

TeKuaka

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A PUBLICATION OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Redesigning practicum in the final year

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TeKuaka

Te Kuaka is a publication of the Faculty of Education at The University of Auckland that is published three times each year.

The magazine title relates to the migrating Kuaka, or godwit. In this context, the Kuaka's journey is used as a metaphor for our own students' journeys and the hope that they may return to the University from time to time to gain new knowledge and understanding in their profession.

Te Kuaka was the name of a newsletter first published in 1990 by the former Auckland College of Education (prior to its amalgamation with the University). We retain this title for our faculty magazine in recognition of our proud history and heritage of excellence in teacher and social services education.

We are pleased to be able to keep our wider community up to date with news of the work the faculty is engaged in and to share our successes with you. We hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Te Kuaka*.

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Editorial

Faculty Reorganisation

In November last year, the Faculty of Education was reorganised into the following five schools:

Te Puna Wānanga with a shared interest in Māori education, a specialisation in Māori-medium teacher education, and sector leadership through the delivery of Ministry of Education professional learning and development contracts in Māori-medium education and in Te Reo Māori in English-medium schools. The Head of School is Dr Jenny Lee - jenny.lee@auckland.ac.nz

Curriculum and Pedagogy with a shared interest in teacher subject knowledge; in how knowledge is constructed within and between subjects; in how to teach particular subjects to students including curricular knowledge, knowledge of student understanding, and knowledge of instructional strategies aimed at increasing understanding (including the use of new technologies); and in curriculum and pedagogical design and policy. The Head of School is Professor Judy Parr - jm.parr@auckland.ac.nz

Learning, Development and Professional Practice with a shared interest in examining and developing professional practices related to education and schooling – in particular initial teacher education, teacher professional learning and development, special education, educational leadership, and parent education; in evaluation; and in educational and developmental psychology including processes of assessment, motivation and learning. The Head of School is Associate Professor Christine Rubie-Davies - c.rubie@auckland.ac.nz

Critical Studies in Education explores the place of education and its transformative potential in New Zealand society, the Pacific region and the world through research and teaching that critically examines the historic and contemporary arrangements in education settings, and the development of alternatives; and through the analysis of educational theory, policy and practice. The School includes a focus on Pasifika Education. The Head of School is Dr Airini - airini@auckland.ac.nz

Counselling, Human Services and Social Work with a teaching and research focus on diverse fields of practice in social work, counselling, disability support and youth work aimed at preparing a workforce focused on improving rights and wellbeing for individuals, families, communities and iwi. The Head of School is Phil Harington - p.harington@auckland.ac.nz

The intention is that these Schools reflect the diverse interests of the communities we serve and that they speak clearly to the range of expertise that we offer in our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

We welcome inquiries from those interested in studying with us, or in working with us on research of mutual interest.



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR GRAEME AITKEN
Dean, Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland



Pushing boundaries

– radically redesigning practicum

The first year of teaching is known to be difficult and stressful. For those new to teaching it can seem a lot like running a marathon. After careful planning and preparation there may be unanticipated obstacles, perhaps a radical change in course and many challenges that are certain to test both strength and stamina. So when the starting gun fires, how can the Faculty of Education ensure that its students get off to the best possible start?

Each year the Faculty of Education places over 2,500 students on practicum in 426 early childhood centres, 280 primary schools and 96 secondary schools throughout Auckland and Northland. “The challenge for initial teacher education is to prepare students for the complexity and demands when they first start teaching,” says Dr Lexie Grudnoff, Deputy Dean of Teacher Education at the faculty. “While teachers, policy makers and students around the world consider the practicum to be a critical component of initial teacher education programmes, our research has shown that the difficulties experienced by beginning teachers when they start teaching are due to an increasing disconnection between practicum and the realities of practice.”

Data from England, Australia and New Zealand indicate that up to 40% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching, raising concern about the impact on teacher supply as well as the social and private costs associated with preparing teachers for a career that did not meet their expectations or which they found too difficult. In New Zealand, the focus on increasing teacher quality to raise student achievement has led to increasing scrutiny of initial teacher education programmes. As a result, over 20 reviews and inquiries have been initiated by government agencies and pressure groups over the past 20 years, which question traditional ways of preparing teachers and criticise programmes for being overly theoretical and too removed from the realities of teaching.

Yet, despite increasing criticism, the design and organisation of practicum has remained fairly constant in New Zealand. Lexie argues that merely changing the structure and timing of practicum isn’t the answer. “People tend to view practicum as a way of credentialing and practising skills rather than looking at it as a site for learning,” she says. “When students start work as a beginning teacher their sphere of work and influence becomes the whole school - their colleagues, their syndicate or department and the wider school community. We wanted to reconceptualise the way we think about practicum and the way the faculty works with schools.”

Over the past three years the Faculty of Education has been conducting an in-depth research and development project to transform the practicum experience for student teachers, schools and the University. Informed by extensive and ongoing research, the radically redesigned final-year practicum in the Faculty of Education's Bachelor of Education (Teaching) programme challenges the traditional practicum model and aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

"For practicum to be effective it needs to prepare beginning teachers who can be active members of a school as well as in the classroom," says Lexie. "This project harnesses the expertise of teachers working in schools, and the University works in partnership with them to create practicum experiences for student teachers that are more relevant, appropriate and educationally sound. The key has been to get all those involved in the practicum, both within the University and in the school, to work together to support student teacher professional learning in context.

Drawing on international models of partnership and school-associated teacher education, in 2009 the faculty began working collaboratively with four primary schools in Auckland to pilot a redesigned practicum programme that met the University requirements, provided opportunities for recognition and professional development for school staff, and enabled a model to be developed at each school that aligned with their school culture and contributed to more effective teacher preparation. The focus for the redesign was to redefine practicum roles, relationships and sites for learning in order to address the mismatch between preparation and reality.

Oxford University Professor, Hazel Hagger, is the adjunct senior researcher for the project and calls herself the "experienced critical friend." Highly regarded internationally for her expertise in teacher education and practicum, Professor Hagger visits Auckland twice a year from Oxford. She assisted with the development of the project and conducted qualitative research with schools involved. "Teacher education is where the action is," says Hazel, "as researchers we cannot be withdrawn in the ivory tower if we are to engage with teacher education. We must immerse ourselves in schools, their systems and their practices in order to fully understand it."

Gay Turner, principal of Prospect School in West Auckland was inspired to get involved in the pilot project after talking with Lexie and hearing Hazel speak about practicum initiatives overseas, her research on teacher education and her extensive experience working on similar projects. "There was a strong critical voice amongst principals I was speaking with about the gap between student teachers' knowledge and experience and the realities of being a beginning teacher in a school," recalls Gay. "It is easy to be negative, but in education especially we need to be able to see the big picture and ask what are we going to do about it. I wanted to be a voice for principals in the project and get the whole school involved in something that could really make a difference."

Building effective practicum partnerships

Central to the redesign has been the focus on the partnership between the faculty and the school. Critical to the new relationship are two new roles: the adjunct lecturer, nominated by the school, and the liaison lecturer, based at the faculty. Together they design a practicum experience that recognises the school context and meets the University's requirements. The aim is to enable each school to more adequately meet the learning needs of the individual student teacher on practicum. "The practicum

relationship is with the University and the school rather than the University and the teacher," says Lexie. "Each school decides which teachers will work with the students as their associate teacher and, while assessment of the students is carried out jointly by the school and the University, the form of assessment is determined by the school."

Gay reinforces the significance of the new partnership with Prospect School. "It has empowered all our staff involved in the decision-making around the overall practicum experience," she says. "When someone from outside the school comes in to make judgements of a student teacher and your involvement in the decision making is limited, then the relationship is quite different."

Prospect School associate principal Vivienne Mackisack leapt at the chance to become the adjunct lecturer when the pilot began. "As the school coordinator of student teachers I was already involved in the practicum and professional development within the school. Then, suddenly my role became more overt and exciting," she recalls. "For me, being part of the pilot project provided an opportunity to engage with something completely new and innovative."

During the pilot Vivienne worked closely with faculty liaison lecturer Helen Villers, who continues to work with the school. "As a liaison lecturer my role is now working within the school rather than outside it," says Helen. Judgements and decisions about student teachers happen collectively and both Helen and Vivienne have enjoyed shared responsibility for the entire practicum experience. "Vivienne and I quickly created a reciprocal and bilateral relationship which involved mutual decision making," she reflects. "We forged a strong professional relationship, a mutual respect and trust for each other and worked together to make judgements about the students' readiness to teach and how to support them in that process."

University staff and staff within the school take shared responsibility for the student teacher's learning while they are on practicum. This has empowered associate teachers to be more responsive when student teachers are not meeting the criteria. "Everyone involved comes together to discuss the student and the best way to support their learning," says Gay. Helen agrees. "Our judgements of teacher competence are now more authentic and trustworthy both formatively and summatively. As students work through the practicum we now have a more focused way to provide the support they need."

Research reveals that the new approach has enhanced student teachers' practicum experiences in a number of ways. By shifting the focus beyond the classroom to the whole school, student teachers gain from working with a range of professionals including their associate teacher, the adjunct lecturer and the University liaison lecturer. The students talk positively about getting feedback on their teaching from a range of sources, and being able to access the expertise of a number of professionals. The students also comment on the benefits of being involved in the wider school community in terms of increasing their understanding of the full role responsibilities of being a teacher.

The school as the site for learning

By shifting the focus of practicum from the classroom to the school, student teachers are required to participate as any other teacher working at the school from day one. "Students are expected to attend teacher only days, participate in professional learning, cluster group meetings and staff meetings and attend



Prospect School Principal Gay Turner (centre) and Helen Villers (second from right) with staff and student teachers.

camps if necessary,” says Lexie. “They assume the role of a teacher from the get-go and are accountable for participating and contributing.”

Traditionally, student teachers go to schools with their requirements for practicum, and their primary relationship is with their associate teacher and the students in the classroom. In the redesign, student teachers are grouped together and the school has responsibility for the group. “This shifts the practicum relationship from a one-to-one between the student and the associate teacher to a shared responsibility for the group,” says Lexie. “In a far more communities of practice approach, students are encouraged to work as a group together with their supervising teachers and the new adjunct lecturer who is nominated by the school.”

At Prospect School, student teachers participate in teacher only days. They are expected to be involved in data analysis and work with their associate teacher to identify target students and formulate inquiries into teacher practice based on their discussions of the evidence. “We make a point of asking student teachers to contribute to discussions so that they have the opportunity to participate and we can get their perspective and feedback on the process.”

The associate teachers at Prospect School also build teacher release time into the practicum so that students can participate in professional learning and meet with other student teachers, beginning teachers and associate teachers in the school. “It is important for students to experience the realities of being a teacher,” says Gay. “These opportunities are much closer to reality and allow students to build their capacity, their knowledge and their networks.”

Findings from research conducted with schools in the project suggest that shifting the site for practicum from the classroom to the school has contributed to student teachers’ engagement with a greater range of perspectives about teaching and increased their understanding and awareness of the expectations of the school and what they are likely to encounter as a beginning teacher.

Opportunities for co-learning

Transforming the practicum experience has allowed for a greater emphasis on learning at multiple levels, not only for student teachers, but for everyone involved.

Student teachers have found it beneficial to have more than one person working with them to support their learning rather than merely judging their learning. Associate teachers across all schools in the project have reported that they find it hugely

beneficial working with other colleagues to support their own and the student teachers’ learning. “This has been an unexpected benefit,” says Lexie.

At Prospect School, associate teachers now work together as a cohesive group to support students on the practicum rather than independently of each other. Helen and Vivienne have worked together to inform, support, mentor and motivate associate teachers around the achievement criteria, the theoretical model and the expectations, and these practices continue today. “We started having associate teacher meetings to share ideas and I would bring back what I was learning from my papers at the faculty,” says Vivienne who completed two postgraduate papers as part of her involvement in the pilot. “Because we established a culture of shared support and co-learning we managed things as they came up as a group and engaged in professional discussions more frequently.”

University researchers meet with principals, adjunct lecturers, liaison lecturers and others involved in the project regularly to discuss their thoughts about what is working and what isn’t. “This provides them a chance to talk about their philosophy toward teacher education and to discuss and develop their ideas,” says Professor Hazel Hagger. “These discussions are part of the ongoing discussion and exchange of views between academics and school practitioners. Any issues or ideas that come out of these meetings contribute to the ongoing development of the project.”

The most significant contribution of this project has been that everyone involved is sharing responsibility for teacher education. “This has reconceptualised practicum for everyone,” says Lexie. “The University, the school and the students all assume responsibility and work together to provide a dynamic, more authentic learning experience for students. The relationship reinforces the respect for the knowledge that school practitioners bring to teacher education.” Building on the success of the pilot, the project was expanded in 2010 to include 18 primary schools and 10 secondary schools in Auckland.

Hazel believes the project has international significance for initial teacher education around the globe. “The preparation of an effective teaching force is critical for any country’s economic growth and prosperity,” she says. “This project is evolving and changing on the ground while at the same time research is being undertaken so that it can be used to drive innovation nationally and internationally. It puts The University of Auckland on the map as a place where serious practicum research is taking place.”



The big picture: In pursuit of equity

Between 1985 and the late 2000s the gap between New Zealand's richest and poorest increased more than any other OECD country with the exception of Sweden¹. Rising income inequality in any country creates a multitude of complex economic, social and political challenges. To start, it becomes much harder for talented and hardworking people to get the employment opportunities they deserve and people will no longer support open trade and free markets if they feel they are losing out while a small selection of the population continue to get richer. Not to mention, the potential economic, political and social instability income inequality can create.

Equitable access to employment opportunities that enable people to avoid and escape poverty is critical if we are to have any hope of closing this gap. Education and, in particular, equitable access to tertiary education, is considered vital to build the knowledge and skill required for improving the prospects and living standards of lower-skilled workers and provide individuals with the opportunity to acquire the skills needed for employment.

Professor Stuart McNaughton, Director of the Woolf Fisher Research Centre, provides insight into successful schools and what he believes is critical for ensuring the economic, social and political prosperity of the nation.

Recent OECD reports on *Equity and Quality in Education*² and on the outcomes of increasing income inequalities (*Divided We Stand*³), reinforce an ongoing critical need in our policies and research practices for school success. This need is to focus on being even more effective with Māori and Pacific students and students from poorer communities. We know that educational disparities between these students and others are not inevitable. But we also know that the energy, resourcing and commitment needed to achieve this in any one school or cluster of schools is considerable and that if the structural sources of inequality in income, employment, housing, and health were reduced the task would be easier for us. While recognising the urgent need to have policies in place to combat ‘out-of-school’ factors, but also knowing that it is possible to design more effective schools, what are the big picture changes to pursue nationally that would increase school success? There are seven items on my admittedly non-exhaustive list.

ONE The first item is not about resourcing. It is about our collective goals for interventions and their student outcomes, and the focus here is achievement. Policies of “bringing up the tail” and “reducing the gaps” provide at best a limited focus and at worst a recipe for preserving subtle but powerful forms of inequality. We need to accelerate progress so that changes in the overall distributions of achievement occurs across levels. This is needed so that the children not well served by schools come to achieve as would be expected nationally, to be distributed across the achievement bands in ways that meet our national expectations for all children. If we don’t do this, achievement at the highest levels in schooling is limited and post-school options are curtailed. Related to this is the idea of what an equitable intervention needs to do. We have to move away from an inoculation model (intervention at one point designed to cure later points) to one of continuous and developmental change. The uncomfortable reality is that changing success patterns at one point, for example reading accuracy and fluency at Years 1-3, may be necessary for success later, for example, at Year 4 in reading comprehension and beyond, but it doesn’t guarantee that. Similarly, an intervention that increases achievement at Year 9 through to Year 11 doesn’t guarantee success at Level 2 NCEA and University Entrance. Our policies should be about deploying more effective practices at multiple points such as sensitive periods across schooling and also for the major transition points. This would also help to reduce the predilection to find the next big thing to invest in rather than working on fine tuning a system and solving the constraints on being effective across that system.

TWO The second item for a more success oriented and equitable system is to invest in an evidence based problem solving role in schools. Specifically, the need is to fund a permanent position for a dedicated person to lead the development and evaluation of programmes in schools. This is what the Woolf Fisher Lead Teachers Masters Scholarships are designed to demonstrate, with one year’s training through a master’s thesis year. The concept draws on the evidence from successful intervention models. A highly skilled person is needed in schools dedicated to leading the use of the evidence within the school to evaluate, to fine tune core programmes, to systematically check that valued outcomes are met, and to ensure that new programme initiatives actually do what they are designed to do. This is a highly specialised role. It includes both analytic problem-solving skills as well as data discussion and other process and interpersonal

skills. The evidence from the Learning Schools Model⁴ and intervention-based research projects such as Starpath is that such a dedicated person is essential. This is not something that the literacy leader, the head of department, or a senior management team member has the extra time on top of their usual load to do. And it is not something for which necessarily they have the full set of skills. In various permutations this role is present in some other jurisdictions in Europe and North America but the need for this role is exaggerated in our context where there are multiple programmes being trialed, developed and scaled-up in schools. Some of them like Te Kōtahitanga are very successful but as the designers have recently written, they are very vulnerable to threats to sustainability, especially when the resources such as facilitators are withdrawn. This dedicated role will likely require networking across schools to achieve national coverage, but is sorely needed.

THREE The third focus also draws on the evidence from recent intervention and evaluation projects. One very concrete version of the problem identified is the variable state of our student management systems, especially in secondary schools. It has been assumed that schools will have the resources and the capability to manage and use systems that are appropriate to their needs like tracking students longitudinally and to disaggregate data easily to monitor effectiveness. This is not the case. Scaling up programmes known to be effective requires good data management systems which can be guaranteed to be reliable, accurate and fit for purpose. But there is a general need of which the state of databases is one instance. The more general concern is to invest in infrastructure for schools in a way that doesn’t rely on local initiative, resources and good will. This concern is also addressed by the seventh item on my list. Exciting new developments in broadband technology, and new media tools such as Netbooks need to be well resourced if they are to be implemented in schools and scaled up effectively for equitable outcomes. The issue here is about resourcing, not just in terms of funding of infrastructure but also in terms of the capability to use new tools effectively at appropriate and sustained levels, which among other things means appropriate professional development.

FOUR Professional learning and development (PLD) itself is the fourth focus. We need to invest continuously and systematically in the professional learning of teachers and in the recognition that their work is complex, challenging and constantly needing to be updated. The PLD focus needs to be on developing teachers’ content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, melded together in highly talented individuals. And this professional learning focus needs to start at initial teacher education to ensure that we optimise the opportunity for teachers to begin their careers with the attitudes, knowledge and skills to improve educational outcomes rather than to have these grafted on later. We have used a model of ‘adaptive expertise’ in our interventions, drawing on the history in New Zealand education of teachers being treated as able to problem solve and design more effective ways of teaching, sometimes against the odds. This model needs to have at its centre culturally responsive teaching to achieve the adeptness required to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. However, the touchstone is always to show that we are making the differences to educational outcomes, now even more urgently because of the growing threats from structural inequalities. On the one hand this requires better indicators of effective teaching designed for specific levels and content. On the other hand we need the requisite PLD designed for those specific levels and content (and not generic). It



Professor Stuart McNaughton (right).

is an open question as to whether the newer policy environment for operationalising the twin focus, which requires national competitiveness, contestability and consortia of convenience, will deliver more effective PLD than previous models such as centre-based advisory services. At the very least the fractured delivery of PLD significantly complicates the ability to ensure that all PLD is informed by and delivered consistently with, the evidence-based principles identified in the Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis (BES). Those managing the marketplace in which multiple ‘providers’ flourish and in which multiple programmes are introduced, need to require that the highest quality equitable outcomes are met. A relentless well managed focus on the challenge for equitable outcomes is needed based on the problem solving role in the school to provide the research and development capability within the school.

FIVE Successful interventions also show that the role of the leaders at various levels in schools is critical to guaranteeing effectiveness over time. The fifth area of concern is to continue the focus of preparing and supporting leaders in their effectiveness as leaders of learning. Again our system has benefited from having the academic and professional evidence to inform this work. It is not surprising that it was in the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) on Leadership that the recognition of the centrality of the role in leading school change occurred, but it was in that BES also where the role of the leader in developing community relations and family practices which impact markedly on students’ achievement, the next big picture item, was systematically demonstrated.

SIX The professional development of teachers and leaders is important. But this should not be at the expense of considering also how to build up and maintain effective relationships with communities; a sixth focus. Our models for meeting the equitable challenge have tended to stress the role of teaching because of the amount of variance in achievement with which teaching is associated and as something we have immediate control over. But there are significant family influences in the set of variables that account for an even larger source of variation in achievement – so called ‘student background’. These include the practices and resources that are in the family that contribute to students’ repertoire of resources. A review of the effects of family influences

as well as specific programmes that involve parents reveals a set of impressive findings across all levels, although less consistent and more nuanced during secondary school. Nevertheless at secondary school, family influences still matter a great deal. For example, parental emotional support is consistently associated with more positive outcomes for students. All of this suggests a coherent life span approach to family involvement in education is needed to add to the value from changes in the classroom. Take the summer learning effect where there are exaggerated ‘drops’ in school related literacy achievement over summer in some schools. To overcome this requires on the school-side resourcing of children (with for example, matched books) and of family members (with for example, strategies for supporting their children). The estimates suggest that if these were overcome, then together with effective teaching at school achievement gains could be close to the ubiquitous one standard deviation; that is around where the enduring differences in academic achievement sit.

SEVEN The final item is a substantial policy matter which bears on the six others. It is the pressing need to solve tensions between self managing schools and our central policy agency. Recently, Viviane Robinson, Helen Timperley and I used indicators from high performing systems and high improving systems to assess what would be needed for our system to lift the equity and excellence of student outcomes⁵. We ran these indicators over the case of national schooling improvement and over the implementation of standards. We concluded that the capacity available in our self managing schools is considerably less than the capacity in teaching and leadership actually required. We also concluded that the ‘culture and structure’ of self managing schools complicates us being able to develop the capacity. To guarantee less variability and ambivalence and more urgency, focus and intensity in the system, consistent with what the OECD reports signal, we need to turn the default assumption of adequate capacity on its head.

¹www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality

²www.oecd.org/edu/equity

³www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality

⁴www.education.auckland.ac.nz/wfrc

⁵Robinson, V. M. J., McNaughton, S., & Timperley, H. (2011). Building capacity in a self-managing schooling system: The New Zealand experience. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(6), 720-738.

News in brief

ASB Community Trust backs Starpath Project

The Starpath Project has been awarded funding from the ASB Community Trust's Māori and Pacific Education Initiative to work in partnership with up to 40 secondary schools over the next four years. The ASB Community Trust was a significant sponsor in phase one of the Starpath Project, providing \$1.55m between 2005 and 2010, and has committed a further \$1.5m to support the growth of the project in phase two which is anticipated to run until the end of 2015.

Starpath director, Professor Liz McKinley, says by tracking and monitoring student progress Starpath has developed significant strategies to address the barriers which are stopping students from succeeding at secondary school and entering tertiary study. "During phase one we discovered that many Māori and Pacific students who were academically able weren't getting accepted into the degree courses of their choice because they had made ill-informed NCEA subject choices," says Liz. "Our research with five schools in phase one has proven to increase NCEA results. In phase two we will be applying the lessons learned through our research with up to 40 schools in the region."

Faculty of Education welcomes top researchers and academics

Dr Jenny Lee, Te Puna Wānanga

Early this year Dr Jenny Lee (Waikato, Ngāti Mahuta) was appointed as the new Head of School, Te Puna Wānanga. Throughout her career Jenny has focused on the advancement of achievement for Māori learners and their whānau. "I am excited about contributing to the kaupapa of Māori education and working with Te Puna to make a difference in the Māori educational landscape for our whānau, our communities and our schools," says Jenny.

Her vast experience has involved many years working in secondary and tertiary education in addition to working on large curriculum development and research contracts in collaboration with iwi and other Māori educators across institutions including Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Her doctoral research, on the topic of Ako (Māori pedagogy), investigated pedagogies that can fulfill Māori educational aspirations.

Jenny's book *Jade Taniwha: Māori-Chinese Identity and Schooling in Aotearoa* draws on accounts of four Māori-Chinese, recollecting their experiences of identity at school in New Zealand to show how members of this unique hybrid community struggle to define themselves on their own terms, often in the face of discrimination and prejudice.

Professor Saville Kushner, School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice

Professor Saville Kushner has joined the faculty in a dual role – to develop educational programme evaluation and to build research links with other professional and disciplinary groups.

In addition to working in schooling and education, Saville has worked in the criminal justice sector, the performing arts, social services and international development. He has been described as a methodologist, but also as a curriculum theorist and has a history in advocating educational case study, narrative and what he has called "personalised inquiry", stemming from his earlier work at the Centre for Applied Research in Education in the United Kingdom.

Saville recently worked as a Regional Advisor for the United Nations (UNICEF) where he developed a focus on child rights and international development, and is now writing about rights-based methods. "I am really looking forward to rich conversations about research methodology and children's rights," he says. "The more challenging the conundrum the better."

Professor Peter McLaren, School of Critical Studies in Education

Professor Peter McLaren joins the faculty from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at The University of California in Los Angeles. Professor McLaren is internationally recognised as a leading architect of critical pedagogy and for his scholarly writing on critical literacy, the sociology of education cultural studies, critical ethnology and Marxist theory.

He spent his early career teaching in Canada's largest public housing complex located in Toronto's Jane-Finch Corridor. *Cries from the Corridor*, McLaren's book about his teaching experiences, made the Canadian bestseller list and was one of the top-ten bestselling books in Canada in 1980, initiating a country-wide debate on the status of inner-city schools.

A prolific writer, Professor McLaren is the author, co-author, editor and co-editor of approximately forty-five books. Hundreds of his articles, chapters, interviews, reviews, commentaries and columns have appeared in scholarly journals and professional and popular magazines. He has won numerous awards and honours and has a reputation for uncompromising political analysis and his activism, which has taken him throughout America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Faculty of Education to host global Kids' Lit Quiz™ world final

The Kids' Lit Quiz™ has transformed the seemingly solitary experience of reading into a team sport, which is taking the world by storm. The global literature competition for young readers aged ten to thirteen is the brainchild of quizmaster Wayne Mills, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education.

This year's World Final, being hosted by the Faculty of Education, is taking shape. Teams from George Watson's College in Edinburgh, Squadron Line School in the USA, University of Toronto Schools in Canada and Roedean School in South Africa will be travelling to New Zealand to join winning teams from China, Australia and New Zealand in the final this July.

Over the next three months students from more than two hundred and fifty schools throughout New Zealand will be putting their literary knowledge to the test in the regional heats which will culminate in the national final being held at Parliament Buildings in Wellington in June. Visit: www.kidslitquiz.com



Nurturing the *spirit* within

Shrieks of laughter permeate the playground when children are having fun and expanding their worlds through play. Whether sculpting figures from dough, burrowing in the sand pit, experimenting with a waterwheel or simply bouncing a ball, when children play they learn and develop their ideas about the world. Early childhood centres are also important places where children develop their spiritual health and wellbeing.

The aspiration statement in *Te Whāriki*, New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, quite clearly states that all children in New Zealand should “grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit.”

As a dedicated early childhood teacher Susan Batchelar often pondered the spiritual dimension of the statement. “I used to look at it and wonder, what does ‘healthy in spirit’ look like?” reflects Susan. “As a teacher I had a particular view on children’s spirituality, but what does it mean for other teachers, and how do we nurture it?”

Susan says that the aspiration statement clearly states early childhood teachers are responsible for nurturing children’s spiritual health, yet conversations about children’s spirituality in New Zealand have been slow to develop. “Jane Bone’s research into spirituality in early childhood education in New Zealand started wider discussions on the subject and I am hoping my research will build on this.” Susan hopes that her recently completed Master of Education thesis will add voice to a topic that is often seen as problematic and frequently confused with religion.

“I wanted to gain insight into how much we really know and understand about how early childhood teaching supports a child’s spiritual wellbeing,” says Susan. “We share this responsibility as teachers - not just because it is stated in *Te Whāriki* but because it is part of who we are as human beings.”

Susan believes spirituality to be a universal and innate human characteristic, unrestricted by age, gender, religion and ethnicity. It motivates a person’s search for meaning and purpose in life and is closely linked with our physical and psychological wellbeing. Religion on the other hand she says, “is a structured system of beliefs which, for many, is one form of spiritual expression.”

Her research, based in a Christian early childhood centre, investigated how teachers in the centre interpreted the concept of ‘healthy in spirit’ in *Te Whāriki* and what it meant in practice. She was particularly interested in discovering whether teachers’ were intentional about supporting children’s spiritual health. To gain insight into their perceptions and understandings of children’s spirituality and how they perceived their practice supported children’s spiritual development Susan read centre documentation, observed teachers’ practice and conducted interviews with them.

“Teachers in the study were aware of the difference between spirituality and religion and the role teachers can play in nurturing

children's spiritual health," says Susan. "I had expected to find that teachers in a Christian centre would believe that teaching Christianity was the best way to support children's spiritual health." Instead she found almost total silence on both Christianity and spirituality which suggested to Susan that teachers perhaps find it difficult to articulate the knowledge and understandings they have on the subject. "Teachers in the study felt parents were confused by notions of spirituality and religion which led to their decision not to refer to it at all," she adds.

Susan linked her findings to the four principles of *Te Whāriki* which are relationships, family and community, holistic development and empowerment. Through her observations of teachers' practice, Susan discovered that the principles of *Te Whāriki* provided an appropriate framework for teachers to support children's spiritual health and wellbeing. For example, when teachers deliberately encourage friendships between children they are enacting the principles of *Te Whāriki* and also nurturing what is recognised in the literature as an important aspect of children's spirituality.

However, Susan discovered that the level of support provided for children's spiritual development depends largely on teachers' personal world views, and whether that world view includes a spiritual awareness, rather than a clear understanding of knowledge about how their specific practices nurture and develop children's spiritual health.

She suggests that for teachers to become more aware of their own world view, they could reflect on their own life experiences and the people they have connected with at a deep level. Being more aware of the impact and value these experiences have in their own lives can help teachers understand how they might be able to form similar connections with children. "It's important we are aware that spirituality is not only about religion or cultural practices and it certainly isn't something we should fear," argues Susan.

Susan's supervisor Dr Helen Hedges, believes that Susan's research has the potential to open discussions in other early childhood centres about the way teachers can nurture children's spiritual development. "The most significant thing about Susan's research is her finding that teachers were nurturing children's spirituality intuitively in their practice but not necessarily articulating it," said Helen. "She has presented her research in a way that doesn't link spirituality with religion or culture. It is about asking what it means to us, as New Zealanders with a New Zealand curriculum, to be nurturing children's spirits?"

Susan hopes that her research will provide a foundation for teachers to consider what spirituality might mean and look like in the context of their own centre. "Spirituality is an integral part of *Te Whāriki* and therefore something that early childhood teachers need to embrace."

Decidedly distinguished

Distinguished

adj. of high standing; eminent; famous

"The challenge I set myself isn't just to describe the world or critique it, it is to intervene to create the conditions under which the merit of an alternative can be tested."

For over 30 years, Viviane Robinson has had an undeniably insatiable appetite for learning. The Faculty of Education's first ever Distinguished Professor declares that her agenda for her own learning is longer now than it has ever been throughout her thirty-five year academic career. "The fabulous thing about this job is that it is so intensely rich with opportunities," she says.

Distinguished Professor Viviane Robinson is one of thirteen professors throughout The University of Auckland to be appointed to the honorary position since 2001. She joins a select group of top academics who have been recognised for their international eminence and outstanding contributions to their fields of research and study.

"Our Distinguished Professors are held in high esteem by the scholarly community across the world and we take pride in recognising them in this way," said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stuart McCutcheon when he announced the appointments in December last year. "We have some 261 professors in the University, many of them outstanding teachers and researchers. To be named a Distinguished Professor among such company is therefore a truly special achievement." At a celebration dinner held in February, Viviane was praised by her colleagues for her research that has shifted educational thinking, improved communities and changed lives.

As an organisational psychologist working in education, Viviane is internationally renowned for her research and development work in organisational learning and leadership, school effectiveness and improvement and research methodology. She is perhaps most well known for her work on the links between school leadership and student outcomes – work she began during a three year research project for the Ministry of Education's Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) series. In a series of analyses, Viviane identified the relative impact of five leadership dimensions on student achievement and the knowledge and skills leaders needed to engage in the practices involved in each of the dimensions. "The touchstone of effective educational leadership," Viviane reflects "is not its impact on the adults, but on the achievement and wellbeing of students. The fact that the Leadership BES and the subsequent publications were so well received by the education community both here and overseas has been a real highlight of my career."

As the spearhead of the faculty's educational leadership research



Distinguished Professor Viviane Robinson (front row, third from right) with fellow Distinguished Professors at the celebration dinner held in February.

group and the Academic Director of The University of Auckland Centre for Educational Leadership, Viviane has been awarded over 16 million dollars in funding for research and development initiatives, has supervised dozens of masters and doctoral students and consulted for government and professional bodies in England, Singapore, Chile, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

She has written hundreds of articles and chapters, published five books, and has presented at numerous conferences, workshops and events in New Zealand and as far afield as Vancouver, Canada and Bellagio, Italy. In 2011, her significant and sustained contribution to educational research was recognised when she was made a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association.

If you dare to imagine Viviane’s curriculum vitae, this merely scrapes the surface. Yet she is quick to dismiss any suggestion of fame or celebrity status that may be implied by her new title.

She admits to struggling long and hard for 13 years to understand why the theories she was reading didn’t neatly match the professional and practical problems she wanted to explore. “My career has been one where my major motivation has been to address problems of practice,” says Viviane. “There is often a big gap between the way social science and educational academics develop theories and conduct research, and the way practice operates.”

In order to bridge the rift between theory and practice, Viviane had to understand the nature of practice and the difference between theories *in* practice and theories *about* practice. She then had to formulate a methodology that took both types of theory into account and created a dialogue between the two. That enabled her to come closer to doing research that was both highly relevant and rigorous. “The starting point for my research is always a problem of practice in the world, rather than a problem suggested by academic theory,” says Viviane. “Once I understand the theory in the practice, I can then use relevant academic theory as a resource for critiquing and revising the theory in the practice. If I bypass that theory, I am unlikely to have an impact.”

Viviane illustrates her point by using the example of a school that lacks robust student assessment systems. Helping leaders of that school involves much more than teaching them about assessment theory and expecting them to apply it to their context. The real challenge for leaders is not how to apply assessment theory but how to do so in the face of multiple constraints – staff may not have the capability, they may have competing views about what ought to be assessed, and there may not be enough time or money to do what is needed. “Problems of practice are multi-dimensional, self-constraining phenomena,” says Viviane. “It is my job as a researcher to understand that complexity and find ways of improving practice in the face of it.”

It was while completing her PhD in Clinical Psychology and Public Practice at Harvard University that Viviane discovered her job wasn’t just to critique the world, but to intervene to create public tests of the validity of her critique. Her supervisor Professor Chris Argyris, famous for his seminal work on learning organisations, roused her appetite for intervention-based research. “Chris would constantly ask us, ‘Is your theory actionable? Does your theory deliver what you espouse? Can you not just give advice but also enact your advice?’ That was the standard he expected from all his students,” she recalls. “He challenged people to go beyond describing the world to improving it.”

Knowing the enormous impact her own mentors had on her academic career, Viviane takes great pride in the ongoing success of the masters and doctoral students she herself has supervised. “Some of my students have become brilliant independent researchers here at the faculty,” she says, “and I continue to learn from them on a daily basis.”

Viviane says it is an honour to be appointed as Distinguished Professor by a panel of some of the most influential and successful academics within the University. “As an education researcher, to be held in the same esteem as world-class neuroscientists, biochemists, engineers and humanities researchers, is indeed a huge privilege.”

The beginnings of a remarkable man

Influential Māori academic and 2012 Distinguished Alumni, Professor Ranginui Walker, talks about his Ōpōtiki childhood and his teacher training.



“I was reared for the first five years of my life in the secluded Rāhui valley on the south side of Mākeo. There, the upper reaches of the valley ran into the mountainous hinterland. It was marginal land where people lived at a subsistence level, milking a few cows, growing vegetables, pig hunting, fishing and gathering kaimona to feed their whānau.

“I grew up in a loving, happy and secure environment of whānau, with my parents Isaac and Wairata, two doting grand aunts with moko on their chins and a grand uncle who sang songs in his room of what seemed to me a bygone age.”

Despite there not being a lot of money in the valley his people were rich in other ways: “It was a safe place peopled by pakeke, respected elders, grandparents, nannies, uncles, aunts and cousins. Child homicide was unknown. No one hungered because food was shared.” But this utopian lifestyle was not sustainable because it was at the margin of the political economy.

He was only four when his mother’s “interest in self-directed learning” was directed at him. “She bought a slate and an abacus to teach me to read, write and count. I used my newly learned skills to read everything in sight including the labels on tinned goods like ‘Edmond’s baking powder sure to rise’, Desert Gold tobacco and Watties baked beans.” He recalls reading at a relative’s house paper cuttings pasted on the walls about a yacht named Ranger winning the Auckland Anniversary Day regatta and the Springbok team beating the All Blacks. “That was long before I knew who the All Blacks were.”

His mother Wairata enrolled him at the Ōmarumutu Native School before he was five. “That’s how ambitious she was for me to get on with schooling. She saw education as the key to my future. In that she was remarkably prescient.

“I found school easy because of the head start Wairata had given me at home. I was bemused by Joe Ranapia having difficulty with pronouncing the word c-a-t on the blackboard beside a stick figure illustration of a cat. For Joe the illustration was a poti so he could not get his tongue around cat. Joe was a native speaker of Māori. So was I, but I was bilingual and Joe was not.

“In 1937, my parents abandoned the land at Rāhui and went share-milking at Kukumoa among the military settlers around the town of Ōpōtiki. I found it



strange that none of my 'townie' cousins could speak Māori. Loss of language and culture was well advanced among young Māori growing up in Ōpōtiki. I soon found out why."

His first day at his new Ōpōtiki school, a convent, was not a pleasant experience: "At lunch time I was dragged before the nuns by the Pākehā children for speaking Māori in the playground. Although I was not physically punished for doing so, the disapproval had a deep impact on my sense of identity. Speaking Māori in the Pākehā world was forbidden. At the age of five I had no alternative but to conform. The inevitable outcome was the loss of the ability to speak Māori. I listened to my parents' conversations, and understood what they said but when they addressed me in Māori I replied in English. The Pākehā agenda of assimilating Māori as the answer to the 'Māori problem' that bedeviled colonial policy was being achieved through schooling."

Schooling trained him to become a 'brown Pākehā': "My nannies were forgotten. I now listened to nuns who taught me catechism, Bible stories, The Apostles' Creed, the Stations of the Cross, the rosary, the Lord's Prayer and to chant the Angelus at noon.

"In 1946, I was sent to boarding school at St Peter's Māori College in Northcote run by Mill-Hill Fathers and Marist Brothers. I was thirteen years of age. Thereafter I returned to Ōpōtiki only for the school holidays. That was the beginning of the separation from my whānau and becoming an urbanised Māori. When I went back to Ōpōtiki for the holidays, I was teased by our Lebanese shopkeeper who welcomed me home as 'Rangi te Pākehā'."

His parents believed that St Peter's was better than the local Ōpōtiki District High School where he says the students smoked and roamed the streets at lunch time. "They were wrong. The curriculum at St Peter's was inferior, being devoid of mathematics, physics and chemistry. With only 46 students the curriculum



was limited to English, geography, general science, arithmetic, horticulture and Māori. I sat those subjects for school certificate."

He says given the limitations of the subjects studied at St Peter's College, medicine was ruled out as a vocation. "My only career option was teaching. In 1949 there was a post-war shortage of teachers. That to a child of the depression meant security of employment."

"I applied for entry under the Māori quota. I was offered a student place at Auckland Teachers' College which I took up in February 1950. A student allowance covered my living costs. I was a free agent, ready to learn everything that came my way in the 'big smoke' of Auckland city.

"Unfortunately the lectures were uninspiring and ineffectual. Quality assurance and professional development were almost a half a century away. Going on 'section' in the schools for a month once a term was where we learned to teach."

In a student body of over a thousand Pākehā and about thirty Māori, he says "we were acutely aware of our minority status."

"The Māori students were thinly spread around the different sections of the college as to be almost invisible. We contributed to that invisibility by downplaying our Māoriness. We blended so well into the student body that those who were orally competent in Māori never spoke to each other in that language. It was as if we were wearing Frantz Fanon's 'white masks' over our 'black faces'. The only time Māori students were highly visible was in the college sports teams playing rugby, basketball and softball.

"Because of our ethnicity and tribal origins, Māori students tended to 'knock around' together in our leisure activities, playing sport, going to college socials, frequenting downtown dance halls and going to pubs."

Ranginui's first posting (for his Probationary Assistant year) was to Te Horo Māori School at Pipiwai. "Although Pipiwai was

Professor Ranginui Walker was one of six exceptional graduates of The University of Auckland awarded a 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award (DAA) on Friday 9 March.

Born in 1932 in the Waiau valley Professor Walker is a member of the Whakatohea tribe of Ōpōtiki. He is an Emeritus Professor of The University of Auckland, having served as Professor of Māori Studies from 1993 to 1997 and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Māori) from 1996-1997. He also studied at the University, gaining a Diploma of Teaching in 1962, a Bachelor of Arts in 1962 and a Master of Arts in 1966. Professor Walker is considered one of Māoridom's most influential academic leaders and advocates for Māori rights and social justice. He has advocated extensively in the area of education and has published numerous books and articles, including the ground breaking *Ka Whawhai tonu Matou: Struggle without End*. Professor Walker was appointed to the Waitangi Tribunal in 2003. In 2007 he was awarded a Tohu o te Māramatanga Research Excellence Award and in 2009 he received the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Non-Fiction.



only thirty miles from Whangarei it was an isolated Māori community. The sealed road stopped a mile from Kamo. Thereafter it was a dusty metalled road to Pipiwai where there was a general store, a communal hall, and the school with four classrooms. The electric lines stopped at Pipiwai.

"Up the valley past the school where most of the people lived, there was no electricity. That was where I boarded with Mr and Mrs Pera. I had to do my work-book by candle-light. Mr Pera was the most successful farmer in the all-Māori community. The rest of the people in the crowded valley lived in sub-standard houses at a subsistence level. Some milked a few cows while others did sheep-shearing, contract fencing or labouring at the Moerewa Freezing Works. It was a familiar social landscape reminiscent of the Rāhui valley. The Ngāti Hine people at Pipiwai were kind, hospitable and generous towards me.

"My first class at Te Horo School was primer three and four. They were delightful to teach. Robert Shortland with sticky up hair and dimpled cheeks was like a cuddly brown tar-baby wanting to please. I noticed he was sitting up like Jacky with his arms folded while the others were still working their way through the sums on the board. "Have you finished Robert?" I asked. "Yes sir!" he beamed. When I went to mark his work I found he had written down 1,2,3,4, the number of each sum. I knew then there was a lot of learning to do."

Alumni on the Move >>>



DR ANGELA SHARPLES

BSc, MSc, PhD
Deputy Principal
Rotorua Lakes High School & Chair Science OlympiadNZ

Nine years ago Dr Angela Sharples swapped a career in research to teach biology. Passionate about the subject, Angela wants to encourage more young people to choose biology as an option at secondary school and to appreciate how innovative biological research could make a difference to New Zealanders. In 2011, Angela was awarded the Prime Minister's Science Teacher Prize worth \$150,000 for her achievements and commitment to exceptional teaching. "I have really focused on setting high expectations for my Māori students and encourage all of my students to strive for excellence in every class", says Angela. "I include real world learning to provide opportunities for students to work with scientists in the local community." As Chair of Science OlympiadNZ and New Zealand Biology Olympiad (NZIBO), Angela is involved with programmes that foster academic excellence in science and facilitates up to 1,000 students every year working with top academics from around the country. In July 2014, NZIBO will host the International Biology Olympiad competition involving academics from more than 60 countries and the top secondary school biology students from around the world. Angela is leading the fundraising campaign to raise \$2million to host the event in New Zealand.



RHONWEN DEWAR

BA (Linguistics), DipTchg
ESOL Teacher
Sunnynook Primary School

Rhonwen Dewar has recently taken up a new position as ESOL Teacher at Sunnynook Primary School on Auckland's North Shore. "I am very excited about this new role", says Rhonwen. After studying to become a primary teacher Rhonwen taught English as a foreign language to young adults for 10 years before going back to her primary roots at Bayswater Primary School. While teaching at Bayswater she was encouraged by her principal to study a Graduate Diploma of Teaching English in Schools to Speakers of Other Languages (GradDipTESSOL) at the Faculty of Education. Rhonwen found she was able to practise what she was learning with her young pupils while she gained the professional confidence to meet the needs of English language learners. "The TESSOL diploma linked well with my previous study and my role as an ESOL teacher," she reflects. As Auckland teachers increasingly face new challenges with the diverse range of language needs in their classrooms, Rhonwen feels she is better equipped to support students' learning and looks forward to making a difference at Sunnynook Primary School.



BEN HUTCHINGS

BEd(Tchg) Primary
Blockhouse Bay Primary

Ben Hutchings is heading to Jordan with his fiancée in August where he will teach English to students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds in a country where the first language is Arabic.

"It's going to be an uphill battle at times," Ben acknowledges, "but even in New Zealand there are language challenges in my classroom of Year 5 and 6 students".

Ben currently has 19 English language learners in his class including students from Nepal, India, China, Samoa, Fiji and France. "Each student needs equal teaching time and energy," he says.

After Ben graduated with a BEd(Tchg) in 2008 he wanted to broaden his teaching perspective and improve his literacy practice. He applied for a Ministry of Education scholarship to study the GradDipTESSOL. "The opportunity to upskill in this area has assisted me with my professional and personal goals," he says. "My Graduate Diploma has helped me in the classroom but has also enabled my fiancée and I to pursue this incredible opportunity in Jordan together."

Stay Connected: To update your contact details visit www.auckland.ac.nz/alumni

Celebrating 10 years of a significant partnership

Ten years ago, the Ministry of Education introduced the TESSOL tuition fees scholarships, which continue today, to provide financial support for teachers wanting to improve the outcomes for their English language learners.

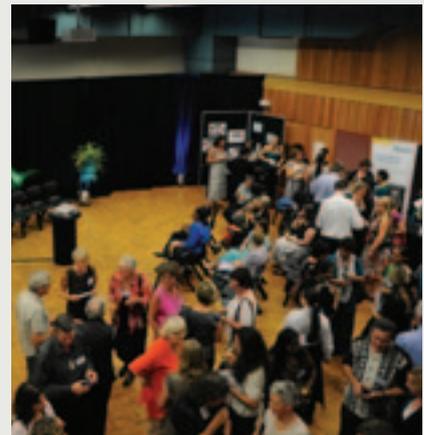
Principals, graduates, teaching staff and Ministry of Education representatives attended a celebration on the evening of 23 February to mark the ten year anniversary of this scholarship and partnership with the Faculty of Education and to reflect on the success of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching English in Schools to Speakers of Other Languages (GradDipTESSOL) programme.

Graduates of the GradDipTESSOL programme came from as far south as Cambridge and as far north as Mahurangi to attend the event. "It was marvellous to see all these wonderful TESSOL teachers reconnecting and sharing their stories," said programme leader Dr Sue Gray.

The scholarship provides the opportunity for registered teachers to be nominated by their school principal and undertake the four core papers towards their GradDipTESSOL qualification at the Faculty of Education.

Sonia Johnston, Principal of Roscommon School and graduate of the programme, acknowledged how the GradDipTESSOL not only helped teachers change their classroom practice but also set them on the path of life long study.

To mark the significance of the partnership, the Faculty of Education has introduced an annual award for postgraduate study of \$1,000 for one teacher or senior manager who has completed the GradDipTESSOL, or equivalent, and wants to pursue postgraduate study at the faculty.



Research scholarship winners make their mark

Having spent a year focusing on research and on the cusp of graduating at this year's Autumn Graduation ceremony in Auckland, the inaugural recipients of the Woolf Fisher Lead Teacher Masters Scholarships reflect on their research journey, share their insights and discuss how they are using their findings to inform their ongoing work to raise student achievement in their communities.

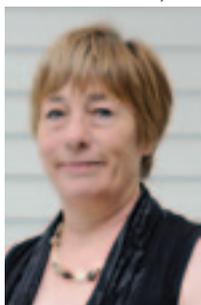
In 2010 the Woolf Fisher Trust and The University of Auckland launched a \$1.25 million scholarship fund to enable existing school teachers in Auckland and Northland to obtain master thesis degrees. The Woolf Fisher Lead Teacher Masters Scholarships provide funding for release from teaching to complete a year's study at masters level in school-based research and development methods at the Woolf Fisher Research Centre in the Faculty of Education.

"Throughout last year staff at the Woolf Fisher Research Centre have worked with the first four scholarship students to provide guidance and supervision for their research and grow their knowledge of research methods," says Professor Stuart McNaughton, Director of the Woolf Fisher Research Centre. "They have learned how to use evidence from their schools to design more effective teaching programmes which will have major benefits for their students and future students. They all share an incredible thirst for knowledge and a strong desire for their students to succeed."

After a year of intensive research and learning together, all four scholarship recipients are now busy working with their principals to drive change within their schools based on the findings of their research. In May, they will reunite at a special graduation event, which will recognise their outstanding achievements and celebrate their success.

A spotlight on teaching reading

JAN ROGERS, KAIKOHE EAST SCHOOL, NORTHLAND



Jan Rogers has been a Resource Teacher: Literacy for over 10 years. From her base at Kaikohe East School in Northland, she supports local teachers to meet the needs of Year 1-8 students experiencing difficulties in literacy learning.

Local evidence suggested to Jan that teachers were finding it difficult to accelerate the learning of low progress students despite long term professional development in Northland. "I wanted to better understand the professional influences on teacher decision making when they teach students to read," she reflects.

Jan conducted an evaluative case study in a Decile 1 primary school. She worked with two teachers of Year 4-6 students, conducting a series of observations and interviews with each teacher to gain insight into the content specific knowledge they had about teaching reading, their knowledge and understanding of assessment and how they used their knowledge to devise programmes that would fit individual student needs within a group reading situation. "This process provided teachers with the opportunity to reflect on and discuss aspects of their understanding around teacher practice, teacher knowledge and their current learning," says Jan.

Jan developed a rubric to observe each teacher while they were conducting guided reading sessions with a group of low progress students. "The rubric Jan has developed is a valuable tool to identify teachers' professional and evaluative knowledge and how their knowledge is demonstrated in practice," says Dr Rebecca Jesson, senior researcher at the Woolf Fisher Research Centre and Jan's co-supervisor.

Jan's research revealed that teachers had very different levels of pedagogical content knowledge and assessment knowledge, which impacted on their practice and ability to be effective in their instruction of guided reading. While teachers could describe the tools they used to assess students' reading, there was limited evidence of transference of the assessment information in their decision-making in guided reading with the students. In addition to this, the assessment tool they used did not necessarily provide the information required for grouping the students appropriately, particularly for students reading at lower levels.

Jan believes that it is critical for professional development to focus on improving teachers' knowledge and transferring their knowledge into practice. She argues that standardised, cluster based literacy professional development doesn't take into account the different levels of knowledge that individual teachers have. "It is more than just knowing about assessment or reading," she asserts. "It is knowing what assessment to use at the right time and how to use information from data to support decision-making that accelerates students' learning."

Jan is now using the rubric in her work as a resource teacher and believes it is a powerful tool for teachers to identify gaps in their own knowledge and practice and help them plan “next steps” for learning. “Jan’s research highlights the complexity of knowledge required for the effective instruction of guided reading and, if we are to raise student achievement, it is critical to provide professional development that acknowledges the individual learning needs of teachers as well as students,” adds Rebecca.

Jan is sharing her insights with resource teachers locally and regionally. “Doing this research has provided me with the critical evidence to support my work and promote wider professional discussion about how we can effectively support teachers and work more closely with them to increase knowledge about assessment practices and pedagogical content so that they can make better informed decisions.”

Giving voice to students



ROCHELLE TELFER, TIKIPUNGA HIGH SCHOOL, NORTHLAND

Tikipunga High School is one of five original schools that have been working in partnership with The University of Auckland’s Starpath Project. The project works with secondary schools to implement key strategies that are proven to transform educational outcomes for Māori and Pacific students and students from low-socio-economic communities.

As senior academic dean, Rochelle Telfer coordinates the Starpath Project at the school. One of the key Starpath strategies they have implemented is an academic counselling initiative that helps students to set and achieve their academic goals. “I was eager to use this research opportunity to give students a voice so that we could understand their experiences and perceptions of academic counselling, what they find useful and important, and how they feel it supports their progress.”

Whānau teachers are responsible for students throughout their time at Tikipunga High School. As part of the academic counselling initiative, they meet with each student throughout the year to develop a personal learning plan (PLP) to achieve their personal, education and career goals. Rochelle surveyed all Year 13 students about their experiences and perceptions of the PLP meetings and conducted seven in-depth interviews to get a better understanding of what they felt was effective and to identify how whānau teachers could better support students through academic counselling.

Because eighty percent of students at the school are Māori, Rochelle felt it was important to take a Kaupapa Māori approach to her research. Each aspect of her research, from planning to developing interview scripts, was done in partnership with the Te Komiti Māori sub-committee at the school. She also hosted a series of face-to-face meetings with Te Komiti Māori, the Board of Trustees, parents and whānau, whānau teachers and students to explain the purpose of her research.

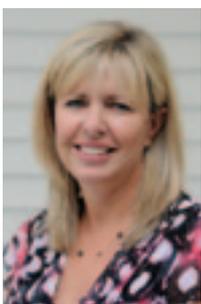
Rochelle discovered that for the PLP meetings to be effective students needed to feel that they have a positive relationship with their whānau teacher. “While the strength of student-teacher relationships varied, students stressed how important it was that their whānau teacher cared about their progress, acknowledged and valued their culture and was genuinely interested in them as a person,” says Rochelle.

Equally important was that students felt confident in their teacher’s knowledge of NCEA and university entrance requirements. Many of the students relied on their whānau teacher’s knowledge and expertise to develop their plan and work toward their goals. “Students must feel confident in their teacher’s knowledge of NCEA irrespective of how strong or positive the relationship is. The relationship on its own is not sufficient,” notes Rochelle.

Students felt effective feedback was also critical for PLP meetings to be useful. “Generally the high achieving students found the feedback less useful than other students,” says Rochelle, “Less academically-focused students found they had a much better understanding of their progress after the meetings and a good understanding of the steps they needed to take to achieve their goals.”

Rochelle believes whānau teachers are in a position to have a significant impact on students’ academic success. Doing her research has highlighted aspects of the academic counselling initiative that Rochelle hopes to refine in the school and she suggests that meeting more regularly with students that are struggling academically is vital if the meetings are to effectively support students working toward their goals. “I also think that it is vital to get students’ perspectives when any initiative is run in the school,” says Rochelle. “What this has taught me is that students can articulate their needs well and offer valuable insight for researchers.”

Creating effective teaching teams



KIM HENRY, NORTHCROSS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL, AUCKLAND

As associate principal in charge of technology at Northcross Intermediate School, Kim Henry knew her team of technology teachers at Northcross Intermediate were doing something right. Longitudinal data collected by the school using Dr Vicky Compton’s Technology Indicators of Progression revealed that students were achieving well when judged against The New Zealand Curriculum. She knew the importance of working in teaching teams to raise student achievement was often debated and wanted to use the scholarship opportunity to explore the features of successful teaching teams.

“There is increasing international acceptance that, in this knowledge driven age, those teachers working in isolation will struggle to synthesise the vast amounts of information required to ensure students are successful,”

says Kim. “I wanted to find out, if teaching teams are to be successful in raising student achievement, what makes them effective and how do they do it?”

Kim surveyed a team of ten technology teachers and conducted a series of in-depth interviews to gain insight into their interactions with other teachers in the team. Each teacher also kept a journal of interactions over a period of two days. “The journal provided a wealth of insight and information into interactions between teachers and others in the school,” says Kim. “They tracked everything, whether it was a text message, a passing “hello” to a colleague or an in-depth discussion with a student.”

What Kim found was that knowledge and the sharing of accurate knowledge was vital to the success of the team. Accurate knowledge was built and maintained by the team through shared activities and artefacts, as well as through the team’s investment in social capital. “Whether it was a planning document, a group activity or an assessment, they shared their knowledge through every mutual interaction,” says Kim, “and because the teachers invested trust in each other, their interactions were open and honest.”

The group of teachers involved in Kim’s study worked as a team and had formed a highly developed community which was inclusive, supportive, reflective and driven by the need to create, use and manage knowledge that they could pass on to their students. Kim believes that teachers operating on their own with such a huge curriculum can never be successful. Doing her masters research has provided her with a deeper understanding and appreciation for how much teachers value knowledge and strive to find it. “This research has shown me that it is vital for teachers to work in teams if we are to have an impact on student achievement,” she says. “Isolated pockets of success aren’t enough. We need to invest in social capital in order to share and grow accurate knowledge. We can start by ensuring we open our classroom doors, provide and receive critique from others, and accept and offer praise in an open and honest way.”

Completing her Master of Education has ignited Kim’s enthusiasm for research and she is eager to work with other teaching teams within the school to further understand the impact they have on student outcomes and work with them to identify what they can do to build knowledge that supports student achievement.

Driving student achievement in mathematics



TRISH HOLSTER, CLAYTON PARK SCHOOL, AUCKLAND

The Numeracy Project developed Trish Holster’s love for teaching mathematics twelve years ago. “Considering the learning progressions in use elsewhere at the time, it was a stroke of genius,” recalls Trish. “The professional development had a particularly powerful impact on my understanding of formative assessment”.

As leader of mathematics and assessment at the school, Trish was becoming increasingly concerned that some senior students weren’t progressing as quickly in mathematics as she would have hoped. “Data suggested that some students’ achievement in mathematics was plateauing at Stage 5 of the Numeracy Project’s Number Framework,” recalls Trish. She considers children to have plateaued when they have been at Stage 5 for more than two years. “We wanted to know what the school could do to move students more quickly from Stage 5 to 6, so I was delighted to have the opportunity to explore this further in my research.”

Trish analysed longitudinal data, interviewed two classroom teachers about their mathematics teaching practices, conducted numeracy interviews with four Stage 5 students at the school and conducted an anonymous school-wide teacher questionnaire.

The data revealed that 80% of students who plateaued in numeracy had experienced a summer drop in their learning. “There was a very interesting pattern that I would like to explore further,” says Trish.

Numeracy interviews suggested to Trish that student data might under-represent children’s actual achievement levels. She also identified a pattern of student strengths and specific gaps in place value knowledge. Students in the study showed a flexible use of the early mental computation strategies they knew. “Their key difficulty was in ‘unbundling’ larger units like hundreds to make smaller ones, this was a procedural problem rather a conceptual one,” recalls Trish. “It’s critically important that a schooling improvement initiative is based on the specific needs of the students and the school, there were lots of surprises like this throughout my research.”

Trish says the Numeracy Project’s teaching model takes a complex learning model and makes it practical for teachers. She found teachers had a good knowledge of learning progressions described by the Number Framework, but she suggests that next teaching steps don’t automatically result from this knowledge. University-based professional development for the whole staff has addressed this need, according to Trish. “There is now much more emphasis on how teachers use benchmark data and how they identify learning pathways for students.”

A really important part of the research experience for Trish was the opportunity to see her school achievement data against a backdrop of national and international achievement patterns. “This provided incredibly valuable insight,” she says. “Our older students seemed to be working at a higher stage in multiplication and division than in addition and subtraction, similar to the national data. I looked at students’ basic fact knowledge, how it was taught, and at how Stage 6 was defined across several Ministry of Education documents and by teachers in the study.”

Principal Paul Wright says that Trish’s strong curriculum leadership and robust research has been used this year to design and deliver meaningful professional development and pedagogical support for teachers at Clayton Park School. “This work is strongly based on the learnings Trish gained during her tenure as a Woolf Fisher Scholar in 2011, and is already leading to significant achievement gains in mathematics across the school,” he says.



SUCCESS IS BELIEVING

Secondary school teacher Jackie Passi was frustrated and fed up. Feeling bombarded with media, educational research and numerous initiatives about how to address Māori and Pacific Island student under-achievement, words such as low achiever, low decile, under-achievement and the infamous long tail were slowly creeping into her psyche.

“The negativity about Māori and Pacific Island student achievement started to really get to me and many of my top achieving Māori and Pacific Island students felt labelled as low achievers too,” recalls Jackie. “All we were hearing about was Māori and Pacific Island under-achievement. It frustrated me that the focus and attention was on the low achievers and that successful students weren’t getting the support or acknowledgement they so needed.”

Determined to re-ignite her passion for teaching, Jackie took a year off to complete her Master of Professional Studies in Education at the faculty. “I wanted to turn the research on its head,” she recalls of her decision to take a more positive focus and instead look at Pacific Island student success. “I wanted to identify Samoan students who, despite being in a Decile 1 school, despite having often tough upbringings, have managed to overcome the odds and are achieving well at school. I wanted to understand how they define their success and what they felt they needed in order to achieve it.”

As a teacher at Waitakere College in West Auckland for 10 years, Jackie has taught many top achieving Māori and Pacific Island students. She is co-organiser of the secondary school’s mentoring programme for top Māori and Pacific Island students who aspire to go to university and coordinates the school’s Pacific Island fono, which is attended by between 80-100 parents of Pacific Island students each term. From Samoa herself, Jackie has a strong connection with her students and, as the first in her family to graduate from university with a degree, she knows and understands what it means to succeed as a Pacific Island student.



The focus for Jackie's research was Samoan student success at a low decile school in South Auckland. Using the traditional Samoan methodology of Talaga, which peels back layers of knowledge and understanding through structured conversation, Jackie met with a group of Samoan students to discuss their definitions of success and gain a deeper understanding of the factors they believe are essential for them to achieve academic success.

Jackie's supervisor Dr Meaola Amituanai-Toloo, was thrilled when she heard about the focus for her research. "Jackie's focus is different and refreshing," said Meaola. "Talaga is like an opening out. It is revealing the deeper notions of what students think success is. I was really happy that she got to use this Samoan methodology as I haven't come across anyone else using it in this way before."

Jackie's conversations with Samoan students in her study revealed something she had never really thought about before. They believed the most important factor in their success was their strong sense of self-belief and self-efficacy. They reported that once they believed in themselves and their own ability to work hard and achieve academic success then anything was possible. "As teachers we tend to focus on the external things such as the marks that students need to pass NCEA but really, unless the students believe in themselves and their own ability, they won't achieve."

For all of the students, their parents and families played a vital role in their success. Their parents' willingness to actively participate in their education motivated them, enabled them to challenge themselves academically, be accountable for their own education and achieve their NCEA results. Students spoke proudly of their parents' unconditional support and alofa (love) they received from their families.

"It was evident that this support was more than just turning up to parent interviews," recalls Jackie. Samoan cultural beliefs often prevent parents from challenging authority. In spite of this, parents of these successful students managed to do exactly that. "They challenged the school system when they did not understand or agree with certain aspects or decisions made by the teacher or the school. They read reports, got involved in the wider school community, and questioned their child. They also read with

their child, made sure they had study environments at home by providing desks and computers and, where necessary, some even worked two or three jobs to ensure they had the money to provide their child with the opportunities and extra tutorials they needed."

Students also valued the positive relationship and rapport with their teachers, seeing it as critical to providing the foundations for doing well in class and their ongoing academic success. "It was important that teachers understood them as individuals but, more importantly, believed in them as well," says Jackie. "It is this belief and mutual respect that helped maintain and sustain positive interactions and the confidence students needed to succeed."

Interestingly the students said that it was important for them to have the support of their parents before building a positive relationship with their teachers. In doing so, these students were exercising the same respect for their teachers as they did for their parents. "This reinforces the absolutely vital role parents have in building and sustaining a positive teacher/student relationship and consequently in student achievement and success," notes Jackie.

All students in the study demonstrated a strong devotion and pride in being Samoan and had strong spiritual and cultural affiliations with their church. Having teachers acknowledge their culture, language and heritage promoted a stronger relationship with the student. "This allowed the students to develop their identity as Samoans and instill a sense of pride in themselves as high achieving Samoan students," says Jackie, "and as students who have embraced New Zealand culture while at the same time maintained the integrity of the fa'aSamoa (Samoan way of life) they believe they should live by."

Other factors students considered important for their success were reciprocity and what they refer to as 'bringing down the barriers'. One student talked of doing well at school as their way of "giving back to the hand that fed me," which resonated for Jackie so much that it became the title of her dissertation. "In this way, giving back and serving (tuatua) their parents and their communities for their support was an important factor in their motivation to succeed," says Jackie. "Students were also determined to prove to people that entering university from a Decile 1 school and being of Samoan heritage does not mean they are bound to fail and have no ambition to aspire beyond their reality."

Jackie believes that models of Pacific Island student success and anecdotes of success should be part of everyday learning. "If students are provided with visions of success daily and are empowered with ideals of success and self-belief then they are likely to challenge themselves to work harder and achieve the success they deserve."

Doing her masters research has inspired Jackie and she believes completing it will make her a more effective teacher, especially for her Māori and Pacific Island students. "My heart is in the classroom," says Jackie with renewed enthusiasm. "I realise now that I became so focused on the academic goals. Having done this research I know I am able to do more to help our students to truly believe in their potential."

As Jackie's supervisor, Meaola reinforces the benefits this research will have on her teaching. "Knowing that the students she interviewed had high self-efficacy, this journey has reinforced Jackie's own self-belief as a teacher to teach not only her students but also encourage students to believe in themselves."

They stand tall
with their kaiako

Building pathways through the new landscape

AN UPDATE TO WHERE THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION IS POSITIONED AFTER THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION-LED REDESIGN OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOLS.

2012 sees us building pathways through the new professional learning and development landscape for schools. Over the past 18 months the New Zealand government has gradually phased in its new approach to lifting student achievement in our schools. This has meant significant changes for schools, kura, wharekura, teachers and professional learning and development providers throughout the country as they all develop new ways of accessing, providing and evaluating services.

Historically, the design and implementation of professional learning and development (PLD) has been underpinned by principles of equity, ensuring access to quality PLD for all teachers and school leaders through University-based providers such as Team Solutions. The new focus moves away from a service that was largely driven by demand from schools to one where in-depth PLD is brokered by the Ministry of Education's regional offices, based on identified need.

"This is one of the biggest changes for schools and providers," says Camilla Highfield, Director of Professional Learning and Development at the faculty. "Schools now register their interest for in-depth PLD directly with the regional Ministry offices and, based on their data, the Ministry will make decisions about the PLD required to lift learner achievement for all students and especially for those who need it most – Māori students, Pacific students, special needs students and students from low-income communities."

The new landscape, where PLD contracts have been put up for tender, has undeniably opened up the provision of services to a more diverse range of providers across the country and removed some of the geographical boundaries that previously existed. Providers have either formed collaborative relationships or have had to go head to head and tender for a wide range of PLD contracts as the redesign has been phased in over the last year.

The Faculty of Education has been successful in securing a number of these contracts throughout the country and is working with the Ministry's regional offices to deliver services that are informed by research and evidence to provide culturally responsive PLD to the sector. In addition, many schools are purchasing PLD services directly from Team Solutions.

"Under the previous school support services contracts held by the six main universities, provision was regionally based," says Camilla. "The open market has changed some of those protocols and encouraged us to think about things differently. Our extensive experience means we are well equipped to work in other parts of New Zealand."

Each contract differs in terms of the PLD focus, who it is delivered by, the types of services provided and the regions it services, but the common thread is a clear focus on inquiry, cultural responsiveness and student achievement. "We know that PLD makes the biggest difference where there is a sustained, in-depth chance to build a relationship with the school community and work with leaders, teachers and students using an evidence-based approach," says Camilla. "Just collecting the data isn't enough. We have to ask what we are doing with it and how we use it to inform our interventions that will improve outcomes for students."

Culturally responsive PLD aims to acknowledge the language, identity and culture of every student. “It is context specific for every single student and that student’s school, family and community,” says secondary student achievement project director Karl Mutch. “There is no formula. Rather, there is a sensitivity and commitment to combining the best of what schools have been doing and the best of what research tells us and negotiating robust, inquiry-based PLD with teachers, leaders and the community about what is going to engage students and lift their achievement. This may include supporting schools to build more meaningful connections with parents and whānau, and working closely with local iwi to support the development of iwi education plans.” The secondary student achievement contract means that the faculty, through Team Solutions, is now providing PLD services across the upper North Island, which represents about 62% of all secondary schools in the country.

Te Kura o Te Puna Wānanga, the faculty’s School of Māori Education, is one of the providers of PLD for Māori-medium schools and te reo Māori in mainstream schools. Associate Dean (Māori) Tony Trinick believes that integrating these PLD services into Te Puna Wānanga ensures that PLD is informed by the most current research and, at the same time, keeps research grounded in school practice and the real challenges that schools face implementing state educational policy.

“Te whānau maioha (practitioners) are working alongside school leaders, teachers, whānau, hapū and iwi to develop quality teaching programmes and practices that support our tamariki to succeed as Māori in education,” says Tony. “All PLD programmes have an explicit te reo Māori outcome and support the revitalisation of te reo Māori and identity.”

Professor Helen Timperley, Associate Professor Timothy Teo and Dr Deidre Le Fevre are currently working with a selection of primary schools on a research project that is evaluating the PLD being delivered in schools. The specific focus is on developing adaptive capacity, understanding the risks of change and analysing the outcomes for students. “We hope to understand what the challenges are for schools and providers and what is most effective in creating changes in these three areas,” says Professor Timperley.

Government-funded professional learning and development contracts provided by the Faculty of Education

Team Solutions

- Secondary student achievement
Regions: Auckland, Northland, Waikato, Hauraki, Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne/East Coast, Central Plateau and Hawke’s Bay

Te Puna Wānanga

- Te reo Māori in English-medium schools
Regions: Auckland, Northland, Taranaki, Palmerston North, Wairarapa and Wellington
- Te reo Māori in Kura and Māori-medium schools
Regions: Auckland and Northland
- Pāngarau Years 1-8 for kura and Māori-medium schools
Regions: Auckland and Northland
- Provisionally Registered Teachers - Overseas Trained Teachers Years 1-13 in kura and Māori medium schools
Regions: Auckland and Northland
- Gifted and talented Years 1-3 kura and Māori-medium settings
Regions: Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne and Hawke’s Bay
- Specialist training Years 9-13 kura and Māori-medium schools
Regions: Auckland and Northland
- Senior assessment in NCEA kura and Māori-medium schools
Regions: Auckland and Northland

Consortium of Professional Learning (a partnership between Team Solutions, Learning Media Ltd and Evaluation Associates)

- Leadership and assessment (primary and secondary)
Regions: Auckland, Northland, Taranaki, Palmerston North, Wairarapa and Wellington in the North Island and throughout the South Island
- Primary literacy and ESOL
Regions: Auckland, Northland, Taranaki, Palmerston North, Wairarapa and Wellington

New books



Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, nationalism and the politics of language

May, S. New York: Routledge, 2012. (2nd ed.)

This new edition of Stephen May's award winning volume on language rights addresses new theoretical and empirical developments

since its initial publication, including the burgeoning influence of globalisation and the relentless rise of English as the current world language. May's broad position, however, remains largely unchanged. He argues that the causes of many of the language-based conflicts in the world today still lie with the nation-state and its preoccupation with establishing a 'common' language and culture via mass education. The solution, he suggests, is to rethink nation-states in more culturally and linguistically plural ways while avoiding essentialising the language-identity link.



He Kōrero - Words Between Us

Jones, A. and Jenkins, K. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2011.

This book traces Māori engagement with handwriting from 1769 to 1826. It describes the first encounters Māori had with paper and

writing and the first relationships between Māori and Europeans in the earliest school.

The earliest Māori-Pākehā engagements were vividly recorded, by both Māori and Pākehā, in drawings and writing in the early 1800s. These beautiful archival images tell stories about how Māori encountered pen and paper, which gives us a new and exciting perspective on the past. *He Kōrero - Words Between Us* is a controversial and enlightening book that will stimulate fresh thinking about those first conversations between Māori and Pākehā.



Changing Trajectories of Teaching and Learning

Parr, J.M., Hedges, H., and May, S. (Eds.). Wellington: NZCER, 2011.

This monograph highlights the Faculty of Education's strong research presence in ongoing

teacher learning and in raising student achievement, particularly in lower decile schools and in the area of literacy. It also encompasses the faculty's role in enhancing teaching and learning through researching quality teacher education and social work education.

The various chapters provide provocation for teachers, tertiary educators, policy-makers and researchers as they seek to further address inequities in progress and achievement and improvements in teaching and learning across fields and age groups.



Collaborating to Meet Language Challenges in Indigenous Mathematics Classrooms

Tamsin Meaney, Tony Trinick, Uenuku Fairhall. New York: Springer, 2011.

Language can be simultaneously both a support and a hindrance to students' learning of mathematics. When students have sufficient fluency in the mathematics register so that they can discuss their ideas, they become chiefs who are able to think mathematically. However, learning the mathematics register of an Indigenous language is not a simple exercise and involves many challenges not only for students, but also for their teachers and the wider community. *Collaborating to Meet Language Challenges in Indigenous Mathematics Classrooms* identifies some of the challenges - political, mathematical, community based, and pedagogical - to the mathematics register, faced by an Indigenous school, in this case a Māori immersion school. It also details the solutions created by the collaboration of teachers, researchers and community members.



Understanding NCEA: A relatively short and very useful guide for secondary school students and their parents.

Irene Madjar and Elizabeth McKinley. NZCER Press.

This book is currently being translated into Samoan and will be available from May 2012. The book is part of the Starpath-produced tool kit, that schools, students, and parents can use to make informed choices and shape educational pathways that will lead to tertiary education. www.starpath.ac.nz

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Our students

Students take their research to the world

Faculty of Education doctoral candidates Marra Neilson and Jennifer Tatebe are on the cusp of taking their research to the world. As winners of this year's Faculty of Education Forum for International Networking in Education (FINE) awards Marra and Jennifer will be travelling to Vancouver in April to attend the FINE Forum and the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual conference.

The annual AERA conference is the world's largest education research event. Attended by over 12,000 people from around the globe, each year AERA attracts many of the world's top educational academic researchers across a range of related disciplines from education and psychology to anthropology and sociology. "It is an enormous privilege to receive the FINE award and be able to attend such a huge international event," says Jennifer, who is also the faculty's FINE Representative. "All the big names in education will be there. It is a wonderful opportunity to actually meet with scholars who I have reviewed and cited in my doctoral research."

As an international student, Jennifer arrived in New Zealand with limited understanding of the New Zealand education system. She became intrigued by how quickly other international students formed attitudes and opinions about teaching in low-decile schools based on limited understanding and knowledge. "I thought there must be something in this," says Jennifer. Her research investigates the attitudes of just over 200 student teachers toward diversity and teaching in low-decile schools in New Zealand. "I wanted to know more about how attitudes are formed and how strong they are. It has been interesting to see how some students' attitudes progress and change throughout their study."

Not one to shy away from a challenge, Jennifer is the first student from The University of Auckland to have a role on the FINE leadership team. As part of the global leadership team, Jennifer helps to organise the comprehensive programme for the FINE Forum, coordinate FINE networking events at AERA and throughout the year, and publish regular newsletters for postgraduate students within the network to share ideas and research and promote international collaboration. "Being part of the leadership team is a great opportunity for me to build on my experience organising research events for the University's Postgraduate Students' Association, taking it to an international level," says Jennifer.

As the FINE Representative, Jennifer considers herself the international voice for postgraduate students at the faculty. The programme for this year's FINE Forum will provide postgraduate students with valuable insight into the process of hiring emerging



Jennifer Tatebe - winner of a Faculty of Education FINE award.

academics, balancing research and personal life, international networking and securing a post-doctoral research position. "I will be taking the questions and ideas we generate as a group to the FINE forum and share what I learn when I return."

Fellow FINE award recipient Marra Neilson will be making her international debut when she presents her first round table at AERA. Having presented at the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE) conference last year, the round table will provide

Marra with the opportunity to share and discuss developments in her doctoral research with international scholars in her field. "These discussions will not only provide insight for my research," says Marra, "they will create opportunities to network for future academic and research positions."

Marra's research is a comparative analysis of discourse within indigenous education policy in New Zealand, Canada and Australia as it relates to educational strategies for Māori in New Zealand, First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada and Aboriginal Australians. She hopes her analysis will provide valuable insight into how indigenous people in postcolonial societies are determining how local outcomes will unfold in light of global forces. "A comparison between the three countries is quite new," she says. "I am interested specifically in examining the tensions between the discourses of globalisation and of local indigenous peoples striving for forms of self-determination through education."

Both Jennifer and Marra believe that research cannot be effective in isolation. "As academics we will be presenting to our peers and working in research units so it is important to know how to network and collaborate," says Jennifer. "The FINE awards are the perfect way to initiate this process and present our doctoral research to an international audience."



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Photos from
The University of Auckland
Tai Tokerau Campus
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in Whangarei on
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