

Mapping Progress



Festival of Education - Wellington

Images of kids making their LCN learning maps at the Wellington leg of this year's Festival of Education.

Student Voice - A story by Anahera Hillman and Evey Lafou from Rata Street School



At the end of last year some of us were below the National Standard in Reading, Writing or Maths. We have been helping the teachers learn what to change to make our learning better so we can be at or above the National Standard. First we had to do a map to show what our learning looked like. We did fat arrows if we got lots of learning from someone and skinny arrows if we got a little bit of learning. We did double pointing arrows if the learning was two-way, like I help my friend and he helps me. Then we had to talk about what we did in our learning, and what we did when we got stuck. There were lots of different ideas. But the thing that nearly everyone did was...we asked a friend. But usually we just asked our friend for the answer. After we did these things, and our parents did and the teachers did, we had things we thought were most important. The 3 things we are going to learn about are: whanau engagement in learning, active learners and learning for the modern world. So now we are helping the teachers write a plan of what we are going to do. One thing we are going to do is to tell our teachers what our parents are good at so they can help us with our learning. My Mum would be good at helping people on the computer, and making things. My mum was one of the parents who came to the meeting to help decide what things the parents are going to do. We think if kids, parents and teachers do this stuff it will help kids reach the National Standards.

Network Voice - Chris Theobald, Seaview

I have been a member of the Seaview Learning and Change Network since the start of the 2013 school year. Although colleagues and I were quite confused about the LCN concept to begin with, two key messages I received within the LCN were perfectly clear as soon as I heard them:

1. *Respond and take action now.* Listening to Brian Annan at the Carterton Regional Network meeting, one thing he did say stuck in my head in particular: You're collecting information about your students and communities now, don't wait to develop a plan to start making changes. Do what you can, now. So with that in mind, after creating student and whanau learning maps, I was surprised that many students knew that they could be working and learning better if they were given the opportunity to work on a given task in a different manner. In light of this, and on a very limited budget, I created a flexible space in my class that allows students to develop in agency and have freedom to work in a variety of ways depending on the learning task. For more information on this "Trademe Modern Learning Environment" see: <http://goo.gl/bQp3Gc>

2. *The 'trickle down' of information from network leaders to teachers and community isn't as effective as it needs to be.* In my role as Practitioner Evaluator for our network I was privileged to go into various schools and conduct Probe IV interviews. It was amazing to see the wonderful things that are going on in our schools. It was also alarming to see the unanimous confusion amongst staff about what our LCN is all about, with some responding - We haven't even started to do LCN yet. In response to this, I utilised a web tool called Video Scribe to make a quick clip to explain the LCN concept and in particular our change priorities. The URL for the clip is: <http://goo.gl/Af7Byo>. By taking action where I learnt there was a need, I have changed my practice and hopefully helped others change their own practice too - and for me that's what an LCN is all about..

From the Ministry LCN Team

The world of Learning and Change Networks continues to be an interesting and dynamic place to live and work for all concerned. There are now networks from Muriwhenua in the Far North to Invercargill in Southland encompassing a wide range of schools, learners, communities and achievement challenges. There are 53 regular Learning and Change networks nationally including 338 schools with 24 networks in the Northern region, 14 in Central North, 8 in Central South and 7 in Southern. In addition there are 3 Science LCNs recently established with 2 in Auckland and 1 in Hawkes Bay. We expect to have a further 4 Science LCNs established by the beginning of 2015.

A total of 7 Mutukaroa networks have been established encompassing 52 schools and a joint project with NZPF has seen 6 Maori Achievement Collaboratives established. Altogether 68 networks are operating across the country with that number likely to exceed 70 before long. Approximately 20% of schools in New Zealand are participating in a Learning and Change Network of some kind. Given that the project has only been running for 2 years that is quite impressive.

Consistently we are finding that irrespective of the focus of the achievement challenge, there are some key themes which are common to most networks. They are:

- Empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning, often referred to as student agency.
- Engaging families/whanau to become partners in their children's learning.
- Ensuring that schools interact with learners and whanau in a culturally responsive way.
- Ensuring teachers are equipped to succeed in a 21st Century learning environment.

The balance and mix of these themes may vary across networks and they may use different words but those key concepts are present in the planning and thinking of most networks. They emphasise the importance of including parents and students in the network if we are to have the impact on student achievement that we want. To be frank, while most networks need the ongoing support and involvement of the principals, networks that only include Principals are not nearly as effective as those that include other teaching staff, parents and learners. LCNs need to

start with Principals but they must not stop with Principals.

The reality is that New Zealand has excellent teachers, Principals and schools and we have had them for many years but we still have a core of students who are underachieving and whose achievement levels schools have not been able to improve despite every effort. Frankly, if schools could have shifted the performance of these learners on their own they would have done it by now. Therefore, the need to include parents as partners in their child's learning becomes essential. Many networks are finding that where parents are included as genuine partners they are delighted to be included and usually add considerable value to the process.

Likewise, networks are finding that priority learners themselves can contribute a valuable perspective on their own learning. The exercise of having learners complete learning maps has often illustrated how perceptive many learners are at understanding the factors which influence their learning. There have been many occasions when a student's learning map has proven to be an eye opener for the parents and teachers of that child. Sometimes the message from the learner has been quite powerful and made a real difference to their life.

Most LCNs have been established for some time now and the early enthusiasm generated by embarking on a new journey together may be wearing off as the reality of meeting the commitments of working in a LCN become a reality. Schools are often incredibly busy places and Learning and Change Networks can easily get lost amidst the more urgent and pressing matters which schools have to manage. Ministry and Uniservices officials (whose total focus is the LCN project) need to recognise that LCNs may not always be "top of the pile" for some very busy schools. This doesn't necessarily mean that those schools are not committed to their LCN because the vast majority are very committed both to their colleagues in their network and to the concept of the LCN. Schools have to juggle competing priorities all the time, including the demands of being an effective member of a LCN. Sometimes these things just take time. LCNs are not fast boilers but rather they are slow cookers. Any chef will soon tell you which style delivers the better meal!

Keep up the great work everyone!

Bruce Adin

Jenny Jackson, Whitestone LCN Network Sabbatical Report

<http://jennyljackson.blogspot.co.nz/>

*How do we engage every students in deep learning for success?
In order to do this, we need to deeply engage with learning ourselves,
and reignite our passion and excitement for learning.*

*Writing about my research into best practise models of engagement in
New Zealand and the United Kingdom caused me to reflect on my own
deep learning in todays digital world.*

*Since returning to school this term (in only 3 weeks) and going 'open',
learning has become contagious. Everyone wants to catch it.*

NEW Regional Networking Days Term 3 2014

10th September - Central North

11th September - Auckland

12th September - Tai Tokerau

15th September - Southern

16th September - Central South

To keep up to date with all of the discussions happening at our
Regional Networking Days, including involving the wider networks
(families / whanau, learners) as well as access to presentations given
- join the digital platform for the via this link below:

<http://bit.ly/lcnregionalnetworking>

Contributions for the next newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article or story to
the next newsletter, please contact Natalie
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