



EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK  
STARPATH  
TE ARA WHETŪ

# Starpath

NEWSLETTER



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## A NEW PHASE BEGINS



The Starpath Project is entering an exciting new chapter as it embarks on Phase Three of its work in lower decile schools in Auckland and Northland.

Over the past 11 years Starpath has developed a significant evidence base for 'what works' to raise achievement and improve equity in our schools.

With an additional two years of funding from the University of Auckland, Phase Three is an opportunity for Starpath to refine this evidence base in a smaller number of schools.

Starpath is now working with nine schools instead of the 39 involved in Phase Two. Phase Three schools are located in both Auckland and Northland, are committed to the Project and have high numbers of Māori and Pasifika students.

The Project has also narrowed its focus to encourage students to gain University Entrance, as it is the highest qualification available at secondary school. Already Starpath has begun working with the Phase 3 partner schools to develop a 'stretch target' for UE attainment.



The following are the Phase Three priorities:

1. To focus our efforts on schools with high numbers of Māori and Pasifika students within Northland Tai Tokerau and Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau, where Starpath has established relationships.
2. To work with fewer schools using a stronger evidence base.
3. To continue to raise achievement in these schools.
4. To introduce strategies to younger students by working with Years 9 and 10.
5. To enrich subject specialty literacy learning (increased opportunities to learn), academic counselling and parent-student-teacher conferencing.
6. To increase student and whānau family engagement in academic decisions earlier for students.

Starpath will continue to learn by modelling an evidence-based approach, using data to refine what things we do and how we do them. We look forward to working with our new partner schools, meeting new students and staff, and continuing toward our common goals of educational equity and excellence.

We are, of course, keen to keep in touch with all Starpath schools. We will be sharing our findings through regular newsletters and updates of the website and toolkit.

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Matariki whakatauki

*He ngāngara whakapae huarahi -  
Another obstacle to be negotiated*



Many of you may have recently taken part in Matariki celebrations, which is recognised by Māori in June and July as a time of renewal. This is a time when seeds are stored for future planting, soil is prepared for certain

plants and for future fertility. This is an apt metaphor for Starpath as we are well underway with our Phase Three work.

We have now met with senior leaders from our nine Phase Three schools. Thank you for the way in which you have embraced this challenge to improve Māori and Pasifika student achievement, using an enquiry based approach and looking in more depth at the data around each of your Year 12 and 13 students. We are also keen to understand the potential of your Year 9 and 10 students and how we ensure that those entering at or above curriculum level are able to sustain this throughout their college years and then successfully complete UE.

We are already identifying common challenges such as meeting the requirements for UE literacy as being a problem for many students, the need to increase opportunities for externals and the credits offered in particular courses that may hinder some students' chances of securing UE. We are further aware that there have been challenges around UE in particular views of some teachers, students and parents and families who do not envision UE as a suitable qualification for their young person.

UE is the highest school qualification so should therefore be the goal for senior students. We do not assume that they will all go on to university study but hope that it gives them courage to pursue their dreams including tertiary study if they wish. It will also build confidence and capabilities that will position them better for vocational learning or other careers. This is about opening possibilities by reducing obstacles that limit young people's potential.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve positive gains for Māori and Pasifika students so that they can realise their aspirations through our belief in them, opportunities for learning and expert guidance.

Professor Cindy Kiro - Starpath Director

# VISITORS FLOCKING TO TOOLKIT

Faculty of Education and Social Work » The Starpath Project » Starpath Toolkit

### About us

Starpath is an evidence-based whole school intervention focused on transforming educational outcomes for New Zealand students. The project has concentrated on Māori, Pasifika and low income students who are under-represented in degree level study.

[Find out more](#)



### The Starpath Project Toolkit

An online resource for secondary schools implementing Starpath's strategies to raise student achievement.



The Starpath Toolkit, above, was launched online earlier this year.

The recently launched Starpath Toolkit has seen an influx of new visitors to our website. The free online Toolkit is a major milestone in Starpath's history. It provides a comprehensive array of practical templates, resources, case studies and academic research to support schools in their use of Starpath strategies.

In the two weeks following the Toolkit's launch in March we recorded 43% more visitors than usual to our website. We were also pleased to notice that nearly half of these visitors had never visited our site before, meaning our strategies are reaching a broader audience.

For those of you familiar with our Wiki page, this has been removed with the Toolkit now taking its place.

The Starpath website has also been recently reviewed and updated. You will notice that all publications from Phases One and Two have been collated, there is an introduction to Phase Three and there is a new feature at the bottom of the home page where you will find recent news and events. There is also a news and newsletter archive where you can find material from earlier phases of the project.

See [www.starpath.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.starpath.auckland.ac.nz).

## CELEBRATING PHASE TWO

Starpath Phase Two was officially brought to a close on 31 March 2016. To celebrate the five years of this stage of the Starpath Project a special event was held at Kohia Teachers Centre at the University of Auckland Epsom Campus. Past and present staff members, the Starpath Board, colleagues from the Faculty of Education and Social Work and other invited guests attended. Dame Anne Salmond, one of the Project's original sponsors, spoke about the origins of Starpath and the current Director Cindy Kiro thanked the Board members for their time and service to the Project.

Key findings from Phase Two were presented in the Final Summative Evaluation Report\*, released in early May. This has been sent to all Starpath partner schools and interested stakeholders. It explains that most Starpath schools made considerable gains in student achievement at levels 1-3 of NCEA over the course of Phase Two. However we were disappointed the same could not be said for University Entrance results. Whilst pass rates for UE initially improved they declined in 2014 when changes were made to the UE requirements.

In terms of impact and effectiveness on teacher/school leader practice and student achievement, the data analysis showed mixed results. Schools valued the partnership with Starpath and its practical focus on improvement efforts,

especially in the area of data utilisation. However, Starpath recognises much more intensive work was needed.

Conclusions from Phase Two:

- Starpath has developed an approach that has contributed positively to a more data driven focus by partner schools to student achievement.
- Results were variable, reflecting many factors such as differences in schools, multiple interventions, changes in government policy and the timing and implementation of Starpath practices.
- Phase Two produced rich learning and endeavoured to gain maximum learning from work with the schools.
- Positive relationships with schools were developed and maintained with a number agreeing to participate in Phase Three.

The Starpath team hopes to continue its contributions to overcoming the challenge of inequity and supporting excellence in education for Māori and Pasifika students through its work with Phase Three partner schools.

\*Starpath Phase 2 Final Summative Evaluation Report, published March 2016.

## STARPATH PHASE 3

### Who we are

Professor Cindy Kiro  
Director

Joy Eaton  
Director: School Engagement

Victoria Cockle  
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Tania Linley-Richardson  
Professional Development  
Facilitator

Morgan Rangī  
Data Analyst

Nichola Shackleton  
Research Fellow

Heidi Brickell  
Research Assistant



## RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

Starpath has joined with Te Puna Wananga to present a series of seminars by researchers at the Faculty of Education and Social Work. These are public events which teachers and school leaders are most welcome to attend. The remaining four seminars are:

**August 17:** An update on the development of tools to improve the pronunciation of Māori.

**September 21:** Talanoa'i 'a e talanoa: Critical discussions of talanoa as a research method.

**October 19:** Learnings from the Māori Medium Team.

**November 16:** Fa'atamā: Understanding Samoan fathers in New Zealand and implications for academic counselling and PSTs in secondary schools.

All seminars are held at the University of Auckland Epsom Campus, 74 Epsom Avenue, C Block Atrium, 12 to 1pm.

# TEACHERS TELL US ABOUT DATA USE

Results from the Teacher Data Use Survey have highlighted teachers' concerns as well as positive experiences of using data to improve student outcomes.

The survey was carried out in 2013 and repeated in 2014 to gauge teachers' perceptions about data use within Starpath partner schools.

It revealed that teachers did not feel they had the support or time to use data to aid their teaching practice. This point was reinforced by teachers explaining that they felt key barriers to effective use of data were: not having enough time to focus on data; a lack of resources; and a lack of support from other staff.

Teachers also expressed a lack of trust regarding the presentation and interpretation of data made available to them. However, the pre-post comparison of the 84 teachers who completed the survey at both time points showed an improvement in this area, with teachers more likely to agree that the data in the SMS allowed them to make valid judgements about student performance by 2014.

Encouragingly, teachers at both time points were more positive in response to questions about data organisation, data use, data management systems, and understanding of data in 2014 compared to 2013. They were also more likely to agree that their professional development focused on using student achievement data to improve student learning outcomes. In the comments section teachers spoke explicitly about the impact of participating in the Starpath PLD programme, stating that it had improved their ability to understand the data utilisation process, interpret student achievement results, and to use these data to support students' academic progress.

Additional comments stated that data are used almost exclusively for summative assessment and that there was a stronger focus on data use for senior students. It was suggested that there is a need for a greater emphasis on data use for



formative assessment and for use at junior levels (Years 9 and 10). Whilst overall the survey showed that teachers perceived improvements in organisation of junior data in the SMS, there were no large changes in the use of this data reported between 2013 and 2014.

The findings from the survey indicated that schools need greater support in both the visualisation and interpretation of data, and in the use of junior data for formative assessments. Starpath has used these findings to develop an Excel-based teacher dashboard to assist teachers to visualise and interpret their junior and senior data.

In total 84 teachers completed the survey at both time points. Both closed questions, where teachers responded to items on a likert scale (e.g. a scale of 1-5), and open questions, where teachers were invited to write comments, were included in the survey. Thank you to all the teachers who participated.

## Advice for Parents at PSTs

Many schools will be conducting three way conversations with students, teachers and parents in term three. To assist parents of students who are tracking towards the UE qualification to engage fully in this conversation, we recommend sharing the following questions with your parents in advance of the meeting. This will help them to clearly identify the next steps for their child:

- How is my son/daughter tracking with their achievement in their approved subjects for University Entrance?
- When will all the internal assessments be completed? How are they doing with their achievement in these?
- How are they doing with the UE Literacy requirement? What other requirements do they need?
- How is my son/daughter doing in courses which have a high external component? Might they need extra support such as tutoring?
- How can the school help my child prepare for external exams? Will it be offering a tutorial programme?
- What are the deadlines for a) applying for the tertiary course/s my child is interested in, b) applying for accommodation if they intend to study outside of Auckland and c) scholarships available for financial support?
- Is there a Plan B in place for my child if they don't attain the UE qualification this year? Are there opportunities the school can provide in January to help get them there?
- What can the school tell me about the University of Auckland's UniBound course? (This is a six month academic preparation transition course which begins in summer school. Fees are waived for the summer school paper, free accommodation is offered as well as other benefits. Students can gain 30 points towards their Bachelor's degree. For more information see: [www.unibound.ac.nz](http://www.unibound.ac.nz))
- What can we do at home to support our child with their study needs and preparing for tertiary study?



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