

# A story about a system that learns: Hine and the Institute of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment

## Hine's story

Hine has been the principal of a kura kaupapa Māori in a medium-sized city for ten years. Some time ago, her kura reworked itself as an innovative learning environment. Hine is now on a twelve-month secondment at the Institute of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment (ICPA). At the ICPA, she is working on a project to investigate the social and educational effectiveness of teaching and learning in innovative learning environments.

The rationale for investigating innovative learning environments is that they have been the subject of extensive debates within and beyond the school sector. For example, lobby groups have formed representing parents who strongly oppose the growing use of innovative learning environments, believing that their children have been disadvantaged by working in these spaces. At the same time, a growing number of schools find innovative learning environments allow them to run excellent programmes of teaching and learning in which they can explore a variety of pedagogical approaches and ways of collaborating. Hine's kura finds that an innovative learning environment works well as a space for employing culturally Māori learning processes and ways of working. It supports the design of a marau-ā-kura that is highly responsive to local priorities, resources and aspirations.

Several months into her secondment, Hine is working on some case studies for the innovative learning environment project. One of the case studies is based on Putiputi Kura. Putiputi Kura has 300 students in 10 classes from Years 1-13, of which five are innovative learning environments. Hine spends several days in the kura, attending staff and syndicate meetings and making observations in the classrooms. She interviews senior managers, teachers, parents and students, and talks to the staff about the planning models for programmes of teaching and learning. Her respondents explain that the kura took time and care to consult with their community prior to implementing an innovative learning environment. This is in line with other evidence identifying consultation as important to the success of a move towards this approach.

By the end of the year, the project has been completed and Hine is looking forward to returning to her kura. The project report has been disseminated through school hubs and networks, and made publicly available for download on the ICPA website. To support the report, video clips illustrating the school case studies have also been placed on the site, and the project has been publicised via blog and social media posts. Initial teacher educators and professional learning providers have begun to integrate the results of this project into the advice and support they provide.

ICPA also works with its educational researcher partners located in universities and other research institutions. The innovative learning environment project was planned, developed, implemented and reported in collaboration with researchers who are interested in innovative learning environments. Several journal articles have been published off the results.

The report included advice on the policy context and resourcing schools and kura need, for an innovative learning environment to be effective. The Ministry is using this advice to strengthen the supports it offers and reframe some of its messages to the sector.

## Connections to the emerging ideas about a system that learns

Institute of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment (ICPA)

Responsive local curriculum

Learning partnerships with parents and whānau

A system that learns  
Collaborative inquiry networks