THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Student agency, wellbeing and learning

Research and report by Megan Martin, Lydia Sula, Liz Beattie, Keri Campbell and Dr Sarah Te One

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Motivated by our shared concern for social justice and child rights, and by lessons from research into the interaction between student agency, wellbeing, and learning, our project set out to explore how we could improve wellbeing outcomes for our students.

Working within different contexts, and with different cohorts of students, we drew upon the same frameworks and evidence. In particular, each of us chose a specific inquiry focus from a set of wellbeing indicators created by the Education Review Office, and each used Lundy's Model of Participation to consider how we would provide students with *space* to express their *voice*, an attentive *audience*, and real *influence* over their learning.

Through sharing our findings, we identified six elements that need to be present in a classroom or school that is intent on improving learner agency and wellbeing, and thus learning. These are relationships, identity, participation, pedagogical know-how, leadership, and environment. They combine to form a transformational model, called **RIPPLE**. In addition, one teacher developed **SANER**, a framework for evaluating, talking about, and growing emotional competence. Together, we believe that these frameworks could help create significant shifts in pedagogical practice that would enhance student wellbeing and truly put learners at the centre.

The inquiry story

This inquiry took place over three years and involved four schools in Christchurch's Catholic Kāhui Ako - Te Mara Akoranga Katorika. The schools are diverse, including two single-sex secondary schools and two full primary schools. The number and age of participating students also varied, with the inquiry focus on year 9 students in the two secondary schools, and years 0–1 in one primary school, and years 6–8 in the other.

What was the focus?

This project explored the relationship between student agency, wellbeing, and learning. It was a response to evidence that when learners are listened to, and when their interests are made central to teachers' shared praxis, they become more engaged in their learning and their wellbeing is enhanced. The project was also informed by a shared commitment to children's rights. We developed the following innovation statement:

> **We want to find out whether, given the right environment (physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, social, educational), opportunities and support, together with our learners we can build creative, imaginative, resourceful, and practical dispositions to enhance wellbeing in communities of learning.**

Our approach to this research was underpinned by a child rights framework, the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* (NZ Government, 2019), *Grow Waitaha* (Ministry of Education and Ngāi Tahu Mātauraki Mahaanui, 2013), numerous Education Review Office reports (2015, 2016a, 2016b*) and *Te Pakiaka Tangata. Strengthening student wellbeing for success* (NZ Government, 2017) - a set of guidelines for secondary schools and wharekura.
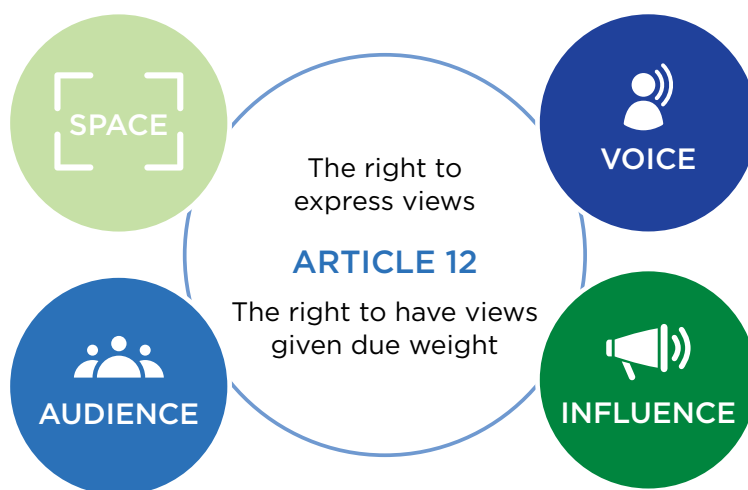
**Christchurch
Catholic
Community**

**Te Mara Akoranga
Katorika**

**Student Agency,
Wellbeing and
Learning Project**

**'He Kakano
ahau i ruia mai i
Rangiatea'**

Voice is not enough

SPACE

VOICE

The right to
express views

ARTICLE 12

The right to have views
given due weight

AUDIENCE

INFLUENCE

What is agency?

Agency is about children exercising influence
over their environment. Agency implies
active participation which includes choice.*

*The 'Voice is not enough' diagram has been recreated for this report, however it can be attributed to the Lundy's
model of participation (2007)*

**Referencing the CORE Blog http://blog.core-ed.org/blog/2020/02/childrens-agency-a-champion-and-a-model-
for-advocacy.html*

School-based action research projects

We used collaborative participatory action research processes to generate data, using individual, school-based teacher inquiry projects. Qualitative, interpretive and phenomenological methodologies underpinned our research design. Collaborative action research to both document and evaluate innovative practices–is a well established educational research approach, largely because its pragmatic, interpretive methods are based on what teachers know and how teachers teach. Cyclic, or spiral in effect, action research is both an iterative and reiterative process (Cardno, 2003; Piggott-Irvine, 2009). Current exemplars for inquiry in education follow a similar cycle of act, do, review or reflect.

What we found

This inquiry addressed three central questions:

- *How can we shift our current pedagogical practices to enable student agency in order to improve their wellbeing and enhance learning?*
- *How can we ensure students' views in relation to their wellbeing are included in decisions about learning and the curriculum?*
- *How can we ensure students' voices about their wellbeing are heard?*

There are some fundamental issues that arise from these questions that are about how the New Zealand Curriculum is implemented in practice (Ministry of Education, 2007). For example, what learning matters to learners is critically important to their wellbeing, so a reflective person has to ask, to what extent does this happen. This issue is bigger than our project.

Throughout the research, we used action research processes to question, research, trial, analyse, and reflect on our data to reveal our overall model for wellbeing. Below we summarise how our questions were answered, and then, based on our theoretical lenses (our theory of learning and our rights-based framework) we discuss the implications of both for our next steps.

Shifting our pedagogy to improve learner agency, wellbeing and learning.

We wanted to reach a shared understanding of how teacher practices could enable learner agency to improve wellbeing and learning. We started by investigating what agency meant and then began observing. We encouraged this in our own practice. How were we sharing power with our learners? And, if we were, how did this impact the organisational culture of the school?

We addressed learner agency in multiple ways depending on our specific learning context. This meant being deliberate about involving learners in all aspects of planning for their learning, thus developing their agency. This included moving from a teacher driven curriculum to a co-constructed curriculum design with teachers, learners and whānau, developing frameworks for agency, creating more learner-centred and culturally inclusive environments.

This finding illustrates the notion of transforming participation in which, as a result of establishing a shared understanding, novice learners and experienced teachers find common ground and become a community of learning.

Within communities of learning, participation is always variable. That impacts on the practices – in this case, teacher pedagogies – which have to accommodate differences and resolve tensions in order to survive. Because one school in the project already had well established learner agency platforms in their full play based learning environment, their response to this question was nuanced. Even with an environment that was set up for learner agency, their challenge was how they would ensure engagement for all with such freedom. Some learners needed more teacher support to participate effectively.

Including learners' views about wellbeing in curriculum decisions

All of us used a variety of strategies to include the learners' views about their wellbeing in curriculum discussions. Again, we found this was addressed variably. For some of us, we were able to ask learners and then feedback directly into the school timetable. For others, the organisational structures made this difficult.

Based on our findings, to genuinely include learners' views in the curriculum requires leadership and a school culture that is responsive and willing to change. There were some obvious barriers. For example, some of us found there was no process for listening to learners at critical phases in planning for learning within existing school structures. In these schools, learner voice was not sought during curriculum discussions with staff and so, their wellbeing, while a consideration, was not directly addressed.

Not all practices in a working community are good. In fact, they can inhibit innovation and privilege, intentionally or otherwise, dominant discourses in education. Hauora/wellbeing is a 'soft' skill subject and lacks the status of English, or Physics for example. But, we argue, if learner wellbeing is ignored, that could constitute a breach of standards and so, evaluating process, protocol and procedure in the organisational structures of schools should be a regular occurrence that is transparent and open to all involved - learners, whānau and teachers.

Our RIPPLE model has the potential to highlight key aspects of wellbeing that could support transformational change at both the classroom level and school wide. Leadership, as we note earlier, is critical to relationship building that supports participatory learning and creative pedagogical know how. We need to shift from a belief that the only valid knowledge resides with teachers if we are to embrace learner views about their wellbeing in relation to learning.

Ensuring students' voices about wellbeing are heard

We used Lundy's Model of Participation (2007) to ensure that we had considered Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence. We all created space for our learners to be heard, and ensured we were an active audience. We then used our influence to make changes in order to improve the learning environments and ultimately the wellbeing of the learners.

The success rate was, once again, variable. We worked hard to think about why this was so. How could we create a culture where learners felt safe to voice their concerns about wellbeing. What were we doing well and what did we need to improve?

Over the course of the project, we certainly became more conscious than we were about the value of listening to learners. As we became more aware, we became more and more curious about why some teachers put up barriers to listening to learners, not in a controlled sense, but in the context of authentic conversations.

We recognise that for some, learners and teachers alike, discussing wellbeing is too personal and, for teachers, some may feel ill-equipped to cope. One of our team designed SANER - an interactive resource to gauge how learners were feeling and, at the same time, normalise the language of emotional well being. This innovation sits neatly alongside the RIPPLE framework and could, potentially, become widely used as a tool to support conversations about wellbeing.

The RIPPLE effect

What we found was that if any of the overall themes were missing from the RIPPLE this was a major barrier to improving wellbeing. These themes are what we feel are necessary to implement a whole-school wellbeing approach that is effective.

R	**Relationships** This research revealed how power dynamics impacted on wellbeing. This could be social, cultural, and environmental. Positive learning relationships can be developed by a teacher's shared approach with the learners that acknowledge the identity of the learner and embedding pedagogical practices proven to enhance connection.
I	**Identity** Teachers need to know, respect and value learners' identities. This can be done by listening to their voices and creating authentic learning experiences and environments.
P	**Participation** Creating an environment that allows for learners' voices to be heard and acted upon; allowing them to be active participants in their learning is vital. This results in increased ownership, agency and sense of belonging.
P	**Pedagogical know-how** Being adaptive educators that move with the times using pedagogical research and evidence to shift practice is required to be effective in meeting the needs of learners.
L	**Leadership** In the context of this project this is three-fold; senior leadership, teacher leadership and learner leadership. It is crucial that there is collective voice in the decision making processes that affects the learning environments for all.
E	**Environment** A learning environment should reflect the spiritual, emotional, social, cultural, physical and intellectual needs of its community.

ENVIRONMENTS

LEADERSHIP

PEDAGOGY

PARTICIPATION

IDENTITY

RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction and rationale

Our project explored the relationship between learner agency, wellbeing and learning. Recent research has shown that when learners are listened to they are more engaged in their learning. We wanted to find out if, given the right environment (physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, social, educational), opportunities and support, together with our learners we could build creative, imaginative, resourceful and practical dispositions to enhance wellbeing in communities of learning.

We wanted children's learning interests to be central to our shared praxis because evidence suggests that this leads to wellbeing. Instead of Hauora/wellbeing delivered as a one-off checkbox event, we wanted wellbeing to become a lived experience for all children and young people at school. To do this we had to investigate; first, how we can shift teacher pedagogy to position the wellbeing of learners as the primary consideration; and second, how such practices become embedded.

Our questions and expectations

This inquiry was broken down into three key questions:

- How can we shift our current pedagogical practices to enable learner agency in order to improve their wellbeing and enhance learning?
- How can we ensure learners' views in relation to their wellbeing are included in decisions about learning and the curriculum?
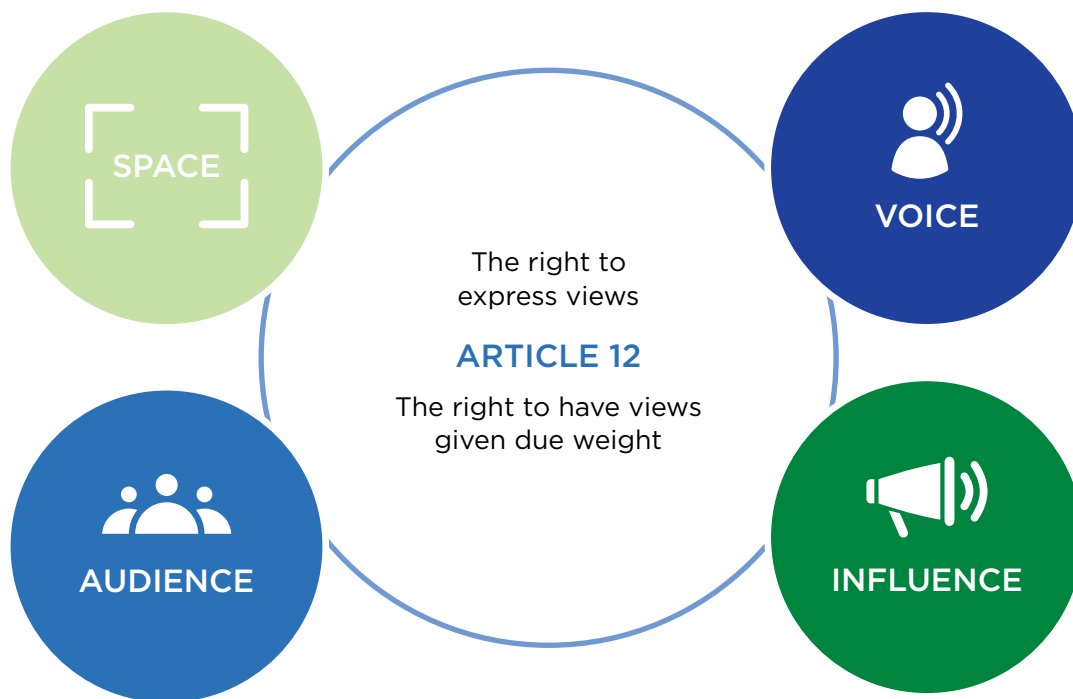- How can we ensure learners' voices about their wellbeing are heard?

This involved several components but research supports the value of involving children and young people in all aspects of planning for learning. That means teachers need to enable this; the organisational structures of schools need to enable this; and, there has to be a shared understanding in the wider whānau community that children and young people's involvement, in an authentic way, will enhance wellbeing and how they feel about themselves as learners. Teachers need to be able to identify what in their current practices facilitates wellbeing, and if there are barriers to this, how can these be overcome?

We expected to see a shift in many aspects of learner engagement due to learners feeling empowered and feeling that they could voice their opinions and that these opinions were valued and taken into consideration. Through this process we anticipated learners would develop:

- a sense of belonging and connection to school, to whānau, to friends and the community
- social and emotional competency, social awareness, good relationship skills, self-confidence, an ability to lead and have responsible decision making skills
- skills to be inclusive and involved, engaged, and invited to participate and make positive contributions
- their understanding of their place in the world, and confidence in their identity and be optimistic about the future (NZ Government, 2017).

We refined our intended initial outcomes during the ethics application process. We identified some key points for children and young people as well as for teachers. These are summarised as follows:

For children and young people - our learners:

- We wanted our learners to use the strategies and tools they've learned as part of their everyday living to be agentic and take responsibility for their own learning and wellbeing.
- We wanted this to translate into a sense of collective responsibility for wellbeing at a community level (peers).
- We wanted teachers to listen to learners and focus on supporting and developing their agency (influence).
- We wanted teachers and learners to work as partners contributing to overall wellbeing at a community level (school).

For teachers:

- Explicate their praxis when it comes to wellbeing.
- Incorporate all learners' views (voice) into their planning and evaluation processes.
- Focus on enhancing all learners' agency.

Introducing our team

Our TLIF team: From the left, Megan Martin, Marian College, our critical friend, Dr Sarah Te One, Senior Researcher at CORE Education, Lydia Sula, St Teresa's School, Liz Beattie, St Joseph's School (Papanui), and Keri Campbell, St Thomas of Canterbury College

We started this Teacher Led Innovation Fund (TLIF) project in 2018. Our application went through a two-stage process before it was finally accepted. Our team of teachers came from four different and diverse schools in our Christchurch's Catholic Kāhui Ako - Te Mara Akoranga Katorika. Each had very different learning environments.

None of us were quite sure what we had signed up for but we were excited to start, and together, with our critical friend, we began a two year adventure which was both exciting and terrifying at the same time.

Methodology and research design

This research was motivated by concerns about children and young people's wellbeing at school. Three questions guided our inquiry:

- How can we shift our current pedagogical practices to enable learner agency in order to improve their wellbeing and enhance learning?
- How can we ensure learners' views in relation to their wellbeing are included in decisions about learning and the curriculum?
- How can we ensure learners' voices about their wellbeing are heard?

Key influences

Our approach to this research was underpinned by a child rights framework, the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* (NZ Government, 2019), *Grow Waitaha* (Ministry of Education and Ngāi Tahu Mātauraki Mahaanui, 2013), numerous Education Review Office reports (2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b) and *Te Pakiaka Tangata. Strengthening student wellbeing for success* (NZ Government, 2017) - a set of guidelines for secondary schools and wharekura.

A child rights framework

This framework is based on four key principles: all rights apply to all children, decisions made about children should take their best interests into account, all children have a right to develop to their full potential and, finally, all children are entitled to a point of view. These principles apply across several categories of rights for children, including their rights to a quality of life and, implied within that, a sense of wellbeing and belonging.

Voice is not enough

SPACE

VOICE

The right to
express views

ARTICLE 12

The right to have views
given due weight

AUDIENCE

INFLUENCE

This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus educational decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order:

SPACE	Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
VOICE	Children must be facilitated to express their view
AUDIENCE	The view must be listened to
INFLUENCE	The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

The 'Voice is not enough' diagram has been recreated for this report, however it can be attributed to the Lundy's model of participation (2007)

What is agency?

> Agency is about children exercising influence over their environment. Agency implies active participation which includes choice.*

Our team was committed to including the views of the learners in our research design. As part of this process, we read and discussed several models (Hart, 1992; Shier, 2001) for including children and young people in research before settling on the Lundy (2007) model for participation. This model on page 14, identifies four discrete but complementary components. Space refers to the social, emotional, cultural, spiritual and physical environment where you listen to children; Voice is about the strategies selected to document what children say and think; Audience refers to who is listening, and, who needs to hear the views of children about the issue under discussion and finally, Influence is how you use what children share to make a difference to their lives. All too often, the influence component is lacking, and we fail to act on what children tell us, and, in a related, hidden component, we fail to feedback to them, how their views influenced us.

Grow Waitaha and the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*

Another influential policy was the child wellbeing strategy. In part as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic but also because of residual trauma from earthquakes and then the Mosque shootings (2019), learner wellbeing had been foregrounded by teachers throughout Christchurch. The impact of COVID-19 prioritised wellbeing, especially for children and young people.

Although not acknowledged as such, teachers were, in a very real sense, essential workers. Their resourcefulness, supported by the Ministry, was commendable. An example of this can be found in *Grow Waitaha* - an initiative designed collaboratively to support "schools in post-earthquake Canterbury through educational transformation [and] work with school communities through the process of educational change" (Ministry of Education and Ngāi Tahu Mātauraki Mahaanui, 2013). Some of the resources developed for this site were used as tools to generate data.

The *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy* (NZ Government, 2019) articulates a holistic multidimensional understanding of wellbeing. Specifically, the strategy acknowledges the rights of all children and young people to a good quality of life and, as part of that, recognises that whānau wellbeing is fundamental to achieving overall societal wellbeing.

Referencing the CORE Blog http://blog.core-ed.org/blog/2020/02/childrens-agency-a-champion-and-a-model-for-advocacy.html

Education has a critical role to play and is significant to this project because our research sites included children starting school at five and young people in secondary school settings.

The education outcomes for the strategy reflected elements of our research design and confirmed the key elements of our analysis:

> **Children and young people learn better when they are engaged, safe and included. This means their needs are understood and their identities, languages, cultures, abilities and personal qualities are recognised, respected and valued.** *(NZ Government, 2019, n.p.)*

Embedded in the strategy are children's rights.

Education Review Office reports and *Te Pakiaka Tangata*

Numerous reviews and studies, both national and international, have established clear links between wellbeing and learning success. In brief, the cumulative impact of poor wellbeing on learners, particularly Māori and minority groups, is both concerning and costly (Action Stations, Ara Taiohi, 2018). Measures to address underlying, persistent and systemic issues have prompted high-level policy responses including a set of guidelines -*Te Pakiaka Tangata.* Our research used these guidelines to refine our individual school mini projects which were based on four of the nine focus areas for desired outcomes for wellbeing (See Table 1 below).

Our wellbeing projects and school sites

Learners have a sense of belonging and connection to school, to whānau, to friends and the community.

St Thomas of Canterbury College

625 learners | Years 7 - 13 | Focus on Y 9

Students are socially and emotionally competent, are socially aware, have good relationship skills, are self-confident, are able to lead, self manage and are responsible decision-makers.

Marian College

400 students | Years 9 - 13 | Focus on Y 9

Students are nurtured and cared for by teachers at school, have adults to turn to who grow their potential, celebrate their successes, discuss options and work through problems.

St Joseph's (Papanui)

450 students | Years 0 - 8 | Focus on Y 0/1

Students are included, involved, engaged, invited to participate and make positive contributions.

St Teresa's School (Riccarton)

170 students | Years 0 - 8 | Focus on Y 6, 7, 8

Table 1: The participating schools

| Christchurch Catholic Community

Te Mara Akoranga Katorika | Student Agency, Wellbeing and Learning Project | 'He Kakano ahau i ruia mai i Rangiatea' |

School-based action research projects

We used collaborative participatory action research processes to generate data, using individual, school-based teacher inquiry projects. Qualitative, interpretive and phenomenological methodologies underpinned our research design. Collaborative action research–to both document and evaluate innovative practices – is a well established educational research approach, largely because its pragmatic, interpretive methods are based on what teachers know and how teachers teach. Cyclic, or spiral in effect, action research is both an iterative and reiterative process (Cardno, 2003; Piggott-Irvine, 2009). Current exemplars for inquiry in education follow a similar cycle of act, do, review or reflect.

Participants

The four schools participating in this project were part of the Christchurch's Catholic Kāhui Ako - Te Mara Akoranga Katorika.

- **St Thomas of Canterbury College**: 40+ participants (Student participants, senior leadership staff; our whānau group)
- **St Teresa's School**: 70 participants (students and teachers)
- **Marian College**: 10+ participants (students and teachers)
- **St Joseph's School**: 10+ participants (students and teachers)

Data collection methods and tools

We used the following methods to collect our data:

- Observations
- Surveys
- Interviews, including conversational interviews with children, both individually and in small groups
- Focus groups interviews
- Oral and visual, digital recording (digital storying)
- Teacher/researcher journals (Google slides and Google docs)
- Learner portfolios (learning journeys)
- Movement maps

We used methods known to work with children such as sentence completion, storytelling, artwork, and photographic prompts. A benefit of this lies in its transformational potential. Given our initial premise, that children are experts in their own lives, we heeded our child rights framework and designed questions and surveys in order to genuinely listen to their ideas about wellbeing (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2018).

Finally we explored visual movement maps - spaghetti junctions (Duncan & Te One, 2012, 2014) as a way to document teacher engagement with children. When coupled with observation data, this is a powerful reflective tool for teachers because it shows where they place themselves, who they talk to, and about what.

Theoretical framework for analysis

Part of any inquiry has to include 'making sense' as a precursor to making changes and then taking action. Our theoretical lenses for analysing data drew predominantly from the following:

- Sociocultural theories - learning and development through participation in cultural processes (for example, Rogoff et al, 2007; Wenger, 1998);
- Ecological theories - taking into account how the environment and systems affect learning and development (see Bronfenbrenner, 2005); and,
- Kaupapa Māori theory and approaches which locate inquiries in relation to place (mana whenua), iwi, hapū, whānau and tamariki (Bishop, 2003; Durie, 1994; Macfarlane, 2004; Te Maro, 2010).

Our overall intention was to promote learner wellbeing and, as part of that, to examine and evaluate the extent to which our current organisational structures empower teachers, alongside children, to try something that makes a difference to children's learning at school.

During the analysis phase, we met as a group and considered all our data sets in relation to the questions we focused on, but also in relation to the overarching questions. As a result of intense interrogation of the data, we identified our key themes and tested these using our interpretations of theory. Most influential in the end were sociocultural theories with notions of community as sites for learning, practice, and inquiry.

To support our thinking, our critical friend designed an online workbook for us to continue the analysis process in between meetings (see Tables below). Each page of this workbook captured our theorising and our process. We began with the idea of communities of learners (Rogoff et al, 2007). Then, through discussion and reflection, we became a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) where we developed a shared understanding of how our experiences transformed the nature of our participation. Putting that learning into practice led us to become a community of inquiry. We re-purposed these ideas and re-named them as a learning community, a working community, and a curious community which gave us a sense of ownership of the process (Table 1).

Theoretical lens

A learning community	A working community	A curious community
Learners and kaiako who are part of a class, a group, and community	The way in which participants (learners and kaiako) in the community work together	The ways in which learners and kaiako evaluate, question, innovate, and consider reflectively and reflexively, insights and then make changes.

Table 1: Our theoretical lens

A second lens we applied to our research drew on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989,The Convention). Our critical friend had expertise in this area (Dalli, Te One and Pairman, 2017; Te One, 2010) and was able to support us to interpret and apply this lens to our action research projects. Given that agency was integral to each of our questions, we spent time reading about what this meant and how it reified in our schools. We used the framework below to analyse our data and, based on these, we were able to evaluate whether or not, we were respecting children's rights to be heard, where we listened to them, who actually listened and finally whether or not, based on what we had heard, we were able influence their wellbeing at school.

Child rights (learner agency) lens

Space	Voice	Audience	Influence
Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views	Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views	Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with responsibility to listen	Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

Table 2: Our rights-based framework

We had been processing our data individually and then, guided by Sarah, as a team we analysed our collective data to identify key themes. Through this iterative, interpretive process, six clear themes emerged from the data. These would later be encapsulated into the acronym RIPPLE.

Our RIPPLE themes

Relationships

Identity

Pedagogical Know-how

Participation

Leadership

Environment

These two tables were then applied across the three research questions before being deconstructed into findings, insights, and discussion points. The final stage of the process was to write up each schools' story as a short case study.

We then set the question alongside data, theme, and theoretical analysis. Each question had a separate table. Below is an example of how the data was hyperlinked to the teacher/ researchers' journals and observations and then, categorised according to theme, theory, and children's agency.

Question	Data	Theme	Theory Learning	Theory Agency
How do current pedagogical practices ensure student wellbeing and enhance learning?	Learning Intention Reflection	Identity	Learning Community	Influence

Table 3: Analysing data according to question theme and theory

The final stage of our analytical process was spread across two further tables - both designed to address the TLIF requirements to identify and discuss findings as well as to reveal shifts in practice. Table 4 (Findings, insights and discussion points) guides the user to identify the finding and then note any insights, discussion points and recommendations.

Sample table #1 - How we analysed data according to findings, insights and discussion points

Findings	Insights	Discussion points	Recommendations

The final stage in our process was two-fold. We wanted to present our findings in a way that showed how our practices had changed as an outcome of our respective research projects (see Table 5). Over the course of the project we used a variety of tools to create a cohesive narrative. One of these - the PIXAR Story Spine (Aerogramme, 2013), became a loose template for us to craft a contextualised write-up of our school-based inquiries.

Sample table #2 - How we could show and analyse shifts in practice

What we used to do	What we changed	What happened next	What difference did this make for learners and kaiako

Originally, we had planned to complete our analysis work by April 2020 but we were interrupted by COVID-19. This, plus other reasons yet to emerge, meant our team decided to put the project on hold until Term 4 2020. Since then, we have also had to contend with the compounding impacts of the Lockdown on student wellbeing as well as managing our own. Rather than easing back into life, we have all experienced pressures and stress.

Ethical considerations

CORE Education's ethics committee reviewed our ethics application. We explained in full our design, our methods and our intentions to work closely with students of all ages. We were attentive to their rights throughout the research and we practiced a process of seeking ongoing assent. This meant informing students that we were asking or observing as part of our research project and making sure their options about whether or not to participate were clear.

Findings

When we met in February 2020, we co-constructed our analysis to search for themes and findings. We inserted data to answer our key questions and then we reflected on the picture this produced. We came up with the acronym RIPPLE through a process of micro and then macro-analysis.The six attributes of RIPPLE encapsulate our outcomes and link to our purpose: we wanted to address underlying concerns about wellbeing for learners from age five to 18; we wanted to ensure all learners felt heard and understood; we also wanted to enable them to input into curriculum design and influence systems level change. In other words, we wanted to hear how learners felt and to see their concerns, opinions and ideas incorporated into our school systems.

The next sections explain our thematic findings.

Relationships
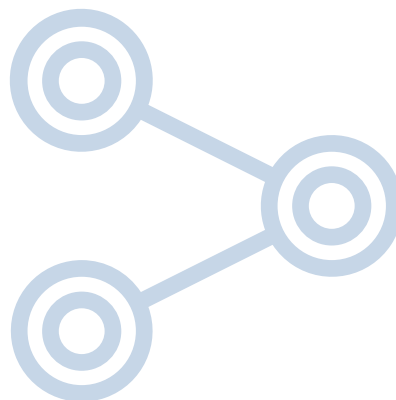
Wellbeing and relationships go hand in hand. In fact, relating to others is a key competency in the New Zealand curriculum and as such has implications for all learning areas at all education levels.

> **"Relating to others is about interacting effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts. This competency includes the ability to listen actively, recognise different points of view, negotiate, and share views".**
> **(Ministry of Education 2007, pp.12)**

As we perused our data, relationships were a common theme across all sites. Wellbeing for learners and teachers was inextricably linked to relationships with others. However, we found that we needed to be deliberate in our approach to building relationships. This looked quite different depending on our specific learning contexts. We found many examples of why relationships mattered to learners and how shifts in our practice could improve relationships.

For example, in order to build relationships at St Thomas of Canterbury College, understanding the young people's cultural background was the starting point. For the new entrants at St Joseph's School (Papanui), building a sense of belonging and connection where children felt nurtured and cared for by the teachers and adults supporting their transition was vital for how they felt about their learning (manaakitanga). At St Teresa's School this was reflected in human to human relationships as opposed to the more traditional teacher to student dyad.

> **"The endless amount of happiness the teachers show us. They always seem to make us smile and feel good about ourselves"**
> **(Student, St Teresa's School).**

At Marian College, the teacher/researcher embedded an emotional competency framework, which included a check-in and check-out system of measuring feelings (see Figure 1). She was able to 'hear what the students were feeling'.

> **"The teacher is open to listening to what we have to say and takes suggestions and asks if there is something better she can do"**
> **(Student, Marian College).**

This framework emerged through the action research process. Students were able to clearly articulate what they were feeling and why because they had developed their emotional competence. This improved understanding and communication between teacher and students, and between students as well.

RED	*Angry.* High energy/intensity, more unpleasant emotions
BLUE	*Sad.* Low energy/intensity, more unpleasant emotions
YELLOW	*Happy.* High energy/intensity, more pleasant emotions
GREEN	*Calm.* Low energy/intensity, more pleasant emotions

Figure 1 - Emotional check-in and check-out system

Identity

> **"Students do better in education when what and how they learn reflects and positively reinforces where they come from, what they value and what they already know. Learning needs to connect with students' existing knowledge"**
> *(Ministry of Education, 2020, p.17)*

Identity is about acknowledging the significance of what it means to know who you are and where you come from (Bishop, 2004; Durie, 1994; Macfarlane, 2004). In terms of teacher practice and delivery this means knowing the learner and their background and culture. This was evident when looking at the levels of engagement of the students and their involvement in their own learning. Another significant aspect was the cultural awareness of the teacher and their proficiency in appropriate cultural behaviour and practice.

At St Teresa's School identity was about children knowing themselves as a learner; knowing their interests and how they like to learn best. Children being able to identify their interests was beneficial in terms of their engagement. At St Joseph's School Papanui their focus was on building an authentic learning environment that reflected how the students identified as learners.

In the example below, the teacher/researchers' analysis of the data revealed the significance of names and whakapapa to Māori young people at St Thomas of Canterbury College:

From interviews with the students it became evident that some teachers were unaware how to pronounce student's names correctly. The significance of a name particularly to Māori students is a major part of their identity. Our students said they went along with their names being shortened or abbreviated in order to alleviate any tension from the lack of knowledge and understanding of the teacher. Through gathering their voice and acting on it we were able to support the cultural identity of the students. We did this by providing a platform for the students to create a video of themselves saying their names correctly and this was shared with the staff. This meant the teacher became the learner and the learner became the teacher (ako-reciprocal learning relationship). For the students and the teachers it was a starting point to acknowledge iwi affiliations and develop the self confidence of the students through greater understanding of their whakapapa.
(Teacher/researcher journal, St Thomas of Canterbury College)

The impact on students was evident almost immediately:

> **"It was really cool that the teachers were making an effort to pronounce my name correctly"**
> *(Learner, St Thomas of Canterbury College)*

Also evident was the impact of ako and reciprocal learning relationships or pedagogy. Something as simple as pronouncing names correctly affirmed identity, whakapapa and relationships which are known to increase success for Māori as Māori (Education Council, Ministry of Education, 2011).

Participation

We valued learner agency. We had developed a shared understanding of what this meant and realised that learners of all ages participate actively in their own contexts and too, that this influences their experiences. By using the child's rights framework throughout our projects we not only gathered voice from our learners, but, we as teacher/researchers were an engaged and active audience, who listened to them, considered their viewpoints and modified our practice to ensure that these influenced the decisions made about their learning.

SPACE

VOICE

The right to
express views

ARTICLE 12

The right to have views
given due weight

AUDIENCE

INFLUENCE

SPACE	Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
VOICE	Children must be facilitated to express their view
AUDIENCE	The view must be listened to
INFLUENCE	The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

The 'Voice is not enough' diagram has been recreated for this report, however it can be attributed to the Lundy's model of participation (2007)

Our findings reinforced the importance of participating and contributing which reflects another key competency that emerged from our data.

> **"Students who participate and contribute in communities have a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within new contexts".**
> *(Ministry of Education 2007, p.13)*

We noticed that our learners tended to participate more actively when they had 'voice' and 'choice' about what they were expected to be engaged in. At St Thomas of Canterbury College the combination of whānau, learners, and the teacher participation led to co-constructing the junior curriculum to reflect their bicultural perspectives.

At St Joseph's School (Papanui), learners were active participants in the exploration of authentic learning environments. This began by asking learners to draw where they liked to be at school and they all drew the playground.

This prompted the teacher/researcher to analyse the images using critical thinking tools. The learners' perceptions of what counted as learning differed and this prompted some important questions about the role of a teacher:

> Learners said, "We all need to sit at a desk and sit still to learn"; and "Learning is hard, learning makes me tired and I have to have a desk and sit still to learn".
>
> So if the learners have these perceptions, this impacts on their wellbeing. My task then is to investigate what I am doing, or can do, to change this view of learning. Where did it come from given that the learners have only been at school for 1 year. How does this perception of what learning looks like affect their wellbeing?
>
> To move our school forward I have to change the other adults' views of learning because this is where our learners' views for the most part come from. (Teacher/researcher journal, St Joseph's School, Papanui).

At Marian College learners and the teacher/researcher co-constructed the learning environment as part of a class wellbeing challenge. Students were invited to choose a wellbeing challenge that best met their needs and to self-experiment, then report back to the class and share their experience. The students embraced the opportunity to share their stories of their wellbeing journeys and to support and encourage their fellow classmates.

Choice was important for learners and so being offered genuine opportunities to choose made a difference to their wellbeing:

> **"I liked the choice and independence and liked how you can adapt to your life"** *(Learner, Marian College)*

St Teresa's School's curriculum is informed by student participation and well established processes have been designed to include their views. Regular surveys and conversations with learners guide future topics for learning and determine which resources are needed to pursue interest based projects. Part of these discussions reveal learners' thoughts and opinions about how the day could run.

> **"I love the freedom we get and the choices we are free to make and how the teachers support us and provide us with the proper equipment. I also love the inviting and friendly atmosphere and how we are encouraged to try new things, even if we are scared to do them."**
> *(Learner, St Teresa's)*

For all our schools, a heightened awareness of what participation meant resulted in us transforming the way we worked. We shifted from a community of learning and working into being a curious community based on our insights. Listening to learners revealed choices for us and them. This in turn led to ownership of decisions and enhanced learners' sense of agency - influence over their school experiences.

Pedagogical 'know how'
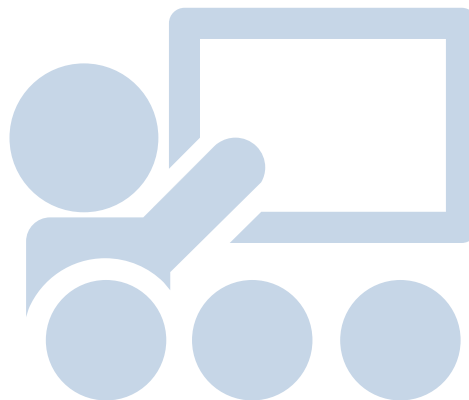
Pedagogical knowledge refers to the specialised knowledge of teachers for creating effective teaching and learning environments for all students. This project challenged the teachers to grow their pedagogical knowledge by using evidence based sources, and to apply what they had learnt in innovative ways to best meet the needs of their learners in their specific contexts.

All of our teachers developed their 'pedagogical know how' and developed an array of strategies to listen to learners based on Lundy's participation model (2007, see image above). The teacher/researcher at St Joseph's School (Papanui) used resources from the Grow Waitaha and the Authentic Learning Environments website (Ministry of Education and Ngāi Tahu Mātauraki Mahaanui, 2013) to drive the shifts in practice and reflected on her responsibilities to do this.

St Thomas of Canterbury College's shifts in practice were influenced by *Mātauraka Mahaanui Indicators of Success* (Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, 2012), *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2017), *Tapasā* (Ministry of Education, 2018) and *Tātaiako* (Ministry of Education, 2011) documents. The full play learning environment at St Teresa's School emerged from 5 years of intensive Professional Learning Development informed by Nathan Wallis (Wallis, personal communication, 2019) and his work around brain-ready learning.

The SANER framework

The teacher/researcher at Marian College developed a framework (SANER) to evaluate emotional competence. She immersed herself in the topic of wellbeing and upskilled her knowledge and experience by completing a Master's level paper on Emotions, Health and Leadership and a Diploma of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing.

Because she had spent considerable time researching the theory and practice around emotional competency alongside her own personal journey to understand emotions, she was able to create the emotional competency framework for an education context. This drew on the work of Keltner, Oatley and Jenkins (2014) and the 'RULER approach' for developing emotional intelligence in schools which was developed by Mark Brackett from Yale University (Nathanson et al, 2016).

This is the SANER framework:

See and recognise emotions in self and others
Awareness, acceptance and understanding of emotions
Name it to 'tame it' by accurately labelling emotions
Express emotions appropriately
Regulation tools and strategies

This became the framework for her teaching practice. She designed numerous innovations using a variety of different methods and strategies in her classroom context. This has resulted in increased emotional competency in the students.
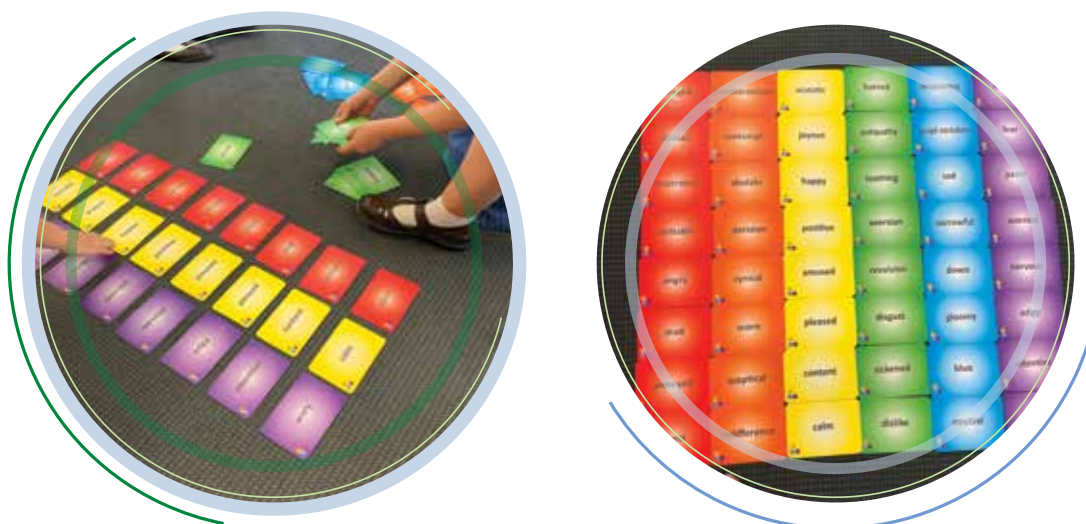
Learners using emotion words to rank the intensity and categorise into groups.

The following quote summed up the overall impact on learners:

> **"I learnt about the feelings scale. Not bad emotions just emotions"** *(Learner, Marian College):*

Leadership

Leadership mattered in our schools in a variety of ways:

- Senior Management as Leaders
- Teachers as Leaders
- Learners as Leaders

Senior managers as leaders.

Working across four schools from Year 1-13, with very different learning contexts, structures, and educational philosophies, highlighted the importance of leadership. When senior leaders listen to the voice of students, and to the teachers who advocate for them, they have the power to significantly influence and support change through their decision making processes. They ultimately control the vision, timetable and the resources of the school.

The teacher/researcher at St Joseph's School (Papanui) was a Senior Leader and held a position of influence. She was able to discuss with the rest of the leadership team the possibility of enlarging the play area to provide more room and to allow the children to play on the adjacent grassed area.

As a result of her findings, she noted that her practice had shifted from a token listening stance to learner voice and to acting on it - the influence sphere of the Lundy model. The year 0-1 learners loved the playground, but were not allowed on the field. They felt restricted in their play area as they had no grass.

There was some considerable resistance from decision makers because of traditional concerns for safety especially for 5 and 6 year olds sharing an outdoor space with older learners (up to 13 years old). The school agreed to the change and the younger learners now have access to a much larger grassed play area. An unintended consequence of this has seen positive interactions with older students demonstrating nurturing and caring behaviours with the younger students (tuakana/teina).

Teachers as leaders

Learner's perceptions of their learning were impacted by teachers. In this project, the teacher/researcher met with a group of 6 year olds once a week on a Wednesday afternoon. These learners loved these sessions, "because it's fun and we don't have to learn anything". This comment got her thinking and she was curious to understand where children's perceptions about teaching and learning came from given that they had only been at school for a year. How does this perception of what learning looks like affect their wellbeing?

Using the Authentic Learning Environment Resource from Grow Waitaha (Ministry of Education and Mātauraka Mahaanui, 2013) to explore learner views she found that they had very strong ideas around the parameters for both learning and teaching. Below is a selection of the responses generated by images in the resource toolkit.

"We need a teacher"

"We have to wear a uniform"

"Learning is hard"

"Learning makes me tired"

"We have to have a desk and sit still to learn"

"Swimming is not learning"
(Learners, St Joseph's School, Papanui)

These investigations challenged the traditional, hierarchical structures in the schools as 'child voice' met institutionalised, organisational systems, which include views and perspectives about learning from teachers, leaders, whānau, and wider community.

In her role as a Senior Leader, this teacher/researcher worked with her staff to move perceptions about learning from being confined to a desk in a classroom in a teacher-led and controlled space, to them recognising the benefits of collaborating, co-constructing, and adjusting the learning intentions and environment through genuine listening and shared decision making with learners.

Learners as leaders

At St Teresa's School, the Principal and Senior Leadership Team have driven the vision and practice of play based learning for several years. This approach allows for trial and exploration in the learning spaces. Teachers are granted autonomy to lead in their hubs, seeing what has worked and what hasn't.

This leadership effect has flowed onto the children as the environment and pedagogy allows them to lead their own learning. They have been on a real journey to understand how learners lead their own learning and, if they do, whether or not this improves engagement in learning overall.

During this project, the timetable was re-conceptualised and this now means that learners manage their own day; they can see the lessons they need to attend, and then plan to manage their own time as they see fit:

> **"I like how we can have freedom to do our projects"** *(Learner, St Teresa's).*

There have been some impressive results. We now see learners pursuing interest based projects, taking themselves outside for some physical activity, playing games, chatting with friends, going shopping for things they might need, and working on other things they may have due.

Environment
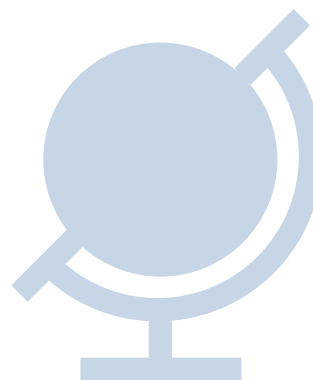
> **"Effective and safe learning environments are those that have inclusive cultural values and principles that permeate their structure and pedagogy. Such practice is built on respectful and reciprocal relationships and fosters a 'culture of care' across classrooms and throughout the school"**
> **(Ministry of Education 2017, pp. 45).**

We know for students to learn best they need to feel safe, secure, seen and soothed. We drew from the work of Angus McFarlane and his Educultural Wheel (Ministry of Education, 2017) which demonstrates that all members of a school community have a responsibility for providing manaakitanga and this becomes the foundation for wellbeing and learning.

Our four school environments were very different and they ranged from:

- full play based learning to traditional
- girls and boys only to co-ed
- years 0-8, Years 7-13, Years 9-13,
- decile ranges from 3-9

What became clear is that although our environments were different, we shared a belief that as teachers, our attitudes and professional behaviours impact significantly on the emotional, social, physical, psychological environment of learners.

The importance of authentic learning environments were highlighted at St Joseph's School. Learners' perceptions of themselves as learners were confronting and resulted in changes to the classroom layout.

At Marian College, the teacher/researcher tried co-designing the classroom based on a shared understanding of engagement with her learners. Together with her learners, they discussed the physical layout of the desks and chairs and then set them out accordingly. This was problematic because the furniture had to be put back as it was found for the next class.

On the other hand, both the physical and pedagogical environment at St Teresa's reflected their play-based philosophy. Across the school, physical spaces are set up for play to happen anytime and anywhere. Resources in the learning spaces, both inside and outside, are determined by learners' interests, with teachers supplementing as needed. Teachers also bring in loose parts to provoke new interests.

Identity was the focus of the project at St Thomas of Canterbury College. The teacher/researcher and the Principal agreed that this was important and therefore the environment needed to reflect the multiple identities represented in the school.

> **"We are dealing, it would seem, not so much with culturally deprived children as with culturally deprived schools. And the task to be accomplished is not to revise, and amend, and repair deficient children, but to alter and transform the atmosphere and operations of the schools to which we commit these children"**
> *(Ryan 1976, pp. 61-62).*

The fact that success for Māori as Māori was especially significant in terms of the College's vision for relationships with whānau Māori and mana whenua.

While this teacher/researcher's participant cohort for interviews was small, the wellbeing project was part of a schoolwide kaupapa to enhance cultural responsiveness and wellbeing. Learners reported that the environment did not reflect their culture

> **"Our environment does not reflect our culture"**
> *(Learner, St Thomas of Canterbury College).*

Based on this, and wider school data, the community (learners, staff, whānau, iwi representation) co-constructed a plan to begin work on a cultural narrative that would directly reflect the cultures that are present in the Kura. This began to take shape when carved pou for each house were created by the learners and with the help of expert carvers from Lyttelton.

The impact was welcomed and the sense of pride in identity could be seen and heard across the Kura.

> **"It is cool now that we have some te reo on the buildings and the mural is awesome"**
> *(Learner, St Thomas of Canterbury College).*

Our findings indicated that each element of RIPPLE was important and to a large extent, interrelated. Like with most action research, there was a certain messiness as we worked through the data. We feel our RIPPLE effect concept has potential for others to use as a framework for considering wellbeing in educational contexts. Our reasons for this are explained in the next sections which directly address the question of how practices shifted and the effect these shifts had on learning.

Shifts in our practice

Here is a summary of our individual learning stories showing shifts in teacher practice.

Lydia's Story

Focus for Inquiry
- **Student engagement in a self-directed learning environment**
- **Student voice and partnership in co-constructing the learning environment**
- **Intrinsic motivation in students when following their own interests**

This is what I used to do	What informed the change?	This is what I do now	Impact for students
Courses/ Workshops were entirely decided by and driven by teachers based on what we thought would be engaging for children.	We are a play based learning environment and in the senior area of the school, this means children are directing their own learning by exploring their individual strengths and interests. This was not happening if teachers were deciding what children should be interested in. Teachers did not feel comfortable with this.	All courses and workshops are now informed by student interest. Twice a term, children are asked for their feedback on what they would like these courses and workshops to be about. This is done via google forms. Teacher planning is informed entirely by these ideas.	Higher student engagement as children are in courses they chose out of personal interest. *"I like having courses because they are fun and we get to choose what we want to do from what we're interested in"*
Courses offered to engage children in various interests. Children only sticking to this work in their independent time and not thinking outside of this as to other interests they could pursue independently.	Children are engaged in their courses but are now only sticking to this course work in their own time and not exploring anything further. It feels like yet again, they are doing what has been directed by a teacher. Teachers frequently commented on the lack of creativity they were seeing in the learning space.	One teacher a week provides a small provocation to hook in some children who may be "floating" or not engaged and to provide a spark of curiosity/interest to inspire children to pursue something outside of just their course work.	Engaging a small number each week in a provocation which has inspired some to pursue this further for example making bouncy balls, provoked some children to take an interest in kitchen chemistry further independently. *"It's cool having something different each week that kind of inspires us"*

Ongoing Reflection/Monitoring:

Beginning this year, we are planning to emphasise the provocations more as a focus for Term 1 and hold off on the set courses. This is because we felt courses were stifling creativity in our children. We were only seeing them stick to what the teacher had suggested to do in the course and that was it. We are play based and we want to see our children explore, be curious, think creatively. We are hoping the provocations that we provide will spark interest and curiosity in a range of different areas for them to take further in their own way and that the timetable will be freed up for more exploratory play to happen.

Term 2 2020: After a term's trial of SPARK where teachers offered one SPARK session a week each on a wide variety of topics, we noticed that children were taking but not giving anything back. Meaning, they were happy to come along to a SPARK session and were engaged but then did nothing more with it afterwards in their own independent learning time. The learning stopped after the teacher directed session, where we had hoped that instead this would spark an interest for them that they would then be motivated to pursue further on their own, with our support. Rather, children wanted everything provided for them, to take and do nothing further of their own volition. This again, was not the skills we were wanting to develop. Instead we took this out completely and kept this chunk of time each day, completely free and supported children in initiating their own personal or group interest based project.

Keri's Story

Focus for Inquiry
- Learn and better understand what our Māori community values and wants for their children, what Māori learners need to enjoy educational success as Māori
- Māori students experience high quality teaching that reflects culture and identity
- Strong engagement from whānau and the wider community

This is what I used to do	What informed the change?	This is what I do now	Impact for students
I was conducting the lessons in a very teacher driven style and the kaupapa was predominantly decided by the classroom teacher and the head of department. Together we would choose what areas should be covered and in what order without student or whanau consultation.	When I gathered feedback from the students via verbal questioning about their learning. They informed me that they felt like they did not have a part in the construction phase of the content. They wanted to learn more about their language and culture by being active. They were more interested in learning haka and waiata as opposed to sentence structure.	At the beginning of the term or an upcoming unit I give the students an opportunity to have their say. I do this by surveying them and asking them what different focus areas or topics they would like to learn about. Then as a class we look at how we can construct the process of their learning (in groups, pairs, on-line, individual or collaborative presentation).	This has resulted in a more enjoyable working environment for the students and myself. They are more engaged in their learning because they have had an opportunity to have their input in what and how they are learning. Quote from the students at the beginning of the data gathering *"We are told what we should be learning but we don't know why?"*
We were asking whanau for feedback but this was done after decisions had been made in terms of curriculum content. This feedback was being received but not being used to inform decisions or to aid planning and learning.	During our whanau hui, members of our community addressed the issue of curriculum content and suggested that as a whanau we could co-construct the learning and asked to be part of this process. Senior members of our whanau felt that this would be more authentic and would provide an opportunity to include Maori culture and identity across the curriculum and not just as an add on.	We now have a more collaborative approach to lessons and topic content. The students' views can be reflected in their learning and their culture and identity is acknowledged. We have now adopted a co-constructive approach with our whanau that includes staff, senior management and students discussing content together before the implementation phase has taken place.	By communicating and co-constructing learning with the students they feel more confident to speak up and question the way they are learning and why. Their whanau also have an opportunity to work with the school to be more fully engaged in the learning of their sons. By working with staff to ensure they are developing curriculum content that is reflective of the needs of the community and the culture and identity of the students.

Ongoing Reflection/Monitoring:

As I have had the opportunity to reflect on my practice. I have seen many areas that I need to develop in terms of moving from teacher-led to student-directed. It has also allowed me to see the benefits of student input and how important it is to make necessary changes in order to create a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment. Through my observations, videos, voice recordings, interviews, and various discussions with students and whanau I have been able to monitor the students and collect their views and their perspectives. By continuing to do this we can ensure that the students and their whanau have a voice and for that voice to be heard.

Liz's Story

Focus for Inquiry
- Student voice in relation to how they feel they are being nurtured and cared for
- Do our students have adults that support them to reach their potential. Who are these adults?
- In what ways are our students nurtured and cared for in our school
- Do we consider our students' voices in their wellbeing and take action?

This is what I used to do	What informed the change?	This is what I do now	Impact for students
Little Joe's-Preschool Visitors followed a prescribed programme that had been used by the previous teacher and handed on to me when I took over the class and programme.	When I asked the students what their favourite parts of the afternoon were they listed hands-on activities, opportunities for interaction with other students and informal learning. They were not interested in formal learning.	At the beginning of each lesson we talk as a group about what the students would like to do for the session. I then construct a plan for the afternoon.	This has resulted in a more informal and relaxed atmosphere with the students making real connections and new relationships with other students. Quote from students at the beginning of data gathering *"We need to sit at a desk to learn and we need to sit still"*
I used whatever classroom was available to hold our Little Joe sessions each week.	This was difficult in that our visitors did not know what room we would be in and they wandered around the school. The visitors wondered why we couldn't have a permanent meeting space that felt like it belonged to them.	We now have a space for our group and we have filled it with resources that are suitable for the level of students attending.	The students know where to go each visit. They arrive early and play with each other while parents have time to relax and talk to other parents.
I delivered lessons without clearly articulating the learning intentions. This is something I used to do but I had lost this from my practice.	When I reflected with the students about their learning it was clear that many did not understand what they were supposed to be learning or what the learning outcome was or would look like.	I structure the lessons with time for discussing learning intentions and developing learning outcomes with the students. I allow time at the end of the lesson for students to reflect on their own work, the work of their peers and class feedback.	The impact for the students is that they know what to focus on. They can state what they are learning and what that learning may look like. The learning is clearer to them.

Ongoing Reflection/Monitoring:

One of the outcomes of this project for me has been to highlight how much I need to look at my practice and continue to make changes. Meeting each week with the TLIF team and discussing our progress has made me more aware of what I can change and question. Reflecting on each lesson has led me to thinking about all that I do as a teacher and how I can get more student voice and provide more agency. Observations, discussion with students, interviews, drawings and videos have all been ways to keep monitoring the students and gathering their thoughts on what they feel and how much they are listened to.

Megan's Story

Focus for Inquiry
- Student views and voice in relation to their own wellbeing.
- Student voice and partnership in co-constructing the learning environment.
- Emotional competence - recognising, awareness, understanding, regulation and expression of thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

This is what I used to do	What informed the change?	This is what I do now	Impact for students
We gathered summative student voice through course evaluations. This informed planning for the next cohort and unit.	Through our TLIF discussions and the development of our inquiry questions alongside PLD from PENZ conferences and Grow Waitaha PLD, I realised that we did not gather student voice to inform their next steps for their learning journey. We only gathered voice to inform planning. This did not allow students to have any say or control over their learning journey. Decisions were made for them not with them in regards to health and wellbeing.	I use formative student-voice to inform teaching. I use Lundy's Framework of child participation to provide space, a voice, an audience and a chance for students to influence the next steps of their learning. I now co-construct the learning environment for engagement. I know use the SANER check in and check out system 'to hear how they feel'	This has resulted in students feeling that their voices have been heard. Their needs are informing the focus and content of the learning. Students feel they have choice, ownership and agency. Quote from student. *"The teacher is open to listening to what we have to say and takes suggestions and asks if there is something better she can do".*
I didn't have a system of practice in place to develop Emotional Competency. I explored feelings and emotions slightly in my teaching of Health but I didn't really have an understanding of how to develop emotional competency.	In 2018, we conducted a biannual health consultation and a robust wellbeing audit. The biggest issue identified by our students, teachers and community was emotional regulation and in particular anxiety. That is why I have focused on shifting my teacher practice to try and improve the emotional and social competence of the students I teach. I completed a paper at University of Canterbury in the Summer of 2018/2019 on Emotions, Health and Leadership and a Diploma of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing 2019/2020. Through research and my own personal journey of understanding and self-experimentation around emotions I was able to develop the SANER Emotional regulation approach.	Teach and support students to develop their emotional competence using the acronym SANER which provides a framework for learning: - See and recognise emotions in self and others. - Awareness, acceptance and understanding of emotions - Name it to 'tame it' - Express emotions appropriately - Regulation tools and strategies Check-in and check-out system in place.	This has resulted in increased emotional competency in the students. Quote from student. *"I learnt about feeling's scale. Not bad emotions just emotions"*

I taught concepts and content with a pre-planned workbook as a guide. I always felt under pressure to 'get through' the information. Health is not a priority in the timetable. We only have 2 lessons per week timetabled for half a year in Year 9.	There was a gap between knowledge of wellbeing and action to be able to do anything about it. I came to the realisation that wellbeing is a skill. I needed to allow space in the class for students to practice and self-experiment with the skills/tools and strategies that the research says has a positive effect on wellbeing. This meant that I traded-off delivering content for developing concepts as in Health I always pushed for time.	I now embed wellbeing tools and strategies into the lesson allowing for these to be practiced in the class. I use the wellbeing challenge framework and have renamed the 'assessment' into an 'investment' for their learning based on these challenges. There is freedom within the framework to allow for 'voice' and 'choice'.	This has resulted in increased choice, ownership and agency. The challenges have allowed students to self-experiment and develop and take control of their own wellbeing skills and support and help others. Quote from student. *"I liked the choice and independence and liked how you can adapt to your life"*

Ongoing Reflection/Monitoring:

What I have reflected on is that teaching is a dynamic, relational process and needs to be informed by the needs of the learners. In order to keep growing in my teacher practice and push myself to try and experiment with pedagogy this constant process of testing, reflecting, analysing, group discussion then testing, reflecting, analysing, group discussion was invaluable.

Data has been gathered using mixed methods of interviews, videos, student slides, surveys, observations. The evidence has been gathered through the personal slide and it has been disseminated by our critical friend and teacher TLIF team.

Discussion and conclusions

This project began by asking the following questions:

- How can we shift our current pedagogical practices to enable student agency in order to improve their wellbeing and enhance learning?
- How can we ensure students' views in relation to their wellbeing are included in decisions about learning and the curriculum?
- How can we ensure students' voices about their wellbeing are heard?

There are some fundamental issues that arise from these questions that are about how the New Zealand Curriculum is implemented in practice (Ministry of Education, 2007). For example, what learning matters to students is critically important to their wellbeing, so a reflective person has to ask, to what extent does this happen? This issue is bigger than our project.

Throughout the research, we used action research processes to question, research, trial, analyse, and reflect on our data to reveal our overall model for wellbeing. Below we summarise how our questions were answered and then, based on our theoretical lenses (our theory of learning and our rights-based framework) we discuss the implications of both for our next steps.

How can we shift our current pedagogical practices to enable student agency in order to improve their wellbeing and enhance learning?

We asked this question because we did not really have a shared understanding of how teacher practices could enable learner agency. We started by investigating what agency meant and then began observing. We encouraged this in our own practice. How were we sharing power with our learners? And, if we were, how did this impact the organisational culture of the school?

We addressed learner agency in multiple ways depending on our specific learning context. This meant being deliberate about involving learners in all aspects of planning for their learning, thus developing their agency. This included moving from teacher driven curriculum to co-constructed curriculum design with teachers, learners and whānau, developing frameworks for agency, creating more learner-centred and culturally inclusive environments.

This finding illustrates the notion of transforming participation in which, as a result of establishing a shared understanding, novice learners and experienced teachers find common ground and become a community of learning.

Within communities of learning, participation is always variable. That impacts on the practices – in this case, teacher pedagogies–which have to accommodate differences and resolve tensions in order to survive. Because one school in the project already had well established learner agency platforms in their full play based learning environment, their response to this question was nuanced. Even with an environment that was set up for learner agency, their challenge was how they would ensure engagement for all with such freedom. Some learners needed more teacher support to participate effectively.

How can we ensure student's views in relation to their wellbeing are included in decisions about learning and the curriculum?

All of us used a variety of strategies to include the learner's views about their wellbeing in curriculum discussions. Again, we found this was addressed variably. For some us, we were able to ask learners and then feedback directly into the school timetable. For others, the organisational structures made this difficult.

Based on our findings, to genuinely include learners' views in the curriculum requires leadership and a school culture that is responsive and willing to change. There were some obvious barriers. For example, some of us found there was no process for listening to learners at critical phases in planning for learning within existing school structures. In these schools, learner voice was not sought during curriculum discussions with staff and so, their wellbeing, while a consideration, was not directly addressed.

Not all practices in a working community are good. In fact, they can inhibit innovation and privilege, intentionally or otherwise, dominant discourses in education. Hauora/wellbeing is a 'soft' skill subject and lacks the status of English, or Physics for example. But, we argue, if learner wellbeing is ignored, that could constitute a breach of standards and so, evaluating process, protocol and procedure in the organisational structures of schools should be a regular occurrence that is transparent and open to all involved - learners, whānau, and teachers.

Our RIPPLE model has the potential to highlight key aspects of wellbeing that could support transformational change at both the classroom level and school wide. Leadership, as we note earlier, is critical to relationship building that supports participatory learning and creative pedagogical 'know how'. We need to shift from a belief that the only valid knowledge resides with teachers if we are to embrace learner views about their wellbeing in relation to learning.

How can we ensure students' voices about their wellbeing are heard?

We used Lundy's (2007) Model of Participation to ensure that we had considered Space, Voice, Audience, Influence. We all created space for our learners to be heard, and ensured we were an active audience. We then used our influence to make changes in order to improve the learning environments and ultimately the wellbeing of the students.

The success rate was, once again, variable. We worked hard to think about why this was so. How could we create a culture where learners felt safe to voice their concerns about wellbeing? What were we doing well and what did we need to improve?

Over the course of the Project, we became more conscious about the value of listening to learners. As we became more aware, we became more and more curious about why some teachers put up barriers to listening to learners, not in a controlled sense, but in the context of authentic conversations.

We recognise that for some, learners and teachers alike, discussing wellbeing is too personal and, for teachers, some may feel ill-equipped to cope. One of our team designed SANER - an interactive resource to gauge how learners were feeling and, at the same time, normalise the language of emotional well being. This innovation sits neatly alongside the RIPPLE framework and could, potentially, become widely used as a tool to support conversations about wellbeing.

The RIPPLE effect

What we found was that if any of the overall themes were missing from the RIPPLE this was a major barrier to improving wellbeing. These themes are what we feel are necessary to implement a whole-school wellbeing approach that is effective.

R	**Relationships** This research revealed how power dynamics impacted on wellbeing. This could be social, cultural and environmental. Positive learning relationships can be developed by a teacher's shared approach with the learners that acknowledges the identity of the learner and embedding pedagogical practices proven to enhance connection.
I	**Identity** Teachers need to know, respect, and value learners' identity. This can be done by listening to their voice and creating authentic learning experiences and environments.
P	**Participation** Creating an environment that allows for learners' voice to be heard and acted upon; allowing them to be active participants in their learning is vital. This results in increased ownership, agency and sense of belonging.
P	**Pedagogical Know-how** Being adaptive educators that move with the times using pedagogical research and evidence to shift practice is required to be effective in meeting the needs of learners.
L	**Leadership** In the context of this project this is three-fold; senior leadership, teacher leadership, and learner leadership. It is crucial that there is collective voice in the decision making processes that affects the learning environments for all.
E	**Environment** A learning environment should reflect the spiritual, emotional, social, cultural, physical, and intellectual needs of its community.

ENVIRONMENTS

LEADERSHIP

PEDAGOGY

PARTICIPATION

IDENTITY

RELATIONSHIPS

Personal insights

All research is like a journey - there may be a map but, in our case, there were significant detours. As teachers we had to learn to be both pedagogical leaders and researchers at the same time. For each of us, there were different learning junctures.

We soon learnt as a group that wellbeing was massive - it was 'everywhere but nowhere'. Wellbeing is an elusive concept that many people struggle to define. Is it in danger of becoming the 'buzz' word of our time? We found trying to do everything in wellbeing just leads to 'wellbeing overwhelm' and a watering down of any possible positive impacts for students.

> **"You can do anything, but you can't do everything. If we are going to move the needle for wellbeing in a positive direction we need to know: what exactly we are looking at; who does this involve; are all voices heard and considered; and what exactly needs to change collectively that will make a positive difference in a sustainable way".**
> *(Teacher/researcher Reflective Journal)*

Clear learning intentions understood by teachers, learners, and the wider learning community mattered. We found it takes just one simple learning intention that a feedback loop can be created around. This feedback loop process takes significant teaching time and involves a process of self-reflection, peer reflection, and then whole class feedback against the success criteria. This reflection and feedback process includes time for the learners to articulate what they had learnt at the end of the lesson. The reflection then forms the starter for the next lesson based on what the whole class has learned. The impact of this was the students were all successful in achieving the learning intention.

> **"What surprised me often was they had picked up more than I expected. I was learning to listen to their learning".**
> *(Teacher/researcher Reflective Journal)*

Knowing who you are and where you come from was deeply significant for learners and their identity. We also learnt how important it is to include whānau in decision making and discussion. By doing this we are creating a greater level of understanding for learners and their whānau, ensuring that they are at the helm when it comes to making decisions about curriculum and content covered.

Connecting with whānau about what is important to them and their tamariki is a slow process that needs to be continuously refined. However, this has a positive impact for the students and their whānau as we are able to integrate learner voice, whānau voice and the collective voice of our wider hapori. We also learnt that it is important to adhere to tikanga and kawa and this is a continuous learning cycle that is evolving for all involved.

> **"I learnt that by exposing students to kaupapa Māori and te ao Māori we were building their self confidence and their understanding of their identity and their place in the world and this was also having an impact on their parents and caregivers who may or may not have been exposed to these experiences in their own lives".**
> ***(Teacher/researcher Reflective Journal)***

Finally we have learned the importance of trusting our learners. As another of our teacher/researchers observed:

> **"It is very easy to return to default as a teacher and think you know what is best and take back the control. We learned not to get too uptight or controlling; they will do the things they need to do in the time that it is right for them. This is what brain development research and Piaget's theory (1936) tell us, that things will happen when they are meant to happen. Sometimes children need a little bit of a hand held along the way but mostly, I learned to just trust and follow their lead.**
>
> **We tried so many different things and thought each time it was going to work, we were always trying to fix things because we were being reflective as to what wasn't working but I think we've got to a place where we need to follow what our children are showing us".**
> ***(Teacher/researcher, Reflective Journal)***

Unintended consequences and barriers

There were no significant unintended consequences to arise out of our research but we were plagued by unexpected barriers which meant we had to continually bounce-back, adapt and pivot:

- Our critical friend changed. We had initially invited Keryn Davis (CORE Education) to be our critical friend but when she had to withdraw, there was a significant delay to finding a suitable replacement. Dr Sarah Te One took on this role and we were able to progress our TLIF.

- The Mosque Shooting, 2019. This had a significant impact for Christchurch Schools where they were all required to go into lock-down for the duration of the event. Along with this, the fall out effects of this traumatic event impacted each team member in their school environments, and on a personal level. This stalled our data gathering process and we had to recover and regroup before moving on with the project.

- Covid-19. We were on track to complete our project in June 2020 and had just had our planning meeting to pull together all our findings. This was when the RIPPLE effect emerged from our data. COVID-19 completely stalled our project and we didn't really gather momentum again until Term 4, 2020.

- An unexpected diagnosis. Our project lead had a brain tumour removed on 29 October, 2020. Retrospectively, we can see that her illness impacted progress significantly. We have had to all 'step up' as a team and reshuffle roles and responsibilities, but we are proud to say that her commitment to the project has been the inspiration for us to collectively complete this report.

Role of experts

The reality for our TLIF was that the expectations around research were beyond the expertise of our team members. In retrospect we are amazed that we made it through the two-stage application process before engaging a critical friend.

Dr Sarah Te One from CORE Education has guided us through every stage of the TLIF with extreme patience and understanding. Her oversight and experience from guiding other projects through the 'messy' TLIF learning process was invaluable as she knew how to support us individually and as a team.

We were extremely fortunate and grateful to have benefitted from a Senior Researcher who has a breadth and depth of pedagogical knowledge combined with practical 'real life' application to education settings that can only be described as a treasure (taonga). Her experience working across the social sector as an advocate for children's wellbeing helped us understand better how to align existing research and best practice - specifically using Lundy's Model of Participation as a right's based framework that formed the foundations of all our individual projects.

As teachers we have all grown our practice as she constantly questioned and challenged our assumptions around pedagogy and learning. Sarah mediated our team sessions and ensured we adhered to an action plan to keep us on track. She provided clear frameworks in the form of workbooks to help us record our thinking and analyse our learning journeys which meant we were able to see the collective themes that emerged from our research. Without Dr Sarah Te One we would not have completed this report.

Overall implication for educators

Our next step is to get our report professionally published so we can mobilise the RIPPLE effect to the wider education community and importantly, we are committed to feeding back to the learner participants in our projects. We will prepare a special publication to share the findings with them. We look forward to sharing our RIPPLE effect and showing learners exactly how they influenced our model.

We will share our learning in the following forums in 2021:

- Christchurch Catholic Kāhui Ako fono (Te Mara Akoranga Katorika) hui.
- Grow Waitaha (Wellbeing Community of Practice, Wellbeing Activators and Secondary Schools Wellbeing Leads Network, Across School Teachers) hui.
- Mana Ake Professional Learning Development

We are submitting abstracts to present our project to the following conferences:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference, Australia.
- Delving Deeper Conference
- Wellbeing in Education NZ Conference.
- ULEARN Conference.

We will be providing report summaries for the following platforms:

- Christchurch Catholic Kāhui Ako (Te Mara Akoranga Katorika) website www.ccka.nz
- Wellbeing website www.liveuptoyou.org
- CORE Education website www.core-ed.org
- Publication of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch Inform Magazine
- NZ Education Gazette

We will investigate the opportunity to be interviewed about our project by the Kāhui Ako Ki Ōtākaro.

- Ōtākaro Kōrero

We feel that our work has been enclosed in a 'Christchurch' environment that includes specific circumstances that have had a large effect on wellbeing such as the earthquakes and the Mosque Shootings. We have in Canterbury benefited from bespoke professional local support such as Mana Ake and Grow Waitaha and now we want to know how our learnings translate to a wider New Zealand context.

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