Hui Whakarewa
Launching Te Kotahitanga with a small cohort of teachers

Mere Berryman and Robbie Lamont 2013
Whakataukī: Me oioi te ringa, ka puta te tama a Urukoroa

Literal: When agitated by the hand, the son of Urukoroa will appear. Urukoroa was one of the comets that brought fire to earth.

Metaphorical: The whakatauki suggests that we need to actively participate before a fire can be started and the desired result achieved. The metaphor can be applied to launching Te Kotahitanga in your school.

In November 2013, Te Kotahitanga was recognised internationally with the conferring of an award from the World Innovation Summit for Education

New Zealand Government
Launching Te Kotahitanga with a Small Cohort of Teachers

The workshops for Hui Whakarewa are structured around the genesis of Te Kotahitanga, all seven elements of GEPRISP, and the Effective Teaching Profile.

Regardless of how many new teachers you are working with, you will need to find ways to ensure all teachers have an opportunity to develop their understanding around these key concepts.

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The Effective Teaching Profile

Te Kotahitanga Observation Tool

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Facilitating the Hui

With a small cohort of teachers, it is recommended that the lead facilitator remains with participants throughout the entire hui.

This communicates a strong message about the importance of the Hui Whakarewa in introducing new teachers to the key concepts of Te Kotahitanga.

It also ensures consistency across the hui, provides an opportunity to build relationships, and ensures that at least one member of the team has an understanding of each participating teacher’s positioning and prior knowledge and experiences.

Bear in mind that there will be times when the whole team will need to be present, for example, for whakawhanaungatanga and, where possible, there should be opportunities for different members of the facilitation team to take a lead role in some of the activities or plenary sessions.

It is also recommended that more than one member of the team is always present to engage in learning conversations and provide feedback and feed-forward during the activities.

Even with small numbers, it is important to model discursive practice throughout the hui. Facilitation teams will need to use a range of strategies, find appropriate opportunities to change the pace of the learning, and make use of different parts of the available space. For example, a ‘pair, walk, and talk’ might provide a useful opportunity to reflect on what the Effective Teaching Profile looks like and sounds like in the classroom. When planning the hui, facilitation teams will need to ensure that strategies do not become more important than learning outcomes, either in their own minds or in the minds of participating teachers.

Where to hold the hui

With a small group of teachers, you still need to carefully consider where the hui is held. The following questions will be useful in guiding your decision making:

- Which venue will allow us to engage with the Māori community? How might we do that?
- Which venue will allow us to engage with other Te Kotahitanga teachers? How might we do that?
- Which venue will allow participating teachers an opportunity to fully engage with the hui without the distraction of competing agenda or responsibilities?
- What are the budget implications of different venues?
Pōwhiri

You will need to decide whether a pōwhiri is an appropriate beginning for the hui. This will often depend on the venue. If your school has a pōwhiri as part of the welcome to new staff, you may wish to align your hui to this.

Timeframes

The most important consideration when planning the length of your hui is to ensure there is adequate time for participating teachers to develop their understanding around each of the key concepts. It seems reasonable to expect that Hui Whakarewa with a small cohort of teachers will require less time than Hui Whakarewa with a larger group. With a smaller cohort, there is likely to be more time for individual learning conversations, both in the plenary sessions and during the activities. Depending on the daily start and finish times, two days will normally be adequate time to complete all Hui Whakarewa activities with a smaller cohort of teachers.

Plenary sessions

Plenary sessions throughout the hui can be run as learning conversations. It is appropriate to use the PowerPoints (as in the outline), but rather than a facilitator standing at the front for these sessions, the group may be able to comfortably sit around one computer and engage in a learning conversation. With a small group, you will have ample opportunities to connect with the prior knowledge and experiences of the group as you engage them in learning conversations.

Reflection and feedback

Throughout the hui, it will be important to plan for times when participating teachers record their reflections in their journals. This activity is particularly useful at the beginning or end of a session. It allows time for learners to process what they have learned. Some useful reflection questions you may wish to use are:

• What have I learned?
• What are the implications for me in my classroom practice?
• What else would I like to find out about?
Karakia, waiata, and whakataukī

When planning, decide how you will start and end each day and how you might share responsibilities for this with participating teachers.

Sharing the journey with the Māori community and across the school

The evening session on Day Two of the Hui Whakarewa provides an opportunity for existing Te Kotahitanga teachers (tuakana) to share their Te Kotahitanga stories with both the Māori community and with the new cohort of teachers (teina).

For example, you might plan for a series of five to ten minute presentations from experienced Te Kotahitanga teachers, in which they share aspects of their journey, including evidence of shifts in outcomes for their Māori students.

You may wish to invite all staff, the board of trustees, and key members from the Māori community for a shared meal, either before or after the presentations. The facilitation team must decide how formal this occasion will be and plan accordingly.
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For more information email kiaekepanuku@waikato.ac.nz