

Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ report to the Cognition Education Trust Board

October 2020

The Cognition Education Trust grant enabled Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ to develop and strengthen the Ako Mātātupu Mentor teacher support programme.

This programme aims to establish a world-class programme for all mentors working with TFNZ participants; to contribute to the landscape of best practice mentoring and induction in Initial Teacher Education; and to leave a legacy of supporting new teachers in the schools partnered with the Teach First NZ flagship programme.

In 2019-2020, there are 112 participants (teachers) on the Teach First NZ programme, stationed from Kaitaia to Invercargill, and supported by 115 In-School Mentors. These Mentors and their Participants have directly benefited from the CET grant.

Purpose of the Grant:

To deliver the Ako Mātātupu Mentor teacher support programme in 2019

Term of the Grant:

The term of the grant was from 1 June – 31 December 2019

The actions from our grant agreement have been implemented as follows:

1. Dedicate a member of the Teach First NZ staff to working with the mentors and the programme

In October 2019 we recruited for and successfully hired a Mentor Manager who was dedicated to support our community of in school mentors.

Her work included:

- Reviewing the Mentoring experience for Mentors and Participants on the Teach First NZ programme
- Meeting with and supporting Mentors in schools
 - Problem-solving where necessary
- Designing and planning for Mentor Wananga to be held in March and October in 2020
- Planning for digital support and resources for Mentors



2. Review and redesign current mentor programme and handbook with updated resources, increased guidance on effective mentoring, and benchmark it with other great models

Between October and December 2019, our Mentor Manager completed a qualitative evaluation of the impact of Mentoring on the success and well-being of participants on the Ako Mātātupu programme. This evaluation was informed by interviews with alumni and participants of the programme, past and present mentors of participants, and senior leaders in schools.

Based on the findings of this evaluation a [Mentor handbook](#) was designed that includes our most common Mentor models, contact details, programme information and best practice guidelines.

3. Design an evaluation, with support from CET, to investigate the effectiveness of current work with mentors, and learn from the experience of the mentors in 2019 about how TFNZ can improve the programme, hopefully in partnership with some of TFNZ schools

Through the evaluation described above we were able to gauge:

- An understanding of the progressive support needed by our participants at the various stages of their teaching journey
- An understanding of the gaps in the preparation undertaken by participants over the Summer Intensive element at the beginning of our programme, including the changes needed:
 - Participants needed more direct teaching on lesson and unit planning
 - Participants need training in curriculum specific pedagogy by curriculum experts
 - Mentors need a solid and structured induction to mentoring participants on the Teach First NZ programme
 - Senior leadership teams in schools need to be better informed about the programme and its specific nuances compared to other Initial Teacher Education programmes
- The findings and recommendations of the evaluation have been included in our new programme and the associated training for mentors.

4. Develop an online sharing platform for mentors to access information about their participants and additional resources

Following the evaluation and design of the handbook, we are developing four online modules. These will be made available to Mentors through our online learning platform, Canvas.

These four modules are based on:

- The induction of a programme participant into the school community
- Working with the Ako Mātātupu Teacher - the first term

- Best practice principles of classroom observation and effective feedback
- Toolkit for Mentors

These will be complete and accessible to Mentors from January 2021. We expect that they will be of benefit to all our partner schools and to beginning teachers beyond our programme.

5. Run more in-person, cluster and online meetings with mentors through the year

In 2019, we facilitated termly [induction](#) and [support](#) workshops for In-School Mentors. These workshops allowed us to connect with the Mentors and encouraged connections with each other. These were conducted both in person and online.

Each of these workshops was delivered in collaboration with our tertiary partners (2017-2021) at the Mind Lab and allowed us to present to Mentors information on the academic programme of their participants and to discuss ways to support the participants in their developing teaching practice.

As aforementioned, at the end of 2019, our Mentor Manager began to plan for two Wananga to be held in Auckland in 2020. These would allow our mentors to travel to Auckland and workshop with us over a concentrated period of time, to hear from experts in the field of teacher mentoring and to share the common challenges of the role. Unfortunately, due to COVID19 we were forced to cancel both Wananga and instead work towards creating an online platform for engaging with and supporting Mentors. We intend to reinstate these wananga in 2021.

How will you share the learnings- across the participating schools and elsewhere-evidence of a specific dissemination plan?

1. The learnings from this project have informed the programme design of the Ako Mātātupu Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching. This qualification was approved in August 2020 and will be delivered from November 2020. It will impact the Initial Teacher Education journey of up to 100 new teachers every year.
2. From January 2021, Mentors from our 56 participating schools will be able to access online modules to guide their development as Mentors. We anticipate that these resources in best practice will impact induction and mentoring for all beginning teachers in our schools, not just those on our programme.
3. We are in the process of building the [Mentor Handbook for 2021](#) and will be providing this handbook and the associated training to the 65+ Mentors engaged with the programme in 2021.

What difference did the CET grant make- was it allocated to any specific elements of the programme?



The CET grant was largely dedicated to hiring a Mentor Manager. This Mentor Manager was able to lead the evaluation of Mentoring in the Teach First NZ programme, and to provide recommendations from that evaluation for our programme going forward. The dedicated staff member and time on this project have been invaluable to our work.

What are your next steps?

In 2021 we are expecting to have 130 programme participants working in 65 different low decile secondary schools around Aotearoa.

To support our 65+ school mentors we will:

- Dedicate one member of the Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ staff to working with and providing support to our school mentors
- Develop an online platform where Mentors can input and access information about their mentee, connect and share with other mentors and access mentoring resources
- Create online mentoring resources which cover which are benchmarked against other great mentoring models
- (If possible) visit all Mentors in their school context throughout the year
- (If possible) reinstate the two in-person Mentoring Wānanga planned for 2020 (March and October).

In the future, as a Tertiary Education Organisation we intend to develop an accredited Mentoring programme which can be offered to our mentors and other educationalists interested in this crucial area.