

# **Leaders supporting the transition for teachers into Innovative Learning Environments**

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degree of Master of Educational Leadership.

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor any material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for any degree or diploma or a university or other institution of higher learning.

## **Abstract**

Primary schools within New Zealand are changing, and the way that teachers deliver the curriculum is becoming more innovative and creative, leading to the introduction of Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs). The Ministry of Education (n.d.) states that “a learning environment includes the physical, social, and pedagogical context in which learning occurs” (para.1). An ILE makes teaching and learning collaborative, teaching practice is shared and reflected upon regularly, and schools are continuously improving teaching practice in order to improve student outcomes (Osborne, 2013).

This study investigated the leadership support given to teachers who are transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. It investigated five participants, both the leaders’ and the teachers’ experiences and knowledge through this transition. A qualitative case study approach was employed for my research in order to gather data about an under-researched topic in the New Zealand primary school context. The method of data collection for this qualitative study was semi-structured interviews. The participants were selected using informed and voluntary consent.

The findings identified four key themes:

- Teachers and leaders need to have a choice and be willing to move into an ILE from a single-cell classroom.
- Teacher and leaders should be given ongoing professional development before and during their transition into an ILE.
- Collaboration is a key factor in having a successful transition and an effective team in an ILE.
- Key barriers and challenges that contribute to the transition for teachers in an ILE are logistics and resistance to change.

Based on the analysis, recommendations at a leadership level, teacher level and policy level including recommendations for further research are suggested.

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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **Introduction**

This research project was the result of my concern, as a middle leader of a multi-cultural primary school, about the support given to teachers through their transition into an Innovative Learning Environment (ILE) in a New Zealand primary school. This concern was supported by my colleagues in similar schools throughout New Zealand who were facing a similar experience. This chapter outlines the rationale for the research undertaken, as well as the research aims and questions developed to focus the research project. The context and scope of the research are also explained and the chapter concludes with an overview of how this dissertation is organised.

## **Rationale for research**

Primary schools within New Zealand are changing and the way that teachers deliver the curriculum is becoming more innovative and creative. The nature of this change in education has seen the introduction of ILEs. Kaye (2016) states that the New Zealand Ministry of Education “is investing \$882.5 million over the next four years so we can continue building school infrastructure that supports 21st century teaching and learning practice and maintains our focus on raising achievement” (para. 4).

The Ministry of Education (2011) states that “a learning environment includes the physical, social, and pedagogical context in which learning occurs. An innovative [modern] environment supports strengths-based teaching and learning. It offers students and teachers flexibility, agency, ubiquity, and connectedness” (para. 1), to work within. An ILE makes teaching and learning collaborative, teaching practice is shared and reflected upon, and communities are continually improving teaching practice to improve student outcomes (Osborne, 2013).

## **Background to research**

This dissertation sits within the background of research that has investigated the perceptions and experiences of support both given and received in an ILE, by a leader and teachers within one primary school in New Zealand. The Ministry of Education (2011) states that “most schools [in New Zealand] were built between the 1950s and 1970s. The way that teachers teach and students learn has been developing since then” (p. 13). Students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are learning in ways that are very diverse, innovative, collaborative and different to that of the past, yet many students’ learning environments do not reflect this. Hattie (2015) reminds us of the more traditional ways of teaching of



when “a teacher is placed in a room with a closed door with twenty to forty young people and expected to work alone to make a difference” (p. 23). The teacher is given no opportunity to collaborate or enhance their teaching practice. With all of the changes that we have seen in education in New Zealand over the last 20 years, it is important our classrooms respond and reflect the changes we have seen which the Ministry of Education (2011) states as being “critical to modern education delivery” (p. 13).

The term Modern Learning Environment (MLE) was used initially and this term has developed and changed to Innovative Learning Environments (ILE), as it is used internationally and is now used by the Ministry of Education. For the purpose of this small-scale study, ILEs and MLEs are the spaces in which the learning occurs for students and teachers.

Along with these modern spaces with modern furniture came the introduction of technology and students working 1:1 on devices as opposed to more traditional methods of using pen and paper. Madden, Wilks, Maoine, Loader and Robinson (2012) state that “the continual references to our children growing up in a globalised or digital world is an assumption of the comfortableness of students in the use of digital technology in educational settings” (p. 23). This assumption is realistic as students are experts in using digital technology in their own leisure time. Students and teachers working within these environments need the technology to be accessible. As Larson and Miller (2011) state “through the internet, today’s students have opportunities to engage in authentic tasks reaching far beyond their classroom walls” (p. 122). All primary schools will be rewired for up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT), with modernising and converting new classroom builds into ILEs being seen as a high priority by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education (2011) states that “it is expected that it will take until 2021 for all schools to modernise all of these teaching spaces” (p. 13).

The New Zealand Curriculum has a vision set by the Ministry of Education in 2007 which states that students should become “confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). In order for this to happen the Ministry of Education made a decision to provide flexible ILEs instead of single-cell classrooms.

Osborne (2013) reminds us that:

modern [innovative] learning spaces can support teaching as inquiry better than single-cell classrooms. Working in an open, flexible learning environment where inquiries are shared, interventions devised collaboratively and reflections based

on both self and peer observations, leads to a more robust, continually improving community of practice (p. 5).

### **Scope of the study**

For this study, I undertook an interpretative, qualitative, methodological approach to keep the focus directly on the participants' points of view and experiences. The data that was collected was from one contributing New Zealand primary school. Horizon Primary School (HPS) was a New Zealand multi-cultural, decile four, full primary school. HPS had approximately 425 students, made up of 22 different ethnicities. Participants involved in gathering the data that underpinned this research consisted of one team leader and four teachers who had transitioned from a single-cell classroom to an ILE.

### **Research aims**

The aim of this study was to investigate the support given to teachers through their transition into an ILE in a New Zealand primary school. I have been a middle leader both in New Zealand and London within traditional single-cell classrooms, and I am beginning to see the transformation from single-cell classrooms to ILEs. My study focused on one educational leader and four teachers and their perceptions and experiences of both giving and receiving support through the transition into an ILE.

The aims that guided this study were as follows:

1. To investigate teachers' perceptions of support that was given by leaders when transitioning into an ILE;
2. To identify and critically examine the successes that a leader perceives they have achieved in their leadership and management of the transition to an ILE;
3. To investigate the enablers and barriers that teachers perceive in their transition into an ILE; and
4. To explore the ways in which a leader perceives that they have developed their personal capabilities and personal professional knowledge in order to lead and manage the transition to an ILE.

### **Research questions**

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the ways in which school leadership supports them in their transition to teaching in an ILE?

2. What are leaderships' perceptions of the ways in which they support teachers in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
3. What do teachers perceive to be the enablers of and barriers to their transition to teaching in an ILE?
4. What does existing research suggest as enablers of and barriers to supporting teachers in transitioning into an ILE?

## **Dissertation organisation**

This dissertation is set out over six chapters and the chapters are organised as follows:

### *Chapter One*

This chapter provides an overview of the research with an introduction, the rationale that guided the research, the context of the research, and the aims and questions of this research, and concludes with a brief outline of how this dissertation is organised.

### *Chapter Two:*

This chapter reviews the international and New Zealand literature relevant to ILEs and the support given to teachers through their transition into an ILE. The first part explores the history of New Zealand education and fast-forwarding that into 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning. The second part explores the topic under the following themes: leadership; managing change; professional development; and collaboration.

### *Chapter Three:*

This chapter presents the choice of methodological framework used and describes the process of the data collection and data analysis. The research issues of validity and reliability as well as the relevant ethical considerations are also outlined within this chapter.

### *Chapter Four*

This chapter provides an overview of the key findings from, and analysis of, data gathered through semi-focused interview sessions.

### *Chapter Five:*

This chapter discusses the findings that are presented in Chapter four. Where appropriate, the key findings are linked to themes of literature that were discussed in Chapter two. The

similarities between the key themes that were found in the data with the key themes in the literature are discussed.

#### *Chapter Six:*

This final chapter summarises the key themes and issues that were found through this research and presents them for a final discussion. This chapter then provides a set of recommendations for future practice and addresses the limitations of the research.

## **Chapter two: Literature review**

### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature related to leadership supporting teachers transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. The chapter begins with a definition of an ILE and the terminology that is used most commonly around the world. Following this is a brief history of open-plan classrooms within New Zealand, followed by the development of open-plan classrooms around the world. This chapter then describes four themes that successfully impact leadership supporting teachers transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. They are: leadership implementing a change initiative within their school; a change initiative for teachers; professional learning and development as a key component for acceptance of change for teachers within a school; and collaboration as a change initiative.

### **Innovative learning environments**

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has completed an international research project looking into education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An ILE is defined by the OECD (2013) as “an ecosystem of learning that includes the activity and outcomes of the learning” (p. 22). It includes both where the learning takes place and the setting in an organic, holistic concept (OECD, 2013). The Ministry of Education (2016) states that ILEs “are learner-focussed and emphasise valued learner outcomes. They encourage collaboration and inquiry, both for learners and teachers, and allow teachers to teach in the style that best suits the needs of diverse learners” (para. 3). Silcock (2016) defines an ILE as:

usually [having] flexible learning spaces that may include larger, open-plan areas, along with smaller breakout and meeting-style rooms. They are characterised by a pedagogical approach to teaching and learning that is much broader than just a change to physical spaces (para. 1).

For the purpose of this small-scale study, ILEs and MLEs are the spaces in which the learning occurs for both the students and teachers.

### **Historically in New Zealand**

In the 1970s in New Zealand open-planned classrooms were introduced. These classrooms gave teachers who were interested in working in teams an opportunity to get blocks of classrooms modified into open-plan classrooms (Cameron & Robinson, 1986).

These open-plan classrooms were either architecturally designed or the schools remodelled their existing blocks. By 1984 there were approximately 600 open-plan units or pods of classrooms being used around New Zealand in primary schools (Cameron & Robinson, 1986). The schools with these units or pods were called 'variable space schools' (Cameron & Robinson, 1986). Even with over 600 open-plan units or pods operating, Cameron and Robinson (1986) noted in their research that "72 out of the 600 schools questioned in June 1982 (12%) replied that former open-plan classrooms were operating as if divided into single classrooms" (p. 3). Cameron and Robinson's research shows that even though schools had architecturally designed or modified their classrooms into open-planned classrooms, this did not automatically see a shift in teacher practice and pedagogy. Over time these open-plan classroom designs were found to be, as Shield, Greenland and Dockrell (2010) state "impractical and difficult to teach in because of problems of noise and visual distraction" (p. 225). From the late 1980s, there was a pattern around schools in New Zealand which saw many open-plan schools having remedial work to revert these spaces back to a previous design of an enclosed classroom (Shield et al., 2010). The initiative to have open plan would have cost schools a great deal of money at the time. If more effective support was given to schools around the teaching practice and pedagogy in these open-plan classrooms, we may have not seen such a drastic change to remodel back to traditional single-cell classrooms so quickly in New Zealand.

## **Historically around the world**

Open-plan classrooms within schools took off around the world as a phenomenon starting in North America in the 1950s, followed by countries such as Canada and Britain in 1975 (Bennett & Hyland, 1979). There was not much research around at the time to indicate a dramatic change from the traditional single-cell classroom (Bennett & Hyland, 1979). When these open-plan classrooms were implemented, educators began to question whether the changes were made for the positive effects the classrooms were going to have on student's outcomes or whether they were implemented to, "provide a match between the built environment and what educators and architects saw as a significant shift in primary school teaching" (Bennett & Hyland, 1979, p. 164). What became apparent to researchers was that open-plan schools did not guarantee improved teaching was going to take place (Allen, 1975; Bennett & Hyland, 1979; Marshall, 1981). At the time, there was research being conducted but there was still no means to answer the question of, "whether or not the open-plan classroom was significantly more beneficial to children than a transitional single-cell classroom" (Horwitz, 1979, p. 71-72). Horwitz (1979) gives

three reasons in his research for why this question could not be answered. These were because of conflicting findings and the inadequate evaluation of the impact. Further, Horwitz states that the most important reason “lies in the lingering ambiguity surrounding the definition of open classroom – particularly the confusion between open space and open education” (Horwitz, 1979, p. 72). However, in contrast, Grapko’s research found that teachers working in an open-space classroom showed a slight advantage over teachers who were teaching in a traditional single-cell classroom in their ability to understand all children within their classroom (Grapko, 1972). He also noted in his study that the “results [from his research] show that pupils in traditional classrooms do better academically” (p. 28).

By the early 1980s, schools had reconfigured their open-plan classrooms back to single-cell classrooms by rebuilding the walls (Cuban, 2004). Cuban (2004) states that the reason behind the rebuilding of walls was that “the national crisis [in America] gave rise to a perception, amplified by the media, that academic standards had slipped, that the desegregation movement had failed” (p. 71). Kirk (2017) however, states that the open-plan classrooms were not successful in this period of time because there was “not enough organizational or financial support to make the spaces work” (para. 4). She went on to discuss the noise level being an interference to the concentration of both the teachers and students (Kirk, 2017). Kirk’s (2017) research shows that if schools had more support when implementing these open-plan classrooms around teaching practice and pedagogy, we might not have seen such an emotive change in rebuilding the walls and making single-cell classrooms so quickly.

### **Currently in New Zealand**

The development of ILEs has created environments within New Zealand that follow the national curriculum in a way that was originally intended by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2016). The Ministry of Education (2016) states that it shares the OECD’s holistic view of learning environments and defines them “as an ecosystem that includes learners, educators, families/whānau, communities, content and resources like property and technology. It’s about everything working together to support teachers and learners and ensure our young people are confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” (para. 1).

The teacher is given no opportunity to collaborate or enhance their teaching practice currently in a single-cell classroom. Osborne (2013) offers that:

modern learning spaces can support teaching as inquiry better than single-cell classrooms. Working in an open, flexible learning environment where inquiries are shared, interventions devised collaboratively and reflections based on both self and peer observations, leads to a more robust, continuously improving community of practice (p. 5).

When these modern spaces [ILEs] with modern furniture were introduced around the country, it also brought the introduction of technology within classrooms. Students are now moving away from the more traditional methods of pen and paper and are working on devices such as Chromebooks or iPads. The assumption is realistic and a reality for students who are working in an ILE, as they are experts in using digital technology in their own leisure time and therefore are transitioning to using it in an ILE with ease. Where schools are transitioning staff and students into a new ILE the technology needs to be accessible to everyone connected to the space. Without access to technology such as devices, both students and teacher could be prevented from using technology that they are comfortable using. Leadership plays a key part in implementing and leading a change initiative like technology within schools.

### **Leadership implementing a change initiative within schools**

Leadership is important within every school, no matter the size or context. Within a primary school context, leadership's main focus should be seen to provide and encourage positive student outcomes and student achievement. Within an ILE in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, leadership still has the same focus. However, leadership within an ILE can provide many challenges and new opportunities for leaders to develop their skills in leading and managing teachers to improve student outcomes. It is also vital that leaders lead teachers through new and innovative pedagogical change. The following literature around leadership implementing a change initiative within a school has been put into subsections under the following subheadings: understanding the categories of change; walk the talk; and trust.

#### *Understanding the categories of change*

The notion of change can be characterised into two categories depending on the impact it has on people. These categories are technical change or adaptive change (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Technical changes are described as having "known solutions that can be implemented by current know how" (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 19). However, adaptive change is described as change that "can be addressed



through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties" (Heifetz et al., 2009, p. 19). Leaders need to be aware of these two categories and ensure that they understand them before implementing any change within their school. It is important for leaders to support the teachers in their team through the change of transitioning into an ILE by identifying whether they are experiencing the change as technical or adaptive change (Osborne, 2014). By leaders knowing this information about the teachers in their team, they could be able to ensure the right support is given to them according to the way they are experiencing the change.

### *Walk the talk*

Change is often complex and is not always successful. In order for change to be successful Lawson and Price (2003) suggest that "leaders must walk the talk" (p. 30). If a school's structure includes an ILE or the teaching practices and pedagogy that take place within an ILE, the leaders should be seen by members of their staff to be on the ground floor modelling effective teaching practices. When leaders are seen to be on the ground floor implementing and modelling the new teaching practices and pedagogy themselves, it can create a readiness amongst their staff to change their own teaching practice and behaviour (Blackmore, Bateman, Loughlin, O'Mara & Aranda, 2011; Chua & Chua, 2017; Ogram & Youngs, 2014; Osborne, 2014). Interpreting from this literature, a leader in an ILE needs to ensure they are organised and have upskilled themselves ready for the implementation of change in order for their strategies to be accepted and incorporated into teachers' practice to create positive outcomes for students (Chua & Chua, 2017; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2004). Effective leaders need to continue to check in with their team during the transition period as this will make it easy to identify or discuss any issues or discomforts that the teachers may be having or feeling at this time, before they become a major barrier or hurdle to the success of the ILE. An effective leader must continually guide their school towards making positive changes or risk having a negative effect on student outcomes (Waters et al., 2004). In order to do this, effective leaders need to ensure they have a high level of trust with their team before they introduce the change initiative.

### *Trust*

Within a school, and even more so in a working team transitioning into an ILE, trust is a fundamental concept that is needed to create a successful working team. Tschannen-Moran (2014) mentions five facets of trust as benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability

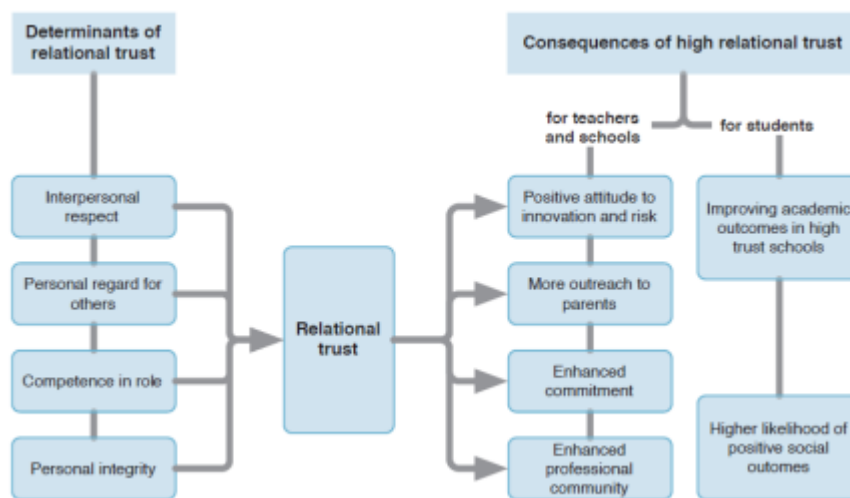
and competence. The five facets can have relative weighting dependent on the nature of the interdependencies (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Where there is trust there is more likely to be innovation and engagement in the change, which is vital for a team transitioning into an ILE, because without it can create disconnectedness, and teachers run the risk of operating single-class classrooms within an open space. However, Le Fevre (2014) discusses the notion of how teachers perceive the level of risk in an activity such as de-privatising their teaching practice as being high enough that it prevents them from engaging in the action. Leaders need to be aware of this and have already pre-planned their steps so that they are not faced with a resistant or wary team member.

Barth (2002) discusses the notion of the culture of a team becoming weak when teachers have a problem or issue with the other teachers in their team. A high level of trust is important within a team, but even more so in an ILE where teachers may be changing their pedagogy and teaching practice. A leader needs to ensure that they are creating an environment within the team where there is trust between all team members. This environment is ideal for a leader to then guide their team of teachers towards a shared vision and goal that has been established across the school before moving into an ILE. (Barth, 2002)

Relational trust is foundational to this process of team building, and Cardno (2012), Robinson et al., (2009) and Tamati, (2011) make this point. The success of one person within a team depends immensely on the contribution that the other members of the team make. Bryk and Schneider (2003) note that trust influences the uncertainty and vulnerability that teachers feel when engaged in change. In order for a team to be effective, they need to establish a positive, supportive learning culture for the group and create a high working level of trust in order to make changes within their teaching practice and pedagogy.

Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) have created a model (see Figure 2.1) of how relational trust works in schools. It highlights the importance of an effective leader demonstrating to their team knowledge, skills and understanding in order to gain that trust which is so very important when working in an ILE. Having a high level of trust between a teacher and their leader creates a platform for the leader to start to bring about a change initiative such as an ILE, which will influence the teacher's teaching practice and pedagogy.

Figure 2.1: How relational trust works in schools (Source: Robinson et al., 2009, p. 184)



### ILEs as a change initiative for teachers

Change happens constantly for an educator over their career and includes such aspects as the change of a class, role, building or job. These all impact on their feelings in a vital way. As Hargreaves (2004) states “there is no human change without emotion and there is no emotion that does not embody a momentary or momentous process of change. Some changes are embedded in the very nature of teachers’ work. Others are imposed upon it” (p. 287). Change for teachers becomes a part of their emotional life (Osborne 2014).

For leaders who are transitioning a team into an ILE it is key that they understand the skills and knowledge needed for implementing a change initiative. Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2009) state that “a missing ingredient in most failed cases is appreciation and use of what we call change knowledge: understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice” (p. 54). Although change knowledge does not ensure success, without it a leader can fail at implementing the change (Fullan et al., 2009). There are eight key guiding drivers or principles created by Fullan et al., (2009) which are:

- Engaging peoples’ moral purpose
- Building capacity
- Understanding the change process
- Developing cultures for learning
- Developing cultures of evaluation
- Focusing on leadership of change
- Fostering coherence making

- Cultivating trivial development.

Fullan et al., (2009) discuss the importance of all leaders needing to have an understanding and awareness of these drivers or principles in order to action change within their school. Lunenburg (2011), however, has created a framework that not only shows how to create change but also how to maintain it. His change cycle includes nine components (see Figure 2.2) which can guide a leader through an implemented change and maintain it.

*Figure 2.2: The change cycle of school culture (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 9)*



Psychology theory shows that four concepts are needed in order to start transition and complete a behaviour change (Lawson & Price, 2003). The four elements of starting a transition and completing behaviour change are:

- The individual can see the purpose of the change and agrees with it
- The rewards and recognition system must support the new behaviour
- The individual must have the skills for the new behaviour
- Key people who are role models must be seen to model the new behaviour.

Leaders must give their teachers an opportunity to align their beliefs, and once teachers are able to accept the change their actions will follow (Lawson & Price, 2003). In order to bring teachers along with the change, leaders need to give teachers the opportunity to see for themselves how they fit into the change and figure out what the implications of following or not following the change proposed within their school might be (Lawson & Price, 2003). These four concepts are important for leaders to be aware of so that they can guide their team through the transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. These four concepts may work as a guideline for the leader to help understand what part of the change

initiative their team members are working at. Having different forms of PLD will create an acceptance of implementation of the change initiative.

### **Professional learning and development as a key component of acceptance of change for teachers within a school**

Within the primary school context change is always happening and for educators, Osborne (2014) reminds us that “the 21st century requires a much more innovative, entrepreneurial approach to leading change if schools are to ensure that they are constantly evolving and adapting to best meet student, parent, whānau, and community needs in a rapidly changing world” (p. 3). For any school that is implementing change, a key component for the acceptance of that change is professional learning and development (PLD). Timperley (2011) states that PLD is “an internal process in which individuals create professional knowledge through interaction with this information in a way that challenges previous assumptions and creates new meaning” (p. 5). It is important that teachers make meaning of their new learning in order to create a transformative change, not an additive change to their practice (Timperley, 2011). Further, Guskey (2000) states that PLD is an opportunity to follow “processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so they might in turn improve the learning of students” (p. 16). PLD is designed and implemented within schools to bring about positive change and improvement (Guskey, 2000). PLD for all leaders and teachers within a school should promote opportunities for both leaders and teachers to see how these changes can be of benefit to their practice as well as have a positive impact on student outcomes (Timperley, 2011; Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007).

PLD is important for teachers’ practice and personal growth. Leaders should be active within a school in ensuring that opportunities to improve positive outcomes for teachers and their students are happening and accessible to all. Timperley et al. (2007) explain that “actively organising a supportive environment to promote professional learning opportunities and the implementation of new practice in classrooms” (p. 27) is beneficial to all teachers and students. The literature from Timperley et al. (2007) would suggest that leaders need to create opportunities for teachers within their school to constantly learn, grow and reflect on their teaching practice in order to improve student outcomes. Leaders also need to also provide opportunities for the PLD to be delivered in a variety of ways and ensure that all needs of their team members [teachers] are being individually met in order to improve student outcomes.

Within education in the past, PLD was something that teachers had given to them and they had to take on board or, as Timperley, Kaser and Halbert (2014) suggest “essentially someone coming up with ways for you to improve your practice” (p. 6). The approach, in the view of Timperley et al. (2014), will not see a change in teaching and leadership practices and most of it will be forgotten. Over time, the approach has changed and Timperley et al. (2014) created a model called ‘The spiral of inquiry’ which shows that PLD is now seen as something that is ongoing and can be done in teams or learning communities in order to make a transformational change (Timperley et al., 2014). The spiral of inquiry (see Figure 2.3) has six phases that a learner can loop around to ensure they are using what they have learnt to improve other practices and deepen understandings and lead to innovative practices (Timperley et al., 2014). The 7+3 framework (OECD, 2015) is similar to the spiral of inquiry as it was designed to optimise learning. If schools want to be successful and effective, they need to attend to all of the seven principles (Figure 2.4) and three dimensions (Figure 2.5) (OECD, 2015).

*Figure 2.3: The spiral of inquiry (Source: Timperley et al., 2014, p. 5)*



*Figure 2.4: The seven learning principles (Source: OECD, 2015, p. 18)*

- *Learning Principle One:* Make learning central, encourage engagement, and be where learners come to understand themselves as learners.
- *Learning Principle Two:* Ensure that learning is social and often collaborative.
- *Learning Principle Three:* Be highly attuned to learners' motivations and the importance of emotions.
- *Learning Principle Four:* Be acutely sensitive to individual differences including in prior knowledge.
- *Learning Principle Five:* Be demanding for each learner but without excessive overload.
- *Learning Principle Six:* Use assessments consistent with these aims, with strong emphasis on formative feedback.
- *Learning Principle Seven:* Promote horizontal connectedness across learning activities and subjects, in- and out-of-school.

Figure 2.5. The three innovative dimensions (Source: OECD, 2015, p. 19)

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- i. *Innovate the pedagogical core.* This is about ensuring that the core aims, practices and dynamics are innovated to match the ambition of the learning principles. It is about innovating both the core elements (learners, educators, content and learning resources) and the dynamics that connect those elements (pedagogy and formative evaluation, use of time, and the organisation of educators and learners).
- ii. *Become “formative organisations” with strong learning leadership.* Learning environments and systems do not just change by themselves but need strong design with vision and strategies. To be firmly focused on learning such leadership needs to be constantly informed by self-review and evidence on learning achieved.
- iii. *Open up to partnerships.* This recognises that isolation within a world of complex learning systems is to seriously limit potential. A powerful learning environment and learning system will constantly be creating synergies and finding new ways to enhance professional, social and cultural capital with others. They will do this with families and communities, higher education, cultural institutions, businesses, and especially other schools and learning environments.

The 7+3 framework outlines the key principles (See Figure 2.4) and dimensions (See Figure 2.5) needed to implement an effective ILE within a school. Leaders who are leading the transition within their school need to be aware of these and can use the 7+3 framework as a tool to help guide the implementation of their change initiative. The inquiry process is a key factor that helps teachers to improve their teaching practice, and while working in an ILE it is important that this process is collaborative and everyone within the team follows the 7+3 framework process together.

### **Collaboration as a change initiative**

The term collaboration has been around in education for a long time (Slater & Ravid, 2010). However, it has resurfaced as a key trend and the latest catchword (Doig, 2014) with the introduction of ILEs in New Zealand. Collaboration is what Cardno (2012) states as “the term employed to express partnership, co-operation, agreement, consent” (p. 124). In order for collaboration to happen within a school, a leader must create an environment where they can manage the participation of their team so that they be a part of the decision-making process (Cardno, 2012).

The concept of collaboration has changed over the years and has moved away from teachers ‘preparing lessons together’ to teachers ‘team-teaching’ (Benade, 2017). In order for teachers to collaborate, they need to move away from sharing and visiting each other’s classrooms and begin to get into a deeper form of collaboration (Benade, 2017). As a leader is leading a team through a transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE, they need to ensure they are using developed processes and teaching practices that will enable their team to build on knowledge, skills and relationships (Sweeney, 2015). There are four key factors that Sweeney (2015) discusses that leaders need to consider when

creating an effective environment for collaboration within a school. They are: being committed to a needs-based goal; having a focus on evidence-based needs and strengths; having role clarity and good relational trust; and enabling a presence of challenge and critique practices.

Leaders within a school need to be able to decide what level of collaboration is appropriate at the time, based on need and their team members. Cardno's (2012) categories of collaboration model show the types of collaboration decisions leaders' face when deciding how to collaborate within a school, as listed below:

1. Information – letting people know what is happening and accepting feedback
2. Consultation – seeking response or advice formally or informally from individuals and groups
3. Discussion – presenting information and organising forms to facilitate debates to increase understanding and encourage questioning
4. Involvement – inviting people as subscribers to participate in the review processes
5. Participation – taking part in policy and programme implementation as contributors and active participants (p. 134).

As ILEs are reasonably new throughout New Zealand, primary schools would benefit from collaborating with all teachers and leaders as they navigate their way through discovering their school-wide vision and pedagogy for these new ILE spaces within their schools. For leaders who are leading a team of teachers transitioning from a single cell to an ILE, all of Cardno's types of collaboration are important at different times along the change initiative. All the teachers in the team will bring different strengths and because of that, they can be included in different types of collaboration.

Further, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) discuss a scale of collaboration which demonstrates the various stages teachers can find themselves in, from “scanning and storytelling (exchange of ideas and resources) to help and assistance, to sharing (of materials and teaching strategies), to joint work where teachers teach, plan or inquire into teaching together” (p. 112). The notion of ‘working together’ can have a positive impact on both leaders’ and teachers’ teaching practice and pedagogy, which will also have a positive impact on student outcomes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Teachers who are transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE will find themselves moving through these various stages of collaboration. With the support of their leadership, an ideal notion, being between ‘joint work’ and ‘working together’, would be created. At these stages, the



teaching team would find themselves collaborating in way that would enhance their teaching practice and student outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The literature review outlines the open-plan classroom approach that came about as early as the 1950s around the world and in the 1970s in New Zealand. It then demonstrates some of the similarities that this approach has with the current implementation of ILEs in New Zealand. In this chapter, the literature review also highlights the importance of knowledgeable leaders who have a clear understanding about implementing a change initiative and who can create a team that has a high level of trust so that successful change within a school can impact on both teachers' pedagogy and teaching practice.

## **Chapter Three: Research methodology**

### **Introduction**

This research took place to provide evidence to address both a leader and teachers' perceptions on how they are supported in their transition into an ILE within a primary school context. Chapter three describes and discusses the methodology and method used for the research study. The first section of this chapter discusses the rationale behind the paradigm used in the research study. This includes the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the paradigm. The second section of this chapter discusses the method used in the research study as well as the data collection and analysis. The last section of this chapter discusses the research issues of validity and reliability as well as the ethical considerations of this research.

The research questions that guided this research study were:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the ways in which school leadership supports them in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
2. What are leaderships' perceptions of the ways in which they support teachers in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
3. What do teachers perceive to be the enablers of, and barriers to, their transition to teaching in an ILE?
4. What does existing research suggest as enablers of, and barriers to, supporting teachers in transitioning into an ILE?

### **Positioning**

The interpretivist approach, which requires "the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman, 2015, p. 26), leans towards a qualitative approach. As the researcher, I looked through an interpretivist paradigm into the perceptions of a leader and teachers' support both given and received through their transition into an ILE. As the participants shared their experiences, knowledge and teaching practices, I gained knowledge that helped me to understand the paradigm that is constructivist. Bryman (2012) discusses that this ontological positioning "challenges the suggestion that categories such as organisation and culture are pre-given and therefore confront social actors as external realities that they have no role in fashioning" (p. 33).

Epistemological and ontological perspectives are what form and guide a researcher's study. Epistemology is defined as "the study of the nature and validity of human

knowledge, or the difference between knowledge and belief.” (Wellington, 2015, p. 341) whereas ontology is “the study or theory of what is, for example, the nature of reality” (Wellington, 2015, p.343). The ontological position for this research assumed there would be many different perceptions of reality. Bryman (2012) describes an interpretive approach as “a term given to a contrasting epistemology to positivism” (p. 28). An interpretive epistemological position supports this research study as it aimed to analyse the individual participant’s assumptions and understandings on how teachers perceive the support that they received from the leadership through their transition into an ILE.

## **Methodology**

This research study followed Davidson and Tolich’s (2003) description of qualitative methodology with an interpretive approach. A qualitative methodology takes into account the multi-layered nature of human behaviour (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). When finding the answers to my research questions a qualitative method was used.

## **Methods of data collection and analysis**

This section explains the method used for the collection and analysis of data which was gathered in my semi-structured interviews.

## **Description**

The purpose of a semi-structured interview is that it has, as Longhurst (2003) states “relatively instructed nature... and has capacity to provide insight into how research participants view” (p. 471) the context you are interviewing them on by drawing on their own experiences, beliefs and values. Longhurst's (2003) research shows us that “semi-structured interviews are useful for investigating complex behaviours, opinions, emotions and effects, and for collecting a diversity of experience” (p. 152-153). I gained knowledge of the participants’ experiences of the support given and received by both a leader and teachers through their transition into an ILE within their organisation.

Kvale (1996) has proposed ten criteria of a successful interviewer as knowledgeable, structuring, clear, gentle, sensitive, open, steering, critical, remembering and interpreting. Bryman (2012) has suggested adding balanced and ethically sensitive to Kvale’s list. The criteria acted as a guide that I found useful to follow when preparing the semi-structured interview. I saw the criteria as a way to ensure that I created an interview that had rich questions as well as creating a comfortable atmosphere for the participants.

The interviews in my research used open-ended questions which were well thought out and set out before the interviews took place. This is called the interview schedule (Appendix A) (Bryman, 2008; Yin, 2011). Bryman (2008) describes an interview schedule as “a collection of questions designed to be asked by the interviewer” (p. 712). When creating questions for the semi-structured interview, I kept in mind what (Wellington, 2015) discusses as five types of questions to avoid. These are double-barrelled questions, two-in-one questions, restrictive questions, leading questions and loaded questions (p. 146-147). This helped to ensure that I created questions that were going to elicit a response from the participants that would be open, honest and provide insight into their knowledge and experiences. The questions used for the teachers and leader in the semi-structured interviews included:

*Teacher questions:*

1. How were you selected to work in an ILE?
2. What working relationship did you have with your team before you moved into an ILE?
3. What professional development did you receive before you moved into an ILE?
4. Can you describe the leadership practices that were/are in place at this school, which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE?
5. What model of leadership do you follow in your ILE?
6. What contributing factors did you consider helpful when setting up an ILE?
7. Are there any barriers or challenges that contribute to the transition for teachers in an ILE?
8. What leadership practices do you believe could be put in place to help overcome these barrier or challenges?
9. Who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices?

*Leader questions:*

1. How were you selected to work alongside teachers’ transitioning into an ILE?
2. What working relationship did you have with your team before they moved into an ILE?
3. What professional development did you receive before you led the transition into an ILE?
4. Can you describe the leadership practices that were/are in place at this school, which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE?
5. What model of leadership do you follow in your ILE?

6. What contributing factors did you consider helpful when setting up an ILE?
7. Are there any barriers or challenges that contribute to the support of teachers transitioning into an ILE?
8. What leadership practices do you believe could be put in place to help overcome these barriers or challenges?
9. Who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices?

### **Strengths and limitations of semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interview research method was an appropriate method for this study because it enabled me to gain detailed information about the participants' knowledge and experiences. Semi-structured interviews are less formal than a structured interview format (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013) as they give more flexibility to explore things the participants have said, if and when things come up throughout the interview (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998).

Semi-structured interviews are one of the most commonly used methods of data collection in educational research (Guest et al., 2013). The semi-structured interview within research is not a method without limitations or challenges. An interview conducted with the correct interview protocol following a process of a planned set of guiding questions, the location, and the physical arrangement of furniture, can lead to quality research data (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). This then brings a challenge to whether the quality of the interview, and the analysis of data is the best it can be.

Another challenge that can be problematic is the meaning that is heard by the interviewer, as it might not be the meaning anticipated by the interviewee (Somekh & Lewin, 2011). To address this issue, after the interviews I sent the transcripts to the participants so that they could sign the consent form (Appendix B) that they agreed it was a true recording of the conversation that took place, and if not, they were given the option to change it if need be.

### **Recruitment process**

Initial contact with the school was made by email to the Principal with the Principal's participant information sheet for the Principal and Board of Trustees (Appendix C). This sheet informed the Principal and Board of Trustees of the purpose of my research, why their school had been chosen, any risks for the school and the benefits of participating in my research. The same email also had the consent form (Appendix D) attached. The first school that agreed for the research to take place within their organisation was chosen due

to time constraints on myself to begin this research. The Principal then needed to read, sign and return the permission to access (Appendix D) to give permission for me to access the school staff. The Principal was then asked to forward an advertisement (Appendix E) to all staff. The participants then directly responded to my email with their interest. I then sent the consent form (Appendix B) for participants to read, sign and return. At this point, they were sent the participant information sheet (Appendix F) which gave them an information sheet about my research study and how they would be a part of it. It clearly stated to the participants the risk and privacy and outcomes of taking part in my research.

### **Participants and sampling**

Purposive sampling was used for this study. Purposive sampling is when the researcher chooses the participants based on the purpose of their involvement in the study and then the researcher goes out and finds them (Bryman, 2012; Guest et al., 2013). To find and recruit a sample school to interview one leader and four teachers to participate in the study, I used a Ministry of Education list of schools identified as having already gone through the transition into ILE as at November 2017. I emailed three school Principals in both West Auckland and the North Shore of Auckland, who had identified as already having gone through the transition into an ILE. These areas of Auckland were selected because they were close to both the residence and university that I attended. The first school that replied and agreed to take part in my research was selected. If gaining one leader and four teachers became problematic, then a referral from the participants who had replied and agreed to take part in the research could have been used to recruit new participants. Each participant was interviewed once at a place of their choice with questions and sub-questions related to my research questions.

The qualitative data was collected by semi-structured interviews from one primary school, where I interviewed one leader and four teachers. These qualitative interviews gave a greater insight into the points of view that the interviewees held and what they perceived as important or relevant from their experiences (Bryman, 2012).

The following types of schools were excluded from this study: purpose-built ILEs. For the purpose of this study ‘purpose-built ILEs’ are ILEs planned, designed and built from the ground up with the ideas and input of all stakeholders involved.

Pseudonyms were used to identify each participant. The school participating and the participants’ information is presented in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1: School and participant information*

Participant number	Position	Gender	Ethnicity
One	Leader	Female	NZ European
Two	Teacher	Female	NZ European
Three	Teacher	Female	NZ European
Four	Teacher	Female	NZ European
Five	Teacher	Female	NZ Maori

Guest et al., (2013) remind us that “establishing one or more eligibility criteria for inclusion” (p. 48) in my research helped ensure that the right interview is for the right participant. As the researcher, I also made sure that the school followed my requests and that both the school and the participants fitted the criteria to take part in my study. The school that took part in my research had to have participants that met the following criteria:

- A teacher currently working in an ILE that had already made the transition from a single-cell classroom into an ILE within their organisation;
- And/or a teacher who was currently working within an ILE and had previous experience working within an ILE in another organisation; and
- A leader who holds a management unit and has overseen the transition of teachers into an ILE.

The criteria were designed to ensure that the right participants were chosen to undertake my research, as they were equipped with experience and knowledge that assisted my research.

## **Data analysis**

For the data analysis process, I needed to take the transcripts and make meaning of them. Cohen et al. (2013) state that the [qualitative data analysis] process involves “organising, describing, understanding, accounting for and explaining the data and making sense of data in terms of the participant’s definitions of the situations” (p. 643). I also needed to ensure I was taking note of the categories and themes that arose from the semi-structured interviews that were emerging from the data. However, Cohen et al. (2013) remind us that “selecting, organising, analysing, interpreting and reporting data means the researcher is faced with several decisions and issues” (p. 648).

There are ‘12 tactics’ for generating meaning from transcribed interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Cohen et al., 2013). These are:

- counting frequency of occurrence
- noting patterns and themes
- seeing plausibility
- clustering
- making metaphors
- counting
- slitting variables
- subsuming particulars
- factoring identifying
- noting relations between variables
- building a logical chain of evidence
- making conceptual/theoretical coherence.

These 12 tactics help the researcher test and confirm the meanings found in their data while helping the researcher to avoid bias and form quality conclusions (Cohen et al., 2013).

A substantial amount of careful consideration went into how I approached the data analysis and presentation of the data while ensuring I upheld validity and reliability throughout this process. I chose to organise my data into themes according to the interview questions. This then enabled me to see the categories and themes as they emerged.

## **Coding**

To begin the initial coding of my semi-structured interviews, I printed each transcript on an A4 piece of paper with 1.5 spacing and a 3cm margin. This gave room on each transcript for me to highlight the transcripts row by row so that I could sort the data into themes. I then looked across the five interviews for similarities, differences and patterns.

Bryman (2012) notes that “coding is a critical stage in the process of doing a content analysis” (p. 298). Cohen et al. (2013) discuss the notion that “coding enables the researcher to identify similar information” (p. 559). Cohen et al. (2013) continue to discuss that coding “enables the researcher to search and retrieve data in terms of those items that bear the same code” (p. 559). Once the transcripts had been highlighted, I



created a table and sorted the data into four main themes that had emerged from the data. I clearly identified each theme with a different colour and then went back through each transcript and took from them the data that related to each theme and coloured-coded it accordingly.

## **Validity**

Validity is a term used in research that refers to the extent to which questions accurately reflect the concepts that were set out to be answered by the researcher (Davidson & Tolich, 1999; Hartas, 2010; O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). I continually reviewed my data and made certain that it linked to my research questions I had set out to answer. Cardno (2003) suggests that pre-testing before piloting the questions ensures validity. I gave my semi-structured interviews to both a leader and teacher who were not in my research, to test that they were 'fit for purpose' and to check accuracy.

## **Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency and strength of a measurement, and it is a tool used to determine whether the results of a study are replicable at a different time or place (Hartas, 2010). Reliability ensures that the quality of the semi-structured interviews within the research is consistent and minimises any errors or bias (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). To achieve a greater reliability in my research I minimised the amount of bias as much possible. To do this I made sure that each semi-structured interview had the same format and sequence of words and questions for each respondent (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). I made sure that my attitude, opinions and expectations were neutral so that I did not influence the participants when they were answering the questions in the semi-structured interviews.

## **Ethical Issues**

The ethical principles set by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) gave guidance to the ethical conduct of my research. The Treaty of Waitangi document which is founded in New Zealand helped shape the principles that are in place. AUTEC has seven principles which were followed when conducting my research. These are:

- Giving informed and voluntary consent
- Respecting the rights of privacy and confidentiality
- Minimisation of risk, truthfulness
- Including limitation of deception

- Social and cultural sensitivity and commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi
- Research adequacy
- Avoidance of conflict of interest.

Informed and voluntary consent was obtained from the school and the individual participants. Letters were sent out to the school (Appendix C) and individuals (Appendix F) stating the purpose of the research. The school Principal gave consent by signature to undertake research within the organisation or with the organisation's people (Appendix D). The participants were only able to participate in my research once their signature was obtained on the consent form (Appendix B).

The letters also informed the participants of their rights to privacy and confidentiality throughout my research. Their privacy and confidentiality were respected by making sure that they were not recognised throughout my research process of collecting the data, analysing the data and then writing up my findings. I used pseudonyms throughout my research. This also ensured that the participants' names, schools and identities were not recognisable in my study. Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed by an independent person. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement before transcribing my interviews (Appendix G).

Participants were also informed that they were able to withdraw from the research at any time up to 10 days after they had received their transcription for validation (Appendix B). The file names of the recordings and transcripts of the interviews were coded so they could not be directly linked to specific participants. A list of these codes is kept in a separate file.

I minimised harm to the participants during the research by maintaining privacy and confidentiality but also by consideration of the time required to complete the research. The semi-structured interviews were kept to a manageable duration and the questions were clear and relevant to the research. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research if the time caused stress or difficulty.

Truthfulness was considered before, during and after the interviews took place (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). Before I began the semi-structured interviews, I discussed with each participant my role as the researcher and the purpose of this study. While conducting the interviews, I made it clear to the participants that there were no correct answers and that

I was simply trying to find out their knowledge and experiences when transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE.

Deception was minimised within my study by providing the participants with a consent form (Appendix B) and participant information sheet (Appendix F), both by email so they could look at them prior to the interview. It is important for the researcher to create an effective bond of trust between the participants and themselves (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013). Before I started my interviews, all participants knew who I was, the purpose of my study and what I was hoping to find out. The study was approved for ethical consent through AUTECH. This then gave the participants a high level of confidence and trust in what I was setting out to do in my research (O'Toole & Beckett, 2013).

Throughout the design of this research, protecting the cultural safety of the participants was vital. There are three broad principles suggested by the 1988 Royal Commission on Social Policy when working with my participants: partnership, participation and protection (Ministry of Education, 2012). The principle of partnership was upheld through establishing an open, honest relationship with the participants. The principle of protection was upheld by ensuring I was respectful and honest. I listened carefully to the participants' responses to ensure that I understood exactly what they were saying; this was important through the semi-structured interview process. Once the interviews had been transcribed, all participants had a chance to read over the transcript to confirm that this was a true version of what they meant and had said. The principle of participation was upheld through the informed consent, and the safe environment and the confidentiality of both the school and the participants.

Research adequacy for this research study was maintained as the research project had clear and concise research goals. These goals were shared with the participants on the participant information sheet (Appendix F & C). These goals were also shared with the participants before each interview so that all participants had a clear understanding of the purpose of this study. When planning and discussing my research proposal I attended the drop-in times with the ethics committee and my supervisor to receive feedback and make changes before conducting the semi-structured interviews. I made sure that the participants' time or effort was not wasted by making sure that I was organised for the semi-structured interviews before conducting them. An avoidance of conflict of interest was important throughout this research. To avoid a conflict of interest, I did not carry out my research within the school that I am currently employed at and no immediate family or friends were a part of my research.

## **Conclusion**

This qualitative research set out to understand the participants' knowledge and experience of transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. This chapter has introduced the methodology design, data collection and analysis within this study. It has considered the sampling and justified the approach. It has shown why and how semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection method and discussed how the data collection was coded. Finally, in this chapter I have discussed the data analysis and the validity and ethical research issues. In the next chapter, I will present my findings from the five semi-structured interviews.

## **Chapter Four- Presentation of the research findings**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this research was to gather both the leader's and teachers' perceptions of support, both given and received when transitioning into an ILE. This chapter presents the participants' perceptions and experiences through their transition in an ILE. The findings draw on evidence-based, semi-structured interviews with questions formulated for both the teachers and the leader who had already transitioned from a single-cell classroom into an ILE. Four teachers and one leader were each interviewed separately for this research.

The first part of this chapter outlines demographic data to provide information about the participants. Further detail is then given about how the findings are presented. The results are organised in order of the interview questions. Explanations are provided to explain the meaning of each theme and participants' quotes, which are used as evidence to support the findings. To conclude the chapter, a brief summary is provided.

### **Research participants**

The research school is a co-educational, multi-cultural, full primary school with a decile rating of four as of 2016 and an average school roll of approximately 430 students over the research period. For the purpose of this study, and to protect anonymity of the school and staff, it will be known as Horizon Primary School (HPS).

Purposive sampling was used because it was an appropriate method for my small-scale study, as I wanted to recruit participants who would help inform my study. For my study, I decided I needed one leader who had led the transition for teachers from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. I also decided I needed four teachers who had already transitioned from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. I used a Ministry of Education list of schools to identify schools that had already gone through the transition into ILE. It was important that the school selection deliberately included a primary school that has both single-cell classrooms and a new ILE. I found six schools in Auckland that matched the criteria of my investigation. I interviewed one leader and four teachers, and they are numbered according to the order in which I interviewed them, as shown in Table 4.1.

### **Participants' demographic information**

The five participants from HPS were the team leader and four Year 1 and 2 teachers. The participants are numbered (as in Table 4.1) in the order they were interviewed.

*Table 4.1* Adult participants' demographic information

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Leadership/teaching experience in current school</b>
One	Leader	Female	NZ European	5 years
Two	Teacher	Female	NZ European	2 years
Three	Teacher	Female	NZ European	3 years
Four	Teacher	Female	NZ European	1 year
Five	Teacher	Female	NZ Maori	6 years

## **Presenting findings**

The semi-structured interviews were made up of nine questions and were created to answer the following sub questions of my research:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the ways in which school leadership supports them in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
2. What are leaders' perceptions of the ways in which they support teachers in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
3. What do teachers perceive to be the enablers of and barriers to their transition to teaching in an ILE?
4. What does existing research suggest as enablers of and barriers to supporting teachers in transitioning into an ILE?

The following sections present an analysis of data from the nine questions with teacher responses noted first, followed by the leader responses. Comparison of the results will occur in the following Discussion chapter.

## **Teacher's responses**

### **1. How were you selected to work in an Innovative Learning Environment?**

Three reasons emerged for how they were selected to work in an ILE. Two teachers stated that they had no choice, as reported in the following statement from Participant Five: "No choice, you were just told you were in it by management."

One respondent (Participant Three) indicated that a second reason for selection was associated with a room being demolished. She noted: "I was asked to move into the hall

because of my classroom being demolished while the Junior Learning Environment (JLE) was being built.”

Another respondent (Participant Two) indicated that a third reason for selection was associated with having already worked in the same year level and senior management had asked her to move levels for her own professional development. She stated:

I think it was the year level that was going to be in an Innovative Learning Environment because I had been working in Year 4, 5 and 6 and the principal said that it would be good for my development to move down.

## **2. What working relationship did you have with your team before you moved into an ILE?**

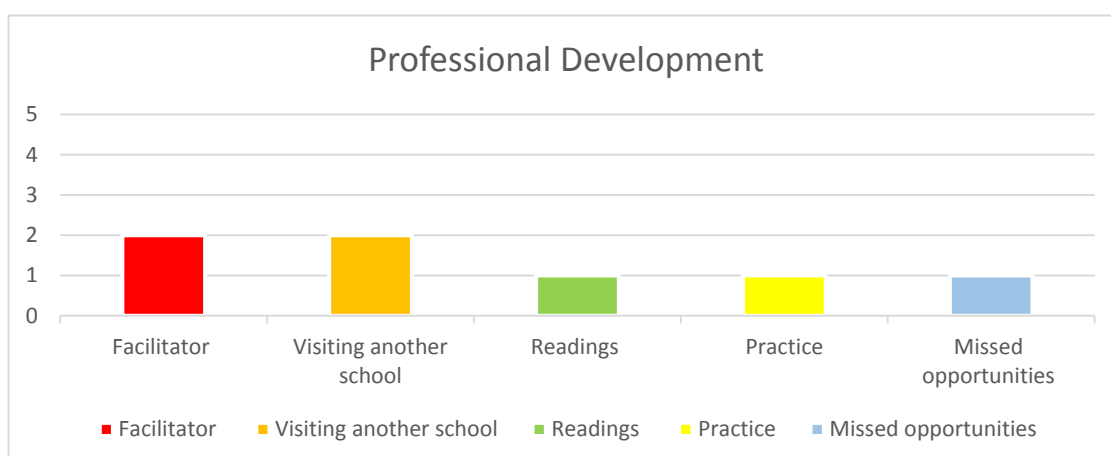
Two reasons emerged about the working relationships that the participants had with their team before they moved into an ILE. Two teachers noted that they had no working relationship with anyone in their team before moving into the ILE.

The other two respondents (Participants Three and Four) were provisional registered teachers (PRT) and were new to the school so they also had no working relationship with anyone in their team before moving into the ILE. Participant Three noted: “I was a beginning teacher, so I was still finding my groundings and developing relationships with staff.” Participant Three noted something similar: “So when I first moved into the space I had only been teaching for three terms. I was a beginning teacher (BT) so I was kind of just following what I was told to do.” This shows that, because both participants (Participants Three and Four) were new teachers, there was no relationship established with their working team before they moved into their ILE.

## **3. What professional development did you receive before you moved in to an ILE?**

The following table shows the types of professional development received by the participants before they moved in the ILE.

**Table 4.2** Professional development received by teachers before transitioning into an ILE



Five responses emerged related to the professional development that these participants received before moving into an ILE. From these responses, it is noted that the four teacher participants in this study had different professional development opportunities before moving into an ILE. Three out of the four participants received more than one aspect of professional development.

Two out of the four teacher participants stated that they worked with facilitators from an outside agency, as reported in the following statement from Participant Three: “We had received professional development by Facilitator Y before moving in and during our time we have been in here.” This was also reported in the statement from Participant Five: “So the whole school got the pedagogy of the ILE from an outside agency with Facilitator Y.”

Two out of the four teacher participants stated they were able to visit two other schools which had already transitioned into an ILE to observe their practice and the way they had set their space up. This was noted by Participant Four: “We also had a lot of opportunities to go and look at how other schools were running their ILEs. Yeah, so learn from other schools.” The same experience was noted also from Participant Five who stated: “We went down the line, so we had a teachers’ only day and only our team went down, not the whole school.”

One respondent (Participant Two) indicated a third aspect of professional development they received before moving into an ILE was through many professional readings. She explained, “I got a lot of readings to do from senior management around pedagogy in an ILE.”



Another respondent (Participant Four) indicated that she used the hall space as a time to give things a go before moving into their new purpose-built ILE. She noted:

So a lot of our professional development was what we did in the hall as our practice year, and that was the chance to take on board things that we wanted to try and, yeah, like I said, before making the mistakes, try new things and see what works, what doesn't, then kind of refine it, getting ready to move into the new space.

Lastly, Participant Two admitted to not taking up opportunities of professional development that came her way. She acknowledged that with the following statement: "I was also encouraged to go out and see other schools, but I just didn't get round to it."

#### **4. Can you describe the leadership practices that were/are in place at this school which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE?**

Three responses emerged about the leadership practices that were or are in place at the school, which helped with teachers' transitioning into an ILE. Two respondents noted management being supportive, as stated by Participant Three: "Management was very supportive. They would often check in and make sure we were ok." Participant Four also noted the support by leaders with the statement: "We had the support of senior management."

One respondent (Participant Two) indicated a second leadership practice in place, which helped her, was that all teachers in her team were helpful. As they were on this learning journey together and as she was a beginning teacher, she felt that all teachers had the knowledge that was shared by senior management, which meant everyone was able to help her when needed. She stated:

I think it was not just the leadership, it was all the teachers in here; they were just so welcoming and helpful, which it should be anyway. It was not just having to go and ask the team leader something; you could go ask anyone which I really, really enjoy. It shows the collaboration that is set up within our team from our team leader.

Participant Five indicated a third leadership practice that was in place, which was a booklet made up by senior management. This booklet was given out to teachers informing them of the practices they had to follow when working within an ILE. She stated: "You get a booklet of what you have to do." She went on further to state: "There is no real

consultation with how things went. It was one person leading it and you just did it and that's the way it is in here."

### **5. What model of leadership do you follow in your ILE?**

Three explanations emerged on the model of leadership that was followed in the ILE. One respondent (Participant Two) noted that the leader in her team worked alongside the teachers. She stated: "It would be, how do I put it, not strict. She works with us, alongside us, not on us."

Two respondents (Participants Three and Four) indicated that a second model of leadership within their team was a very collaborative model. Participant Three reported: "They are quite collaborative; everyone works together as a team and puts their heads together to find solutions or outcomes within planning." Participant Four complemented this in her interview and noted:

Lots of collaboration so although we have our leader in here with us as our team leader, everyone's thoughts are valued, everyone's ideas are valued; if something works well she'll share it and we are all open to trying new things.

One respondent (Participant Five) indicated a third model of leadership where the leader was perceived to be collaborative in the eyes of the leadership team. However, another teacher (Participant Two) saw it differently and stated: "I think it is one person coming up with the ideas and they say it is collaboration, but really it is just one person and we are all following what they say."

### **6. What contributing factors did you consider helpful when setting up an ILE?**

Five responses emerged as helpful contributing factors when setting up an ILE. These responses show that each participant finds different contributing factors to be helpful when setting up an ILE. One participant in this study noted more than one factor as helpful.

One respondent (Participant Two) stated equipment such as having trolleys and enough storage for her things as being helpful contributing factors when setting up in ILE. She reported in the following statement: "The fact that we do have trolleys, because I've got a lot of stuff and even this breakout room having a bit of storage for us as well, because that was my concern – not having anywhere to put anything."

Participant Three indicated two helpful contributing factors. The first one was a shared understanding by all members of the team before getting started in the ILE. She stated the following: “Everyone being on board, having the same understanding, and making sure everyone was pulling their own weight in the team.” Participant Three also mentioned ensuring that the parents and whanau were well informed about their children’s learning environment and how it all works. She noted:

I would also consider making sure that parents are well informed – having them come into the classroom space and checking on how things work so that they have a good understanding and can see the structure and systems that are working well for their child.

Participant Four indicated the fourth contributing factor that was helpful in setting up a ILE was being able to go out and look at other schools with already-established working ILEs, and network with those teachers who have already made the transition from single-cell classrooms to ILEs. She valued this as she noted: “Definitely going into other schools and seeing how it works and actually visualising it, not just hearing this is what you do, this is how you could run it. Actually seeing it was what I think was most beneficial.” She went on to say: “Getting to go out and look at other schools, take photos, get ideas, talk to other teachers and then bring it back to our school and see what would work.”

Participant Five indicated the fifth contributing factor that was helpful in setting up an ILE was working alongside facilitators from outside agencies so that they could teach the pedagogy that goes behind teaching in an ILE before she moved into one. She stated: “Having Facilitator X, an outside person, coming in and having the pedagogy behind you first before you start.”

## **7. Are there any barriers or challenges that contribute to the transition for teachers in an ILE?**

Four responses emerged as barriers or challenges that contributed to the transition for teachers into an ILE. One participant noted more than one barrier or challenge in her experience.

Participant Two indicated a barrier or challenge to be the complete flip of practice from what you know in the past to upskilling and changing to 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning in an ILE. She stated:

This is with any class though, like because I moved down year levels, it was a whole new sort of thing for me; so it was not just the year level, it was also the environment and the way you teach.

Participant Three indicated a second barrier or challenge when transitioning into a ILE was being emotionally exhausted. After just completing her first two years of teaching and then transitioning into an ILE, she stated:

I found the tiredness hard. So going from a single cell and relearning was quite full on. There were a lot of different teaching styles to learn from and a lot of different behavioural needs all in one area. So that was really energy sapping.

Two respondents (Participants Three and Four) both indicated a third barrier or challenge when transitioning into an ILE to be reluctance from both parents and teachers. Participant Three indicated in her statement:

Reluctance from teachers within my working team was challenging. The kids adapted a lot faster than the parents and some of the teachers. They were open to making mistakes and giving things a go and adjusting more quickly, whereas explaining things to parents and some teachers and getting them on board was slightly more challenging.

Participant Four also indicated the same barrier or challenge as she stated: “I would definitely say teacher mind-set. You need to be working with teachers who want this to work as much as you do.”

Participant Five indicated a fourth barrier or challenge for teachers when transitioning into an ILE as too many children in one space. She stated:

The number of children because the groups are too big. My teaching groups have 30 to 35 children in them, so how we structure it is if you have, so let’s take reading, for example. So one teacher will have Red 1, Red 2 and some Magenta readers and so that is the only level you have, so you don’t have the wide range, and within each group you have 30 to 35 students.

**8. What leadership practices do you believe could be put in place to help overcome these barriers or challenges?**

Six responses emerged as leadership practices that could be put in place to help overcome the barriers and challenges from the previous question. Two participants noted more than

one leadership practice that could be put in place to help overcome the barrier or challenges.

Participant Two indicated that there were no leadership practices that could be put in place to overcome the barriers or challenges discussed in the previous questions because her leader is doing everything perfectly. She noted: “I don’t have any because I think what my team leader is doing is really, really good.”

One respondent (Participant Three) indicated two leadership practices that could be put in place to overcome the barriers or challenges discussed in the previous questions. The first leadership practice she suggested was leaders checking in regularly with staff for pastoral care that is separate to checking in about teaching practice. As reported in her statement: “So with the tiredness, just check in with others to ensure that they are not getting stressed or struggling to maintain energy levels. Supporting them, helping them with anything that they might be struggling with.”

The second leadership practice that Participant Three indicated could be put in place to overcome the barriers or challenges was taking out challenging students who are being disruptive or to give the teacher a break. She stated: “With challenging students, giving the teacher a break by taking them out of the space and trying to help them with some strategies to put in place.”

Participant Four also indicated two leadership practices that could be put in place to overcome the barriers or challenges discussed in the previous questions. The first leadership practice she suggested was having clear expectations so that everyone is on the same page. She stated: “Senior management and middle management need to really make it clear to all what is expected.”

The second leadership practice that Participant Four indicated could be put in place to overcome the barriers or challenges would be having a whole school pedagogy of the ‘way we do things around here’. She stated:

They need to really make it clear what is expected and that this is a whole school way of teaching and learning; even though other classes aren’t necessarily in a purpose-built space, their practice that they are doing in other teams should be very similar to modern learning practices.

Participant Five indicated a sixth leadership practice that could be put in place to overcome barriers or challenges could be to employ an extra teacher to work in this space.

She stated: “At the moment we have six teachers with 180 students. Having an extra teacher who could be a rover teacher would be really helpful.”

### **9. Who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices?**

Three responses emerged about who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices. Participant Two stated: “It was the heads of the school like the principal who were responsible for implementing these leadership practices.” Participants Three and Five both stated they thought it was up to the senior management team to implement these leadership practices, with Participant Three stating: “Obviously management is very important to make sure that teachers and colleagues are feeling comfortable and are on board with these changes and if not, what can they do about it.” Participant Five also stated: “I think management.”

Participant Four indicated the third response that no one particular person is responsible for implementing these leadership practices. She stated:

Because it is new for everybody across the school, there is no particular person that is charge of leading it. We are just kind of like, if something is working really well then that person might be seen as like the go-to person to implement it by talking to the rest of the staff or observing other teachers doing it and giving feedback.

## **Leader responses**

### **1. How were you selected to lead a team of teachers transitioning into an ILE?**

The one leader participant (Participant One) discussed how she was already a junior team leader and, because the junior school was being rebuilt into an ILE, senior management said she did not have any choice about leading the team of teachers transitioning from single-cell classrooms to ILE. She stated: “As the junior team leader, and it was happening in the junior school, it was basically, it wasn’t a selection, it was happening.”

### **2. What working relationship did you have with your team before they moved in to an ILE?**

The team leader was in a ‘walking’ position without a class, so spent time getting to know the teachers before she transitioned from single-cell classrooms into an ILE. She noted: “I was the team leader and I did not actually move into this space. I was walking and I did not have a class, so I was guiding them through that.”

### **3. What professional development did you receive before you led the transition into an ILE?**

Two responses emerged from the leader as professional development that was received before leading the transition into an ILE. She discussed visiting other schools that had already made the transition from single-cell classrooms to an ILE. She stated:

I had about three years of professional development before I actually moved into an ILE. We did day trips to look at existing ILEs, whether they be from an existing school or the new builds. I got to go to the new build, but I can't remember if all of my team did.

The second response that emerged was that she worked with facilitators from outside agencies. She stated: "We had a lot of work with learning with digital technologies with Facilitator X and a lot with Facilitator Y looking at student ownership."

### **4. Can you describe the leadership practices that were/are in place at this school which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE?**

Four responses emerged from the leadership practices that were or are in place at this school which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE. The leader acknowledged that both senior and middle management were leading change by learning alongside the teachers. She stated: "Management always comes with us to look at things or learn things and gets the same PD as the teachers."

She went on to discuss that if teachers were unsure or stuck on something, they were able to problem solve together as a team with middle and senior management. This was reported in the following statement: "Teachers can come to me or any senior management with any sort of problems or challenges and not be judged at any time."

The leader indicated a third response, which was the supportive learning environment within the organisation which helped teachers feel valued, included and empowered through their transition. She stated: "I guess the supportive nature of their leadership means that teachers feel they can rely on their leaders."

The leader indicated a fourth response, that middle management and senior management promoted professional learning within their school. This had a great impact on the teaching and learning and enabled them to see how valuable it can be to work together in a professional learning culture. She stated: "Principal X and deputy principal Y took me

down to look at other schools three times. Principal X has been fully on board through the whole journey and really learning alongside us all as a team.”

### **5. What model of leadership do you follow in your ILE?**

One response emerged from the model of leadership followed within the ILE, as collaboration. She stated:

It’s all collaborative, everyone has strengths. We plan together all on the same document. We all sit down and talk about, you know, we have planned team meetings on a Wednesday night, but a bunch of us will just sit and chat every night after school; we tend to do that a lot.

She went on to discuss the leadership potential some of her staff in her team have, as reported in her following statement:

I mean, they have all got that potential to step up and lead and they do, do that. I was away for a week reading their reflections, doing their appraisals; it was like I got a chance to see them step up, which I’m hoping they know they can do even if I am here. But I don’t know how comfortable they feel.

She noted further that young staff needed more support in their beginning years, stating:

I have got some young staff in here who haven’t been teaching for that long. So I am just there to support, but I want to empower leadership and encourage them.

### **6. What contributing factors did you consider helpful when leading the setting up of an ILE?**

Four responses emerged as contributing factors that the leader considered helpful when leading the setting up of an ILE. The respondent discussed having facilitators to work alongside from outside agencies. She stated: “Having quite a few workshops with Facilitator Z were helpful to her.” The second response from the leader was that she found it helpful visiting other schools who had already transitioned from single cell to ILE. She stated: “Facilitator Z was the one that I contacted to say, ‘look, I want to look at an existing school’. He gave me a list of schools to go and look at. So being able to shoulder tap was helpful.” The third response that emerged as a contributing factor was workshops. She stated: “I was a part of a group that went regularly to workshop x, to some of their evening workshops, and listened to their guest speakers who were in ILEs already and had transitioned from a single cell.” The fourth response that the leader found helpful was the



communication between senior management, her team, colleagues she met at the workshop, and the facilitators. She noted: “Having someone to talk to or bounce ideas off is key.”

**7. Are there any barriers or challenges that contribute to the support needed for teachers transitioning into an ILE?**

Three responses emerged as barriers or challenges that contribute to the support needed for teachers transitioning into an ILE. The leader respondent discussed the challenge for some teachers worrying about other teachers watching and judging their practice within the working space, as when are you working in an ILE you are an open book. She stated: “For teachers it is de-privatisation of practice. A lot of them think, ‘oh no, people are watching me’, which they are actually not; they are too busy with their own kids.”

The second response that emerged from the respondent as a challenge or a barrier when transitioning teachers into an ILE could be the teacher’s resistance to change. What they know is what they know, and the unknown can be scary. She noted: “So we had a few resisters who were not happy with the change and so working with them became difficult at times.”

The third response that emerged from the respondent was the barrier or challenge of team members not getting on with one another and having different personality traits that can be difficult for others to work alongside. As reported in the following statement: “Within your team you can have people who do not get on with each other for different reasons. There can be personality differences; there can be shouty people who need to learn how to work in this kind of environment.”

**8. What leadership practices do you believe could be put in place to help overcome these barrier or challenges?**

Three responses emerged as leadership practices that the leader believes could be put in place to overcome the barriers or challenges discussed in the question above. The first response from the respondent was the notion of teachers being open to learning from one another and accept that at times that they are not always the expert themselves. She believed that leaders need to encourage their teams to be open to this within the ILE. She stated: “It is all about learning together and from one another and being open to that.”

The second response that emerged from the respondent was that middle and senior management need to ensure that the teachers working within these ILEs are adaptable to

change and be flexible in their daily routines. She stated: “We are always refining our practice as a team; we are still changing and, you know, this is our third year in this ILE.”

The third response that emerged from the respondent was that leadership must look at the timeline of buildings being taken away and the new ones being built. This participant led a team that was working in the school hall while the new building was being built. She stated:

It is not purpose-built, you know, so there are no acoustic panels. There was a bank of computers at one end of the hall, so kids were disappearing down there to that. So kids were all over the place and you would lose them when it was their turn for, say, a reading group. It was a nightmare.

### **9. Who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices?**

There was one response for the responsibility of implementing these leadership practices within the participants’ organisation. The respondent discussed it being a collaborative approach. She stated:

I am quite collaborative; I do talk to my team; I do not go and find something and then come back and say, ‘we are doing this now’. If I find something I will say, ‘this is an idea I have got. What do you reckon? How can we tweak it to meet our needs?’ That kind of thing.

She went on to say: “I am not dictatorial. I do not know if they see that, but I do not think I am.”

## **Conclusion**

My qualitative research was analysed and coded to generate common themes from the five semi-structured interviews. The results of the analysis procedure have been presented and explained in Chapter four. Common themes were organised for each question, explanations were given to explain the meaning of each theme, and participants’ quotes were used as evidence. The comparison of teacher and leader responses and significance of these findings will be discussed in Chapter five.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather both the leader and teachers' perceptions of support, both given and received when transitioning from a single-cell classroom into an ILE. The following four research questions informed the basis of this study and are the subheadings for the discussion in this chapter:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the ways in which school leadership supports them in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
2. What are leaderships' perceptions of the ways in which they support teachers in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
3. What do teachers perceive to be the enablers of and barriers to their transition to teaching in an ILE?
4. What does existing research suggest as enablers of and barriers to supporting teachers in transitioning into an ILE? For the basis of this discussion, questions 3 and 4 will be combined.

This chapter analyses and discusses the findings in Chapter four, making reference to the relevant literature from Chapter two. The four main themes identified in the previous chapter form the basis for the discussion under the research questions in this chapter:

1. Teachers and leaders having a choice and being willing to transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE;
2. Teachers and leaders being given ongoing professional development before and during their transition into an ILE;
3. Collaboration being a key factor in having a successful transition and an effective team in an ILE; and
4. Barriers or challenges that contribute to the transition for teachers in an ILE.

Finally, a conclusion is provided to describe the extent to which the aim of this study was achieved.

### Discussion

**Research question one:** *What are teachers' perceptions of the ways in which school leadership supports them in their transition to teaching in an ILE?*

The responses to the first question of this research study formed an understanding of the teachers' perceptions of ways in which school leadership supported them through

their transition into an ILE. These following subheadings – choice, change and equity of PLD – were derived from the findings.

### *Choice*

What became clear from the findings was that the teachers were not given a choice as to whether they wanted to move into an ILE or not. The teachers were put into a team without any choice in a decision made by their senior leadership team. For some of the team members [teachers] this became a barrier to the team working collaboratively and successfully in their new space due to the choice being made for them. Two of the teachers did not want to move into an ILE and had a fixed mind-set about teaching pedagogy and practice. Some of these teachers had been teaching for more than ten years in single-cell classrooms and were not ready or willing to change their teaching practice and pedagogy. Because the decision was made for the four teachers, they did not get a chance to mentally prepare for the shift in their teaching practice or have the time to prepare themselves with knowledge, expertise or experiences to manage this change and see how they would successfully fit into it. It also meant that the school's stakeholders did not have their teachers' full commitment to making the transition successful, not only for the students but for the school.

The body of literature from Osborne (2014) and Hargreaves (2004) discusses the pace in which education changes and how with some changes, teachers are given the resource of 'time' to embed these changes slowly, while other changes are forced upon them. The responses from all four of the teacher participants showed that there was 'no choice' in moving into the ILE, which aligns with Osborne (2014) and Hargreaves' (2004) literature around some changes being forced on teachers. Hargreaves (2004) discusses that, without enough time and support given to these teachers to get their heads around the change, it can create a barrier [fixed mind-set] to the change [ILE] being successfully implemented. With changes in teachers' practice and pedagogy there needs to be a strong foundation of trust between the leaders and the teachers (Osborne, 2014). The findings in my small-scale study around teachers being flexible in their thinking is consistent with what Madden et al. (2012) propose about teachers being flexible and adaptable so that they can deal with change. If teachers are not flexible in their thinking or teaching practice it will be hard to create opportunities to enhance their practice and pedagogy as well as improve student outcomes.

### *Equity in PLD*

The findings identified that the four teacher participants received different PLD opportunities before transitioning into an ILE. There was inequity in the PLD that the four teachers were both offered and received from the school. The PLD that was offered or that was received was different and not all teachers were offered the same opportunity to undertake the PLD. Within a working team, team members can have different learning opportunities. However, there was not time given to the teachers to then share and collaborate on what they had learnt from the PLD with the rest of their team or the rest of their school. Being given an opportunity to collaborate and share would have strengthened all teachers within the team. It also would have given the team an opportunity to create a shared understanding of effective teaching practice and pedagogy for their specific school context for working within an ILE, before transitioning into an ILE.

PLD is supported through the research of Timperley et al. (2007) and Sweeney (2015), who discuss the significance of leadership within an organisation ensuring that PLD happens and that the teacher's knowledge is built upon. Further to this, Fullan and Mascal (2000) note the importance of the PLD both being personalised to the needs of the individual and relating to the school-wide improvement plan. It is important that the organisation gives time to their staff to share and reflect on the PLD to build expertise and teaching practice (Bunker, 2008).

**Research question two:** *What are leaderships' perceptions of the ways in which they support teachers in their transition to teaching in an ILE?*

The findings of this research identified that the team leader understood that a team is important and the leader's espoused theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974) was that she was leading a collaborative team successfully through a transition into an ILE. Senior management, however, were only discussing the vision and expectations of this transition into an ILE with this leader and not with the whole school. With only the leader of the team knowing and understanding the vision and expectations set by senior management within the school, the leader was put in a tricky position. The team leader was trying to implement a change initiative with her team; however, the teachers did not have the vision and expectations shared with them, which made it difficult for the teachers to understand the direction that leader was going in when changing their teaching practice and pedagogy. The team leader was trying to share and collaborate with her team so that the

teachers had their ideas and input in the change initiative; however, in the end she was just ‘telling them’ what they were to do next. The following two subheadings, trust and collaboration, were derived from the findings.

### *Trust*

The findings of this research identified trust as a key component to creating a successful working team before transitioning into an ILE. A high level of trust is important within a team but even more so in an ILE as leaders and teachers are working so closely together in these spaces. If teachers are expected to change their thinking, pedagogy and teaching practice, a high level of trust needs to be created and be successfully operating within the team before any changes are made and implemented by leadership.

Relational trust is foundational to the process of team building (Robinson et al., 2009). The success of one person within a team depends immensely on the contribution that the other members of the team make (Robinson et al., 2009). In order for a team to be effective, a culture of trust needs to be established within the team. The importance of trust within a team is also supported through the literature of Cardno (2012) and Bryk and Schneider (2003). A leader’s job within an organisation is to ensure that they have the trust of their staff in order for teachers to open up about their teaching practice and be willing to make changes (Cardno, 2012; Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

### *Collaboration*

My findings in this research identified collaboration as another key component of the success of the team transitioning into an ILE. The leader perceived her team to be collaborating as a team and working to the strengths of one another. They collaborated as a team by planning on the same document online and having regular team meetings once a week where they would ‘sit and chat’.

The body of the literature from Sweeney (2015) and Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) outlines the importance of leaders building onto the prior knowledge that their teachers already hold. Collaboration is a key factor in having a successful transition and an effective working team within an ILE. ILEs give a great platform for ‘de-privatisation of practice’ (Osborne, 2013) and both leaders and teachers can start to work to one another’s strengths and weaknesses, which enables both leaders and teachers to have an opportunity to be reflective in their practice in order to improve student outcomes (Benade, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2016; Osborne, 2013).

**Research questions three and four:** *What do teachers perceive to be the enablers of and barriers to their transition to teaching in an ILE, and how is that supported by the literature?*

In my study, there were clear descriptors of what the teachers perceived to be both enablers and barriers to their transitions to teaching in an ILE. The key enablers were described as PLD, leadership and stakeholder connections. There were a few of barriers that were discussed by the participants, and I have grouped them under the heading of logistics and resistance to change.

#### *Enablers*

The findings of this research identified that each participant discussed different contributing factors to be helpful when setting up an ILE.

#### *PLD*

An enabler identified by teachers within my research was the importance of having PLD. As already stated earlier, all four teachers received different forms of PLD before transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. Two teachers valued going out and having a look at other schools that already had an established working ILE. They valued networking with teachers in those schools to share ideas, photos and practice. Two teachers indicated they valued working alongside facilitators from outside agencies so that they could teach the pedagogy that goes behind teaching in an ILE before they moved into the space. One teacher valued senior management giving her professional readings to read and gain knowledge and insight into the pedagogy and teaching practice in an ILE and how they can be run successfully.

The literature from Ministry of Education (2012), Orgram and Youngs (2014) and Timperley et al. (2007) reports on the importance of PLD being available to all leaders and teachers within an organisation so that PLD impacts everyone and what is learnt becomes sustainable pedagogy and teaching practice within the organisation. The responsibility of the leaders within an organisation is to promote PLD (Ministry of Education, 2012) amongst their staff so that it becomes part of the ‘way we do things around here’. This is consistent with the responses of the teachers in my study who valued the PLD opportunities that they were given by the senior management within their organisation before transitioning in an ILE. Timperley et al. (2007) discuss the notion of all leaders and teachers within an organisation benefitting from PLD especially when it

is organised in a supportive environment, as this will have a positive impact on student outcomes. Literature from Guskey (2000) and Timperley et al. (2007) notes the importance of PLD for all teachers and leaders as it can create a positive transformative change and improvement in teaching practice and pedagogy in an ILE.

### *Leadership*

Research also suggests that leadership needs to be on the ground level throughout the implementation of a change initiative. Literature from Blackmore et al. (2011), Chua and Chua (2017), Lawson and Price (2003), Ogram and Youngs (2014) and Osborne (2014) reports on leaders 'walking the talk' as this creates a readiness and a willingness amongst their staff to change their pedagogy and teaching practice to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century students, while working in a team in an ILE context.

### *Stakeholder connections*

The findings in my study also indicate that all four teacher participants valued the connections between senior management, teachers, whānau and the students. It was important that leadership ensured that all stakeholders were well informed about the new ILE space and how it would work and operate. As the changes within the school began, it was important that leaders continued to create an environment where all stakeholders continued to engage with one another to ensure they understood the changes taking place and feel part of it and also to have opportunities to ask questions if need be.

High trust relationships are very important between all stakeholder if you want the transition and change to be successful (Bryk & Schneider 2003; Robinson et al. 2009). For leaders within an ILE it is important that they help strengthen the connections and relationships between home and school. This will then help parents and the wider community to understand pedagogy, environments, technology and delivery of the curriculum that their children are receiving. The more that the parents, whānau and community understand and ask questions, the greater the impact will be on positive outcomes for all (Bryk & Schneider 2003; Robinson et al. 2009).

### *Barriers*

In my study teachers perceived numerous 'logistics' or 'surface features' as barriers to their transition into an ILE. Logistics such as bag storage, reading group sizes, voice level of the teachers and students, and challenging behaviours were the perceived barriers that came through in the findings. However, these 'logistical' barriers could be



the same barriers that could be apparent for teachers working within single-cell classrooms and are not just apparent in an ILE. Without the teachers and the leaders having a shared vision and understanding within their team then this alone creates a barrier as they are not working on the same page or moving at the same pace.

The findings from my study suggest that it would be beneficial to all organisations if there was more research around ILEs in the education sector in both New Zealand and around the world. It would be helpful and crucial to the success of the ILEs and organisations if there was more research on implementing the pedagogy, teaching practice, and configurations of the space.

### *Resistance to change*

Change can be hard for some teachers and can create a resistance to the change. Heifetz and Linsky (2004) state that as a leader “you need to respect and acknowledge the loss that [teachers] suffer when you ask them to leave behind something they have lived with for years [their teaching practice and single-cell classroom environment]” (p.6). It is important that leaders acknowledge and keep in mind that the change some teachers are going through when they transition into an ILE could be huge for them and at times the teachers will want the leader to acknowledge that they can see what some of them are giving up (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004). When a leader acknowledges what some teachers are ‘giving up’ in their current teaching practice and environment [single-cell classroom], it can then create a stronger relational trust between the leader and the teacher, which can then create the conditions to successfully implement the change initiative within the school (Robinson et al., 2009).

## **Conclusion**

The discussions of the research findings with links to relevant literature has provided an overall picture of the answers to the guiding key questions of this research. Overall, the teachers’ perceptions of support they were given did not completely match the leader’s perceptions of support they gave to teachers transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. These conclusions and recommendations will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion, recommendations and limitations**

### **Introduction**

This study set out to investigate a leader and teachers' perceptions on how they were supported in their transition into an ILE within a primary school context. There were four questions that this research set out to answer:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the ways in which school leadership supports them in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
2. What are leaderships' perceptions of the ways in which they support teachers in their transition to teaching in an ILE?
3. What do teachers perceive to be the enablers of and barriers to their transition to teaching in an ILE?
4. What does existing research suggest as enablers of and barriers to supporting teachers in transitioning into an ILE?

This chapter is broken down into five sections. The first section of this chapter will discuss the four key conclusions I have reached from this study. The second section will outline the recommendations that could support teachers, leaders and policy makers when transitioning from single-cell classrooms to ILEs within their organisation. The third section of this chapter will discuss areas of future research. Finally, the last section will note the limitations of this research.

### **Conclusions**

Conclusion one: *There is a lack of understanding about the term 'collaboration' as perceptions vary.*

My findings have led me to conclude the importance of collaborating for a purpose and not collaborating for survival. Across HPS, from senior management through to the ground floor with the teachers, there was a lack of understanding of the term 'collaboration' and what successful collaboration can look like within an organisation and working team.

The literature (Benade, 2017; Cardno, 2012; and Sweeny, 2015) supports this small-scale study in discussing the notion that collaborative practices can provide opportunities for teachers to receive feedback on their teaching practice. This study has shown that when working in a team within an ILE it is key that the teachers work collaboratively in order to bring about change in their practice. Such collaboration should enable the working team to support each other and learn from one another.

Conclusion two: *A resource of 'time' was not given to the leader and teachers to work together to form a team before they transitioned into the ILE.*

My findings show the importance of time and the effect that this has on the success of the team working within an ILE. The working team at HPS did not get enough time together before their transition as they had to move into their school hall while their single-cell classrooms were pulled down and the ILE was built. When a leader is leading a team of teachers through a transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE, it is crucial to the success of the team that the team is given plenty of 'time' to sit down together well before they move into their new space. This 'time' resource needs to be used for the following areas: to get to know one another; to learn each other's strengths and weaknesses; to build trust; to create a way we are going to do things around here; to create a team agreement; and to create a vision for your ILE. These are only a few, but vital, areas that need to be addressed before a group of teachers is put in a shared space and expected to work together successfully and produce positive outcomes for all students.

Through the literature (Cardno, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009; Tamati, 2011) the importance of building relational trust is a key foundation for leaders who are wanting to create a successful working team. It is important for leaders leading a change initiative within a school to ensure that the working team have enough time in the form of teaching release to come together to form a shared understanding of the 'way we do things around here'. Bryk and Schneider (2003) remind us that a high level of trust is needed within a working team as this influences the uncertainty or vulnerability that can come about through the process of a change initiative. An effective leader needs to demonstrate to their team skills, knowledge and understanding in order to gain trust (Robinson et al., 2009).

Conclusion three: *PLD is key before, during and after the transition.*

My findings indicate the importance of PLD before, during and after the transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. PLD has a huge impact on the success of the team working within the ILE, as well the pedagogy and teaching practice that is embedded amongst all staff within an organisation. It is important that the PLD is received by all members of the team, and that there is an opportunity to collaborate on the PLD received to ensure it has a positive impact on the pedagogy and teaching practice of both the leaders and all of the teachers.

The literature also supported opportunities where both leaders and teachers were utilising PLD as a pathway to improve the teaching and learning, which then had a positive impact on student outcomes (Guskey, 2000). Teachers should be given time to process their new learning over time so that they can refine what they have learnt and implement it into their teaching practice (Timperley, 2011).

Conclusion four: *There is a lack of understanding around ILE pedagogy and teaching practices.*

My findings showed that there was a varied understanding around ILE pedagogy and teaching practice. There were varied misconceptions of ILE pedagogy and teaching practices amongst the working team. The misconceptions resulted in the team not working on the 'same page at the same pace'. Also, at times the team was operating as single-cell classrooms within an open space.

Osborne (2014) discusses the importance of teachers' teaching practice de-privatising as they transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE space. He also goes reports that an ILE has a positive impact on teachers working within an ILE space as they can collaborate together and improve teaching practice (Osborne, 2014). Further, the Ministry of Education (2016) offers that ILEs create collaboration through inquiry both for the teachers and the students.

## **Recommendations**

Through the four key conclusions drawn from this research, there are some recommendations that could support teachers, leaders, policy makers and universities and institutes when transitioning from single-cell classrooms to ILEs within their organisation.

### *Recommendations for teachers*

All teachers who are transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE need to ensure they get PLD before, during and after the transition. This PLD would need to be specific to ILE pedagogy and teaching practice.

### *Recommendations for school leaders*

All leaders leading a team who are transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE need to have specific leadership training and professional development for an ILE context. This training would need to be specific and cover collaborative practice, action planning, and visioning and change management.

Senior leadership and the Board of Trustees (BOT) of an organisation need to give time to the leader leading the transition and the teachers who are transitioning from single-cell classrooms. This ‘time’ would give both the leader and teachers release so that they could come together and get to know each other, establish values, a vision, find out each other’s likes and dislikes, curriculum strengths and weaknesses, plan, establish routines and collaborate. This investment needs to be provided and it needs to be given to the team transitioning well in advance. The transition needs to be slow and ensure everyone is on board before they even think about furniture or moving students in.

*Recommendations for policy makers:*

That the Ministry of Education creates a clear and consistent understanding of the term ‘collaboration’, so that an educational sector-wide definition can be identified and used correctly. This could then be included in both the New Zealand Curriculum document and on their website for ILEs.

An additional recommendation is that the Ministry of Education creates a model of effective teaching practice and pedagogy that is needed in order to work successfully within an ILE. Then organisations that are implementing these new spaces into their schools would have a model to go by and to apply in their own context. This model could be included in both the New Zealand Curriculum document and on their website for ILEs.

The last recommendation for policymakers is that the Ministry of Education gives more money to schools transitioning from single-cell classrooms to an ILE. This money would be utilised by schools to give more ‘time’ in the way of release to both the leaders and the teachers to come together to create a shared understanding and vision for the new ILE.

*Recommendations for universities and institutes*

That teacher training programmes for new graduates include teaching skills, knowledge and understandings based around ILE pedagogy and teaching practice. Also, the programmes could include a practicum in an ILE for all students within their studies. This is vital as more schools around the country are implementing these spaces. We have freshly trained teachers coming out of their study without the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to work successfully in these spaces, and it is becoming more than likely that they will come across an ILE within their organisation of employment in the future.

### **Areas of future research**

Although this small study showed that the leader and the teacher participants did not share the same understanding of the term collaboration, further research could look into the impact that successful teacher collaboration has on students.

This study has revealed the support by a leader to teachers as they transition from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. A natural progression would be to look at how you prepare students who will transition from single-cell classrooms to an ILE.

As there is no 'set way' to set up and transition to an ILE, further research could look into successful models of ILE practice for setting up an ILE in a primary school context, both in a purpose-built ILE and a remodel of single-cell classrooms. This would then give schools a model to work off when they create their own ILE within their organisation.

This study has shown how one leader led a transition for a team of teachers transitioning from a single-cell classroom to an ILE. A progression from this could be looking into what makes a good leader within an ILE.

### **Limitations of the research**

There were a few limitations in this research. When I got to the point of collecting data it was in Term 4 of the school year. At the time this made it hard to get a school to agree to take part in this research as it is a busy time for leaders and teachers within a school. They have school reports and data due as well as end-of-year commitments, which meant taking part in this research was not feasible for some schools that were asked.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the purpose of this small-scale study was to investigate the support given to teachers through their transition into an ILE in a New Zealand primary school. The success of ILEs within schools relies heavily on the leaders within the school, but also on the teachers who need to be open to change and looking at their teaching practice and pedagogy through a new lens. A leader needs to approach the change initiative by ensuring they have the knowledge and understanding needed, while demonstrating and implementing the skills on the ground floor. A leader needs to ensure they create a high level of relationship trust so that their team of teachers will trust them and begin to change their pedagogy and teaching practice.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Semi-structured interview questions: Teacher**

The purpose of this interview is to gain your individual perceptions of your experiences through your transition into an Innovative Learning Environment. You have signed the consent form to agree that your responses will be used in this research. All information that is transcribed in this conversation will be treated confidentially. Once this interview has been transcribed you will receive a copy. You can check that the transcription is correct, your identity has been protected and that you stand by your comments made in the interview. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to complete this interview.

- 1. How were you selected to work in an ILE?**
- 2. What working relationship did you have with your team before you moved in to an ILE?**
- 3. What professional development did you receive before you moved in to an ILE?**
- 4. Can you describe the leadership practices that were/are in place at this school which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE?**
- 5. What model of leadership do you follow in your ILE?**
- 6. What contributing factors did you consider helpful when setting up an ILE?**
- 7. Are there any barriers or challenges that contribute to the transition for teachers in an ILE?**

**8. What leadership practices do you believe could be put in place to help overcome these barrier or challenges?**

**9. Who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices?**

#### **Appendix A: Semi-structured interview questions- Leadership role**

The purpose of this interview is to gain your individual perceptions of your experiences of supporting teachers through their transition into an Innovative Learning Environment. You have signed the consent form to agree that your responses will be used in this research. All information that is transcribed in this conversation will be treated confidentially. Once this interview has been transcribed you will receive a copy. You can check that the transcription is correct, your identity has been protected and that you stand by your comments made in the interview. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to complete this interview.

**1. How were you selected to work alongside teachers transitioning into an ILE?**

**2. What working relationship did you have with your team before they moved in to an ILE?**

**3. What professional development did you receive before you led the transition into an ILE?**

**4. Can you describe the leadership practices that were/are in place at this school which helped teachers with their transition into an ILE?**

**5. What model of leadership do you follow in your ILE?**

- 6. What contributing factors did you consider helpful when setting up an ILE?**
- 7. Are there any barriers or challenges that contribute to the support of teachers transitioning into an ILE?**
- 8. What leadership practices do you believe could be put in place to help overcome these barrier or challenges?**
- 9. Who is responsible for implementing these leadership practices?**

## Appendix B Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

*Project title:* Leaders supporting the transition for teachers into Innovative learning Environments.

*Project Supervisor:* Eileen Piggot Irvine

*Researcher:* Sarah Mackay

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 13/11/2017
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/344.**

## Appendix C- Participant Information Sheet for Principal and Board of Trustees.

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) features the letters 'AUT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

**Title of project:** Leaders supporting the transition for teachers into Innovative learning Environments.

**Project Supervisor:** Eileen Piggot Irvine

**Researcher:** Sarah Mackay

**Advertisement:** to participate in a dissertation research project.

Kia Ora, my name is Sarah Mackay and I am a Master of Educational Leadership student at AUT. This is an invitation to participate in my research. I am inviting experienced middle leaders and teachers to participate in my research study. My research forms a dissertation which is my final component for completing this Master's degree. The purpose of my research is to gain an insight into the leaders supporting the transition for teachers into Innovative Learning Environments within Auckland primary schools.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of my research is to help me gain an insight into the experiences and perceptions that influence leaders supporting the transition for teachers into an Innovative Learning Environment. As an aspiring principal, this area is of personal interest to me.

### **How was school identified and why are we being invited to participate in this research?**

The reason I have contacted your school is that your school has already made the transition from single-cell classrooms into an Innovative Learning Environment in an Auckland primary school context. I contacted your school first and sent an invitation to which you have responded.

### **How does the school agree to participate in this research?**

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and you may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way. If you withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

### **What will happen in this research?**



As part of the research I will need to interview for approximately one hour each, you as the school principal or a leader who has led the transition at your school into an Innovative Learning Environment. I also ask that you assist in the recruitment for the four teachers each needed to take part in the interviews. I ask that you pass on an email invitation and the research information sheet to all of your staff. During the interview, I will ask the participants a series of questions about their perceptions and experiences and the reasons for them. We can meet at a place of their choice, perhaps at their work place if they have an office or in a seminar room on one of AUT's campuses. The findings may be used for academic publications or presentations.

### **What are the discomforts and risks, and how will they be alleviated?**

The questions that the participants are asked will be very easy to answer. They will be asked about their perceptions and experiences through their transition from a single-cell classroom to an Innovative Learning Environment. You may choose to disclose as much or as little personal information as you wish. My questions are not invasive and there is an opportunity for you to give more or less information on each question depending on your views and insight into the reasons for your aspirations. You do not have to answer any question during the interview that you do not want to, and you may terminate the interview at any time.

As participants will be part of an interview they will be sharing information about their leaders, colleagues and school, and as such, confidentiality outside of the researcher may be an issue. In addition to the consent form, the first order of business of the interview will be to address such issues and decide upon a protocol that protects the confidentiality and anonymity of all the participants.

### **What are the benefits?**

The benefits for your school may be greater understanding of your perceptions and experiences transitioning into an Innovative Learning Environment. The benefit for me is that you will be providing valuable data to complete my dissertation. The wider school community will also benefit through hearing your story. Some of the participants' ideas may influence improvements to an Innovative Learning Environment.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

The data the participants provide will only be shared with people who have signed a confidentiality agreement (myself, transcriber, supervisor and editor) and I will use pseudonyms so that you or your organisation will not be identified in the findings.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no costs apart from the time the participants will spend with me during the interview. The cost to you will be an hour for the interview and the time it will take you to review the transcript of the interview. You will have a week to review the transcript.

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You have one week to consider this invitation.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

You will have an opportunity to view the dissertation if you wish and the transcript once it is complete. A summary of the findings will also be made available to you.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Eileen Piggot-Irvine*. Email address:

eileen.piggotirvine@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Who do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Sarah Mackay

Email: sarahmackay@live.com

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Eileen Piggot-Irvine

Email: eileen.piggotirvine@aut.ac.nz

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, AUTECH Reference number 17/344.**

Kind regards

Sarah Mackay

## Appendix D- Permission for researchers to access organisation school staff / students.

**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

*Project title:* Leaders supporting the transition for teachers into Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs).

*Project Supervisor:* **Eileen Piggot-Irvine**

*Researcher:* **Sarah Mackay**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.
- ☐ I give permission for the researcher to undertake research within  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I give permission for the researcher to access the staff / students / employees of  
\_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature: .....

Principal's name: .....

Principal's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/344.**

# Participants wanted

## *Transitioning into an Innovative Learning Environment*

Looking for leaders and teachers to explore the support given and received when transitioning into an Innovative Learning Environment from a single-cell classroom.

Kia Ora, my name is Sarah Mackay and I am a Master of Educational Leadership student at AUT. This is an invitation to participate in my research. My research forms a dissertation which is my final component for completing this degree. Participation in this research will likely benefit you in giving you a clearer understanding of perceptions of support given and received by both leaders and teachers. It will also highlight the enablers and barriers when transitioning into an Innovative Learning Environment.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of my research is to help me gain a critical insight into the experiences and perceptions that influence leaders supporting the transition for teachers into an Innovative Learning Environment. As an aspiring principal, this area is of personal interest to me.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

The reason I have contacted you is that your school has already made the transition from single-cell classrooms into an Innovative Learning Environment in an Auckland primary school context. I contacted your school first and sent an invitation to which you have responded.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and you may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way. If you withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

### **What will happen in this research?**

As part of the research I will need to interview you for approximately one hour. During the interview I will ask you a series of questions about your perceptions and experiences

and the reasons for them. We can meet at a place of your choice, perhaps at your work place if you have an office or in a seminar room on one of AUT's campuses. The findings may be used for academic publications or presentations.

Email: [sarahmackay@live.com](mailto:sarahmackay@live.com) for more details

## Appendix F- Participant Information Sheet

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is displayed in white capital letters on a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

**Date Information Sheet Produced:** 13/11/2017

**Project Title:** Leaders supporting the transition for teachers into an Innovative Learning Environment.

### **An Invitation**

Kia Ora, my name is Sarah Mackay and I am a Master of Educational Leadership student at AUT. This is an invitation to participate in my research. My research forms a dissertation which is my final component for completing this degree. Participation in this research will likely benefit you in giving you a clearer understanding of perceptions of support given and received by both leaders and teachers. It will also highlight the enablers and barriers when transitioning into an Innovative Learning Environment.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of my research is to help me gain a critical insight into the experiences and perceptions that influence leaders supporting the transition for teachers into an Innovative Learning Environment. As an aspiring principal, this area is of personal interest to me.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

The reason I have contacted you is that your school has already made the transition from single-cell classrooms into an Innovative Learning Environment in an Auckland primary school context. I contacted your school first and sent an invitation to which you have responded.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and you may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way. If you withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

### **What will happen in this research?**

As part of the research I will need to interview you for approximately one hour. During the interview I will ask you a series of questions about your perceptions and experiences and the reasons for them. We can meet at a place of your choice, perhaps at your work place if you have an office or in a seminar room on one of AUT's campuses. The findings may be used for academic publications or presentations.

### **What are the discomforts and risks and how will they be alleviated?**

The questions that you are asked will be very easy to answer. They will be inquiring about your perceptions and experiences through your transition from a single-cell classroom to

an Innovative Learning Environment. You may choose to disclose as much or as little personal information as you wish. My questions are not invasive and there is an opportunity for you to give more or less information on each question depending on your views and insight into the reasons for your aspirations. You do not have to answer any question during the interview that you do not want to, and you may terminate the interview at any time.

As participants will be part of an interview they will be sharing information about their leaders, colleagues and school, and as such, confidentiality outside of the researcher may be an issue. In addition to the consent form, the first order of business of the interview will be to address such issues and decide upon a protocol that protects the confidentiality and anonymity of all of the participants.

### **What are the benefits?**

The benefits for you may be greater understanding of your perceptions and experiences transitioning into an Innovative Learning Environment. The benefit for me is that you will be providing valuable data to complete my dissertation. The wider school community will also benefit through hearing your story. Some of your ideas may influence improvements to Innovative Learning Environment classrooms.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

The data you provide will only be shared with people who have signed a confidentiality agreement (myself, transcriber, supervisor and editor) and I will use pseudonyms so that you or your organisation will not be identified in the findings.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no costs apart from the time you will spend with me during the interview. The cost to you will be an hour for the interview and the time it will take you to review the transcript of the interview. You will have a week to review the transcript.

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You have one week to consider this invitation.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

You will have an opportunity to view the dissertation if you wish and the transcript once it is complete. A summary of the findings will also be made available to you.

### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Eileen Piggot-Irvine*. Email address: eileen.piggotirvine@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 6038.

### **Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Sarah Mackay

Email: sarahmackay@live.com

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Eileen Piggot-Irvine

Email: eileen.piggotirvine@aut.ac.nz

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, AUTECH Reference number 17/344.**



## Appendix G- Confidentiality Agreement

**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

*For someone transcribing data, e.g. audio-tapes of interviews.*

*Project title:* Leaders supporting the transition for teachers into an Innovative Learning Environment.

*Project Supervisor:* Eileen Piggot Irvine

*Researcher:* Sarah Mackay

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- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

.....

Transcriber's name:

.....

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/344.**

