Pepa S1
Session: Session 7 - Wed1 - 9:45:00 AM to 11:15:00 AM - Rehua 226
SIG: Arts & Education

Discussant/Chair: Michelle Johansson, Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZMichelle Johansson
Keywords: Co-conspiracy, Tangata Whenua, Tangata Tiriti

Symposium Title:
Co-conspiring for Change - Tangata Whenua, Tagata o le Moana, Tangata Tiriti

This symposium brings together three papers that interrogate what co-conspiracy looks like across different positionalities — tangata whenua, tangata o le moana, and tangata Tiriti — in the shared kaupapa of building education that is by and for the communities it serves. Drawing on kaupapa Māori, desire-centred research, and critical autoethnography, these co-conspirators hope to contribute to scholarly kōrero on what it means to be an 'ally', and the importance of standing together to make critical and urgent change.

Where allyship can remain a passive statement of solidarity without accountability — co-conspiracy demands action. Drawing on Alicia Garza's framing, it is about moving through guilt and shame toward a recognition of the power we each hold to transform our conditions. It locates the causes of injustice in systems that are historically situated and rooted in the ongoing exercise of colonial power — and asks each of us, from our own position, to take responsibility for changing them.

Drawing on work across a range of educational contexts in Aotearoa, the presenters bring distinct but complementary perspectives: on what it means to hold kaupapa from the inside through deep relational commitment; to nurture and protect the conditions in which rangatahi can thrive on their own terms; and to extend genuine care and accountability outward, rather than hoarding institutional power. Together, they affirm that the work toward a just and fair Aotearoa requires all of us, moving forward together.

Abstract 1 title: Tangata Whenua and Co-conspiring to Decolonise the Institution

Terangingahina Moeahu

Decolonising a tertiary institution is a living, relational commitment that must be embodied in curriculum, pedagogy, governance, and the people entrusted to lead it. Grounded in whanaungatanga, this paper explores the Īa Mātauranga role at Toi Whakaari: a position of academic leadership responsible for weaving a stream of Māori knowledge and worldview through the full breadth of the Bachelor of Performing Arts.

The Īa Mātauranga thread — meaning the flow of mātauranga derived from Te Ao Māori — runs across three bespoke courses through which tauira engage with practice from Te Whare Tapere to Indigenous futurisms, developing personal philosophies that connect positionality, storytelling, hauora, and self-determination. This is tiakitanga in action: nurturing mātauranga Māori not as supplementary content but as the foundation from which all learning grows.

Through the lens of kaupapa Māori theory, this paper critically considers what it means for tangata whenua to hold this kaupapa from the inside — leading curriculum transformation, supporting colleagues, and shaping an institution genuinely committed to giving full effect to Te Tiriti. This is manaakitanga as structural practice: care and empowerment embedded in the architecture of the kura itself.

Kauri Williams
Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School

Abstract 2 title: Tagata o le Moana and Co-conspiring with Rangatahi

Tony Patolo

Dominant narratives about young Māori and Pacific people who enter the workforce instead of continuing in formal education are too often framed through deficit. The Hustle Network begins somewhere different — with the conviction that the choices these rangatahi make are expressions of strength, responsibility, and self-determination, not failure.

Grounded in whanaungatanga, this paper shares the kaupapa and practice of The Hustle Network: a Māia Centre initiative that walks alongside tāngata o le moana aged 17–21 who are building their lives through work. Through weekly kōrero, shared kai, mentoring, and community connection, the network practises

tiakitanga — nurturing rangatahi not by redirecting them toward institutional pathways, but by protecting and affirming the paths they have already chosen.

Drawing on desire-centred research paradigms (Tuck, 2009), the paper examines what genuine co-conspiracy with rangatahi looks like in practice: following their lead, amplifying their voices, and building structures — from peer networks to employer relationships — that recognise their mana. This is manaakitanga enacted relationally, from the ground up, where rangatahi are not recipients of care but active shapers of a network built around their own lives, hustles, and futures.

Tony Patolo
Māia Centre for Social Justice and Education

Abstract 3 title: Tangata Tiriti and Co-conspiracy in Educational Leadership

For Pākehā-led education organisations in Aotearoa, honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi — not performatively, but structurally and relationally — requires a fundamental reckoning with how institutional power has been accumulated and held. Grounded in whanaungatanga, this paper draws on the leadership of programmes spanning postgraduate teacher education, community-led rangatahi research, and support for young people navigating the intersection of school, whānau, and community — initiatives held across two organisations with a shared kaupapa and leadership.

Across all three, tiakitanga is practised not as stewardship granted from above, but as accountability to communities whose knowledge, values, and leadership have always belonged at the centre of education in Aotearoa. Each initiative embeds Māori and Pasifika worldviews as foundations — not additions — while actively working to reframe deficit narratives about the communities it serves. The paper reflects honestly on what co-conspiracy demands of a Pākehā leader: recognising complicity in structural imbalance while refusing the saviour framing, and enacting manaakitanga as reciprocal accountability — building organisations that are genuinely by and for the communities they exist to serve.

Jay Allnutt
Māia Centre for Social Justice and Education

V1 12112026

Pepa S2
Session: Session 2 - Mon2 - 1:25:00 PM to 2:55:00 PM - Rehua 009
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Discussant/Chair: Sally Peters, University of WaikatoSally Peters
Keywords: Refugee, Migrany, Transitions

Symposium Title:
Enhancing the learning of refugee and migrant children as they transition to education settings in Aotearoa NZ

This symposium shares findings from a research project that is exploring ways to enhance transition to ECE and schools in Aotearoa for refugee and migrant children and their families. Funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), the study is based in three early childhood centres, two primary schools, and a migrant settlement service and revolves around partnerships between ECE/school leadership, teachers, Settlement Centre staff, families and researchers. It explores the experiences of children (aged 3-8 years), families and teachers including the challenges they face and evaluates strategies for supporting educational transitions. The three papers in this symposium explore, i) understanding diverse migrant and refugee pathways and developing responsive transition practices, ii) findings from two teacher led 'problems of practice' action research projects to enhance children's and families' participation and engagement and, iii) how language shaped migrant and refugee family experiences of transitioning into primary schooling.

Abstract 1 title: Supporting former refugee and migrant children, and their families as they transition to ECE and school in Aotearoa New Zealand

This presentation draws from pilot study findings as well as the initial TLRI data collection to explore the experiences of former refugee and migrant children, and their families. Highlighting what participants found challenging and what has been helpful provided a basis for planning learner support strategies across the different settings. The study responds to increasing diversity within Aotearoa New Zealand education and the need for culturally responsive transition practices for migrant and former refugee learners. Rather than focusing only on teacher strategies, the project highlights the capability, professional learning, and system conditions educators require to enact inclusive practice. The findings contribute to scholarship on transitions, equity, and learner wellbeing by examining how early childhood, school, and settlement services can strengthen outcomes for children and families. Participant stories provided a powerful lens to understand and reflect on the ecological changes the children and families have experienced before, during and after their migration (as highlighted by Dobsen and Jørgensen, 2024). Knowledge of the challenges experienced through different pathways to settle in Aotearoa led to practitioner inquiries to promote a welcoming environment for new refugee and migrant families, help them navigate challenges, build connections, and foster a sense of belonging (Alam et al., 2023). Emerging findings suggest that practitioner inquiry and culturally grounded reflection supported teachers to develop more responsive transition practices for migrant and former refugee children and families. Early evidence indicates positive shifts in children's participation, belonging, and engagement, alongside strengthened partnerships between teachers, families, and settlement services.

Dr Hazel Woodhouse (Abstract 1)
University of Waikato

Abstract 2 title: Teacher led approaches to building connections, fostering belonging and helping families transition to education in Aotearoa

This collaborative presentation with teachers from two educational settings explores the initial impacts of trialling locally identified learning support strategies for former refugee and migrant children. Using a Problem of Practice (PoP) approach, each setting identified a persistent challenge within their setting related to transition, participation, and belonging, and evaluated the initial impact for children's participation and engagement. The study responds to increasing diversity within Aotearoa New Zealand education and the need for more culturally responsive transition practices. It contributes to scholarship on equity and inclusion by foregrounding teachers' perspectives on the professional, relational, and systemic supports needed to work effectively with migrant and former refugee communities. The inquiry was informed by an action research approach involving cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis et al., 2013). Teachers used setting-based data, reflective inquiry, and collaborative discussion to identify and trial strategies responsive to their local contexts. Analysis was informed by the Māori principles of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, aroha, and ako. Emerging findings highlight the value of collaborative

inquiry, culturally responsive professional learning, and stronger partnerships with families and community services in supporting inclusive transition practices. Findings also reflect the support that assists teachers to do this work.

Professor Sally Peters (Abstract 1)
University of Waikato

Abstract 3 title: Language as Capital, Constraint, and Connection: Migrant Family Narratives of School Transition in Aotearoa New Zealand

This paper examines how language shaped migrant and refugee family experiences of transitioning into primary schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand. Drawing on narrative interviews with families with migrant backgrounds, the study explores language as both a resource and a barrier within educational transition. Situated within sociocritical approaches to multilingualism, the analysis draws on concepts of linguistic capital, social capital, and language ideology to examine how families navigated schooling across differing linguistic and institutional conditions. Findings suggest that prior English proficiency and familiarity with institutional systems functioned as forms of linguistic capital that enabled smoother communication with schools and access to support. Conversely, limited English proficiency constrained institutional navigation, parental participation, and social connection. The study also found that language operated relationally through multilingual peers, interpreters, and community networks, which frequently acted as transitional bridges between home and school. The paper argues that language should be understood not simply as an educational skill, but as a critical infrastructure of migrant transition shaping belonging, participation, and educational access.

Dr Raella Kahuroa and two teacher researchers (Abstract 2)
University of Waikato

V12112026

Pepa S3
Session: Session 3 - Mon3 - 3:25:00 PM to 4:55:00 PM - Rehua 009
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Presenters:

Name: Olivia Johnston
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Keywords: ability; student grouping; equity

Symposium Title:
Interrogating 'ability' and (un)just schooling pathways in Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand

Student 'ability' is a widely used but problematic and poorly defined concept in contemporary schooling. In this symposium, we trace the way 'ability' functions as a principle for sorting students into groups, classes, or pathways deemed more or less 'academic' in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. While these two nations share histories of British settler colonisation and share some related barriers to social and racial equity, their school systems have contrasting structural features, for example a relatively large private school sector in Australia and a complex, modular senior assessment system (NCEA) in Aotearoa. This symposium brings together three empirically-grounded perspectives to the questions: 1) How do teachers' understandings of student 'ability' interact with structural features of education systems to differentiate the learning opportunities available to different students? 2) How do students experience and interpret being allocated into high and low streams? We also discuss the ways in which such differentiated pathways through school may reinforce or challenge wider patterns of privilege and disadvantage related to disability, race, culture, and social class.

Abstract 1 title: How 'ability' is used to categorise students in Australian secondary schools

The construct of 'ability' is used to explain how students are organised into class groups in about 80% of Australian secondary schools. Drawing on Ball's (2010) theory of acquisition, this paper will explore how 'ability' is operationalised in schools to categorise students, questioning the accuracy and fairness of the methods that are used to appraise student 'ability' in Australia. Survey (n=192) and interview data (n=22) from a three-year study of class ability grouping practices in Maths, English, Science, and Humanities and Social Sciences from Year 7-9 are drawn upon to further explore the construct of 'ability' as it is used for 'ability-grouping' of students. The findings highlight that standardised test scores and prior achievement data inform categorisation of students into classes according to 'ability.' However, information about student effort, behaviour, and parent requests also informed appraisals of students' 'ability' for class grouping. The discussion will draw on these research findings to problematise 'ability' as a construct used by schools to group students into classes for learning, because these categorisations often mirror existing social inequalities and can shape students' academic futures accordingly.

Olivia Johnston
School of Education, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia

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V1 12112026

Abstract 2 title: Ko ngā rangatahi, ngā rangatira: Privileging Youth Perspectives of Streaming in Aotearoa New Zealand

Streaming; grouping students by perceived ability through separate classes, groups, or prerequisites, is widely practiced in Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori and Pacific learners are disproportionately affected, with limited opportunity to influence decision-making and restricting future pathways. These practices reflect historical inequities rooted in colonial and deficit-based education systems. In 2022, rangatahi (youth) perspectives were gathered through a collaborative hui (assembly) of secondary students. Rangatahi voice was privileged throughout the research, not confined to findings or discussion sections. Kaupapa Māori principles underpinned the study, ensuring rangatahi experiences formed the analysis, and interpretation of data. Students reported that streaming limits opportunities, constrains future pathways, and excludes both whānau and student input in decision-making. They demonstrated leadership, critical awareness, and insight into systemic inequities. Many internalised deficit labels assigned through streaming, affecting both identity and achievement. Their perspectives resonate with the Māori proverb “Ko ngā rangatahi, ngā rangatira ō āpōpō” (youth are the leaders of tomorrow). By privileging rangatahi perspectives, this study challenges Western norms of research and foregrounds Māori and Pacific students as knowledgeable holders, and contributors- capable of informing educational practice and equity initiatives. It highlights the importance of acting on youth leadership now. Ko ngā rangatahi, ngā rangatira o naiānei.

Kay-Lee Jones
Te Kaupeka Ako | Faculty of Education, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury

V1 12112026

Pepa S4
Session: Session 2 - Mon2 - 1:25:00 PM to 2:55:00 PM - Central 2
SIG: Wellbeing

Discussant/Chair: Myron Friesen, University of Canterbury, Faculty of EducationMyron Friesen
Keywords: school climate, relational pedagogy, mixed-methods research

Symposium Title:
"You Have Value, We Succeed Together, Others Matter": Promoting Inclusive and Collaborative Classrooms and Schools through E Tū Tāngata

An ongoing provocation for many educators is the challenge of developing supportive social-emotional learning environments that effectively promote positive, collaborative relationships and inclusive attitudes across the school community. This symposium presents a cohesive programme of mixed-methods research that has examined how three primary schools and one secondary school have addressed this challenge by integrating the principles of E Tū Tāngata into their relationships, teaching practice, and student behavioural management strategies. The three strands of E Tū Tāngata, "You Have Value, We Succeed Together, and Others Matter" enable school staff to develop a shared language and relational pedagogy enacted in practice and experienced by students, teachers, and school staff. Student and staff findings indicate that authentic implementation is associated with stronger school belonging, increased positive risk taking, and reduced fear of failure. Longitudinal findings further highlight both early improvements in school climate and the challenges of implementation in complex secondary settings. Crucially, across all three presentations, E Tū Tāngata is shown to help staff and students prioritize connection, collaboration, and inclusion. Together, these insights position E Tū Tāngata as a promising approach to enhance school and classroom climate.

Abstract 1 title: E Tū Tāngata in practice: Exploring how teachers navigate pedagogy, teacher-student relationships, and classroom behaviour management

This mixed-methods research explored how primary school teachers from three Canterbury schools experienced and applied the framework of values from E Tū Tāngata within their schools and classrooms. Study One surveyed 41 teachers, examining their perceptions of E Tū Tāngata (ETT) implementation and effectiveness, personal impact, and three school climate related outcomes (positive risk-taking, fear of failure, and school belonging), exploring commonalities and differences across the three schools. Findings indicated that the depth and coherence of ETT's implementation shaped teachers' experiences of both the initiative and their school climate, with some variations across schools. Teachers from schools and classrooms where ETT was better integrated reported better outcomes. Study Two comprised follow-up semi-structured interviews exploring how ETT shapes pedagogical approaches, teacher-student relationships, and classroom behaviour management. Findings showed that ETT functioned as a shared language that made the strands tangible across teachers' practice. Through this, teachers translated ETT strands into effective relational strategies that strengthened their relationships with students and cultivated a relational classroom climate in which behaviour is understood through the lens of shared values. Collectively, the findings from the two studies suggest that ETT functions as an adopted mindset that shapes teachers' practice.

Myron Friesen
University of Canterbury, Faculty of Education

Abstract 2 title: Students' experiences of E Tū Tāngata across three schools: Associations with positive risk taking, fear of failure, school belonging, and student evaluations

E Tū Tāngata (ETT) is a principles-based initiative intended to strengthen relational school climate in Aotearoa New Zealand. We report a convergent mixed-methods student evaluation across three Christchurch full-primary schools. Year 5–8 students (N = 395) completed a survey of perceived classroom enactment of ETT, student evaluation of ETT, and outcomes (freedom for positive risk taking, fear of failure, school belonging), alongside open-ended responses about what ETT helps or harms. Students' narratives converged on a strikingly relational account of school life: classrooms "feel better" when kindness, inclusion, and anti-bullying are normalised; the strand language gives students a shared way to name expectations ("you have value…others matter"); and many describe ETT as permission to be themselves—more confident, less guarded. Bayesian multivariate multilevel models echoed this story. Stronger perceived enactment was associated with higher belonging and positive risk taking, lower fear of failure, and more favourable evaluations. Strand-specific patterns aligned with students' accounts of safety and care: feeling valued tracked belonging and risk taking, while mutual regard tracked reduced fear of

failure. Together, the findings sharpen ETT's theory of change by linking students' lived descriptions of classroom relationships to measurable motivational and belonging outcomes.

Mark LaVenia

Abstract 3 title: The first year of E Tū Tāngata in a Canterbury secondary school: Examining staff perceptions of changes in the social-emotional climate of the school

This research employed a longitudinal mixed-methods study design that examined a secondary school community's perspective of school climate as they began implementing E Tū Tāngata in their school. Baseline survey data was collected in March of 2025, and the first follow-up data was collected in November 2025. This presentation reports the findings from 36 school staff who completed both mixed-methods surveys designed to examine the school community's perspectives of the social and emotional climate of the school at both time points. Initial quantitative findings indicate improvements in school climate, quality of classroom communication, and reductions in staff observations of students' antisocial behaviours. Qualitative data highlight diversity in opinions regarding E Tū Tāngata's alignment with school values, impacts on teaching practice, and overall positive impacts on relationships between staff and students and between staff themselves. The findings point to the potential and challenges of applying school climate initiatives such as E Tū Tāngata in the complex ecosystem of secondary schools.

Victoria Leggett
University of Canterbury

V1 12112026

Pepa S5
Session: Session 1 - Mon1 - 11:10:00 AM to 12:40:00 PM - Rehua 528
SIG: Adult & Higher Education

Discussant/Chair: Sarah Kapeli, University of AucklandSarah Kapeli
Keywords: student mental health, wellbeing, belonging, university

Symposium Title:
Do I belong here? An Investigation of Student Wellbeing Among Marginalised Groups at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland

A sense of belonging is central to young people's success at university and in later life, yet it remains difficult to secure for students from marginalised groups. To address this, one of Aotearoa's largest investigations into student wellbeing is underway at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland — a campus of 47,000 students. The study involves in-depth discussions with more than 100 undergraduate students from minority and marginalised groups, including Māori, Sāmoan, Tongan, Chinese, South Asian, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Postgraduate research students have conducted most of the research, with discussions largely led by researchers from the same minority or marginalised backgrounds as participants — a deliberate approach intended to deepen trust and contextual understanding. In this symposium, you will hear from some of our postgraduate research team to better understand Māori, Pacific, and Asian experiences of university. The findings from this research are intended to shape more inclusive university environments, supporting belonging, engagement, and wellbeing for students whose experiences have historically been under-researched within Aotearoa New Zealand's tertiary sector.

Abstract 1 title: Tauira Māori experiences of university

Following recent attacks on initiatives supporting tauira Māori, understanding the Indigenous student experience of university is more urgent than ever. Local research engages minimally with Māori and shows limited strength-based inquiry into how they foster wellbeing and belonging. This presentation integrates three qualitative studies exploring how Māori undergraduate tauira at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland, navigate belonging, identity, mental health, and academic success. Using kaupapa Māori research approaches, we had kōrero with 27 undergraduate tauira Māori, which were analysed via reflexive thematic analysis. As Māori researchers and kaitiaki, these processes ensured we preserved each kōrero through a strengths based approach. Findings across each study reveal tauira centring Māori ways of being – practising hauora, whakawhanaungatanga with peers, participating in cultural spaces, and engaging with Te Ao Māori – alongside navigating the struggle between authenticity and conformity, the hidden costs of resilience, and reclaiming identity to challenge systemic inequities. Together, these findings call for shared responsibility, increased Māori representation, culturally responsive policies, and accessible mental health support that meets students' cultural and psychological needs – rather than placing the burden of belonging on students themselves.

Shelby Symons, Jemma Dixon, Jack Dobson
School of Psychology, University of Auckland

Abstract 2 title: Leotele-i-nu'uese (to be heard in foreign spaces) – Pacific student experiences of university

University represents the Pacific migrant dream – a symbol of success and mobility for many Pacific families. Yet Pacific students' experiences of mental wellbeing and belonging in tertiary environments remain under-researched. This presentation integrates two qualitative studies exploring the wellbeing and belonging of Sāmoan and Tongan undergraduate students at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. Each study employed Pacific research methodologies to explore Sāmoan (n = 13) and Tongan (n = 10) student experiences, which were analysed through reflexive thematic analysis underpinned by Pacific values. Findings across both studies identify wellbeing as a holistic, culturally informed construct shaped by Sāmoan and Tongan values. Shared themes include the pressure to achieve academically, the centrality of family support alongside the challenges posed by family dynamics, the essential role of Pacific-designated spaces in cultivating belonging, and the negotiation of self-care, faith, and service amid the competing demands of family, church, study, and work. Together, these findings highlight the distinct yet connected experiences of Sāmoan and Tongan students, underscoring the need for universities to adopt culturally responsive approaches that meet the needs and aspirations of Pacific learners within Aotearoa New Zealand's tertiary sector.

Malia Vaka'uta, Seulele Vine
School of Psychology, University of Auckland

Abstract 3 title: “We are forgotten about” – Asian student experiences of university

Despite making up a substantial portion of Aotearoa New Zealand's university population, Asian students' mental health and belonging experiences remain under-researched. This presentation integrates two qualitative studies exploring the wellbeing and belonging of Chinese (n = 20) and South Asian (n = 16) undergraduate students at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. Each study employed semi-structured interviews analysed through reflexive thematic analysis, which were framed by culturally responsive lenses. Findings across both studies reveal Asian students navigating culturally laden family expectations, racial stereotypes, academic pressure, and racism that constrain their capacity to belong and to be open about mental health. South Asian students described belonging through acceptance and exclusion across peer, institutional, and societal contexts, while Chinese students developed management strategies synthesising Eastern and Western values. Both studies identified relationship-building opportunities, multicultural spaces, and institutional recognition of their unique cultural needs as vital for fostering belonging. Together, these findings challenge the wider societal discourse around Asian mental health and call on universities to be more attentive to Asian students – addressing inequities through culturally responsive policies, support, and practices that value Asian students’ cultural resources and strengths.

Senuri Panditharatne, Kahn Tasker
School of Psychology, University of Auckland; Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago

V1 12112026

Pepa S7
Session: Session 1 - Mon1 - 11:10:00 AM to 12:40:00 PM - Rehua 002
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Discussant/Chair: Linda Clarke, Massey UniversityLinda Clarke and Tracy Rikihana
Keywords: Inclusive learning in early years education; practice-based coaching; He Awa Whiria

Symposium Title:
He Awa Whiria in Practice: Inclusive Learning Support, Kaiako Experience, and Coaching in Puna Reo

This symposium presents emerging insights from a Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) partnership between Massey University and Te Rau Ōriwa and Apakura te Kākano Puna Reo. The two Puna Reo operate under the auspices of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and are members of Ngā Puna Reo o Aotearoa. Our collaborative rangahou is focused on supporting inclusive learning in Puna Reo, through embedded learning support (Snyder et al., 2018) and practice-based coaching (Snyder et al., 2015). Embedded learning support is a multi-component approach that integrates intentional teaching strategies into naturally occurring learning opportunities to support mokopuna, especially those with additional learning needs. Practice-based coaching is a collaborative, cyclical process, used to support kaiako to implement intentional teaching practices. Framed through He Awa Whiria (Macfarlane et al., 2015), our rangahou explores the braiding of mātauranga Māori, embedded learning support, practice-based coaching, and the knowledge and wisdom of Puna Reo kaiako and communities. The symposium has three interrelated and interactive presentations: (1) He Awa Whiria as a conceptual frame; (2) kaiako experiences of implementing embedded learning support; and (3) kaiako experiences of practice-based coaching. Together, these presentations create space for dialogue about culturally grounded inclusion, professional learning, and co-construction of knowledge in early childhood education.

Abstract 1 title: He Awa Whiria: Enacting a Braided River Approach

This presentation explores He Awa Whiria (Macfarlane et al., 2015) as a conceptual frame to understand how mātauranga Māori, kaiako and whānau knowledge and wisdom; embedded learning support (Snyder et al., 2018); and practice-based coaching ((Snyder et al., 2015) come into relationship, flowing alongside one another, intersecting, and at times diverging within Puna Reo contexts. Drawing on wānanga, we foreground how He Awa Whiria is not simply a metaphor but an active process that supports co-construction of inclusive pedagogies in early childhood contexts. For example, Te Rau Ōriwa have shared: “Under the korowai of mātauranga Māori, our practice is guided by the belief that every child has the right to experience success in ways that honour who they are, where they come from, and the unique potential they hold.” This statement is significant because it places embedded learning support within the existing values and aspirations of the Puna, not separate from. In both Puna, relationships with whānau, recognition of mokopuna strengths and identities, and commitment to belonging, wellbeing, and success provide the foundation from which teaching decisions are made. This situates embedded learning support and practice-based coaching as tools to support practice within the stream of mātauranga Māori.

Tracy Rikihana
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

Abstract 2 title: Kaiako Experiences of Embedded Learning Support in Everyday Practice

This presentation focuses on kaiako experiences of implementing embedded learning support (Snyder et al., 2018) within everyday routines, play, and interactions in Puna Reo. This mahi sits within the framework of Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua, spanning universal, targeted, and tailored approaches to support learning for all mokopuna. Emerging insights suggest that kaiako engaged with embedded learning support in diverse ways. Some embraced the online learning modules as a pathway to developing their understanding of the approach, while others began by trialling aspects of embedded learning support within their existing practice. Kaiako set individual goals for implementation and drew on the universal, targeted, and tailored support framework within Te Tūāpapa o He Pikorua to guide their practice. For some, this involved strengthening support for mokopuna with additional learning needs, while for others the focus was on enhancing inclusive learning opportunities for all mokopuna across everyday contexts. Through reflections shared in wānanga, kaiako describe how they learnt about and engaged with the embedded learning support approach. Initial feedback from Apakura Te Kākano Puna Reo suggests that inclusive learning has been strengthened through our collaborative approach, where kaiako have been supported to reflect on and adapt their practice to meet the diverse needs of mokopuna. Drawing on kaiako stories and examples

of practice, this presentation offers insight into kaiako experiences, including what the implementation of embedded learning support looked and felt like for them.

Linda Clarke
Massey University

Abstract 3 title: What Was It Like to Be Coached? Relational Experiences of Practice-Based Coaching

We explore kaiako experiences of engaging in practice-based coaching as part of professional learning within the project. Drawing on reflections and wānanga, we examine how coaching was experienced in relation to trust, power, and cultural responsiveness. Particular attention is given to how coaching relationships were established and negotiated within Puna Reo, and how these relationships supported professional growth. Insights from an Apakura te Kākano Puna Reo leader suggest that "practice-based coaching has helped build both confidence and capability within the team, creating meaningful opportunities for ongoing growth, reflection, and more responsive teaching." Our presentation builds on this, as kaiako describe their experiences of being coached and the changes they felt in confidence, reflective capability, and teaching practice, while also identifying moments of challenge. This presentation invites critical reflection on how practice-based coaching can be enacted in culturally sustaining ways, and what it means to support effective, meaningful, contextually grounded professional learning in early childhood education.

Sammy Turipa
Te Rau Ōriwa Puna Reo

V1 12112026

Pepa S8
Session: Session 9 - Wed3 - 2:00:00 PM to 3:30:00 PM - Rehua 003
SIG: Early Childhood Education

Discussant/Chair: Jenny Ritchie, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellingtonshared by all three presenters
Keywords: Te Whāriki; social justice, cultural Justice

Symposium Title:
Considering the contribution of Te Whāriki to social and cultural justice in education in Aotearoa

In this symposium we reflect on the initial vision of Te Whariki 1996 which projected an innovative, creative, progressive, 'bicultural', Tiriti based, sociocultural, holistic, dispositional and integrated model of curriculum for Aotearoa and the world (Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2010; Soler & Miller, 2003). We then draw upon our collective body of research which has been informed by a diverse range of theoretical perspectives, including: mana wahine theory; Indigenous epistemologies; critical theory; Kaupapa Māori theorising; counter-colonial theorising; superdiversity, intersectionality, and interculturality. Our three papers reflect on Te Whāriki (1996 & 2017) with regard to the revernacularisation of te reo Māori, the transformative potential of the curriculum, and its potential to support the lives, languages and wellbeing of tangata whenua and our superdiverse communities in this current time of neoliberal, racist, autocratic retrenchment of previously hard-won social, cultural, and environmental justice commitments. We call for a renewal of a shared commitment to a Tiriti based education that promotes education for active citizenship and social and cultural solidarity. Lamenting the erosion of democracy, Boston (2025) signals that the underpinning dispositions and values to uphold such commitments "must be taught, advocated, and widely practised. That responsibility is not limited to a few; it falls on every citizen" (p. 13).

Abstract 1 title: Kia Hiwa Rā!

There is a powerful promise embedded in te reo Māori policy, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and Te Whāriki in all its iterations, that the language will live, be heard, and be used every day. Yet the reality is that te reo Māori remains marginal in many early childhood settings, often symbolic rather than spoken. This focus critically interrogates the persistent gap between policy commitments to te reo Māori and its everyday use in early childhood contexts. It explores what it means to give genuine substance to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Whāriki's aspirations, arguing that symbolic acknowledgement alone is insufficient and that deeper structural and systemic conditions are required to support the sustained and intergenerational use of te reo Māori.

Associate Professor Mere Skerrett
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract 2 title: A Retrospective Journeying through Te Whāriki Aotearoa Early Childhood Education

Engaging with the Te Whāriki Draft (Ministry of Education, 1993), was both inspirational and transformative. The late Lady Tilly Te Koingo Reedy (1995) recognised the transformative potentiality of the curriculum. Drawing from Martin Luther King's 1963 social justice vision she stated, 'I have a dream that the all-encompassing vision of Te Whāriki… will be the key to unlocking the endless possibilities…' Interwoven Te Tiriti o Waitangi foundations are whakapapa pathways for tamariki/mokopuna Māori. This paper applies an autoethnographic approach informed by mana wahine theory, Indigenous epistemologies, critical theory, Kaupapa Māori pedagogy, and counter-colonial constructs to consider how the social justice vision of Te Whāriki has contributed to repositioning of tamariki/mokopuna Māori at the early childhood interface.

Cheryl Rau
retired, independent scholar

Abstract 3 title: Te Whāriki as a vision for empowering social, cultural and ecological justice advocacy

As Te Whāriki 1996 was being written in the early 1990s, 150 years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori yet again called for the government to honour the obligations that had been promised to Māori in that 1840 treaty. Te Whāriki 1996 reflected a progressive agenda in its commitment to Te Tiriti, providing a vision for the rest of the education sector here in Aotearoa, and for early childhood care and education internationally. This presentation reflects on the current context with regard to upholding the visions of Te

Whāriki 1996 & 2017 as neoliberal social, economic and education policies threaten our Aotearoa early childhood sector.

Jenny Ritchie
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington

V1 01211 2026

Pepa S9
Session: Session 3 - Mon3 - 3:25:00 PM to 4:55:00 PM - Rehua 103
SIG: Inclusive Education and Community

Discussant/Chair: Mark LaVenia, University of CanterburySally Clendon
Keywords: Structured literacy; Specialist schools; Professional learning

Symposium Title:
Team-Based Structured Literacy in Specialist Schools: Building Shared Capability Through BSLA PLD

Implementing structured literacy in specialist schools requires more than adapting teaching materials; it depends on shared capability across the adults who support students with diverse communication, access, and learning needs. This symposium examines BSLA Specialist School PLD as whole-team professional learning, bringing together three perspectives on how evidence-informed literacy teaching can be enacted responsibly in specialist-school contexts. The first paper outlines the design and delivery of large-scale PLD for teachers, leaders, therapists, and teacher aides, highlighting inclusive assessment, responsive teaching, linguistic knowledge, AAC, and collaboration across professional roles. The second paper examines how specialist-school leaders make sense of structured literacy reform, sustain staff confidence, and support implementation that remains principled while adapting to local learners and settings. The third paper focuses on teacher aides, showing how PLD can strengthen linguistic knowledge, language facilitation, AAC use, and confidence among staff who play vital roles in daily classroom support. Together, the papers show that structured literacy in specialist schools is collective, relational work: evidence-informed teaching becomes meaningful when leaders create space for context-sensitive professional judgement, teams build shared language and practice, and all staff are supported to contribute to students' literacy learning with care and confidence.

Abstract 1 title: Structured Literacy Professional Learning and Development for Specialist Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand

This session will explore key learnings from the implementation of large-scale professional learning and development (PLD) in structured literacy across Aotearoa New Zealand. It will spotlight a recent government initiative involving the provision of PLD across three school terms to more than 3,000 educators (teachers, leaders, therapists, teacher aides) working in specialist schools. The presentation will outline the process of extending the Better Start Literacy Approach to meet the unique needs of the specialist school context. The presentation will highlight key principles and actions for implementing structured literacy teaching for children with complex learning needs. This will include principles underpinning the PLD itself, for example, providing inclusive assessment and teaching resources; supporting staff to build the necessary linguistics knowledge and skills needed to carry out targeted assessment and use this to inform responsive teaching; facilitating collaboration between staff including strengthening the relationship between teachers and therapists in optimising communication and literacy teaching; and supporting leaders with optimising intervention integrity while also responding to students' diverse strengths and needs. Data from the implementation will be shared including educator feedback on their experiences and perceptions of participating in the PLD.

Sally Clendon, Gail Gillon
Massey University, University of Canterbury

Abstract 2 title: From Fidelity to Integrity: Specialist-School Leaders' Sensemaking and Adaptive Leadership in Structured Literacy PLD

Implementation of structured literacy in specialist schools requires more than the transfer of evidence-informed routines into practice. Leaders must interpret professional learning, support staff sensemaking, and make principled decisions about how literacy instruction can retain integrity while responding to diverse communication, access, and learning needs. This paper reports emerging findings from focus groups with specialist-school leaders participating in the Better Start Literacy Approach Specialist School PLD, a year-long university-supported programme involving in-person PLD, online Communities of Practice, UCOnline resources, school visits, and local implementation. The analysis is informed by sensemaking theory, ecological accounts of professional agency, and adaptive expertise, with attention to how relational professional learning conditions enable or constrain implementation. Initial accounts suggest that leaders worked to build shared purpose, sustain teacher and teacher-aide confidence, use evidence of learner progress to build shared commitment, and negotiate tensions between fidelity to PLD principles and materials and integrity of enactment in context. Findings point to the importance of PLD

designs that foster relational trust, protect space for context-sensitive professional judgement, and support mana-enhancing implementation with learners, whānau, and staff. The paper contributes to understanding how structured literacy reform can be led responsibly in specialist-school contexts.

Rachael Robertson, Mark LaVenia, Kris LaVenia, Sally Clendon, Gail Gillon
University of Canterbury, Massey University

Abstract 3 title: It Takes a Team: Delivering and Responding to Structured Literacy PLD for Teacher Aides in Specialist Schools Across Aotearoa New Zealand

Implementing structured literacy in specialist schools requires a collaborative, values-driven approach that recognises the strengths of diverse teams and empowers all staff to contribute meaningfully to student learning. This presentation explores the Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) professional learning and development (PLD) model delivered across specialist schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a particular focus on teacher aides (TAs) and the collective responsibility of supporting students with complex learning needs. Teacher aides play a critical role in specialist school classrooms, bringing varied experiences, skills, and perspectives to their work. Through whole-team PLD involving teachers, leaders, therapists, and TAs, the BSLA model aimed to build shared understanding, consistency of practice, and confidence in delivering structured literacy support. Three key areas of learning for TAs included strengthening their linguistic knowledge, enhancing the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), and developing language facilitation strategies. This presentation highlights the importance of valuing all members of the school team, nurturing professional capability, and creating sustainable systems of care and empowerment that enable TAs to thrive in their roles. Findings highlight how strong leadership, peer collaboration, and facilitator guidance contribute to equitable, inclusive literacy practices that ultimately benefit students with complex learning needs.

Rebecca Lindsay, Kate King, Marie Shipston, Sally Clendon, Gail Gillon
University of Canterbury, Massey University

V1 12112026

Pepa S13
Session: Session 4 - Tue1 - 8:35:00 AM to 11:05:00 AM - Rehua 102
SIG: Māori Caucus

Discussant/Chair: Tracy Dayman, University of Canterbury
Keywords: Whakapapa Visual Assessment

Symposium Title:
Tuia te aho: Weaving visibility through whakapapa in Te Ara Māori: Te Whāriki (2017)

Haere whakamuri kia anga whakamua, this symposium will explore the potential of Te Ara Māori to inform a critical, culturally attuned approach through co-design visual assessment. Drawing on a TLRI-funded research project (2025 – 2027), we invite whakawhiti kōrero concerning current curriculum policy, and potential threats to Tiriti-based curricular. In particular, we invoke a series of challenges to existing modalities concerning more scripted curriculum approaches that are not aligned to te ao Māori or honour the intergenerational connections embedded within whakapapa. We ask the audience to provide feedback on a series of possible ngā aho hono kua tuituia that offer scope for re-imagining and visibilising mokopuna/tamariki within Tiriti-responsive practice.

Abstract 1 title: Kia whakarongo ake au ki te tangi a te manu nei – Cry of the bird – lamenting the tensions.

This presentation examines the ongoing tension between the bicultural aspirations of Te Whāriki, and the realities of accountability regimes shaped by colonial-Western perspectives, particularly for kaupapa Māori early childhood settings. He Manu Hou, a bilingual kaupapa Māori early childhood centre, embodies the metaphor of a fledgling preparing for flight. The centre is working to design planning and assessment practices that reflect the essence and mauri of mokopuna—both in the moment and over time—while enabling kaiako to share authentic, accessible learning with whānau. As it strengthens its Māori pathway through alignment with Te Ara Māori, there is a clear commitment to reframing assessment through a Māori lens. This presentation draws on the TLRI project as a platform for critical and creative inquiry into assessment in early childhood education. Grounded in localised kaupapa, the presentation highlights how culturally responsive, contextually meaningful practices can better honour children's identities, relationships, and lived experiences. Participants will be invited to consider how reimagining assessment practices can foreground local knowledge, strengthen connections with whānau, and create richer, more meaningful narratives of learning.

Beth Russell
He Manu Hou Trust ECE

Abstract 2 title: Tui-i-i, tui-i-i, tuituia - Visibilising te ao Māori through whanaungatanga.

Grounded in te ao Māori and the bicultural framework of Te Whāriki, this presentation reframes early childhood assessment through the lens of whanaungatanga (relationships) and visual methodologies. Māori understandings position the child as a treasured being—valued before conception and carrying the legacies of past, present, and future. As articulated in Te Whāriki, the child is both unique and inseparable from their relational world, embodying ancestral knowledge while actively shaping future possibilities. The presentation posits that culturally sustaining visual assessment practices can uphold Māori aspirations by privileging collective (mokopuna, whānau, kaiako) narratives, intergenerational knowledge, and the mana of the child. Drawing on whakataukī such as "Ko tātou ngā kanohi me ngā waha kōrero o rātou mā kua ngaro ki te pō" (we are the seeing eyes and speaking mouths of those who have passed on), the presentation situates assessment as a socially constructed, culturally mediated practice. By positioning mokopuna as "seeing eyes" within their learning communities, early childhood kaiako can enact assessment practices that uphold mokopuna rights while being inclusive, relational, and future-focused. This presentation invites reflection: Whose perspectives are visible in current assessment practices—and whose stories remain unseen?

Tracy Dayman
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha - University of Canterbury

Abstract 3 title: Tuia i te here tangata: Stitching a framework for biculturally inclusive visual assessment.

Framed through the metaphor of stitching and weaving, we introduce a series of provocations as ngā aho hono kua tuituia, interconnected strands that contribute to the development of a more biculturally inclusive

assessment framework. These strands foreground whanaungatanga, visuality, and whakapapa/intergenerational continuity, creating space to reimagine assessment as a relational, dynamic, and culturally grounded practice. In doing so, they offer pathways for more authentically representing mokopuna as learners embedded within whakapapa. The audience will be invited to respond to these woven strands, contributing to a collective exploration of how visual assessment can be re-stitched to better honour Tiriti-responsive practice and visibilising mokopuna/tamariki.

Professor E. Jayne White
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha - University of Canterbury

V1 12112026

Pepa S14
Session: Session 5 - Tue2 - 10:35:00 AM to 12:05:00 PM - Rehua 329
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Discussant/Chair: David Berg, University of Otago College of EducationDavid Berg/ Jenny Ward
Keywords: teacher self-efficacy, principal self-efficacy, collective teacher efficacy

Symposium Title:
Understanding educators' efficacy beliefs through Pā Harakeke: Insights from the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study

Efficacy beliefs influence how learners, kaiako, teaching teams, and tumuaki respond to challenge, persist through difficulty, and contribute to educational improvement. While self-and collective efficacy are influential constructs internationally, there is an opportunity to better understand how these beliefs can be conceptualised, measured, and investigated within the cultural and educational context of Aotearoa New Zealand. This symposium presents a programme of research undertaken through the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study to measure efficacy beliefs in schools, and introduces Pā Harakeke as a conceptual framework that enriches understanding of these beliefs through Te Ao Māori perspectives. The symposium comprises three complementary presentations. The first introduces Pā Harakeke and considers its contribution to extending contemporary understandings of self-efficacy. The second describes the development of a new suite of efficacy belief measures for kaiako, teaching teams, and tumuaki, relevant for Aotearoa. The third presents evidence from the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study examining relationships between efficacy beliefs, school emphasis on academic success, work engagement, and contextual factors. Together, the presentations illustrate how Pā Harakeke, robust measurement, and national evidence can deepen understanding of efficacy beliefs while providing practical insights into the conditions that support effective teaching, leadership, and learning across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Abstract 1 title: Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te kōmako e kō? If the heart of the harakeke were plucked, where would the bellbird sing?

The child sits at the heart of our education system, yet, like the rito, the central shoot of the harakeke, they do not exist or grow in isolation. As Aotearoa New Zealand's Curriculum Insights and Progress Study seeks to understand the conditions that enable learners and educators to thrive, it has become increasingly important to consider how efficacy beliefs are understood within our unique cultural and educational context. This presentation introduces Pā Harakeke, a model for understanding efficacy beliefs within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand and through a Te Ao Māori worldview. While self-efficacy has traditionally centred on an individual's belief in their capability to act, the metaphor of Pā Harakeke broadens our gaze to the wider ecology within which those beliefs develop. It recognises that self-efficacy is not shaped by individual competence alone, but is relationally supported, culturally grounded, internally rooted, and shaped by wider conditions, broadening how self-efficacy is understood and explored within education in Aotearoa.

Mereana Pawa/ Chanel Meads
University of Otago College of Education

Abstract 2 title: 2. Measuring kaiako and tumuaki self- and collective efficacy beliefs in Aotearoa: Developing a new suite of efficacy belief measures.

The Curriculum Insights and Progress Study, Aotearoa New Zealand's national curriculum monitoring study, seeks to understand the conditions that enable learners and educators to thrive. As part of this work, a new suite of efficacy belief measures was developed to better understand the efficacy beliefs of kaiako, teaching teams, and tumuaki. Drawing on Bandura's social cognitive theory and the concepts embodied in Pā Harakeke, three interconnected measures were developed to examine efficacy beliefs at the individual teacher, collective, and leadership levels. The measures were built through an iterative mixed-methods process involving literature reviews, practitioner focus groups, Māori consultation and wānanga, pilot testing, and psychometric evaluation. The presentation describes the development of these efficacy belief measures, presents initial evidence supporting their validity, and considers their potential to strengthen national monitoring, educational research, and school improvement across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Andrew Tagg
University of Otago College of Education

Abstract 3 title: Efficacy beliefs and school academic emphasis: Evidence from the Curriculum Insights Study

While efficacy beliefs have been linked to positive outcomes in schools, less is known about how different forms of efficacy relate to school environments that emphasise academic success. Drawing on data from the Curriculum Insights Study, this paper examines associations between school emphasis on academic success (SEAS), educator efficacy beliefs, work engagement, and school context. Survey data from kaiako and tumuaki were analysed using hierarchical linear regression. Measures of collective efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, principal instructional leadership efficacy, efficacy for disability inclusion, work engagement, equity index (EQI), and resourcing were examined in relation to SEAS. Findings suggest that efficacy beliefs are more strongly associated with academic emphasis than contextual factors such as EQI and resourcing. Collective efficacy emerged as the strongest efficacy-related correlate of SEAS, while principal instructional leadership efficacy also showed a unique association.

Jill Hayhurst
University of Otago College of Education

V1 12112026

Pepa S15
Session: Session 6 - Tue3 - 1:55:00 PM to 3:25:00 PM - Rehua 329
SIG: Quantitative Studies in Education

Discussant/Chair: Mark LaVenia, University of CanterburyGail Gillon
Keywords: Structured literacy; Early literacy; Professional learning

Symposium Title:
Building Pathways for Literacy Success: Evidence from the Better Start Literacy Approach

Across Aotearoa New Zealand, BSLA is supporting schools to strengthen literacy teaching in ways that are explicit, evidence-informed, and responsive to learners. This symposium brings together three papers that trace this mahi across the school years: from early assessment, to Māori learners' progress, to teacher professional learning in Years 4–8. The first paper establishes benchmarks for oral narrative, phonological awareness, and non-word reading in the first year of school, showing how assessment can help teachers and systems understand children's development and respond with greater precision. The second paper examines Māori learners' progress through 30 weeks of BSLA, documenting substantial growth, stronger proficiency than age-matched peers receiving standard teaching, accelerated response to Tier 2 support, and whānau accounts of growing confidence and engagement. The third paper extends the pathway into Years 4–8, analysing how structured literacy professional development shifts teachers' knowledge, confidence, and practice in morphology, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. Together, the papers show how BSLA connects evidence, teaching, and professional learning so that learners' strengths and needs are noticed early, progress is supported carefully, and teacher practice is strengthened over time.

Abstract 1 title: Benchmarking Early Oral Language and Literacy Development in the First Year of Schooling

This presentation reports findings from a large-scale benchmarking study of early literacy and oral language in the first year of schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand. Using Better Start Literacy Approach assessment data, we examine oral narrative, phonological awareness, and non-word reading across baseline and progress-check windows. The study responds to a practical problem: teachers, schools, and policy agencies need benchmarks that are statistically robust, developmentally meaningful, and useful for noticing children's strengths as well as identifying where additional support may be needed. Analyses use paired assessment data from children aged 5 years 0 months to 5 years 3 months at baseline. Empirical decile thresholds are estimated at key assessment windows, and mixed-effects models describe growth and variation across learner and school characteristics. By bringing these domains together, the study offers developmentally timed reference points for interpreting how tamariki retell and understand stories, attend to initial speech sounds, and begin decoding unfamiliar word forms. In this framing, educational measurement becomes a tool for shared understanding rather than simply a means of sorting or comparing learners. Carefully designed benchmarks can strengthen conversations among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, supporting responsive teaching and more equitable system-level decision making.

Mark LaVenia, Megan Gath, Gail Gillon, Brigid McNeill
University of Canterbury

Abstract 2 title: Māori Learners' Progress in the Better Start Literacy Approach: National Evidence of Literacy Growth

Persistent inequities in early literacy demand evidence about what improves outcomes at scale, and for whom. This presentation examines Māori learners' progress in the Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA), drawing on a large national dataset with follow-up through 30 weeks of teaching. The analysis focuses on Māori learners' growth across phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, non-word reading, non-word spelling, oral language, and comprehension, alongside whānau perspectives on children's responses to BSLA instruction. Mixed-effects models showed substantial gains over the first 10 weeks, with continued progress through 30 weeks. Although Māori learners began with lower average scores on several foundational literacy measures, their rate of growth was comparable to other learners. Age-matched comparisons showed that Māori learners who had received BSLA were more likely to reach proficiency than Māori learners receiving standard classroom teaching, with the largest advantages among younger students. Tier 2 findings were particularly encouraging: Māori learners receiving additional support showed accelerated growth, reaching outcomes comparable to peers who had not required Tier 2. Whānau responses added further significance, describing increased confidence, engagement, and willingness to

read. Together, the findings show how explicit teaching, careful monitoring, and timely support can strengthen early literacy opportunities for Māori learners.

Jen Smith, Megan Gath, Gail Gillon
University of Canterbury

Abstract 3 title: Change in Year 4-8 Teachers' Knowledge and Practice in Response to Professional Development in Structured Literacy Teaching

The Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) is Ministry of Education-approved to provide Year 0–8 structured literacy professional development in Aotearoa New Zealand. To date, more than 2,800 Year 4–8 teachers have completed BSLA professional development. The 30-week Year 4–8 BSLA training includes three full-day workshops, delivered either in person or online, and eight one-hour online Community of Practice meetings. Resources are provided online throughout the course. This professional development aims to strengthen teachers' knowledge, confidence, and instructional decision-making across morphology, spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Teachers complete pre- and post-PLD surveys assessing self-perceived confidence and knowledge in these areas. This presentation will report on pre–post changes for Year 4–8 BSLA-trained teachers, with attention to shifts in self-perceived confidence, demonstrated knowledge, and reported implementation experiences. Survey findings will be considered alongside focus group evidence of teacher attitudes, questions, and concerns as they extend structured literacy teaching beyond the early years of schooling. Findings will help shape future professional development for upper-primary and intermediate teachers, particularly in supporting explicit teaching of word structure, vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension.

Andrea Vosslamber, Ann Castle, Gail Gillon,
University of Canterbury

V1 12112026

Pepa S16
Session: Session 7 - Wed1 - 9:45:00 AM to 11:15:00 AM - Rehua 328
SIG: Mathematics & Statistics/Pāngarau Education

Discussant/Chair: Pania Te Maro, Massey UniversityPania Te Maro
Keywords: Pāngarau, Mātauranga Māori, Kaiako brilliance

Symposium Title:
Whiria te Kahā Tuatinitini, Whiria te Kahā Tuamanomano

This symposium brings together the work of kaiako from year 4 - 6 total immersion te reo Māori classes, intermediate bilingual classes and secondary school kaupapa English classes to share what they do to include kaupapa Māori in their day-to-day teaching and learning. We are hoping that kaiako will present their own mahi.

Abstract 1 title: Sometimes I just do it – What is the why? What is the how?

It's all about equity. At school, I was a minority, yet school was still a place that was made for me. I did Kapa Haka and felt that it wasn't my place. It wasn't comfortable, even though it was what everybody did. Later I wondered how this must have been what it was like for Māori in the classrooms that were made for me. The main driver for my work is to create a sense of belonging in mathematics classes – which is key to equity. I use a suite of activities that I am continuing to build where mātauranga Māori sets the scene for authentic doing of mathematics. Being involved in a research project is part of sharing what this means for teaching and learning in secondary mathematics classes as an H.O.D mathematics.

Amy Huse
Horowhenua College

Abstract 2 title: What evolves when involved in research about mātauranga Māori in mathematics?

For nearly three years our teaching team has participated in a research project where we were asked what we do to include mātauranga Māori equitably with mātauranga mathematics. After 2 years, being in a different teaching team has meant reflection about what is most important in our lives as kaiako who know that mātauranga Māori, te reo Māori and supporting mokopuna to be a part of te ao Māori makes a huge difference to mokopuna in bilingual units. It is important to share these insights in ways that others can engage in this enriching work.

William Paki
Arataki School

Abstract 3 title: TLRI research, and the insights we gain from participant communities?

Researching what kaiako do in their mathematics classrooms to equitably privilege mātauranga Māori has found us in bilingual classes in intermediate schools, rūmaki classes in kaupapa English schools, secondary school classrooms, and in hui making activities for secondary school mathematics kaiako. We have developed principles outlining what is most important for constructing activities and resources. Our approach has been Kaupapa Māori research theory and ethics. Data gathering has done through rangatira ki te rangatira wānanga. Mokopuna carried out activities while we observed and later spoke to us while mapping out their understandings of mātauranga Māori, mathematics and pāngarau as three seperate, but deeply connected worlds with their own languages, rules, philosophies and reasons. We present differences that mokopuna have articulated, and where the connections find fruit for our mokopuna to enter into knowledge systems available to them.

Pania Te Maro
Massey University

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