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 NEW ZEALAND'S TE Kaitiaki Māori Research Centre


Understanding how teachers perceive socio-emotional wellbeing: Contributing to the development of a linguistically and culturally responsive SEW framework in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Why focus on socio-emotional well-being?



- Growing international concern
 - Maladjustment
 - emotional and behavioural
 - younger ages
 - compound during adolescence
 - additional risk factors
- Social-emotional well-being
 - positive effects on functioning, including relationships and school attendance
 - longitudinal gains

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What exactly is socio-emotional well-being?



- International perspective
 - developmental process, related to
 - emotional regulation, set goals
 - develop and maintain relationships
 - decision making (CASEL, 2020)
- New Zealand perspective
 - NZ Child and Youth Well-being Strategy (2019)
 - loved, safe, nurtured
 - learning and developing
 - accepted, respected, and connected
 - involved and empowered

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What is happening currently?




- Internationally
 - use of evidence-based programmes
 - ad hoc and discrete
 - require rigid adherence for fidelity
- Programmes often disregard
 - the role of the child
 - the role of the community
 - ethnicity

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What is the need?



- Best practice should include meeting the needs of the child and their communities (Weisz, 2005)
- So,
- cultural and linguistic responsive programmes are essential
- However,
- current adaptations are mainly logistical (ie. timing) or intentional (content-based) without consideration of needs

Ka whati te ti, ka wana te ti, ka rito te ti.
 "When the ti kōuka (cabbage) tree is destroyed, it builds its inner strength, then begins to grow again – Resilience." (Opai, n.d.).

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Responding to NZ Youth




- Aotearoa New Zealand ranks 34 out of 41 for child and adolescent wellbeing (UNICEF, 2017)
- Many students are not experiencing the desired outcomes for student wellbeing (ERO, 2015, p. 25)
- Decreasing rates of school attendance, lower achievement at these levels; increased rates of being stood down or suspended
- Disparities demonstrated within different groups

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Responding to NZ Māori Youth




- less likely to report being treated fairly by teachers
- less likely to have teachers who hold high academic expectations for them (Crengle, et al, 2013, p 5).
- more likely (over 3 times) to be stood down or suspended than other students
- more likely to be frequent truants by Years 9 and 10
- more likely to leave school without a qualification (ERO, 2015; MOE, 2020)

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The role of teachers in SEW



- The influence of teachers is clear but complex
- Related to perceptions that teachers hold around SEW, of themselves, and their students
- Perceptions are underpinned by teachers own understandings and competence in SEW
 - Influence implementation and success of programmes
 - Influence approach taken to develop SEW (agency)
 - Influence interactions with students, in terms of using and recognising verbal and emotional cues

Awareness matters, but in reality the focus on teachers' perceptions of SEW is infrequent!

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Our Partnership

A collaborative project including teachers, tamariki, whānau, hapū and iwi

- Te Taumutu Rūnanga
- Hornby High School
- Hornby Primary School
- University of Canterbury/Otago



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Research Methodology

- Guided by Kaupapa Māori research principles
- Critical participatory action research
 - Relevant to Māori aspirations, while including non-Māori.
- Aim: understand current effects of perspectives, structures, and practices to create new knowledges, and ways of being in relation to SEW
 - improve one's own practice, through an understanding of practices and social dimensions in which these practices occur
- Collective: emphasise self-reflection at a collective level to recognize wider historical contexts.

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Research Questions

- How do teachers perceive socio-emotional wellbeing?
- How do teachers' perceptions inform the development of an expanded construct of SEL that is culturally and linguistically sustaining?

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Our Teachers

- Hornby Primary School
 - Level 2 immersion te reo Māori
 - Year 6 English medium
 - Deputy Principal—leadership role
- Hornby High School
 - Year 7/8 English medium
 - Deputy Principal—leadership role



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Data Gathering


- Wānanga
 - spaces where individuals gather to share, discuss, deliberate, and consider ideas
 - safe spaces
 - te ao Māori ways of living and being
- enabled all participants to be situated as learners, thus, acknowledges expertise of each individual
- enabled joint meaningmaking to occur
- founded on whakawhanaungatanga

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Data Gathering

- Wānanga
 - elicitation of understandings and perspectives
 - underpinned by two models
 - te whare tapa whā
 - CASEL
- Noticing (Mason, 2001)
 - own practice
 - tamariki




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Analysing the data

- open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)
 - independent interpretation of field notes
 - variation or points of difference
- axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)
 - identified relationships between points of difference/variation
- development of tentative categories
- further refinement to enable themes to emerge



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Findings


Opening coding identified aspects heavily related to one's self within their social world.

Axial coding identified

Relationship skills (multi-dimensional) as key

- How one related to one's self
- How one related to culture and languages
- How one related to learning

A relational approach, within which skills would be taught explicitly. The roles of teachers and students were interchangeable (ako).




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Findings

Communication skills (related to cultures and languages)

- Fostered by having
 - understanding of emotions
 - recognition of feelings and associated behaviours
 - ability to reframe experiences
- Teachers' held that having knowledge and skills would contribute to fostering confidence in others
- Suggests that teachers viewed competence in skills as integral to developing SEW in tamariki
- Suggests that developing socio-emotional capacities extends beyond focusing upon one's self



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Findings

Emotions

- Emotions were an area perceived as being less developed
 - diminished sense of well-being due to interpersonal challenges, loss of sense of self, emotional unease
- personal emotional competencies vs teacher emotional competencies
 - habituation of classroom experiences
- Recognized the importance of whānau
 - influence of whānau on both teachers and tamariki
 - socio-historical influences



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Conclusions



- SEW is an entwined and mutually reinforcing system
- Capacity to enrich wider relationships
- Places tamariki at the centre of the whenua alongside whānau
- Such insight reinforces the importance of understanding cultures, languages, and connections between individuals in the development of programmes seeking to develop SEW

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Kā mihi nunui...



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