



GENERATING SEISMIC SHIFTS WITH RECIPROCAL TEACHING

Educational psychologist and teacher JULIA WESTERA continues to be a passionate advocate for reciprocal teaching and in this article she introduces a new initiative and provides a follow-up on two Q & A sessions reported in *Education Gazette* in April 2014 and November 2015.

WHAT IS THIS NEW INITIATIVE?

The new initiative is a modernised version of reciprocal teaching, Reciprocal Teaching - RT3™. The newly refined tools are developed for high impact and sustainability for our schools and communities of learning (CoL).

There are currently nine schools involved – including five secondary. They draw from predominantly Māori, Pasifika, and multicultural communities that are either small town or urban.

Schools choose to start up with coaching intensives. In these they develop skilled trained teaching teams – with both students and teachers learning together. Buy-in by all is near instant. These schools are continuing a phasing-in plan over two to three years, with a few already spiralling into their CoL.

Explanations and graphs can be found at goo.gl/Rgwd2m (2014 Gazette article) and goo.gl/OtdH3i (2015 Gazette article).

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS SHOWING?

Overall, impressive. Snapshots of three schools may best tell the story.

The first case study was enabled by the foresight of Dr Adrienne Alton-Lee and BES (best evidence synthesis) funding in 2014. In this case study in a primary school with predominantly Pasifika students, five year 4 - 6 classes completed the coaching intensives phase.

The results demonstrated acceleration on e-asTTle (especially deep feature) scores for all students – for both boys and girls, and for students from all ethnicities. This sort of profile is consistent with those obtained in a large scale study with New Zealand secondary schools (see BES Exemplar 4).

Both senior and regular teachers commented the results attained were unprecedented in the school in terms of the improvement in test scores and the

students' motivation to learn and to participate orally and actively in group work.

Similar accelerate results have been obtained in other primary and secondary schools involved.

Again, boys as well as girls are achieving in the intensives phase, with boys regularly outperforming girls in their progress rates. Another exciting outcome is the large data base we now have showing huge gains for Māori and Pasifika students. Some of the 2016 data in secondary schools follows.

In a secondary school with predominantly Māori students, students in the four lowest band year 9 - 10 classes averaged 2 years' growth, with a seismic shift! See Table 1.

WHAT STUDENTS SAID WHEN INTERVIEWED BY THE SYNDICATE LEADER:

"Everybody gets a turn at being the teacher so shy people become confident at leading the group."

"I like the strategy clarifying because when you're reading and you don't know what a word means you can ask the group to clarify it."

"I'm getting better with my reading and understanding, so I can help xxx in room x."

"It's helping me to understand words I don't know. I can question myself to understand the text."

"I've learnt how to ask inferential questions."

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Two of their teachers then volunteered to run the coaching intensives for a second time, but now with their two year 12 classes. These year 12 students also averaged 2 years' growth. One teacher excitedly talked about "the amazing impact on my teaching". See Table 2.

In a secondary school with predominantly Pasifika students, the data profile showed a "delayed acceleration leap". Twelve classes scored huge gains when retested eight or more months after the completion of the coaching intensives. This school is typical of many secondary schools, which display an ongoing 'plateau' (i.e. minimal or no progress) in longitudinal literacy data throughout the secondary years. See Table 3.

The acceleration leap is consistent with cutting edge research on collaborative teaching from Cambridge, and fits with the sustained impact seen two years later in NCEA data from one of our largest secondary schools.

IF WE HAVE TRAINED AND SKILLED COACHING TEAMS, WHICH STUDENTS BENEFIT?

International research and anecdotal information from our expert teachers and principals shows reciprocal teaching works for year 1 students as well as for seniors, trades and tertiary students.

One principal of a multicultural primary school highlighted how her year 1s were "no longer reticent". Instead, they could now confidently and quickly clarify when they didn't understand, opening up to learning and teaching.

Early this year a highly experienced secondary teacher was ecstatic about how many of her students

Reciprocal teaching is ranked as the 3rd highest in impact out of the 49 most effective teaching strategies by Professor John Hattie in his book Visible Learning (2009).

Reciprocal teaching is a multi-strategy package for cross-curricular use at all ages.

If well implemented, students become confident, connected, and actively involved learners, and hugely improve in:

- » accessing and understanding challenging texts and tasks in any learning area
- » deeper thinking skills
- » content learning
- » kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) cooperative skills, leadership.

These skills are central to success throughout school and tertiary education, and for lifelong learning.

achieved Scholarship. This was a new one for her, and she credited reciprocal teaching for the dramatic results.

Teachers are also reporting other breakthroughs – for students in years 4 - 6 reading at or above the 6.06 age equivalent level; and also for students with Down Syndrome, selective mutism (year 12) and challenging behaviours. Students become empowered and focused collaborative leaders, enjoying tuakana-teina relationships.

In summary, this initiative is working in primary and secondary schools, for teachers, for both boys and girls, and for Māori and Pasifika students.

IS THIS INITIATIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL?

Yes, it can be, for the majority of schools if done well and with integrity. For some the change will be evolutionary, for others revolutionary.

Reciprocal teaching can be transformational only if teachers understand and are enskilled with its many evidence-based subtleties.

Because the method appears easy to learn, results from a one-off PLD can be nil or negative.

International researchers report an ongoing concern with the many 'lethal mutations' created both by teachers in their classrooms and in online forums.

For deeper and more lasting gains in schools and CoL, integrity has to be an ongoing focus. RT3T™ is a 'complex intervention', with high impact results depending on the integrity of the implementation and scaling up.

Success depends on teachers understanding both the evidence base and the practical steps to implement reciprocal teaching effectively.

The role of the teacher in modelling, scaffolding, providing feedback and monitoring student involvement and achievement with reciprocal teaching is crucial.

With continuity in professional learning opportunities, including within class support provided by expert facilitators, the majority of teachers report stronger results in their second or third coaching round.

Planning for sustainability also has to be central. Basics would be having informed leadership, trained and skilled lead teachers, and employing a team approach. Designing and planning well ahead is also an essential, as leaders will need to mobilise their staff, resources, and timetabling differently.

The investment of time and effort is largely at the front end – for initial professional development.

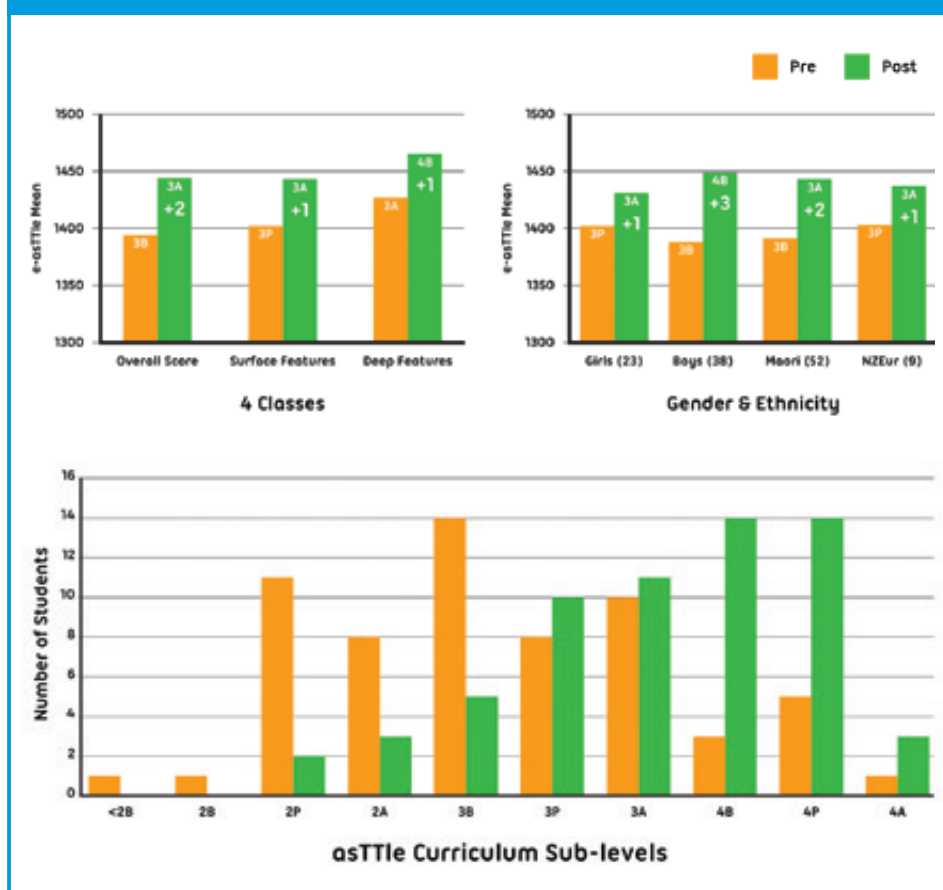
Additional teacher/s and other resources are likely to be needed in order to continue to develop teacher skills and for the ongoing use of the group coaching component. Further, schools will need expert facilitators, particularly in the updated professional development and start-up stages, and to maintain momentum in working collaboratively towards sustainability over several years.

Facilitators must be experienced with spiralling in the new tools, as a schoolwide and CoL strategy. ★

Julia Westera's 2002 doctorate was on the use of reciprocal teaching as an inclusive schoolwide strategy and she is co-author of BES Exemplar 4 Reciprocal Teaching, which can be found at goo.gl/W6Wahk.

For more information visit www.rteach.co.nz.

TABLE 1. RESULTS WITH THE LOWEST 4 YEAR 9 AND 10 CLASSES



One principal of a multicultural primary school highlighted how her year 1s were "no longer reticent". Instead, they could now confidently and quickly clarify when they didn't understand, opening up to learning and teaching.

TABLE 3. RESULTS WITH TWO YEAR 12 CLASSES

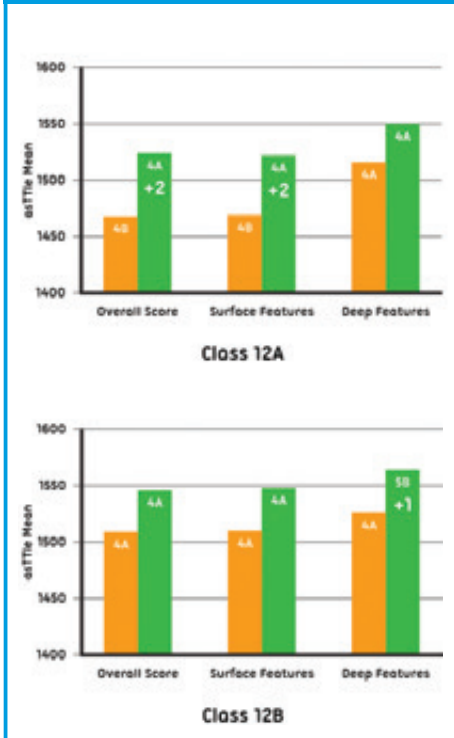
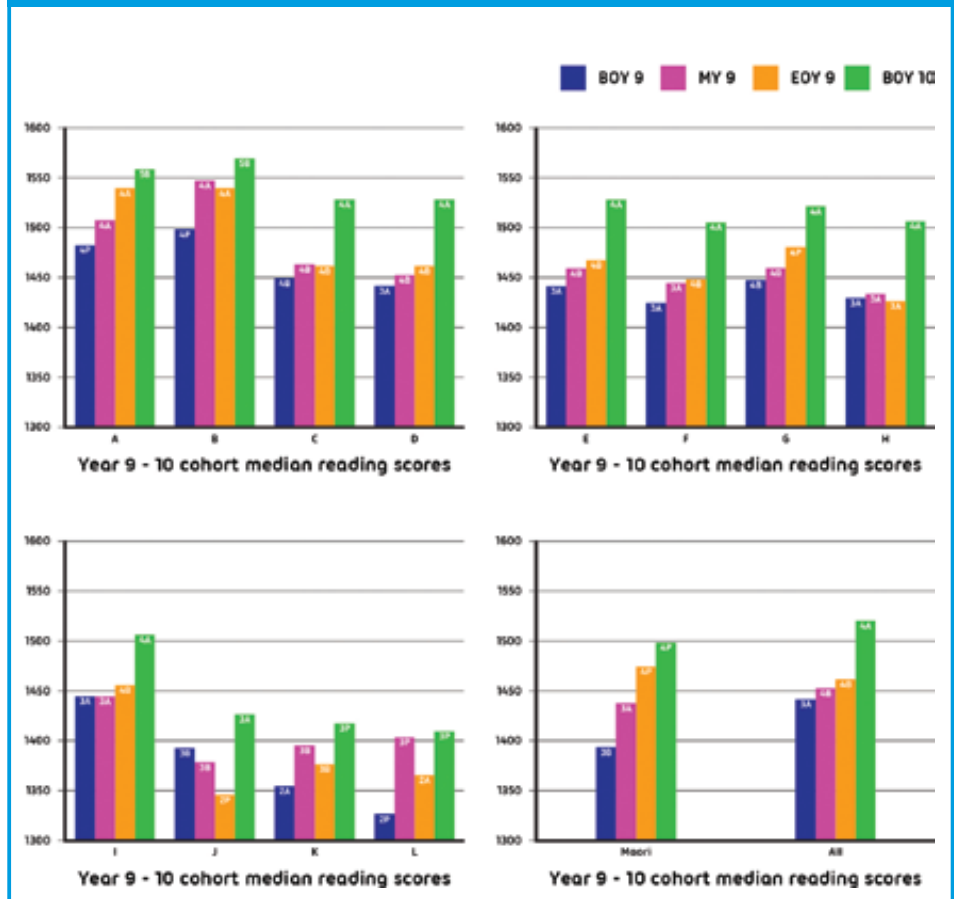


TABLE 2. RESULTS ON E-ASTTLE OVER 13 MONTHS



Bar graph with all year 9 students in 12 classes (A to L) tested at Beginning of Year (BOY), Mid Year (MY) and End of Year (EOY) while in year 9, and again at Beginning of Year (BOY) when they started in year 10.



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- ❖ **Introduction to Leadership Coaching**
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