THE TE PUKE SCHOOLS NETWORK

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INTRODUCTION

Te Puke is situated in the Bay of Plenty, 25 kilometres south of Tauranga on SH2 and has a climate that rivals any other in New Zealand. It is in close proximity to Maketu, landing site of Te Arawa canoe, Papamoa and several other coastal communities. The township of Te Puke has a population of a little over 7000, although this is closer to 9000 when the surrounding rural areas are taken into account. Although famous for its kiwifruit and citrus industry it is also a strong dairy, sheep and cattle farming area.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Listed below are the Te Puke School Network Leaders. Although each has a designated role, in effect, the leaders work as a collaborative team with diffuse roles. Each of the leaders understand and are familiar with all roles and support one another to carry out their tasks.

	Fairhaven (Primary)	Te Puke Primary School	Te Puke Intermediate School	Te Puke High School	Board of Trustees Representative
Principal	Paul Hunt	Shane Cunliffe	Jill Weldon	Alan Liddle	Rebecca Wichmann (3 Te Puke Schools)
Enthusiastic Leader	Lynn Lethbridge	Karen Scott,	Sarah Coates	Simon McGillivray	
Practitioner Evaluator	Ange McAllister	EL and PE roles are shared by leaders	Lyn Crone	Lisa Austin	

Facilitator   Raewyn Williams, University of Auckland

Lead Development Advisor   Rose Carpenter, Ministry of Education

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE FOUR SCHOOLS

The four Te Puke Schools have a range of decile rankings from 3 to 5. The student population in the four Te Puke schools is largely Maori and Pakeha with a growing Indian and Pacific community. The schools are working to further their links with local iwi who own the land on which the schools are built. In July, 2012, the Te Puke Network had 1563 students enrolled. The distributions (in percentages) of ethnicities at that time are shown in Figure 1 below.

Legend:
- Euro/Pakeha 47.3
- Maori 37.6
- Pasifika 5.2
- Asian 5.2
- Other 0.1
- Foreign Fee Paying 0.9
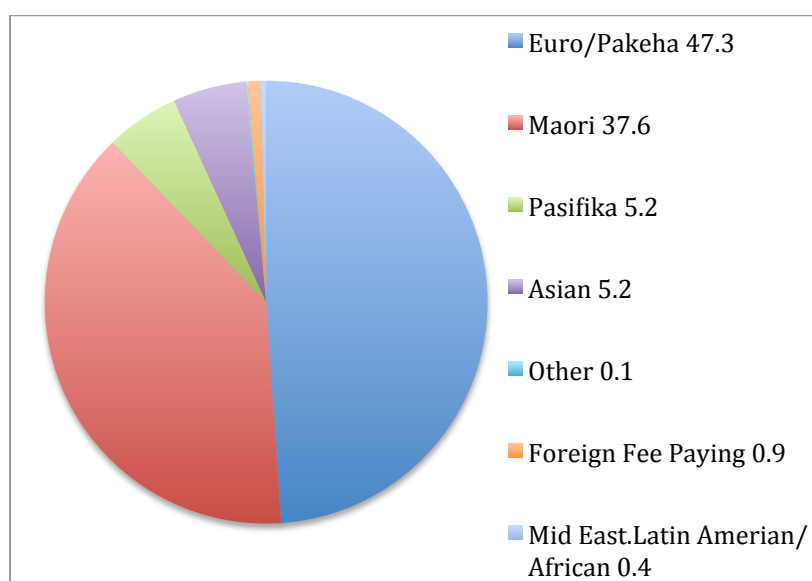- Mid East.Latin Amerian/ African 0.4

Figure 1. Ethnicity of schools in the Te Puke Learning and Change Network.

A. BACKGROUND TO THE TE PUKE LEARNING AND CHANGE NETWORK

The four Te Puke schools that comprise the Learning and Change Network are situated closely to one another with three located in the same street. In developing the Learning and Change Network, the schools are building on existing relationships. They communicate with one another about matters of mutual interest and concern and two of the schools have previously participated together in Schooling Improvement projects. Forming a local network around a shared achievement challenge is a new and welcomed venture. From the outset, the network leaders have wanted the current project to "make a difference". The network leaders considered that to make schools more relevant to the lives of young people, there would have to be significant and focused change. The change would require a challenge to traditional ways of thinking about teaching and learning in schools.

The four schools express a commitment to encouraging participation of families and the community in children's education and consider that understanding the families' cultures was a key factor in the success of this undertaking. They anticipate that the activity of the Learning and Change process will provide an opportunity to enhance this aspect of their work. The network has come to the Learning and Change Network Strategy (LCN) open to hearing the voices of the students. An illustration of this can be found in their use of *Me and My School* surveys to consider students' connections with school. The network leaders are keen to learn about and act on the authentic views of students, their families and the community. They want to extend the connections their students have already made through events such as sports days, to situations in which they share information about their learning.

B. THE ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE

The Te Puke Learning and Change network leaders are keen to create innovative learning environments for the students who are participating in their project. The network holds a broad notion of learning as their focus. Network leaders have collected information related to learning in general and in particular

subjects such as mathematics and writing. In some cases, data collection has involved exploring the factors that impact on students' positioning to learn, that is, being engaged in learning activities. This process, driven initially by hunches, is resulting in the identification of some clear and consistent findings about the influences on the learning of students in the network area. These are discussed later in this document.

While many students in the four schools are achieving at or above national standards, there remain some students whose attainment fall below this level. Maori students are overrepresented in this number. The challenges to learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, are occurring despite additional targeted teaching. For example, Te Puke High School began implementing Te Kotahitanga in 2007. There has been a dramatic change since that time in the way teachers thought about and approached teaching and learning and children have taken a more central place in the school. Staff members have developed many sound professional connections with students' families. However, the school continues to support Maori students for whom the programme was primarily intended to engage in in learning and to achieve academically. While a good foundation has been laid with the students working in small groups and overall improvement has been achieved, there are still some students for whom Te Puke High School wishes to offer additional support. The high school recognised that with good relationships established, their next step would be to change the focus from relationships to academic achievement.

C. UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT: PHASE 1

MAPPING LEARNING CONNECTIONS

Te Puke Learning and Change Network Leaders held a series of meetings over a period of 6 months to plan, share and review their process of understanding and change. At each meeting, each school set tasks for completion between meetings. The process of understanding the learning environment began with identification and discussion of some matters directly related to student achievement and some broader issues associated with achievement in the 21st

Century environment. These included opportunities for innovation and continuity of schooling, notions of teaching and learning, and curriculum and standards. Each is discussed below.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WIDER CONTEXT OF STUDENTS' LEARNING: INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Opportunities for innovation and continuity

The attendees at the first meeting considered the merits of a seamless approach for children through from early childhood to graduating from secondary school. They wondered about linking with business or networking with universities as one of the current challenges for graduates was securing work. They asked, "What competencies would students need to foster innovation and create prosperity?" " What do we mean by learning?" " What is success?" The network leaders considered that, although educators did not know precisely what the future would bring, they needed to prepare children for a different world.

Views of Teaching and Learning

The Te Puke Learning and Change Network considered that it was time to re-establish what it means to be a school. They viewed that they had the wish and capability to move forward, being open to learning while acknowledging that this future is not fully known. They saw that a huge mind shift was required for all teachers to understand the new role of the teacher, traditionally one involving transmission of knowledge. Technology was moving so quickly that it was sometimes difficult for teachers to keep up with this pace. Keeping abreast of change would mean letting go of traditional notions of teaching, learning and schooling. Contemporary views of learning and teaching recognise the exchange of knowledge between teachers and students. While not all teachers are comfortable with the range of technological devices that support student learning, there are many students who can help them acquire new knowledge and skills required.

Curriculum and Standards

The New Zealand Curriculum was seen by the network leaders to support advances in student learning. While there was some discrepancy between the NZ curriculum and NZQA standards, the curriculum, principle-based rather than rule-based, accommodated the range and depth of opportunity required for student learning in this part of the 21st century. The network leaders discussed the way the introduction of standards and associated assessments had brought new pressures, previously in the domain of secondary education, to primary schools. They had observed that, as students neared high school, the parent community often expected a reduction in self-directed learning. Such requests frequently came from intermediate school students' parents, who viewed that their children would prepare better for secondary school with narrower parameters.

PREPARING TO EXPLORE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The network leaders discussed the composition of network teams and delineated the roles of the enthusiastic leaders, principals and practitioner evaluators. Mindful that they would be working together to build on the familiar supports for the priority learners, they listed some key questions that would be kept in view as they explored, with students, teachers and community, the learning environment. The network leaders wanted to find out:

Where are students achieving?

What is obstructing/supporting learning?

What can we do to support students to achieve?

What would a programme look like if it were successful?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DIAGRAM

In preparation for understanding the learning environments of the students participating in the Learning and Change Network process, the group became familiar with the *Learning Environment Diagram,* a tool for mapping learning connections, through hands-on activity and a cycle of trialling and shared

reflection. The network leaders considered the optimal number of students to participate in this project, deciding that there would be no fixed number and that contextual factors would influence each school's decision. The network leaders were mindful of the inverse relationship between the numbers of students selected and the depth of understanding that might be attained. Schools selected between 11 and 33 students as key participants.

There was a range of tasks to complete in order to prepare for collecting information about the students' learning environments. These included:
- Becoming familiar with and modifying the mapping tool (Learning Environment Diagram) to suit each school
- Constructing questions to be asked of participants in relation to their maps

The school leaders also considered additional sources of information, some already available to them, to inform their understanding of the students' learning environments.

When making decisions about who would collect information through the mapping exercise, several factors were considered. As power differentials, such as those between teachers and students, could influence data, it seemed that, in most instances, a student's teacher or principal might not be in the best position to collect these data. In most cases, the enthusiastic leader would be asked to work directly with the students. However, there were no hard and fast rules set, it was simply a matter of keeping potential tensions in mind and limiting other influences on children's performance. Schools would consider their specific circumstances, taking into account availability of personnel and current roles or relationships. They may approach, for example, people in the schools are not directly involved with the teaching and evaluation of a students' academic work, or a resource teacher considered by the students to create a 'fun' climate. In some cases, students or student leaders, particularly those who are more senior, might be able to take the interviewer role.

The Network Leaders considered several ways of using the Learning Environments Diagram. They recognised that carefully constructed questions would be required to elicit the type of information that would help all participants understand each student's learning environment and learning connections. Constructing a context for rich conversation would be the key challenge for professionals in the session.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO UNDERSTAND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The four schools in the Te Puke LCN explored the learning environment in relation to the achievement challenge of student learning, each school focusing on a selected area, in ways that fit with their particular schools and communities. That is, they all engaged in the activity of mapping the learning environment from the point of view of the students' learning but devised their own version of the process. The process of exploration and initial observations from each school are described below.

TE PUKE PRIMARY

PARTICIPANTS

Te Puke Primary School network leaders selected writing as the specific focus for collecting information about students' learning environments. The school chose nine boys and two girls, the group comprising one student with priority learning needs from each class in the school. These students were selected on the basis of their non-engagement with writing tasks and included students with English as a second language and Maori and Pasifika students. National Standards data and e-asTTLe scores were also considered when selecting the 11 students.

DATA COLLECTION

Te Puke Primary School collected and reviewed children's narratives in relation the achievement challenge of writing. The children were interviewed individually with visual prompts loaded onto the PuppetPals app on an iPad.

They manipulated the images as they needed but more often just spoke around the prompt questions. The leader asked school-generated questions as the students showed who helped them learn. Some examples of these questions are listed below.

> This is you... and these are other people at school and at home (teacher, friends, family...)
> Which people do you get on with at school? At home? Jiggle the people who get on together... *(prompt where necessary)*
> Jiggle the people who help you with your learning
> Do you want to be good at writing? Why? Why not?
> How does writing make you feel? *Use visual prompts...*
> What are you good at in writing?
> What do you need to work on in writing?
> How do you know if you are doing well in writing?
> Is writing easy or hard for you? Why? *Use visual prompts...*
> Do you know what your goals are in writing? Who do you talk to about these?
> How do you know if you have reached your goal? Who helps you?
> How does your classroom help you with your writing?

Additional questions considered the role of the teacher and family in supporting the children's learning as well the children's experience of being at Te Puke Primary school. Network leaders watched and listened as the students talked about their learning and the information was collected by video recording and in written form. The findings were collated (See appendix 1).

Teachers carried out observations of the students in their school learning environments. This was done formally through our Teacher Action Inquiry process linked to school charter goals. It provided baseline information from a variety of sources to identify targeted students/groups.

FINDINGS FROM THE MAPPING EXERCISE

After the first round of data collection, some patterns were beginning to emerge. The students were generally positive about school (relationships with teacher, students and their learning environment), about learning to write, and expressed a wish to improve. They were able to articulate their learning goals and many said that they received help with writing at home. They considered that they were bad writers due to spelling, particularly those students in years 3-

6. The older boys often expressed their dissatisfaction more obviously and negatively. The younger students found difficulty with their letters.

The students discussed the learning environment. When the students were asked who was the most important person in their learning environment, most said their teachers and some mentioned the librarian. None of the targeted students saw their input as the most important nor did they see other students in their class as a form of learning support. This contrasted with the findings from our control group of successful writers who emphasised the importance of other students in the learning journey. The target students said that they would like to talk more and draw more before they wrote and would prefer that the teachers talked less.

In summary, the school noted many supports for learning to write. The students were keen to improve their writing and had made suggestions about how they could learn. They enjoyed school and were supported at home. This is an area that will be pursued to obtain more information and a deeper analysis. From the perspective of the students, the main barriers to learning for the group appeared to be specific tools for writing, in particular spelling and forming letters, some environmental factors such as other students talking, preparation for writing and the learned patterns of response to frustration.

FAIRHAVEN

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Teachers at Fairhaven school selected two pupils from each room in the Year 1 and Year 2 (Junior), Year 3 and Year 4 (Middle) and Year 5 and Year 6 (Senior) levels. In total, thirty pupils, seven Pasifika and 23 Maori took part in the project. There was an even split between boys and girls, ratios that roughly reflected the composition of Fairhaven school.

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

Young Leaders, students from Year 5 and Year 6, who were of the same ethnicity as the children in the students taking part in the project, administered a survey that was designed to gather data about:

      a) language spoken at home

      b) family/whanau/community support regards schooling

      c) their feelings about school / class / teacher / other pupils regards schooling

      d) whether or not school values them and their culture.

The survey included some questions that were specific for cultural groups. For example:

- Maori Culture is important in this school. Yes / No
- Te Reo Maori is spoken at this school. Yes / No

FINDINGS FROM THE MAPPING EXERCISE

There were a number of differences and similarities observed between Maori and Pasifika students' answers.

- Nearly all Maori (20/23) said they spoke English at home as a first language and over half of the Pasifika students spoke mostly their native language at home (Samoan or Kiribati; 5/7 spoke Samoan).

- Maori students reported a range of parent involvement in school/ Pasifika pupils indicated little or no input from parents

- The majority of Maori pupils said that the teachers encouraged pupils to achieve and were supportive. All Pasifika pupils said the teachers were supportive and wanted pupils to achieve.

- Both groups were split regarding their views of pupils being supportive of or helpful towards other pupils.

- By far the majority of both groups said they thought it was good to be Maori or Pasifika at school and that they could be successful. The students valued their culture.

- Maori pupils said that their culture and Te Reo Maori were valued and spoken at school. Pasifika pupils were split when indicating if their culture was important at this school.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The interesting trends have led the school staff to conduct interviews with a wider group of the school.

- Further data is to be collected regards the interaction between pupils.
- A Pasifika Performing Arts Groups is to be started up (Representing all Pasifika Groups)
- Te Puke Intermediate School pupils (ex Fairhaven pupils) are to be used to complete an exercise to determine "social interaction". Groups of students achieving well below, below, at and above national standards will be selected to see if there are any differences. Maori and Pasifika pupils will be part of the exercise.

At this stage there has not been a meeting with parents, although a previous meeting with a similar inquiry has been helpful in informing the project. Fairhaven has had good attendances of parents in the past. An example of this was a meeting held in their school library where their tamariki performed using Te Reo Maori. The students were on stage for just 15mins but the 14 parents attending stayed for 2 hours. The school is currently working to extend their connections with the Indian community

When parents were asked what skills knowledge and attitudes their children needed to achieve success as Maori, they responded as follows. Parents saw self-efficacy as a key issue and believed that this was what their children required to engage them in learning. They wanted them to speak Te Reo, to be confident in Marae protocol and to acknowledge their whakapapa. It was important that they were aware of their own culture and knew where they were from. With these attributes, they could stand strongly. They believed the education system worked for the dominant culture and that what was of most significance was not

only that their culture was valued but also that it was taught. One parent had commented that, 'until you work out who you are, you feel like a lesser person'. They asked if the school could help their children in this regard.

TE PUKE INTERMEDIATE

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Thirty-three students, three from each of the 11 classes in the school, took part in the Te Puke Intermediate School LCN project. The students were selected for the study after the network leaders from the school had reviewed school records that included information from contributing schools. These students were mostly males of Pacific Island and Maori ethnicity. The school also selected a group of students, one from each class, who were achieving at or above national standards across a range of subjects. The school was interested in making a comparison between what aspects of educational provision had worked for one group but not for others.

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

In order to ensure clarity and consistency with the data collection process across the school, Te Puke Intermediate School dedicated time to the preparation for this activity. They began the process with teachers completing the mapping exercise and reflecting on this activity. The staff members were divided into groups, such as beginning teachers, senior teachers and technical staff, to explain and discuss their maps with one another. One aspect of the exercise that supported understanding of the mapping activity was the use of an analogy, a situation that was familiar and social but that allowed the staff members to view lateral relationships and to understand the principles of lateral learning with a degree of distance.

The network leaders from the school constructed materials to help the students map their learning environment. These materials were put together in a pack that included images that could be placed on whiteboards. Students worked in pairs or groups of three to complete the mapping task. They indicated connections between sites of learning using two types of arrows, one for strong

and another for weak learning relationships. Photographs of the students' maps were taken on completion. A staff member describes the process below.

> "Using provided 'stakeholder' cards, postits, whiteboards and markers, create a picture of what you think the interaction looks like at our school. Using the whiteboard markers draw arrows between the stakeholders indicating what strength or type of interactions are occurring. Provide a key explain the arrows. First we started a group picture using the analogy of an Old folk's home. This was very successful in explaining how to identify the stakeholders and to show the interactions that happened between them. At the conclusion of all groups completing the activity we photographed the graphic organisers they created. "

Figure 2. Student map of learning connections

Those staff facilitating the mapping exercise said that the dialogue of the students who described their pictures was "fantastic" with clear, rich explanations from the students about how and why they had placed stakeholders

where they did. They had considered that different students had different experiences of the learning based on their needs, attendance and behaviour. The children in the partial immersion Maori Whanau class placed their information into a whare. Interestingly, the Whanau class teacher had also done this in her map, independently of the students.
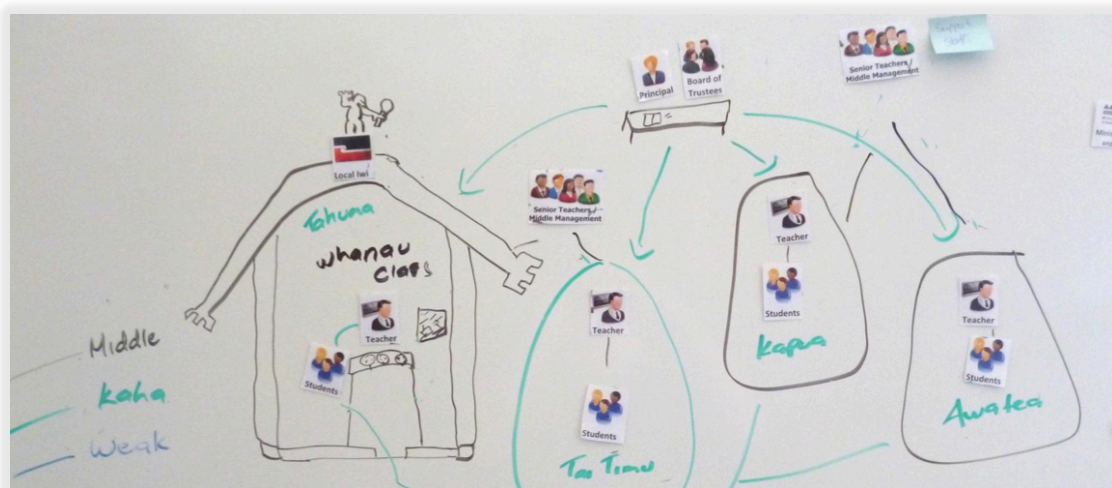

Figure 3. Map of learning connections drawn by a student in a Whanau class.

The parents of each of the students in the target group were invited to meet and discuss the children's learning environments. Although an incentive was offered for parents to attend with their children, none of the parents attended. The parents have now been posted a set of questions, which will be followed up by an individual phone call inviting them to be further consulted.

FINDINGS FROM THE MAPPING EXERCISE

- The staff members collecting information were surprised by the marked difference between the stories/maps of the students in the target group and those who were achieving at or above national standards. Each of the students who were achieving at or above national standards at school showed student-to-student links whereas only two of the students in the target group indicated learning across the peer group. It appeared from the maps that these students did not recognise that there was any dialogue and learning amongst peers.

- Those achieving at or above standards placed students at the centre of their maps while those students from the target group placed them somewhere around the periphery.

- The network leaders also noted that staff diagrams of their view of students' learning environments had only minimal student-to-student connections and, on one staff graph and several student graphs, a hierarchical structure was depicted.

- All student groups placed the local iwi, community and other schools on the outer parts of their pictures.

- All students showed the links to and from their teachers as strong.

Te Puke Intermediate School staff members drew a list of hypotheses, or emerging patterns, from the information they had collected. The emerging patterns were:

- Students who achieve at or above national standards at school have strong interactions between each other.

- Students from the target group perceive themselves as isolated in the school environment.

- Students who are achieving at or above national standards view student–to-student interactions to be stronger and more important than do the teachers.

- To engage parents, we need to approach the parents again, but in a different way.

TE PUKE HIGH SCHOOL

PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

Students at Te Puke High School have been working for a year in small vertical groups, each comprising 15 students from Years 9 to 13. Among the reasons for developing the groups was the expectation of raising students' sense of identify and sense of purpose in terms of learning. The groups have provided opportunity to build

relationships, with the ultimate goal of increasing learning and achievement. The early stages of the vertical grouping have focused largely on developing foundation relationships. Within the current networking project, Te Puke High School plans to take the vertical groups to the next level and focus on the learning. First, to ensure that next steps are based on sound evidence, the network team in the school aim to capture a picture of the current and preferred situations of the students with priority learning needs in their school.

HOW THE INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED

The data collection method was designed to allow comparison between the current and perceived 'ideal' situations of the students in the small groups. Seven student leaders were selected to conduct interviews with the 15 students in their groups. Before the student leaders explored their student groups' connections through use of the *Learning Environments Diagram,* they participated in this mapping exercise themselves, charting their own learning connections. The student leaders conducted interviews with their peers. They gathered data from their own small groups in the form of a mapping activity. The students used coloured stickers to mark entries on their Learning Environment Diagrams. A description of the method is provided below.

Part 1

1. Give each person a piece of A3 paper landscape orientation.
2. Get each person to fold the page and write 'Current Situation' at the top of the left side.
3. Ask the Small Group what the main focus of the activities in your Small Group over last year and the first part of this year. (Hopefully they should identify "relationship building" or "developing a team").
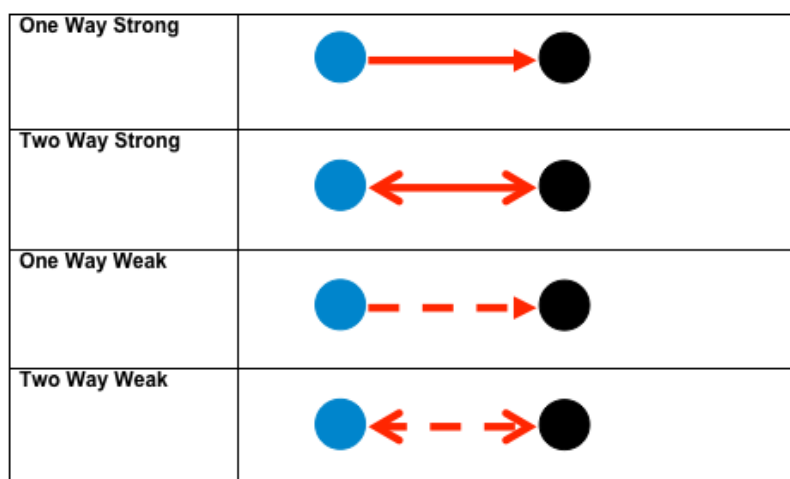4. Draw two dots on the whiteboard and show the following types of **relationships and communication**:

Figure 4. Diagram showing arrows used for indicating strength of relationships.

    a. Tell your Small Group that you want them to work on their own and arrange the dots on the left hand side of the page to show what the relationships and communication look like in their Small Group. This part may take some time.
    b. Form a circle.
    c. Get each person to explain their diagram.
    d. When everyone has explained their diagram, get the group to tell you the common elements/threads. Write these down. Collect in their pages.

Part 2

5. Give each person their piece of A3 paper landscape orientation.
6. Get each person to fold the page and write 'Ideal Situation' at the top of the right side.
7. Tell your Small Group that one of the purposes of the Small Group is to "**develop supportive relationships which improve student engagement in learning and achievement**".
8. Tell your Small Group that you want them to arrange the dots on the right hand side of the page to show what it would look like if your Small Group focused on "**develop supportive relationships which improve student engagement in learning and achievement**". You may need to write this statement on the whiteboard.
9. Form a circle.
10. Get each person to explain their diagram.
11. When everyone has explained their diagram, get the group to tell you the common elements/threads. Write these down.

Part 3

12. Draw a table on the whiteboard and write in the common elements/themes:

'Current Situation'	'Ideal Situation'
• • • • • • •	• • • • • • •

Figure 5. Form for recording current and ideal situations

13. Ask your Small Group "What do we need to do to move from the 'Current Situation' to the 'Ideal Situation'?

14. Record the answers and include in your reporting back to the rest of the student leaders. This becomes the focus of the types of activities your Small Group will engage in to move it towards being more effective to **"develop supportive relationships which improve student engagement in learning and achievement"**.

On the left hand side of the paper, students were asked to use the coloured dots and arrows to show the current structure of their group based on building relationships – this was the Current Situation. On the right hand side, students were asked to produce a diagram of the Ideal Situation where there was a focus on improving student engagement in learning and achievement. Student leaders met to describe the two diagrams for their Small Group. Common trends were identified for all students' diagrams of what characterised the Current Situation and the Ideal Situation.

FINDINGS FROM THE MAPPING EXERCISE

Through analysis of the data from the interviews, Te Puke High School team noted the following in relation to the current and ideal learning environment. The current situation was seen to focus on relationship, and the ideal situation more on student engagement and achievement (See Table y below). In summary they noted that:

- Relationships within the vertical groups varied
- Some children did not feel fully included
- There was room for improvement in terms of working together, for example, seniors with juniors
- Many of the students were at different levels of learning, including the student-leaders.
- The vertical groups could benefit from increased structure (including organisation, planning)

Table y. Summary of Findings from Gathering Data about the 'Current Situation' and 'Ideal Situation' of Small Groups

'Current Situation' of Small Groups	'Ideal Situation' of Small Groups
Focus on Developing Relationships	**Focus on Engagement in Learning and Achievement**
• Smaller groups within each Small Group • Relationships vary • There are a few 'outcasts' in most groups – students who tend to disassociate with their Small Group • Successful building of relationship depends on the Small Group Leader • Small Groups were at different stages of development • There is a need to revisit the rationale for Small Groups • Tends to be a lack of structure in some small groups	• More organization with more planning • Improve working together and communicating • Juniors and seniors working together • Being happier together

Figure 6. Completed form showing perceptions of current and ideal sitautions.

SUMMARISING THE FIRST ROUND OF DATA COLLECTION

Although each of the schools collected information from the students in different ways, they noted that similar patterns were emerging. They noted that students who achieved better tended to have a greater number of learning relationships, than students viewed the teacher as central to their learning. That is, they connected with peers in learning relationships in a wider range of settings. The schools also found that some cultural groups, in particular Maori and Pakeha, were more comfortable with the school environment than others and that the quality of peer learning relationships was influenced by the skill of and relationships between participants.

In particular, the network leaders were viewing the repeated reference to students' thoughts and beliefs about their learning and their ability to learn. It appeared that many parents had low expectations for their students' academic

learning. In speaking with parents, some network leaders had discovered that some parents were not aware of their children's potential to achieve academically although they had clear social and emotional goals for them. The network leaders saw value in supporting students develop beliefs about their ability to learn and to appreciate the benefits of doing so. Through discussion with students and parents, the leaders became aware of the various messages that their students were receiving through schools, families, peers, community/iwi and the media.

D. UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT: PHASE 2.

EXAMINING STUDENT, TEACHER AND FAMILY PRACTICE IN RELATION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE

At the point of writing this report, the network leaders are completing an analysis of practice with students, teachers and families, considering the strategies they generally use in the area of the achievement challenge, the reasons for selecting these strategies and the participants' perceptions of the effects of using them. Each school has trialled the data collection schedule and will complete the exercise with the remainder of the participants for the next meeting. In general, the leaders found the exercise, without modification, to be most straightforward when talking with teachers as this group was most accustomed to discussing these matters, and in this way. The trials were important because through these the network leaders discovered that rather than simply asking the questions as written, they needed to frame questions in ways that were more usual for children and families. One school found that they gained the information that they required through discussion with parents in relation to a particular programme (e.g. Reading Together). The creative ways of accessing knowledge about practice raised the question of consistency of conversations across schools. However, from reports from schools, it was evident that each school collected information about practices and the rationale for these.

Although the schools were still in the process of collating the data from the analysis, valuable insights were being gained through these conversations. One school noted the opportunities it had to delve deeper into the issues of school and home support for learning, to consider the type of home activity that supports learning and the part that language plays. They realised that some families coming from other countries may not be familiar with educational practices and systems in this country and that such factors would need to be acknowledged and addressed.

ANALYSIS TO DATE: EMERGING INFLUENCES ON THE ACHIEVEMENT CHALLENGE.

With one final batch of data to report, the network has collated some key themes that represent their findings. Interestingly, the key messages coming from the data emerged early in the data collection phase have been persisted throughout the collection process. Indeed, as data has been collected, it has tended to strengthen and elaborate the themes, allowing for more in depth understanding of learning relationships and perspectives on learning. The themes include students' agency, teacher practice, student and school relationships and overwhelmingly, matters to do with school and community connection. The specific areas identified by the network as impacting on the academic learning of the participant group are listed below.

- Student agency in their own learning
- Students interests
- Student self perception
- School-Community connection
    o Engagement of families/Strengthening relationship between schools and families
    o Expectations with, of and for community
    o Family empowerment with learning strategies
    o The nature of teachers' learning conversations with families
    o Valuing community/stakeholders and sense of being valued

- o Community view of school experience focuses on relationships (social and emotional) more than learning.
- Teaching practice/approach/perceived relevance for students
- Learning relationships, e.g. teacher/student, student/student, and others

NEXT STEPS FOR THE NETWORK

The network leaders will next consider the findings overall and identify which areas will be targeted for change, what changes need to be made and what the changes will involve. They may also nominate certain areas in which further data collection will proceed in order to inform change in particular areas. A network plan will be developed from which schools will develop their own specific plans.

THE TE PUKE NETWORK AND THE LEARNING AND CHANGE STRATEGY.

The Te Puke Network is conducting a systematic study of the learning environment of the students in their area who belong to the New Zealand Government's priority group. The project has been collaboratively managed, the leaders working together to keep the focus of the work, the academic achievement of the students in the priority group, in view throughout. The in-depth analysis of the students' broad learning environments has been supported by the care leaders have taken to collect relevant information, to record and organise the data as it was collected and to ensure that all participants contributed fully and authentically. The network leaders have taken an appreciative view of the learning environments they are seeking to expand. While they have noted many challenges that they wish to meet, they have discovered many opportunities for schools and families to share information with one another and learn together. Key drivers in this project to date have been the genuine caring of the network leaders for the students in school and the people of the town, the high levels of energy in the leadership team, collaborative effort and leaders courage to consider new ways of perceiving familiar structures.

Appendix 1. Example of Recording of Summarised Data.

Learning Change Network
Interview with 11 children about their writing and general impressions of being a student at
Te Puke Primary School
March 2013

Positives		Barriers		Questions/Observations	
Writing	General	Writing	General	Writing	General
• 10/11 children want to be better writers/think writing is important • Writing is easier when there are pictures (Bm 2 -"I Can" writing, R 11- T puts up animal pictures) • All junior chn clearly stated what they like to write about - personal belongings/pets • Yr 3-6 students could all state their writing goals • 9/11 interviewed were helped at home with homework - positive impression of family members as people who are there to help with learning	• Kids love Mr Cuplitte and Mr Arthur talking to them during breaks and before school • Chn who are veteran students at our school LOVE the experience of being a TPPS student • 9/11 believe their families are positive about TPPS • 1 dad doesn't like coming to school (no reason forthcoming but Dad does help with homework)	• Spelling was an issue for year 3-6 children - 1 child embarrassed to share his writing because of spelling, another 2 struggled to re-read their own writing. Negative impressions of themselves as writers because of spelling • Ideas for writing - mid and senior children struggled with ideas for writing • Junior chn stated that they struggled with letter formation and sounding out • Chn would like to talk more about their writing •	• New children to school struggling to settle in class (? not finding their 'fit'). More negative about themselves as learners, unsure who/what is best to help them. *Have we got an effective enough induction process for older learners coming into our school?* • Getting grumpy with myself (2 Boys) "can't do stuff" • Getting annoyed by other kids in class - kids that start fights/throw things	• Brief drawing time before writing to help form ideas • Typing writing would help spelling • Yr 3-6 boys would like to choose where to write - stated that they prefer to write lying down on the floor or sit on the carpet • None of the children liked distractions when writing - preferred to have 'quiet space'. • 3 older students stated that it would be cool if people outside the classroom read their writing. 1 keen on family overseas reading his writing on class blog • Not one interviewed was unsure about why they were writing at school	• *9/11 interviewed were boys* • All children interviewed stated that they went to bed late/well after dark. 7/11 interviewed were yawning through interview. • Miss Lisa rated overall as second most important person at school - boss of the library and buys heaps of books • Mr Cuplitte/classroom teachers most important people at school (apart from Steven in Room 13 from one response) • Teacher does most of talking in the classroom • Teacher is the one in class that most helps with learning • No-one stated that children are the most important people at school