Issue 27 November 2012

Pull out and keep

The New Zealand Curriculum

Update

Using inquiry to engage Pasifika students

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School leadership for teaching and learning

Welcome to *The New Zealand Curriculum Update*

Curriculum Updates support school leaders and teachers as they work to design and review their school curriculum in line with the New Zealand Curriculum and with current knowledge and understandings about effective classroom teaching.

Curriculum Updates are published in the *Education Gazette* and are available online at http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/curriculum_updates

This Update shares messages from research about classroom practices that make a difference to Pasifika student achievement in literacy. The full report and a summary are to be made available on the Education Counts website.

Tula'i Mai! Making a Difference to Pasifika Student Achievement in Literacy

The Literacy Professional Development Project (LPDP) provided professional development nationwide from 2004 to 2010. Its goal was to improve literacy outcomes for all students in participating schools while reducing disparity between the highest and lowest achievers.

The project had considerable success. On average, students in LPDP schools made double the expected national rate of progress, with the greatest shifts occurring for those who began in the lowest 20 percent of their cohort. These students achieved up to six times the expected rate.

Although the project was not specifically targeted at Pasifika students, the achievement data for the second cohort (2006–2007) showed that, on average, Pasifika students made more rapid progress than any other ethnic group in both reading and writing. The LPDP Pasifika Study was established to investigate the reasons why.

The Pasifika Study was led by the LPDP's two "embedded" researchers, professors Judy Parr and Helen Timperley. Information was collected from ten schools with Pasifika student populations of between 24 percent and 80 percent. As well as including interviews, questionnaires, and observations, the study closely examined the learning journey of twenty teachers and twenty literacy leaders.

This Update focuses primarily on classroom practices associated with improved outcomes for Pasifika students. It highlights the value of explicit language and vocabulary teaching, effective relationships and interactions, and building on students' languages, cultures, and identities. The Update also presents some of the study's findings about effective school leadership.

Using inquiry to engage Pasifika students

Chapters 4–6 of the LPDP Pasifika Study research report (*Tula'i Mai! Making a Difference to Pasifika Student Achievement in Literacy*) examine the classroom practices that made a difference for Pasifika students and the professional development practices associated with that improvement.

The researchers developed a set of classroom practice indicators for understanding and categorising the practices they observed.* They represent what effective classroom practice looked like for diverse (all) students.

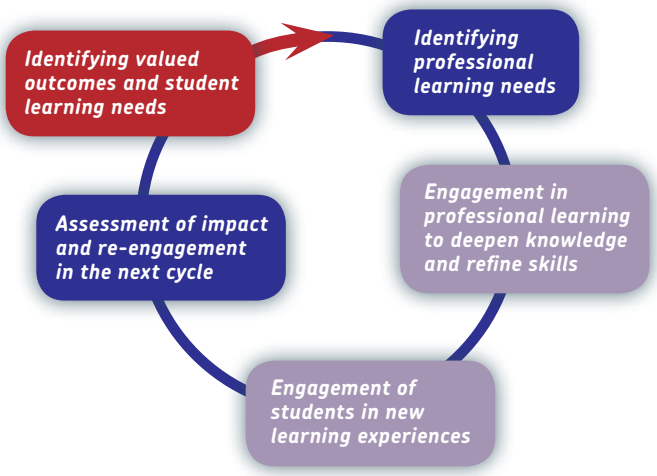
As the study progressed, the researchers described what they saw as teachers adapted their practice to take into account the identities, languages, and cultures of Pasifika students.

This Update presents a snapshot of some of the indicators of effective practice and some examples of practice focused on Pasifika students.

* For more on how the indicators were developed, see page 5 in the online version of this Update.

Guiding questions
He pātai

- What do you know about teaching practices designed specifically to improve outcomes for Pasifika students?
- To what extent do you implement these for your Pasifika students?



While the LPDP was intended to improve achievement for diverse learners, the inquiry and knowledge-building approach (see diagram above) enabled teachers to respond to specific individuals and groups. In *identifying valued outcomes and student learning needs*, schools disaggregated Pasifika student data so that they could inquire into specific puzzles of practice in relation to these students.

To *identify professional learning needs*, teachers closely monitored the progress of selected Pasifika students and inquired into the impact of their practice on these students. In many schools, teachers realised that they needed opportunities to learn more about how to support oral language development and accelerate vocabulary acquisition, particularly the academic language of the curriculum.

Teachers then *engaged in professional learning* tailored to their needs and strengths. Focusing specifically on Pasifika students, sessions included how to use questioning to promote rich student talk and the explicit vocabulary instruction needed to foster language development. In schools with high numbers of Pasifika bilingual students, teachers had opportunities to reflect on the linguistic resources these students bring to their learning and how their first languages might be used in the classroom. Some resources that helped support this learning were:

- *The Learning through Talk* handbooks (2009)
- *The English Language Learning Progressions* (ELLP, 2008)
- *Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools* (SELLIPS, 2009).*

Teachers explored how this professional learning could be applied to practice when *engaging students in new learning*. This Update presents two examples of teachers applying their learning about effective teaching practice to the specific identities, languages, and cultures of their Pasifika students.

Teachers were expected to assess *the impact* of their practice throughout the cycle by reflecting both by themselves and with their colleagues. They participated in formal learning conversations that challenged them to use information about student learning to notice and understand their own impact on that learning. Teachers used these conversations to identify new puzzles of practice to focus on as they *re-engaged in the next cycle*. For example, some schools moved on from a broad focus on oracy and vocabulary development to a more specific focus on understanding and building on the language learning strengths and needs of their English language learners (ELLs).

* For more examples of resources that provide professional learning opportunities tailored to Pasifika students and English language learners, please see the "Useful resources" section of the online version of this Update.

Case studies

The case studies below focus on the inquiry phase in which teachers engage their students in new learning experiences. The table below presents the indicators of effective teaching practice for that phase and some examples of what these looked like when focusing on Pasifika students. The case studies feature two highly effective teachers with classes of predominantly Pasifika students.

Indicators: Engagement of students in new learning experiences	Examples of practice focusing on Pasifika students
• Teachers use student data to design and deliver learning sequences.	
• Teachers explicitly teach strategies for written language.	
• **Teachers explicitly teach language and vocabulary.** See Case Study 2.	• Knowing about and applying principles of second language acquisition • Providing opportunities for tuakana/teina pairings • Providing opportunities for communicative tasks • Providing opportunities to develop fluency
• **Teachers make meaningful connections.** See Case Study 1.	• Connecting to Pasifika world views, knowledge, languages, experiences, and texts • Making links with Pasifika students' island homes and local familiar domains, for example, home, market, church, beach, mall • Using Pasifika interaction practices, for example, metaphor and humour
• **Teachers build effective teacher–student relationships and foster interactions that are focused on learning and build student agency.** See Case Study 2.	• Supporting Pasifika students to articulate their learning • Supporting Pasifika students to develop higher order thinking • Providing opportunities for oral modelling and repetition
• Teachers cater for diverse learning needs.	

› CASE STUDY 1

Making meaningful connections for Pasifika students

The teacher introduced the lesson with a language experience based on a Samoan interaction pattern – the use of metaphor to share a message – to illustrate levels of weak to strong narrative writing. Her mostly Samoan students immediately connected this to their knowledge of effective narrative writing.

She then shared a personal recount of her recent trip to Sāmoa for a family bereavement. The sequence was jumbled, and students needed to collaboratively "unjumble" it. Toward the end of the lesson, she explicitly referred to and reinforced the learning about metaphor:

Student: … She was like a sister to you.

Teacher: Yes, absolutely, what sorts of words tell you that? You are right about "darkest", anything else? Oh "my heart was about to explode"; "dearly loved". So what is it, what sort of word is it called when you … say something like "I couldn't think or read instead my heart and head felt like they were about to explode"? What is that called when you use language like that?

Student: A metaphor.

Teacher: And what does a metaphor mean again?

Student: It is something that isn't real.

Teacher: Right, so a metaphor is like when something is going to happen, but it can't really happen because my head and my heart can't really explode. Is there any other language in there that … shows you a metaphor?

Student: "The world stopped."

The teacher's willingness to share her family bereavement created an authentic focus for her literacy teaching. Her students were fully engaged in the learning because she had been absent for an extended time and they wanted to hear about her trip. The interactive language tasks enabled them to make connections with their world and their literacy knowledge; they then used their explicit knowledge of the structure of a recount to write about a shared experience – the recent school gala. The writing purpose was authentic because the teacher had not been present at the gala and wanted her students to provide her with an account of it.

Building learning, reciprocal relationships and partnerships with the Pasifika learners' parents, families, and communities led to a shift in teacher practice and supported literacy gains.

› CASE STUDY 2

Supporting language learning and agency for Pasifika students

The conversation below took place between a teacher and her year 6–7 students during a lesson focused on evaluation. During this brief exchange, the teacher builds students' agency while scaffolding their oral language development and vocabulary acquisition. The teacher:

- probed and extended the students' ideas
- introduced the vocabulary necessary to complete the task by weaving it seamlessly into the learning conversation
- amplified rather than simplified language so that the students could learn the academic language needed for success
- used speaking frames, such as "I think that … because …", "In my opinion … because …", to explore the criteria for effective responses
- provided an opportunity for student-to-student talk to enable fluency development
- provided time for the students to process and articulate their thinking.

Teacher: So for today's lesson, there are two catchphrases that we are going to use to show our evaluation. One is going to be "I think that", and the other one is …?

All: "In my opinion."

Student: "Because."

Teacher: Who can tell me why we need to have that "because"? This may be a good time to say why you need to have "because". Do a "think, pair, share" on why we need to have "because".

[Students think, pair, share]

Teacher: 3, 2, 1. Now, when we use this "because", that is providing what?

Student: Evidence.

Student: Or proof.

Teacher: Or proof, and when you are trying to prove something, it is called …?

Student: Justifying.

Teacher: Justification. That "because" is your justification of what you do. All right?

You can read an extended discussion of this teacher's practice on pages 168–179 of the report.

School leadership for teaching and learning

The researchers also developed indicators for understanding and categorising school leadership practice. They highlight the importance of instructional school leadership, of self-regulated inquiry and knowledge-building, and of working towards coherence (for example, through ensuring that professional learning for leaders and teachers is aligned to student learning needs). The leadership indicators are listed in Appendix J of the report, along with examples of leadership practices when focusing on Pasifika students.

The following table sets out the leadership practice indicators for the inquiry phase *identifying valued outcomes and student learning needs*. It then lists some examples of what these looked like when school leaders were consciously adapting their practice to the languages, identities, and cultures of their Pasifika students. The following case study illustrates those examples in practice.

Indicators: Identifying valued outcomes and student learning needs	Examples of practice focusing on Pasifika students
• Leaders develop school systems for data collection, organisation, and use.	• Inquiring into puzzles that emerge from analysis of disaggregated Pasifika student data • Using the English Language Learning Progressions to identify the next steps for learning for English language learners • Selecting focus Pasifika students and English language learners and monitoring their progress
• Leaders prioritise student learning and know what is happening.	• Identifying the implications (of evidence about student learning) for Pasifika students
• Leaders set a clear vision for student achievement with informed expectations.	• Using the English Language Learning Progressions to identify where English language learners sit in terms of progress towards curriculum level English language competency

A learning project

The LPDP was a learning project: inquiry and knowledge building took place at all levels. The identification of puzzles of practice led to connected learning for teachers, school leaders, and facilitators themselves because each participant in the project took responsibility for improving their knowledge and skills in relation to specific issues and questions. The evidence to support this inquiry and knowledge building was drawn from both inquiry into professional practice and from formal research. In keeping with this approach, research findings from the study were shared as they emerged, and any learning needs were promptly addressed.

Guiding questions
He pātai

- What do you know about leadership practices designed specifically to improve outcomes for Pasifika students and English language learners?
- To what extent do you implement these for your Pasifika students?

› CASE STUDY 3

Identifying puzzles of practice with regard to Pasifika students

In a number of schools, the literacy leaders were also members of the senior management team, reflecting their commitment to the long-term success of the professional learning. In one such school, a literacy leader (and deputy principal) explained that she and her colleagues had realised that many Pasifika students at their school were English language learners, despite not having identified this earlier. She connected this to another finding from their school: that junior students were being pushed through the reading levels on the basis of their ability to decode text but that they could not always understand the text they had decoded.

I know there has been a big focus on powering kids through levels as opposed to what they were actually doing to get there. I am interested in what the data is showing us now that there has been some PD [with] a focus on literacy, and whether we are seeing different trends [in the data] to what we were before, particularly for those students who are English language learners.

On the basis of these two findings, the school decided to focus on comprehension and vocabulary. Later, the school also decided to adopt *The English Language Learning Progressions* instead of asTTLe to monitor progress for some students because of the ELLP matrix's information about learner development in relation to language structure, grammar, and vocabulary. The next step would be to triangulate students' reading data with their writing data.

The Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017 is due to be released in December. It sets out a transformation agenda that holds everyone involved within the education sector responsible and accountable for achieving Pasifika education success. The Plan places Pasifika learners, their parents, families, and communities at the centre; from there they can influence policies and practices as well as become more informed and demanding consumers of education.

The Pasifika Education Plan sets out clear targets that can be used to measure progress towards achieving accelerated levels of Pasifika participation and achievement, and the actions to get there.

You can find references and useful resources for this Update in the online version at http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/curriculum_updates

The New Zealand Curriculum Update

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

New Zealand Government

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Developing the classroom practice indicators

The classroom practice indicators developed by the Pasifika Study researchers were based on the project's theoretical underpinnings and on the research literature about effective literacy practice for diverse students. They also took into account the more specialised literature about effective practice for Pasifika students and English language learners. The indicators were organised around the inquiry and knowledge-building cycle from the *Teacher Professional Learning and Development BES* (2008). As the research progressed, they were tested and refined in light of the research data.

Useful resources

Davis, A. (2008). *Teaching Reading Comprehension*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Fergusson, P. B., Gorinski, R., Wendt-Samu, T., and Mara, D. (2008). *Literature Review on the Experiences of Pasifika Learners in the Classroom*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, & Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

McComish, J., May, S., and Franken, M. (2007). LEAP: *Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at http://leap.tki.org.nz

Ministry of Education (2003). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2005). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2006). *Connections and Conversations: Making Links for Learning*. Wellington: CWA New Media.

Ministry of Education (2008). *Making Language and Learning Work 3: Integrating Language and Learning in Years 5–8*. Christchurch: Cognition Consulting, University of Canterbury Education Plus, and Visual Learning.

Ministry of Education (2009). *Learning through Talk: Oral Language in Years 1 to 3*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2009). *Learning through Talk: Oral Language in Years 4 to 8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Si'ilata, R. (2007). *The Pasifika Teacher Aide Handbook*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Si'ilata, R., Dreaver, K., Parr, J., Timperley, H., and Meissell, K. (2011). *Tula'i Mai! Making a Difference to Pasifika Student Achievement in Literacy: Literacy Professional Development Project 2009–2010*. Research Component Pasifika Study. Auckland: Auckland Uniservices. The full report will be available on the Education Counts website.

Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., and Fung, I. (2008). *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Literacy learning for English language learners

Cummins, J. (1986). "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention". *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 56 no. 1, pp. 18–36.

Ellis, R. (2005). *Instructed Second Language Acquisition: A Literature Review*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Available at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/5163

Ministry of Education (2003). *The English Language Intensive Programme: Primary Resource* (ELIP). Auckland: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education (2003). *English Language Intensive Programme: Years 7–13 Resource* (ELIP). Auckland: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education (2006). *Connections and Conversations: Making Links for Learning*. Wellington: CWA New Media.

Ministry of Education (2008). *The English Language Learning Progressions*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2009). *Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools: A Guide for Teachers of Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6, and Years 7 and 8. A Resource for Mainstream and ESOL Teachers* (SELLIPS). Wellington: Learning Media.

More information on teacher materials available to support learning for English language learners is available at http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Reviewed-resources

ESOL funding

Noting questions about language background at enrolment will help schools identify English language learners. Schools can apply for ESOL funding if learners meet the criteria, and they can track and monitor learners' progress and achievement using the English Language Learning Progressions. Information about ESOL funding is available at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/EnglishForSpeakersOfOtherLanguages/FundingSupportInitiatives/ESOLFundingPolicy.aspx

Home–School partnerships

Home–School partnerships: http://home-schoolpartnerships.tki.org.nz

Literacy Professional Development Project research summaries and tools

For more information on the LPDP, including links to the Improving Learning for All set of research summaries, go to http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Teacher-needs/Professional-support/Professional-development-and-support/Literacy-professional-development-project-LPDP

For a link to the tools developed as part of the LPDP and information on how to use them, go to www.learningmedia.co.nz/professional-development/tools-from-LPDP

BES Exemplar 3

One of the exemp lars developed as part of the Ministry's Best Evidence Synthesis Programme focuses on professional learning and teaching practices to support student self-regulation and success in writing. See BES Exemplar 3 – Ngā Kete Raukura – He Tauira 3: Teacher and Student Use of Learning Goals, available from Education Counts at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/BES/bes-exemplars

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