

2026 NZAI Conference

8th - 9th April

Keeping Assessment at the Heart: TLCs (*Teacher Learning Communities*) & Learning Walks in Action

Presenters: Franda Zondagh & Grace Whaanga

[LINK to our 2025 NZAI Presentation](#)

TE KURA NUI O
ROTOTUNA
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



ERO's School Improvement Framework

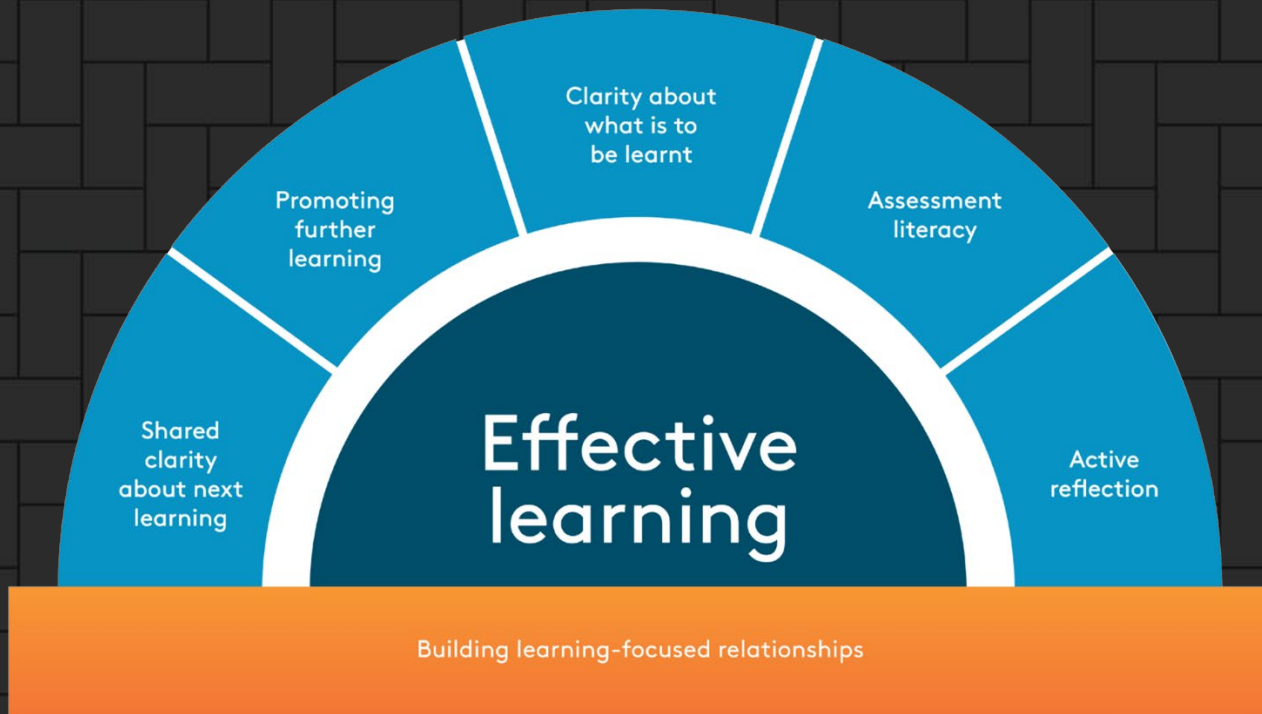
TLCs as our driver of change

Structured inquiry cycles
& Collaborative practice:

- + Capability in assessment
- + Practice informed assessment
- + Learner Agency
- + Reflective Practice



BACK TO OUR 'WHY' OF TEACHING



ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING CAPABILITY MATRIX



**Michael
Absolum**



Dylan Williams

KEY PRINCIPLES OF
ASSESSMENT
for LEARNING

A Focus on Deep Learning

TIMELINE			
NEW SCHOOL RAPID GROWTH	COVID & NCEA	RE-ESTABLISHING THE WHY	EMBEDDING THE PRACTICE
- Opened 2017 (100 students) - Roll Growth was exponential, 700 students @ 2020, 1000+ @ 2025 - Establishing staff leaving for promotions etc - New to NZ New to Teaching	- Covid reduced NCEA to the end point of summative assessment - An over reliance on templates + laptops - Teachers new to teaching were experiencing this as the norm	- Re-establishing the values we hold as teachers, collectively - New Principal - focus on deepening the learning: - Critical - Creative - Caring - Not just WHAT to think but HOW to think	<i>Teachers becoming proficient at translating the learning into the classroom</i> <i>Teacher talk reflects learning</i> <i>Focus is on the learning not just the doing.</i> <i>Capturing student voice is embedded</i>

RSHS Beliefs that underpin our Teaching and Learning Practices

Learners should experience opportunities that ignite curiosity

Learners can benefit from a collaborative and reciprocal learning ecosystem

Learners thrive when mana motuhake (high expectations & self-determination) drives learning relationships

Learners strengthen each others mana through guardianship of self, others and place

Motto

Connect, Inspire, Soar

Mission Statement

Empower our people to be connected,
collaborative, community-minded learners
inspired to soar.

Foundations of our Curriculum Decision-making

CONNECT through collaboration and whanaungatanga.
INSPIRE through personalised authentic learning experiences.
SOAR through creativity and innovation.



Principles

Our Principles are informed by a range of educational research and experience from a range of sources. The Principles guide the direction of our curriculum design and pedagogy.



AKO

We value ako, which is based on the principle of reciprocity. Ako is a notion that ensures that power is shared in learning.



WHANAUNGATANGA

We value quality learning relationships. Learning thrives in a whānau-based environment that supports engagement and success.



MANAAKITANGA

We value integrity, sincerity and respect towards differences, beliefs, language and culture.



TANGATA WHENUATANGA

We value learning that is connected. Contexts are provided for learning where identity, language and culture are activated.



RSHS Beliefs that underpin our Teaching and Learning Practices

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OUR PRINCIPLES

EMBEDDED CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PRACTICES



ROTOTUNA
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



AKO

IGNITE CURIOSITY TO STRETCH WHAT WE KNOW

CREATE SPACE TO TEACH & LEARN FROM EACH OTHER



TANGATA WHENUATANGA



MANAAKITANGA



WHANAUNGATANGA

WE BELIEVE WHEN WE...

ARE GUARDIANS OF EACH OTHER & OUR PLACE

FOSTER MANA WE GROW SUCCESS & THRIVE TOGETHER

QUALITY TEACHING FOR DEEP LEARNING OCCURS

SO THAT ALL ĀKONGA THRIVE THROUGH

**EXCELLENCE
& EQUITABLE
OUTCOMES**



**If assessment truly sits at the
heart of learning...**

**what does that actually look
like in daily practice?**

Teacher Learning Communities & Lesson Study (*lite)



Our 'Virtuous Leadership'* Model

"Just like students, teachers need multiple sustained opportunities to learn and unlearn, including time to try things out in their own classrooms, inquire into the effects, modify their approach, and repeat this cycle until improvement is evident. In short, the development of more expert teachers of deeper learning requires teachers themselves to have high-quality opportunities for deeper learning.' Ch. 3 Pg 47. V. Robinson

EMBEDDING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Quality teaching is:

- critical for student outcomes. Developing our teachers is one of the biggest levers for raising student achievement.
- the biggest driver of student success. It is more impactful than other things, including prior student achievement and class size, on students' outcomes.

PLD has a strong impact on improving the quality of teaching practice and enhancing student achievement. [\(ERO\)](#)

"To be successful, teacher professional development needs to concentrate on both content and process, but the content must come first. In other words, we need to focus on what we want teachers to change, and then we have to understand how to support teachers in making those changes" p.14

Dylan Williams & Siobhan Leahy : Embedding Formative Assessment

TEACHER LEARNING COMMUNITIES*

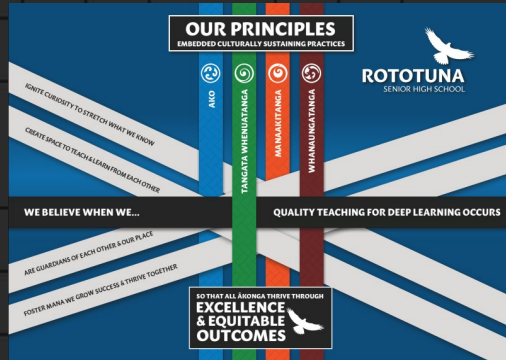
- What makes effective teacher learning?
- Tight, but loose structure
- Roles and ways of being in the TLC
- Supportive accountability
- Amplifying 'promising practice'
- Change in language - Culture of Learning

WE'LL KNOW WHEN IT'S WORKING WHEN...

Leading indicators of success

- Teachers increasingly act as "critical friends" to others.
- The prevalence of desired practices is increasing.
- Students are more engaged in classrooms.
- Teachers modify the techniques in appropriate ways, indicating an understanding of the underlying theory
- Measurable changes of success
- Increased student achievement

EMBEDDING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT



CONTENT FOR
TEACHERS
“PLAYBOOK”



REFLECTIVE
PRACTICE

Learning Walks
“Know thy impact”

**HOW DO WE MAKE DEEP LEARNING
HAPPEN THROUGH DESIGN?**

&

**HOW DO WE KNOW IT MADE A
DIFFERENCE?**

LEADING FOR DEEP LEARNING

Deputy Principal & Specialist Classroom Teacher

- Leadership & Coaching

In School COL	In School COL	In School COL	In School COL	In School COL	In School COL
Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator
8-10 Teachers	8-10 Teachers	8-10 Teachers	8-10 Teachers	8-10 Teachers	8-10 Teachers
MIXED ACROSS DEPARTMENTS					

1st Cycle:

2 years same group

TLC 2026											
Sally Pendergast Group leader - Mangapu BO				Grace Whanga Group leader - Te Uru				Megan Gaskell Group leader - Pouhima			
	Date & block of observation	Who's doing the observation	Done case study		Date & block of observation	Who's doing the observation	Done case study		Date & block of observation	Who's doing the observation	Done case study
Sudhir D...	30 March B1	Sally		Sam Williams	13 March, B1	CSC		Rebecca Ley...	10 March Block 1	MGA	
John Oa...				Natalie Shaw				Cedric Blesael			
Chris Lane				Kelvin Hogg				Marama Toka			
Kalia Grey				Margaret Medland				Rachael Ken...			
Megan B...				Chris Scarlett	17 March, B1	NSH		Nicola Pike			
Holly Arc...				Melissa Ware	10th March, B2	GWH		Olivia Potter			
Scott Daly	25 March B2	Sally	T2 1st up	Avishek Sha...	16th March, B1	NSH		Shand Wilken			
Jeriel Er...				Lili Tai				Natalie Maur...			
Regan va...				Micha Edwa...				James Hepb...			
				Morgan Bai...				Benny Pan			

Bailey West Break Out				Laurel Silvester Group leader - Pouhima BO				Natasha Brill Group leader - Te Pitau			
	Date & block of observation	Who's doing the observation	Done case study		Date & block of observation	Who's doing the observation	Done case study		Date & block of observation	Who's doing the observation	Done case study
Emily Duke				Renate O'S...	Week 5	LSI		Gemma Mc...			
Kelly Daniel				Kay Stokes				Michael Gunn			
Katie Bla...			YE	Brody Chap...				Cole Begbie			w
Mark Mor...				Jasmine Ah...				Swati Gulati			
Jo Barber				Olivia Reed				Lee Clark			
Abbie Watson				Kavita Doshi				Leah Lacey			
Francine ...				Melissa Flo...				Sunita Deo			
Stephanie La...				Martin Mai				Lisa Spaans			
Judy Chi...				Matthew M...				Komal Shandil			
Kyla Butc...				Kate Mallin				Matt Jones			

2nd Cycle:

New groups and (some) new facilitators

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

- Skill set - how to keep groups on track
- Co-constructing the purpose, shared understanding and shared actions for next steps e.g. how is this translating for teachers
- Taking the pulse of the teachers, pivoting when overwhelmed
- Its FOR the teachers so having the right environment is key

BECOMING THE BEST LEARNERS : CURATED CONTENT

	TERM ONE	TERM TWO	TERM THREE	TERM FOUR
2024	THINKING ROUTINES	TEACHING/LEADING TO THE NORTH EAST	SCIENCE OF LEARNING	PRESENTATIONS
2025	LEARNING INTENTIONS / SUCCESS CRITERIA	DIALOGIC PRACTICES	SCIENCE OF LEARNING (2)	
2026	CREATIVE THINKING	CRITICAL THINKING	SCIENCE OF LEARNING (3)	

+

'LESSON STUDY' : CREATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

SHARED COMMITMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY E.g. What are you committing too	FEEDBACK LOOPS E.g. Student Voice & Observations	JOURNALLING E.g. <u>Action Plan</u>
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THE ROUTINE IS IMPORTANT

Kahui Kaiako Lesson Study Hui

STRATEGIC FOCUS: HOW DO WE MAKE DEEP LEARNING HAPPEN THROUGH DESIGN & HOW DO WE KNOW IT MADE A DIFFERENCE?

PROTOCOLS FOR EACH HUI

- Each hui to start with a karakia
- In order to facilitate an open to learning and safe environment:
- Laptop use to be kept to a minimum - e.g. only to be used as a contribution to the hui by notetaker and/or case study person presenting
 - Cell phones to be away
 - Each member will be provided with a journal for note taking whilst actively listening
 - Members to actively listen and support others through their learning especially when someone feels vulnerable (no sarcasm and put downs)

FUNCTIONAL ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

FACILITATOR	GWH	A member of the Te Aho Whakawhanake rōpū. Has the learning intention and the agenda for each session and will lead the group to ensure the agenda is stuck to. Adaptive and responsive, pulling people into the conversation.
STARTER ACTIVITY	KAS	The starter activity can be delegated to any member of the rōpū.
RESEARCHER		Supports the facilitator. If questions come about the researcher will be the one to seek clarity either by checking in with another group or via computer.
TIME KEEPER	BWE	Uses a watch / phone to track the time of each segment. Gives clear indication on when time is coming to a close for each section.
RECORDER	LWA	Uses the agenda to take notes and track the conversations [holistically]. Records in detail, specifics for classroom observations.

SESSION #	6	WEEK 3 ; Term 3	7th August 2024
Attendance:			
Apologies:			

[LINK -](#)
Structure

[LINK -](#)
Example
from TLC

EXAMPLE OF A CASE STUDY: MIKE

Line of Inquiry:

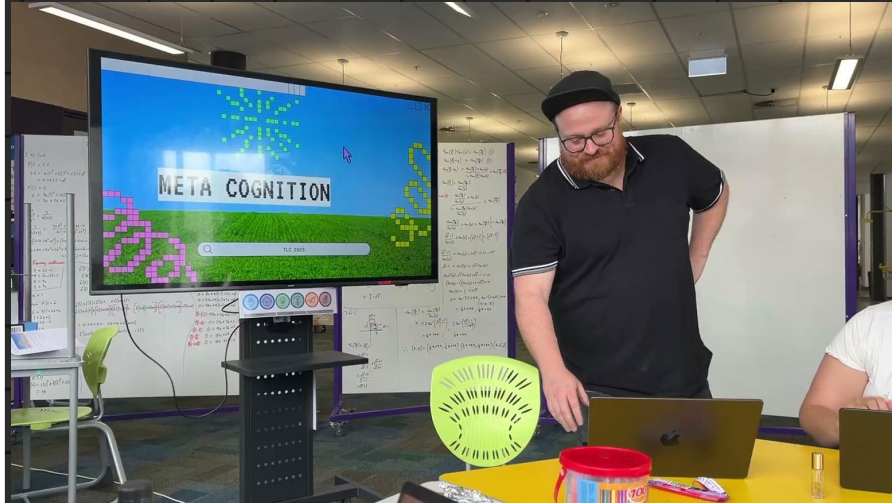
Meta-Cognition (Science of Learning)

The video shows:

His inquiry into metacognition in Hard Tech, some of the issues, and his approach to address these (applying TLC learning about cognitive overload and retaining information long-termly.)

How did he know it made a difference?

Students could complete the tasks without too many mistakes. Navigated easier - leading to more independence. Could refer back to the learning, self identify gaps, correct mistakes, as well as see what is coming next (know their next steps - clear road map)



EXAMPLE OF CASE STUDY - VIKASHNI

Line of Inquiry:

Dialogical Practice

The video shows:

Her inquiry about how she could develop a culture of dialogical practice in her English classes to lead to deeper understanding and sharing of thinking, ideas.

How did she know it made a difference?

More conversations happening in the class about the learning. Better student relationships, more open to being vulnerable, more open to receiving and giving student feedback.

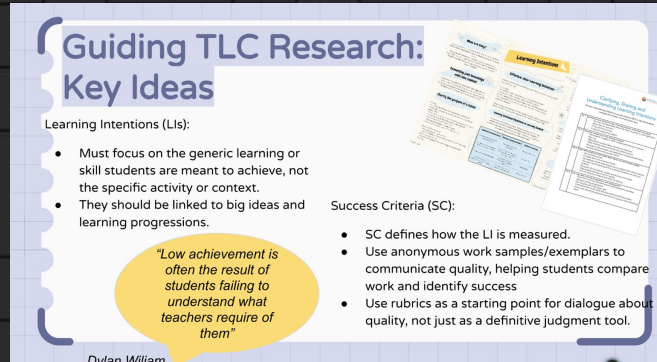


OTHER EXAMPLES OF TLC PRESENTATIONS....



Rachael's 2025 End-of-Year TLC Presentation

My Developing Journey with Learning Intentions and
Success Criteria in Mastery Psychology



Guiding TLC Research: Key Ideas

Learning Intentions (LIs):

- Must focus on the generic learning or skill students are meant to achieve, not the specific activity or context.
- They should be linked to big ideas and learning progressions.

Success Criteria (SC):

- SC defines how the LI is measured.
- Use anonymous work samples/exemplars to communicate quality, helping students compare work and identify success
- Use rubrics as a starting point for dialogue about quality, not just as a definitive judgment tool.

"Low achievement is often the result of students failing to understand what teachers require of them"

Dylan William



Dialogic Practices

Questioning

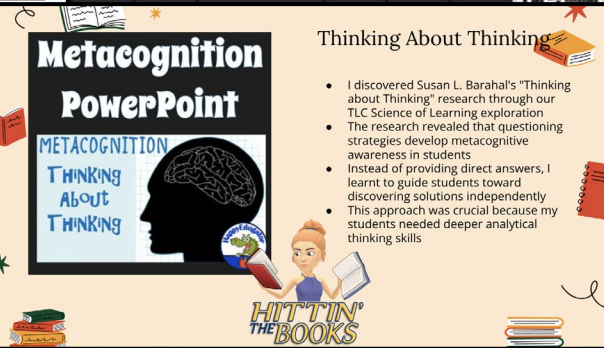
TLC

Livvy Potter



TLC Science of Learning

By Kelvin
2025



Metacognition PowerPoint

METACOGNITION THINKING ABOUT THINKING

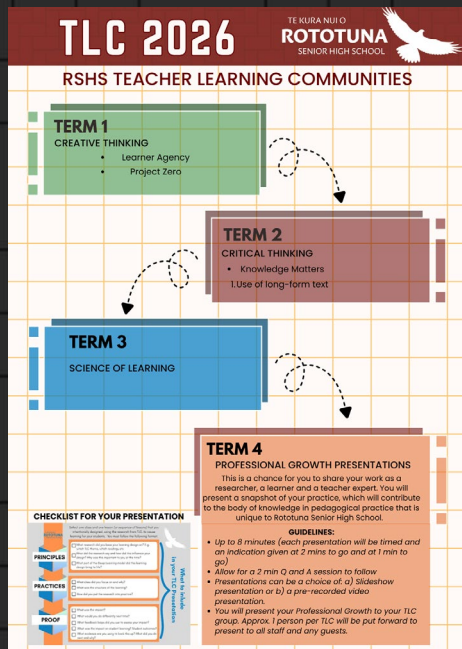
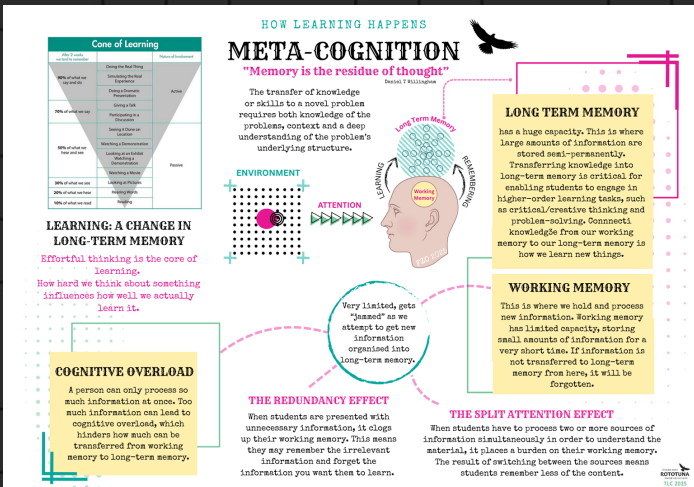
Thinking About Thinking

- I discovered Susan L. Barahal's "Thinking about Thinking" research through our TLC Science of Learning exploration
- The research revealed that questioning strategies develop metacognitive awareness in students
- Instead of providing direct answers, I learnt to guide students toward discovering solutions independently
- This approach was crucial because my students needed deeper analytical thinking skills

HITTING THE BOOKS



BESPOKE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



Links:

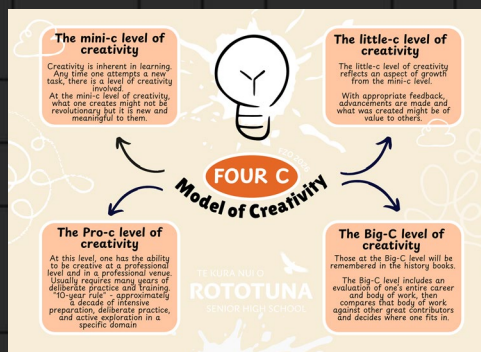
[TLC Presentations 2025: Overview](#)

[Global Learning Goals](#)

[Reflection: Learning Intentions continuum](#)

[Deep Learning PDF](#)

[Learning Intentions unpacking & example](#)



TE KURA NUI ROTOTUNA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Select one class and one lesson (or sequence of lessons) that you intentionally designed, using the research from TLC, to cause learning for your students. You must follow the following format:

PRINCIPLES

PRACTICES

PROOF

In your TLC Presentation

What to include

☐ What research did you base your learning design on? E.g. which TLC theme, which readings etc?

☐ What did the research say and how did this influence your design? Why was this important to you at the time?

☐ What part of the Deep Learning model did this learning design bring to life?

☐ What class did you focus on and why?

☐ What was the structure of the learning?

☐ How did you put the research into practice?

☐ What was the impact?

☐ What would you do differently next time?

☐ What feedback loops did you use to assess your impact?

☐ What was the impact on student learning? Student outcomes?

☐ What evidence are you using to back this up? What did you do next and why?

Evidence of Success so Far.... end of 2025

96+ % teaching staff were intentionally observed by a colleague and provided feedforward for their lessons. *Examples:*

- *Improving questioning to encourage deeper learning.*
- *Focusing on the "demanding" part of warm and demanding*
- *Utilizing UDL and chunking instructions/activities, and closer monitoring and tracking of students.*

100% of teachers have collected student voice - gained feedback about the learning in their classes.

Self-reflective teacher practice pivots - from the student voice collected:

- Incorporating more small practical and hands-on tasks, experiments, and a greater variety of activities and learning modes to provide richer learning opportunities.
- Feedback and Assessment: Improving general feedback processes, including how feedback and feedforward are delivered, and to continue making assessments clearer for students.
- Student Agency and Engagement: Elevating student agency, motivation, and autonomy, alongside improving engagement and participation in learning activities.
- Instructional Clarity and Structure: Work will involve streamlining instructions and resources, chunking, upfront learning roadmap (clarity around the learning purpose)
- Teaching Practice and Management: Intentional grouping, dialogic teaching strategies, restorative behaviour management

Measures of student achievement provided further evidence of impact *(end 2025)*

Level 2 achievement above national and EQI

Māori Level 3 achievement above national and EQI and increased endorsement rates at Excellence

Māori University Entrance attainment above national and EQI.

Increased Māori achievement

- Endorsements at Excellence
- Increased obtainment of UE
- Maori akonga staying at school for longer.

HOWEVER, STILL WORK TO DO....

Learning Walks =

taking the pulse of teaching and
learning at RSHS

Learning walks are not:

- Appraisals
- About compliance

It is our feedback loop:

Improving, not proving

LEARNING WALKS - Gathering student voice

Students understanding of:

- What they are learning
- Where they are at
- Next steps

Student experience of:

- Relationships (warm & demanding)
- Safety to take risks
- Agency in learning

Learning Relationships *

	Not at all	sometimes	Often	Part of the routine
Learners have opportunity to lead learning (eg. develop roles & share responsibilities)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Knows that their teacher cares about them	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feel safe to take risks	☐	☐	☐	☐

Learning Dialogue/Ownership. *

Learners know:

	Not at all	Somewhat	Mostly	Confident
where their learning is at	☐	☐	☐	☐
What their next steps are	☐	☐	☐	☐
how to get there	☐	☐	☐	☐

Tell me what you are learning in this class? *

Your answer

Tell me about a time where you learned in a different way in this class? What made this learning memorable for you? *

Your answer

Do you believe you can succeed in this class?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Mostly	Confident
	☐	☐	☐	☐

What are we tracking with Learning Walks?

We are looking for patterns in:

- Engagement
- Agency
- Ownership
- Spread of effective practice
- Teachers acting as critical friends

What are the students saying?

(Gathered from the learning walks)

“Tell me what you are learning in this class?”

“English - how to plan efficiently for essays. Use of grammar. Writing a personal response and going in depth.”

“We are learning how to debate and mediate with different grps with diff objectives

Today we are negotiating in groups to win a game- strategic thinking and problem solving”

“Write personal responses and how to make them more complex. If we need this for maths for example, when we need to write a response to a question we will know how to structure. “

“Ram Raids, and teenagers committing crimes and why they might do it”

“Sculpture convention research”

“Just learning how to make electronics and how to do it yourself”

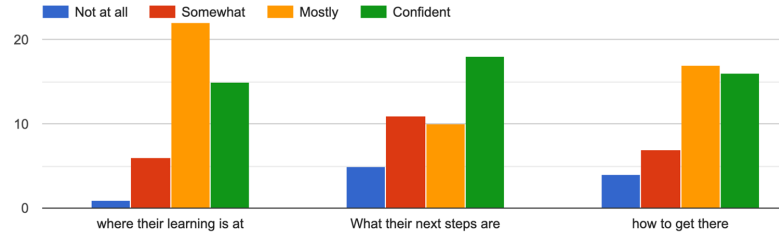
Yay!

Seeing some recognition of the transferable learning: not just about the content or task

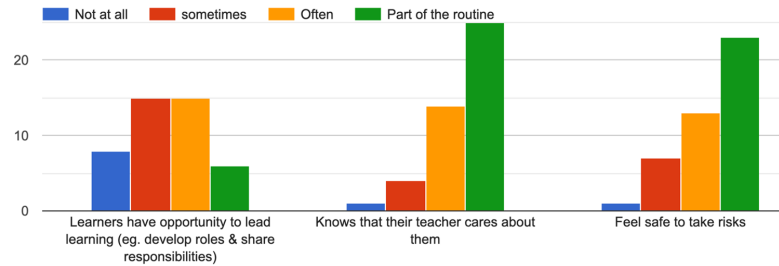
But...

Still getting some answers centered around the task or topic/content

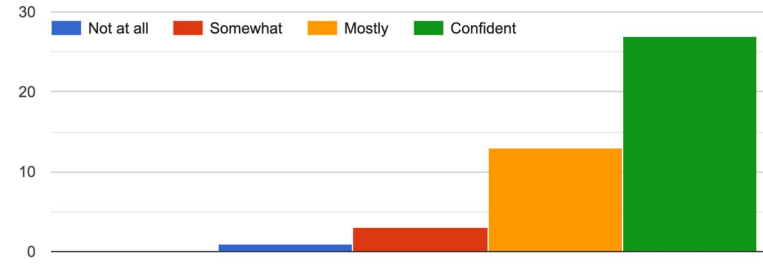
Learning Dialogue/Ownership. Learners know:



Learning Relationships



Do you believe you can succeed in this class?



Evidence of Success so Far.... end of year 2025

Teacher Feedback:

“I just wanted to share how valuable I’ve found the TLC we are running at school — it has been truly mind-blowing. I’ve learned so much from the TLC groups, and it has really helped uplift my teaching in many ways. During case studies, I picked up a range of different strategies from other members, which has been very beneficial.

I also want to mention how much I appreciated the focus on **learning intentions and success criteria** at the start of this year. Before that, I was mainly referring to learning objectives, but I’ve now understood the subtle yet important difference between objectives and intentions. This clarity has shown me that using learning intentions makes goals much more achievable for students.

Another highlight has been exploring the **science of learning**. Understanding how the student brain works in terms of long-term and short-term memory has been eye-opening. Previously, I was mainly using experiential learning in my teaching style, but now I’m able to compare the two approaches and integrate them to make my teaching even more productive.

I also shared restorative practices with my colleagues in India, and they were so impressed that they implemented it as PLD for their staff — and it has been very successful there as well.

Overall, I must say TLC is something truly productive. It not only enhances teaching and learning but also contributes to the holistic development of teachers. Thank you so much for bringing us these resources and materials — they’ve made a real difference.”

Teacher Feedback (summarised)

- **Collaboration and Sharing:**

Respondents highly valued the opportunity to share ideas, knowledge, expertise, and resources with colleagues, as well as the ability to learn from others' teaching content and practices across different curriculum areas and departments.

- **Discussion and Dialogue:**

The discussions, dialogue, banter, and co-constructing knowledge in small groups were highly appreciated, promoting collegiality, challenging current classroom practices, and creating an imperative to look deeply into pedagogical practices.

- **Structure and Process:**

Respondents liked the consistent, structured nature, detailed prompts, and the good flow of content, describing it as not too demanding with a reasonable and well-spread pace and amount of work.

- **Group Environment:**

The close-knit nature, high trust, safe space, and sense of belonging were positive aspects, providing a great space to exchange and explore ideas.

Coherent Improvement Cycle

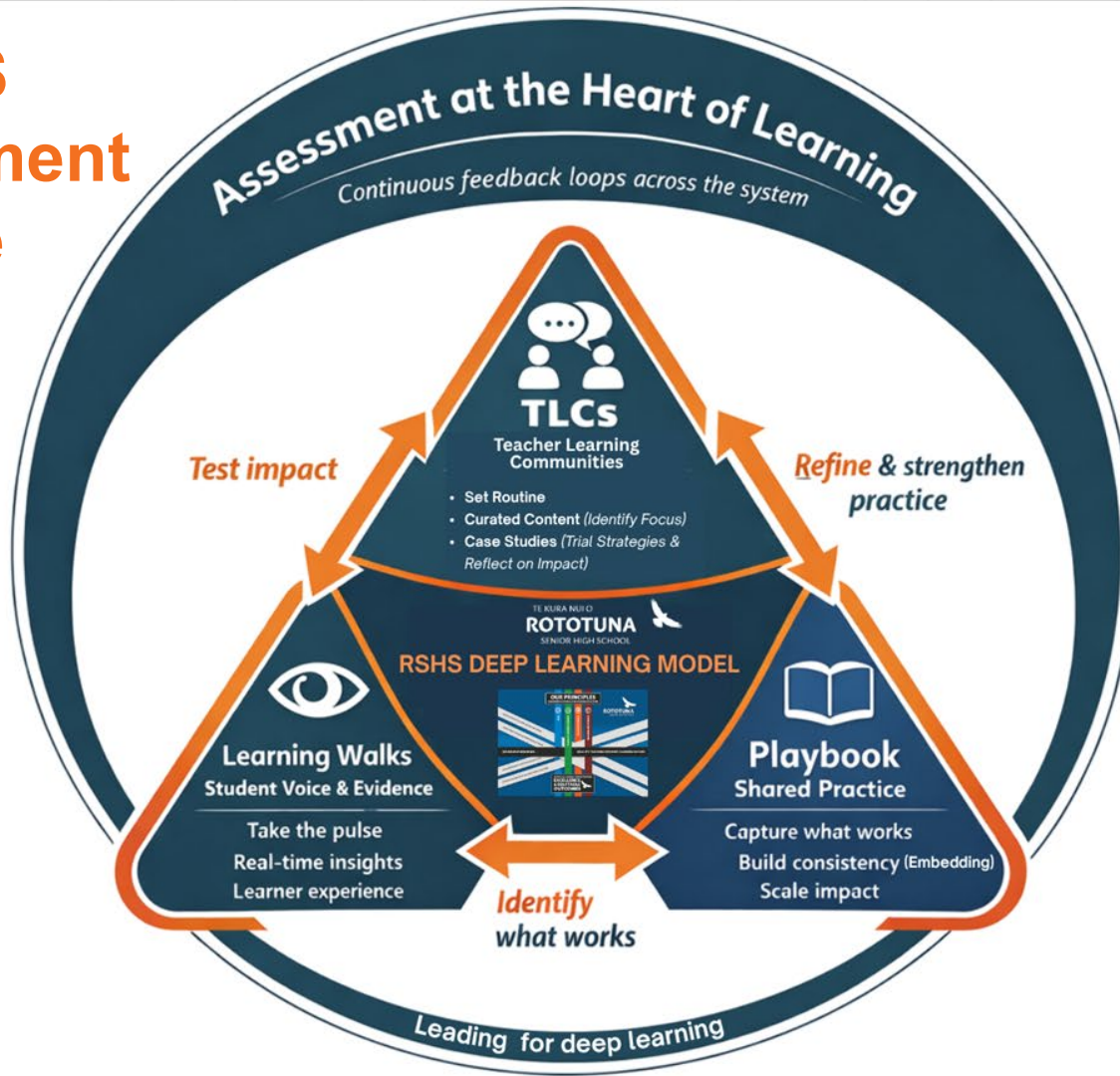
TLCs → Learning Walks → Playbook

- TLCs = generate practice
- Learning Walks = test + evidence
- Playbook = capture + scale

Assessment sits at the heart of learning when
feedback loops exist at every level.

Classroom, Teacher, and System

RSHS Improvement Cycle



Next Steps

- **Ongoing systematic collection of student achievement data** to show improvements e.g. AOV + Learning Area annual reports
- **Ongoing natural and meaningful evidence** from students and teachers to inform further development of TLC's
- **'Playbook' with exemplars of practice** to support teacher growth in development phase (*Coherence and alignment*)
- Ongoing PLD **support for leaders to develop pedagogical knowledge** to facilitate TLC's

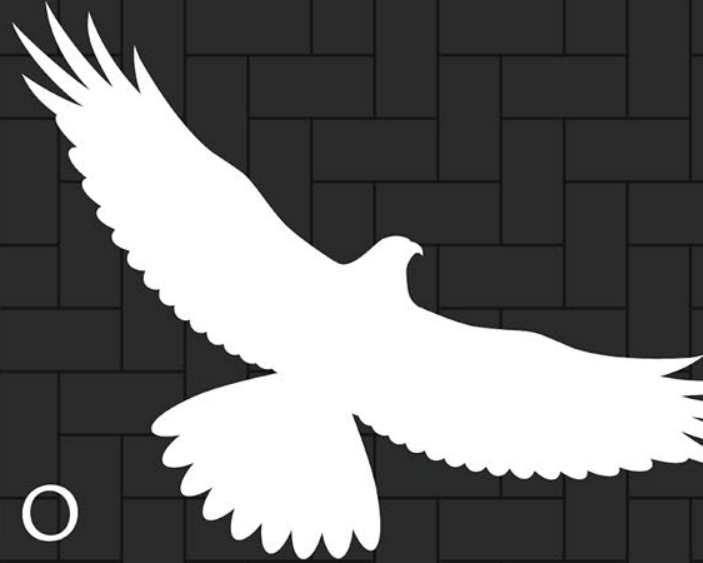
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TE KURA NUI O
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HIGH SCHOOLS



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your contact
details:



<https://shorturl.at/iFoK7>