



# Starpath newsletter

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## Literacy wiki leads the way

**Putting literacy online creates a 'one stop shop' for teachers at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate.**

Literacy Co-ordinator at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate, Cheryl Behrens, is a self-taught techno guru. Having spent her summer holidays preparing material, she established a Literacy Wiki for staff use in March 2013. Eighteen months later the Wiki has an estimated 150 logons per week across middle and senior school teachers.

One main reason Cheryl started the Wiki was to keep data and resources safe and protected. She says there are many benefits from using it as a way of sharing information with others – it is easily accessible anywhere anytime, everything is in the one place, everyone can be involved and documents can be uploaded in any format (Word, PDF, Google). "It's a mobile toolbox with data and strategies." Access to the Wiki is controlled by the administrator, which means it can be private. Another benefit is sustainability. The administrator can train others in this role and a Wiki can have multiple administrators.

The Literacy Wiki at Sir Edmund Hillary has become "a one stop shop of student progress". Teachers have access to asTTle results and credit totals which are imported from the SMS (Student Management System). This process is speedy – taking only 20 seconds per class set of data. Class lists for the Literacy Focus Groups,

action plans and a timeframe for these classes, other literacy projects and a raft of strategies and resources are also available. From July each year the Wiki is also used to track and monitor senior students with Level 1 and University Entrance literacy credits. Historical data can be retained – Sir Edmund Hillary has uploaded student achievement data dating back to 2010.

New material is added to the Wiki every fortnight. As teachers participate in professional development on literacy their learning is shared with others through this forum, and links to useful electronic Ministry of Education resources are also added. Additionally, it's a place where colleagues can access school-wide literacy strategies. Tutor teachers also use the Wiki to access material for discussion with students in Academic Counselling. When new teachers join the school Cheryl provides PLD training so that everyone is in the loop.

Plans for further development include adding teacher contribution pages, strategies to use in the middle school and pages for numeracy. The Literacy Wiki has been used a lot by teachers in their inquiry and has contributed significantly towards positive changes around the teaching and learning of literacy in the school.

Starpath regards this as an example of good practice in the teaching and learning of literacy and encourages other partner schools to consider a similar model.

## From the Chair



**Professor Raewyn Dalziel**  
Chair, Starpath Project

Starpath enters its final year as a Partnership for Excellence with the Government in 2015. For ten years it has been funded through the

Tertiary Education Commission with The University of Auckland raising matching philanthropic funding for Starpath and other projects focussed on equity and excellence in education.

The University of Auckland has committed to continue working with schools to foster the educational aspirations of students and to help them meet these aspirations past 2015. There has been some recent discussion over the emphasis placed on a degree as the appropriate educational outcome for some students. We agree degree study might not be for everyone, but there is plenty of evidence to show that a degree opens the way to greater opportunities, widens horizons and leads to better life outcomes. For those students whose aim is to gain a higher education, we have a responsibility to help make it happen.

In 2015 Starpath will continue to work with its partner schools to embed tracking and monitoring student achievement, target setting, academic counselling and parent-whanau engagement as fundamental school activities. With The University of Auckland Centre for Educational Leadership, it will offer a leadership programme in some schools where this will bring the greatest benefit and, with the Woolf Fisher Research Centre, continue the development of literacy through key subjects.

Research has been an important element of Starpath. Its strategies were developed in partnership with the original five schools following joint research into the barriers to student achievement. Some of the results of Starpath research have already been published in academic journals and books for teachers, parents and students. In 2015 Starpath will undertake an evaluation of the whole programme, develop further resources to underpin the delivery of its programme and prepare research findings for further publication.

The Starpath Board looks forward to supporting the new Director and her team in the busy year ahead.



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# Analysing your end of year data

As the year draws to a close, data analysis continues unabated on two fronts – NCEA internals, and Years 7/9-10 – as part of your annual review. So what should you be looking for?

## NCEA internals.

This is a good time to review progress made by students on internal standards, in total and by individual standard. What percentage of the students were successful this year compared with this time in previous years? How many needed a re-sit compared with previous years? What was the average number of credits attained this year by each student, and how does that compare with last year? What proportion of the students already has their qualification for the year? Of those who don't, how many credits are still required, and how can you help to ensure they gain those credits? How many of the students still attending school have fewer than say, 20 credits? On which standards have the students been more/less successful?

## Years 7/9-10.

End of year assessments are taking place, so ask yourself questions about what progress has been made during the year. For example, how many sub-levels have the students shifted between the beginning of the year and the end? What proportion of the students is making accelerated progress (three or more sub-levels in a year)? Which groups of students are not making any progress, or at best slow progress? How do these compare with previous years?



For both NCEA and Y7/9-10, consider break-downs by gender and ethnicity, or any other group of interest (e.g. your ESOL students, or those with special learning needs).

There are numerous questions that could be asked, but a sense of inquiry will generate these questions for you. The answers you obtain to those questions will enable you to focus on what has improved or not improved (and why), and what you plan to put in place to improve on that next year.

designed to reduce the impact of guessing on multiple choice answers to produce a more realistic result. An example of this is a student with an overall asTTle score at 3B who answers two 5A questions correctly. They would not receive an inflated score.

E-asTTle also has a great target setting module. This can show a student's history of e-asTTle scores across various schools from primary and intermediate to their current secondary school. It also allows teachers to show students a personalised graph which plots their recent scores and predicts their next point of achievement.

Teachers and students can discuss targets and adjust the prediction for the next asTTle test. It may predict that a student will move up one sub-level between two testing points, however this could be adjusted to two or more sub-levels if accelerated achievement is the goal. Starpath sees potential for this tool to be used in academic counselling conversations.

# The adaptive test: a useful guide

A number of Starpath partner schools have expressed an interest in using the adaptive e-asTTle test. This has benefits for both teachers and students.

It is very straight forward to set an adaptive test. Teachers choose the length of the test, up to three curriculum levels and which strands they wish to assess. The first set of ten questions will be the same for all students sitting the test. For example, if a student performs well in the first stage they will be presented with questions at a more advanced level, and if a student does not perform well they will be given an easier set of questions. Student responses are marked as they enter them, so after the initial set the test adjusts the questions according to their performance. At the conclusion of the test the student's report appears on screen.

The adaptive test considerably reduces teacher workload. It also leads to more accurate assessment as questions are tailored to students' ability and new scoring mechanisms have been

## Implementation update



Joy Eaton, Deputy Director

We just completed the mammoth task for Term 3 of collecting interview and focus group data from the 18 Group B schools. This data has now been transcribed and is currently being processed. Our

challenge is to have individual school reports completed by the end of this year. We want to say a huge thank you to all staff and students who participated in the evaluation and a special acknowledgement for the person who organised our visit in each school.

During Term 3 our professional development focus has been on literacy and numeracy for Years 9 and 10. With support from Team Solutions staff, Tania Linley-Richardson has facilitated very popular workshops about subject specific literacy strategies – in English, mathematics, science and social sciences. These were so successful that we have been encouraged to expand the subjects covered. In November we will be offering workshops in literacy strategies for PE/Health and Technology. For numeracy we have been very fortunate to be supported by Team Solutions facilitators Sandra Cathcart and Robyn Headifen. They ran very practical workshops about geometry and measurement and will complete the series in November.

In the last few months Tania has been visiting a number of schools to introduce and demonstrate the adaptive asTTle tool. This allows for a more formative use of asTTle, and cuts down teacher time setting and administering the test. The new asTTle target setting function is also proving to be of interest to schools.

2015 will see a change of emphasis for the project. We will continue to offer workshops and in-school support but we will focus on the production of a resource for schools to use when Starpath is no longer in its current form. This tool kit will be available to Starpath schools for the maintenance of the programme but it will also present resources to be shared with schools who have not been part of the project.

By the time you get this newsletter the year will be almost over. I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work this year and wish you all the best for a safe and enjoyable summer break.

# Themes emerge from review of Starpath's main intervention

A major aspect of the Starpath Project is the Data Utilisation, Academic Counselling and Target Setting (DUACTS) programme.

This is being implemented across 34 partner schools. Starpath team members are nearing the end of an evaluation of the effectiveness of this initiative and some interesting themes are beginning to emerge.

### What is DUACTS?

DUACTS is an integrated programme which combines building quality student data, with one-on-one academic counseling and the informed setting of academic goals for every student.

The pace of the implementation of DUACTS is adapted to suit each school and its capacity to introduce the programme, but the expectation was that by the third year of the partnership all schools would have implemented the key elements of the DUACTS programme. The first 16 of these schools (Group A) joined the Project in 2011 and the remaining 18 schools (Group B) joined in 2012, so the implementation of DUACTS is at different stages in different schools.

Over the three years school staff received intensive professional learning development (PLD) through regional workshops and seminars as well as on-site visits for training and mentoring in the context of individual schools. The Starpath team has also provided regular visits to observe activities such as academic counselling and parent-student-teacher (PST) conferencing, providing written feedback following each visit.

### A DUACTS evaluation

In the second half of 2013 the Starpath team completed a series of evaluation visits to Group A schools to review progress and the overall effectiveness of the DUACTS programme. The same process was completed during Term 3 2014 for Group B schools. As well as interviewing the school principal and between one and three senior and middle leaders in each school, focus groups were conducted with teachers and with senior (Years 11, 12, and 13) students. In total, 31 principals and 65 other school leaders were interviewed, and focus groups were held with 295 teachers and 507 students. Teacher groups included both subject teachers, and form/whanau teachers usually responsible for academic counselling and/or PST conference facilitation. Purposive sampling ensured adequate representation of Māori (22%) and Pasifika (30%) students. Although 32% of the students were not (yet) sure of their career plans, 78% aimed to achieve University Entrance (UE) and 73% aimed to attend university.

The focus of the evaluation was on different stakeholders' experiences of, and views about, the impact of the DUACTS programme on student achievement, as well as on student engagement and attitudes to learning, teacher-student relationships, family/whanau-school engagement, and teachers' work and morale. Additional questions were asked about the challenges and difficulties related to the programme's implementation, adequacy of support provided by Starpath, and the overall sustainability of the programme into the future.

In early 2014 each Group A school was provided with an individual report, summarising its student achievement rates over the past three years and the views of the school's leaders, teachers and students on the impact of the DUACTS programme. Group B schools will receive their individual reports in December. Although the full evaluation report will not be available until mid-2015, it is important that each school



receives feedback as soon as possible. For some schools the report has provided supporting evidence and endorsement for the practices and processes now in place. For a few schools, student voice has been a welcome addition to data not usually collected by the school and in some cases practices have been changed as a result. Other schools have responded to the feedback by refocussing on areas that require additional work or support.

### Emerging themes

Although the full analysis of the data is yet to be completed, some important themes have been identified from data from Group A schools.

- There have been measurable shifts in family/whanau-school engagement, both in terms of parental attendance – from 20% or less at traditional parent-teacher meetings to an average of 75% at the redesigned PST conferences – and ongoing contact initiated by both parents and teachers. Most schools have sustained high attendance figures over three years.
- Staff and students have reported improved student-teacher relationships, with greater focus on student learning and achievement, and reduced absenteeism and stand-down rates.
- Some, but not all, schools have shown significant improvements in their NCEA achievement rates. In most cases the improvements have not been uniform across all year levels and/or ethnic groups, and this aspect requires ongoing monitoring and action.
- For most schools some of the main challenges have included dealing with the variability in the quality of academic counselling by individual teachers, and the use of student achievement data to inform classroom teaching practices.
- Clear leadership and effective communication is critical to successful implementation and embedding of the new practices, as well as to perceptions about the sustainability of the programme into the future.

Part of the success of Starpath's work has been in connecting schools and the sharing of effective practices, so that individual schools have been able to benefit from the experience and expertise of others and the forging of supportive collegial relationships.

# Change of leadership at Starpath

The Starpath Project is delighted to welcome two new leaders to the project.



*Professor Cindy Kiro.*

Professor Cindy Kiro has been appointed Starpath's new Director and Associate Professor Anne Hynds has been appointed Director: Research. They each bring a wealth of experience in equity and education to the project.

Professor Kiro (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine) was New Zealand's first woman and Māori Children's Commissioner, and has extensive experience in working to improve life outcomes for children and young people. She is currently Head of

Te Kura Māori, Faculty of Education, Victoria University of Wellington. As Director, Professor Kiro will be responsible for overall strategic direction for Starpath, and will combine this role with her appointment as Te Tumu in the Faculty of Education.

Associate Professor Hynds is currently a Senior Lecturer in Inclusive Education, Faculty of Education, Victoria University of Wellington. She has considerable experience in working with secondary schools to build stronger



*Associate Professor Anne Hynds.*

equity-focused relationships with Māori and Pacific communities. Her research is focused on culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogy, collaborative inquiry, teacher identity, and resistance to change in equity-minded school reforms. As Director: Research Anne will oversee Starpath's research and writing programme.

We extend a warm welcome to Professor Kiro and Associate Professor Hynds who formally take up their positions in December 2014.

## Farewell to long standing Director

Starpath's long standing Director Professor Elizabeth McKinley has stepped down after seven years leading the Project.

She has been invited to set up a Centre for Indigenous Education at the University of Melbourne, highlighting the significance of her knowledge of equity in education on an international scale.

While she will be sorely missed, her vision and leadership has helped Starpath make great strides towards its goal of increasing tertiary participation for underprivileged students.

Professor McKinley has not only an extensive knowledge of Maori education in New Zealand but of the challenges inherent in reaching students who are falling behind. Her ability to interpret and deliver in plain language the complexities of NCEA and how New Zealand's social fabric and education system intertwine saw her become a national spokesperson on educational equality, and a trusted guide

for teachers and principals wanting to enact change in their schools.

Her contributions were essential to developing the Starpath strategies now in dozens of schools. These strategies have set in place a blueprint for widespread, systematic change in New Zealand's education system with the potential to impact directly on the lives of hundreds of young people.

Prior to departing Starpath, she worked alongside two other leading Māori academics to establish Kia Eke Panuku - the Building on Success project. The aim of this ongoing project is to raise the achievement of Māori secondary school students by incorporating the best elements from Starpath and other achievement programmes, such as Te Kotahitanga and He Kākano.

We wish Professor McKinley all the best in her new role where her expertise and influence are sure to make significant contributions to equity in education in Australia.



*Professor Elizabeth McKinley.*



**Starpath**  
A University of Auckland Partnership for Excellence

The Starpath Project for Tertiary Participation and Success, is a partnership between The University of Auckland and the New Zealand Government. The Project works in partnership with schools to transform educational outcomes for students who are currently under-achieving at secondary school and, as a result, under-represented in tertiary education.