# Resource 7. Gnarly issue – Bus stop activities

## Gnarly issue – Bus stop activities

Gnarly issue – Bus stop activities are a way of utilising the expertise of all the people at the table in order to further understand some fairly recognisable issues that may be present in the school and then, most importantly, seek new possibilities and solutions.

Working in this way can sometimes help to practise for a challenging conversation with self and/or colleagues. These activities have proven useful in Te Kotahitanga professional development since Phase 3 and you may consider utilising them within your own school.

In this module there are four based on issues to do with connecting with Māori whānau and communities for your consideration and use. You might also want to develop some with more direct relevance to your own school setting.

### Preparation

You will need large envelopes, a pen or marker and a different gnarly issue for each bus stop. In each envelope you will need one sheet of A4 paper for each team that will be visiting that stop. Each gnarly issue is written on a separate envelope.

### Organisation

Divide staff into teams of three or four and delegate each team to a gnarly issue - bus stop. Indicate a time allowance, five to eight minutes is usually sufficient; you want people to think outside the square; you don’t want people to over think their responses; and you do want people to cover all questions so providing time prompts throughout is important.

At the end of the allocated time, each team puts their team-response back in the envelope and moves to the next stop. The process is repeated.

The last team visiting each stop is allowed to take all of the responses out of the envelope. It is then their task to synthesise the responses down to provide the most effective solutions.

This activity also has implications for classroom learning as when it is conducted effectively it involves all of the elements of relational and culturally responsive pedagogy.

1. Interactions emerge from relationships: this activity builds from existing relationships
2. Within relationships of interdependence individuals are self-determining and power is shared
3. Culture Counts: everyone’s cultural toolkit, their prior knowledge and experiences are valued and able to be utilised.
4. Pedagogy is responsive and interactive
5. Learners/teachers/leaders are connected through a common purpose/vision and reciprocal responsibility

## Scenario 1

Jeff is a Pākehā principal of a rural secondary school with 41 teaching staff, two of whom are Māori.

The breakdown of the student roll by ethnicity is largely bicultural (Māori 45%, Pākehā 47%).

The school has been involved in professional development for several years that is focused on developing and embedding culturally responsive and relational pedagogies.

While everyone in the leadership team voices support the focus on pedagogy, Jeff knows there is a wide range of understanding and commitment across the team.

Māori students’ achievement has improved slightly in the last four years but, as a group, they are still achieving below non-Māori students at Y9 and 10 (AsTTle) and at all levels of NCEA.

Jeff’s position is that all teachers have a responsibility to reduce that disparity.

Jeff has been grappling with what he can do, as a leader, to bring more urgency to the school goal of raising Māori student achievement. He wants the school to move beyond “doing” culturally responsive and relational pedagogies. He genuinely wants to ‘make it matter’ for everyone but is not sure where to start or who can help.

Identify the main issues in this scenario:

* for Māori students and whānau?
* for teachers in this school?
* for the leadership team?
* for Jeff?

### Agentic problem solving

1. Thinking about your own prior knowledge and experiences and what you understand about transformative leadership, what would you say if Jeff were to ask for your advice?
2. Collaboratively develop a plan for what you would do over the next three to six months if you were the leader in this school. Include senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers in your plan. Consider how and when you might use evidence of outcomes for Māori students. Justify why you have planned this way.
3. What resources / support would you suggest Jeff could explore?

## Scenario 2

Freda has been leading the English department in her school for seven years.

Her first involvement with classroom based professional development was four years ago when she attended a 3 day hui at the local marae.

As a teacher she was involved in classroom observations and feedback meetings and classroom co-construction meetings for three years. From Freda’s point of view effective teaching of Maori students is all about developing relationships.

Last year Freda’s title was changed from HOD English to Leader of Learning English. At the time the senior leadership team talked about the name change as reflecting the school’s focus on teaching and learning.

More recently middle leaders were told that as pedagogical leaders in the school there is an expectation that they will take a more proactive role in supporting the teachers in their faculty to improve outcomes for Māori students.

Freda’s notes for herself from that meeting read, “support teachers to embed a culturally responsive and relational pedagogy”. Freda is unsure what that actually means or what additional demands these expectations will have on her time and energy.

Identify the main issues in this scenario:

* for Freda?
* for teachers in this department?
* for other curriculum leaders in this school?
* for senior leaders?
* for Māori students and whānau?
* For embedding culturally responsive and relational pedagogy across the school?

### Agentic problem solving

1. What does your group think Freda needs to do: in the short term? in the long term? Why? How might she do this?
2. If you were talking with Freda what would you say / do to help her identify her own agency?
3. What resources / support could Freda explore? Who might she ask for help?
4. Who else in the school needs to know about this? Why?

## Scenario 3

Francis is a principal who has developed his internal PLD team which includes senior leaders, middle leaders and experienced teachers.

As a learning community this team has engaged with the research and reports that have been generated out of Te Kotahitanga and see this approach as being a viable way to reduce disparities between Maori and non-Maori in their school.

At the beginning of this year, with the support of the BOT and most members of the leadership team, it was decided that a focus on culturally responsive and relational pedagogy would be required professional development for all teachers at the school. Francis sees this as one way to embed these core principles and practices.

Four teachers who have not been involved in the in-school PD until now are not happy and have aired their concerns in staff meetings, in letters to the local paper and at local region PPTA meetings.

Francis knew there might be some reaction to the change but is surprised at how strong it is. As well as finding the present situation very uncomfortable there is also concern within the leadership team about how the negative publicity might impact on their relationships with both the Māori and non-Māori communities.

Identify the main issues in this scenario:

* for Māori students and whānau?
* for teachers?
* for the leadership team?
* for the Board of trustees?
* for Francis?

**Agentic problem solving**

1. Thinking about your own prior knowledge and experiences and what you understand about transformative leadership, what would you say to Francis about this situation?
2. What advice would you give Francis about how to respond: in the short term? In the long term?
3. If you were Francis how would you approach the upcoming BOT elections?

## Scenario 4

Brian is a senior leader in a large secondary school and as part of the school’s action plan for raising Māori students’ achievement one of his roles this year is to lead the middle leadership learning community.

At the beginning of the year Brian met with all curriculum leaders to develop the protocols for how this learning community will operate. At that meeting he also facilitated a discussion about what evidence HODs might contribute when this learning community meets.

The first middle leaders’ meeting was not very successful from Brian’s point of view. Very few people brought any evidence and there was little discussion beyond ‘show and tell’ of the evidence that was available.

Last week Brian facilitated the second middle leaders’ meeting. There was a range of evidence tabled, from un-useful and irrelevant to very useful.

Some people had no evidence and talked about what they are doing in their own classroom practice.

Brian is not sure where to go from here. He’s keen to get these meetings running and can see how they could benefit Māori students but also feels they have a long way to go yet.

Identify the main issues in this scenario:

* for Brian?
* for curriculum leaders in this school?
* for teachers in this school?
* for the leadership team in this school?
* for Māori students and whānau?

### Agentic problem solving

1. If you were Brian, what questions might you be asking of yourself?
2. What would you say to Brian if you were to talk with him about his situation in terms of the core principles of co-construction meetings?
3. What does your group think Brian needs to do to get the middle leaders ‘on board’: in the short term? In the long term? Why?
4. If you were in Brian’s shoes what would you say to middle leaders? Why?
5. Who else in the school needs to know about this? Why?
6. Who could help? How?

## Scenario 5

Hemi has been the Head of Māori for two years. In that time the numbers of students wanting to learn Māori has increased dramatically and student outcomes across all levels of NCEA have improved.

He’s recently been told that as part of his role he will be expected to work with the teachers in his department to implement culturally responsive and relational pedagogy across the school. While Hemi is confident in his knowledge of te Reo, tikanga and other aspects of Māori culture he is worried he doesn’t have a really good grasp of culturally responsive and relational pedagogy himself yet.

He knows what works for him in the classroom but he’s not sure how to connect his own practice to the theory underpinning the new pedagogy.

It seems like there is a lot of new language he needs to deal with and he’s worried about the time involved. He’s also concerned about letting people down or losing credibility with staff.

However, he also knows that as Māori he is now being expected to take a lead.

Identify the main issues in this scenario:

* for Hemi?
* for teachers in this department?
* for other middle leaders?
* for senior leaders?
* for Māori students and whānau?

### Agentic problem solving

1. If you were Hemi, what would you do?
2. Thinking about culturally responsive and relational andragogy, what would you say if you were to have a conversation with Hemi?
3. What does your group think Hemi needs to do in the short term? In the long term? Why?
4. How might evidence of outcomes for Māori students be used in this scenario?
5. Who else in the school needs to know about this? Why?
6. Who could help? How?

## Scenario 6

Ellie has been HOD Maths for fifteen years.

Each year she has analysed senior students’ results in NCEA and UE and prepared a detailed departmental report for the leadership team that then goes to the Board.

Although they are time-consuming to prepare Ellie takes pride in these reports.

She works hard to ensure they are accurate and in the last couple of years she has started to disaggregate the data to show achievement by ethnicity.

Ellie feels they present a good picture of how well students have done in her subject.

At the beginning of this year senior leaders met with each of the faculty leaders to discuss a new framework for reporting.

Along with other curriculum leaders Ellie has been asked to discuss last year’s NCEA results for Māori and non-Māori students with teachers in her department alongside AsTTle Literacy and Numeracy for the current Year 9 and 10.

Each department is then expected to develop a plan focused around curriculum design and implementation for how they will respond to make a difference.

Ellie can’t really see the point of all this. From her point of view there’s quite enough for her teachers to do without wasting time talking about something that has already been sent by email to everyone in the department.

Identify the main issues in this scenario:

* for Ellie?
* for teachers in her department?
* for the principal and other senior leaders?
* for Māori students and whānau?

### Agentic problem solving:

1. What would you say to Ellie if you were to talk with her about this situation? Why?
2. What would you say to the principal and leadership team in this school and why?
3. What support could both Ellie reasonably expect from the leadership team? Justify your suggestions.
4. If you were in Ellie’ situation what would be your agentic response to the leadership team’s request?