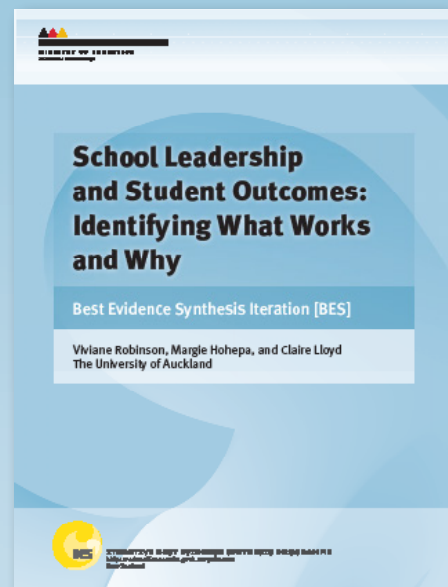


Use a common educational purpose to engage school and family/whānau/hapū

This is one of a series of cases that illustrate the findings of the best evidence syntheses (BESs). Each is designed to support the professional learning of educators, leaders and policy makers.



BES cases: Insight into what works

The best evidence syntheses (BESs) bring together research evidence about ‘what works’ for diverse (all) learners in education. Recent BESs each include a number of cases that describe actual examples of professional practice and then analyse the findings. These cases support educators to grasp the big ideas behind effective practice at the same time as they provide vivid insight into their application.

Building as they do on the work of researchers and educators, the cases are trustworthy resources for professional learning.

Using the BES cases

The BES cases overview provides a brief introduction to each of the cases. It is designed to help you quickly decide which case or cases could be helpful in terms of your particular improvement priorities.

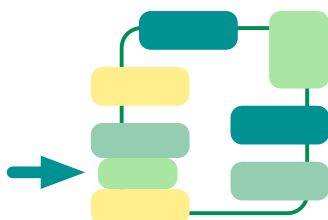
Use the cases with colleagues as catalysts for reflecting on your own professional practice and as starting points for delving into other sources of information, including related sections of the BESs. To request copies of the source studies, use the Research Behind the BES link on the BES website.

The conditions for effective professional learning are described in the Teacher Professional Learning and development BES and condensed into the ten principles found in the associated International Academy of Education summary (Timperley, 2008).

Note that, for the purpose of this series, the cases have been re-titled to more accurately signal their potential usefulness.

Responsiveness to diverse (all) learners

Use the BES cases and the appropriate curriculum documents to design a response that will improve student outcomes



The different BESs consistently find that any educational improvement initiative needs to be responsive to the diverse learners in the specific context. Use the inquiry and knowledge-building cycle tool to design a collaborative approach to improvement that is genuinely responsive to your learners

Use a common educational purpose to engage school and family/whānau/hapū

This case describes how the tumuaki of a kura developed goals that were linked to philosophical and moral purposes valued by the community, and then strategically resourced the pursuit of those goals.

The tumuaki drew effectively on whanaungatanga and connections with community, hapū, and iwi to locate resources that would support an initiative designed to develop biliteracy in the students. The resources came in the form of a researcher and members of the kura whānau itself.

See also BES Exemplar 2: *Ripene Āwhina ki te Pānui Pukapuka (RĀPP)/Audio-assisted reading to support students’ literacy in te reo Māori.*

Introduction

This case documents how the staff of a kura, together with its whānau, students, and a researcher, collaborated to develop a programme that would assist Māori-medium students to make the transition to a bilingual secondary school, the only option available in their community. The students were leaving the kura highly competent in te reo Māori, both culturally and academically.

Tumuaki: They had all that potential but I wondered why they were not succeeding when they went to college. I think about all the kids that have gone to college from here. Bright as, top athletes, top musicians, culturally really really high level.

Few, however, had received any formal instruction in English.

The kura started receiving information from the secondary school that caused alarm amongst the kura whānau.

Whānau kura liaison teacher: It was scare tactics in the beginning ... What brought that about was the statistics from the college, remember Koro? (Koro nods his head in agreement) ... They [the secondary school] do that to all schools, they send the stats back to the school on what the children have got on [English] comprehension and other tests taken at college. I thought that can't be right ... I thought, what gives here?

Although the kura whānau wanted their children to continue succeeding when they got to secondary school, many were not. They attributed this partly to a failure to prepare them for the next phase of their education, which would include English-medium teaching. The whānau wanted to make sure that by the time their children reached secondary school, they would be competent readers and writers of English, but they wanted to do this without compromising their fluency in te reo Māori. The whānau weren't sure how to achieve this, so they sought advice from a Māori literacy researcher.

A 10-week literacy programme involving trained tutors from kura whānau and the wider community was collaboratively developed and then implemented over a period of 12 months. Assessment data showed that, following participation in the programme, year 8 students were able to read and discuss English text at age-appropriate levels and that their rates of writing had improved. Importantly, they had maintained or increased their fluency in Māori, in both reading and writing. These results were replicated with groups of students in years 6 and 7.

In this case, we identify three key leadership dimensions that were involved in the development and implementation of this successful programme: establishing goals and expectations, strategic resourcing, and creating educationally powerful connections.

The research was instigated by the tumuaki on behalf of the whānau of the kura kaupapa Māori concerned. The kura was committed to the principle of developing bilingualism and biculturalism by first ensuring that students achieve linguistic, academic, and cultural competence in Māori. This principle is similar to that found in Te Aho Matua, the philosophical statement that guides the operations of many kura. Te Aho Matua states that, while the kura whānau should ensure that the language used in the kura is, for the most part, exclusively Māori, the goal is competency in both Māori and English:

2.2 Mo ngā tamariki, kia rua ngā reo. Ko te reo o ngā mātua tūpuna tuatahi, ko te reo o tauwiwī tuarua. Kia ōrite te pakari o ia reo, kia tū tangata ai ngā tamariki i roto i te ao Māori, i roto hoki i te ao o Tauwiwī.

2.4 I runga i tēnei whakaaro, kia tere pakari ai te reo o ngā tamariki, me whakahaere ngā mahi katoa o te kura i roto i te reo Māori. Tae atu ki te hunga kuhu mai ki roto i te kura, me kōrero Māori katoa, i ngā wā katoa.

Research context

Whānau of different kura make different decisions around the place and timing of English language teaching. In this case, the tumuaki wrote to the researcher seeking her support to develop a literacy programme for their year 8 students, all of whom were fluent readers, writers, and speakers of te reo Māori. The researcher believed that workload, distance, and funding prevented her from working with the kura at that time. Accompanied by a native speaker of Māori, she travelled to the kura to explain kanohi ki te kanohi why this was so.

In the ensuing discussion of reading, it became apparent to the hui that whānau and community members could be powerful resources for improving students' literacy in English. Although they were not all fluent Māori speakers, they were all fluent and literate in English. The researcher was asked about programmes she was involved in, and three were identified that could be implemented as school-home partnerships: a reading tutoring programme (Pause, Prompt, Praise or PPP for short) and two writing procedures (responsive writing and a form of structured brainstorm).

While the researcher had said that she wouldn't be available to work with the kura for six months, the whānau was adamant that this would be too late for their current year 8 students, given that term 3 had already begun. The programmes needed to begin immediately.

Leadership dimension 1

Establishing goals and expectations

In chapters 5 and 6, we discussed setting and communicating goals for teacher and student learning. We argued that goals do not motivate unless they are seen to be important and that they gain in importance by being linked to wider philosophical and moral purposes. The goals for this particular initiative sat within a wider vision held by Māori—for the language, cultural regeneration, and educational achievement. The kura whānau was philosophically, spiritually, and culturally committed to this vision.

Goals for bilingual competence are set by leaders at the national level and by iwi, whānau, kaumātua, and tumuaki.

It was as a result of whānau and iwi exercising leadership at the national level that kura kaupapa Māori, now a significant educational movement, were established, funded, and resourced. National and iwi leadership were also involved in developing the movement's philosophical base, with its focus on bilingualism and biculturalism.

The leadership of the kura at the centre of this study identified that, somehow, their policy was obstructing achievement of their goals, and that this needed to be rectified.

Tumuaki: One of the main objectives was to become bilingual, biliterate and bicultural. I mean that was the brief. That they [the students] would be as fluent in English as they were in Māori ... there was no policy to prepare these kids for college and they were going to a bilingual unit. I felt it was a golden opportunity to use PPP for transition.

The kura's accountability to whānau and hapū ensured that this initiative was accorded priority. And because whānau and hapū had a strong sense of collective responsibility, all those involved saw the initiative as urgent and important.

Tumuaki: There was a common purpose. Us as staff and also us as a community, and really it does hinge upon, I guess, leadership, leadership in the school and in the hapū. You can't have one without the other ... It was easy for me working with the hapū, for a start one of the kaumātua is my father-in-law ... I know the Ngāti Ira people really well. I can whakapapa there myself.

Initially, there was not unanimous support for developing a literacy programme that included reading and writing in English, but the kura leadership helped the kura whānau to get to the point where they agreed there was a problem and were prepared to seek a solution.

Board of Trustees Chairperson: There were a couple of parents who felt there shouldn't be any English whatsoever in the school ... the rest of them, they really did want their children to read successfully in English as well as in Māori.

... In fact, there seemed to be a general consensus among the people that were part of it that they wanted to be there, that they were all in this together.

1. In kura kaupapa Māori, identifying and setting important educational goals involves making sure that these fit with the cultural and philosophical agenda that underpins the movement.
2. School leadership alone cannot resolve issues associated with setting and meeting goals for student learning and achievement. Also needed is effective leadership from whānau and hapū/iwi.

Leadership dimension 2

Strategic resourcing

In chapters 5 and 6, we discussed how leadership is exercised in obtaining and allocating material, intellectual, and human resources for the purpose of pursuing pedagogical goals. The tumuaki in this kura exercised leadership in this way by:

1. identifying the researcher as a potential intellectual and research resource and negotiating a research relationship;
2. ensuring that the kura whānau were able to make decisions based on good information;
3. leading the kura whānau, as its members worked collaboratively with the researcher to obtain or develop resources necessary for implementing the literacy initiative.

At the initial hui involving the researcher and the kura, whānau and community members were identified as appropriate and powerful resources for a literacy initiative aligned with pedagogical purposes. Importantly, this ensured that whanaungatanga underpinned all parts of the initiative, including its resourcing.

Leadership dimension 2

PPP tutors were drawn mainly from students' own whānau or from the wider community in which the kura was situated. An appropriate person from outside the community was engaged to develop the students' writing skills through the use of responsive writing strategies.

Leadership was exercised in ensuring that funding was made available for priorities associated with student literacy development. The literacy initiative got under way thanks to the efforts of whānau and community volunteers, with the board of trustees providing a budget for research travel and accommodation. Following implementation, the board made sure that the programme would be resourced on an ongoing basis by making its costs part of the annual budget.

The tumuaki's leadership was apparent in the way in which decisions made by the kura whānau were planned, deliberate, and based on factual information. He pointed out that it was critical to have "enough information to make the decision as a board as well as a community".

The leadership of the year 7 and 8 kaiako was essential to the success of the initiative. Taking on the role of community and school liaison teacher, she was responsible for the implementation of the reading and writing strategies. She approached parents and whānau members to explain the project, the training and support provided, and the commitment required of tutors. She monitored the weekly tutoring, helped select appropriate reading material, and provided feedback on student progress. She regularly supplied the researcher with audiotapes of the tutors in action, and she subsequently shared the researcher's feedback with them. She also played a key role in supporting the staff to continue consulting and partnering with the whānau, community, and researcher.

The PPP reading and writing tutoring programme was developed in New Zealand as a means of helping home and school to work together to raise standards of literacy. In the case of this kura, the researcher trained the kaiako to use the programme, then the kaiako trained the tutors. These included kaumātua, parents and grandparents, and young men and women from the community. The tutoring took place at school, but many of the students had parents who had done the training and who were able to give them further tutoring at home.

Young male PPP tutor: I really enjoyed the whole thing, it was awesome, it was a real learning experience ... I think for these kids and for us, the tutors, that there was like, that element of an emotional experience in terms of having gone through something important together ... It took the stress off them [the students], they knew they could do it in English now and they could feel good about having the Māori as well. What they could do when they are reading with English they can do in Māori.

The research team trained a member of their research and development centre, a young woman from outside the kura community/iwi, in responsive writing strategies. Once a week, she would respond in writing (in English) to the messages in the students' stories, sharing her experiences and feelings. She would then return the writing books to the liaison teacher. Warm, personal relationships developed between her and the students through this sharing of writing, but they did not meet her kanohi ki te kanohi until they had completed the programme.

Hinemaia: Since I have been writing to her, I have expressed my true feelings about all my writing and now when I write to anybody, I think about Soli and how she encouraged me through my writing. It almost feels like I know her.

The programme was implemented largely with the help of volunteer tutors. Since then, the kura has been able to find the funds to employ suitable people as tutors, ensuring that the literacy programme—in Māori and in English—becomes part of 'regular business':

Chairperson of the School Board of Trustees: Now the school has agreed to employ people to run PPP and TTT (Tatari Tautoko Tauawhi – te reo Māori reading programme), not relying any more on volunteers. The programmes are going to be ongoing at regular times, regular days, and in that way with it being a small [school] roll, two teacher aides to do that, the kids should get a reasonable, fairly good sort of coverage.

Leaders played a key role in resourcing the goals that were valued by the kura whānau. The researcher, the tumuaki, and the kaiako all exercised leadership by finding appropriate people to work with the students and by making sure that those people had opportunities to learn the necessary knowledge, skills, and practices. Whānau and community members were key resources in the pursuit of biliteracy goals that they saw as vital for the academic and cultural futures of their young people.

Leadership dimension 6

Creating educationally powerful connections

In chapters 6 and 7, we explained how creating educationally powerful connections between individuals, organisations, and cultures can facilitate student achievement. Such connections achieve this by ensuring a better pedagogical and philosophical match between what students bring to school and what happens to them there, and by ensuring continuity of success as students move from one school environment to another. In this case, the kura drew on powerful whakapapa and community connections to ensure that its students were equipped for continuing achievement when they moved to the bilingual secondary school and that the pursuit of biliteracy goals continued without pause.

This study shows how the leaders of a kura, by focusing on goals that have been identified as important, ensure continuity in their students' literacy learning and achievement when they change schools. Their kaupapa, shared by many kura, was competence firstly in te reo Māori me ōna tikanga and then in English, so that students would be equipped to live as Māori, bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate. To support this goal, it was necessary to raise students' levels of literacy in English while maintaining or improving their literacy in Māori.

It was also important to the kura, whānau, and community that the kura whānau participate in the learning of its own young people. Relationships were critical to the success of the literacy initiative. By involving tutors from the students' own whānau and community, existing whānau and whakapapa connections were drawn on and strengthened in educationally powerful ways.

Young male PPP tutor: Well, we were all from the area, part of the whānau and stuff from there, and I think just improving everyone's confidence and stuff, yeah ... I think that was important because then all the kids already knew the people they were being tutored by ...

Mother and PPP tutor: ... like at first I didn't really know her [the student] very well. I think she's my cousin or something, but towards the end we started, even down the street, she would give us a yell and come over and have a little natter about stuff and see how things were going ...

Student: We had a lot of laughs together. If I didn't know how to read, she would tell me to give it a go, I'd just laugh and she would laugh with me. She was real cool. Getting to know my tutor better was an excellent part of the reading.

At the pōwhiri to the initial hui, the speakers linked the researcher to their community through whakapapa. This set in motion a process akin to moral imperative, in which whanaungatanga is used to recruit the necessary expertise into an enterprise.

The importance of whanaungatanga and connections with community, hapu, and iwi were recognised and drawn on effectively in this initiative, which was designed to support the development of biliteracy and ensure that students were well prepared for the transition from a full-immersion primary school to a bilingual secondary school.

Findings/outcomes of the literacy initiative

Measures of students' reading and writing in English and Māori were taken at four assessment points: before, during, and at the conclusion of the 10-week initiative, and during the maintenance period. An analysis of all the measures showed that the groups of year 6, 7, and 8 students all made significant improvements in reading and writing English. Analysis of the measures for Māori reading and writing revealed that the students who were already very proficient retained their competence, while the others made statistically significant gains across the four assessment points. In addition, many of the qualitative gains in English writing were also evident in the students' written Māori.

These findings show that instruction in English literacy does not compromise literacy in te reo Māori when it is well developed, and it may actually enhance te reo Māori competences. The kura has continued to use the programme, including the assessment strategies in Māori.

Key questions

1. Consider what knowledge and understandings your kura whānau has about literacy and bilingualism and their relationship to the regeneration and maintenance of te reo Māori and to student achievement. If weak, how might they be effectively grown and used?
2. How are you able to demonstrate that your students are succeeding in the language(s) of instruction?
3. What policies and practices relating to biliteracy and bilingualism does your kura have in place?
4. What discussions has your kura whānau had about the impact that teaching English literacy might have on students' competence in te reo Māori?

Source

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Further Reading

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Rau, C. (2005). Literacy acquisition, assessment and achievement of year two taurira in total immersion in Māori programmes. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 8(5), pp. 404–432.

Skerrett White, M. (2003). *Kia mate rā anō a tama-nui-te-rā: Reversing language shift in kōhanga reo*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton (especially Chapter 5).