Alternative Education and Youth Development in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Te Kura Tāwhai me te Whakawhanake Taiohi i Aotearoa



A resource for educators working in Alternative Education settings
He puna kōrero mā ngā kaiako i ngā Kura Tāwhai

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Introduction.
He kupu whakataki

Tēna koutou katoa

This resource has been developed by a group of AE practitioners and youth development specialists who are passionate about mana enhancing education (development and learning) for all rangatahi within Aotearoa. We're very grateful to the philanthropic sector (especially the Vodafone New Zealand Foundation and the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust) who have seen high value in the AE sector since its inception, and who have helped to sustain the sector, and made this resource possible. Without the passion of AE educators and champions, many rangatahi would have failed to thrive - and we acknowledge that thriving through the ability to access quality education is a basic human right.

Designed as a tool for conversation and reflection on the work of AE, this resource has been written primarily for educators working in the sector, and it also contains valuable insights for mainstream teachers, learning support educators, researchers, policy makers and other key stakeholders. Each section includes some key questions for discussion with your team (He urupounamu, which means to question entering into a rich conversation).

We believe that the real strength AE lies in its foundations: culturally responsive youth development. The intersections of youth development and education cannot be overlooked; in fact as Lloyd explains in the first section, "development makes learning possible". We acknowledge that at the heart of all effective AE practice is cultural responsiveness: in particular, we explore vital concepts from Te Ao Māori as they apply to youth development and education, including mana and various whānau kaupapa. The youth development foundations and cultural responsive heart, enable us to consider a different definition of AE to the traditionally deficit terms that have been used by the Ministry of Education. We define AE from a strength's based perspective and go on to explore various aspects of our practice including, what we teach, how we teach and how we guide rangatahi ("otherwise known as "behaviour management" - a term we're not fans of!). Journeying with rangatahi is an art in AE...as in all good education practice. As educators we can learn the science of our practice, but it is the art of AE educators' practice that makes a difference, and so we dedicate a section in this resource to playing with some of these ideas. Finally, and by no means, least importantly we conclude by considering ourselves as practitioners: how can we look after ourselves and others without burning out. We know that the burnout rate in AE has been much higher than in other similar roles like teaching and youth work. So we give time to reflecting on ideas of thriving; both for ourselves and others in our teams.

No reira koutou, nau mai, haere mai ki tēnei kaupapa. We hope that you find inspiration and 'aha' moments as you engage in these ideas, and we encourage you to kōrero/talanoa in a community of other educators who also believe in the idea of mana enhancing education.

Ngā mihi nui, the writing team.

Key terms. Kupu Tūāpapa

Alternative Education (AE).

With culturally responsive relationships at the centre, AE is a high support and high challenge learning environment, led by skilled educators enabling choice for rangatahi during a crucial time of development and learning.

AE is another option, or another opportunity for education, because mainstream education, is not for everyone. AE is a different learning environment which is small and agile enough for rangatahi to belong and be seen. It is a place where rangatahi can come with all of their needs and know that their needs will be met here.

Alternative education settings.

A related cluster of education settings, including, for example, teen parent units, youth justice residential schools, Te Kura, and activity centres.

Educator.

All staff employed in AE who are involved in learning and development with rangatahi. Tutors are educators who do not usually have a teaching qualification and teachers are those who do.

Rangatahi.

Young people who attend AE; the majority of whom are Māori. Rangatahi is used to infer that holistic development of the young person is critical in this space - not just their learning. By using the term 'rangatahi' rather than 'ākonga', we signal the high value we place on development.



AE practice and youth development. Te Whakahaere Kura Tāwhai me te Whakawhanake Taiohi i Aotearoa

Nā Lloyd Martin

In this section, we distinguish between youth learning and development, with a particular focus on Māori youth development and the vital concept of mana. These key foundational ideas set the scene for us to be able to describe and even define, the essence of AE.

Youth learning and development.
Ko te Ako me te Whakawhanake Taiohi

In 2019 six groups of educators from different AE programmes were asked about the activities that they ran, and which ones they felt were most helpful in creating positive change for rangatahi. Interestingly no one identified traditional learning activities (such as literacy and numeracy) in these conversations, even though several groups maintained strongly that education was central to their kaupapa. The sort of things they talked about included:

"It's about relationships, us sitting down at the morning tea, and at lunchtime table and having conversations and joking and being human. And being real".

"On Monday morning, they have a drink, have breakfast, and then we jump straight into the van, and we just go for a walk. And while we're walking we're talking, we're having a laugh, and also kind of digging a little deeper to find out what's going on inside them".

"And to be humble, you know, when they see that we're humble enough to be cleaning the wharepaku just as much as they are. What activity do we do that has the most leverage? Yeah, it might be the cleaning that we do as a school as a staff and students. It might just be that".

"So there's kai, there's karakia, there's 'how are you where you're at?' check in, learning to speak honestly and openly as you know, it's conversation skills in front of each other".

"It's like a little council for youth -you go around and actually ask them questions like, how's your day going? I have a couple a couple questions, every morning for breakfast".

"And that's the first thing we usually ask them... 'how's the baby? and how are you?' And he said, 'You know, I've never had people take an interest in what I'm up to'".

Did this mean that they thought learning was not important? Not at all! But what experienced educators in AE recognise is that meeting developmental needs creates a foundation, or platform for re-engaging rangatahi in learning.

Development makes learning possible.

But they are each distinct processes, and are each driven by different factors. Lev Vygotsky, a pioneer educational psychologist identified five developmental stages that all children and young people go through[1]. He suggested that each developmental stage is driven by a crisis, usually because whatever the child was doing before, isn't working anymore. As an example he identified birth as the first developmental stage, a crisis occurs because what the baby was doing before to breath and eat stops working as soon as they get out of the womb. This early developmental crisis is followed by a period of learning as they start breathing and learn to feed in a new way. Each developmental stage is driven by a crisis, and it results in two things:

- A changed relationship between the child/ young person and their world
- Followed by a relatively stable time of learning and acquiring new skills

The beginning of adolescence (at around age 13) is the final developmental stage that Vygotsky identified. A crisis is created when their ways of doing things as a child, no longer work as well among peers and in the adult world. They have to find new ways of relating to the world around them, and it is as they are going through this stage that many rangatahi arrive in AE. Some have learnt patterns of coping with the rest of the world that are unhelpful for themselves, and destructive of their relationships with others. Trauma and adversity can also create complexity around normal developmental processes, and introduce new crises. For example:

- Through learning that adults cannot be trusted
- Or having their mana, cultural connection, identity or self-efficacy undermined by negative experiences

Rangatahi who arrive in AE need more than a psychological label stuck on them and some medication to help them cope[2]. All rangatahi have a series of developmental needs that must be met before growth can occur. These needs are summarised in the Circle of Mana, a model of youth development[3]:



[1] Vygotsky, L.S. (1998). 'The Problem of Age' in *The collected works of LS Vygotsky, child psychology* (Vol. 5). (R.W. Rieber, Ed., English trans. & M.J. Hall, trans.). New York: Plenum Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (Forthcoming publication) Pedology of the Adolescent (D. Kellogg & N. Veresov trans.) Singapore: Springer. Original: Выготский, Л.С. (1929). Педология подростка. Задание 1-8. Москва: Издание бюро заочного обучения при педфаке 2 МГУ.

[2] Van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score*. New York: Viking.

[3] Praxis, 2019; adapted from the *Circle of Courage*.

The young person's mana is at the centre of this model, because when they are met in the context of a supportive community, each of these needs enhances the mana of a young person, and when they are unmet, or broken, their mana is being undermined. A young person's developmental needs are being met when they:

- Experience **belonging** (includes connection with identity)
- Become good at something (and have that **competence** recognised by others)
- Are part of the decision making process, and are trusted with **responsibility**
- Express **generosity** towards others (what can I contribute -rather than what can I get away with).

A crisis is often triggered when one or more of these needs is unmet in a young person's life, and the behaviours that get them referred into an AE programme in the first place, are often a response to one or more unmet developmental needs. Another look at the list of comments from the AE educators suggests that the activities they identified are not just a 'feel good extra'; they create a foundation for learning to occur by meeting developmental needs, and by helping each young person negotiate a new relationship with the world around them.

Key questions. He urupounamu[4]

1. In your own words, try describing the difference between learning and development.
2. Reflect on the Circle of Mana, and consider what are some things that schools could do differently to meet the developmental needs of rangatahi?
3. Why do AE educators place high value on the development needs of rangatahi? Why is youth development foundational to practice?



[4] Urupounamu = question, entering into a richer conversation.

Māori youth development. Ko te Whakawhanake Taiohi Māori

Nā Jono Campbell

Youth development is a relatively new concept. It is important to consider the concept of youth development through the lens of Te Ao Māori. Traditionally, children and young people were generally well treated and there was great affection accorded to them. Neglect of the mana of a child or young person could result in the parents being punished[5].

According to tikanga a child retained the classification of 'child' until their parents or parents' siblings had died or until they produced a child, thereby taking on adult responsibilities. However, as life–expectancy has improved and the average age for child birth has increased, there has been a shift in Māori society in the way groups of people are categorized. The developmental processes (as opposed to age) are the focus in differentiating between groups. The terms rangatahi, taiohi and taitamariki are used interchangeably to describe youth and the period when rites of passage or development associated with youthhood occurs.[6]

By being your best, you can bring out the best in others for the benefit of all.

Te Ora Hou (an urban Youth Development movement with over 40 years' experience working with predominantly Māori youth communities across Aotearoa) in their youth development model *Tohatoha*[7], define Māori youth development as the process of *Tamariki tū Taiohi tū Rangatahi tū Rangatira* or the *process of the transition from childhood into adulthood*. At the heart of this process is the concept that we are all born with innate potential - God given purpose - and it is the role of the iwi, hapū, whānau, and those in our community to support the emergence of that potential into being so that the young person has knowledge and mana that allows them to further invest into the lives of others.

[5] Ware, F.J.R. (2009). *Youth development Maui styles: Kia tipu te rito o te pā harakeke: Tikanga and āhuatanga as a basis for positive Maori youth development approach*. (Masters dissertation, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand). Retrieved from https://mro.massey.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10179/1152/02_whole.pdf?

[6] Ibid. p. 4

[7] Roberts, S., Davis, S., Campbell, J., & Butters, J. (2019). *Tohatoha: Unlocking your potential for greatness*. Te Ora Hou Aotearoa resource.

Tohatoha is an indigenous approach to urban youth development and has 3 key components:

1. **Te Haerenga** or the journey of Tamariki tū Rangatira
2. **Whānau** - who help navigate the way, provides support, connection, knowledge, wisdom and models integrity, aroha and generosity
3. **Waiwai** - key elements (skills, experiences, learning, opportunities) modelled and shared by whānau to ensure that the child or young person successfully navigates the journey which are defined in Tohatoha as:
    a. Tūhonohono - Strong healthy connections
    b. Akonga - Essential skills and knowledge
    c. Mana - The spark, emergence or manifestation of potential
    d. Ohaoha - Wise generosity

Te Haerenga or the journey is known as *Tamariki tū Rangatira*. Every young person needs to be supported to find their rangatira[8] spaces. The process is developmental, and takes place over a lifetime.

- In order to successfully go on the journey rangatahi need whānau (in this context whānau is collective encompassing whakapapa - bloodlines; kaupapa - shared interest or values based and, tīhokahoka - temporary places of belonging)
- In order to find out where you are going you need connection to people and place
- Through people and place, you find purpose.



The role of whānau is to ensure *Tūhonohono* (positive connections or reconnection). Tūhonohono allows rangatahi to connect to:

1. *Akonga* which is the learning process or the acquisition of the essential skills and knowledge that will support the emergence of purpose and potentiality
2. *Mana* which is the emergence of potential - the spark that comes when you are able to be the person you are called to be
3. *Ohaoha* which is the wise generosity required to be able to share the journey, experiences, learnings with others in order to support their growth and belonging, without the need for reciprocation.

[8] *Tohatoha* defines rangatira as "The rangatira stage is the fulfilment of realised potential that is used to grow the collective with wisdom and honour. In positive youth development, a rangatira is an individual that uses their pūmanawa generously, preferring others above self". In Roberts, S., Davis, S., Campbell, J., & Butters, J. (2019). *Tohatoha: Unlocking your potential for greatness*. Te Ora Hou Aotearoa resource. p. 19.

Manahi entered AE with 2 stated aims. Firstly, he wanted to follow in his dad and brothers' footsteps and becoming a Mob member and secondly, he wanted to go to jail. Very clear and concise! Through a combination of kaimahi who developed strong connections with him and gentle exposure to new ideas, concepts and thinking he began to explore who he was - his gifts, strengths, his beliefs and aspirations. Slowly as he was taught to navigate his education journey he came to the realisation that he had potential - leadership potential - he could utilise his strengths on a pathway that didn't require him joining the mob or jail. In the AE space he began to explore Rangatira spaces - leading mihi whakatau, karakia, inducting new students, modelling the program values through turning up on time, communication, having fun, challenging himself and in turn supporting new students to do the same.

Manahi's story above shows that this journey was not without challenges. As in navigating it required many course adjustments, stormy waters, times of being becalmed, going backwards and so on. But key to the success of Manahi up to this point is:

- the ability to capture the moments where he had support or connections (Tūhohono)
- the learning journey (Akonga) that supported the acquisition of essential knowledge
- the way that knowledge was used to support his growth in understanding who he was (Mana)
- and the opportunity to be able to share that journey with others in order to grow them (Ohaoha).



Key questions. He urupounamu.

1. In your own words, what are the key ideas from this section on Māori youth development?

2. In what ways does your practice as an educator include Māori youth development concepts?

3. What is one thing you could do to change your practice, or change your AE programme's practice, so that Māori youth development can be incorporated?

Mana as a key concept. Ko te pūtake o Mana

Nā Jono Campbell[9]

Ko te kaha kei te tinana, ko te mana kei te wairua
Kaha is the strength of the body, while mana is the strength of the spirit.[10]

Mana is a complex term, commonly used at the risk of its meaning being dumbed down. Mana is commonly defined as spiritual power, authority, prestige and status, and conveys the concept that it emanates from the gods. The traditional Māori worldview believes that a spiritual world or reality exists beyond the experiences of everyday life, and mana refers to the authority and power that connects the spiritual world to the human experience. Central to Māori belief is the notion that everyone is born with 'an increment of mana'. Essentially we are all born with mana (untapped potentiality) and the role of the community and the educator is to create the environment for that potentiality to be ignited and realised.

Mana is the untapped potential or pūmanawa (inherent talent or spiritual abilities) required to perform life's activities.[11]

The apportionment of mana is flexible and can be increased or decreased depending on a number of factors including connection to Atua (te taha wairua), whakapapa birthright, and responses to life experiences. Metge[12] refers to these factors as mana atua, mana tūpuna, mana tangata and mana whenua. One of these factors could dominate the other or can be across a couple or all. *Te Whare Tapa Wha* model, which is central to not only the physical education and health curriculum but a cornerstone of the education system, identifies Taha Wairua as a key component of human



development. Māori spirituality was viewed as an understanding of a greater power/s in the world, and Māori saw how it influenced daily life. To ignore these forces was to risk social, physical, mental or spiritual consequences. One of those consequences is the loss of mana, purpose or potentiality to be the best you can be in order to bring out the best in others.

A common observation among educators, parents, and youth workers is that if you ask a child what they want to do when they grow up and they can tell you; however, ask the same young person at 14 she/he will shrug her/his shoulders and say those iconic words "I dunno". Our educational history is littered with policy and decision making that served to diminish the identity and mana of Māori learners. Mead[13] explains, "Our people became frightened of themselves, frightened of their culture, frightened of their tikanga, frightened of their spirituality and they pushed them aside, even their reo". Additionally, historical policies

[9] This section has been adapted from Roberts, S., Davis, S., Campbell, J., & Butters, J. (2019). *Tohatoha: Unlocking your potential for greatness*. Te Ora Hou Aotearoa resource.

[10] Tate, P.H. (2012). *He puna iti te ao marama: A little spring in the world of light*. Auckland, N.Z.: Oratia Media Ltd.

[11] Mead, H.M. (2003). *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori values*. Wellington, Aotearoa: Huia Publishers, p.51.

[12] Metge, J. (1995). *New growth from old: The whanau in the modern world*. Wellington, N.Z.: Victoria University Press.

Mana is not something that can be put into a tick box.

Mana emerges; is nourished and protected; and can be seen in the language and actions of rangatahi.

that pushed Māori into manual education and English medium instruction, served to take away the rich knowledge that existed in Te Ao Māori around understanding biodiversity, geography, astronomy and meteorology. What was lost was the language to express that knowledge and a place to share and grow that body of knowledge.

Sadly for many rangatahi, their experience of the education system has not been mana enhancing.

As rangatahi identity, skills and talents are developed we see their mana enhanced—brought to life through the process of being supported to be the person they were created to be. Perhaps the easiest way to identify mana is through the emergence of:

Whakamanawa – Confidence

Pūmanawa – Charisma/Personality

Matatau/Ringa rehe – Competence, knowledge and skills

Raukaha/kahapupuri/Aheitanga – Capacity, the ability do more

Ngakau aroha - Compassion/caring for other

Manaakitanga – Bring out the best in others

Manawaroa – Resiliency

Manahau – Positive inner strength leading to a cheerful disposition, solutions

Mahaki - humility

Traditionally, the focus of Māori education was on enhancing mana.

> Humans too are vessels of mana and so the primary purpose of the whare wānanga was to activate and foster the mana atua of the student. Whare wānanga graduates of the highest grade are referred to as tohunga or 'vessels of mana'. A tohunga is a gifted person and a repository of knowledge. Ultimately, however, what sets them apart is the gift of creative insight[14].

The modernisation and revitalisation of Māori traditions is enabling change as many rangatahi are hoping to carry traditions and renewal to new generations through many ways including whare wānanga. Not only are they revitalising te reo, but also tikanga, and wairua. It is hoped that this will enable Māori to live more fulfilled, stable lives, realising their untapped potential. In AE, our opportunity and challenge is to create mana enhancing spaces together.

"Mana grounds you, mana makes you solid. Mana roots you to your past, present, and future"[15]

[13] Mead, ibid, p. 33

[14] http://www.charles-royal.nz/wananga/

[15] Iti, Tame. (17/07/2015). "Mana: The Power in Knowing Who You Are". Youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeK3SkxrZRI)



Mum was pulling her hair out. Her 14 year old son (Tama) was not going to school. As a single Mum working two jobs and trying to make ends meet while caring for her 2 primary aged kids she was stressed, and felt harassed by schools. She was at her wits end when she was contacted by a youth worker who had a connection to her son and suggested he join their after school program. Lacking motivation which was exacerbated by an addiction to weed and gaming she could see his life disappearing behind blank eyes.

He never seemed to engage much but attended the after school program so at least that was a success. One day the youth worker got a call from the Mum, "What did you do today? My son is full of life!". That day they had gone roller skating and something inside Tama clicked. Initially he had struggled with the activity, falling over a lot; however with encouragement from the youth workers and other rangatahi, he stuck at it and mastered the art of roller skating. Something about that experience brought a flicker of life and gave him a tangible experience of succeeding. His life's calling is not necessarily to be a roller skater but something about that experience allowed him to rediscover his mana, to be able to gain an insight into his potentiality, to show resilience, to laugh and have fun. Sadly, in many settings that moment would have been dismissed by many - as an insignificant moment in a meaningless recreational activity. However for that boy and that mother it was a significant milestone in allowing him to change course and continue on the journey of discovering his purpose and potential, reclaiming his mana.

Key questions. He urupounamu

1. How would you define mana?
2. What does mana enhancing practice look like in your education setting?
3. How does mana relate to the earlier ideas about learning and development, including Māori development?

What is AE?

He aha hoki te Kura Tāwhai?

Nā Judy Bruce

---

together

not a single person

pretty much

i'm understood

"I'm happier, and I'm more calm and more myself now, like my...relationships [have] gotten so much easier now."
AE young person

"AE is having a place to stand. AE gives space for a young person to develop a sense of who they are - it gives young people roots to explore the world".
Adrian Schoone

"It's just one big family...everybody's so like together, you're not like a single person, pretty much, like it's hard to explain but I do feel understood, especially by my [tutors]...they're all amazing.They're all there to support you, they all have your best interests, like at their heart, and they'll just do anything to be there".
AE young person

"AE is about connectedness without hierarchy." Daisy Lavea-Timo

"AE is joining up experience in the context of relationship/village to help young people begin to thrive." Lloyd Martin

What do you think AE is? It has never really been defined in NZ, except by the criteria that is used to refer rangatahi to AE (usually deficit language) and by the characteristics which typify programmes. For example, the Ministry of Education defines AE[16] as a programme which "provides educational and pastoral support for students who have disengaged from mainstream schooling". Inferring that it is *the student who has disengaged*, may imply that fault somehow lies with the student, rather than the school or wider system.

When seeking a definition that captures the essence of AE, the quotes above help to give us some idea of the core values that underpin the work of AE, especially belonging and connectedness. We love this definition taken from interviews with Pacific educators for this resource:

Alternative Education (AE) is another option, or another opportunity for education, because mainstream education, is not for everyone. AE is a different learning environment which is small and agile enough for rangatahi to belong and be seen. It is a place where rangatahi can come with all of their needs and know that their needs will be met here.

In a review of AE programmes throughout the world, Lloyd Martin[17] suggests that there are 6 key factors present in successful AE.

1. The space: Relaxed, friendly, small size, informal, flexible environments enabling young people to renegotiate their identity as learners

2. Autonomy and choice: Non coercive/ non-authoritarian, high trust learning environments that encourage student responsibility and involve them in decision making

3. Relational pedagogies: These are linked to each of the other categories, but distinguish relationships as both a form of support and used as a context for teaching and learning

4. High support learning environments: Low staff to student ratios that allow one to one academic support, flexible content that can be tailored to student needs and interests, balancing high support with high expectations.

5. Staff training: Teachers and support staff receive training that is specific to the AE context

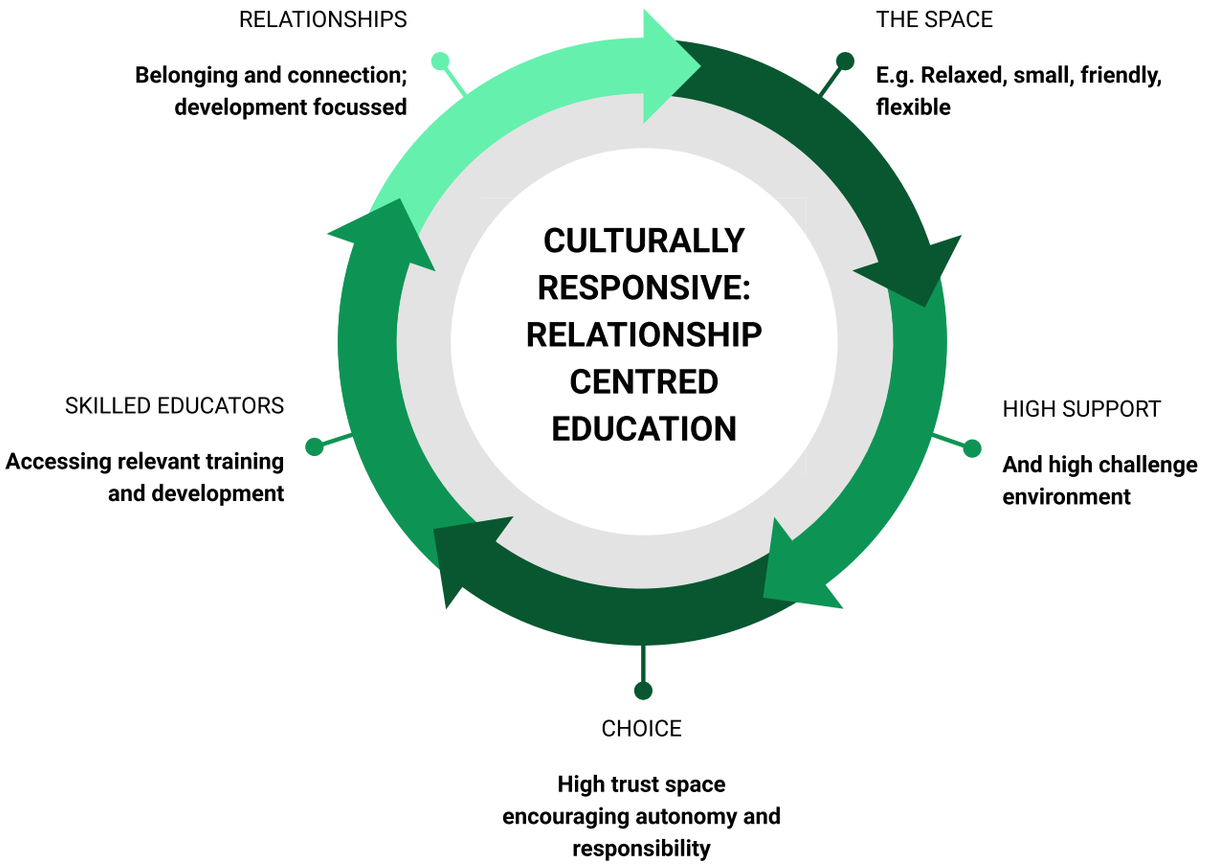
[16] Alternative Education Provision. Retrieved from http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/Alternative-education, June 13, 2020.

[17] Adapted from Martin, L. (2020). *Alternative Education Literature Review*. Unpublished paper.

6. Culturally responsive: Young people can express and grow their own cultural identities, learning is place based and incorporates the local culture contexts, educators understand and practice culturally responsive pedagogies and reflexivity (a conscious awareness of the need for critical cultural thought and action).

We could summarise these characteristics in to this definition of AE:

With culturally responsive relationships at the centre, AE is a high support and high challenge learning environment led by skilled educators enabling choice for rangatahi during a crucial time of development and learning.



Key questions. He urupounamu.

1a. From your perspective, how would you choose to define AE?

1b. What do you think the essence of AE is?

2. Why do you think some people think of AE negatively?

3. Consider the image above. What do you think is missing and why?

4. If schools could adopt these practices, what would need to change?

Who are we? Educators.

Ko wai mātou? Kaiwhakaako.

Nā Adrian Schoone

We are all familiar with the proverb, *It takes a village to raise a child* and there is perhaps no place where this is more true, than in AE settings. AE settings employ people from a range of skill and life backgrounds to meet the holistic needs of rangatahi. The AE workforce developed from its volunteer base of community-focused people who desired to help make a difference. This passion continues to be a hallmark of anyone working in AE and provides the *why* behind the *what* of their roles. Therefore, the very heart of the AE workforce is vocational. While nowadays we tend to think of vocation relating to trades, it has a much wider meaning. The word *vocation* derives from the Latin *vocāre*, which means to call. You could say the AE workforce holds a sense of calling for their roles. While understanding the motivation for working in the AE sector is critical, it is equally important that educators develop their approaches to equip rangatahi with cultural understandings, social skills and academic knowledge to participate fully in life.

Educator roles in AE are broad, such as those who bring specific skills and knowledge (e.g. trade skills, te reo and ngā toi teachers), career guidance counsellors, or teacher aides funded to work with students with additional needs. Over the years, however, the AE workforce has consolidated around two key educator roles: tutors and teachers.



Tutors/Youth Workers. Kaimahi taiohi

Whether a tutor or youth worker, the people in this role see their key task as building positive working relationships with rangatahi. While there is currently no specific training that totally prepares these workers for their unique roles in AE, their life experiences and relational skills qualify them with an *expertise for the everyday*. An in-depth study into the role of tutors found that they held the following key attributes.[18]

Call	Passion to make a difference for young people forms the necessary foundation of tutor practice.
Joy	Approaching young people with ease, joy and humour helps tutors create an attractive learning atmosphere.
Care	Tutors develop caring and trusting relationships that draw young people to ongoing engagement with learning.
Empathy	Tutors understand the context in which young people live – and share from their past experiences
Critical Thinking	Thinking critically of both self and the world in order to transform their tutoring practices.
Grace	Grace is a restorative approach that seeks all ways to keep young people included and engaged.
Mana	Tutors respect and esteem young people as taonga.
Commitment	Continuity of tutor presence, long-term commitment and predictability provide young people with a safe space.
Team	Tutors work cooperatively with parents, teachers and other professionals.

Tutors ability to get alongside rangatahi, providing guidance and tuition in everyday life skills complements the skills teachers bring to AE settings.

[18] Schoone, A. (2016). *The tutor: Transformational educators for 21st century learners*. Dunmore Publishing.

Teachers and Pedagogical Leaders. Kaiwhakaako me ngā Kaiarahi mātauranga

Teachers and Pedagogical Leaders provide expertise with curriculum knowledge, assessment and planning in order for rangatahi to access quality academic learning experiences. At its very basis, competence in literacy and numeracy is an essential life skill that requires innovative teaching approaches. Teachers:

1. with reference to Individual Education/ Development Plans, design learning experiences that seek to integrate curriculum areas

2. help rangatahi develop study skills that are also necessary if they are to return to schools

3. identify teachable moments in the everyday activities of the AE centre

4. throughout a young person's time in AE, track and report on achievement.

Some teachers work at distance, through Te Kura – the correspondence school.

Since 2011, pedagogical leadership has been funded by the Government. Pedagogical Leaders are teachers who provide academic guidance to other teachers and tutors working in AE settings. Often Pedagogical Leaders itinerate to work across multiple settings. The aim of their role is, *To raise the educational outcomes of students in AE*, that ensures:

- cultural competence in working with diverse students and tutors and, in particular, that programmes address the identity, language and cultural needs of Māori student

- quality curriculum, planning, and assessment

- strategies to build engaging learning activities based on evidence programme review based on self review.[19]

Across Aotearoa New Zealand, Pedagogical Leaders work in slightly different ways in response to the needs of students and staff members, but at its core The Education Review Office highlight that Pedagogical leadership is a professional development and support process for AE.[20]



[19] Education Review Office, 2012. *Alternative Education: An evaluation of the pedagogical leadership initiative*. https://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Alternative-Education-An-Evaluation-of-the-Pedagogical-Leadership-Initiative-September-2012.pdf

[20] See the above document for a list of principles of pedagogical leadership in AE, pp. 22 - 24

Working together. He waka eke noa[21]

In many instances it is difficult to separate the roles of tutors/youth workers and teachers. Most teachers in AE hold similar values to tutors, and many tutors are able to plan activities that have academic educational outcomes. In Schoone's study[22], one tutor put it like this:

teacher's content
tutor's relationship
an arrow in the quiver is a tutor-trained teacher

However, while the motivation to work in AE may be shared, the table below summarises some general differences between what tutors and youth workers bring, compared to those of teachers.

My job (as a tutor)	Your job (as a teacher)
Have a passion for working with rangatahi **Have a strengths-based approach** **Value reciprocity** **Work together with rangatahi and whānau to develop an Individual Education/Development Plan**	
• Watch out for, and cater to, the holistic needs of rangatahi • Focus on the young person's development of the New Zealand curriculum key competencies: thinking, using language, symbols and texts, managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing • Observe rangatahi throughout their everyday interactions to inform my approach • Develop activity-based learning experiences that may include Education Outside the Classroom, cultural knowledge, sporting, arts or life-skills • Mentor rangatahi, helping them to navigate life circumstances • Plan for the material needs of rangatahi in terms of transportation, food and learning resources.	• Watch out for, and cater to, the academic needs of rangatahi • Focus on each young person's attainment in literacy and numeracy, and achievement in curriculum areas leading to NCEA credits • Assess each young person's academic levels to inform the development of the IEP and curriculum planning • Plan an integrated curriculum, supported by tutors' activity-based learning experiences • Conference with each young person around their career goals, and prepare them with study skills for their next step • Create and provide resources for each young person's learning experiences.

Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What are some of the key characteristics that you think AE educators (teachers and tutors) have?
2. What could AE educators offer to mainstream education settings?
3. How can mainstream teachers and AE tutors work together to better accommodate the needs of AE rangatahi?

[21] He waka eke noa. A waka able to traverse difficult seas (problems).

[22] Schoone, A. (2016). The tutor: Transformational Educators for 21st century learners. Dunmore Publishing. p. 21

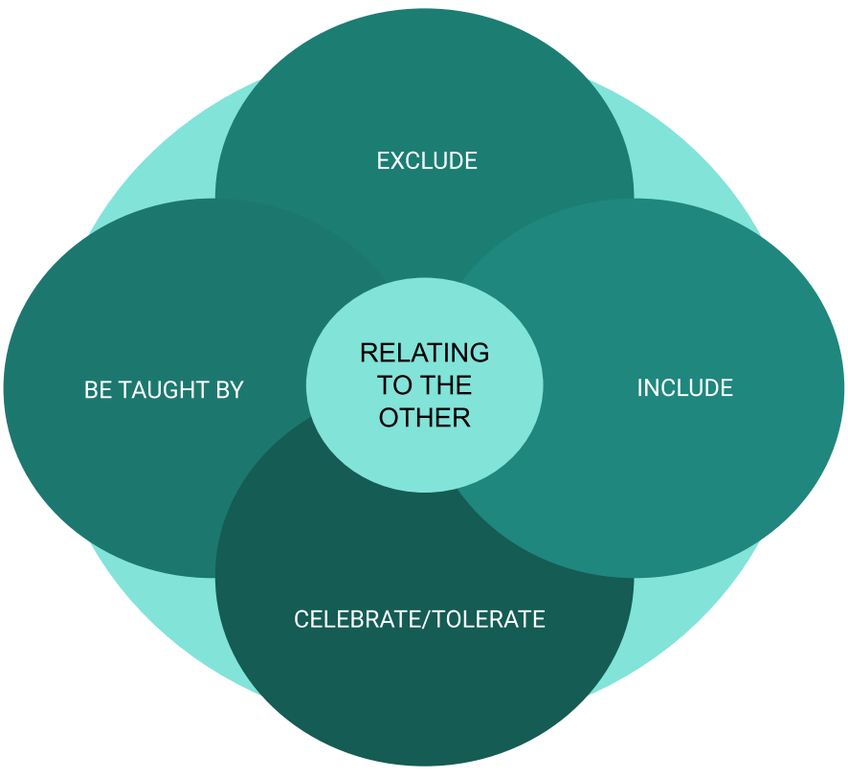
How do we connect interculturally? Me pēhea te paihere ā-tikanga?

Nā Judy Bruce

Culturally responsive practice is at the heart of all effective AE programmes and pedagogies. We recognise that there are multiple ways of engaging interculturally, and educators are often thinking and rethinking what this means for their own practice. The Intercultural Engagement Model[23] below shows four ways that are typically understood and actioned in education and other broad contexts when engaging with the Other (or Others, defined as one who is different from ourselves).

The Model captures four worldviews, and can be a useful tool for thinking about our own attitudes and practices, as well as those that exist institutionally. One of these approaches is to **exclude** people different to ourselves through blame, alienating systems, and attitudes. This is often motivated by fear. We see this happen a lot in schools where young people are alienated/excluded from attending. Another, perhaps more common approach is to **include**; which is as an act of saying, "you are welcome here; come in and be like us". A third way is to allow Others to exist side by side, so long as we are not altered by this encounter. This orientation is often understood as: to **celebrate**. For example, by celebrating differences through festivals and other cultural events, or by increasing tolerance through cultural understanding. The final orientation toward Others is to **be taught by**. This is an open and humble position of knowing that Others have something to teach us about what it means to be in this world. It is a willingness to being disrupted in our ways of being and knowing; recognising that our own knowledge is partial. This position is first and foremost one of humility. Pacific educators in this section explain that this approach "comes from a place of humility, not from a mindset of 'fixing' or 'saving'".

When we consider AE contexts, it's vital that we take time to reflect upon our own beliefs, attitudes and practices when connecting with Others. In AE, around 60% of all rangatahi attending AE are Māori; the majority of whom live in urban contexts. In this section we explore different approaches to engagement with Māori whānau and rangatahi. We also acknowledge the growing number of young people who attend AE from Pacific families and communities, and explore engagement concepts relevant to this context.



[23] Bruce, J. (2014). Framing ethical relationality in teacher education. University of Canterbury, Christchurch NZ.

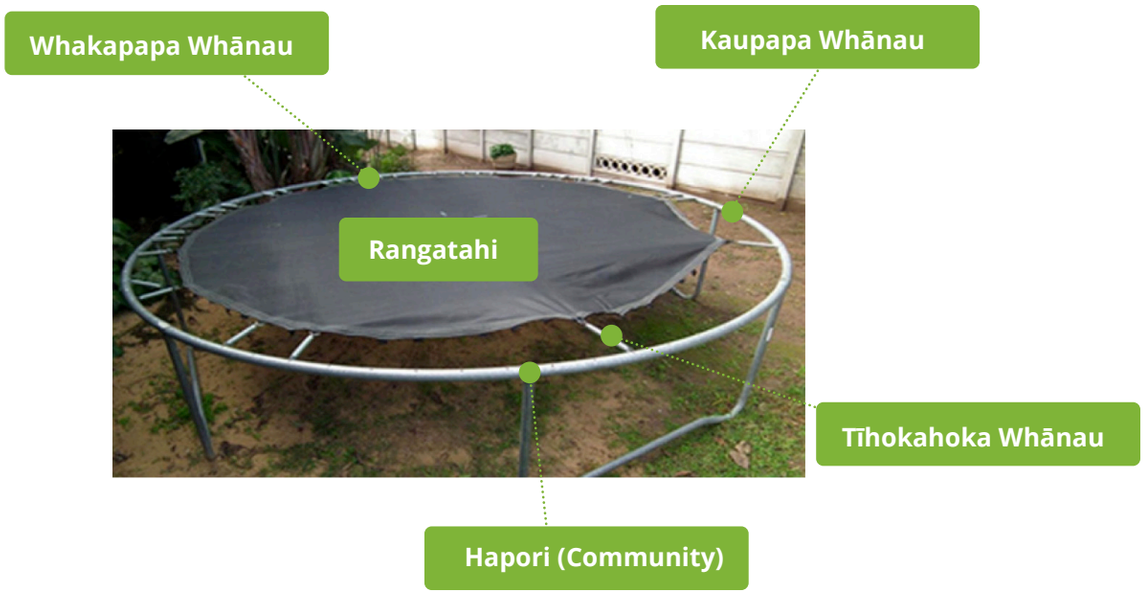
Whānau connections, the trampoline model. Hononga ā-whānau, me he turapa.

Nā Jono Campbell me Sharyn Roberts

Human and youth development models such as those presented in *Positive Youth Development Aotearoa* (PYDA)[24] propose that rangatahi who exist in healthy whānau and healthy communities (hāpori) are more likely to be healthy. Many rangatahi who have been alienated from mainstream education, are at risk of also being alienated from key supports provided in their whānau and hāpori.

For many urban Māori rangatahi, *whakapapa whānau* (the traditional family unit) is not always the singular most important influence in shaping their lives. Whānau (defined as the "social and economic environment"[25] that traditionally was self-reliant within whānau and hapū collectives) has since evolved to mirror the society where it exists - largely urban towns and cities, and different forms of whānau have emerged to create belonging and resilience.[26]

The Trampoline Model[27] is an assessment tool which provides a way of understanding different forms of whānau relationships, and explores the ways these provide bounce or resiliency in the lives of rangatahi. Keelan suggests that "the rules of engagement are learnt through other forms of socialisation",[28] and the *Trampoline Model* presents these other forms as *kaupapa whānau* and *tīhokahoka whānau*. Knowing which whānau



[24] *Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa*. (2011). Wayne Francis Charitable Trust. Retrieved from https://www.wfct.org.nz/pyda

[25] Keelan, T.J. (2014). *Nga reanga: Youth development Māori styles*. [ebook]. Retrieved from http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/referencing-books-in-apa.php#e-book-reader-book. P.96.

[26] Adapted from Metge, J. (1995). *New growth from old. Whānau in the modern world*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

[27] Roberts, S., Davis, S., Campbell, J., & Butters, J. (2019). *Tohatoha: Unlocking your potential for greatness*. Te Ora Hou Aotearoa resource.

[28] Keelan, T.J. (2014). Nga reanga: Youth development Māori styles. [ebook]. Retrieved from http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/referencing-books-in-apa.php#e-book-reader-book. P. 94.

connections a rangatahi has, enables educators to apply a restorative approach to understanding, and enables the rangatahi to say, "ko wai au - who am I?"

If the trampoline mat represents rangatahi, what do the springs that connect them to the frame represent? A close look at the trampoline in the picture, reveals that some springs are connected to the frame but not to the mat. These springs provide no bounce. There are also some springs connected to the mat but not to the frame. To be truly connected, the springs must be connected to both the frame and the mat. Rusty springs are better than no springs. The most vulnerable rangatahi are those with few or no connections (springs) to people or place. Isolated and lonely, rangatahi will struggle to thrive and may be more at risk of harming themselves or others.

More springs - more bounce, less springs - less bounce

The Trampoline Model acknowledges three critical whānau connections: Whakapapa, Kaupapa Tīhokahoka, and these different whānau connections exist within Hapori (the community):

1. *Whakapapa Whānau* denotes kinship connections that prepare rangatahi for their wider responsibilities to marae and hapū. *Whakapapa whānau* are relations: siblings, parents, cousins, aunties, uncles, grandparents, etc. Whānau are for life. When seeking to understand the whānau context of a rangatahi in AE, and how you may engage, some helpful questions to ask are:
    a. What is the experience of the rangatahi with their whānau?
    b. What is the whānau experience of the education system?
    c. How do you connect with whānau?
        i. How do you build relationships; do you communicate only when there are challenges?
        ii. Would you expect whānau to turn up when you ask on your terms?
    d. Would you ever visit whānau?
2. *Kaupapa Whānau* are unified by a shared interest, place, values, ways of working and loyalty. Unlike whakapapa, membership is voluntary. Examples of *kaupapa whānau* are mates, teammates, club mates, interest group members, schools, and marae. *Kaupapa whānau* are aligned by shared whānau values and interests. Questions that help understand the *kaupapa whānau* are, for example:
    a) Where, or who does, the rangatahi connect to?
    b) Do she or he have team mates, interest groups, or coaches who are supportive?
    c) Where are their places of belonging in the community?
3. *Tīhokahoka whānau* are united by place, but not necessarily whakapapa or kaupapa. Membership is temporary and not always by choice. *Tīhokahoka whānau* could be malls, libraries, schools, boarding schools, care and protection residences or prisons. Understanding this whānau context may be understood through exploring questions like:
    a) What are the places of belonging (sanctuary) and key connections for young people?
        i. Who are the people who provide those connections?

Hapori whānau encompasses the role of the public and the wider community in influencing whānau development. This is the community where whakapapa, kaupapa and tīhokahoka whānau interact and connect for identity and belonging. "Ehara mā te pūmau anake o ngā mātua Māori ki te manaaki i ā rātou tamariki ka tipu ora anō ai, engari me tautoko anō hoki e te hapori whānui. It's not only by Māori parents being diligent about nurturing their children that they will be healthy, but they must also be supported by the wider community".[29]

[29] Te Ara. (2015). Retrieved from Māori Dictionary Online: https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&keywords=community&search=



Hine had finally found a place of belonging in an AE programme, referring to classmates, kaimaihi and those she connected with, as 'her whānau'. Like many rangatahi, she was reluctant to leave and transition to further opportunities. A connection with a Whānau Ora Navigator helped Hine and her whānau create a PATH[30] plan to map her future aspirations. When asked by the Navigator, "who do you want from your whānau to come?", Hine replied "I want my teachers" and named three kaimahi in the AE Programme. When the Navigator asked, "Why?", Hine replied, "Because they are my whānau…my other whānau just want me to join the gang. But I am more than that and these are the people who have encouraged me to achieve my dreams".

Hine's AE programme measured more than attendance. They placed high value on all three types of whānau relationships. Each term whānau nights celebrated rangatahi success, with over 60 whānau members attending and sharing kai, fun, music and noise. Whānau regularly commented:

> *"They come and visit us and find out what's happening for us"*
>
> *"They make us feel welcomed and valued"*
>
> *"For the the first time we don't feel like we are there because our kids have done something wrong"*
>
> *"It's not complicated or formal…we can be ourselves and our kids are welcome"*

AE educators understand the importance of these connections, how to strengthen them, and how to create kaupapa whānau in the classroom.

[30] Pipi, K. (2010). The PATH planning tool and its potential for whānau research. *MAI Review*, Vol. 3, Retrieved from http://reveiw.mai.ac.nz

Pacific engagement, Pacific AE educators' worldviews.[31] Te hononga ā-Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa: me ō rātou tirohanga hei kaiwhakaako i te Kura Tāwhai.

Nā Daisy Lavea-Timo

The story of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa is one that is both familiar in terms of the waves of migration who came in search of the land of milk and honey and one that is ever evolving. This modern Aotearoa environment is one where more than 60 percent of Pacific peoples are now born in New Zealand.[32] Many rangatahi with Pacific heritage are engaged in AE settings. For this section, Pacific educators who have a lot of experience in the sector were asked 2 questions: "What is AE for you?" and "What advice would you give to new educators working with Pacific rangatahi?" Their insights provide great food for thought.

What is Alternative Education for you? He aha te Kura Tāwhai ki a koe?

Alternative Education (AE) is another option, or another opportunity for education, because mainstream education, is not for everyone. AE is a different learning environment which is small and agile enough for rangatahi to belong and be seen. It is a place where rangatahi can come with all of their needs and know that their needs will be met here.

What advice would you give new educators? He aha tētahi kōrero hei āwhina i ngā kaiwhakaako hou?

"Vā is the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together"[33]

The Vā- Relationships

The cultural formation of Pacific peoples is relational and collectivist rather than individualistic. Appreciating the vā and an awareness of it in an AE classroom and how it represents a Pacific way of being and knowing, can make a positive contribution to the intercultural understanding required for effective engagement and education. To build positive relationships, a teacher must have self-awareness of their own cultural background, as this may influence their professional practice. Making positive connections with Pacific young people starts with having a high regard for their Pacific cultural contexts. It requires seeking to understand their Pacific values, principles, structures, attitudes and practices, and the differences and similarities within, among and between the various Pacific groups. *This comes from a place of humility, not from a mindset of 'fixing' or 'saving' but rather a place of service in order to lead. It should be seen as a road to be travelled as opposed to an end that needs to be achieved.*

Be Real

Pacific young people like to use humour and can tell if you are being disingenuous or 'trying too hard' to fit in.

Belonging

Pacific young people need to know they belong and feel like they are part of the aiga/whanau and being cared for before they engage with their learning. If they know you care, they will believe you.

[31] Special thanks to Salatielu Tiatia, Alofa Ah-Dar and Silivelio Fasi for their insights

[32] New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (2016). *Pacific economic trends and snapshot*.

[33] Wendt, A. (2016). *Tatauing the post-colonial body* http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp



Identity

Pacific languages, cultures and customs are a key foundation of identity and making space for young pacific people to discover and create their identities is crucial in AE. Educators must support Pacific young people to be themselves and create learning environments where they can see themselves and their Pacific cultures reflected in the classroom.[34]

AE educators need to be open to learning and not assume that all Pasific young people are the same.

For good insights, ask questions such as: Which Pacific island(s) do they whakapapa to? Have they recently migrated to NZ or were they born here? Were their parents/ grandparents born in NZ?

Using Pacific greetings, humour, texts and storytelling of one's own cultural identity and experiences are also a great way of connecting with Pacific young people.

Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What do you think about the definition of AE given here? In what ways does it differ to other definitions that you have heard?

2. In your own words, explain what is meant here, and how it applies in other contexts too: *"This comes from a place of humility, not from a mindset of 'fixing' or 'saving' but rather a place of service in order to lead. It should be seen as a road to be travelled as opposed to an end that needs to be achieved"*.

3. There are four cultural contexts above. To what extent does your AE setting reflect these practices? What could you do differently?

[34] Ferguson, P. B., Gorinski, R., Wendt Samu, T., & Mara,. D. (2008). *Literature review on the experiences of. Pasifika learners in the classroom*. Wellington: New Zealand.

What we teach.
Ngā Akoranga

Nā Lloyd Martin

As someone who taught in AE in the late 1980's, and whose former students are now mostly in their forties, I am very happy to report that while some have ended up in and out of prison, others have gone on to run their own businesses (here and in Australia), earn degrees, bring up families successfully and contribute to our communities. It is helpful to consider what we are doing in AE that actually helps people towards these positive outcomes.

Sitting behind the question of *what we teach*, is a much larger one about the purpose of AE. Is it to fix rangatahi so they can fit back into the (education) system? Or is it to provide alternative approaches to learning? If it is the first reason, then we would judge the success of AE by how many young people have integrated into school and re-engaged with the NZ Curriculum. Judged by this standard, AE hasn't performed particularly well in this country (or in any other). This view was echoed by Ministry of Education in a briefing to the incoming Minister of Education in 2017[35]:

Our review of AE has shown it to be largely ineffective at helping the most at risk students experience positive educational and social outcomes.

This view is based on reports such as the one conducted by ERO, which found that between 13 and 34% of rangatahi in AE found their way back into mainstream schools in 2010. The reported rates of return, did not take into account how well the arrangement worked out for those rangatahi over time.

Perhaps it is helpful to take a step back and ask some bigger questions about the purpose of AE, because if we understand what futures we are preparing rangatahi for, we would know what is important to be helping them to learn during their time with us. A series of focus group discussions with educators across seven AE programmes found that some groups were very clear that their job was to provide a timeout environment, which helped to 'fix and return' rangatahi. Those that operated from this kaupapa generally had two things in common:

- They maintained close working relationships with their referring schools, and in some cases were even considered as 'offsite' staff of those schools. This resulted in better access to some resources, but it also came with increased restrictions about what they could do.

- They tended to have a younger age group (Year 9 and 10) and had a strong focus on remedial literacy and numeracy work. However, they also tended to rely heavily on Te Kura (Correspondence School) and didn't always have the expertise or resources available to do more than this.

Other AE programmes saw that their job was to meet the wider needs of rangatahi, and support them to achieve their goals. These included a return to school, moving into vocational courses, and finding employment. The content of their programmes tended to follow this broader focus, to include; achieving credits towards NCEA (no matter what the age of their students), accessing STAR and other 'taster' courses (through Polytechs and local tertiary providers), and having opportunities for work experience. Most groups that I talked to (who had this focus) were frustrated with the time it takes to actually achieve credits with Te Kura, and many were exploring other options. Some were able to leverage off relationships with local schools, and wider community networks in order to provide a wider range of options. However, these groups also tended to have enough staffing to release people to do this community engagement work.

Rangatahi in AE can be broadly divided into two groups. It appears that between 30 and 50% of those who arrive at most AE programmes do not engage and will disappear again after a few days

[35] Education Review Office (2011) Retrieved from: http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/secondary-schools-and-alternative-education-april-2011/

or weeks. Conversations with those that do stick around reveal that their involvement in AE has helped them re-engage with learning and start thinking about their future. Contrary to some stereotypes of rangatahi in AE, the ones I spoke to recently (from the 'stick around' group) were mostly pretty clear about where they are going, and what they want to achieve during their time in an AE. The quotes below are representative of a series of one to one conversations with AE rangatahi from different programmes just before the 2020 lockdown:

"Probably [stay here] until I'm 15 and a half, and then I can go do a pre-trade through Ara (Polytech)".

"I just want to finish up, hopefully get my credits, go to Ara and finish off my NCEA's level 2, Then I just get a job. … I'll miss this place, it's done a lot for me, but then I'd like to move on".

"To go back to school, to get an education, to Year 13. They helped me when I needed help, it's easier to learn. They explain the questions better [than at school]".

"I talked to MP [staff member] about doing this Warehouse Stationery thing, it's like work experience and you get 20 credits for it".

"My Dad said he's going to get me a part time job, it will get me a couple of hours a week Okay, so I'll be doing part time on Saturdays and Sundays doing food deliveries [saving up for a car]".

"I wanted to get back into Wgtn High School, and that failed… I'm not going to go to W-- High, I've got my own issues with that school, but I've got the option to stay here until I'm 16, then go to Weltec".

"I want to be a hairdresser, and like an artist. Because my Mum was a hairdresser. When she was like 18 she had a full hairdressing license and stuff, and I pretty much know how to, technically.
Q. yeah. And would you like to go and get like your full license or whatever it is?
Yeah. I would actually.
Q. Is there anything that you're doing here that will help you towards it?
No [laughs]".

Three things emerged from these conversations with rangatahi:

1. Getting credits towards NCEA was important to many of them (especially the older ones).

2. Many had struggled to get help with their work when they needed it in the mainstream, and they really appreciated the one to one attention that they were getting in AE.

3. They wanted help from people they had connected with and trusted.

If we focused on providing learning around the outcomes that we are preparing rangatahi for:

- We would run parenting and child health awareness programmes, recognising that for most, this is the last opportunity to learn about this stuff before they become parents themselves.

- We would leverage off community resources to connect them to work experience opportunities, greater engagement with mana whenua, build participation in sports and the arts, and we would find ways for them to earn credits towards NCEA as they do these things.

- We would ensure that they are equipped with the academic skills, work habits and confidence they will need to engage with vocational courses (trades, hairdressing etc) at the local Polytech.

- We would have a close enough relationship with some schools to create pathways to re-engagement for those that want to return, (this might look like dual enrolments for a while). We would also make sure that they return to school with some credits already under their belt (so they feel like they are ahead of, and not behind their peers)

- We would prepare them for the future of learning by making sure that their digital literacy is not limited to gaming, and accessing social media through a phone - this is an issue that we became more aware of during the COVID lockdown.



Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What do you believe the purpose of AE is, why, and what do you think it should be?

2. If you're working in AE, what is the curriculum focus and why?

3. What changes would you like to make to the curriculum focus of your (or other) AE programmes?

How do we teach? Me pēhea te whakaako?

Nā Adrian Schoone and Judy Bruce

In the recent history of AE, we have benefited in many ways from a number learning initiatives: Te Kura and Pedagogical Leaders, as well as thankfully a low staff to student ratio which gives us time to attend more to the individual learning needs of rangatahi. Beyond these initiatives there are many really great and innovative teaching approaches used in AE. There isn't scope here to explore all of these and so in this section we highlight two approaches to spark thinking for your own practice. Before we look at these ideas, consider approaches you know about using these questions to guide your thinking.



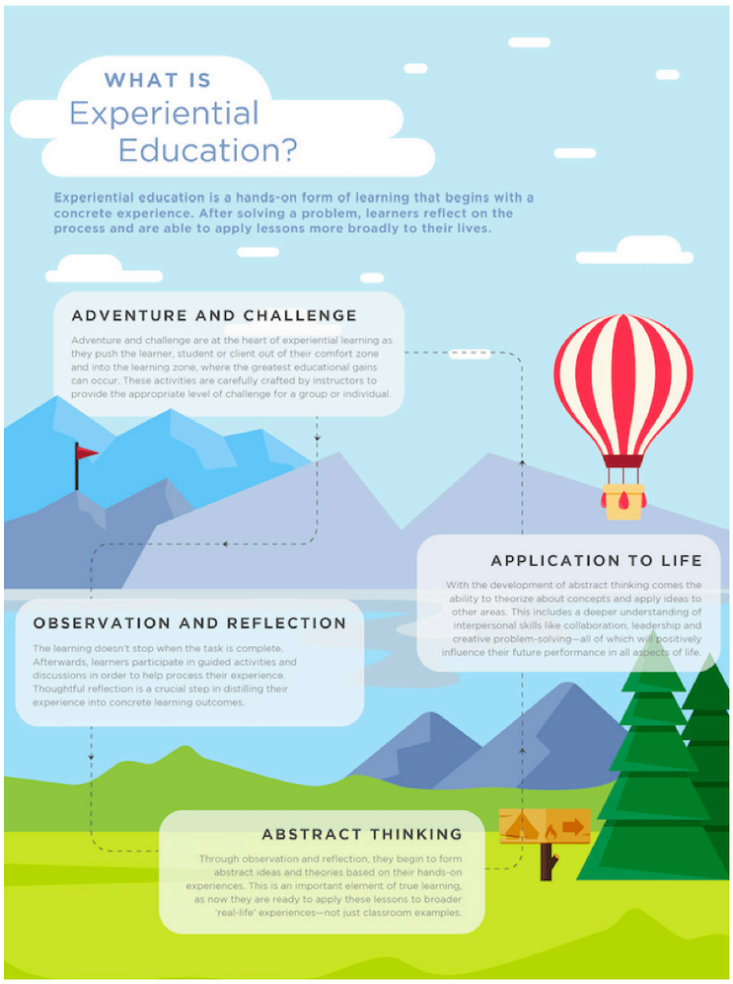
Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What are some of the best/most effective teaching approaches you have used? Or have seen used?
   a. Why do you think these approaches worked?
2. What hasn't worked very well, and why?
3. What support or resources would you like to see available to make teaching and learning easier?
   a. What actions could you take (individually or as a team) to help get the support/ resources?

Experiential learning and the value of ping pong. He wheako whaiaro me te nui o te poikōpiko.

When asked what rangatahi remember most about their time in AE, adventures often come to mind. Learning out of the 'classroom' and through experience is highly valued and the joy for many AE rangatahi is that it is learning beyond the workbooks! So what exactly is experiential learning (EL)? Experiential Learning can be defined as any learning and development that takes place through direct experiences. The aim of which is to increase knowledge, develop skills and shape values. The challenge for many educators is to create real and meaningful links to the curriculum and to the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes. How does a game of ping pong for example, become a learning and development experience for rangatahi? This can be articulated through the experiential reflection cycle[36] which helps to shift an activity/experience from an isolated event, to a learning event by asking: what happened? So what does that mean? Now what's next? Or how can I apply this learning to my life?

[36] https://www.aee.org/what-is-ee



Key questions. He urupounamu

Think of an experiential activity you have led (or seen led) with rangatahi. Now read through the Experiential Education Model above and consider the following questions.

1. Adventure and Challenge - what strategies can we use to ensure that rangatahi are stretched beyond their comfort zone, but not pushed into the panic zone?
2. Observation and Reflection - after an experience, what are some activities you can use to help rangatahi reflect?
3. Application for Life/Abstract Thinking - what are some ways you can get rangatahi to reflect on how the knowledge, skill or value might apply in other areas of their lives?
4. How could you use experiential learning to support learning that already happens, e.g. through workbooks?

Want to learn more?

Check out the *Te Whariki Kete*[37] that understands the educational value and importance of development through play.

[37] Te Whariki Curriculum https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/

A transformational learning space. He akomanga hihiko

When a learning activity becomes need-satisfying, where we wholly engage - head, heart and hands - we enter into the possibility that learning can be transformational. Glasser[38] (a renowned American psychiatrist who developed Choice Theory) maintains that all humans seek to fulfil five basic needs:

security, love and belonging, freedom, power, and fun and learning.

He suggests that we all have these same needs, but just how much of each of the five we need differs from person to person. For example, your need for love and belonging may require many friendships, whereas another person's need may be fulfilled by just a few good friends. Based on these five needs, Glasser gives us a clue as to how we can create need-satisfying learning experiences. In the table below, there are some questions to consider.



Key questions. He urupounamu

Key questions for this section are listed in the Table below.

Security: Our psychological and physical needs	Is the learning occurring in a physically, emotionally, and culturally safe way? Are the material needs of rangatahi met? (E.g. food, fees, and learning materials) Does the learning experience scaffold in ways that build upon rangatahi strengths? Do rangatahi have an overview of the learning plan? (This gives them security in a knowing there is structure and an element of predictability)
Love and Belonging: Connection with others	How are relationships sustained and nurtured by this learning experience? In what ways will rangatahi be able to work together? How will conflict be dealt with?
Freedom: Having choices, being autonomous, creativity	What choices can rangatahi make within each learning experience for what, where and how they learn? What freedom do they have in thinking outside the box? How does this learning develop their self-management skills?
Power: Significance and competence	How does learning enhance the mana of rangatahi? How is individual and group achievement recognised? How can the learning outcomes be shared with others?
Fun: Pleasure, play, humour, relaxation and relevant learning	What are the fun aspects of this learning experience? What opportunities are there for informal engagement with knowledge and skills? How relevant is the learning experience to the interests and needs of students?

[38] Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice Theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. HarperPerennial.

How we guide young people. Te ārahi i ngā taiohi

Nā Rachel Maitland

Practices that really work in terms of behaviour management. Hei mahi whakarite whanonga tika

In the AE context educators approach each young person they encounter with genuine curiosity – understanding that they do not yet know his/her worldview, experiences, interests or motivations. AE educators seek to understand each young person from a holistic perspective paying attention to his/her social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs. AE educators know that rangatahi cannot be viewed in isolation and that they are a product of their environment. Their environment includes the values and norms of their whānau, their peer group, and their wider community. AE educators recognise that rangatahi lives outside of the classroom setting have a powerful impact on their ability to engage in learning.

AE educators challenge unacceptable student behaviour – they are neither punitive nor permissive. AE educators' ability to guide behaviour of rangatahi is based upon a strong relationship and is always mindful of maintaining the young person's mana. Often these approaches include giving thought to where, when, and how they challenge behaviour. The physical location, whenever possible, is usually away from the group. The time, if circumstances allow, is once the young person is calm and likely to be receptive. The way in which the educator would address difficult behaviour is specific to the preferences of the young person and largely determined by the relationship they have.

AE educators don't aim to establish a completely harmonious learning environment. However, if they can create a space where rangatahi feel safe; they can teach life skills in this authentic setting. In AE settings educators can guide rangatahi to process grief, conflict, and a host of other emotions and behaviours. AE educators recognise when rangatahi are unable to manage their own emotions or deal with life's challenges in a constructive way. These educators know when a young person is not open to talking and they back off when the young person indicates they need space. Inevitably AE educators will need to address antisocial and aggressive behaviours of rangatahi. They are tuned into the warning signs and have strategies to keep themselves safe. Even when an educator has an excellent relationship with a young person, they are always aware of the risk that they could be the person that the young person lashes out at, either verbally or physically.

AE educators recognise that many of their rangatahi have experienced trauma and have not yet developed the ability to process perceived threats or distress in a constructive way. This knowledge enables the educator to understand that antisocial behaviours, although sometimes directed at the educator, are not about the educator themselves. AE educators know to look beyond the face value of poor behaviours and recognise that the antecedent is likely to be a result of something much deeper than the apparent trigger. With this knowledge AE educators are able to remain calm in the midst of chaos and, in the first instance, assess their own safety and the safety of all rangatahi. AE educators do not immediately look to impose a consequence for poor behaviour. They give the young person the time and space needed to move their mind to a place where they can engage and are receptive to a restorative process.



Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What are the most effective ways that you've used or seen used, when guiding rangatahi behaviour?

2. What are some ways that you've observed and/or heard about that are ineffective in terms of behaviour management? Why do you think this was?

3. Consider a time when you didn't know what to do, or how to manage a challenging behavioural situation.

    a. After reading through the rest of this section, reflect again on the challenging situation and see if any of the ideas suggested could help.

Head, heart, hand. Māhunga, Manawa, Mahi ā-ringa

In 2019, a small-scale research project based out of the University of Canterbury, sought to identify the understandings, beliefs and practices of exemplary teachers of Aotearoa New Zealand's most disengaged secondary school students.[39] The specialist field of AE (AE) was the focal point of the study and a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced AE leaders, exemplary AE educators, and former AE students. The research findings were divided into three key domains[40] including the head, which refers to what exemplary teachers of at-risk rangatahi know; the heart, which refers to what exemplary teachers of at-risk rangatahi believe in; and the hand, which refers to what exemplary teachers of at-risk rangatahi do. Within each of these three domains, six generalised statements are captured to present the key findings. Each statement is a compilation of words and ideas offered by the research participants and have been adapted for the purposes of this publication. Overarching themes include teachers' ability to disengage their ego, to see rangatahi from a holistic perspective, to use time and space strategically, to employ mana-enhancing practices and to challenge rangatahi to see themselves and their world in a different light.

The Head: What exemplary AE educators know. Te Māhunga: Ko ngā mātauranga o ngā kaiwhakaako Kura Tāwhai.



Mātauranga: knowledge, wisdom, understanding.

They know they don't necessarily know how to teach the young person sitting in front of them.

They know that what works well for rangatahi would work well in mainstream settings, and not the other way round.

They know themselves and they consistently turn up as themselves.

They know their own personal and professional limitations and are skilled at working within a collaborative team of other adults.

They know what is happening in each young persons' lives beyond the classroom and strategically adapt their approach, curriculum content and anticipated outcomes to reflect this knowledge.

They know the risk.

[39] Maitland, R. (2020). *The enduring effect of exemplary teachers of Aotearoa New Zealand's most disengaged secondary school students: an ideology of hope.* (Unpublished Master of Education thesis). University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

[40] Sergiovanni, T.J. (2007). *Rethinking leadership: A collection of articles* (2nd ed.). California: Corwin Press.

The Heart: What exemplary AE educators believe. Manawa: Ko ngā mātāpono o ngā kaiwhakaako Kura Tāwhai



Kaupapa: purpose, passion, vision, values.

They love their work and believe that they can make a difference, but they do not think that they have been sent to save the world.

They believe that rangatahi are doing the very best that they can with the tools they have, and they do not personalise behaviour.

They like each young person and believe each young person is capable and competent and has mana.

They have empathy for each young person, but they do not pity them. They have empathy but these people are not pushovers.

They challenge their own beliefs, the beliefs of each young person, and they challenge the system.

They believe that there are many variations and models of life, and that there is no 'one' pathway or solution to achieve a life well led.

The Hand: What exemplary AE educators do. Mahi ā-ringa: Ko ngā mahi a ngā kaiwhakaako Kura Tāwhai



Tikanga: methods, techniques, practice.

They build powerful relationships and connections with rangatahi, their peers, families and communities.

They create a safe place, a place of refuge, a culture and climate that allows rangatahi to detox from the chaos in their lives.

They design resources and are resourceful.

They carefully tailor their approach to suit the relationship between the educator and the young person, enhancing the young person's mana, never diminishing it.

They anchor rangatahi with a sense of belonging.

They create opportunities for fun and laughter, giving rangatahi a bank of happy memories to anchor them in tough times.



Key questions. He urupounamu

1. Go through each of the 18 statements above and self evaluate your own practice. 1 = all the time, 2 = sometimes, 3 = never. Add up your total score out of 18.
2. If you changed one way of being/doing, what would it be and why?
3. If you are working with others in your team, rate your programme together using the scale in 1.
    a. To what extent do you as a team incorporate the 18 practices?
    b. What do you want to change in your practice as a team, and what can you do to make these changes sustainable?

Trauma Informed Practice. Pāmamaetanga

Trauma can result from a single stressful event, series of events, or cumulative experiences in which a young person's ability to cope is dramatically affected. The main sources of trauma include sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence in the home and/or wider community. How people experience and respond to traumatic events differs significantly from person to person depending on a number of factors such as the support systems they have in place, their age, and previous experience of trauma.

The impact of trauma. Ko ngā hua pāmamae

Trauma can have immediate and long-term implications for a young person's overall wellbeing with potential to negatively impact their neurological, physiological, psychological, cognitive and social development. Children and young people are most vulnerable to trauma because their brains are still developing. Trauma can affect a young person's ability to regulate their emotions and access functions of the brain, such as memory and their capacity to learn. Trauma frequently occurs within close relationships and, it is important to note, recovery from trauma is largely dependent on positive, secure, relational experiences.

Trauma affects a young person's ability to remember and ability to concentrate - two critical factors impacting on learning.





What might trauma look like in an AE setting? Pāmamaetanga i te Kura Tawhai?

It is difficult to anticipate how a young person affected by trauma might behave. The young person themselves may have little insight into how they might respond to trauma and what might trigger that response. Rangatahi who are affected by trauma may:

- Have poor self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Be uncomfortable asking for help
- Have difficulty remembering instructions
- Be highly sensitive to potential threat
- Have difficulty finding the words to describe how they are feeling
- Experience perceived threat with the intensity of their original trauma
- Be impulsive, defensive, self-destructive, and/or reactive
- See change as a threat
- Have a survival focus
- Lack empathy or insight into the impact of their actions

What are trauma informed practices? He mahi hei tautoko taiohi e pāmamae ana?

The ultimate goal of trauma informed practices is to support rangatahi to become self-regulated. Trauma informed practices in the AE context require all aspects of the programme to be viewed through a trauma lens, requiring educators to be aware of how trauma affects rangatahi. It is important to note that trauma informed practices will benefit *all* young people in the AE environment. Examples of trauma informed practices include:

- Creating a safe, secure, relational environment
- Offering rangatahi predictability through programme routines and rituals
- Preparing rangatahi for change
- Offering rangatahi predictability by consistently being calm, respectful and compassionate
- Helping rangatahi to recognise their triggers
- Enhancing a young person's vocabulary to support them in naming, describing and recognising their feelings
- Supporting rangatahi to process and interpret their emotions

- Supporting rangatahi to process and interpret both positive and difficult behaviours
- Teaching calming techniques that quiet the mind
- Explicit teaching of social and interpersonal skills
- Recognising and celebrating each young person's progress and development
- Supporting verbal instructions and information with visual aids

The importance of trauma informed practice in AE. Pāmamaetanga me ōna āhuatanga i te Kura Tāwhai.

Disengagement from school can be a symptom of trauma and, therefore, is likely to have affected a number of young people involved in AE. It is crucial that AE educators understand the impact of trauma on young people as this will enable educators to identify the signs of trauma and respond appropriately. Rangatahi who are dealing with the impact of trauma require considered approaches to help them engage in learning and development. With an understanding of trauma, AE educators can employ a suite of trauma-informed practices with a goal of supporting rangatahi to process perceived threat, to self-regulate, and regain a sense of control. Understanding the impact of trauma allows AE educators to recognise when a young person's behaviour is not deliberate or intentional and this knowledge enables educators to depersonalise the behaviour and offer tailored support for the young person.



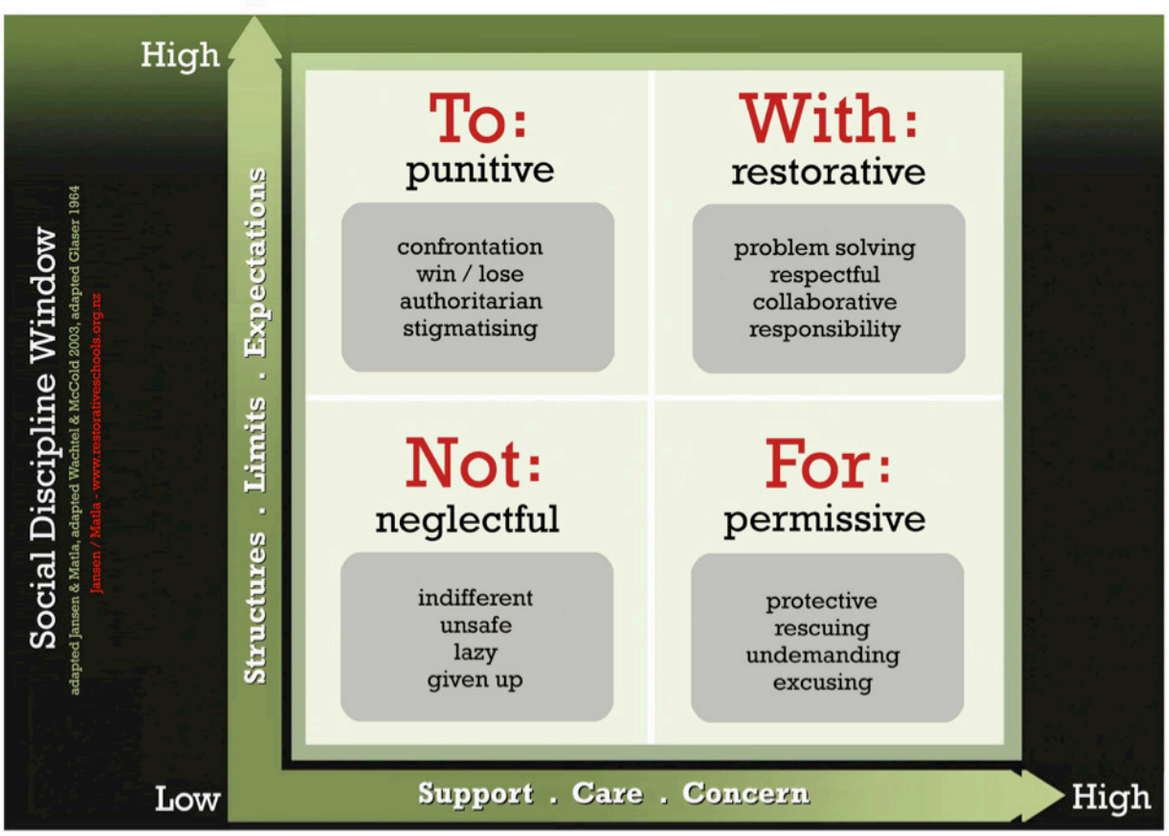
Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What trauma affected behaviours have you noticed in rangatahi?
2. What are 2 key cognitive effects of trauma that impact directly on learning?
3. What changes could you make in your practice to better respond to the needs of those impacted by trauma?

Restorative practice.

Restorative practices are integral to a trauma informed approach. With its origin in the restorative justice movement, restorative practices are a relational response to resolving conflict and behavioural issues. Restorative practices veer away from punitive responses where punishments are prioritised and imposed to manage difficult behaviour and incidents of conflict. Rather, restorative practices seek to employ a solutions focussed, targeted response to resolving conflict and supporting behaviour change. Here, the goal is to empower everyone involved in an issue or incident to have a voice in finding resolution, restoring mana, and strengthening relationships in a healing way[41].

Restorative practice is recognised as having the potential to give rangatahi a greater sense of safety and belonging within the AE learning environment. Many lessons can be generated from the successful resolution of a single conflict. A young person can develop empathy and gain new insight into how conflict affects others both directly and indirectly. Restorative practices reinforce prosocial behaviour and are strongly linked to improved engagement in learning.



[41] Savage, C., Macfarlane, S., Macfarlane, A., Fickel, L., & Te Hēmi, H. (2014). Huakina Mai: A kaupapa Māori approach to relationship and behaviour support. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 43(2), 165-174.

In the AE context, restorative practices can be used to coach young people to navigate conflict while repairing as much harm as possible and strengthening the connection between AE students and their tutors, peers, whānau, and/or their wider community. Skilled facilitators will have patience, empathy, and the ability to help participants find common ground. With the ability to engage learners in restorative practices AE tutors can address conflict as it arises; thus finding real solutions tailored to the needs of the young people in their unique AE context.

Tamati is a 14 year old rangatahi who has been attending an alternative education (AE) programme for the past three months. Tamati appears to be a lot older than his years due to his physical stature but his behaviour is typical of a much younger boy. Tamati usually stays with his Mum, but his behaviour at school and home has significantly deteriorated since beginning secondary school. Tamati's behaviour has led to multiple stand downs from school resulting in Tamati's referral to AE. His exclusion from school and his poor behaviour at home has led to a significant breakdown in his relationship with his Mum, and two weeks ago the decision was made for Tamati to move in with his father. Tamati has had little to do with his father since his parents separated when Tamati was a small child. Tamati's parents' relationship was very volatile.

Since beginning the programme Tamati has had a great relationship with one of the AE tutors, Tane. However, Tane is a stickler for punctuality and since moving in with his father Tamati has regularly arrived late for his AE course which Tane consistently challenges. Recently Tamati has spoken to one of the other tutors stating that he believes that Tane hates him and wants Tamati to get kicked off the AE course. One morning Tamati arrived late and walked into his AE programme during the daily karakia timatanga. Tane stopped the karakia and asked Tamati why he was late again. Tamati seemed agitated staring at the ground and clenching his fists. Again Tane asked for an explanation. Tamati then swore at Tane and began to advance on Tane in a threatening manner.



Key questions. He urupounamu

1. Reflect on the story above, using ideas from the 3 sections (Head, Heart and Hand; Trauma Informed Practice; and Restorative Practice) to consider various ways that you as a team could approach this conflict.

The art of practice.
He toi whakaako

Na Jono Campbell, Rachel Maitland, Adrian Schoone



We can read about best practice and understand the science of teaching, but the magic happens in *the art of teaching*. AE educators understand the fine art of teaching which is subtle and nuanced. The following three examples demonstrate this by exploring helpful models to bring clarity to our practice:

1. We explore the art of listening through the holistic concept of *whakarongo*, which is much more than listening.
2. We consider the joy of humour, interlocked with the subtle play of relationships, authenticity and discipline.
3. We wrestle with the ethical complexity and power of the private educator-rangatahi relationship; a step beyond traditional notions of the professional educator and the personal educator.

Whakarongo

Whakarongo to many of us is a command to listen but it translates to much more than that.

Whaka: is a prefix 'to cause'

Rongo: all your senses, perception, intuition

Whakarongo: engaging all your senses to discern what is happening around you, leading with the head, hands and heart[42]

Whakarongo is the process of engaging all your senses: to feel, smell, see, and sense what is happening.

It is also about how you interpret time as the intersection of the past, present and future – of looking forward into the past.[43] This is the ability to whakarongo:

> *Papa Mau Piailug, the Micronnesion Navigator who was key to helping us Polynesians rediscover the art of navigating or Wayfinding would lie in the hull of the waka, feeling the nuances, the vibrations of the sea, taking in the angle of the waves, the flight of the birds and know exactly where he was in relation to land.*[44]

In traditional indigenous education practice, a key role of the ākonga is to be able to whakarongo - know the signs, understand the environment, discern the details, see the whole picture and therefore know the way. They know where they need to go and how to bring together those around them. Skilled teachers, youth workers, and leaders understand how to apply these principles with rangatahi in order to support them to become navigators.

Whakarongo is knowing what each young person brings with them to AE on a daily basis, that can either help or hinder their participation. It is understanding the developmental needs of rangatahi individually and collectively and ensuring that the need to deliver curriculum does not override or ignore what is happening for each young person. The curriculum and programme ought to enhance the mana of rangatahi.

Sia was a 14 year old young person referred to AE for lateness and consistent non-attendance. She came with very little information except that she and the parents refused to engage through the standard school processes. The AE educator did some investigating, talking and meeting with whānau. As part of the investigation, the educator also sought to find out who was connecting with Sia. He found that there was a local youth organization who had engaged her in their leadership program. When asked about this the educator replied, "Sia's mum is profoundly deaf, with limited mobility and her father is in a wheelchair. Sia has 5 younger siblings. Every morning she gets them off to school, sorts the house and then goes to school herself unless she is required to help her parents navigate around the city. How could the school miss this? What did they not see? She at the age of 14 runs a household?"

Whakarongo is

- to know what is happening in the classroom
- to identify unintended learning opportunities
- to know what the young person, their whānau are and are not telling you
- the ability to support them to navigate not just through school but in all areas of their life

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[42] Roberts, S., Davis, S., Campbell, J., & Butters, J. (2019). *Tohatoha: Unlocking your potential for greatness.* Te Ora Hou Aotearoa resource.

[43] Marcus Akuhata Brown; in Ibid., p. 21.

[44] Spiller, C., Barclay-Kerr, H., & Panoho, J. (2015). *Wayfinding leadership: Ground breaking wisdom for developing leaders*. Wellington, Aotearoa, New Zealand: Huia Publishers.

Nunchucks and jandals

Working in AE often means working alongside some of our most vulnerable communities and contending with serious threats to the wellbeing of rangatahi. These threats can include poverty, substance abuse, violence, and gang involvement just to name a few. Amongst such serious circumstances AE educators skilfully employ humour to demonstrate and to strengthen their own humility. This humility shows rangatahi that educators do not take themselves too seriously and gives the educators a break from the heavy issues they are required to deal with in their work.

Humour is a powerful tool used by effective educators when connecting with rangatahi. Humour is used to create laughter and light-heartedness, counteracting many young peoples' cultural norm where being tough and stoic is an expectation. Importantly, humour is always used carefully and strategically in a way that does not diminish a young person's mana. Educator use of humour can be effective however, humour[45] should be used carefully and never in the form of sarcasm or to humiliate rangatahi. Shaming a young person serves only to destroy trust and is ineffective in supporting behavioural change.

Accepting and appreciating rangatahi sense of humour is one way that educators can support a sense of belonging in allowing rangatahi to be themselves in the classroom setting[46]. Alternative education educators "use humour artfully for de-escalation and distancing in challenging situations"[47]. Humour is one of three teaching characteristics that rangatahi with a history of non-attendance at school, appreciated (They also loved the most, teachers who were positive and helpful)[48].

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of working alongside a wonderful teacher, Malia, delivering education to youth-at-risk. This teacher established powerful relationships with her students and used humour skilfully to establish and strengthen her relationship with rangatahi. Occasionally one of Malia's students would get themselves in trouble. In response to this Malia, being a proud Samoan woman, would go to her resource cupboard and retrieve her famous jandal nunchucks. The iconic kiwi footwear, the jandals, were connected by a long woollen rope. Malia would drape the nunchucks over her shoulders and begin her journey across campus to engage with the young person in question. Malia would use her booming voice to alert the young person to her presence, "Hey! What have you been up to?!" As soon as the young person saw Malia wielding her jandal nunchucks laughter would ensue, "No Miss! I'm sorry!" Within this light-hearted atmosphere Malia would then sit and talk to the young person, getting to the bottom of whatever issue had arisen. It is important to note that Malia's students responded to the jandal nunchucks with laughter because of the strong, trusting relationship Malia had established with them. They knew that Malia would, in fact, never hurt them either with her words or her jandal nunchucks.

[45] Macfarlane, A.H. (2007). *Discipline, democracy, and diversity: working with students with behavioural difficulties*. Wellington: NZCER Press.

[46] Bishop, R., & Berryman, M. (2009). The te kotahitanga effective teaching profile. *SET: Research information for teachers*, 2(2), 27-33.

[47] Schoone, A. (2017). Joy, grace and transformation: The pedagogy of tutors in New Zealand's Alternative Education centres. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 21(8), 808-821.

[48] Bruce, J. (2018). *Dis/engagement in secondary schools: Towards truancy prevention*. Retrieved from: https://teorahou.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Disengagement-in-secondary-schools.pdf.

The 3 Ps of AE educator identity. Ko ngā Pī e toru o te tuakiri kaiako i te Kura Tāwhai



Social Educators are those who teach in the broadest sense of the term[49]. Social Educators are not classroom teachers bound to teaching a standard curriculum, but are teachers of life skills – often through a mentoring approach – who aim to assist others to participate fully as citizens. Although Social Education is not a common theory of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, we can glean some Social Educator strategies to inform AE practice. The three Ps is one such strategy, and this talks about educator identity as being:

1. P – Professional
2. P – Personal
3. P – Private

Firstly, the AE educator is a *professional* who draws from a toolbox of knowledge, skills and experience to facilitate an informed learning experience. AE settings abide by regulations set out by secondary schools and the Ministry of Education that require a professional approach. The formality of practice is demonstrated when educators work with whānau and other agencies.

Secondly, it is important that the educator is *personable*. The educator builds ethical relationships that are friendly and inclusive. Rangatahi and educators know about aspects of each others' lives, for example, their whakapapa, their likes and dislikes, or key experiences. The AE educator works empathetically and is able to *step foot* inside a young person's life, literally and metaphorically.

The third P relates to the *private* aspects of identity. The private self is who we are with our whānau and closest friends. In line with ethical practice, this relates to areas the educator chooses not to share. Sometimes it is because the educator has not fully processed something themselves (e.g. a medical diagnosis), perhaps the information would be inappropriate as a professional to share (e.g. a financial hardship the educator is facing), or that the information considered sacred (e.g. relating to religious values). Whatever the case, the educator's focus should always be on the young person, rather than the young person's focus on the educator!

There are times when the private aspects of an educator's life may be shared with a young person when the educator judges that this information has been processed, and will have a potentially liberating effect. Take this example from an AE educator talking about an experience he had with a boy named Billy:[50]

[49] Schoone, A. (2020). Imagining social pedagogy in/for New Zealand. *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*, 9(1), 2. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2020.v9.x.002

[50] Schoone, A. (2016). *The tutor: Transformational educators for 21st century learners*. Dunmore Publishing. p.26

Billy, when he went back to school

that was a highlight, the dark space that he had

it was quite awesome to see that transition

some scary moments

his thoughts go blank at one point he

stormed off, angry, stormed off, sat on the ledge of the balcony

(every day wasn't a dull day, never a lull day)

freaked out, quite a big drop

you're on the other side

(talk calmly, talk calmly)

found out that he had been adopted: his 'mother' was actually his grandmother

oh crap

(please don't jump, don't fall, don't do anything)

i started sharing about my grandparents and how

i was given up at three months old, but hey "i'm still here, i'm still moving forward"

"don't lie about your life being the same as mine"

i buried that i didn't tell anyone

he knew someone else was on the same page as him

a sparkle came back to his eye

"i want to be alive"

it kinda did justice to both of us

Key questions. He urupounamu

1. Remember the stories of Sia, Malia and Billy. What are the lessons here for us as educators?
2. What are the ethical implications when practicing the art of teaching?
3. How could educators, including those working in mainstream settings change their practices to be more in tune with the art of teaching?

Looking after ourselves.
Kia tiaki tātou i a tātou.

Nā Judy Bruce

you're their educator
you're their driver
you're their shoulder to cry on
you're their... emotional punching bag
the list goes on

Amosa[51]

We know that AE educators are caring and empathetic. They extend grace, guidance and a *watching over*.[52] In fact, Noddings[53] writes that,

caring is the very bedrock of all successful education and...

contemporary schools can be revitalised in it's light.

And it can be exhausting. What happens when we care too much? Research from a project of AE educators in CHCH[54], recognised that the sector was sustained within an ethics of community care; supported by community funding providers. But care without adequate resourcing and support can lead to strain and burnout for educators, and this has been the case for many working in AE. Policy and funding aside, our primary question here are...



Key questions. He urupounamu

1. What can educators do to practice self care, reduce the risk of burnout, and move to a space of thriving, rather than surviving?
2. Who do you know that has worked in AE or a related sector for prolonged periods of time, and thrived?
   a. What are their self care practices, and how do they differ from others?

[51] Schoone, A. (2016). *The tutor: Transformational educators for 21st century learners*. Dunmore Publishing. p.74

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid, p. 45

[54] Bruce, J. (2015). *Alternative Education provision in Christchurch: Alternative possibilities for policy and practice*. Unpublished report.

The practice of self care. Ko te tiaki i a au anō

There is no doubt that we as AE educators often experience high levels of stress in the workplace, as we work with rangatahi who are themselves often very stressed, and maybe showing signs of anxiety, PTSD, and trauma. Cultivating self care and resilience is not always easy, but there are available to us some helpful tools to guide our practices. For example, in a fascinating study of Vietnam prisoners of war[55], researchers explored the characteristics of resilience in those who did not develop depression or PTSD. The resiliency factors were:

- Optimistic thinking
- Helping others cope with extreme stress
- Having a moral compass (beliefs that cannot be shattered)
- Faith/spirituality
- Humour
- Having a role model
- Strong supportive relationships
- Facing fear (leaving one's comfort zone)
- Having a mission or a strong sense of meaning in life
- Experience in overcoming challenges

Take a look at this list, and consider which of these resiliency factors are present in your own life. How might you cultivate these factors for better self-care and wellbeing?

The **5 Ways to Wellbeing** are a significant signpost for many of us who live and teach good practice in self care[56].



The five ways to wellbeing are key indicators of thriving. Most educators working in AE, GIVE to others (perhaps too much!); but in what ways do we give to ourselves? E.g. What time do we allow ourselves to recreate and re-energise? What are the words/self talk that we give to ourselves? Being ACTIVE is not just about physical activity, but also ways of being actively engaged. We will explore LEARN as a way to wellbeing later in this section. CONNECT with others relates to the idea of meaningful connection. E.g. to what extent are my needs to be heard and understood being met? Taking NOTICE is the idea of practicing mindfulness and being in the present; noticing ourselves and our environments in ways that foster positivity.

[55] Charney, 2005. Retrieved from https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/518761_4

[56] https://wellbeinginfo.org/self-help/wellbeing/5-ways-to-wellbeing/

As educators it is important to practice these *5 Ways to Wellbeing* as a means to self care. When we care for ourselves, we are more able to care for our team and rangatahi in AE. *In addition to these practices*, research[57] shows that people who flourish in the workplace experience the following:

1. Feel appreciated for the work they do
2. Understand their strengths
3. Are able to use their strengths
4. Have a sense of autonomy
5. Balance work/life



Key questions. He urupounamu

Use the scale in the table below to rate your own experiences of wellbeing. The statements come from the *5 Ways to Wellbeing* and the *5 Flourishing Workplace Practices* outlined above. Rate your own experiences: 1. Rarely, 2. Sometimes, 3. Usually. E.g. for *Connection*:

1. "Rarely" e.g. I rarely connect meaningfully with others
2. "Sometimes" e.g. I sometimes connect meaningfully with others
3. "Usually" e.g. I usually connect meaningfully with others

Because educators are in a giving profession, we have changed this to include the idea of giving to ourselves (e.g. time, self care activities, rest, etc)

Statement	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Usually (3)
I GIVE to myself			
I am ACTIVE			
I keep LEARNING			
I meaningfully CONNECT			
I take NOTICE			
I feel APPRECIATED for the work I do			
I understand my STRENGTHS			
I use my STRENGTHS at work			
I have a sense of AUTONOMY at work			
I have work/life BALANCE			
TOTAL			

If you would like to, you can tally your score. Someone really thriving could get a maximum of 30/30. But many of us are likely to be around 20. Less than 20, have a look and see which areas you would like to change. Make a plan for this to happen. If you score 10 or below, then it really is time to make some changes. Talk with someone you trust about what you can do.

[57] Hone, L., et al. (2005). Flourishing in New Zealand workers. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 57*(9), 973-983.

Helping teams to thrive. Hei awhina tō kapa kia pūāwai.

If you are a leader in your setting, you can help create a culture where others thrive (flourish). Here are some suggestions from the research:[58]

- Show appreciation toward others - give praise, encouragement and positive words of affirmation

- Develop others' strengths - as a team, take time to understand one's own and others' strengths

- Use each other's strengths - after you understand each other's strengths, work to these! E.g. Some people are fabulous networkers, others thrive on systems and admin tasks.

- Build trust - people who work in a high trust environment are more productive. Build a culture of trust with your team.

    - "People want to be given greater control over the decisions they make, the way they organize their work and the ideas they put forward. This requires leaders to set clear goals that matter, provide guardrails or boundaries where needed, and then coach – rather than control – their people as they move forward. It means trusting people to show up and do the best they can, and to support and nudge them when required".[59]

- Cultivate the practice of mindfulness and curiosity. This can include a community of practice for learning and development: "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly".[60] Communities of practice can be within AE settings, consortium, regions, or national. In NZ mainstream education, these are often called Kāhui Ako (communities of learning). Communities of practice can also be across sectors, like Ara Taiohi members working in AE. While it can look different across contexts, the key idea is that communities of practice help us to learn, and flourish. They are learning communities where we feel connected and supported.

[58] Hone, L., et al. (2005). Flourishing in New Zealand workers. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 57*(9), 973-983.

[59] McQuaid, M. *Five ways to flourish at work*. Retrieved from https://www.michellemcquaid.com/5-ways-flourish-work/

[60] Wenger-Trayner, E & B. (2015). *Introduction to communities of practice. A brief overview of the concept and its uses*. Retrieved from https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/

Concluding thoughts. Kupu whakakapi

We wrote this resource as a response to the need for professional learning and development for educators working in AE related settings. We hope that the resource might be of use to others working in education, as well as youth work and youth development sectors. Included throughout the resource are tools, practice examples, stories and key questions. It is hoped that the key questions can be used to spark conversations/talanoa with those in your practice community. The final section is a compilation of a number of different organisations, websites and resources, that we thought you may find helpful.

Useful resources. He rauemi āwhina

General Alternative Education

Alternative Education National Body: The Alternative Education National Body (AENB) is the collective voice for AE providers from across Aotearoa New Zealand. Established in 2003, the AENB seeks to:

- Promote good practice for AE provision
- Facilitate relational networks and communication for providers
- Advocate on important issues on behalf of AE providers

https://www.alted.org.nz/

TKI Ministry of Education website provides information and support for schools, providers, parents/caregivers, and students working in alternative provisions.

http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz/

Trauma Informed practice resource

What is SMART Online? The SMART (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma) Program is an online learning course that focuses on supporting children and young people in a range of educational and other settings. The course is free and can be completed at your own pace – it should take approximately six hours of total student time. The SMART program was funded by the South Australian Government Department for Education, as part of the Keeping Them Safe child protection reform agenda. It seeks to enhance the capacity of the school and early childhood personnel to effectively respond to the needs of children and young people who have experienced abuse and trauma.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Schools NZ. A NZ training hub for educators interested in learning more about restorative schools.

http://www.restorativeschools.org.nz/

Pacific resources

Tapasā is a resource from MOE/ being implemented by the Teacher's council for all teachers of Pacific learners. It is designed to support teachers to become more culturally aware, confident and competent when engaging with Pacific learners and their parents, families and communities. This page gives some background and has links to the Tapasa pdf and supporting resources.

https://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Tapasa

CocoNet TV: an online village, Pacific people telling Pacific stories. https://www.thecoconet.tv/

Lalaga Fou Report by the Ministry of Pacific Peoples https://www.pacificaotearoa.org.nz/about-us

Pacific Prosperity Strategy, Ministry of Social Development

https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/strategies/pacific-strategy/pacific-prosperity-our-people-our-solutions-our-future-english-version.pdf

An article that gives the link to Oranga Tamariki's Talanoa Mai app, a fantastic interactive resource which gives you something tangible to help with engaging with Pacific people

https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/news/talanoa-mai-pacific-app-first-of-its-kind/

Te Kotahitanga

Te Kotahitanga is a research and professional development programme that:

- supports teachers to improve Māori students' learning and achievement, enabling teachers to create a culturally responsive context for learning which is responsive to evidence of student performance and understandings

- enables school leaders, and the wider school community, to focus on changing school structures and organisations to more effectively support teachers in this endeavour.

https://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About

Huakina Mai

Huakina Mai is a kaupapa Māori behaviour initiative that promotes whānau, schools and iwi working together to build a positive school culture, based on a Kaupapa Māori world view. This initiative is based on the growing body of practice-based evidence that school and student/whānau success are improved by personalization and strong relationships of teachers' knowledge of, and caring for students.

https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Kaupapa-Maori/Huakina-Mai

Te Mana Tikitiki

Te Mana Tikitiki uses tikanga and te reo Māori to build resilience, self-esteem and confidence to uplift the mana of young Māori learners and improve learning and achievement. It is a home-grown, evidence based behaviour intervention programme and works in partnership with local iwi. Te Mana Tikitiki was developed in conjunction with Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei.

https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Kaupapa-Maori/Te-Mana-Tikitiki

Brainwave Trust

The Brainwave Trust has a wealth of resources related to child and adolescent development, with a focus on wellbeing, stress and resilience.

https://www.brainwave.org.nz/

Praxis

Praxis is a network of youth development practitioners. They are educating and mentoring the next generation of leadership in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Praxis offers courses in Youth and Community work. The courses are recognised by NZQA, and are approved for student loans and allowance funding, through a direct relationship with the Tertiary Education Commission.

https://www.praxis.org.nz/

Te Ora Hou and the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust

Te Ora Hou and the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust have previously published resources related to youth development and education. This can be found here:

https://www.wfct.org.nz/positive-youth-development/pyda-framework/

https://teorahou.org.nz/resources/positive-youth-development-through-education/

Glossary: Selected explanations from Te Aka online dictionary

In AE approximately 60% of all rangatahi are Māori. Throughout this resource we have included use of te reo, in part as a way to strengthen and develop our culturally responsive practice as an AE community. Commonly understood te reo terms are not translated here, and te reo terms that may be less commonly known or understood are translated within the resource, as well as here in the glossary.

Urupounamu - important questions

Tāwhai - to stretch out - stride, to traverse, to copy (as an alternative)

Kura - treasure, valued possession, education

Tūāpapa - foundation (to be built on)

Me he turapa - like a trampoline

Mahi ā-ringa - hands on work

Hihiko - transformational, inspirational, spark = intensified sparking. Implying a transformational/ inspirational space

Whakarite - being prepared

Whanonga tika - appropriate behaviour.


te ora hou
with young people