**Gnarly issue – Bus stop activities [Resource 10]**

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.

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

**Initiating Engagement**

***Scenario 1***

Sharon is a Māori parent whose Year 9 daughter has just completed her first term at a mainstream secondary school. While Sharon’s daughter was at primary school she had regular conversations with her daughter’s teachers, and had numerous opportunities to contribute her knowledge and expertise to the school in sporting, cultural and academic contexts. To date she has received a monthly newsletter and she has accessed the school website and calendar online. Without any personal contact and opportunity to engage Sharon is unsure about the school and about how she as a Māori parent can participate within it.

1. What are the implications for Sharon’s daughter?
2. What are the implications for Māori students and their whānau when they are unsure about how or if they can participate within the school ‘as Māori’?
3. What are the implications for the school when Māori whānau are unsure about how or if they can participate within the school?
4. If Sharon was a parent at your school, what opportunities would she have had to engage by the end of term one?

***Scenario 2***

Beginning of the year literacy and numeracy assessment results have identified students who are achieving below expectations. An analysis indicates that the proportion of Māori students in this group is higher than the proportion of Māori students across the cohort.

The notion of somehow involving Māori whānau in improving this situation has been suggested, however, previous experiences have demonstrated that invitations to large group meeting via newsletters or phone calls has not always been a successful way to initiate a relationship around school learning.

1. Who in the school has responsibility for coordinating initial contact with Māori whānau in this situation?
2. Given that in the past newsletters, phone calls and large group meetings have not been an effective means of engaging Māori whānau, what other avenues for engagement might be explored?

**Developing the relationship**

A school has a strategic goal of working with their Māori whānau in a coordinated way in order to accelerate learning. This school has worked in different settings and has provided a range of opportunities for Māori whānau to engage around the learning of their children. These conversations are now focused around how we can move these intentions forward into practice.

1. While there may be suggestions around tools and interventions that whānau can use, how can the school demonstrate that they also value the knowledge and experiences of whānau?
2. In light of question one, what might a non-dominating and reciprocal relationship between Māori whānau and school look like?

**Maintaining and sustaining the learning relationship**

A month ago the coordinator of a home-school literacy initiative had a conversation with a Māori mother who had participated in reading tutor training sessions with 19 other parents.

The mother indicated that although she now had more effective strategies to help her son to improve his reading and that the resources that were being sent home were suitable, she still was not totally confident.

1. What processes for support (feedback / feedforward) might be suitable for this mother?
2. Given that 20 parents attended the training session, what are the implications and considerations for the other participants?
3. What else does this coordinator need to consider in terms of monitoring the impact of her practice (and the practice of the parent tutors) against the reading outcomes for the students?
4. What support (including feedback / feedforward) might this coordinator need and who is best positioned to provide this within the school and/or external to the school?