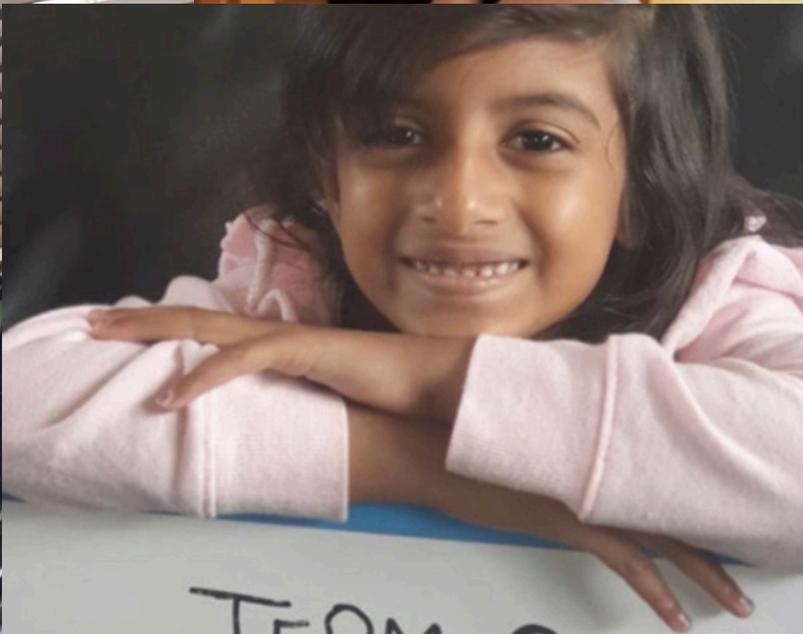
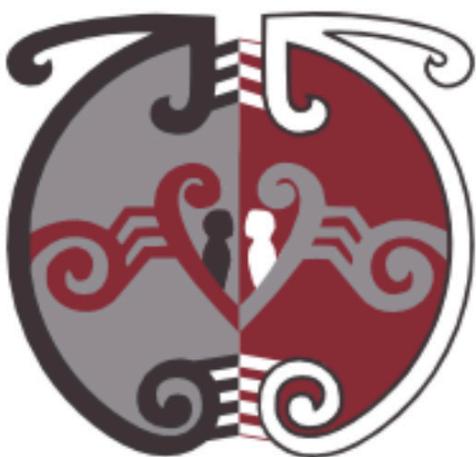


A Spotlight on Sylvia Park School

Part 3 of 3

SPS Connect Inquiry and team reflection



This is the final spotlight in a series of three spotlights in which Sylvia Park School share their experiences of providing continuity of learning for ākonga during lockdowns in 2020 and 2021. The spotlights are organised around the school's six aspirations - Ngā wawata.

This spotlight explores Pakirehua / Inquiry and provides some very useful final reflections from teachers.



We are very grateful to Sylvia Park School for their generosity in sharing their amazing mahi with us, so that we can learn from their experiences.

Pakirehua / Inquiry Making a difference in the world

Learning at home provided many opportunities for student agency and self-directed learning. We took this opportunity, gave our students choices and encouraged whānau to be involved with learning through topics that were important to them.

Tōtara and Te Manawa whānau set tasks that were centered on 'passion projects' - student choice and independent inquiries. Kōwhai brought their learning together under themed topics that were selected for high student interest like 'wheels' and 'family'. There were also excellent opportunities to integrate community events into learning such as the Covid 19 updates and ANZAC Day.

We provided many school-wide activities that students could opt into if they were interested - enviro, taha tinana and tuhituhi challenges, and online book clubs were examples of these. Many Year 4 to 6 students had been given the opportunity to use Nanogirl's Labs STEM projects and this was another avenue to follow specific interests.

At home, whānau were able to work alongside their children to learn and teach things that were valued by them such as baking, gardening and languages. This learning was shared and celebrated in classes and through assemblies on return to school.



What we learned

- » The opportunity for student choice inquiry was ideal and students responded very positively. This is something that we can actively seek to integrate more explicitly at school.
- » Whānau enjoyed being part of student inquiry and being able to share some of the things that were important to them.
- » Passion projects provided another way that students were able to teach and learn from each other. Some of the best examples of this were with some of the students who took part in Nanogirl's Labs bringing their learning back to present to their classes and even using that learning to teach te reo Māori.
- » Learning at home and increased student agency in choosing what to learn gave teachers a different perspective on students' interests and a greater ability to know and understand their drivers. Also, by having the students present their passion projects, it enabled new relationships between students to form out of a shared interest.
- » Professionally, teaching in this way was a great learning curve for teachers. Those that were able to approach it with an inquiry mindset, even informally applying the stages of the Spiral of Inquiry, seemed to find it more comfortable and rewarding.

"My favourite thing that I have seen over the last few weeks is students and families engaging with others to complete all kinds of activities. I think that is our greatest success."

- Amanda (teacher)



Team reflections

As we moved into Alert Level 2, it was important to take time to reflect on the lessons learnt during the lockdown, particularly when it came to distance learning (SPS Connect). While distance learning had been challenging, many positive developments had taken place and it was very important to ensure these gains were not lost in the transition to onsite learning. Teachers and whānau teams took time to reflect on the following questions in order to explore what helped, and what hindered teaching, leading and learning.

Debrief Wheel

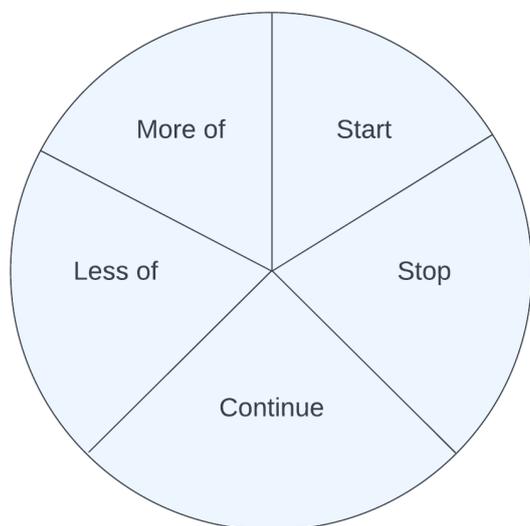
Use this tool to reflect on your approach to distance learning.

Where to from here?

How will you bottle up the greatness?

Ask:

- » What will you start doing?
- » What will you stop doing?
- » What will you continue?
- » What will you do less of?
- » What will you do more of?



Attribution: CC-BY Leading Learning (2020)

Reflecting on the learning

The following questions can be used to facilitate a conversation around the ways students were engaging with distance learning:

Engaging Learners

- » How did you optimise individual choice and autonomy?
- » In what ways were you able to vary the demands and resources to optimise the challenge?
- » Which strategies were useful for building self-managing learners?
- » In what ways did the students have opportunities to reflect on their learning?
- » How did you hook learners into lessons and maintain engagement?

Representing Learning

- » What were the various ways that teaching and learning were able to occur?
- » How were these presented and illustrated in a variety of ways?
- » In what ways were new vocabulary, specific language and contexts introduced?
- » How did you check for understanding and comprehension of learning?

Expressing Learning

- » Which tools were used effectively for communication?
- » How were the students able to practise and present/show their learning?
- » In what ways were students and teachers able to monitor progress?
- » How was the notion of goal setting utilised?
- » In what ways was feedback given and received?

Adapted from CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Summary

Students liked:

- Agency in their environment
- Agency in learning
- Seeing friends and teachers online

Student concerns:

- Technology issues
- Missing friends
- Missing working with others

Whānau liked:

- Seeing and being part of the learning
- Seeing another side of their kids
- Support from the school
- Flexibility in expectations

Whānau concerns:

- Finding balance
- Technology issues
- Kids missing out on time with friends
- Too much computer time

Teachers liked:

- Partnership with whānau
- New tools and resources
- Building their own and students' confidence
- Seeing students in a new way
- Student agency
- School wide collaboration

Teacher concerns:

- The wellbeing of students who didn't attend
- Too much computer time
- Steep learning curve
- Equity of student access to devices and support

In case we ever need to do this again:

- Consider setting up devices and new technology tools, such as maths apps, so they are accessible, managed school-wide and already in use with the students before a crisis
- Keep whānau contact details up to date
- Efficient, multidirectional communication channels set up with everyone already used to using them
- Increasing all teacher confidence with technology to build consistency
- Consider what can be prepared now so the first few days are less stressful

Things we've been asked to keep doing:

- Keep giving students choices in what and how they learn
- Keep using SeeSaw for learning, not just reporting
- Keep sharing learning in progress, not just end products
- Keep using technology in a variety of ways at all levels
- Keep whānau involved throughout the learning process