāwhiti and Ōtautahi are



rethinking PE by going beyond narrow skills and drills to enhance their students' learning.

The articles also reflect the variety in the ways people learn. I was inspired to hear colleagues share their own experiences of personal growth, including educators who are taking up the wero to master te reo Māori and NZSL.

I know that my own learning has accelerated in recent years as I have learnt from others. There is always someone with the knowledge and experience that we need, you just need to know where to look.

There is a theme in these articles of the importance of time to develop the understandings and relationships necessary for quality learning for all. This we have heard very strongly and consistently from you, our members. That is why better resourcing to give educators time to grow and do their work is firmly in our union campaigns this year.

I do hope you enjoy reading these beautiful stories of learning as much as I did.

Ngā mihi nui,

Mark Potter  
National President/Te Manukura  
NZEI Te Riu Roa



# The akoranga issue

*“Mai i te kōpae ki te urupā,  
tātou ako tonu ai /  
From the cradle to the grave,  
we are forever learning”  
– whakataukī*

This issue explores the variety of ways educators are continuing to learn and develop in their profession, for themselves and their ākonga.







FEATURE | THE AKORANGA ISSUE

# Whiria te tāngata

Staff and students at two Te Tai Tokerau kura have been learning the challenging skill of tāniko and other weaving techniques. *Ako* finds out how this akoranga is supporting hauora and weaving the school community together.





01

By sharing the traditional skill of tāniko (finger weaving), which her mother had taught her, Whangārei kuia Tania Davis is inspiring pupils and teachers, strengthening their connections, and building engagement with further learning for struggling pupils.

Danelle Unuwai, principal at Te Kura o Otangarei, says learning tāniko has provoked more passion and excitement from her kaiako than any other form of professional learning and development (PLD) in the six years she has taught at the school.

“It’s professional learning because it fills their wairua up! We’re learning skills we can pass on to our tamariki, it’s good for the hauora, good for whanaungatanga. It actually meets many needs from this one activity.”

The programme began at Totara Grove School in 2022, after acting principal Vanessa Peters (Whaea Ness) admired Tania’s tāniko purse in the school carpark. Tania, a grandmother of a student at the

school, acknowledged that she had made it herself. “The next question was, would you be interested in teaching a course here?” shares Whaea Ness. “I knew she was at home, and she had free time. And she said, ‘Oh gosh, I wouldn’t mind!’”

Tania wrote up a proposal that night, describing the benefits for the children, in alignment with the school values (whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, ako and tū rangatira). Whaea Ness was impressed and Tania was invited to return the next day. Whaea Ness told her, “I love it, I want to run with it, this is beautiful!” Whaea Ness selected a mixed group of girls – some she was concerned about educationally, and others who were rangatira or leaders at the school to provide a stabilising influence.

With the support of the school board, Whaea Ness drew on funding which had come to the school as payment for teachers doing a reo course, which she thought should be tagged for a kaupapa Māori project.





02

“So Tania started teaching the girls from 9am to 1pm every Wednesday,” explains Whaea Ness. “And it has been the best test of our school values, but also grit, persevering, resilience! We’ve had tears, we’ve had ‘I’m giving up, it’s too hard, I can’t do it!’ And then we talked about the puāwai, the blossoming at the end – ‘It’s going to take some hard work, but you wait!’ So it’s that mindset stuff for the girls too, the ones that struggled in class, with engagement, coaching them through that.”

“Tania is great with them like that too, she’s ended up becoming a nana for these girls. There have been so many wins for everyone!”

Then one of the kaiāwhina (teacher aides) saw the girls learning and asked if she could learn too. Whaea Ness suggested Tania might be willing to teach a group of staff after school once a week, and when she agreed, Whaea Ness asked the school board to fund Tania for that mahi as well. The board agreed.

“The way I see it is, teacher aides get the skill, then they can take it back to class,” explained Whaea

*“The way I see it is, teacher aides get the skill, then they can take it back to class. There are so many of our kids that need to learn this art form.”*

– Vanessa Peters

Ness. “There are so many of our kids that need to learn this art form – fine motor skills and so on.”

Ten staff at the school, including one male, have been supported to learn tāniko with Tania – five classroom teachers, four kaiāwhina, and a relief teacher. “We’ve just finished our term, and oh my gosh, you should see their mahi toi!”

Because the students and teachers are all first-time learners of this challenging and rare skill, it has created a bonding experience for them all, and lifted morale and spirit. At the end of the term, they had some beautiful artworks which others could see and admire. For the teachers, learning tāniko helped them identify with new learners and understand their feelings.

“We could all relate to the struggle that they went through,” says Whaea Ness. “I said, ‘now I can see their tears!’ And we’ve had to ask each other, ‘Hey, how do I do this?’ It’s really humbling. When the girls finished their little kākahu (cloaks), we invited them to our adult evening class after school. We had kai, we celebrated, and they worked alongside us. It was beautiful to hear



them say, ‘Whaea, you do it like this!’ And ‘Will you come and help me? How do I do this part?’

“And then the parents came in to see. Tania did up all these certificates and a taonga, and when we presented them with their kākahu, at end of term assembly, their whānau were with them.”

Mastering this traditional artform has been difficult, but it has touched students and teachers deeply. “When they had their last session, it was really emotional,” says Whaea Ness. “One group was just crying, ‘I don’t want it to finish!’ So we’ve kept them on, we’ve got a second group that have started this term.”

Whaea Ness was so positive about the effects of Tania’s tāniko teachings that she asked her if she might be willing to teach at another school as well. With her consent, Whaea Ness invited interest from the other four schools in the local I Have a Dream network. It was quickly picked up by neighbouring school, Te Kura o Otangarei.

“It’s been awesome, the journey we’ve been on,” shares tumuaki at Te Kura o Otangarei



Danelle Unuwai. The kura has two full reo immersion classrooms and the rest are reo rua (bilingual). It has a 100 percent Māori student roll, with students mostly from northern iwi. “We started last term with a group of girls, like six Year 6 girls, and it has just been a great experience for them – all the skills that they’ve picked up through the group. Resilience has been the main one, and perseverance. You know when things get tricky, having to keep on trying.”

Whaea Danelle’s selection of girls was based on their interest in art, and having a positive attitude to trying new things. For some, she thought it would give them something positive to look forward to. At her kura, the programme was targeted at the older girls, Year 6, who could gain the skill, then pass it on to another group before leaving the school at the end of the following year.

“One of our girls that was in the kōtiro group, she taught us (teachers) how to do the tāniko! ‘You just spin this one and twist your finger.’ So we took a video of her showing the process. She’s the expert, she’s helping us! And it was good





03

for our girls who found it challenging. We're modelling ourselves as learners too, and they're enjoying watching us."

Whaea Danelle also heard that Tania was willing to teach staff as well, and found that most of the staff, in fact all the women, were interested in learning the skill. "So we've got a group of ten that meet every week." Being situated next to a kindergarten, and wanting to build a stronger connection with those staff, Danelle also invited them to join the tāniko group, and two kindergarten staff have taken it up. "We wanted to build more whanaungatanga, so they've joined our rōpū and it's really helped us to connect."

Whaea Danelle sees the tāniko work as very effective professional development. "It's something that's challenging, even I'm doing it. I wanted to cry for the first two or three sessions 'cause I couldn't get it, even I had to learn to keep persevering. It's been a real good journey that we've all been on."

"We're learning something that is one of our old skills from the past, but it's really good for our hauora. We just didn't want to stop! Because we were just starting to grasp it, and we were all loving it. We even got together in the holidays at one of our homes and had a day wānanga."

*"It's just so exciting to see passion and love, and relationships building. It has created so much more than just whatu (weaving)."*

– Tania Davis

"There are so many things to be learnt. Even for us as adults, learning the patterning and the maths and things. And trying to awhi other people along too. It's just like a classroom situation, but we're all adults."

How does learning tāniko support better teacher practice? "Well for myself, and I was a teacher before I was the principal, it's helped me know how learners feel. To be learning something, and how challenging that can be ... it's been good for us as kaiako who work with tamariki to know this is how our learners feel every day, and keeping that in mind."

Whaea Danelle also says it has been good for mindfulness. "It teaches us too as adults, to slow down, chill out and get grounded."

While the girls learn it in a 3-hour session during school hours, staff at Te Kura o Otangarei have a 2-hour session after school on Mondays. Even one of the school board members has joined the tāniko staff group. "That was great. I was like, oh yeah, that will help you connect more with the staff and build that whanaungatanga!"

After taking a group of pupils and staff through to completion of their first small kākahu, and extending the programme to Otangarei, Tania is

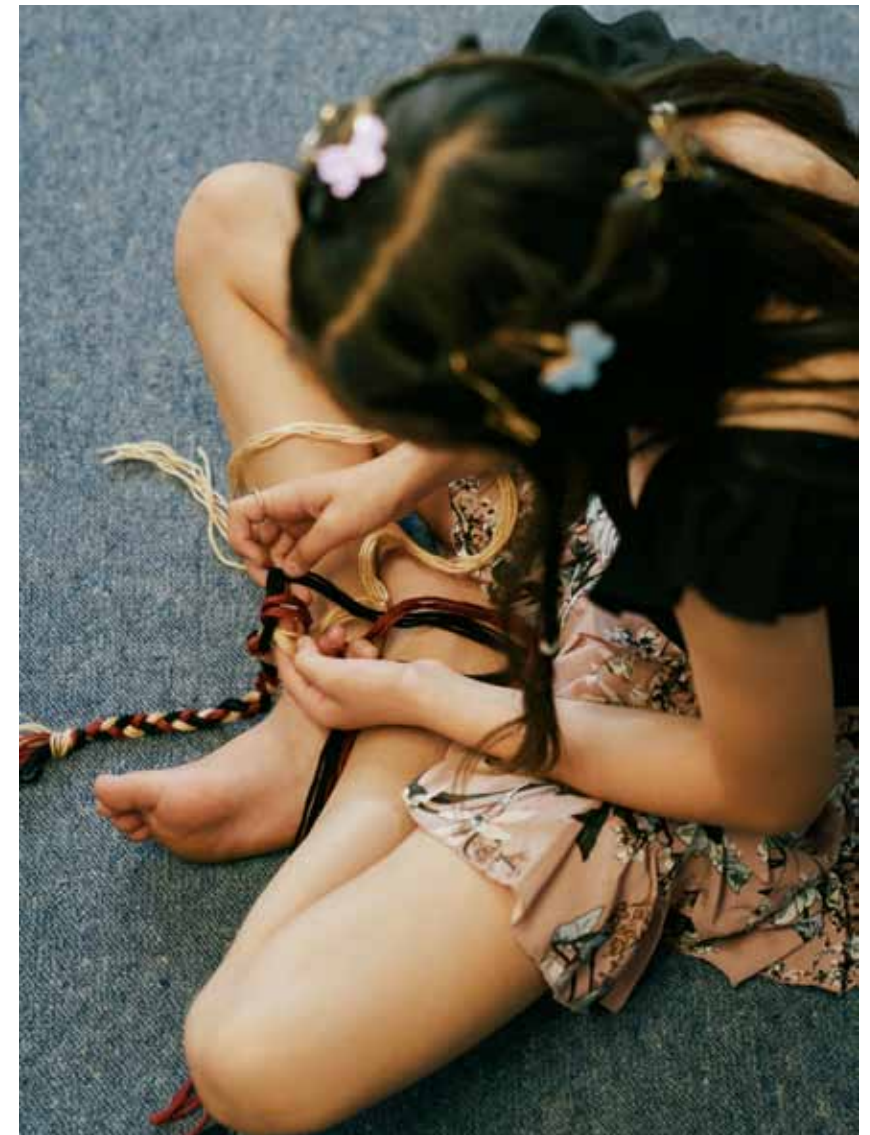


"We're modelling ourselves as learners too, and they're enjoying watching us."

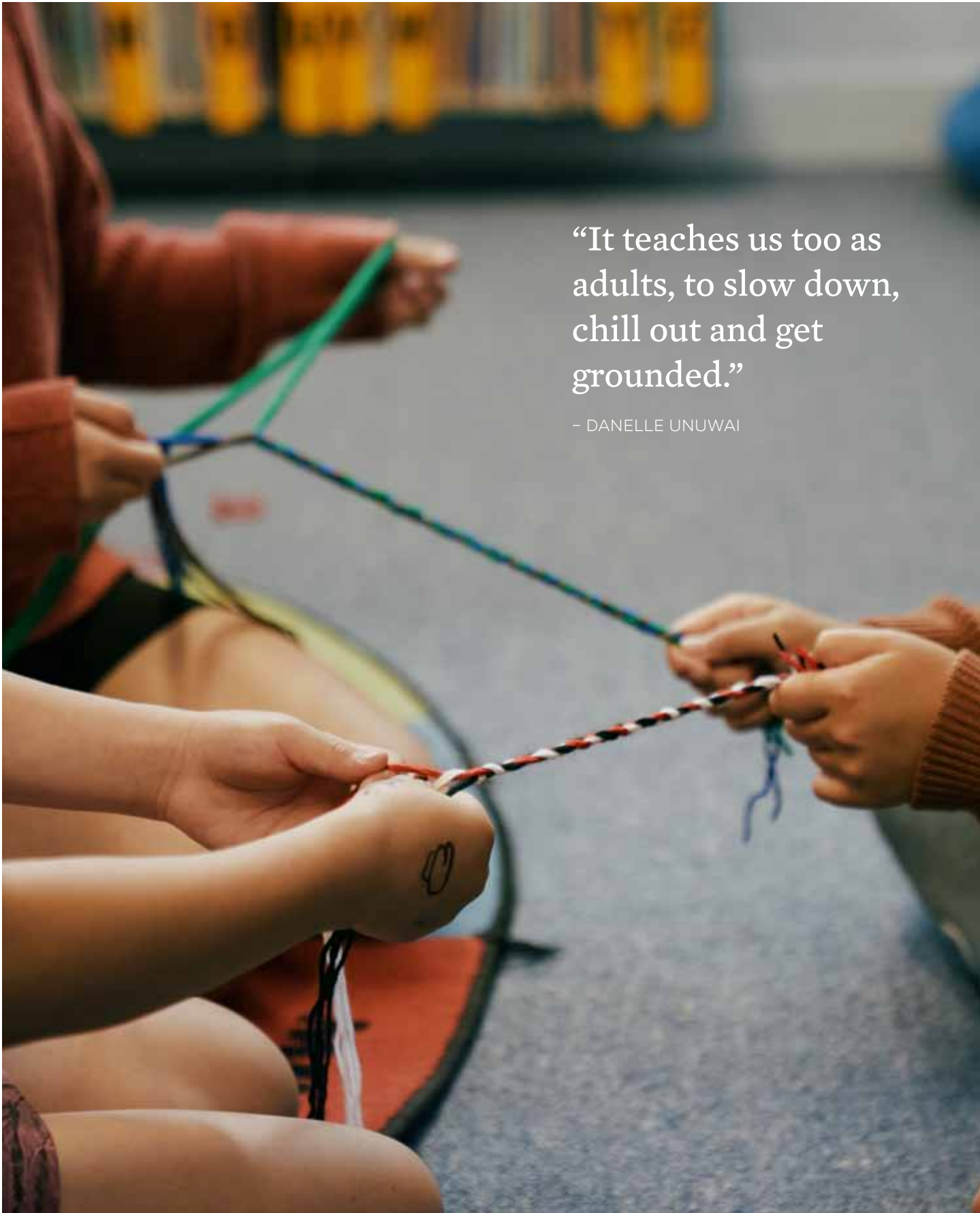
– DANELLE UNUWAI



04







“It teaches us too as adults, to slow down, chill out and get grounded.”

– DANELLE UNUWAI



now preparing her students to make larger kākahu which represent the school mātāpono or values, to become significant art pieces for the school.

“So we’re advancing them in their weaving, but also their knowledge,” says Tania. “Their first kākahu was just do this, and follow the steps. Now I’m starting to teach them to weave that whakapapa into their kākahu and to think about creating the story in their kākahu.

“Each of them is given a value, and each is creating a kākahu to represent that. For example, for the ako value, one of the girls is doing her tāniko – simply a book, a ruler and a pencil. Just stepping them up, bringing in those values from the school. Teaching them about creating their story and their kākahu, and representing it. I’m really excited about that for them!”

Tania’s programme is built around the concept of ‘Poipoia kākano, kia puāwai’ (Nurture the seed and it will flourish). She uses contemporary materials to teach all the techniques required

to weave any kākahu. Tāniko is but one part of that. Her students are also learning to weave māwhitiwhiti and add tags and feathers to complete their kākahu. While this is a new career for Tania, who had never taught tāniko previously, she is finding it deeply satisfying. “My mum was a beautiful weaver, she taught me when I was about ten, but when I was about 11 she joined the church with my dad and she really struggled to bring those two worlds, te ao Maori and te ao hāhi together. And she gave up weaving and followed her Christian life, and it wasn’t until she was much older that she wanted to re-start. But by then she wasn’t able to. So for me, it’s about picking up my mum’s journey.

“What I love is seeing the change in other people’s lives. Absolutely, things have really done a turn-around for me, but it’s just so exciting to see passion and love, and relationships building. It has created so much more than just whatu (weaving). That surprised me. I’m loving every second of it, it’s wonderful!” ●

See the online version of this article for references.





# Dr Kate Thornton

## Every teacher should have the opportunity to develop their own leadership capabilities

The importance of all teachers having opportunities to engage in leadership professional learning and development (PLD) has been highlighted in the Education Council’s 2018 publication *The Leadership Strategy for the teaching profession of Aotearoa New Zealand*. Its vision is for “every teacher, regardless of their role or setting, to have the opportunity to develop their own leadership capability”.

*The Educational Leadership Capability Framework*, also published in 2018 by the Education Council, sets out core capabilities which are intended to provide high-level guidance for PLD and that apply to different spheres of leadership. Despite this high-level guidance, leadership PLD offerings in the Aotearoa New Zealand context are diverse, and their effectiveness and reach are not well understood. There are also barriers to participation including time, cost and lack of relevance to specific sectors.

Leadership PLD can be formal or informal, so what should you be looking for in a formal effective leadership PLD programme? The following indicators are derived from a review of literature on the characteristics of effective leadership PLD and suggest that:

- It is evidence based and ongoing rather than a one-off learning opportunity.
- There are opportunities to develop a greater understanding of personal identity and leadership capacity including personal values and authentic leadership practices.

- There is a focus on how to lead others and how to develop leadership in others. This includes support for the distribution of leadership and for the development of strong learning communities.
- Opportunities are provided to reflect on your leadership practice both individually and collectively.
- There is an emphasis on educational/ pedagogical leadership leading to improved outcomes for children and families/whānau. This may include opportunities to conduct an inquiry in one’s own school/centre.
- An understanding of indigenous leadership practices and a focus on Te Tiriti-based and culturally responsive and equitable leadership practice is prioritised.
- There is a focus on systems and organisational leadership including leading change, strategic leadership, goal setting and problem-solving.
- Opportunities to work in networked communities, alongside peers, sharing experiences, ideas and challenges are provided.
- Access to mentoring and/or coaching and opportunities to learn how to coach and mentor others are also offered.

As mentioned above, there are constraints to access and there appear to be more opportunities for those in formal leadership roles than for teachers to access PLD opportunities. However, if leadership is a practice in which everyone can be involved

then how can leadership capacity be developed without formal opportunities?

*The Educational Leadership Capability Framework* mentioned above provides useful guidance and offers reflective questions that can be applied to each capability. Development of leadership capabilities can be strengthened informally through processes including reflection (both individual and shared), working in a professional learning community, and having access to mentoring and coaching.

One of the first steps to developing leadership capacity is to reflect on your personal understandings of leadership, as how you view leadership will influence your participation in it. Another important step is considering what is important to you and what your values are. Professors James Kouzes and Barry Posner describe an inner journey to developing leadership capacity suggesting that: “... becoming a leader begins when you come to understand who you are, what you care about, and why you do what you do. Developing yourself as a leader begins with knowing your own key convictions; it begins with your value system.”

This process requires individual reflection and will also be informed by feedback from and dialogue with others. The value of being a reflective practitioner, being willing to observe, critique and improve one’s practice, individually and within a team, is well established. Reflection is particularly important in times of change as effective professionals and educational leaders need to be continuously open to new learning. Opportunities can be

provided through professional discussions to reflect on leadership concepts and practices and link these to current research.

The importance of openness to learning and critique is central to the notion of professional learning communities. These have been defined by Professor Louise Stoll as “an inclusive and mutually supportive group of people with a collaborative, reflective and growth-oriented approach towards investigating and learning more about their practice in order to improve pupils’ learning”. Shared and supportive leadership and collective learning and application are two of the characteristics of professional learning communities, which are characterised by a high level of trust between members of the teaching team.

The importance of mentoring and coaching in supporting leadership learning is also well supported by research; and mentoring and coaching others can be an effective leadership practice as well as a way of developing leaders and leadership. Effective mentoring and coaching relationships should be supportive and non-judgmental and underpinned by honesty, trust and mutual respect. Teachers and leaders at all stages of their leadership journeys can benefit from mentoring and coaching support.

In conclusion, leadership PLD is something for all teachers to consider, and can be formal or informal. This article aims to provide some suggestions for those considering how to strengthen their leadership capabilities and practices. ●

See the online version of this article for references.

Dr Kate Thornton is an associate professor in the School of Education at Victoria University of Wellington. Her research is focussed on educational leadership and leadership development, mentoring and coaching, and professional learning communities.





FEATURE | THE AKORANGA ISSUE

# Capturing communication

An innovative language project involving 19 kindergarten teachers has shown the value of collaboration and using data to enhance intentional teaching in early childhood education.





01

All educators understand the importance of supporting and extending oral language skills for tamariki in early childhood — but how do you know if your centre or kindergarten is going about it in an effective way? And how do educators really unpack each child’s progress and needs when it comes to language acquisition?

A data language project has given four kindergartens in the Hutt Valley deep insights into how tamariki are learning to communicate.

Wendy Walker, who was the lead researcher at Sun Valley Kindergarten in Wainuiomata, said that what made this project particularly special was getting to visit other kindergartens.

“That additional responsibility was a real highlight. You don’t often get to do research in somebody else’s kindergarten so it was very validating for what we do and really exciting to see how another setting can operate.”

The project brought teaching teams together with a clear research and learning focus on language. Teams fed their collected observation data back into their own kindergartens for analysis and discussion. They also met with

teacher researchers in other kindergartens, offering a unique opportunity for supportive collaboration, a cornerstone of any professional learning community.

Using data collection tools as a method to really dig into what was happening in the programme, the teachers involved say the project has consolidated beneficial teaching practices as well as empowering them to introduce new methods where needed.

Wendy says that teachers always have a sense of what their children are learning.

“But the data really validated and supported that for us, and it showed us where there was room to strengthen our practice with those children.”

Entering the project, all the teacher-researchers said they felt nervous. They were being asked to learn new technologies, and perhaps have their teaching practice critiqued.

Claire Fouhy, speech and language therapist for Hutt City Kindergarten Association, brought in two expert mentors, Sue Cherrington from Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington and Tara McLaughlin from Massey



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02 Kai time is also kōrero time for tamariki and staff at Sun Valley Kindergarten.





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“I’d never done anything like this and it was so unknown. I think it helped knowing that the whole team was involved, so I wasn’t on my own.” – JESSICA GIBB



University. Sue and Tara helped to train the teacher-researchers in data collection, and acted as ‘critical friends’ throughout the project. The critical friend role was multi-faceted but in general Sue and Tara helped teachers to make sense of tools and data, asked provocative questions, provided a different perspective, encouraged teams to go deeper with their interpretations and ideas, and celebrated success.

Wendy said the support from Sue, Tara and Claire helped a lot. “I thought, what’s this going to involve? Am I up for it? But there was a lot of coaching and learning opportunities to ask silly questions so that was very empowering. When it came time to do the data research in a different setting we felt quite equipped to do that.”

Jessica Gibb at Sun Valley Kindergarten agrees. She laughs and says that when the project started she was a nervous wreck.

“I’d never done anything like this and it was so unknown. I think it helped knowing that the whole team was involved, so I wasn’t on my own.”

The four teams entered the project with broad enquiry questions such as: ‘How do we know that we are helping to progress children’s language development?’ and ‘How can we intentionally teach language to all learners?’

Annette Collings, senior teacher for ten kindergartens at Hutt City Kindergartens, supported the teacher-researchers throughout the project. She says the HealthCare Plus grant that Claire won made the project possible.

“The grant allowed teacher-researchers release time to do the project. They could focus their attention on the collecting of data. This would have been more challenging if the funding for release time was not in place.”

### Using data to better our practice

The word ‘data’ can be a cold one, invoking images of people inputting numbers into complex algorithms for processing. In this case, it was using a range of methods to capture information about children’s verbal and non-verbal language and their interactions with peers and kaiako, as well as the practices that kaiako were already using to support children’s language. Taken together, data from across the tools were used to provoke teams in their reflection and planning for language growth.

The Sun Valley team all agreed that one of the most effective data collection tools was videoing children during the session, something they implemented after deciding to focus their language inquiry on peer-to-peer communication.



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Head teacher of Sun Valley Kindergarten Shellyn McAuley says that one of the benefits of video is that it can be replayed, so that teacher-observers can get an idea of the context surrounding children’s interactions and behaviours.

“We often think language is just what we hear, but it’s so much more. We found we wouldn’t have picked up on the body language, gestures, facial expressions, the way a child might just walk away, or you might have four in a group and as soon as someone else appears, they scurry off.”

Shellyn says video also helps when doing speech referrals because you can go back and break down a sentence to find sounds you think are missing.

“A little snippet can go a long way later.”

Sometimes the data gave the teams some surprising results. Teachers Mandy Bartosh and Jessica Gibb mention one child whom they’d rarely seen speak during the session happily talking away to her cousin in a video.

On reflection they realised the child was confident speaking to peers, but not to teachers. The work for that child became around promoting positive interactions and feelings.

Mandy says the data taught their team not to make assumptions about what was happening within the programme. Watching the videos gave them a chance to observe what was happening within groups of children when they thought that teachers weren’t around. There were subtle behaviours within the groups that weren’t always obvious to teachers or displayed in the teachers’ presence.

Wendy Walker says that one of the adoptions to their practice that came out of data analysis was the need for developing the children’s social language around sharing and emotional competence.

“We could devise team strategies to address that – role plays and creating resources that talked about sharing, using the children as role models, acting out funny scenes in front of them and affirming when we saw examples of that in front of the group. So that was really very helpful for our children.”

As Claire Fouhy is careful to point out, data is there to inform the teachers’ practice, not control it. Claire shared a mantra learnt from critical friend, Tara, that reminds kaiako that, “People make decisions, not data!”

For Janelle Morgan, a teacher-researcher at Pukeatua Kindergarten, the child profile tool was

particularly useful as a way to get a bigger picture of individual children.

“It was really good for getting the whole team to focus on a particular child because some teachers know that child more than others. We’d fill it out individually first and then we’d come back together for a discussion. We’re still using those tools now.”

**Language at the forefront**

All the teachers *Ako* spoke to said that the year-long focus on the project meant that language acquisition was always at the forefront of their minds, bringing a laser focus to all their interactions with the children.

“It made us far more intentional in the way we scaffold language learning,” says Wendy.

Their use of descriptive language increased.

“So now we say, ‘Would you like to put your left hand in your sleeve?’ or at tidy up time, we’ll say ‘Can you put the red bike away in the white shed?’, so the child knows – oh, that’s a bike and it’s red so this must be the bike, and the teacher’s pointed to the shed so that must be white,” says Mandy Bartosh.

The teachers were continually focussed on how the children were learning to communicate and what teachers could do to extend that.

Sun Valley Kindergarten started using different books with basic sentence structures, descriptive words and doing words. They also changed the way they approached reading time.

“We do lots more conversation as we read,” says Mandy. “Sometimes we don’t always finish the story the way you normally would and it might take a long time to read a story, but the children have given us lots of their ideas.”

For Shellyn, this adoption of practice has put the children front and centre in problem solving with language as well, something they’ve brought into role playing at mat time.

“We might get them to choose or offer an example where they’ve had a struggle with language or getting their point across and we have the children solve what we might try instead and then we model it in pairs. It’s quite a good way to approach it, to use a real-life example with the children involved.”

Over at Pukeatua Kindergarten, Janelle Morgan noted that sometimes the older ways of doing things offered up useful tools.

“I went back to a lot of things that we were doing years ago with repetition and action songs. I started using songs that I hadn’t used for ages, simply because there was more repetition in them.”



05



“We do lots more conversation as we read. Sometimes it might take a long time to read a story, but the children have given us lots of their ideas.” – MANDY BARTOSH







Shellyn McAuley says that while you never let a criteria or topic drop out of your teaching repertoire, the focus on language gave all the teachers a common goal which was affirming and motivating for the teachers.

The outcomes of the data language project place it firmly within a professional learning community model and show the enormous value of professional learning and development when it's done collaboratively and over a longer period of time. The project was personalised by the teams to respond to their unique setting, and each of the four teams took their learning in a slightly different direction.

The project also highlights a need for funding and time to be available so that teachers can take part in such beneficial practices in a deep and meaningful way. However, critical friends Tara and Sue point out that teachers interested in this type of work can start by trying one or two new tools to explore the value they might add to their teaching practice and child learning.

"We're always open to learning more strategies and skills," says Mandy. "We do our

See the online version of this article for references.

university degrees but we don't learn a lot about diverse learners and communication as much as we should, and so we learn a lot on the job and this just kind of pulls it together and highlights what we can do to keep on top."

Of course, the endpoint of any professional learning is the children. Jessica says she believes the project had enormously positive outcomes for the children at their kindergartens.

"I feel that we have gotten to know them a lot better. We have got more individual strategies that will suit the children better for their needs with language."


Wendy agrees and says the benefits are ongoing. "We will continue to provide resources like we did in our research year, the language resources that we know are helpful – whether it's a game or a social story specific to the competencies we feel the children need to strengthen."

"I'd say to anybody – try and do something like this within your teaching career because these opportunities don't come along very often and they make you appreciate why you've chosen this career." ●


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FEATURE | THE AKORANGA ISSUE

## Te whakatipu toa reo

Putā noa i te motu e ngana ana te hunga tangata ki te ako i te reo Māori me Te Reo Turi/New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), koia nei ngā reo taketake o Aotearoa. I kōrero ake a *Ako* ki ētahi o ngā ākonga e ngana nei ki te whai i tēnei kaupapa, ko te whāinga hoki ko te whakamana i ngā reanga e kake ake ana, e mōhio ai rātou ko wai rātou, nō hea rātou.



## Growing language champions

Across the country people are making it their mission to learn te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), both official languages in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Ako* spoke to educators who have taken up the language learning challenge, with the aim of empowering the next generation to be confident in who they are and where they come from.





01

Ko Brittany Manawaiti tērā o Ngāti Maniapoto, e koke ana i tēnei huarahi ki te tūhono atu ki tōna whakapapa Māori. I a ia e whakaako ana, mārama te kite i te hua o te reo Māori me tōna mōhio ki tōna whakapapa mō ana tamariki, whānau Māori hoki. I riro i a Brittany tētahi karahipi reorua mai i TeachNZ, kia noho ia ki te ako i te reo mō te kotahi tau ki Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Hei tāna, kua huri tōna ao, e kore hoki e ea i a ia tēnei ara te whai.

Nō Ngāti Maniapoto hoki te pāpā o Brittany, ā, i tipu ake ki Te Kūiti, ā, he Pākehā tōna māmā. I a ia e tipu ana, hei tā Brittany, kāore noa iho i tūhono atu ki tōna whānau Māori, ā, kāore hoki ia i whai i te reo Māori. Heoi anō, nā tāna whai i te reo Māori, kua kitea ētahi hononga kāore noa ia i mōhio.

Ko tā Brittany, “koia te haerenga mīharo ko tēnei” i Te Wānanga o Raukawa, ā, i a ia e ako ana, ka tūtakina ngā tāngata mai i ngā kokona katoa o te ao, mai i ngā kaiako, tumuaki, rōia me ngā kaitaki kiriata hoki. He rawe katoa te hunga o tōna akomanga, he kaha rātou ki te tautoko i te katoa, nā te mea i te ako tonu rātou katoa. “Kāore he aha, ahakoa ko wai, i te ako te katoa. He kāhui tōna hanga, he kāhui tōna mahi, ki te taka atu tētahi, kua huri atu te kāhui ki te kahi me te hiki i taua tangata, he mahi ā-rōpū.”

*“Kāore he aha, ahakoa ko wai, i te ako te katoa. He kāhui tōna hanga, he kāhui tōna mahi, ki te taka atu tētahi, kua huri atu te kāhui ki te kahi me te hiki i taua tangata, he mahi ā-rōpū.”*

*– Brittany Manawaiti*

Ka whakapuaki mai a Brittany mō ngā piki me ngā heke i pā ki a ia, me te hoki atu ki te pātai, “E aha ana ahau i konei?” I tētahi rangi, ka kī ake ia ki te pūkenga reo, me haere pea ia ki te kōhanga ki te ako me ngā tamariki o reira. Ka pau ngā marama, ka toro ake taua pūkenga reo ki a ia me te kī, he hui ā-whānau tā te kōhanga reo i taua pō tonu. E maumahara ana ia ki te wā e noho porohita ana te whānau, ka tū ia ki te kōrero i tāna kaupapa. I kī atu ia ki te whānau, ka whai hua tonu tāna noho me ngā tamariki ki te ako i te reo. Ka tautokohia tāna tono, ka noho atu ia ki te whānau. Ka noho te kōhanga hei wāhi haumarū, ā, ki te hiahia ia ki ētahi mea, ka noho rātou ki te āwhina, ki te tautoko i a ia i roto i āna mahi.

I mahi ia ki Te Kōhanga Reo o Tū Roa ki Ōtaki i ngā Paraire, ā, i ētahi rā kua pukumahi ia me āna mahi mō te akomanga. Hei takoha atu, ka noho ia ki te tuari i ōna mōhiotanga, te āwhina i te kōhanga reo ma te taki haere i ā rātou pūtea me te kōhi moni mō te kōhanga i ngā wā e wātea āna ia.

Mō Brittany, i pupū ake ētahi pāmamae, ā, i ētahi wā ka noho whakamā ia mōna e noho ngoikore nei ki tōna reo me tōna whakapapa. Ka kite hoki ia he uaua ngā pepa iwi, pepa hapū hoki, nā tāna tawhiti mai i te marae, ā, kāore i taea e ia te hono atu ki te haukāinga. He nui te pānga tautoko o te whānau kōhanga me ōna hoa o te akomanga i tēnei wā tonu.



Brittany Manawaiti of Ngāti Maniapoto has been on a journey of reconnecting with her Māori whakapapa. While teaching, she discovered that the use of te reo Māori and knowledge of whakapapa was very beneficial for her tamariki and Māori whānau outcomes. Brittany received a bilingual scholarship through TeachNZ to study full immersion for one year at Te Wānanga o Raukawa. She says that this was life changing for her as she couldn’t have afforded it otherwise.

Brittany’s dad is from Ngāti Maniapoto and grew up in Te Kūiti, while her mother is Pākehā. Growing up, Brittany says that she didn’t really have much of a connection to her Māori whānau and didn’t have much exposure to te reo Māori. However, through her reo journey she discovered connections that she never knew existed.

She says that she had the “most amazing learning journey” at Te Wānanga o Raukawa and while studying she came across people from all walks of life including teachers, principals, film directors and lawyers. Everyone that was on the course together was so supportive of each other because they were all on the same level. “It didn’t matter who you were, everyone was learning together. It truly was a collective effort and if someone fell, you would work as a rōpū to bring that person along with you.”

“It didn’t matter who you were, everyone was learning together. If someone fell, you would work as a rōpū to bring that person along with you”

– BRITTANY MANAWAITI

Brittany shared that she had periods that were very up and down, in which she would question herself and ask, “What am I doing here?” One day she joked with the pūkenga reo (lecturer) that she needed to go to kōhanga and learn with the tamariki there. Months later, that same pūkenga reo came up to her and told her to attend the whānau hui of a local kōhanga reo that was happening that same night. She remembers being in a circle with the whānau and explaining who she was and why she was there. She told them that it would be beneficial for her reo journey to learn with the tamariki. They took her in and she became part of the whānau. The kōhanga eventually became a safe space for her and, if she needed anything, they would help her – particularly with her studies.

She worked at Te Kōhanga Reo o Tū Roa in Ōtaki every Friday, and sometimes also on the days she wasn’t busy with course mahi. In return for the knowledge that they were sharing with her, she was able to offer her own knowledge, helping with finances and fundraising for the kōhanga where she could.

For Brittany, learning te reo Māori unearthed some emotional trauma, and at times she would feel whakamā for her lack of knowledge of her language and background. She found that the iwi and hapū papers in particular were quite hard because she was further away from the marae and wasn’t able to connect as easily as others. Having support from her kōhanga whānau and fellow course mates was critical in getting her through this period.





“He mahi nui ki te ako  
i tētahi reo hou mō te  
pakeke, he uaua ake mēnā  
he kaiako koe.”

“It is a big effort for adults  
to learn a new language,  
especially if they are full-  
time teachers.”

– BRITTANY MANAWAITI





Kāore a Brittany i hoki ake i te tau tuarua o āna mahi akoako. He uaua rawa mōna te utu i ngā utu me te hoki atu anō ki te mahi. Nā tāna ngaronga mai i te kōhanga me āna mahi akoako ka taka te pāpouri e kore ia e kite, e whakaaro ka pupū ake.

I a ia e hoki atu ana ki ngā mahi ECE, ka toko ake te whakaaro mō tōna haerenga reo, te kōkiri, me te noho hāngai ki te kaupapa. Mea rawa ake, kāore noa i roa tōna hokinga atu ki te Raumati South Kindergarten, ka rongo ake kua hapū ia, ā, he māhanga ka whānau mai hai te Haratua 2023. Ki a Brittany, he tohu pai tēnei, e ō ai tāna whakamutu i tōna haerenga reo Māori.

Hei tā Brittany, e whakaaro ana ia ki te tuku i āna tamariki ki Te Kōhanga Reo o Tū Roa, e tīmata ai āna tamariki ki te wāhi i tīmatahia ai e ia tōna haerenga reo Māori. E noho ai āna tamariki ki tēnei o ngā reanga tamariki kōrero Māori, e noho ai rātou hei toa mō te reo Māori, e ora tonu ai te reo Māori ki Aotearoa.

“He mahi nui ki te ako i tētahi reo hou mō te pakeke, he uaua ake mēnā he kaiako koe. He tau mahi anō, i runga anō i ngā mahi mō te tau e mahi nei rātou, me te whakaaro ake me pēhea te whakauru i ēnei akoranga hou ki ā rātou mahi whakaako. I tua atu, kāore koe e utua ana mō ngā mahi i tua atu i āu mahi ake. Ko tāu e whai nei, ko ngā whāinga matua e tutuki ai ngā tamariki me ngā whānau.”

Kua roa kē a Anneke Brouwers, he kaiako nō Te Kura a Rito o Newton i Tāmaki Makaurau, e hiahia ana ki te ako i te reo Māori, engari i tīmata ia i te wā i te whare wānanga ia e ako ana. I te tīmatanga, i oti i a ia ētahi pepa reo Māori, nā tēnei ka whai tūāpapa ki te ako i te reo Māori ā-rumaki nei. Hei tā Anneke, he pai mēnā he mōhiotanga ōu o te reo Māori i mua i te haere ki te ako rumaki i te reo, engari pai ana ki te kore ō mōhiotanga: “Mai i ōku wheako, ki te kaha tō mōhio ki te reo, ka kaha ake ngā hua ka puta.”

Nā runga i ngā mahi tautoko a tōna hoa, tōna whānau me tōna kaiako, i te tau 2019 – kotahi tau noa iho te roa o te ako rumaki ki Te Wānanga o Raukawa – ka tīmata a Anneke ki te ako ki te akomanga rumaki reo ki Te Kura a Rito o Newton a Te Uru Karaka.

1 Ko Te Ahu o te Reo Māori, te “ara kōkiri mō te reo Māori,” he kaupapa nā Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga mō te hunga e mahi ana ki te rāngai mātauranga, ko te whāinga matua he whakatipu, he whakapakari i te hunga mahi mātauranga ki te whakaako i te reo Māori ki ngā ākonga katoa o Aotearoa.



“He mea mīharo te rongo ā-tinana i te wā ka tūtaki te tangata me te kōrero i tōu ake reo. Ka kitea koe.”  
– Jenna-Lee Pfeifer

Mō Anneke, ahakoa nō ēnei tau noa i tīmata tāna ako i te reo Māori, kua roa kē ia e kaingākau ana ki te reo Māori. Ka hoki ōna whakaaro ki te wā e waru noa tōna pakeke, ka haere ia ki te marae: “E whakapōtaetia ana tōku māmā me tōna tohu Bachelor of Nursing, i taua wā hoki ko tōku matua kēkē hoki tērā e whakapōtaetia ana me tōna tohu kairangi, i tuhia e ia mō te whakarauoratanga o te reo Māori. I te pō i mua mai i taua hui rā, ka heke atu mātou ki Te Papaiōea, ki te marae i Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa. Ka noho mātou ki te pakitara o te wharenuī mātakitaki ai i ngā tāngata e tū ana ki te mihi ki tōku matua kēkē mō āna mahi whakahirahira. Ka kōrero tēnā, ka puta he waiata, ka mihi mai tēnā, ka puta tōna waiata, he wheako mīharo tēnei ki a au nā te mea e kaingākau ana ahau ki ngā mahi waiata. Ahakoa he whānau Pākehā mātou, i rongo tonu ahau i te manaakitanga i roto i te wharenuī i taua pō, ā, mai i tērā wā, ka whai hononga ahau ki te ao Māori, ā, ki ngā waiata hoki.”

He mea nui tonu te waiata, ina akoako ana koe i te reo Māori. Ko te kī a Jenna-Lee Pfeifer, he kaiako i ngā tamariki i raro i te rua tau te pakeke ki Te Pā, he akomanga ki Te Rōpū Kura Kōhungahunga o Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtākou, “He mea hira tonu te waiata i roto i tōku haerenga ako i te reo Māori, ina rā e pā ana ki te whakahua i te kupu.” He rawe katoa ki a Jenna-Lee ngā mahi waiata, i ētahi wā ka āhua raru ia ki te whakahua kupu, ka hurihia e ia hei waiata. Mā te whakahuahua anō rā me te rere o te kupu e mōhio pai ia, e mau ai i a ia te kupu.

I te wā i whakarite rāua ko tōna hoa tāne ki te noho mai ki Aotearoa nei, i mōhio tonu ia ka ako ia i te reo Māori. I mōhio ia mō ētahi o ngā tamariki ka noho ki tāna akomanga, ko te reo Māori tō rātou reo tuatahi. Hei tāna, ki te whakamahi ia i te reo Māori me tāna akomanga, “ka kitea tonu i ō rātou kanohi, kua puta te māramatanga ‘e mōhio pai ana ahau ki tērā’ me te ‘e mōhio ana koe ki ahau.’ He mea mīharo te rongo ā-tinana i te wā ka tūtaki te tangata me te kōrero i tōu ake reo. Ka kitea koe.” Mā te kite i ngā āhua a ngā mātua me ngā whānau i a ia ka whakamahi nei i te reo Māori, mārama pai ana rātou kei te whāia te huarahi tika. “Koia nei taku aweawetanga.”

E mahi ana a Jenna-Lee i Te Ahu o te Reo ki Ngāi Tahu, e whakaakohia ana ki te mīta o Ngāi Tahu. “Me ako ahau i te reo Ngāi Tahu, te ako i te reo mō te whenua e tū nei au, he haerenga tino mīharo tēnei,” tāna kī, me te mea anō he rawe ki a ia te āhua o te akoako i te reo me te whakarato atu ki ngā kaiako o te rohe nei.

Unfortunately, Brittany didn’t return for her second year of studies. She explains that funding it herself was too risky and transitioning back into her workplace was another obstacle. Having left her studies and the kōhanga behind, she was hit by a grief that she wasn’t expecting.

In preparing for her transition back to ECE, she asked herself what her reo journey would look like moving forward and how she would maintain it. But as fate would have it, not long after Brittany had returned to her teaching position at Raumati South Kindergarten, she found out that she was pregnant and will be welcoming twins in May of 2023. She sees this blessing as a sign to continue her reo journey.

Brittany plans to send her tamariki to Te Kōhanga Reo o Tū Roa where her reo journey began and where she hopes her tamariki will begin theirs. She wants her tamariki to be part of the next generation of fluent te reo Māori speakers who will continue to be champions for our reo, ensuring the future of te reo Māori in Aotearoa.

Brittany is currently doing Te Ahu o te Reo Māori and says it is a game changer<sup>1</sup>.

“It is a big effort for adults to learn a new language, especially if they are full-time teachers. Another year of effort on top of the already busy workload and then figuring out how to implement those new learnings into your teaching is a lot. Plus, you don’t get paid for this extra time that you are putting in. You really are investing your time in order to get better outcomes for your tamariki and whānau.”

Anneke Brouwers, a teacher at Newton Central School in Auckland, had always wanted to learn te reo Māori, but only began learning it when she started university. At first, she completed a few te reo Māori papers, which gave her a solid foundation to start learning in full immersion. Anneke says it’s useful to have some level of te reo Māori proficiency before going into full immersion, but it is not crucial: “From my experience, the more you have, the more you get out of it.”

With the support of her partner, her whānau and her kaiako, in 2019 – after just one year of learning in full immersion at Te Wānanga o Raukawa – Anneke began teaching in the full immersion unit at Newton Central School, Te Uru Karaka.

1 Te Ahu o te Reo Māori, which means “the future pathway of te reo Māori” is a Ministry of Education funded programme for those working in the education sector that aims to grow and strengthen an education workforce that can integrate te reo Māori into the learning of all ākonga in Aotearoa.

“It’s amazing what you feel when someone greets you in your home language. You just feel seen.”  
– Jenna-Lee Pfeifer



Anneke Brouwers

For Anneke, although she only embarked on her full immersion year at Raukawa a few years ago, her love for te reo Māori had always been there. She recalls going to a marae for the first time when she was only eight years old: “My mother was graduating with her Bachelor of Nursing at the same time that an uncle of mine was graduating with his PhD that he had written on the revitalisation of te reo Māori. The night before the graduation ceremony, we went along to the Massey University campus marae. We sat along the pakitara of the wharenuī and watched as person after person would stand and mihi to my uncle for his achievement. After each person spoke, we would get up to sing a waiata, which was such an amazing experience for me because I loved music and singing. Although we were a Pākehā whānau, we really felt the manaakitanga in the wharenuī that night and from that point on I felt a deep connection to te ao Māori and waiata in particular.”

There is something to be said about the power of waiata when it comes to learning te reo Māori. Jenna-Lee Pfeifer, who teaches the under-twos at the Otago University Childcare Association’s (OUCA) Te Pā, says, “Waiata has been a powerful tool in my language journey, especially around pronunciation.” Jenna-Lee has always loved music, so at times when she struggles with the pronunciation of a word she finds it helpful to learn a waiata with that same word in it. The repetitive and fluid nature of waiata just helps it stick in a way that simply speaking the word cannot.

Jenna-Lee is Canadian and has lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for five years with her husband, who is from England, and their daughter. She said that when she first came to the country nine years ago to visit her husband’s parents, she just fell in love with the place. “It felt like coming home.”

When she and her husband made the decision to move to Aotearoa, she knew she would need to learn te reo Māori and become fluent. She was aware that for some of the tamariki that she would be teaching, te reo Māori would be their first language. She says that when she uses te reo Māori with these tamariki in her class, “You can see it on their faces, like ‘I know that’ and ‘you know me.’ It’s amazing what you feel when someone greets you in your home language. You just feel seen.” Seeing the reactions of parents and whānau to her use of te reo Māori with their tamariki and in the narratives that she writes for them gives her great confidence that she is on the right path. “It keeps me going.”





Ko Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga te māngai tautoko mō Te Ahu o te Reo Māori ki Ngāi Tahu. E kore e taea e ia tēnei tū āhuatanga ki te kore tēnei tautokotanga. Ko āna akomanga ka tū i ia Taite mai i te 4–7 karaka i te ahiahi, ā, ko te pūtea tautoko ka utu mōna ki te haere ki ngā akomanga nei. Ki ōna whakaaro, e kore e tutuki i a ia tēnei haerenga ki te kore tēnei akomanga.

Nā tēnei haerenga reo Māori, kua takatū ia ki te tuku tonu ki te whare wānanga ki te mahi i tāna tuhinga kairangi mō te ‘decolonisation of early learning’ ki Aotearoa nei. He whāinga tēnei mōna ake, e takatū nei ia ki te noho hei kaikōrero i te reo Māori i ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei.

Atu i te ako i te reo Māori, e ako ana hoki a Jenna-Lee i Te Reo Turi, i takea mai i tāna tamāhine, ka noho turi nei mai i te timatanga o tēnei tau, ā, kua mau taringa hiko ia. He mate ā-tinana anō tāna, ka noho turi nei ia i tōna taiohitanga. Hei tā Jenna-Lee he uaua ake te ako i Te Reo Turi tērā i te ako i te reo Māori nā te mea kāore he mahinga tautoko hei whai ake mō Te Reo Turi, tūturu ki Ōtepoti nei. Ko tāna hoki, “Kāore anō kia whakaarahia Te Reo Turi ki ngā wāhi, ki ngā mahinga ngaio. He mahi uaua te whakateri i tēnei wāhi, engari kua tuwhera ōku whatu ki te take me titiro tātou ki ngā reo taketake katoa.” Nā te uaua o te whai mahinga tautoko mō

ēnei kaupapa ki te wāhi e noho nei ia, koia nei te pūtake o tāna noho hāngai ki tēnei kaupapa.

Kua tūhono hoki a Jenna-Lee ki tētahi rōpū hapori mō Te Reo Turi ki Ōtepoti me te tūmanako ka taea e ia te haere ki ngā hui ka karangahia e rātou, e whānui ake ai tōna mōhiotanga NZSL. Ko tāna, ka rawe katoa ki tāna tamāhine te whai atu i a ia ki te tūtaki i tēnei rōpū, e rite ai tā rāua tūtaki ki te rōpū nei me te whai wheako hoki.

Ko Maryanne Grocott tēnei, he kaiako kōhungahunga ki Whakatiki, e ako ana i Te Reo Turi mō ngā tau e waru. Ka mau hoki a Maryanne i ngā taringa hiko, me tāna ki kua whai aronga kē ia ki te ako i ngā reo taketake e rua, ā, i noho hoki ki te ako i te reo Māori, he uaua māna i taua wā nā runga i te hoihoi o te taiao i taua wā.

I kite ahau he akomanga koreutu tērā, mō te ono wiki te roa i te whare pukapuka ki te ako i Te Reo Turi. Ka noho ahau ki te mahi i taua akomanga, ā, he rawe katoa ki ahau, he mea hoki hei kōhi ake ka whakaako ki ngā tamariki e mahi nei au.” He rawe ki a Maryanne te whakaako i āna tamariki i ngā tohu rerekē mō ngā kai, mō ngā tae hoki. Ko tāna, ko ētahi atu kaiako he mōhio ki Te Reo Turi, ka noho mātou ki te kōrero i Te Reo Turi i mua i ngā tamariki, kua pātai ngā tamariki,

Jenna-Lee is doing Te Ahu o te Reo ki Ngāi Tahu, which is Te Ahu o te Reo Māori taught using Ngāi Tahu dialect. “To be able to learn Ngāi Tahu dialect, to learn the language of where I’m standing, has been such an opportunity,” she says, also stating that she loves the way this is being taught and how it’s being provided to kaiako in the region.

She attends classes between 4–7pm every Thursday, and Ministry of Education funding pays for her to be released early from her mahi. She doesn’t think that her journey would have progressed as rapidly as it has without this course.

Her reo journey has encouraged her to submit a proposal to the university to do her PhD on the decolonisation of early learning in Aotearoa. A personal goal for her as part of this is to be conversationally fluent in te reo by the end of the four years.

On top of learning te reo Māori, Jenna-Lee is also learning NZSL, motivated by her daughter, who lost most of her hearing earlier this year and now wears a hearing aid. Her daughter also has a genetic condition that typically leads to complete deafness in teenage-hood. Jenna-Lee admits that it has been “harder and more isolating” learning NZSL than it has been to learn te reo Māori

because those same supports aren’t available for NZSL, especially in Dunedin. She says, “NZSL is not elevated in professional practice. It has been hard trying to navigate this space, but it has opened my eyes to the fact we need to be looking at all of the official languages.” The fact that it has been hard for her to access these courses where she lives only reinforces the need to learn.

Jenna-Lee says that she has recently connected with a community of NZSL users in Dunedin and hopes that she can attend regular hui with them to continue to progress her NZSL. She says that it will be great for her daughter to see other people that also use NZSL and have similar experiences to her.

Maryanne Grocott, a kindergarten relief teacher in Upper Hutt, has been learning NZSL for the past eight years. Maryanne wears hearing aids and says that she had an interest in learning both official languages and even started to learn te reo Māori, but says that she found it difficult to focus due to the busy environment.

“I saw that there was a free six-week class at the library to learn NZSL. I did that and got a taste of it and found that it was something that I could pick up and enjoy and teach to the tamariki that I work with.” Maryanne loves teaching the tamariki



“He aha ā kōrua kōrero?” Ko tāna hoki, “He pai ki te uru ki tētahi taiao e taea tō whakamahi me ētahi atu tāngata, ā, ka noho hei reo ora, kua aro mai ngā tamariki, kua tīmata te tuku pātai.”

“I ētahi wā e tohu ana koe ki tētahi tamaiti, ka kite koe e neke ana ngā ringa, e whai ana rātou i ō ringa tohu. Kei taua momo wā rātou, e taea tā rātou tere ako. Ka noho ahau ki te tākaro kēmu. Ka kōrero Pākehā atu ahau ki a rātou, kātahi ka reo tohu atu mō te tae, ka mea atu ki te rapu i tētahi mea whereo. Ā, kāore e roa, kua waia ki te reo tohu, kua warea te kupu.”

E whakamārama mai ana a Maryanne he turuturu noa tōna haerenga ako nei, e rua ngā wāhanga o te rua tau – i te wā o te Kōwhēori-19 – kāore i taea tāna ako i Te Reo Turi. E wātea ana ngā akomanga ipurangi, engari he uaua rawa ēnei ki te whai māna. I ēnei wā, kua tae atu ki ngā akomanga me ngā hui, tere tonu ia ki te whakarite i ngā hui, i ngā akomanga kia tae wawe atu ia. Kua tae hoki ia ki ngā tutukitanga Te Reo Turi i ngā wharekai, he rawe ēnei huinga hei whakapakari ake i tōna whakamahinga i Te Reo Turi.

Ko tētahi āhua o te ako i Te Reo Turi he iti nei ngā akomanga i waho atu i te whare wānanga. I tēnei wā, e mahi ana a Maryanne i tētahi akomanga Te Reo Turi hei whakahou ake i ōna pūkenga. Ko ia tonu kei te utu i āna utu, nā te kore o te pūtea tautoko e wātea ana mō tēnei tū āhuatanga. Heoi, i tērā tau ka puta ake he paku pūtea āwhina mō ēnei akomanga, ā, he kore utu hoki ētahi. “I ētahi wā noa, ka puta he pūtea tautoko mō ēnei akomanga – ētahi wā he iti, ētahi wā he nui ngā pūtea tautoko – i te nuinga o te wā, ko au tonu ka utu i ngā akomanga, mō tōku wā ake.” Ko tā Maryanne, māu tonu koe e taki ki te mahi i ngā mahi nei, e tutuki ai i a koe tēnei kaupapa.

Mai i tōna tīmatanga i ngā mahi Te Reo Turi, kua noho toa a Maryanne mō tēnei kaupapa whakahirahira, mā te tuku i ngā pukapuka *Let’s Talk* nā Deaf Aotearoa, hei āwhina i te hunga e hiahia ana ki te ako. Ko tāna, mēnā e aro mai ana ētahi ki te kaupapa Te Reo Turi, mahia, rumakina hoki. “Tirohia te ipurangi mō ngā akomanga, tētahi rōpū hapori e taea tō tūhono atu. Kāore he mate mēnā kātahi anō koe ka tīmata, he tohunga rānei koe, he pai ki te ako ā-rōpū. Āe, ka puta he hē, ka puta ngā katakata, ka katakata hoki ō hoa, engari e pai ana, koia nei te tukanga akoako.

“He hirahira te kite e pūawai mai ana Te Reo Turi. Ki ōku whakaaro, he tino rawe ngā



“He pai ki te uru ki tētahi taiao e taea to whakamahi me ētahi atu tāngata, ā, ka noho hei reo ora, kua aro mai ngā tamariki, kua tīmata te tuku pātai.”

– MARYANNE GROCOTT



Maryanne Grocott

pūrongo ka puta i te 1 karaka i ngā ahiahi i te wā Kōwhēori, nā te whakamahinga o ngā ringa tohu Te Reo Turi. He mea nui kia kite tāngata, kia kōrerohia te kaupapa nei. Ka rahi ake te hunga mōhio ki Te Reo Turi, ka rahi ake tōna kitenga ki ngā hapori katoa o te motu, hei tautoko i te hapori turi.”

He reo taketake te reo Māori me Te Reo Turi o Aotearoa nei. Nō tātou katoa te māringanui ki te tāwharau i ngā taonga nei, kia puritia mō ngā reanga e haere ake nei. Ko ngā mahi ka mahia i ēnei rā, e whakaawe i ngā mahi ā tōna wā. He maha ngā ara ki te kaha tō hiahia ki te ako, ka taea noatia. Ki te hiahia koe ki te puta, haere, rumakina, tītiti ki te rae! Mahia te mahi! ●

in her classes different signs for food and colours. She says that other teachers that she works with can also sign and they often have conversations using NZSL in front of the tamariki, some of them asking, “What did you just say to each other?” She says, “It’s great when you get into an environment where you can use it and people are using it as a living language and children become curious and start to ask questions.

“Often you can be signing to a child and you can see their hands moving and they will be mimicking signs that you are doing. They are in that stage of learning where everything is like a sponge. I like to do simple things like play games with them. I might speak in English but do the sign for a colour and ask to go find things that are red. After a while they get used to the sign and then you don’t have to use the word.”

Maryanne explains that her learning journey has been in bits and starts, and that for the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic she wasn’t able to learn any sign. There were online classes available, but she found these too difficult to follow. Now she makes sure that if there are meetings or classes in person, she knows about them and will tap into them. She has even been attending regular café meet-ups with other NZSL users, which she says has really helped with her proficiency and use of the language.

One of the limitations associated with learning NZSL is the few courses that are available outside of university education. Maryanne is currently doing a repeat course in order to keep her NZSL knowledge fresh. All of these courses are paid for out of her own pocket as funding for NZSL courses is few and far between. However, in the last year there have been subsidies for classes, with some being free. “Occasionally, they have some funding and the classes are subsidised – sometimes lightly and sometimes heavily – but mostly I pay for the classes and go in my own personal time.” Maryanne says that being self-motivated is crucial to succeeding with learning any language as an adult.

Since starting her NZSL journey, Maryanne has become a great advocate for the language, offering *Let’s Talk* booklets by Deaf Aotearoa to help those who are interested in learning get started. She says that if anyone is interested in NZSL to just get immersed in it. “Look online for classes and then find a group in your community that you can practise with. It doesn’t matter your level, there will be someone there that can sign with you. Yes, you will make mistakes and have to laugh at



“It’s great when you get into an environment where people are using it as a living language and children become curious and start to ask questions.” – MARYANNE GROCOTT

yourself, and others will also laugh with you, but it’s okay as it’s all part of the learning process.

“It’s exciting to see NZSL coming into the forefront. I think that the 1pm news updates we had during COVID were great for bringing it into the public arena. It’s important for people to see it because it gets them talking, it starts the conversations. I think the more people who learn it the more it will be used and the more support the Deaf community will have.”

Te reo Māori and NZSL are both official languages of Aotearoa New Zealand and are unique to this country. It is our responsibility to protect these taonga to ensure they are here for future generations. Everything we do today influences what happens tomorrow. There are pathways that exist and if you have the motivation to learn, it is possible. So, if you can, get out there and do it! Mahia te mahi! ●





OPINION | THE AKORANGA ISSUE

## Nicola Bright

### Let’s not forget who reo Māori revitalisation is most important to

#### Te reo revitalisation is personal for Māori

One of my earliest memories of te reo Māori is of being in a warm dark room at night, listening to my Nan and Koro quietly speaking Māori while I lay on a mattress on the floor next to their bed. Having been brought up speaking English first, I didn’t understand their words then, but I have no doubt that these experiences helped form my deep love of, and commitment to, my language and culture. As a Māori researcher of Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa descent, the work to revitalise our reo is personal to me, it is personal to Māori, and it is personal to future generations of Māori.

#### Te reo Māori is the latest cool kid on the block

I clearly remember when, with a few exceptions, generally only Māori were interested in reo Māori revitalisation. Now, we are seeing the fruits of generations of hard work by reo Māori activists and advocates, many of whom were recently honoured and remembered at Ngā Kākā Kura o te Reo 2022. Te reo Māori is being valued and used not only among Māori but becoming more so among non-Māori too. The annual celebration of te reo Māori in September has been gathering momentum in recent years. We’ve seen famous artists – Māori and non-Māori – releasing songs in te reo Māori for the first time, and phrases like “e whai ake nei” rolling off the tongues of non-Māori newsreaders. Our language is in the non-Māori public eye so to speak and for now, it’s getting a lot of attention. The positive interest and enthusiasm for our reo from many non-Māori is at once both a reason to celebrate, because we are more likely

to have a positive linguistic environment for our language to thrive in, but also to think critically about the new challenges ahead.

Over the weeks of Mahuru Māori and Te Wiki o te Reo Māori the commentaries and passionate debates by Māori about who is using te reo Māori, their motivations for using it, and who is missing out overran my social media feed. As Māori, we are grappling with what it means and feels like to share hard-fought space for our reo, where we may soon be outnumbered by non-Māori and their aspirations for the reo.

#### Education will drive change

Our nation is on the cusp of a growth spurt in our understanding of identity, language and culture. Strong direction from government about reo Māori provision in schools, new curriculum content for Aotearoa New Zealand’s Histories and Te Takanga o te Wā that kura and schools are expected to begin implementing from 2023, and a *New Zealand Curriculum* refresh that aims to be bicultural and inclusive, are priming the education system for change. These changes will impact how people see their place in this country and their relationship to te reo Māori, the indigenous language of Aotearoa. Māori and non-Māori, learners, teachers, whānau and communities will be affected in different ways.

#### What are the roles of Māori and non-Māori in revitalising the reo?

As this sea change occurs in the education system, I am reflecting on what it means for

researchers who are working to support reo Māori revitalisation through education. I work at NZCER – a research organisation that has contributed to reo Māori revitalisation research for many years, and has recently made a commitment to becoming a bilingual organisation. As a group we are beginning to have hard and critical conversations about what our roles as Māori and non-Māori researchers in reo revitalisation will be. Sharing the language revitalisation space with increasing numbers of non-Māori brings challenges and tensions that must be worked through so that we do not lose sight of who this work is most important to – Māori.

#### Reo Māori revitalisation has to benefit Māori first

Māori have experienced the power of the education system being used against us and our reo. The assimilationist agenda that actively deterred the use of te reo Māori in schools from the early to late 1900s is a prime example. Now the focus of the English medium education system, which has been a very effective tool of assimilation and colonisation, is changing to support reo Māori revitalisation. The interest in te reo Māori amongst non-Māori is snowballing, a juggernaut that could easily swallow up resources and people before it. How do we make best use of this interest and support, while making sure we are not submerged in another wave of colonisation, this time of our language, however benevolent and well intentioned? As recent research into reo Māori in schools shows, we need to prioritise resources for Māori – especially Māori speakers of Māori who are the best resources – to ensure that te reo Maori will survive and flourish.

#### What is our responsibility as researchers?

As researchers, we have to prioritise and hold space for Māori. While everyone is welcome to learn the reo and enjoy the many benefits that come from understanding and using multiple languages, it remains crystal clear to me that this work must benefit Māori first. In the flurry of activity and enthusiasm from non-Māori to learn our language, we must ensure that Māori, for whom the reo is most important, are not forgotten.

It is important to have conversations about what holding space for Māori does or could look like in language focussed projects that are kaupapa Māori, Māori-led, Māori-centred or Māori-informed, and to be careful that we don’t try to artificially separate the reo from tikanga and identity.

It means encouraging non-Māori colleagues to have critical conversations about who benefits from the work they want to do in language revitalisation. To understand what it means to be a good ally, to strive for social justice and equity. It means not only focussing inwards on aspirations for the reo as an individual but to look outwards and embrace collective aspirations for Māori, understanding that Māori must lead the way in saying what those aspirations are.

I’ll admit that change on the scale that it is occurring makes me uneasy. But I also know that I want to react to it with positivity and aroha. For me, that means staying true to the purpose of the reo Māori revitalisation movement, to support whānau Māori first and always to pass the language on to our mokopuna. Ko tōku reo tōku ohoho, ko tōku reo tōku māpihi maurea. ●

An earlier version of this article was originally published on *Ipu Kererū*, the blog of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE).

See the online version of this article for references.

Nicola Bright is of Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa descent. She is a Kairangahau Matua (Senior Researcher) in the Te Wāhanga team at NZCER. Her primary – and lifelong – interest is in contributing to the revitalisation of te reo Māori. She is also interested in how people’s ideas and understandings about identity in Aotearoa may change over time as more mātauranga Māori is included in the *New Zealand curriculum* through subjects such as te reo Māori, Aotearoa New Zealand’s histories and Te Ao Haka.





# Learning for life

Professional learning and development (PLD) is a critical part of practice for all educators. But how do they ensure their ongoing learning has the best impact for ākonga? These personal stories showcase some outstanding PLD experiences that benefit students, educators and whole communities.

In 2018 Ana Te Kani was doing well in her fifth year of teaching, but she had hit a standstill professionally. “I’d sort of lost my passion in teaching, you know, following the same routine every year.” She decided to go home to find it, returning to teach at her own immersion school, Te Kura o te Manutūkē, in Gisborne, where she had gone as a kid. “And I did find it,” says Ana. “It’s the reo.”

But while she loved being back, there was still little room for her to grow as a leader, in part because many of her whānau were already in leadership positions in the school. So she decided it was time to move on. When someone suggested

she apply for a principal role at another school in her rohe, she didn’t think she’d have a chance, but gave it a shot.

Under Ana’s leadership since July 2021, Te Kura o Pātutahi is thriving, with a doubled roll and staff, a new school charter, logo and uniform, an overhaul of the school’s technology, participation in inter-school sports and – most importantly for Ana – a growing sense of tuākiritanga, identity. “If kids have a strong sense of belonging through knowing who they are, then they’re unstoppable in where they’re heading to,” she explains. “I’m from here,” she reiterates – her grandfather and his siblings



01





02

“Had I not done that PLD I don’t think I would have had a clear understanding of my role as a principal.” – ANA TE KANI

went to the school, and she remembers it as the heart of the community, which she wants it to become again. She says the changes the kura has seen are thanks to the strong whānau community environment that’s growing, but it’s clear that her own drive and skills also play a big part. Twenty-seven when she started out, Ana is one of the youngest principals in the country.

The other critical factor in Ana’s successful start as a principal is a workshop she attended just two weeks before starting at Pātutahi. “Had I not done that PLD,” Ana says, “I don’t think I would have had a clear understanding of my role as a principal.”

The NZEI Aspiring Principals’ Seminar is a one-day, intensive session that provides interested teachers with a clear understanding of a principal’s role through analysing what a ‘Day in the Life of

a Principal’ looks like. Topics and skills include staff management, governance, reporting, finance, compliance and strategic planning. Ana describes it as “an opening statement to what a principal is” and says the course convener, Louise Green, did a fantastic job of breaking everything down, helping her to grasp what her new role would entail. “She explained all the moving parts of a school, the mechanics of it, the legal and financial sides of things and we got to practise in a workshop, what we would deal with as principals.”

Of course, Ana explains, “nothing makes sense until you are in the job and the water’s boiling”, but the PLD was critical in supporting her through the “crash course” which was her first few weeks of being a principal, “meeting finance people, hui with the ministry, getting the school in line regulation-wise, juggling personnel,



03

budgets. I’d never done any of that before.” The course helped her to get started immediately in identifying and prioritising what needed to be done for the students and their kura to thrive. Which was just as well, because three weeks into her new role the country went into lockdown. “Thankfully I’d been able to set the kids up with some tech, create accounts, teach them to use email and so on, just in time!”

Ana says that networking with other principals was a highlight of the course. “It’s really hard to do that now—I don’t have time.” Listening to other people’s experiences and hearing from experienced principals was invaluable. “I was just soaking it all up,” she says. She also found solidarity with other, less-experienced participants. “I felt really tau (content), I knew I wasn’t on this journey alone.”

Seminar convener Louise (“the guru lady”, as Ana calls her) has kept in touch with Ana in her new role, emailing, calling and visiting and giving advice when asked. This ‘above and beyond’ support, and the ongoing benefits of networking



Woodville School  
tumuaki Wes Va’ai-  
Wells

Photo: Supplied

are difficult aspects of PLD to quantify, but they make a tremendous difference in improving student outcomes, as many educators know.

### 3-2-1 contact!

Wes Va’ai-Wells, also a beginning principal at Woodville School in the Manawatū, who attended an Aspiring Principals’ seminar, says that support networks, and time spent talking with other teachers and principals, have been his saving grace in his new role.

“Perhaps the most pivotal aspect of me coming into my role was having a large network of people who believed in my vision, my character and my abilities,” says Wes. “These people are the ones I attribute my successes to because they’ve supported me with every unsuccessful application while reaffirming and reassuring me of my reasons to pursue principalship. There’s no way I could do this by myself. I knew when I chose to walk toward principalship that it wasn’t a one-person job.”

Wes sees professional learning and development in broad terms, and says it was a



whole combination of experiences and learnings, rather than a specific course, that steered him to principalship and helped him grow as an educator. Particularly influential, however, was a TeachNZ scholarship in 2016, which allowed him to finish his master’s degree. When he first graduated in 2005, Wes knew he wanted to go into the schools and communities that had helped raise him – predominantly low socio-economic and low decile. Wes says the postgraduate study kick-started him into thinking about leadership and about a role in which he could have a bigger influence over change.

“I was able to combine current educational research, a deeper understanding of the New Zealand education system, and my own and others’ teaching experiences,” Wes explains. “This provided me with the confidence to do and be more in order to better support the next generation of learners.”

For Wes, the timing of this learning was critical. As an undergrad, he says, he was more of a ‘Cs get degrees’ candidate, but having now been a teacher “everything I’d been reading about and learning about made way more sense”. Having the practical experience in which to contextualise theory made for better learning. He graduated this time with distinction.

**Transforming teacher aide practice**

Even more so than teachers, teacher aides can find themselves thrown into new situations with little preparation, and until recently there were only very limited PLD options for bridging that gap on the job. That situation changed significantly, however, when the Teacher Aide Pay Equity claim was settled and a TA PLD Pilot Fund was negotiated as part of the Support Staff in Schools’ Collective Agreement (SSSCA).

Glenys Brown, a teacher aide at Waimauku School for the past 14 years, was on the Teacher Aide Pay Equity team and was active in promoting the PLD fund that came as a result of the settlement. Another \$4 million has been negotiated as part of the new 2022 collective agreement, which is in place until the end of February 2024.

Glenys says the PLD fund has been hugely transformative for the work of teacher aides, a group of educators whose professional demands can change significantly with each new student, and who regularly need to learn new skills for different needs.

“In the past, and right up to now, a new teacher aide was normally just thrown in,”



*“The neurodiversity that we’re seeing in schools is huge, and there’s more and more of it, so we need the PLD, we need the training.”*  
– Waimauku School teacher aide Glenys Brown.

Photo: Meredith Biberstein

explains Glenys. “My first day, I was put in a classroom with an autistic child who was digging holes in his skin until his skin bled and I just had to get on with it. I had no training.” Working with neurodiverse students is the core of what teacher aides do, and with the approaches and research in this area constantly evolving, it’s important to stay informed and be aware. “The neurodiversity that we’re seeing in schools is huge, and there’s more and more of it, so we need the PLD, we need the training,” says Glenys.

An evaluation report published on the pilot fund cites one participant’s comment that attests to the hugely positive outcomes: “To access proper courses that support you in your work and in turn supports the students is a game changer. Not only for us, personally, but also for the children we work within the schools and for the families as well.”

As part of the next round of the fund, an induction course for new teacher aides is being put together that will cover the basics of teacher aide work; not the cherries-on-top, but the cake. Beyond that there is also a huge range of learning opportunities available through the fund, from literacy and numeracy programmes, to understanding neurodiversity, to managing challenging behaviours, to more generally applicable PLD, such as learning about tikanga. Glenys herself completed a tikanga Māori course through Massey University. “It improved my understanding of why some things are done a certain way, and opened up my thinking in terms of many things, including aspects of our school life,” she comments.

Glenys’s school has been supportive of teacher aide PLD, but she has seen instances where the school culture has been a barrier for some. An ongoing challenge to teacher aides taking up professional development opportunities is the fact that release time can be difficult to coordinate. “There’s not a field of relievers for teacher aides,” Glenys explains. “Our work is so individual, based on the relationship with the student. Often, a reliever wouldn’t be able to step in.” She explains that this is why a variety of approaches are offered, including webinars and online courses which teacher aides can manage in their own time, and from remote locations – although access to devices can also prove a barrier, as most teacher aides don’t have school-issued laptops so work off their own phones. Schools are being encouraged to support teacher aides with devices to use for PLD where needed.

As well as helping improve learning outcomes for their ākonga, the availability of PLD for



04

“I don’t know anyone who works in education who doesn’t love learning.”

– CLARE FORREST

teacher aides has been transformative for the profession overall. “It’s really lifted the mana of teacher aides,” says Glenys, a fact that the pilot evaluation report also noted. “We’re certainly not the babysitters that we used to be thought of.”

It has also given teacher aides solidarity in other ways. “We can network and talk with like-minded people. You can collaborate with others about the people that you’re worried about, and they’ve had similar experiences ... that in itself makes you feel not so isolated and actually part of a team ... It can be quite a lonely job,” observed one pilot participant.

The new fund will be available to teacher aides from the beginning of 2023 until February of 2024, after which the future of PLD for teacher aides is uncertain. “We would love it to be something permanent,” says Glenys, “but we’re going to have to fight for it again when we renegotiate our collective agreement. So, when the teacher aide PLD fund goes live at the start of 2023 it’s really important TAs make the most of it. Spread the word amongst your colleagues and get your applications for PLD rolling in. When we extend our knowledge

Photo: Meredith Biberstein

and skills we are better able to support the students and teachers we work with.”

**Not alone – training for gender awareness**

Another area of education where PLD makes a big difference to countering the sense of isolation is in libraries.

Clare Forrest is a librarian at Rāroa Normal Intermediate School in Wellington and is also in charge of professional learning development for SLANZA (School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa). “Being a librarian is a very isolated role in a school,” explains Clare. “You are often the only person who has that role, and nobody knows what you do because it’s a specialised role. So it can feel like you’re doing it all on your own.”

As well as providing important professional learning support, the online courses offered by SLANZA, both regionally and nationally, bring people together so they can network and learn from each other.

PLD plays a vital role for training librarians on the job, Clare explains.



# “Having access to excellent, current and relevant PLD is vital for school librarians and we need to ensure it is funded and supported by school management so we are recognised for the specialists we are in our kura.” – CLARE FORREST

“My colleague is a trained librarian, but the way I learnt was on the job, and from fellow librarians who were extremely generous with their time and knowledge, and from the PLD I’ve done,” says Clare. She attended face-to-face courses through the National Library, which are ongoing, where she learnt the basics of running a school library.

“Having access to excellent, current and relevant PLD is vital for school librarians and we need to ensure it is funded and supported by school management so we are recognised for the specialists we are in our kura,” she emphasises.

Formal PLD for librarians is very wide-ranging, from learning about the latest online tools that allow librarians to curate amazing inquiry collections of Aotearoa New Zealand history curriculum resources, to the best ways to engage all students in reading, to how to ensure collections are inclusive, diverse and accessible for all.

Clare is herself a PLD educator. She has a passion in particular for increasing diversity in libraries and has developed a module on gender and sexuality in school libraries which has proved very popular.

The module is online, open to 50 people, and runs for three to four weeks, with participants working at their own pace through resources and tasks, then engaging in conversations about the materials. “We look at what gender is, what it means, what resources are available, such as tools to help you check through your collections – for example, looking at your sports section; do you have any books on women? We look at gender stereotyping in books, and how to take a class through their own evaluation of that.” Sexism, censorship, and teaching puberty and sexuality, are also explored, and useful resources, such as primary-appropriate rainbow books to include in collections, are shared. “Though it also varies from school to school,” cautions Clare. “What’s right for my school is certainly not right for another school, and that’s important to understand.”

The gender diversity workshop is a prime example of the importance of continually providing

educators with opportunities to learn, and to relearn, so as to keep pace with the world that their ākonga are being educated in.

Clare doesn’t think this is a problem. “I don’t know anyone who works in education who doesn’t love learning. School librarians are passionate about sharing their knowledge – to their ākonga, to their colleagues and to their communities.”

### How do you choose?

One of the challenges for anyone looking at either providing or pursuing professional learning opportunities is the sometimes overwhelming number of things on offer.

When the Teacher Aide Pilot Programme first ran, Glenys says there were some challenges in terms of assessing quality PLD in their stocktake. She says that this time around there are processes in place to make sure the quality is there and that the PLD on offer is appropriate for teacher aides. “It’s got to be good for teacher aide best practice, the school, and it’s got to be good for the students,” she emphasises.

Wes says that one of the most beneficial skills he got out of his own professional learning development was being better at critical thinking, and that this is helpful when looking at what’s on offer in terms of PLD for him and his staff. “You can pick any type of research and build your own convincing narrative around it,” he says. “So I’ll do my research on these programmes, and ask who looks to gain the most from us doing this?”

The answer, of course, should always be the ākonga, whose learning is what every educator’s role is ultimately in support of, through their professional learning development or otherwise.

“What I ask,” says Ana, “is does it align with my kids? Is it going to improve my kids’ achievements? Is it practical? Can I administer it? I want to source PLD that is child-focussed and specific to the needs of my kura.” ●

See the online version of this article for references.

## Teaching and learning in the field

Learning support staff are vital to achieving an Aotearoa New Zealand education system inclusive of all learners, particularly those whose learning needs cannot always be met by a classroom educator. Along with speech language therapists, teacher aides, kaitakawaenga, physiotherapists and many other professionals, Ministry of Education (MoE) field staff are a core part of the collective working to ensure that our vulnerable learners don’t slip through the cracks.

Louise Hoggart (right) is part of MoE’s support staff team and someone whose passion for learning, and for helping others learn, is lifelong. After kick-starting her career with a diploma in teaching, she undertook postgraduate studies in early intervention, followed by a master’s degree in specialist teaching. Since then she has engaged with “loads” of further professional learning development, and since 2018 has channelled her passion for education into helping other teachers



learn, via a professional development programme called PTR-YC (Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children).

PTR-YC is a ministry-endorsed programme designed to support early childhood centres in increasing desirable behaviours and decreasing problem behaviours in toddlers and pre-schoolers when other guidance and

interventions have not been effective. The programme is originally American, “but we’ve Kiwified it a bit”, says Louise. Six sessions of two hours are held over a term, usually with a focus on classroom-wide practices specific to the centre’s needs, an emphasis Louise says is key. “The inquiry approach is foremost – identifying what teachers need, specific to that community.” At the conclusion of the sessions, teachers are left with a toolbox of changes they can implement in their classrooms as well as an intervention plan. “All the strategies for the intervention are contained within the programme,” explains Louise, “so they don’t have to reinvent the wheel.” The teachers are also supported post-programme. “We build a relationship, so that when something crops up they can just get on the phone and ask for help,” Louise says.

While the programme can cater for specific children or a group of children, Louise says that fundamental classroom practice is an increasing focus for centres. “More and more in our early intervention teaching we’re coming across teachers who are struggling just with the day-to-day role of teaching,” she says. She wonders if this might be because tertiary training isn’t always practical enough or easy to translate for some teachers, or whether the fact early childcare teachers often move from centre to centre might contribute.

Louise notes that connection and collaboration between teachers and other centres also help ground and enhance learning on the programme. In 2022 she ran side-by-side sessions for two centres based in Kaiapoi, which she says worked exceptionally well. “They got to interact with each other. They got to do the activities in teams and then feed back. They exchanged ideas.” ●







## Looking through the lens of a child: Reimagining the role of PE

For many of us adults, memories of physical education at school are embarrassing and isolating. *Ako* profiled teachers being supported to change that through Healthy Active Learning, a joint government initiative enhancing tamariki wellbeing through quality physical activity and healthy food and drink.

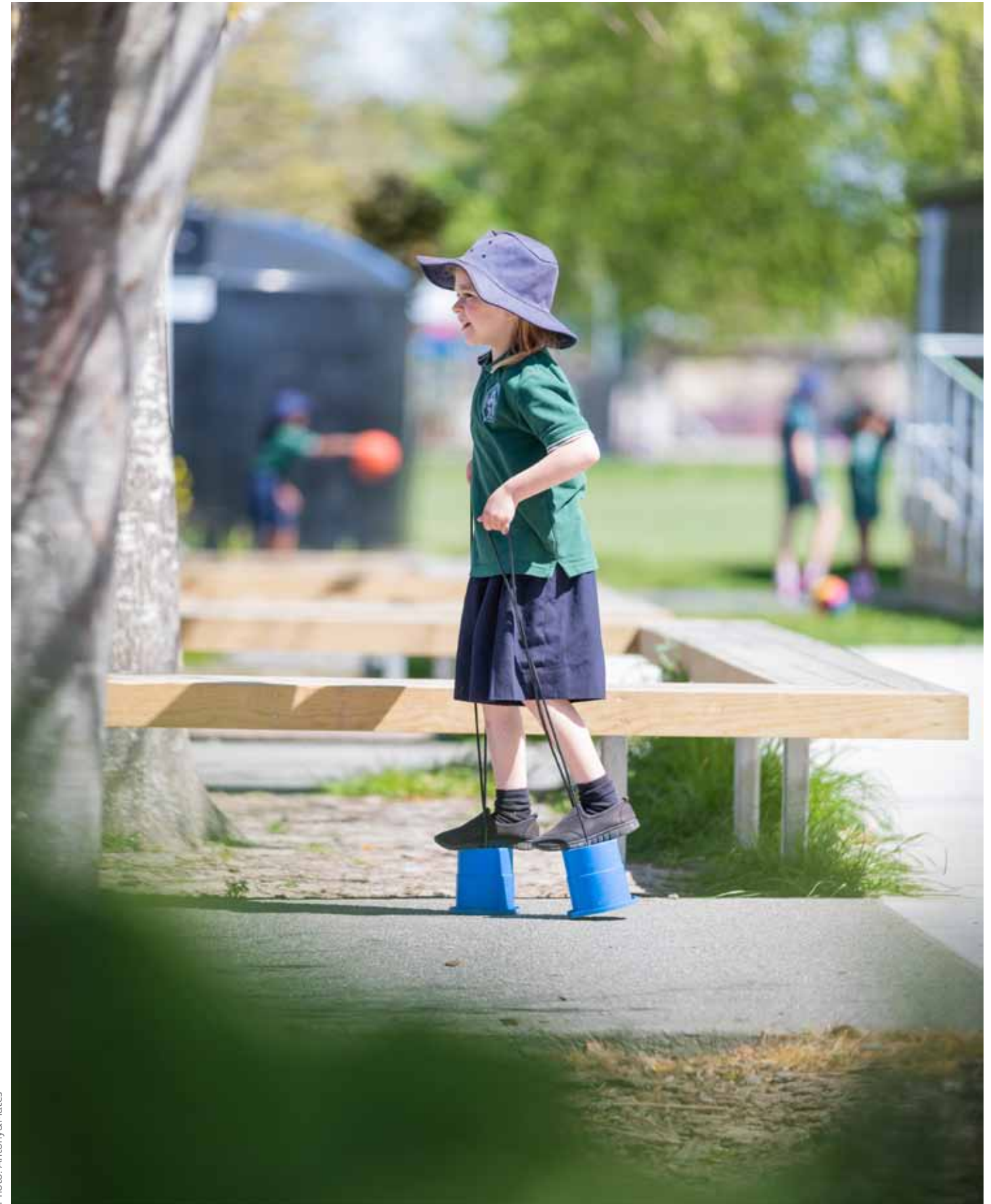


Photo: Antony & Mates





01

Ricci Clark always knew she wanted to become a teacher because she didn't enjoy school when she was growing up.

"I thought if there was somebody there who just knew me or who made me feel like I was worth something, then I wouldn't have got myself into trouble."

Ricci says hauora had no place in the classroom and physical education was about learning how to throw a ball at each other and stay out of the way of adults.

"We never went into hauora at all – so learning about who you are and Te Whare Tapa Whā, we never went into that. Learning sports was not a fun thing and beep tests were a regular occurrence."

Ricci is now a kaiako at Te Kura o Maarawaewae – Greerton Village School in the Bay of Plenty and her priority is putting the wellbeing of ākonga first.

Hauora and being active is at the heart of Ricci's bilingual classroom. Every day starts with kapa haka and ākonga get to go outside to move their bodies every 40 minutes or so. She's always looking for new kēmu (games) to try and pūrākau (storytelling) and te ao Māori values are imbedded across all learning areas – including Health and Physical Education (HPE).

Ricci also ensures that tamariki with different abilities are always involved in physical activity in ways that work for them.

"It's never just about getting a sweat up. Pretty much all our games involve mahi tahi – working together, looking after one another to get each other over the line. It's about how we can work together to achieve the collective goal."

"So much learning comes out of physical activity, but sometimes we don't value it because it looks like they are just playing around."

Change is happening though, and there is a growing understanding of the role that quality PE and physical activity can play in enhancing learning and wellbeing.

Quality PE is student-centred and is about supporting students' learning and holistic wellbeing through developing the physical, social and emotional skills they need to thrive. UNESCO's recent call for investment in quality physical education recognises its ability to help address mental and physical health issues and inequality exacerbated by COVID-19.

Research shows that physical activity improves cognitive function, concentration and reasoning in tamariki and rangatahi, and that habits, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours developed early, impact future wellbeing.



"So much learning comes out of physical activity, but sometimes we don't value it because it looks like they are just playing around." – RICCI CLARK



02





Supporting teachers to be more confident in delivering quality HPE in Aotearoa is a focus of Healthy Active Learning. Backed by an initial investment of \$47.6m and part of the Child Youth and Wellbeing Strategy, it is a partnership between Sport New Zealand, the Ministry of Education, and Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand.

Currently supporting more than 900 schools and kura across the motu, Regional Sports Trusts and regional health and education agencies work together to help them create healthy and active learning environments and better connections to their local community. This includes providing free professional learning and development (PLD) for teachers.

Healthy Active Learning is locally led, so how and what support is offered looks different depending on the school, its teachers, students and community. It might be planning the HPE curriculum and using physical activity as a vehicle to deliver other learning areas, creating more inclusive cross-country events informed by student voice, PLD around delivering taonga tākaro (traditional Māori games) or fakamalohi sino (Pasifika games), or around Movewell – the games-centred resource distributed to all schools at the end of 2021.

Healthy Active Learning started at the beginning of 2020, and evaluation shows that physical activity

is now more visible in school charters and strategic plans. Schools and teachers are dedicating more time to HPE, and the number of schools providing physical activity experiences which meet the needs of all students has risen from 61 percent in 2020 to 78 percent in 2022.

**Letting all tamariki shine**

One of those schools is Our Lady of the Assumption, a Years 1-8 special character school, in Hoon Hay, Christchurch.

Three years ago, prior to Healthy Active Learning, the demographic of the school's ākonga was changing. Growing subdivisions were leading to families from different cultural backgrounds moving into the suburb, and there was a need to find ways to support the learning and wellbeing of those students.

Principal Janet Cummings says teachers understood the value of physical activity and PE for students, but what they offered didn't really differ from the sports they were already playing outside of school such as hockey, football and netball.

So when the opportunity to be supported by Healthy Active Learning came along, Janet and lead HPE teacher Bridget Grant jumped on it.

Janet says the support of Sport Canterbury's Healthy Active Learning team has been invaluable to the school, its teachers and students. "If they

hadn't been there, we would have been very similar to what we always were. They've been instrumental in change."

The school now delivers a more varied sport and PE programme either on school grounds or in the local community, and delivered by kaiako themselves. Gymnastics, handball, lacrosse, volleyball, golf and marching are all included, with PLD delivered around all of it. There has also been support to co-design their Health and PE curriculum and integrate physical activity into other learning areas.

A highlight for Janet and Bridget was a session on marching – which saw teachers coming up with their own routines, and students enjoying something new.

"We were surprised by one of the young boys who led the marching team. If we hadn't given him that opportunity, we would never have known that he had those skills," says Janet. "The increased opportunities available for students are allowing them to shine."

There has also been the introduction of a play pod thanks to Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa funding – a Sport NZ fund distributed through Regional Sports Trusts for the delivery of activities for tamariki and rangatahi.

Co-designed by the Physical Activity Leaders (PALS) – a group of senior students who the Healthy Active Learning team has also run leadership programmes for – it features stilts, moonhoppers and, in Bridget's words, "big construction things".

"Play is so important for their development – and it's incidental exercise. Sometimes they don't even realise they are exercising, or doing PE, or doing a sport. They are just enjoying themselves moving," she says.

The PALS most recently designed and led a whole-school Commonwealth Games event, and 13-year-old Tim Daines says since joining the group he has found his skills as a leader.

"The leadership part of me has come out of the dark and really stood up."

Tim says his favourite moment of the games was watching another senior student help a junior student with one of the activities. And then there was the tug of war.

"The little kids even got really involved in it. So much so that they ripped up the carpet – which had to be glued back down," he says.

Bridget, as lead teacher, has worked especially closely with Healthy Active Learning facilitator Vicki Cowley. The model means Bridget can reach



Above: Physical Activity Leaders (PALS) at Our Lady of the Assumption getting out the play pod.



Photos: Antony & Mates



03





out to Vicki for support when she needs it and her team then cater to the unique needs of the teachers, students and school.

“She’s been an amazing resource,” Bridget says. “She’s taught us to trust and value ourselves and know that actually we can do this.”

Vicki says the model allows change to come from within the school – ensuring it is sustainable and reflects the values of students and teachers.

“It’s the questions and conversations that the staff are having with each other – I just provide them with the platform for them to have those conversations to see what they want to do and what they want to achieve.”

**Making PE fun for all**

Back at Te Kura o Maarawaewae, Ricci says the support of the Sport Bay of Plenty Healthy Active Learning team has challenged her and her colleagues to create a more inclusive physical activity environment for all students.

“They’ve encouraged us to look through the lens of a child and ask what would this look like if I was maybe not as capable or confident, what would my peers think of me, how am I going to feel in that situation?”

There has also been in-class support during PE lessons, help with planning the HPE curriculum, and two offsite hauora PLD days for teachers in the region. Ricci’s colleague, Year 1 and 2 kaiako Tori Dunham, says Healthy Active Learning has transformed her relationship with PE.

Tori says she “completely hated” PE when she was at primary school and so, not knowing any different, didn’t want to inflict that onto her students. But her approach, and understanding of what it means to be active, has now changed. She has learnt that physical education is not just about learning how to throw a ball.

“Healthy Active Learning has given me a more meaningful way to incorporate games and for it to be seen as Health and Physical Education,” she says. “Last year there were a few teary moments with children not wanting to participate because I was taking the approach of ‘Okay, we’re learning to shoot today, we’re learning to pass, stand in this line, stand in this line’. And they’d drop the ball and feel embarrassed.

“This year it’s different. They might giggle with a friend but they’re able to laugh rather than get upset. It’s because we’re creating that sense of belonging and just not feeling judged. They feel more of a team.”



“I want people to see the value in it because I see the results. It’s right there in front of me every day.” – RICCI CLARK

Tori has also been integrating physical activity into other learning areas.

“In one of the first meetings with [Healthy Active Learning advisor] Meg we sat down and thought of different ways we could adapt one game. You can do it as a warm-up in your writing, a warm-up in your maths. I hadn’t really thought about that,” she says. “And for the children who really like PE but dislike writing, it’s a way to make writing fun as well.”

Ricci says the support from Healthy Active Learning has empowered her existing practice. Part of her job, as an in-school teacher for their kāhui ako, is to help her kaiako become more culturally responsive by sharing local stories and ideas to embed hauora into the classroom. She says she is passionate about showing how we can bring “teachings from our tipuna” into different learning areas.

“They’ve come in and shown how you can look after this facet of your taha wairua, how you can talk to your kids and get them thinking about their kare ā-roto, their emotions,” she says.

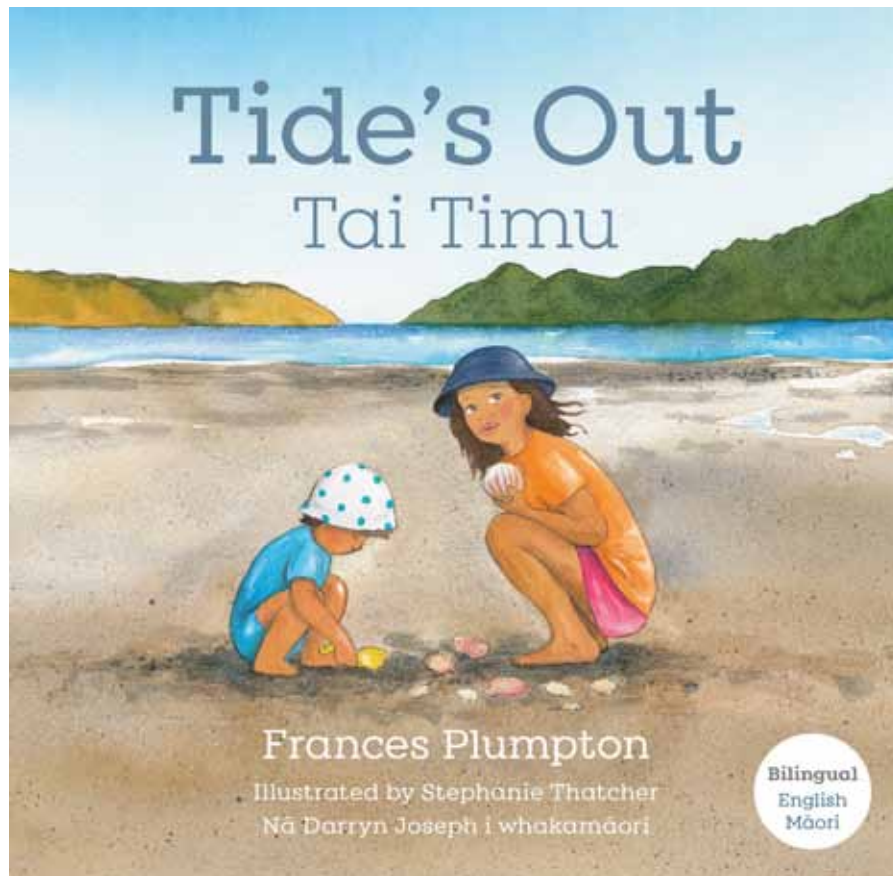
“Just the simple way that they explained it to our kaiako, I think our teachers just grabbed it and went ‘Oh this is doable’.

“I want people to see the value in it because I see the results. It’s right there in front of me every day. My kids are happy, they are attending school pretty much every day – it’s hardly ever that I have kids away. We love each other, we hug each other, we have fun together. We are like whānau.” ●

See the online version of this article for references.



# REVIEWS



## Tide's Out Tai Timu

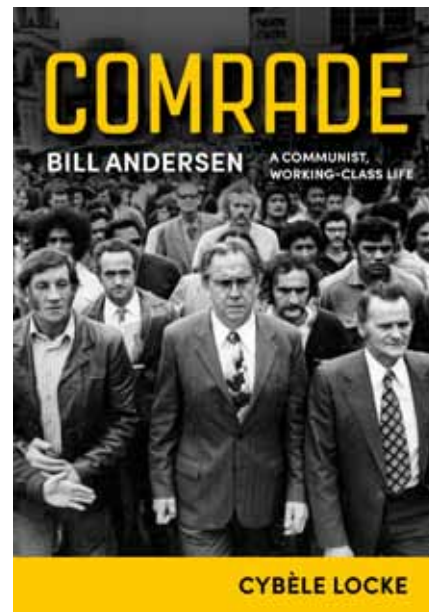
Frances Plumpton, Stephanie Thatcher, Darryn Joseph (Mary Egan Publishing)  
Age: 2-7

“Tide’s out – what can we find? / Kua timu te tai – he aha rā hei kitenga mā tāua?” Beautifully illustrated in watercolour, this bilingual descriptive counting book features over 20 of the creatures, shells and birds that can be found on beaches throughout Aotearoa. It would be excellent to share with curious kids before or after a trip to the

beach, or for classes talking about living treasure that they find in nature. For older children it could lead into learning about tides and estuaries. – Sarah Silver

## Comrade – Bill Andersen: A Communist, Working-Class Life Cybèle Locke (Bridget Williams Books) Biography

Cybèle Locke’s *Comrade* tells the life story of Bill Andersen, one of the most influential figures in the New



*Comrade: an absolute must-read for anyone interested in the union movement or socialism in New Zealand.*

Zealand labour movement of the 20th century. Andersen’s life, however, was inseparable from his politics (communist and working class, as the title suggests), and as such the book is much more than the story of one man. Instead, it’s a history of trade union responses to the challenges of the post-war and then neoliberal periods, from Andersen’s perspective. As well as plenty on union organisation and government policy, particularly regarding the structure of the economy and industrial relations, issues covered include the development (or

degeneration) of socialist politics in New Zealand, union responses to Māori land struggles, the inclusion of Māori, Pasifika and women workers at all levels of the union movement, and the place of rugby league as a working class sport. Locke is a lively and engaging writer with deep subject knowledge, and I left the book with a far greater understanding of many moments in New Zealand history. Alongside her previous book, *Workers in the Margins*, *Comrade* is an absolute must-read for anyone interested in the union movement or socialism in New Zealand, with several teachable examples of solidarity and resistance, Māori land struggles, and working-class life.  
– Ben Rosamond

## Tiaki: A shout-out to Aotearoa’s lesser-known creatures

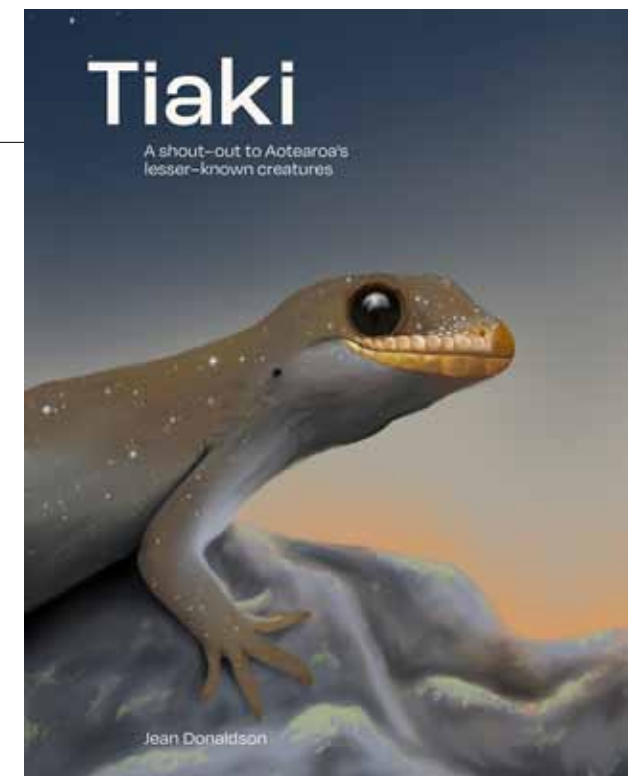
Jean Donaldson (Potton and Burton)  
Age: 10+

Upon opening this small book you are welcomed by an array of amazing digital paintings and targeted facts about the unsung creatures of Aotearoa who are not well known, yet are vital to the biodiversity of their native country. Following an indigenous theme, you will find each creature with its English and Māori names where available.

Targeted at pre-teens to teenagers, this book details not only some fun facts about these creatures but also a map of their specific locations in Aotearoa. Full of stunning images in black and white to full colour, with not too many words, it is suited to a large audience, especially the young environmentalist and conservationist.

Delve into this stunning factual book to see what might be lurking in your own backyard, and to learn something new about a little or unknown creature.  
– Kerry Wood

*Tiaki: see what might be lurking in your own backyard, and learn something new about a little or unknown creature.*



## Īhaka and the Unexpected Visitor

Kirsty Wadsworth, Zac Waipara (Scholastic)  
Age: 3-8

One day Īhaka arrived home from school and saw his mother digging kūmara in the back garden. But before he took off his school bag, he heard a booming knock at the door. He ran to open the front door. With a loud WHOOSH and a “tremendous whirl of wind, Tāwhirimātea swept in.” He wanted Īhaka to help him with a problem...

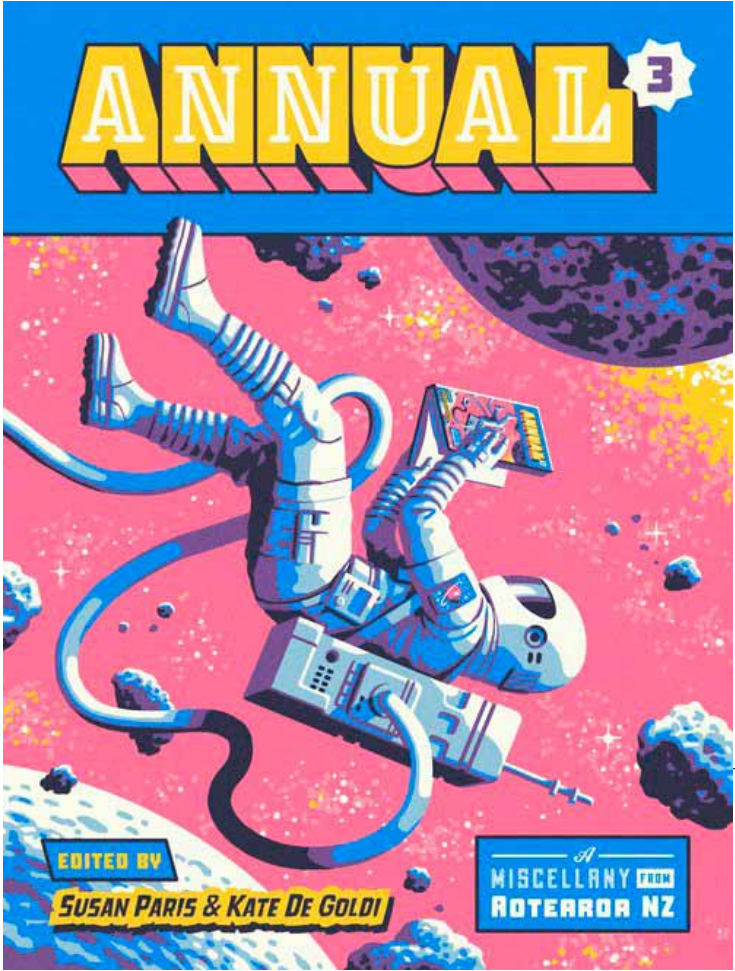
A wonderful story that introduces the reader to Māori gods, but in a modern context. There are simple reo phrases which are repeated throughout the story.

I really enjoyed the illustrations



that brought life to the power of the gods, and I particularly loved the final image of Īhaka tucked up in bed, safe in knowing Tāwhirimātea and the missing cloud were together creating the wonderful storm outside. I was super stoked to learn this book is also published in te reo Māori.  
– Heather Holmes





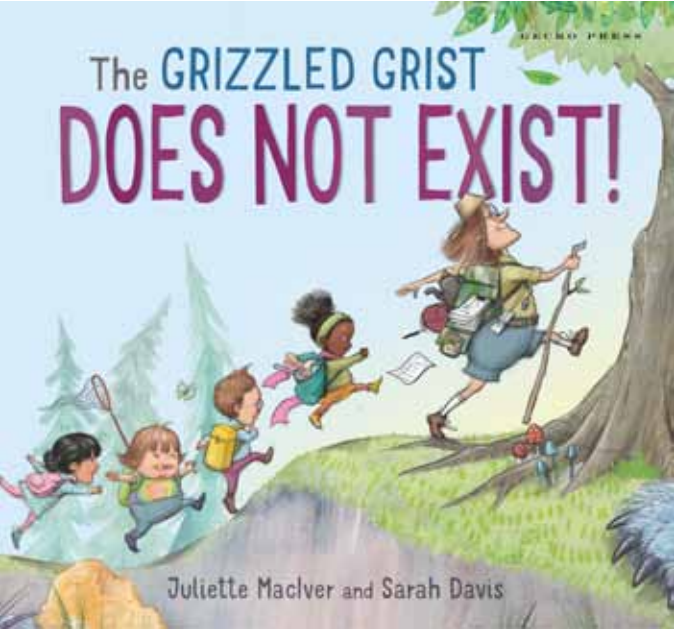
**Annual 3: A Miscellany from Aotearoa NZ**

Edited by Susan Paris and Kate De Goldi (Annual Ink)

Age: 9-13

*Annual 3* is the third in a series edited by Susan Paris and Kate de Goldi. It is visually lively, content-rich and varied. There is something for everyone, in terms of length and variety. The 10-year-old reader I consulted found it “Awesome, with loads of interesting stories and even a board game. Loads of it was funny, even the mini-comics!” He even found the cover fascinating. It is a book you can re-read and dip into, and we would highly recommend it for the age group it is designed for.

– Suzanne Innes-Kent



Annual 3: visually lively, content-rich and varied.

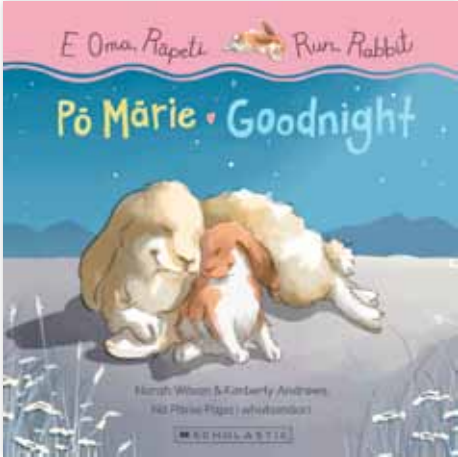
**The Grizzled Grist Does Not Exist**

Juliette MacIver, Sarah Davis (Gecko Press)

Age: 2-4

We thought it was a bit scary the first time we read it, but the next time and the last time it wasn’t. We also thought it was a little bit funny. The teacher was nice to all the kids, but not really to Liam, because she didn’t think hiding was a skill.

We found out that Liam’s skill at hiding becomes really useful later in the book, but we can’t tell you why because it will spoil the surprise. It reminded us a little bit of *The Gruffalo* and we loved it at the end when the children said “Hooray for Liam”. We are three



and four years old and we recommend this book to other children who are two, three or four years old. – Kira, Kora, Eva, Lex, Matilda (ngā tamariki o Hill Street Early Childhood Centre)

**E Oma, Rāpeti / Run Rabbit: Pō Mārie / Goodnight**

Norah Wilson, Kimberly Andrews, Pānia Papa (Scholastic)

Age: 0-4

I might be biased as my toddler’s favourite bedtime toy is called Rāpeti, but this book has won my heart. The fun and warm illustrations (think *Guess*



*How Much I Love you?*) combined with playful and familiar language make this a perfect bedtime story. As a te reo learner, I find having the English translation under the te reo means I use the reo more confidently. The two other books in the series featuring Rāpeti, *Te Wā Tākaro/ Playground* and *Te Rēhi/The Race* are also delightful. – Sarah Silver

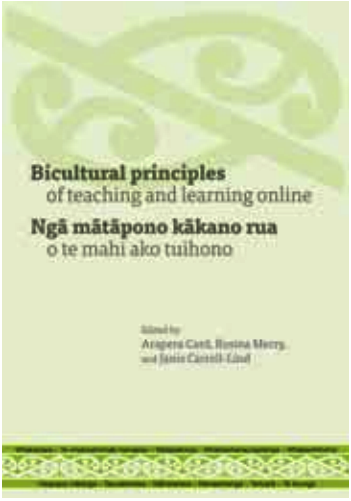
**Sylvia and the Birds**

Johanna Emenev and Sarah Laing (Massey University Press)

Age: 10+

*Sylvia and the Birds* is a simply stunning book to read and explore. The amazing illustrations tell a story of their own. The book is hardcover, and every page is a visual treat for the reader young or old. The illustrations made the book more accessible to my child who is neurodiverse. It was a more ‘grown-up’ book, which can be hard to find for neurodiverse children. The book underpins beautiful values about the importance of looking after all, including our birds. It tells a story of one remarkable women’s commitment to caring for and looking after 140,000 birds here in Aotearoa.

The book has a wonderful fun activities section which creates opportunities to reinforce the stories and journeys of birds in an educational way



Wild Coasts: gives hope that we can have a positive impact on our environment.

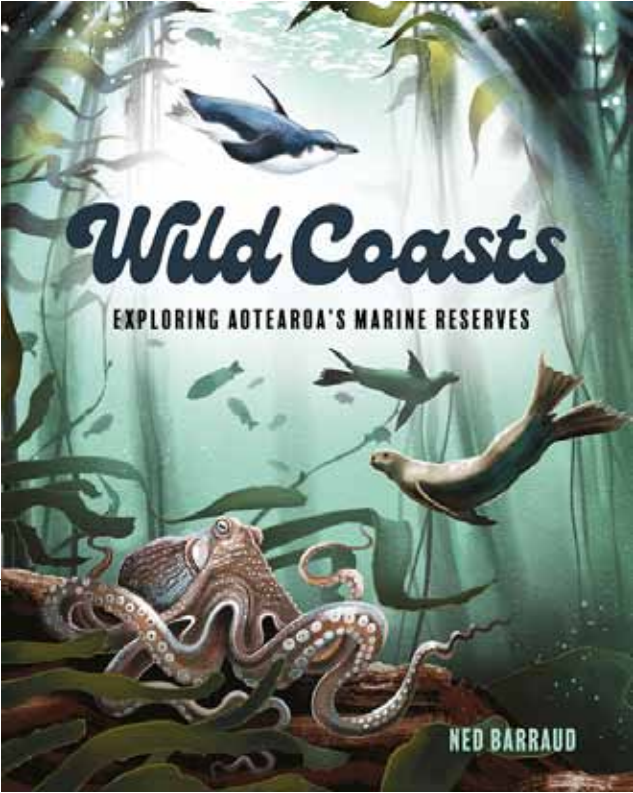
for children. The backyard bird-spotting chart and count the birds in your garden activity are fun ways to learn about our native birds. Sylvia is an incredible and inspiring woman who has lived a remarkable life of service to others including our birdlife here in Aotearoa. This is a powerful story to share with our young and old. – Jody Anderson

**Bicultural Principles of Teaching and Learning Online Ngā Mātāpono Kākano rua o te Mahi ako Tuihono**

Edited by Arapera Card, Rosina Merry, and Janis Carroll-Lind (NZCER Press)

Teaching resource

This book explores 11 bicultural principles for creating online learning spaces that tailor to cultural responsiveness. This insightful read is written by a team of 11 staff from Te Rito Maioha, from the lens of educators who work with taura through online learning systems. The principles



can be used to guide the structure of all online gathering spaces. This is an exceptional read for anyone who is organising in the digital space.

In an ever-changing online world, it can be challenging to translate the kawa (protocol) and tikanga (customs or ways of doing) of bringing people together in an online space. The book begins with a dive into cultural responsiveness and how this can be guided in the online learning space. The individual breakdown of the 11 bicultural principles provoke deep reflection about practices.

**Wild Coasts: Exploring Aotearoa’s Marine Reserves**

Ned Barraud (Potton and Burton)

Age: 7-10

There are 44 marine reserves in Aotearoa, created to protect coastal flora and fauna. This book dives below the ocean surface in six of these “wild safe zones”, exploring over 50 different

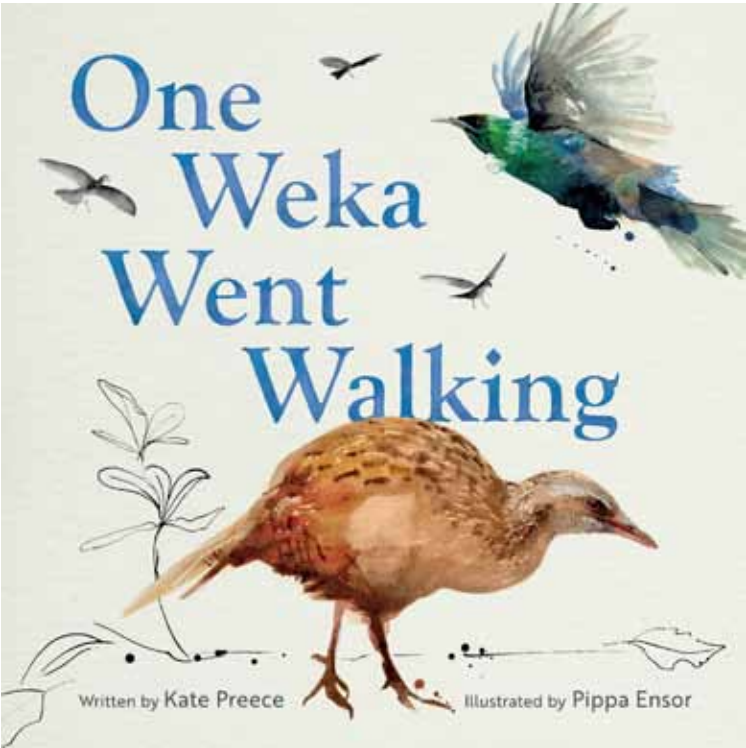


species that now flourish there. The vivid and accurate illustrations are complemented by bite-sized pieces of text, keeping the reader engaged, but not overwhelmed. For budding environmentalists and marine biologists, *Wild Coasts* gives hope that we can have a positive impact on our environment, explaining the impact of overfishing and the importance of these reserves to the marine ecosystem.

– Sarah Silver

**One Weka Went Walking**  
Kate Preece, Pippa Ensor (Bateman Books)  
Age: 4+

From cover to cover, *One Weka Went Walking* delights the reader with beautiful water colour images of the most vulnerable and endangered birds of the Chatham Islands. The text flows with an easy rhythm and offers tantalising clues about each bird’s feeding habits and environment. Additional facts are provided as footnotes. A great book for a range of reading ages and abilities, from enticing rich conversation and questions through to investigation and research. Superb. – Heather Holmes



**NZCER BOOK GIVEAWAY**



We have two sets of these informative new titles for teachers from NZCER Press to giveaway. *Ki te hoe! Education for Aotearoa*; *Pacific educators speak: Valuing our values*; *Bicultural principles of teaching and learning online* | *Ngā mātāpono kākano rua o te mahi ako tuihono*.

To enter send an email to [ako@nzei.org.nz](mailto:ako@nzei.org.nz) by 1 May 2023 with “AKO NZCER giveaway” in the subject line.

**PICTURE BOOK GIVEAWAY**



Win a pack of these gorgeous new picture books from Scholastic. We have two copies of Kyle Mewburn’s fun read-aloud title *We Saw a Spinosaurus*, plus two sets of Norah Wilson’s delightful bilingual stories about little Rāpeti.

To enter send an email to [ako@nzei.org.nz](mailto:ako@nzei.org.nz) by 1 May 2023 with “AKO picture book giveaway” in the subject line.

WE’RE BACKING

FAIR PAY  
AGREEMENTS

FOR THE EARLY  
CHILDHOOD SECTOR

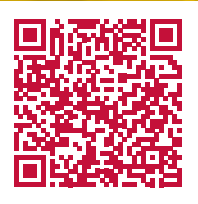
All tamariki in Aotearoa deserve world-leading early childhood education, and early childhood teachers and support staff must be supported to provide this.

NZEI Te Riu Roa will be seeking a Fair Pay Agreement to cover all workers in the early childhood sector this year.

This is an opportunity to embed full pay parity and fair pay across the early childhood sector and improve working conditions by raising issues like ratios, funding and non-contact time in the agreement.

Show your support and get involved in the campaign to secure a Fair Pay Agreement.

<https://action.nzei.org.nz/petitions/support-a-fair-pay-agreement-for-ece>



NZEI  
TE RIU ROA





Ana  
Primary Principal

## NZEI TE RIU ROA IT'S OUR UNION

Joining NZEI Te Riu Roa means **connecting** with 46,000 other people working in education. **Together** we can achieve positive change for education, for our profession, and for tamariki and their learning.

# IT'S OUR UNION

## WHY JOIN US?

Work together for positive change in education and in our workplaces.

Use our **collective strength** to successfully negotiate improved pay and conditions.

Access **support** from NZEI Te Riu Roa staff and the **expertise** of your colleagues.

Build your knowledge and networks through training and **professional development**.

Unlock member-only **discounts** on travel, healthcare, computers and holidays.



Jamie  
Primary Teacher



Shellyn  
Kindergarten Head Teacher

## HOW DO I JOIN?

Join online at [nzeiteriuroa.org.nz/join](https://nzeiteriuroa.org.nz/join)

Talk to your **NZEI Te Riu Roa worksite representative** at your workplace.

Call us free **0800 693 443** weekdays 8.30am – 5.00pm.

Email [nzei@nzei.org.nz](mailto:nzei@nzei.org.nz)

**NZEI  
TE RIU ROA**