

A Changing Story of Reading at Huntly College

A research report prepared for the National Library of New Zealand as part of its Communities of Readers initiative.

AUT School of Education Communities of Readers Research Team

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1. Introduction to the Reading Research at Huntly College

Part of that culture is, we're readers, we have to model that, your reading is important, it's important for your wellbeing, it's important to have a break over the holiday. We have a teacher only day tomorrow, we've just said to teachers today and to students, take books away for the break. Great for you, don't forget pick up your books and that's now how we talk as a school. We could never have said that a year ago even (Deputy Principal, interview 24 September 2020).

Huntly Raahui-Pookeka is a small town on the banks of the Waikato River. The name Raahui-Pookeka comes from its Māori history, and connection to kaitiakitanga of tuna (eel) populations in local lakes (Science Learning Hub – Pokapū Akoranga Pūtaiao, 2014). Its pākehā name, Huntly, evokes the imposing power station commissioned in 1982 to run on gas and coal that dominates the local landscape. Secondary education is offered by two schools. A Kura that provides te reo Māori immersion education has a growing roll, and a 2020 Education Review Office (ERO) report that praises the school's support of its students. Huntly College is an English medium secondary school and official statistics told of a decline of a third in its roll between 2017 and 2019, its 2019 student population identified as Māori (77%), Pacific (4%), Asian (5%) and European/Pakeha (14%), and a recent increase in students leaving before their 17th birthday. Like the power station is for the town these demographics were the backdrop to other stories from the school. It is the work of the new principal, senior leaders, other staff, and students at Huntly College to change the nature of those stories and some demographic indicators, such as small inclines in the roll from 2020, suggest the trajectory of the school may be changing.

In 2018 a new principal started at the school bringing her experience of leading three other schools within a culture of innovative curriculum and reflective teaching. Huntly College was previously notable for its ongoing struggles to meet the expectations of the school inspectorate, ERO, especially in student wellbeing and achievement and concerns about its leadership from the Ministry of Education. Since the change of leadership there has been a qualitative change in the stories coming from Huntly College. In her new role she set about changing narratives of Huntly College through pedagogical, curriculum and staff changes, and changes to narratives about leading and reading.

We are readers here. You are building a culture; you have just got to make things up...this is the school for leaders. And then we started up Leaders are Readers, and it becomes a bit of a fun thing for kids. The Ministry gave us \$100,000.00 to buy books which we have done so the books suddenly looked really modern. Getting teachers to read because the teachers were still saying, "Don't worry about it. Nobody reads." We started setting up the modules that we were going to teach and saying that every teacher needs to recommend books to the kids. It does not matter what you are doing. And then in the tutorial programme, just reading the stories (Principal, interview 28 August 2020).

The National Library's Community of Readers project at Huntly College began in early 2020 and was intended to conclude in July 2021. It was one of four community-based projects that like the other Communities of Readers projects aimed to connect more children and young people with reading by responding to the needs, strengths, and interests of the community. While there has been some fluidity in milestones and some postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic this community project has managed to continue relatively intact despite the pandemic restrictions.

This report is divided into two parts. The first mainly is based on observation of the views and activities of those involved in the organisation and delivery of the Huntly College Community of Readers project. These observations are informed by findings from the wider programme of research on reading for pleasure conducted by the university researchers. We sought to understand how to build a reading culture in a school like Huntly College. The second part is based on research undertaken by three student research associates who surveyed teachers and students in the school to examine the schools' reading environment. All research by university and student researchers at Huntly College was conducted under approval from the AUT ethics committee, and participants were encouraged to participate voluntarily and with informed consent.

2. An Inquiry into Building a Culture of Reading at Huntly College

The university research team examined the Huntly College Communities of Readers project using a narrative inquiry methodology to see if there were changing narratives about reading at the school. In doing so it aimed to provide insights on what it might take to build from a low starting point a richly literate reading culture within a secondary school. Data gathered included interviews and observations of the school and National Library members involved in the authorization and organization of the project. The following data were collected over the period of one year (March 2020 – April 2021):

Data Collection from Huntly College Community of Readers Project		
Role	Interviews	Observations and field notes
<i>School Leaders</i>		
Principal	1	Nil
Deputy Principal and Literacy Lead and lead liaison for schools' involvement in CoR	2	At regular planning meetings and school events
<i>National Library Staff</i>		
Community of Readers programme manager and Huntly CoR lead liaison for National Library	1	At regular planning meetings
Senior Specialist Developing Readers	2	At regular planning meetings and school events
National Library Facilitator, National Capability	2	At regular planning meetings and school events
National Manager for Reading Services	1	Nil

Interviews were semi-structured, and observations focused on gathering personal and social narratives such as feelings about the project or relations between those involved, continuity narratives such as what happened before or what might happen in the future, and situational narratives that described the context of the project. Other materials collected from these participants and drawn upon in this report are email communications elaborating on points from the interviews and planning documents that were prepared for and discussed at meetings. Understanding has also been generated through ongoing discussion with the student research associates that occurred when they were meeting with the university researchers, but generally they worked in parallel with the university researchers conducting their own research on reading in the Huntly College environment. Their methodological approach is described in part two of this research report. The data referred to in the first part of the report has been collected and analysed systematically along three dimensions of narrative inquiry: temporal, situational and relational dimensions (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2002). The research findings have been written up within a single story that represents a range of different viewpoints and perspectives on what occurred.

2.1 An Ambitious Programme of Work for Huntly College

Vision Huntly College is associated with reading; leaders are readers

Mission Working together to support staff and the student leaders to promote and inspire Huntly College students to read for pleasure and wellbeing

This formal mission and vision statement were formed at a meeting in March 2020 between National Library and Huntly College before the closure of all schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A programme of work was agreed in May, along with the reopening of schools. The programme consisted of three work streams: staff as readers, student leaders as readers and researchers, and experiences for students. The National Library sought a focus on teachers' reading, informed by reading research from the United Kingdom.

I think that the work that Teresa Cremin has been doing in the UK, the teachers as readers work they've been doing over there, is really important and making it so clear that if you don't have teachers who know the literature who are readers themselves and are able to chat about and share that with students, that it really makes it very difficult to inspire a kid to want to be a reader [with] many at homes where reading isn't valued (Senior Specialist Developing Readers, interview 8 May 2020).

While similar research has not been conducted in New Zealand, the teachers as readers research found knowledge of children's fiction amongst teachers in England was limited (Cremin, 2019). It was a priority for the National Library to work with teachers and develop their capacity to support student reading by building teachers' identities as readers, and their knowledge of children and young adult literature. This is a strand of work they have developed through their Services to Schools division. Activities at Huntly College started with a staff survey conducted internally by the school using the National Library's school culture review tool to help plan the programme. The school also collected information about teachers' reading preferences and results were used for the first activity in the school. Staff at the National Library selected young adult fiction and non-fiction for loan to Huntly College staff and presented it to them in book bags that also held a book voucher for them to purchase a book of their choosing. Feedback on this early activity suggested it had a mixed response in the school, with some staff feeling defensive because they were confused by being presented with books written for young people, and others who regarded it positively and feeling affirmed as readers. "But it certainly made a buzz about teachers as readers and it prioritized that feeling that actually us as readers, us as teachers, is super important to the whole way of being in the school now" (Deputy Principal, interview 19 April 2021).

Planned professional development sessions had been delayed by the pandemic but were subject to postponements and restrictions for other reasons too. Professional development time is precious especially when there was also within the school a bold programme of curriculum redevelopment instituted by the new leadership.

At an online planning meeting there is another discussion about making time for a professional learning and development (PLD) session with teachers. Staff PLD is usually Wednesday morning, but it might be possible to use Tuesday after school. The only other time is lunchtime but requires extra organization and volunteers. The Community of Readers programme manager says she knows PLD

time is pressured. Week 2 of the term ERO inspectors are due. The Deputy Principal suggests a date, though warns the PLD time might be needed for something else (field notes 18 September 2020).

There was only time for one professional development session in 2020. Lengthening of the project allowed for another two sessions that focused on reaching teachers and encouraging them to act as reading role models. Only one of the 2021 sessions occurred while the research was still in progress. This session was focused on creating a school wide-reading culture, including strategies for sharing books and book-talking with students.

Again, that's a slow process, doing these things it has to be layered, you can't just go in with one session. I think any kind of professional development to really be effective has to be ongoing... it's not a one stop hit. It takes time to layer and to learn and to see impact. But we can certainly see a developing interest amongst staff as reading role models, which was one of the important aims of the Huntly Community of Readers (Senior Specialist Developing Readers, interview 23 April 2021).

The second workstream focused on the student leaders, who play an important role in the school's new stories of itself as creator of Huntly's future leaders (Biddle, 2019). At the initial planning meeting Huntly College staff were more supportive of this focus than the library's desire to work with teachers, and the student leaders are critical to sustainability of the progress made in developing a culture of reading at the school.

As time progresses, I think that probably is the way to go because as soon as teachers get involved with things, it sets a different relationship. However much we focus on mana ōrite and partnership, there is still a different dynamic between a teacher and a student sometimes, and I think we really need to nurture those peer-to-peer conversations about reading and we need to find space in the curriculum (Deputy Principal, 19 April 2021).

The project plan indicated the National Library intended working with the student leaders in a session on reading for pleasure and a focus group, but this was postponed due to extra pressures experienced by student leaders because of the pandemic.

The first and largest Communities of Readers event for the school was the "Speed-date-a-genre" event held in July 2020. The National Library took over the school hall for two sessions that covered the whole school. Huntly College students and staff visited displays where experts from the National Library introduced each genre and encouraged students to borrow from a range of engaging and purposefully selected texts. Many books were borrowed by staff and students. When reflecting upon the event one of the student researchers noted that providing high-quality books that looked new and had been specifically chosen with fellow students in mind, was likely to make her peers feel a sense of connection with the books borrowed through the "Speed-date-a-genre" event. The National Library capability facilitator attached to the project suggested that the event highlighted the connection students had with graphic novels, and since that event "the Librarian has utilised the Services to Schools Lending Service and requested extra graphic novels to meet demand. Managing the loan using their library system has also meant that the increase in issues has been captured" (National Library Facilitator, email communication 18 May 2021). The librarian reported to the school leadership an increase in library annual lending rates from 1.5% of students in 2018 to 21% in 2019 after the arrival of the new books, but the percentage of students lending from the library doubled directly

after the “Speed-date-a-genre” and the rise was attributed at least in part to the students’ better access to graphic novels.

Other student experiences included trips for the whole school to visit the National Library He Tohu Tāmaki exhibit and the Auckland War Memorial Museum. While these experiences were not directly concerned with reading, they provided an opportunity to engage with shared stories. The Deputy Principal thought the National Library’s Senior Education Specialist He Tohu Tāmaki’s sharing of Tainui’s role in the founding of Auckland was especially powerful for the students, many of whom identify with Tainui iwi. There were other activities in 2021 including a library logo competition and trips to Auckland Writers Festival. The project is planned to conclude with the school’s Festival of Stories that will extend into the Huntly community with invitations to schools in the Kāhui Ako to which Huntly College belongs. The National Library is supporting author visits for the festival.

A National Library capability facilitator has been working during the project with the school librarian to support student experiences and helping the school to build its capacity to support reading.

This has meant supporting the development of the library online presence with their integrated library system upgrade and utilizing Services to Schools lending service to ensure students and staff have access to engaging texts (email communication 18 May 2021).

Huntly College is part of the North Waikato network for National Library’s Services to Schools, so there were existing working relationships with staff before the Communities of Readers project. However, while there are connections with the usual work of Services to Schools, the work of the Communities of Readers project occurred within a considerably more condensed period and different reading related activities occurring in proximity reinforced one another.

2.2 Leaders are Readers and Readers are Leaders

Leadership is important in the school’s new narratives. Leadership roles are distributed across the staff; and student leaders are recognized as fundamental to the school, widely visible in the school and in its external representation. The Principal discusses the role of leadership in supporting a culture of reading:

This is my fourth time being a principal and the thing that really fascinates me more and more is the power of the principal to influence. If you have a principal that completely disregards reading, “It isn’t for these kids, it’s not what we do here, we don’t put any money into it”. Everybody says that – all the teachers say it, the kids say it.

If you say the opposite. First of all, I said, “If you come to Huntly College, it’s the school for leaders.” I just said it off the bat one day. Well, everybody says it. The kids all say it. Those kids that went to Wellington say, “This is the school for leaders.” Then I quickly added in the other bit, “and leaders are readers.” So, everyone says it.

It’s amazing. You don’t have to say it much and then every time you say, “What are you reading at the moment? Tell me what you’re reading.” “Here’s a cool book, I reckon you’ll like that and I don’t wanna see you until you’ve finished it.” It becomes, a way of being together is talking about what you’re reading. This is what I’m becoming more and more fascinated by, and it’s not new, obviously,

whatever the principal does, the whole school does. It's ridiculous, but it's true (interview 28 August 2020).

The National Library staff cited the importance of having the leadership on side to make the Communities of Readers project a success, and suggested leadership should offer more than generalized support. Huntly College principal has demonstrated support for the initiative in specific, everyday practices of leadership such as in her interactions with students where she makes her expectations for their reading explicit. The Deputy Principal has demonstrated even more specific support, acting for the school as sole liaison with the planning committee throughout the entire project and taking on many major and minor roles that were required to make the project happen. She also cites the importance of school leadership, and especially that a principal sets the tone for the whole school.

I'm absolutely convinced that school leadership – and it has to be the principal – is crucial in the whole making reading a thing in any situation, actually. It has to start with the principal (Deputy Principal, interview 24 September 2020).

Even when there is significant support from leadership, realistically the involvement of senior leadership has limits. On the deliberate integration of reading into school life, "it is important that the leadership team is onboard, but this last year, has also highlighted that urgent issues within the school have to take priority and this takes time" (National Library Facilitator, email communication 18 May 2021).

Engagement with outside experts has potential to transcend the limitations of school leadership.

When you've got a DP in a school or any teacher really saying, "There's the stuff we need to do," you can go a long way with that, you certainly can but when you have experts who are taking the time and trouble to come in and share what they know, too, it's more powerful somehow (Deputy Principal, interview 24 September 2020).

Recognizing the benefits of reading for pleasure promoted by the National Library the Deputy Principal suggests that the student leaders are also essential for sustaining an agenda for this kind of reading in the school. Yet secondary students may struggle to fit reading for pleasure into their everyday lives or value it in the same way as school leadership or librarians. The student research associates pointed us towards the importance of understanding how leadership and reading are interpreted and valued within the different communities to which they belong. For example, in a community that values communal over individual activity somebody who spends a lot of time reading by themselves may not be demonstrating the dispositions of a leader. This insight raises a question for those aiming to develop reading cultures of whether there is space within a community of readers for different levels of engagement with reading. It also talks to the need to expand students' views of reading by raising their awareness of the social and interactive nature of reading and challenging opinions that reading for pleasure is an indulgence or unproductive use of time.

2.3 Different Forms of Reading

An area focused upon through the National Library's professional development was assisting teachers to choose books appropriately for students, recognising differences in readers. This aligned with the school's aim to make readers out of all at Huntly College, including students neglected in a pākehā schooling system.

There's lots of things about Huntly College – you've got Rakaumanga which is a full immersion school just along the road, so our kids see those kids as they're better than us; they speak Māori and they're over there. There is access to books but that's not so much the need at the moment for books completely in Te Reo. Kids find those Patricia Grace stories so funny. They talk about them for ages. It's lovely. So long as they can, to start with, see themselves in the stories, then we're on the right track (Principal, interview 28 August 2020).

We need more, we need heaps more of books in Te Reo Māori. We've got some but it's really limited. The aim in our library and across the school is that we're a bicultural school, we're a bilingual school and we're working on that but actually we need to be a bilingually resourced school so we're just at the beginning of that (Deputy Principal, interview 24 September 2020).

A strength of the Communities of Readers project has been its creation of common experiences of reading while recognizing difference, and according to the research informants, raising awareness of reading at the school. The Deputy Principal distinguishes between three different forms of reading at Huntly College.

One is the reading for pleasure, where teachers don't have any say in what a student or a young person is choosing to read. They are reading independently, and it is beyond the curriculum. Then we have obviously got this duty as teachers to be promoting reading to access the curriculum. And teaching young people who come to us from primary school without the skills of being able to read at quite a basic level (Deputy Principal, interview 19 April 2021).

These are different forms of reading associated with some of the different responsibilities the school has to its students. This typology of reading indicates the different priorities of schools generally, and especially the priorities of schools where there are students with low levels of reading literacy. Viewing struggles with reading at an elementary level may suggest to a school the need for a literacy intervention programme, yet such programmes are difficult to implement successfully for secondary students. For example, literacy programmes designed for very early readers to develop phonemic awareness and decoding skills are not very successful for secondary school aged students who have a low level of reading literacy (McNaughton, 2020). From wider reading studies reading literacy is known to develop within richly literate environments or cultures of reading because within them interest in and motivation for literacy increases (Schiefele et al., 2012; Goulding et al., 2018; Paris & McNaughton, 2010) and reading habits are developed and shared (Strommen & Mates, 2004; UNESCO, 2017). Maintaining a discourse of reading for pleasure (or similar concepts such as reading enjoyment, reading for interest, or engaged reading) may remind schools to keep in mind purposes for reading that are not limited to literacy and assist in building a reading culture.

2.4 Reading Together at Huntly College

The Communities of Readers project at Huntly College has been a deliberative, multi-faceted and collaborative approach to developing a reading culture. Reading and language rich activities have been approached from many different fronts, drawing predominantly on the expertise in reading of the National Library and the willingness of the school leadership and librarian to make the most of what they could offer. To an extent it drew on other people and environments to support the initiative, such as the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi O Tāmaki and the author visits scheduled for Huntly's Festival of Stories. While some plans did not come to fruition, new ones emerged during the project such as the Festival of Stories.

The collaborative element of the Communities of Readers project at Huntly College is important. Reading is sometimes about the reading activities of individuals. Reading is inherently social, and to extend its benefits to all within Huntly College and the other communities to which they belong requires a holistic and collective effort. The two student researchers who worked on the reading research in both 2020 and 2021 are both avid readers. At a meeting between them and university researchers to discuss progressing their student research on reading they reflected again on the meaning of reading for pleasure.

Melanie made the comment that the library had recently “gone online”. She had noticed that E-books were now available, and she had been reading available online comics. Through her friends she found new websites/apps such as Webtoons for comics and Wattpad where users could upload their own stories. Fan fiction was popular with them and others at the school.

“People find fan fiction more interesting,” said Katie-Rose. “Books based on T.V shows and games like Assassin’s Creed.” However, she thought teachers still wanted students “to pick a book off the shelf”. Katie-Rose had made her own digital children’s book about a girl with diabetes which she had shared with local primary schools (field notes from research meeting 19 February 2021).

This short vignette shows how reading for pleasure is promoted, contested, and sustained through a network of relations. Knowledge of these outside of school interests helps make sense of the increase in borrowing rates of graphic novels and eBooks from the school library, as different but related kinds of reading bolster one another. The school library has been resourced by school leadership and supported through the Communities of Readers project to develop its online provision. The student researchers show that they do not restrict their reading for pleasure to printed materials and move readily between different formats and media based on interests shared with or fostered by others (Cummings et al., 2018). This conversation was important for their research because it sparked for them curiosity about how extensively these ways of reading were embedded within the school, and how well understood they were by teachers at the school. Their investigations are presented in section 3.1, but the school leadership and national library informants suggested to university researchers that there has been a significant change in the reading culture at Huntly College. There is evidence from the school library that more students are accessing reading texts and using the library than in previous years, and the senior leadership report that teachers are more aware of reading and believe the leadership team are better supporting reading at the school. The challenge for the school is maintaining the momentum and building on what the Communities of Readers project has achieved beyond the life of the project.

2.5 Conclusions from the Huntly College Research

The conclusion of the Communities of Readers project raises immediate questions for Huntly College about how to sustain and build upon what has been achieved. Communities of Readers was an extraordinary initiative because of the extent of the resources and expertise available to the school.

To reiterate how incredibly lucky we feel. We feel incredibly fortunate to be working in this project. We really, really do. My final word is, absolutely one of the most sincere thanks to National Library for working with us. It’s really, really phenomenal (Deputy Principal, interview 24 September 2020).

The school can continue its own work on reading and to work with the library even without the same level of involvement or access to resources. While the project was generally very successful for the school changing

institutional culture and habits is difficult work and a long-term project. Recognising and reflecting upon successes as well as contradictions are important to future growth and understanding for schools and others committed to supporting reading cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand. In general, young people's reading is supported when they are embedded within richly literate cultures that build interest and intrinsic motivation through collective engagement (Boyask, 2021). Young people are more than the totality of their schooling and the influences outside of school more enduring, so activity in school may be supplemented by bridges between students' lives at school and those outside of school. An example at Huntly College can be seen in the increase in borrowing of graphic novels, which meshes with students' outside of school interests in reading online comics.

In this research we saw how a school that approaches schooling differently from many others could set aside time to work in partnership with the National Library on an integrated and holistic programme of reading within school. Within this environment there were still challenges to overcome, with the school having to negotiate other priorities and create time and space for the work with the National Library. Notably, planning and liaison with the school occurred almost entirely through the Deputy Principal. This demonstrates the support of school leadership yet also means there is only a partial view from our interviews and observations of how far the enthusiasm for and engagement with the project extended into the wider school. The closest the research has got to observing this has been in the research conducted by the student researchers discussed in section 3.

According to the participants in this case study some of the challenges secondary schools face in building a richly literate culture, while apparent, were mitigated by a willing school leadership with an enthusiasm for reading, the support of high resourcing and expertise from the library. Reading and storytelling has spread throughout many facets of the school, through reading relationships, texts shared, online engagement and community activities. These outcomes suggest a culture of reading is seeded by people who have interest, commitment, knowledge, resources, authority, and a willingness to collaborate.

3. Huntly College Student Research Associates

The recruitment of student research associates was prompted by the National Library's desire to hear from young people about their experiences of reading, the school's desire to involve students as leaders in the Communities of Readers project, and in two ways to widen the views represented in the research. First, the position of the student researchers was more distant from the aspirations of the Communities of Readers project than the National Library and school leadership; the distance may help the student researchers develop greater objectivity on the topic of the research. Second, through their insider positions in the school we hoped they would have access to a wider group of research participants and views of the reading environment at Huntly College, which would produce a more illuminating picture of the whole culture than might be achieved by outsider researchers. Seven students attended the first student researcher meeting with Ruth Boyask and Daniel Couch, which led to three students opting to work with the university researchers in 2020, and two continuing in 2021. The student researchers were formally acknowledged in the research team as student research associates and worked under the AUT ethics protocol which included obtaining informed consent for interviews and survey responses for all participants and preserving anonymity of the survey data. While the research was conducted in consultation with the university researchers and has contributed to our understanding, their research was a separate strand of the project and because it was conducted relatively independently, they were able to opt to have their research

assessed as schoolwork. In section 3.1, student research associate Melanie Mounsey reports on the work of the student researchers, presenting what they have discovered about reading during the Communities of Readers project in their school. It is followed in section 3.2 by a short response to their report.

3.1 Huntly College Reading Research

Melanie Mounsey, Student Research Associate and Year 12 Student, Huntly College

Our knowledge of reading at Huntly College comes from research over several years by two different groups in the school using different methods. The first investigation of the reading culture at Huntly College was carried out in 2019 when a curious teacher new to the school wanted to find out if and what students at Huntly College were reading. What was found out was that the reading culture at Huntly College was minimal with few students reading and one parent specifically saying not to teach Māori boys to read. To quote, “Don’t teach Māori boys to read, all they need to do is know how to dig holes on my farm”.

The teacher, along with the new senior leadership team (SLT), used a survey template from the National Library to find out what staff thought the reading environment was like at Huntly College. The questions were answered using a scale of importance (1 having low importance and 4 having high importance). From the study and by asking questions of the school librarian it was found that in early 2019 only 1.5% of students issued books out of the library, no money or resources had been spent on the library in 15 years and that staff did not think that students read or were interested in reading at Huntly College. This changed when, with a lot of effort from the leadership team to promote reading 21% of students were getting books out of the library in mid-2019. By 2020 most teachers believed that the SLT had improved the reading culture at Huntly College. This was supported by evidence from the library that 48% of the students by mid-year had been to the library to issue a book. It was around this time that Huntly College student researchers joined the Community of Readers Project. Part of the school’s work with the Community of Readers Project evolved into our reading research with the AUT researchers, Ruth and her team.

In our 2020 research with AUT we - Katie, Ofa and I - wanted to find out what reading for pleasure was at Huntly College. With the AUT researchers we came up with two data collection activities to find out what students were reading for pleasure and if they are reading for pleasure. So that we were not a nuisance to students with too many surveys and activities, to find out what might work we did trial tests with the teachers. Our first activity was a type of questionnaire where we wanted to find out the personalities and reading preferences of the teachers. We wanted to find out if there was a certain pattern to personality types and what people read for pleasure. Our second activity was done in two parts. The first part was where the teachers had to read a set of blurbs from books of our school library and guess what genre they were. The second part was a facilitated reflection, asking the teachers if they were surprised about the genres and what one they picked as a favourite.

In our trial with the teachers, we found that researching the topic of reading for pleasure was quite hard and controversial as there are many ways that it can be perceived. We decided to pause the research and begin again in 2021 because we were struggling to research reading for pleasure and had the challenge of researching during the exam period.

Our new research questions for 2021 were to find out if and what students are reading for pleasure. This way we were still able to incorporate our original theme while being able to answer simpler research questions. To answer our new questions we created two surveys, one for teachers and one for students. In the teachers’ survey we asked questions like: *What is ‘reading’ to you? What do you believe ‘reading’ is at Huntly College? What do you believe students at Huntly College are reading and why? How do you think*

students at Huntly College are reading? Do you believe they are reading paper books, online etc? From their answers we wanted to find out if teachers' perceptions of reading at Huntly College had changed from the earlier survey by the SLT.

There were 18 out of a total of 27 teachers¹ who completed the survey. For the first question, most teachers mentioned reading as both a way to learn and gain knowledge as well to relax and have fun. One teacher called reading an escape from reality as well as a burden to get through. For the second question six teachers replied that the reading environment at Huntly College is positive and that students are reading for enjoyment, while nine teachers believed that the reading environment could be further improved, and reading is something some students still do not do. This provided a more complex picture of teachers' views than a survey done in early 2020 by the SLT where teachers said that the reading culture at Huntly College had improved from previous years because it explains where there has been improvement and what might need further development. To the third question, nine teachers responded that students enjoy reading, read in their own time and are reading many different platforms and genres. Eight teachers believed that students were forced to read in Puna Ako² and did not read or enjoy reading in their own time. 12 teachers believed that students are only reading online, and four teachers believed that students were reading both online and paper books. One teacher said that most students do not have experience in reading and so do not read.

There are some quite interesting differences in the students' responses. Our aim with the student survey was to find out what the students thought of reading at Huntly College and what they were reading. Out of 214 students at Huntly College, 46 of them completed the survey³. Of the 46 students that replied, the majority stated that they read online manga, anime, fanfictions, and roughly half said they read books printed on paper. Another interesting difference between the teacher and student responses was that students believe that reading has a relatively high importance. This was found by using a scale of 1-4, with 1 being of low importance and 4 being high importance. 8.7% (4) of students believe reading has an importance of 1, 13% (6) of students believe reading has an importance of 2, 47.8% (22) of students believe reading has an importance of 3 and 30.4% (14) of students believe reading has the highest importance of 4.

Through all the studies done by both teachers and student researchers with the AUT research team we found that even with there being many improvements in students' reading for pleasure at Huntly College over the past few years there are still many beliefs and conceptions about what students think about and read. This suggests to me personally that there is a strong held belief about reading at the school. This might be influenced from outside, including discussion about Huntly College by people who do not know what is happening currently inside the school, which to answer would require further research. In our 2021 research there were some limitations of the research in both the teacher and student survey. A drawback for the teachers' survey was that the original date that Katie and I had been given for the survey was moved forward to the day before because something of "more importance" had come up. This complicated things as Katie was unavailable at the new time and it meant that I had less time to prepare things for the teachers.

¹ Some of the teachers were student teachers in the school at the time. It is not known by the researchers how many of these participated in the survey because the survey was anonymous.

² A 100-minute tutorial timetabled four days a week.

³ It is not clear how representative the views of the 46 are of all students at the school because the ethical protocol required complete anonymity of the student survey for a waiver of parental consent for students under 16 to participate. The researchers were concerned the students would not have participated if parental consent was a requirement so did not seek demographic information from participants beyond requesting that they were students at the school.

Limitations in the student survey included the number of students participating meant we did not have a complete picture of students' perspectives of reading. As well as this, some of the students' responses were immature with the students writing things irrelevant to the survey and these had to be discounted. This may have been affected by a lack of understanding by students. Though information about the purpose of the survey was sent in an email to all the students, many did not read it and so did not fully understand what the survey was for.

3.2 Implications of the Student Research

The complexities of student reading and where it takes place is highlighted by the student research reported, since it suggests there may be differences in perceptions between students' views of reading and what teachers currently think about their students' reading. Our interpretation of all data from Huntly College encourages an empathetic reading of this difference. The school is currently working towards a substantial cultural change, and it is difficult work to overturn long held habits of mind and embedded practices. A 2021 ERO review report of the school recognises the progress being made, citing a shift from a school that in 2018 needed urgent attention to one that is developing. The student research associates have identified two areas that may have implications for future school development. Their research recognises the importance students attribute to reading, and the breadth and diversity of students' out-of-school and pleasure reading activities. Both areas have pedagogical implications that could be explored by the school.

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