



**Teach First NZ**

**2013 Cohort**

## **Leadership Projects and School Impact**



**Teach First NZ believes that great teaching requires great leadership. We also believe that our alumni will be required to exhibit leadership skills as they continue to engage, beyond the initial two-year programme, in working to close the education gap in New Zealand. That's why we place leadership development at the heart of our programme, and require all participants to undertake a leadership project in their second year of the programme. Read on to learn about the impact some of these projects, led by second-year teachers, have had in our partner schools.**

### Antonia McBryde



Antonia wanted Pasifika students to feel confident and connected as Pasifika in their school and school community – a confidence that would help them to achieve educational success, overflow into their families and into their future endeavours. She also wanted to raise the profile of Pasifika culture in her school so that students had an understanding and appreciation of it, independent of clichés, prejudices and cultural or racial stereotypes. To achieve these aims, she identified each Pasifika student from her school, and then invited them and their families to participate in a discussion & dinner. This dinner led to the forming of a Families Committee which subsequently decided to organise weekly Pasifika dance classes for the students and their families.

### Esther Rakete



The idea of empowering whānau to become better engaged with the school in order to improve student achievement has long been a passion of Esther's. The project that emerged from this idea was to have Whānau Wānanga (Family Gatherings) for parents and families of students in her Te Reo Māori classes, outside of and separate to the normal report evenings held for parents. She hoped that this would add educational value not just for kaiako and ākonga but also ōna Mātua, ōna Whānau (Parents and Families). The project aimed to make good on the relationship expressed by the acronym A.K.O which as a word - ako - means to teach and learn. The acronym is A for ākonga (students and learners), K for Kura and Kaiako (schools and teachers) and O for ōna whanau (families associated with learners and schools). The project aimed to encourage further these parties working in a successful triadic relationship through collective teaching of and learning from each other.

### Joanna Pascoe



Literacy presented itself as a challenge for Joanna, so as a strategy to increase interest in writing, Joanna invited the Action Education Poets to run a Spoken Word Workshop in her school. This evolved into the Spoken Word Project, a regular meet where she and a colleague encouraged budding poets to play with language in the form of poems, lyrics and freestyle word flow. A highlight was when brave young poets took to the stage at The Old Stone Butter Factory and shared their craft with the local community. "I have always been into music and have written a lot of songs. I only started to really love English when Ms Pascoe showed me that I can transfer song into poetry." - Sadieux Tua

## Kai Fuerst-Jaeger



Kai saw the importance of incorporating the use of technology in the classroom for the purposes of preparing students for today's technology-driven world. While a wealth of platforms is available for this purpose, he observed that the effective and efficient use of these is not without significant challenge. One of the barriers for a more seamlessly integrated approach to using Technology in classrooms is a lack of know-how and confidence among the teachers expected to utilize these platforms in their teaching. As a result, Kai's project aimed to form a focus group that would meet at regular intervals to share and refine ideas about how Google Apps could be used, implement these ideas in the classroom and then

share it back with the whole department in an allocated slot during the department meetings.

## Leonie Wethey



Leonie's leadership project was the establishment of a co-curricular Drama club called ACT. The focus of the project was to provide a place for students with an interest in drama to develop their performance skills and gain confidence in expressing themselves creatively. The outcomes she wanted to achieve, along with the indicators of success, were for the students to develop the skills they needed to put on a student-run showcase, to assert that they had gained in confidence as a result of the ACT sessions, and to expose the students to a wide variety of dramatic experiences, such as workshops and professional shows.

The need to be addressed was for a drama outlet at school as there was no drama department or drama course on offer to the students. Leonie took a lead in addressing this need through providing the students with a space to express themselves dramatically. This was a collaborative leadership project, as she worked through and with the Media Studies teacher. They planned the programme together and co-lead the weekly workshops.

The group is now in its second year and has tripled in size since its inaugural year. The students enjoy the social element of the group, the opportunities it provides, and the confidence they gain through their involvement. One member has stated, "I enjoy being in ACT because it is something that can make me more confident and brave and I walk away each session knowing I have learned something new". The group is currently working towards an ACT milestone: a full scale drama production that will be performed across several nights for friends, family and the community at the end of the second school term.

## Ruby Knight



A colleague in the Dance department approached Ruby about bringing a stronger literacy focus into dance and supporting students who achieve well in dance but are less engaged in other areas. Ruby saw an opportunity to use NCEA more creatively and prioritise learning over assessment. So together with two other colleagues, she created a whole new unit around the year eleven Visual Text standard, allowing for more student choice and autonomy with regards to how they would demonstrate their learning.

Students were encouraged to communicate a story in a range of ways - through film, posters, multi-media presentations, spoken word poetry and now dance was included as an option. As a result, students produced an array of creative and captivating visual texts and the number of Merits and Excellences increased significantly. The student feedback was really positive, one student said "I enjoyed creating a masterpiece that I was passionate about and that got me awarded an Excellence grade" and another student said "I got to do what I enjoy, which is dance. Also I got to make people understand my story using techniques from dance."