

## Manurewa CoL Report 8

Prepared for Cognition Education



### AREA Facilitator

#### AREA Facilitator Year 6-7 and 8-9

(AREA: Attendance, Retention, Engagement and Achievement)

*Poipoia te kakaano, Kia puawai  
Nurture the seed and it will bloom*

This whakatauki has resonated with me strongly this year. As the AREA facilitator I feel like I am a waka on this amazing journey. I get to welcome new paddlers who need some advice and support in order to reach their full potential and destination with new vigour, confidence and a view towards a better tomorrow. Some need lots of support along the way and others just need a helping hand to set them in the right direction. How I think this whakatauki relates most is that with the right care and guidance the students and whanau that I work with can and have made better choices and ultimately blossomed.

#### **The journey continues...**

At the end of 2020 I was left feeling very optimistic about the relationships I had built with the Year 6 students who would be joining me in 2021. I had used our time together advantageously to engage them in collaborative games that would support them as Year 7 students. Covid 19 and lockdowns were a distant memory and we were all becoming accustomed to our new norm. This was my third cohort of Year 6-7 through the AREA programme so my confidence levels as a facilitator had shifted in a positive way. I have also developed tacit knowledge related to considering which students will not exhibit their identified and referral indicators as Year 7 student. Two particular primary schools took advantage of the criteria and referred over 10 students each. As a result I started 2021 with 27 initial Year 7 students.

My focus this year is around finding or linking each of my AREA students with a 'Champion' or two. Someone who can support them, guide them and also someone that the kids trust. I am a strong believer that every student needs at least one and two if they are really lucky.

## **Year 7 2021 Cohort**

### **Successes**

- Communication via phone calls and text messages during the Xmas break.
- 20 whanau who attended the first day of school and participated in the school Powhiri.
- Starting with a full cohort of 27 students within the first week of school.
- Great communication and ongoing contact with whanau during the term.
- Students and whanau have learnt to communicate better with form class teachers and the school in general.
- Fortnightly meetings based on indicators. This was a future learning idea from Report 6.
- Positive observations of students in a number of different settings.
- Goal setting using the Growth Coaching approach. A very powerful tool for positive mindset thinking and encouraging students to process their own pathway.
- Primary schools showing interest in how students in this cohort are progressing as Year 7's.

### **Challenges**

- Larger cohort group at the start of term 1.
- The need to use the contingency plan with one student. This involved home visits, informing the attendance officer and getting truancy involved. Student returned to school successfully.

### **Future learning/focus**

- How to better refine the referral criteria for Year 6 teachers.
- Reviewing GROWTH goals before the end of term 2.

### **Experiences**

There are a few narratives that I could document here but one stands out more than the rest. I first met Student N in the school library of his primary school along with 4 other students who had been referred by their Year 6 senior teacher for their low engagement levels. I met him with a smile and a, "Hi my name is Ms Brooking and you are?"

He replied with "Oh and who sent you to fix me?"

This gave me an instant insight into this student's history with school and external agencies. To start with he was hesitant and 'unfriendly' however he warmed up by the second or third visit and became more engaged with the collaborative activities I initiated. I contacted home and explained who I was and how I would like to support them both as he transitioned into Year 7 and then with his engagement and academics. Mum seemed shocked that I was not with any particular government agency and she could name a lot of them.

With each visit to the school Student N became warmer and was always loaded with questions about Year 7 and his new school.

He was placed in a form class with a young creative male teacher who has a strong cultural background and is known for building confidence levels and engaging students through music. When I met with Student N as a Year 7 at the start of 2021 we organised a check in system and he told me something that I had to instantly share with his form class teacher, whanau leader, mum and his Principal.

'Everyone cares about me here, you just want to help me. No one tries to target me so I have to go home.'

Hearing this made me cry happy tears.

The student who was most at risk is now on a 'on hold' list and has perfect attendance. He participates in all activities and always gives me a smile. Before the end of term 2 I would like to assess his academic progress and set a Growth goal as this is his AREA need now.

## **Year 8 2021 Cohort**

### **Successes**

- Making contact with all 8 students and their whanau over the xmas break.
- All returned to school successfully within a week.
- Successful observations of each student within their form class.
- Three students from the 2020 Year 7 cohort are now 'on hold' as their attendance, engagement and achievement levels no longer need my attention. They know I am here should they need me.

### **Challenges**

- I had to initiate the contingency plan with one student. The attendance officer, truancy and school leadership became involved and Student D successfully returned to school.
- Some engagement levels have dipped slightly in some classes. These students and I discussed the observations I did and made goals that will need to be reviewed before the end of term 2.

### **Future learning/focus**

- Ensure all students and whanau are well informed about the enrolment process for 2022.
- BYOD device requirements at our local High schools so whanau can look at their options before the end of the year.
- Review of GROWTH goals.

### **Experiences**

Student J has been in the AREA programme since 2019. She was originally referred for her low attendance rates and is the sibling of another AREA student who is currently in Year 9. It has been a long road building a productive relationship with Student J who is very reserved and often hides under her giggles when she wants to avoid conflict and orquade conversations. I have been tracking her attendance and working with mum to ensure we get a full whanau wrap around plus fostering a relationship with her form class teacher. During week 7 of term 1 she did not attend school and had not contacted myself or her form class teacher. I did a home visit and she agreed to return to school the next day. It was then that she made a full disclosure of historical abuse. Having completed some Child Youth and Family courses and this not being my first disclosure I documented everything and informed our Pastoral Care team immediately.

After this disclosure was made everything became very messy in that people within the whanau denied the abuse could have ever happened and are causing issues from Student J and her mum. People within the family want it 'swept under the carpet' to make matters worse the accused abuser is a family member who she must see on a weekly basis. Our own Social Worker spoke to her and immediately created a safety plan and informed her mum. I continue to support Student J and her whanau in any way I can which for the most part now is 'a friendly shoulder and ear'. My next hurdle with this student is helping her with her transition to high school. She is inzone for our local High school however, her abuser is a student at that school. We have until the middle of term 3 to make some decisions around enrollment and then I will focus on building her up and making a connection to possible champions for her at her new school. Possible champions include teachers I already know and work with, the Social worker who is already linked via our own and possibly other past AREA students who I know will be both supportive and positive role models.

### **Year 9 2021 Cohort**

#### **Successes**

- All in school by week 3 of the year.
- Supporting a whanau with getting a quote, transport and appointment organised for a BYOD.
- In class support for students during English and Wananga classes as requested by students and teachers.
- Ongoing contact with Kaitiaki teachers.
- Supporting a whanau with accessing MSD

#### **Challenges**

- Ensuring that everyone had a device that could be used for learning purposes.
- Transport and language barriers when dealing with agencies such as The Ministry of Social Development.
- Finding every student a 'Champion'.

#### **Future learning/focus**

- Contacting whanau during the next term break with the specifications and requirements for a 2022 device.

#### **Experiences**

Student I was my most recent addition to the AREA programme and a student who I knew but had never spent much time with until the middle of 2020 when his form class teacher showed some concern over his transition to High school because of low engagement levels and his history related to being easily led and making negative choices.

We completed his enrollment form together and I used this as a method to build our relationship and also to get a look at the full whanau picture. I learnt that he the oldest child of four and his family had moved to New Zealand from Kiribati Island (Gilbert Islands). English is his second language, he loves Rugby and school has always been hard, especially the academics.

However, he had his 'champion' in the way of his amazingly caring and competent form class teacher so he always had a sense of belonging.

I made contact during the Xmas break and he had everything sorted from the first day of school information to uniform. However, there was the issue of his device. Together we went and visited the IT department for a quote including the minimum requirements and specifications. The next step was to contact mum so she could set up an appointment with MSD. Her English is enough that we can understand each other and occasionally Student I will step in to help. MSD did not have a translator so we had to make do with a speaker conversation. The easiest appointment they could organise was during the term holidays which we agreed to. I kept ringing to remind Student I and his mum and everything was fine until the morning of the appointment. They had no transport and no money for a taxi. I suggested walking but they had the younger siblings who would find the distance an issue. They could not stay home with Student I as he would be needed to help translate at the appointment. I made the decision to pick up the family myself and to spend the day supporting this whanau.

Our day ended with MSD taking the quote and agreeing to supply the funds to purchase a Chrome book that will be used for the next 4-5 years as a BYOD.

This experience has shown me that not only do our kids need a champion but also our whanau. It also got me thinking about services that I will find to support this whanau from translator services to Kiribati Island community groups. Because of the AREA programme I have been able to support not just Student I but all of his siblings and also their mum. I hope to be able to connect her with services within the community that can support this whanau.

### **Executive Summary**

It has been an eventful fifteen week so far this year. The time invested last year has enabled me to view the 'fruits of my labour'. A majority of the students within the AREA programme are now settled and engaged in their new schools. For many their indicators have moved from engagement to achievement and this is my next step in the process.

I look forward to continuing this journey with these wonderful young people as they now start paving their own way forward.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

Rita Brooking  
**A.R.E.A Facilitator Year 6-9**

### **Glossary of terms.**

**Whakatauki:** Maori proverb

**Form class:** A class group that spends their learning time together including roll call each day at year 7-8 level.

**Whanau leader:** A leadership person who oversees a group of 8 classes.

**Kaitiaki:** The name given to roll call groups consisting of year 9-13 students.

**BYOD:** Bring your own device

**Powhiri:** The traditional way of welcoming visitors to a new place. Once this has been done they are considered Waewae tapu and free to return.

Ministry of Social Development (MSD)