

## Course Director's Report

**Written by:** Misha Shamdass & Marc Clarke  
**Title:** Specialist Classroom Teacher Symposium – *Empowering Culturally Responsive Practices*  
**Dates:** 18 - 20 April 2018  
**Venue:** Quality Hotel, Parnell, Auckland

### Planning Committee

NZ SCT Association: Marc Clarke, *President* and Misha Shamdass, *Vice President*

### TRCC Committee and Staff Involvement

Eseta Fuli and Danielle Sanders

### Participants

(Time in SCT role)	SCT < 1 year	SCT 1-5 years	SCT >5 years	Did not specify
Total 75	28	21	14	12

### Course Objectives

A key driver towards the crucial aim of successful outcomes for all learners is a focus on effective teaching by accessing and using research to improve teaching pedagogy through a collaborative learning and sense-making culture. The role of the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) is a leadership role for the enhancement of pedagogy and teacher development in New Zealand secondary schools.

The objectives of the course committee was to empower SCTs with the value of whakamana to lead, mentor and support other teachers to develop pedagogy as well as andragogy (adult learning) by providing opportunities to collaborate and develop best practice by providing access to latest research via inspiring, engaging keynote speakers and practical, interactive workshops.

The primary vehicle or theme used to achieve these objectives was culturally responsive and relational pedagogy. The theme was prevalent throughout the symposium, from the Pōwhiri/Whakatau by students of a local school to the various keynotes and workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy. There was also a panel session including representation from Education Council, PPTA, Kāhui Ako: Communities of Learning to give participants fresh perspectives on how the various organisations/initiatives function to achieve identical goals.

Secondary themes included technology, literacy research and classroom behaviour which were presented by various keynote speakers to get participants thinking about how new research and technology creates dissonance to contest traditional ways of thinking.

### Effectiveness of the course

The planning committee sought to generate a sense of manaakitanga and cultural awareness from the outset with the Pōwhiri/Whakatau by students of a local school to emphasize the purpose of our collaborative learning for this symposium. This was followed by a well-received presentation by

Therese Ford on culturally responsive pedagogy which set a pleasing tone for the remainder of the symposium.

The symposium format allowed participants to access an introduction to each theme at the keynote sessions and choose workshops based on their needs. This format proved to be suitable to allow for both experienced and beginner SCTs. Sessions were built into the programme to include active learning such as the speed-dating session where participants were given an opportunity to share their own inquiries which they had prepare in advance of the symposium. This fulfilled the tuakana-teina appeal of participants to be able to learn and share with others through networking and collaboration.

### **MoE focus on improving outcomes for Māori through Culturally Responsive Contexts.**

, Therese Ford of Waikato University who presented theoretical foundations and policy development over time shared the work of Poutama Pounamu, which is a collective theory of change and plans of action to clarify purpose and provide a foundation for collaborative sense making that leads to priorities for action.

Another keynote, Hine Waitere of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, presented the rationale behind the data tool, Rongohia Te Hau. The purpose of the tool is to provide a school-wide snapshot with baseline evidence of Culturally Responsive and Relational Pedagogy. The three sets of evidence used are student surveys, teacher survey and whanau data to find links to CR and RP.

Of particular interest to the SCTs, who as part of their roles are regularly observing teacher practice, was the use of a walk-through observation tool to observe 30% of a school's teacher pedagogy in a day in order to collaboratively make sense of the student, teacher and whanau perception data.

A survey was administered both before and after to understand the experiences and influences the content of the symposium had on participants. In response to the question in the survey on how participants rated their current ability to model cultural responsiveness in their practice, those who answered needs development or developing **reduced from 33% to 15%**. The participants who had answered very good or excellent **increased significantly from 27% to 52%**.

The question on how participants rated their ability to support and challenge colleagues to use culturally responsive pedagogies revealed those who answered needs development or developing **reduced from 48% to 23%**. Those who answered very good or **above increased dramatically from 15% to 41%**.

### **General Comments on the programme**

There was an overwhelming positive response, both formal and informal in nature, of how the symposium was experienced by participants. In the survey, **100% of participants rated the programme 3 or above** to the question "Was the programme appropriate and effective?" on a scale of 1 to 5. **95% stated 4 or above**. Some of the comments from participants highlighted an increased understanding of the role of SCT.

The planning committee noted that participants appreciated the variety of topics and the engaging and inspiring way in which speakers communicated. There was a sense that all the sessions were valuable and clarified the role of the SCT as well as provided useful data and strategies for practice. Some feedback received identified the need for more practical sessions which highlights a need for more reflective sessions to be built into the programme.

On an organisational level, the venue was ideal and the level of care and support from the organising staff was excellent.

## **Presenters**

### **Therese Ford, Poutama Pounamu** - *Cultural Relationships for Responsive Pedagogy in Practice*

This keynote and subsequent workshop will explore what cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy looks like in practice and provide participants with an opportunity to consider how this approach aligns with other systemic structures and conventions.

### **Hine Waitere, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi** - *Rongohia Te Hau: Data as the Servant, not the Master of Culturally responsive and relational pedagogy*

Hine is the Director of the Indigenous Leadership Centre at Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi. Her current work schedule as Expert Partner involves working with schools to support principals, middle leaders and teachers to give life to Ka Hikitia in addressing the aspirations of Māori communities by supporting Māori students to pursue their potential. This keynote explores how data is used to enhance culturally responsive leading learning and evidence based decision-making.

### **Margaret Ross, Help Behaviour** - *Classroom Behaviour*

Margaret has a background of over 35 years in education. She has taught and held management positions in schools in Inner London, Nigeria and New Zealand. She trained in inner London with a group of Educational Psychologists. Her specialities are relationship building, motivation, behaviour management and their practical application in a school or work environment. Today she runs courses and provides educational services for teachers, parents, health professionals, charities and corporate organisations in NZ and abroad.

### **Richard Rowley, MindLab** - *Disruptive Technology – Problem or Opportunity?*

To prepare for a challenging and exciting future-focused education, Richard Rowley of MindLab talks about disruptive technology and the impact on the future of education and its implications.

### **Judy Parr, University of Auckland** - *Making Writing a School-Wide Improvement*

This keynote and subsequent workshop considers some of the issues raised in research around writing in the subject areas. It considers practical ways that we might employ to help every teacher to contribute to their students' writing development.

### **Christina Thornley, Education Council** - *Our Code Our Standards*

Christina Thornley who leads the Education Council's professional learning programme on the Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession will engage participants in activities that increase their familiarity with these resources. She will also illustrate how teachers' inquiry or goal focused learning can form the centre piece of appraisal for their certification.

### **Julia Tod, Kāhui Ako Communities of Learning** - *Leadership Roles and Collaboration with SCTs*

With the introduction of the IES Communities of Learning – Kāhui Ako Across School and Within School Teacher leadership roles into 214 Kāhui Ako nationally a collaboration between existing and

new roles is essential. Julia Tod, Lead Education Kāhui Ako Adviser for the Ministry of Education, and former SCT herself, will facilitate a workshop on how this collaboration and role clarification can be implemented successfully within Kāhui Ako.

**Kirsty Farrant, PPTA- *Teacher Wellbeing***

In this session we will consider some practical ways that teachers can manage their workload, thereby reducing stress levels. We will also touch on some strategies for dealing with bullying in the workplace.

**Marc Clarke & Amanda Loveridge - *SCT Job Description 2018 and Evidence Gathering***

This workshop will use historical SCT documents and the experience of attending SCTs to develop an up to date SCT Job Description that best suits the role in 2018.

**Misha Shamdass – *The problem with success: Perspectives of the Specialist Classroom Teacher role in NZ Secondary Schools***

Misha Shamdass is an SCT at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate Senior School in Auckland. She will share her research findings of how Specialist Classroom Teachers and senior leaders perceive the evolving role of SCT and how they lead change.

**Erika Jenkins and Simon Crosby - *Enhancing Capacity to Lead Change***

Study based on the special characteristics of Ormiston Senior College and its innovative environment in relation to change in the 21st Century learning contexts.

**A summary of your reflections on presenters, what they offered and how they were received**

The planning committee has reflected on the feedback from the surveys administered and informal feedback from participants and are extremely pleased with the responses received. There were clear highlights such as the presentations by Therese Ford, Richard Rowley and Margaret Ross.

Richard Rowley's presentation was deliberately confronting as he shared his personal learning journey which had not initially been positive but was transformed later through technology. The planning committee feels that participants were clearly challenged to develop growth mind-sets around technology and its impact on the future of education. Richard was inundated with questions and comments at the end of the session from participants.

Margaret Ross was a refreshing speaker with a humorous, practical presentation which had participants clearly wanting more at the end. It was felt that another scheduled block of time with her would have been welcome by participants.

All the other presentations were well received and were targeted to suit a variety of experience levels of SCTs. Some participants indicated they would like more time to collaborate with each other on the speed-dating sessions which was very popular. The planning committee were aware of this need and provided some time after the symposium to schedule a SCT Association meeting where a new executive team was nominated and regional clusters were set up to continue the collaborative culture of sharing/learning.

The response below from a participant sums up of the effect and sense of purpose drawn from the participants. The question put forward was "What's one new idea you take away from this conference?"

*The one idea that seemed to thread through all the learning for me was my agency to bring about change in my school and community. The foundation of this change making must be honest, caring, culturally responsive relationships (with all the stakeholders) and the vehicle is authentic inquiry that uses a wide range of evidence and research to develop, test and evaluate a 'theory of improvement'.*

**Suggestions e.g. implications and recommendations for future courses.**

It is apparent that professional development opportunities for SCTs are invaluable as they are usually isolated in their role in schools. There is clearly a need to continue to provide courses for SCTs and their senior leaders to spend time together to link their practice.

This symposium provides the opportunity for SCTs across Aotearoa to network and collaborate. This has the aggregated effect of growing the NZ SCT Association to continue to support SCTs and their schools and staff to develop best practice.