

Professional Learning and Development Profile

VIV AITKEN



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Region: Taranaki - Whanganui - Manawatū

Priorities:

Local curriculum design; assessment for learning

Specialisations:

Key competencies (including social and emotional learning); Literacy and Communication; Leading for Change; New Entrants (foundational learning); Social Science; The Arts

Key Words:

Curriculum integration, inquiry, dramatic inquiry, mantle of the expert, dramatic play, socio-dramatic play, process drama, drama for learning, arts-based pedagogy, future-focussed teaching and learning, pedagogy, student efficacy, student agency, writing, oral language, local curriculum, storytelling, drama, holistic curriculum, authentic learning, questioning, communication, engagement, teacher in role, role play, purposeful learning, wellbeing, power and positioning, effective teaching, affective-to-cognitive learning, innovative assessment, active learning, embodied learning, collaborative learning, empathy, twenty-first century education, deep learning, transformative learning, imagination, creativity

Personal Statement:

Kia Ora. I'm based in Palmerston North and affiliated with Tātai Angitu, Massey University though I have the privilege of working in schools all over Aotearoa.

As a teacher, researcher, and life-long learner I'm able to combine three decades of experience with an insatiable interest in current innovations.

My facilitation style is positive and highly relational; based on building trust and working in partnership with teachers, leaders and learners as a colleague-in-exploration. While I have a strong knowledge base, I will always tailor delivery based on the needs and strengths of those I'm working with. Together we'll celebrate existing success, draw on current research, explore new possibilities, reflect and innovate to improve outcomes.

Professional Learning and Development Overview:

Local curriculum development

- I work with school leaders, kaiako and others to help them develop a living breathing local curriculum for their school: one that represents an alignment between values, effective teaching and learning, assessment and other practices and recognises and reflects the unique place, stories and people in the school community.

Curriculum integration and innovative pedagogy

- I support kaiako to plan and teach effective, engaging, safe and authentic learning experiences through child-structured dramatic play, process drama, drama for learning and Mantle of the Expert
- I sustain cross-sector teaching networks and authentic collaboration through sharing of practice and a safe space for mistake-making and exploration.
- I support teachers and teams to plan across all learning areas within the New Zealand Curriculum - with principles, values, key competencies, and cultural competencies at the centre.

Learner agency and engagement

- I help colleagues understand how power and agency operate in schools.
- I work with teachers and leaders to develop practical and achievable strategies for increasing student agency and engagement, in inclusive and culturally sustaining ways.

Support for teachers as researchers and artists

- I draw on my experience as an education researcher and supervisor to provide support for teaching-as-inquiry, and mentoring for research and projects in schools.
- I collaborate with teaching artists to bring top quality creative experiences into schools – and with teachers to build artistry in their classroom practice.

Professional Information:*Qualifications*

- 2012 Graduate Diploma of Teaching, University of Waikato
- 2005 Doctor of Philosophy, University of Waikato
- 2003 Associate in Speech and Drama, Trinity College London
- 1993 Master of Philosophy, University of Wales
- 1990 Bachelor of Arts (with honours), University of Wales
- I hold a full and current teacher registration with EDUCANZ

Research/publishing/presentations

I have researched, published, and presented extensively in The Arts, particularly Drama in Education and Mantle of the Expert, as well as curriculum integration, student agency, intellectual disability and inclusive education. Recent publications include Real in All the Ways that Matter (NZCER 2021), a podcast series and an article for Literacy Forum. Recent conference presentations include keynote presentations at the National Literacy Association and Drama New Zealand conferences.

Professional learning and development experience and expertise

As a Ministry accredited facilitator with Tātai Angitu, Massey University (2017 – present) I:

- provided hundreds of hours of tailored PLD in dramatic inquiry across eight schools in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington;
- assisted three schools to develop a living breathing and coherent local curriculum;
- provided research support for schools in receipt of the Ministry of Education's Grassroots project funding; and
- facilitated courses on New Zealand's education system for a group of Ministry officials from Bangladesh.

As a Senior Consultant with IPL / Te Whai Toi Tangata, (2016-19), I:

- developed and implemented short and long term professional learning opportunities in The Arts, curriculum integration and student agency for schools in Hamilton, Bay of Plenty, King Country.

As Associate Professor in Education at the Eastern Institute of Technology (2015-16), I:

- co-ordinated the Bachelor of Primary Teaching degree programme; and
- organised regular professional development exchanges with Mentor Teachers from partner schools as part of ongoing review and development processes.

As Senior Lecturer and researcher in Education at the University of Waikato (2001-2015), I:

- provided preservice and in-service teacher education in the Arts and curriculum integration;
- supervised emerging researchers into Masters and PhD study; and
- convened regional and national seminars and one international conference, giving teachers the opportunity to share their practice and research and access to international speakers and presenters.

As convenor of Mantle of the Expert Aotearoa: www.mantleoftheexpert.co.nz (since 2009), I have:

- offered online support and professional development materials to teachers around New Zealand and internationally;
- shared teachers' blogs and international research;
- facilitated cluster groups, ongoing teacher-teacher support and networking around Aotearoa; and
- founded the Dramatic Inquiry Network trust – now a Ministry Funded Network of Expertise.

As an education researcher I have:

- published over 25 academic articles including in peer-reviewed international journals;
- contributed chapters to three books including *Connecting Curriculum, Linking Learning* – a guide to curriculum integration regularly used as a text book for preservice education programmes;
- published a book on *Mantle of the Expert*;
- given over 30 conference presentations, including several keynote addresses within New Zealand and internationally; and
- acted as research mentor for Otaika Valley's TLIF project (2018) and Drama New Zealand's pilot literacy programme (2019).

Summary of Examples of Practice:

Example 1:

I supported kaiako at a culturally diverse city primary school to build skills and knowledge in effective teaching and learning as part of local curriculum development. Our work together was sustained over four years and had strong relationships as the foundation. We explored dramatic inquiry (DI) as a means of uncovering the whole curriculum, but with a particular focus on teaching critical histories of Aotearoa. First, I supported a team of 10 kaiako through a one-year inquiry exploring how DI could be used to set up engaging, safe learning experiences for tamariki to learn about significant events and themes in history. Then, this team became leaders in supporting other colleagues as the PLD was extended across the school. In the final phase, dramatic inquiry was embedded into local curriculum documentation, with systems established so that the teaching approach is sustained into the future. Over the years we created an extensive online resource for teachers with resources, readings, planning examples etc.

Example 2:

I worked with the senior management team, kaiako, and wider school community at a high decile primary school to reconceptualise their local curriculum. The school already had a strong sense of its identity and values, and I was able to support them to bring this together to tell a coherent 'story' using metaphors and imagery already important to the school. With an extensive review of documentation,

systems and practices and input from kaiako and community, the school's local curriculum is now articulated in a coherent and accessible digital format so that it can be accessed by new staff, families, Board and others. This consolidation has provided an important starting point for a longer-term project of local curriculum development, review and renewal to be carried out in partnership with mana whenua.

Example 3:

Working alongside teaching staff and principal at a semi-rural primary school, I facilitated an 18-month professional learning and development programme on enhancing student agency. The process began by supporting teachers and leaders to examine the concept of student agency based on current theory and research. We looked at how systems of power were operating in the school before going on to explore possibilities for enhancing student agency within the classroom and wider school systems and processes. A key focus was bringing international definitions, models and ideas about student agency into dialogue with cultural concepts such as ako and manaakitanga which are at the heart of the school's practices. I supported teachers to identify and implement strategies to enhance student agency within classroom practice (including higher-order questioning, co-construction, repositioning and use of an 'expert frame'). As part of our journey, we created an online resource to gather resources, reflect on readings and continue conversations between our face-to-face sessions.

Referees:

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