



Volume 1

# The Twenty-Two

A Year in the Centre for  
Excellence in Teaching  
and Learning.



# Introduction

**W**elcome to our first volume. It has been a busy and productive year in the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning with new initiatives running alongside more established programmes. The centre as a physical space has been bustling with students and teachers, from within Westlake and the wider community. It has been great to see the space really come alive after two years of interruption.

This annual publication is a collection of our achievements, with a focus on teacher voice about individual and group experience within the centre. We have tried to capture some key moments of the year as a touchstone of the centre's impact on teaching and learning, and the success it encourages for both staff and students.

As planning begins for 2023, the centre continues to grow in its reach and influence, but our founding mission statement remains at the core of all that we do:

***The Westlake Boys Centre is a dedicated, inclusive space that provides our community with a range of evidence-based programmes and opportunities for excellence and equity in boys' education. We are a supportive and caring environment that connects and engages in positive, holistic, and motivated learning.***

We hope you enjoy our summary of the year. If you have any ideas for how the centre can help you or others, please reach out to us.

With thanks,

***Becky, Kelly, Casey, and Jude***

# Beginning at Westlake

At the core of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is our Provisionally Certified Teacher programme. Over the past four years we have successfully moved to a group mentoring model which has positively impacted the professional development of these beginning teachers, and their well-being. Group mentoring provides a safe and supportive professional environment where not only the mentor assists and guides the beginning teachers, but they learn from one another.

Teachers are grouped across curriculum areas which allows them to gain insight into the wider curriculum and gain a greater understanding of the whole school. The relationships that are developed between beginning teachers and mentors are key to the success of the programme.

In 2022, there were sixteen beginning teachers, with the majority of these being teachers in their first year of the profession. It was our first (nearly) uninterrupted year in three years and the centre came alive with group mentoring meetings. After teacher training through lockdowns, the stability of this year was important to the career development of these teachers. We asked a few of our beginning teachers to share their experiences of their entry into the profession and their first year at Westlake.

## Karl Domeraki, Outdoor Education and Physical Education

I began my teaching career in the middle of the 2021 lockdown online. Teaching a very physical subject, I had to come up with creative ways to stimulate my Outdoor Education classes. Through online teaching, we challenged our students to cover 100 kilometres in groups of three. The underlining message of the challenge was "Achieving in the Face of Adversity", which ironically was what I was having to do as a year one teacher beginning my first teaching job in lockdown.

Teaching for me is all about the continuity of relationships with the students. It is a profession that is extremely fulfilling and rewarding, and I understand that having the potential to transform the lives of our students is a privilege.

Group Mentoring has provided a different perspective from other subject areas which is important and beneficial into understand how different departments and teachers carry out their daily processes. It has also provided an alternative opinion or point of view sometimes which has allowed me to

understand the nature of my work as well as giving me a shoulder to lean on in my times of need.

The biggest challenge facing teachers today is work life balance and accommodating the amount of time some students are having out of school.

## Jerry Gao, Languages

Choosing teaching as a profession was influenced by my father. He is a teacher, and he enjoys his career. So, when I was a child, my dream was to be a schoolteacher. I made it. Dreams do come true.

Six years ago, when I first came to Aotearoa, I was working as an early childhood teacher. After working for Auckland Kindergarten Association for a couple years I decided to challenge myself to teach "big" kids. As I am a migrant and I like learning languages, I wanted to share my languages and culture with Kiwi kids. I believe language and culture exchange can mitigate culture misunderstanding.

2021 was a challenging year and my practicum was impacted by lockdowns. Luckily, I did my second practicum at Westlake Boys and all my Associate Teachers were very supportive. I learnt lots of online teaching strategies. However, I was concerned about teaching physically in school, and knew I would have to work on strategies for classroom management.

The centre is a place where I can find support, where I can find answers, where I can find a person to share my thoughts. Jude is a team mum, who is looking after us, scaffolding us and mentoring us to be good teachers. Moreover, my subject mentors, Daisy and Heather, have regular meetings to support me to expand my understanding NCEA, my subject knowledge, which makes me feel more confident to teach. I am very lucky to have my first year at Westlake Boys.

## Ellen Bayliss, Biology

I had an awesome Biology teacher at school who made learning about science FUN and gave me a sense of confidence in myself to pursue further study. I wanted to be able to do the same for future students.

The biggest challenges during the lockdowns of 2021 were student engagement in online lessons, student completion of work, lack of student/teacher relationships, MARKING – there was so much!



Fast forward to 2022 and group mentoring has provided regular feedback and advice in a comfortable and somewhat private setting free of judgement with other beginning teachers who are facing the same challenges and are in the same point of their career. It brings comfort to know at times we are battling the same challenges and there are ways to work through them.

As a first-year teacher my biggest challenge has been a work life balance, managing behaviour and being a good authoritative actress! At times it has been not knowing what processes to follow when various incidents have happened in class or within department. Other times, motivating students to produce work which is more than mediocre. Some students are quick to finish, but generally not to their best potential.

## Sara Caplain, Biology

Moving from another school where I did my first PCT year, the main difference was the group mentoring sessions rather than just one on one sessions that usually happen. I have enjoyed these sessions for getting to know other members of staff and sharing ideas that can help improve your teaching. I trained in 2020 which was affected by lockdowns but as I was already studying at distance from Waikato it didn't greatly affect the course – the practicums needed adjusting to later in the year, that's all. As I had been working already in schools supporting students, I think I was less affected as I already had in class experience. The biggest challenge teachers face going forward is digital distraction – and how to manage/ balance the use of devices in class for learning and still encourage interaction with other forms of communication and the real world!

## Alexa Jelicich, Art

I chose teaching as a profession to combine all my passions. I think that most teachers remember their own teachers that inspired and mentored them. In my opinion, it's a passing of the torch so to speak. They ignite that fire and drive, the love of lifelong learning. So, I guess in a way teaching as a profession is cyclical and that is exciting, to think there are potential students here who I will inspire and mentor.

The lockdowns of 2021 were unfortunate in some ways that one of my practicums pivoted to full online learning but in many ways, it was an invaluable experience. We have been fortunate enough to have a semi normal year this year, but I came into

the profession feeling prepared to switch to online if necessary. I do feel like the absenteeism at the beginning of the year had a ripple effect throughout the whole year.

The smaller mentor sessions have been pivotal to what I deem my successes this year. I am reflective by nature; I love to unpack things with others, so I have found they have benefited me greatly. I can't imagine a better first year and I don't think I would have had the same experience without that support and forum.

When my students fell behind for whatever reason getting them back up to date was a challenge. Also infusing young men with the self-efficacy needed for them to achieve at their highest potential was problematic. After such a disrupted 24 months I really struggled to motivate some of them pass the bare minimum.

## Lance Dunne, English and Media Studies

Group mentoring has been an invaluable experience for me on my teaching journey. It gives the opportunity to learn from the shared experiences of other PCT's. Quite often, the challenges we face in the classroom are similar and through the group mentoring process we can learn and grow from these discussions. It is also beneficial to have teachers from other departments in the group mentoring process.

I think the biggest challenge facing teachers today is understanding and dealing with the pastoral needs of students. These can often be a barrier to their learning. Once again, these shared experiences within the group can offer solutions to best meet the needs of students who may have some challenges.



# Cross Curricular Literacy

2022 saw the creation of the Cross Curricular Literacy group.

Led by Jude, representatives from all curriculum areas have been meeting twice a term to look at how we can better support the literacy needs of our students in preparation for the new NZQA literacy standards and to improve learning outcomes in curriculum areas by removing barriers to literacy and developing our students' literacy skills. The group is comprised of Maeve Learmonth, Natasha Collins, Amanda Cross, Hayley Barker, Nick Brown, Boran Alkhdairi, James Debenham, Logan Douglas, Kelly Easton, Leanne Hooks, and Hannah Harrington.

At the start of the year, our work began by reflecting on the work the Community of Learning Literacy group had been doing for the past couple of years. In this work, literacy teachers from across the COL have created a road map for literacy looking at key transition points from Early Childhood Education to Year 13. Understanding what is happening at primary and intermediate schools has been key in considering the literacy needs of our students at Westlake.

Running parallel to the literacy road map document is the introduction of new literacy standards. These will be compulsory in 2024, but Westlake will be opting into the standards in 2023. The new standards will be a requirement for students to obtain their NZQA qualification and will replace literacy credits across the curriculum. Westlake plans to offer these to year 10 students. Students will have multiple opportunities to achieve the literacy standards throughout their

time here if they do not succeed on first attempt. As a school however, we want to enable as many students as possible to gain literacy as soon as possible.

The Cross Curricular Literacy group began their work by looking at what departments were already doing to support literacy in their subject areas. We have approached our review, and subsequent work, from a strength-based approach. Amazing things are happening with regards to literacy across the curriculum, and by sharing these ideas and strategies we can strengthen the teaching and learning that occurs.

In response to this review, Jude has created documents with ideas and strategies for teachers for reading and writing. The aim is to share these next year via the members of the group to their faculties. As more resources became available from the Ministry of Education, we reviewed these as a group and looked at ways to incorporate the required literacy skills into our junior schemes of work. This resulted in every member of the group creating a sample reading resource and multiple choice assessment that looks at reading on three levels: on the lines, between the lines and beyond the lines. This was a really useful process to go through and has strengthened our understanding of what skills our boys need to develop.

As we end our first year as a group, Jude is beginning a literacy audit of our junior exams. The aim of this is to identify any common literacy strands across the curriculum and to reflect on whether the reading material is appropriate to age and stage of our students. If we can unlock barriers to literacy for our students, and support our teachers in enabling this, we will not only improve literacy but learning outcomes across the curriculum. It is a big goal, but one very worth pursuing.

# Lead From the Middle

Our Aspiring Middle Leadership Programme is the crowning glory in our Centre programmes. Leading the programme is one of the most rewarding parts of the year, and this year Casey and Becky joined Kelly and Jude in that role. In the programme, the participants embark on their own leadership journey through a personal inquiry, gaining professional skills, experience, shadowing of current leaders, and growth coaching along the way. Previous participants have gone on to take leadership roles in both academic and pastoral realms of the school. Below are some of this year's participants reflections on their experiences.

The call for the 2023 cohort will be at the start of term one.

## Angus Nicol, Social Studies and History

I was drawn to apply for MLP programme because of the positive things I had heard about the course over the last couple of years. I want to be able to take the next step in my career in the most efficient way that I can, and I felt that applying for the Middle Leadership programme was the natural thing to do to help me achieve my goals. My main takeaways from the programme were the importance of having good communication skills and how important it is to reinforce high expectations in everything that you do. My leadership style has changed as a result of completing the MLP programme in that I feel more confident in myself and my ability to put myself out there as much as I can. I would highly recommend the programme to anyone that is wishing to take the next step in their career, whether that is in a pastoral or academic role. It is a lot of fun, and great for self-development!

## Molly Smith, Digital Technologies

The Middle Leadership Programme was a safe, nurturing environment where I was encouraged to critically reflect on the characteristics that I think make a good leader and my own leadership style. Through these activities, I gained an insight into my own strengths and more importantly, the areas that I felt I needed to focus on and further develop.

By the end of the programme, I had gained more confidence to share my ideas and reflections within a group environment, lead change within my department and apply for the roles that I am passionate about. My favourite part of the course was learning about "Open-to-Learning Conversations", and I have already been able to apply this learning to a variety of situations from working with student teachers, colleagues and

even my students. The principles that underpin this theory have ensured that I have been able to maintain and build relationships, trust and respect while moving forward in establishing positive outcomes.

## Logan Douglas, Digital Technologies

I was drawn to the middle leadership programme as a tool and an opportunity to gain an insight into what a middle leader was all about, but also gaining the skills, techniques, and knowledge to be an effective middle leader as I progress through my teaching career. I learnt from the start of the programme that the entire space and the people on the course were trustworthy and confidential which really allowed me to break out of my shell and be more open. I knew in myself I needed to do this and communicate more openly and confidently in front of other staff. This has helped me in my overall leadership journey.

I managed to take away heaps from the programme, but my most helpful takeaway were the Open-to-Learning Conversations which really opened my eyes into how good and effective communication takes place during those sticky and awkward conversations which may take place in the workplace. I have gone on to use these in my extra-curricular 1st XI Football Manager role. The programme has helped me to gain the confidence to apply for middle leadership roles within the school. I have also taken part in two days of Growth Coaching PD from this, which extends more into the open-to-learning conversation realm.

I encourage everyone to take part in the MLP programme that is interested in getting into a middle leadership position as the course will give you the skills and knowledge heading into these roles.



# How can we grow positive student leaders?

Following online IBSC professional development discussions at the start of the year, Casey was inspired to consider how we can guide our students on the path to manhood at Westlake Boys'. A seed was sown and she began to think about how we can develop our student leaders in the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and not just our teachers. The next natural step was to work with our prefect team.

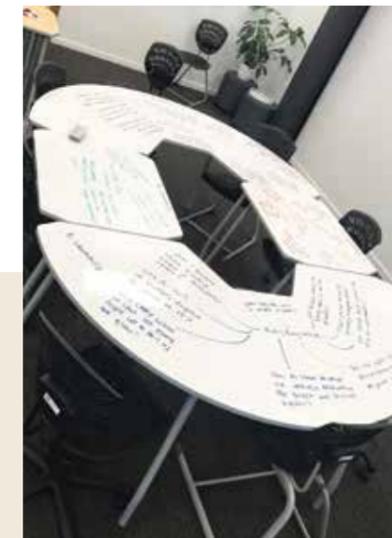
Starting in March, on the late start Thursday mornings, Casey worked with our 55 prefects to explore what it means to be a prefect and the ideas of honour and legacy within our school environment. Alongside a range of staff who had attended prefect camp with the boys, SMART goals were set for the year, allowing the young men to really consider what they wanted to achieve as a Westlake prefect in 2022. The prefect professional development also enabled the boys to hear from the Board of Trustees about what it means to be an effective leader beyond school. Charlie Meredith worked with the boys to understand what their personal character strengths were. All of this enabled them to become stronger, more effective leaders this year, especially when they had the opportunity to work with junior students in Virtute. Using the Growth Coaching skills that staff have developed over the past few years, the prefects were coached, enabling them to have the confidence in the decisions they are making in their leadership journey.

As this was the first year of the programme, it has allowed Casey to reflect what worked well and to refine the programme for 2023's cohort of prefects. It is clear that the programme has had a successful impact on the young men involved, and will continue to do so.



## What the prefects had to say:

- "I believe that the next prefect team would also benefit completely from the same course."
- "It definitely added skills that I would not know otherwise and put me in places out of my comfort zone."
- "I think that the prefect PD did assist me in becoming a better leader within the world environment, as I have taken other leadership positions within my Surf lifesaving environment and found these sessions very beneficial."
- "I really enjoyed having the real world experience from the board members talking to us about how they use their leadership skills in the modern environment and what best works for them."
- "It has brought me opportunities that I may have not been able to achieve. Being a prefect placed me in leadership positions that helped me be a meaningful leader."



# IBSC Conference

## Howdy y'all

In July of this year, Casey travelled to Dallas, Texas to the International Boys' School Coalition to present on behalf of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. In her role as Leader of Learning she led a workshop sharing her experiences and expertise with educators of boys from all around the world. The workshop focused on the way the Centre has changed the way professional development is now delivered at Westlake, looking at three main areas:

- Pedagogy
- Future of School Leaders
- Community of Engagement

In presenting an overview of the programmes and the range of support the Centre now offers, Casey expressed what a cathartic experience it was, almost being on the outside looking in, seeing how many teachers we have impacted since the conception of the idea. The workshop was very well received by all who attended, and many attendees expressed how impressed they were with, not only the range of Professional Development we offer, but the uptake and engagement with the programmes.

Whilst at the conference, Casey was also able to attend a full range of workshops and hear keynote speakers to develop

herself professionally. On reflection, she was reminded of what an amazing job we are doing and left the conference feeling a sense of pride in the progress that we have made in such a short space of time, especially given the disruptions we have all experienced. Some major takeaways that she also had was the importance of how Character Education is embedded in our teaching and all that we do for our boys, and how outdoor experiences really push and develop student values and morals; a reminder that boys' schools provide a holistic education for young men.

In terms of her role as Teacher in Charge of Professional Development, Casey came away with fresh ideas that she has already started to implement into our programmes this year. You can read more about them in this publication; the importance of professional development through reading and diversifying the ways we share and reflect on our professional learning, to name a few. On their return to New Zealand, the staff who visited the USA, reflected on all their learning from the conference in a podcast, the first from the centre, and this is available for all Westlake staff to listen to on Teams.

Moving forward, Casey, Kelly and Jude are part of the organising committee for the IBSC Conference 2023 which will be held at Westlake. We look forward to helping to provide a memorable, professionally valuable and enjoyable conference to the many educators who will join us in July of next year.

# A Piece of the Action



Conor Pearson and Andrea Dawber were selected to participate in the International Boys' School Coalition's Action Research programme. Here they share their experiences at the IBSC Conference in Texas, USA in July of 2022. They are currently carrying out their research and will present their findings in July 2023 when the conference is held at Westlake.

## Conor

In New Zealand, we venerate stoicism. Our paragons of masculinity are rugby players who show no pain. Subsequently, we have developed a culture of emotional reticence which has made us morally inarticulate. Our young men have only recently been encouraged to show vulnerability and discuss social, emotional, and moral issues. However, they don't all know how to do this and don't have a dedicated time to develop such skills. I wanted to research how we can better equip our students with a social and moral vocabulary and awareness to promote a more open, positive notion of masculinity.

My action research is looking to investigate a way that can change the aforementioned inability to discuss socially and morally complex situations. I no longer want our teaching of character to be in siloed, eureka moments, but instead be intentional and explicit about how we are guiding students through difficult conversations and experiences. I want to focus on our youngest year level (Year 9) and see how we can use our mentor period to explicitly address this. The outline of my research is:

- Teach the boys about morals and social responsibility, creating class definitions, forming a shared understanding.

- Introduce a series of challenging social/moral scenario relevant to students and have them discuss/independently work out the most appropriate way to respond
- Introduce a framework to help boys work through the different aspects of challenging scenarios ('Define, Determine, Decide') model
- Discuss more scenarios utilising the framework
- Have students anonymously create and submit their own challenging scenarios (could be hypothetical or problems that they are dealing with)
- Work through these different scenarios as a class, using our framework

## HOW IT'S GOING:

So far, we are at the stage of creating our own challenging scenarios. I am pleasantly surprised and cautiously optimistic with how well it has gone so far. This last stage of the journey is perhaps the most important as it empowers the students to bring their own fears and anxieties to the table for us to work through as a group. We are creating a shared problem with a shared response that is articulated through shared language. Through discussing difficult social and moral scenarios, I can see the varying perspectives of the students and how they

bring their own experiences and biases to each situation. Overall though, it's amazing and encouraging to see how open-minded the students are and most have a strong sense of social justice. Many scenarios that I thought would be challenging have proven to be menial to the boys. What has stood out to me is the need to carve out time to have these kinds of conversations where students can be challenged and express their own challenges. For this to work successfully, the importance of prevision and creating a working definition for morality and social responsibility cannot be overstated. The boys need the tools and the language before they can be expected to succeed. Also of importance is the teacher acting as a moderator and not a preacher. However, it is our responsibility to educate, and I've found that at times I do need to intervene to steer conversation in the right direction.

## EXPERIENCE IN DALLAS /IMPORTANCE OF THE PROGRAMME:

This was the single greatest professional development I've experienced. I cannot be more effusive in my praise and encouragement for more teachers to take part. Being on the programme and having to complete the work (it is a big workload!) is just a small aspect of Action Research. Where you learn the most is when you are both physically interacting with colleagues from all around the world, but also in the remote connection we have developed since leaving Dallas. I am now privy to the insights of teachers plying their trade in the best boys' schools from across the globe. Sharing insights in this informal network is the greatest PD tool I've had access too. The second crucial aspect is that, hopefully, your research will make a difference in the lives of the boys in front of you. Success doesn't mean that your action becomes engrained in your practice and has long-lasting effects on your school. It's often

not as grand as that. Success means you've gained meaningful insight into boys' education through explicitly (and obsessively) trying to figure out how to best service our students. It widens your perspective, challenges your assumptions, and interrogates best practice in all the right ways. My theory is that having a voice in my head incessantly asking, "Is this the best way I could be doing this?" can only be a good thing. We should always critique our practice and Action Research puts this under the microscope for the benefit of our boys.

## Andrea

In New Zealand, men are encouraged to "Speak up, not, man up" however, the explicit teaching and education around what a man is, is not addressed nor is it explored. Rather, stereotypes of masculinities proliferate social media and society. Men are often exposed to a one-dimensional masculinity that focuses on emotional restraint and ideal physique. Invariably men are defined by what they should not be rather than celebrated for the dualities of what they are and can be. Ray Swann (2021) stresses that "when boys form narrow views of what it is to be a man, it can actually hinder their self-expressions. It can impact their ability to form close relationships or worse". Through my action research I want to be able to address the extent to which the choice of art acts as a window or a mirror to their own understanding of masculinity and how does art empower students to access different masculinities? Ultimately, I want to help students challenge the "man box" as defined by Heilman (2017) and to step outside of the "man box" and form their own ideas and embrace their own masculinities. I believe that by providing my students with the opportunity to articulate their ideas and understanding of masculinities in a safe environment and share this with their peers they will be able to exhibit "agency and emotional reflexivity" (Waling, 2018).



#### HOW IT'S GOING:

With my year 13 Art History cohort this year we have:

- Looked specifically at what portraiture is and how it functions.
- The students have self-selected portraits by Titian and/or Bronzino and engaged with them on a personal level by answering the following questions: what stands out to you the most and why? What is the artist/patron trying to communicate about the sitter? Why did you choose this portrait?
- Group, class, and individual discussion that focused on the qualities and attributes regarded as characteristic of 21st century men. Then students were to choose a Renaissance artwork, or an artwork from any period of their choosing that visually expresses these stereotypes.
- Students then engaged with the philosophical concept of the Renaissance Man and Baldassare Castiglione's *The Courtier* that outlines the 16th century ideals of the well-rounded man. With this contextual Renaissance ideology students compared and contrasted this to their discussion of 21st century masculine ideals
- Lastly, students reflected on the following questions: To what extent do your personal views/ideas of masculinity shape what artwork you are drawn to? To what extent do you think your original choices were impacted/affected by 21st century male attributes/ideas? If you could change any of your artworks which would you change and why?

Throughout this process so far, I have been amazed at the vulnerability displayed by my students during our discussions. They have been cautious when voicing their opinions and thoughts for fear of "cancel culture" and this has encouraged me to ensure that students are explicitly taught how to

respectfully share their views/thoughts/opinions. It was also evident in our class discussions that the boys are equipping themselves or evolving to code switch so that in different environments they present or reflect a different form of masculinity within which that environment is accepting of. Lastly, in discussion with my mentor here at WBHS, we explored the traditional view of single sex education, in particular boys' schools and how traditionally and on the surface, they are viewed as a one-dimensional institution of masculinity. However, in actuality, boys' schools provide boys with the opportunity to develop, engage and participate in the plurality of their masculinity.

The conference in Dallas was a fantastic experience. From the keynote speakers to the plenary sessions to the workshops, there were continual moments where I found myself frantically writing down ideas, reflections and tips/tricks that could be practically used in the classroom. Being surrounded by so many positive and enthusiastic teachers who have a passion for teaching boys was infectious. The conference and action research program further reinforced what Mr Ferguson said during the last two years of lockdowns – that schools are social institutions. This was reinforced throughout the conference whereby laughter, fun and the sharing of emotions and experiences were at the forefront.

By being a part of the Action Research cohort for 2022-2023, I have met a diverse range of teaching professionals and the connections that I have been able to make with teachers all around the world has resulted in the exposure of the many different yet strikingly similar experiences to that which we face here in NZ. The professional conversations that take place daily with those in my action research group have resulted in continual reflection of my own practice and exploration into many different facets of teaching.

# Research at Westlake 2022/2023

**O**ur vision for the research group is to grow a culture of teachers as researchers at Westlake Boys High School, enabling our educators to become leaders in the pedagogy of boys learning.

Our aim is to critically evaluate resources on the social-emotional, cognitive, academic, and behavioural development of boys in a secondary school context. The research group has been and will continue to work together to curate resources in these areas, which will undergo a thorough evaluation process. This research will then be disseminated within our school community with the aim of supporting best practice in boys' education through evidence, ensuring Westlake is a leader in New Zealand, of teaching boys the way that they learn best.

#### Objectives

- To curate resources for research
- To carry out quantitative and qualitative research
- To engage in scholarly conversations
- To seek opportunities for research projects at Westlake
- To present/publish research findings

As educators we see research as a way to improve student outcomes through informing, affirming and improving our own practice. Research can enable justification on pedagogical decisions and to provide alternative/new ways of approaching educational questions or problems.

Involved in the research group thus far are Kelly Easton, Jude Arbuthnot, Casey de Wit, Carla Boniolo, Dr Nick Brown, Sidah Russell, Keryn McAlpine and Andrea Dawber. After some skills development and concept mapping together, we have delved into research with a focus on Boys Education. Areas that have piqued our interest thus far are 'Self-Regulation with BYOD', 'Literacy', 'Motivation and Engagement towards learning'. Our next steps are to critically evaluate each piece of research using an evaluative matrix to determine its relevance to our foci and look to share our research with a wider audience at Westlake.

*Some global research undertaken by the IBSC with a focus on boys' education can be found here:*  
<https://www.theibsc.org/teaching-learning/research>

# IBSC Shorts

**I**n October of this year, Kelly and Jude had the pleasure of producing an online professional development programme for the International Boys' School Coalition 'Shorts' series. Our webinar was called 'Embracing Inclusive Education at a Boys' School' and shared our journey from Dr Jon Mundorf's visit to Westlake in 2018 to our current integration of Universal Design for Learning Principles in our professional development programme, and teaching and learning.

The webinar was an opportunity to talk about UDL in our unique context here at Westlake and allowed us to hear from both students and teachers. Jessica Copping and Lance Dunne spoke eloquently about their experiences of using UDL in the classroom. The course was live for a week and teachers from the global IBSC community were able to engage with us in online discussion about the issues raised in the short course.

'Embracing Inclusive Education at a Boys' School' allowed us to put into practice the Centre's ethos of evidence-based best practice and consolidated our understanding and practice of UDL. It is a topic we have shared within school and with educators from across Auckland, and to be able to share our experiences with a global audience online was a moment we took full advantage of. It will be great to produce more online content like this from the centre in the future.



# Better Boys, Better Men

Realising the importance of professional reading to teaching, one of the Centre's new initiatives this year is staff book club; an idea that came from, and was supported by, David Ferguson. Roughly fifty teachers have joined book club, with the school supporting this initiative by providing a book (or eBook) for every staff member involved.

Our first text was *Better Boys, Better Men* by Andrew Reiner. In *Better Boys, Better Men*, cultural critic, and *New York Times* contributor Andrew Reiner argues that men today are working on an outdated model of masculinity, which prevents them in moments of distress and vulnerability from marshalling the courage, strength, and resiliency—the very characteristics we regularly champion in men—they need to thrive in a world vastly different from the ones their fathers and grandfathers grew up in. According to Reiner, this outdated model of manhood can have devastating effects on the entire culture and, especially boys and men, from falling behind in the classroom and rising male unemployment rates to increased levels of depression and disturbing upticks in violence on a mass scale.

Following reading, the members of book club met after school one Thursday in November to discuss *Better Boys, Better Men*. The discussion was rich and reflective, and since then we have been fortunate to take the discussion further with Andrew via Zoom.

Our next book will be *Tools for Teachers* by Oliver Lovell.

## Do our boys need to be better?

*A review of Andrew Reiner's book 'Better Boys, Better Men' by Carla Boniolo*

The premise of Reiner's title is striking. On my first glance at the school bus yellow dust jacket, I half-scoffed as I thought: who doesn't want boys to be better? Yet, after further reflection, I wondered: what is so wrong with our boys that they need to be better? Well, according to Reiner, there's a lot.

His central thesis is that boys lack the emotional resilience to fully process and act upon their feelings. He argues that men are angrier than ever, more violent than ever and – this one surprised me – lonelier than ever. This progression from rage to disaffection and isolation was tracked throughout his book and illustrated through the inclusion of case studies. Whilst attempting to highlight the universality of this experience, I felt that Reiner compressed the anecdotes of the men he interviewed and did not interrogate intersectionality enough. I would be interested in a richer discussion about how culture and ethnicity impact the performance of masculinity. However, I acknowledge that perhaps conversations about this in the US — where Reiner is from and where all his case studies are based — are more fragile.

I found some of the discussion about sport to be confronting. Reiner focused heavily on the locker room culture and dissected its flaws. It would be interesting to hear from our PE staff and coaches as to whether they think this culture is present in our Westlake teams. It is my personal belief that sport can actually be a space where positive aspects of masculinity are expressed. Sport can be a place where boys develop both interpersonal and leadership skills. I'd love to know whether Reiner agrees with me on this.

If anyone would like to borrow a copy of the book, I have one that I am happy to lend.

## A Zoom with the author: Book club meets Andrew Reiner

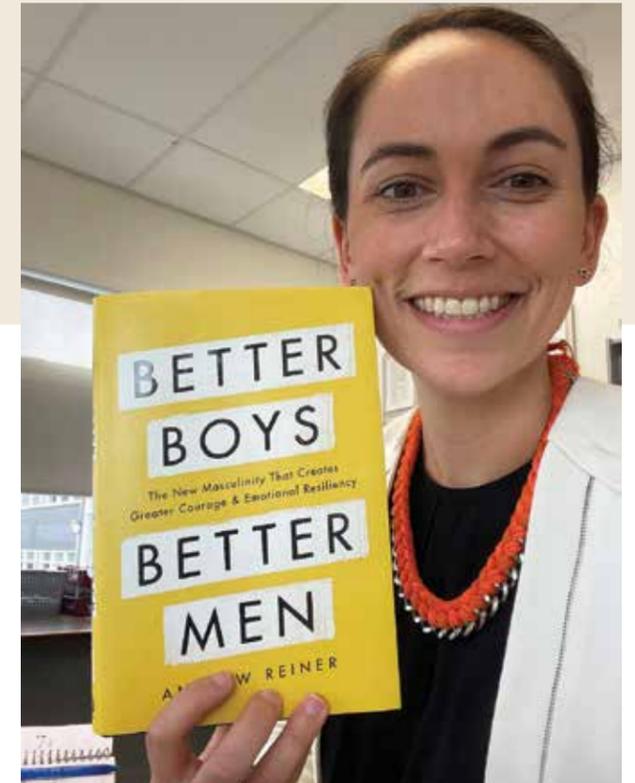
On the morning of Wednesday 16th November, the members of the Westlake Book Club were able to connect with Andrew Reiner via Zoom and ask him some questions about his book and his process. It was a worthwhile experience and gave the members more insight and understanding to the context of 'Better Boys, Better Men.'

In discussion, Andrew went into more detail about what he understood about the importance of creating a good culture in sport, something that is very relevant to us at Westlake. He talked about exploring the damaging ways of a culture of domination and how our boys get messages that in order to be successful, you need to armour up and can't show too much compassion/empathy for your opponents. He suggested that a balance in sports needs to be found. Coaches need to be intentional as they have the most impact and should be role models of teamwork, collaboration, support, idea of self-discipline, empathy, and compassion.

We asked about whether this is an issue for just boys, and Andrew agreed with us that it is important that we do focus on what benefits all humankind, but right now what was used to support and guide boys is rusted and this needs to be fixed within society to benefit us all. There are a multitude of cultural reasons of why men and boys are becoming increasingly lost and he hoped his book was an opportunity to get people to think about where to start.

Interestingly, Andrew shared that the book was envisioned with women as the primary audience. Women are the main purchasers of books (why aren't men and boys reading is another can of worms to open here!) and he and his editors were hoping the women would bring the ideas of the book to the men and boys in their lives. He has found in his research that the spaces men felt safest were with the females in their lives. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this, but he hopes for men to feel that safe in the company of other men.

After such a rich discussion, it would be great to take these thoughts and ideas to our colleagues, friends and family. It's a hot topic right now and for good reasons.



# Teachers of the future

## The Auckland Schools' Teacher Training Programme

2022 was the second year of the Auckland Schools' Teacher Training Programme. 2021 graduates, Lance Dunne and Keryn McAlpine, are now first year teachers at Westlake Boys High School making excellent progress in their careers. The programme this year is led by Joe Cachopa at Westlake and allows Trainee Teachers to complete their one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching from the University of Waikato whilst experiencing the classroom and school life on a daily basis.

### What Sidah has to say

"The programme is unique because you are embedded full-time in your school, while also studying full-time online. Being fully immersed in school life at Westlake Boys High has brought so many advantages. At the end of this year, I know I will be a better, more confident first-year teacher than I could ever have been doing a more traditional postgrad teaching qualification.

The ASSP cohort are a pretty special bunch as well. We meet regularly for workshops, visit each other's schools, and support each other through the highs and lows of juggling full-time study while also being in the classroom every day.

For me, making the decision to shelve a 20-year career in journalism and corporate and government communications was a huge decision. People still tell me I am crazy, but I was feeling burned out and wanted to do something different. In a recent catch up with old colleagues, I mused that teaching is not actually that different to communications – but now I only ask myself one question when preparing my work. That is: "How can I best communicate this concept in a way my students will understand and find interesting?" Trust me, that is a breath of fresh air after juggling all the politics of diplomacy at my last job with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I am really happy with my decision to re-train. I know I have been enormously lucky to be based at Westlake Boys where they absolutely wrap their new teachers in support. I learn so



much from being in the school full-time, and that's the best thing about becoming a teacher – every day is a day to learn something new."

### What Amy Bennett, Mentor, has to say:

"I have really enjoyed mentoring Sidah with Level 1 Social Studies this year. After maternity leave and working part time, it has been helpful for me to reflect more on my own practice as well as offer advice to Sidah. It has been a real collaboration in the classroom, and I have enjoyed bouncing ideas off her and getting her input into the challenging topics we cover in class – the changing concept of masculinity, the culture of smoking and vaping, the issue of homelessness, and engaging the students in social action. I feel the learning has flown both ways as Sidah has introduced me to many new ICT initiatives and current pedagogical theory, as well as providing interesting perspectives on the content we have taught. I have really valued her input and enjoyed working together. I hope she feels the same way!

I think the Teacher Training programme here is excellent. You get to really understand how a school works, and can form better relationships with the staff and students by being here every day. Having that consistency allows the teachers to develop much faster and they have more opportunities to put the theory into practice. I have enjoyed being a small part of it and would happily mentor another trainee in the future."

In 2023, the programme is expanding. We are fortunate to have seven new teacher trainees beginning at Westlake. As this year ended, the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning provided professional development for a range of Mentor Teachers from schools across Auckland. This was an excellent opportunity for us to widen our scope for providing support for Teachers beyond the bounds of Westlake, and to grow our reputation as leaders of professional learning. The feedback we received from the new Mentor Teachers for 2023 was overwhelmingly positive.

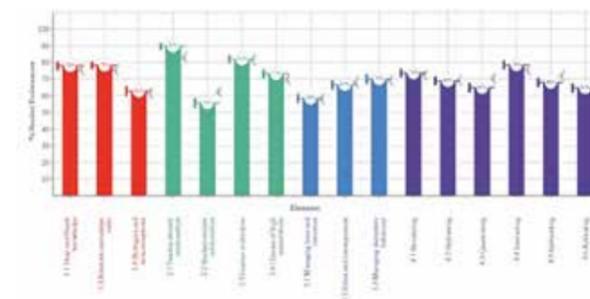
# The Great Teacher Toolkit

The Great Teacher Toolkit at its core, is a model for great teaching, which has been developed by Evidence Based Education, an organisation in the UK. Toolkit instruments provide feedback to Teachers on their personal practice and areas for development. These are related to 'dimensions' and 'elements' found in the 'Model for Great Teaching' (see reference at end of page). Embedded in the GTT platform are questionnaires for students and online Teacher Professional Development courses and leadership programmes, all focused on improving specific elements of Great Teaching. The four Dimensions are Content Delivery, Creating a Supportive Environment, Maximising Opportunity to Learn and Activating Hard Thinking; these dimensions are then further classified into Elements.

We have been using the Great Teacher Toolkit with teaching staff at Westlake for close to two years. In 2022 we have had 23 teaching staff signed-up to utilise this for professional development, on a voluntary basis. The group of Teachers involved met for professional discussions around individual and collective practice. I also met with Teachers individually to discuss reflections and to observe practice, in correlation with the elements of the Great Teacher Toolkit.

The starting point for Individual Teachers is to complete a full questionnaire with selected classes. From this they receive a breakdown of results for each element questioned by the students. The results from which, provide specific areas of Teaching and Learning that can be highlighted as strengths and areas that may comparatively be for development. The intention with this data is to inform teaching and learning professional development. We often have 'hunches' where we may think we need to develop our practice, but the data from students in our classes who experience what we do the most, provides rich evidence to back this up. The data is encouraged to be used alongside lesson observations from either myself or another colleague and self-reflection of individual practice. All of which are key pillars underpinning professional development in Teaching.

After reflecting on the evidence provided by the questionnaire results, the GTT platform provides professional development courses which directly correlate with dimensions and elements highlighted by the questionnaires as areas for development. For example, an individual Teacher's results may look like this:

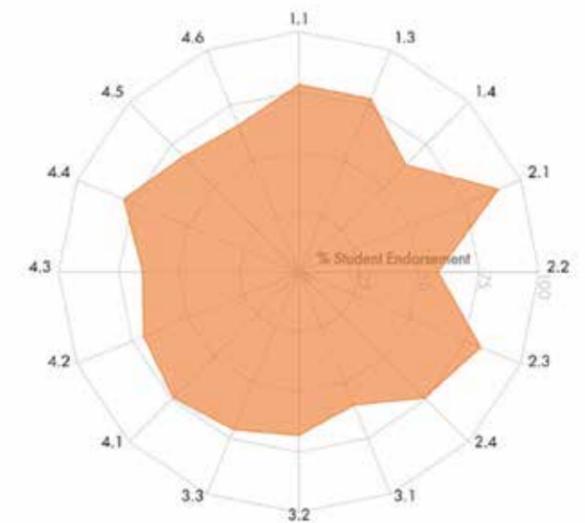


Hence this Teacher can use the evidence here, to identify elements 2.2 Student-student relationships and 3.1 Managing time and resources, as areas to further support professionally and take the PD courses offered by GTT, or seek further evidence or data in these areas to improve individual practice. Once a Teacher decides on a focus element to develop, the expectation is to then survey students again later in the year, but only in this one area (so less questions, more finely tuned to that specific element). The results should demonstrate improvements made and be reflected in the results from the follow-up questionnaire.

Strengths that have been identified collectively amongst Teachers at Westlake include Teacher Student Relationships, Learner Motivation and Interacting, as illustrated by the highest percentages on the bars below.

Areas for development as a school include, Student to Student Relationships, Managing Time and Resources and Strategies and Misconceptions, as illustrated by the lowest percentages on the bars below.

The same data can also be illustrated with this web chart below.



If you would like further reading. The Founder of EBE, Prof Rob Coe's Model for Great Teaching – the things teachers know, do, and believe that research has shown to make the biggest difference to student learning, can be downloaded. Or if you have any further questions you can contact me via email [kea@westlake.school.nz](mailto:kea@westlake.school.nz)

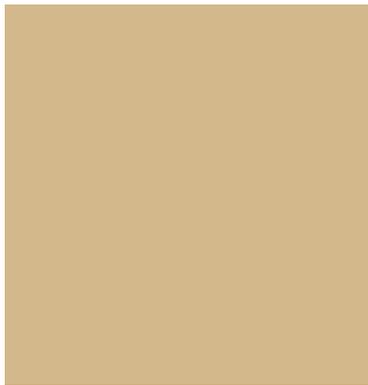
**Kelly Easton, Specialist Classroom Teacher, Westlake Boys High School**

**Thank you to the following staff  
for contributing to our first volume:**

Sidah Russell, Lance Dunn, Amy Bennett, Kelly Easton,  
Casey de Wit, Carla Boniolo, Andrea Dawber,  
Conor Pearson, Logan Douglas, Molly Smith,  
Karl Domeraki, Jerry Gao, Ellen Bayliss, Sara Caplain,  
Alexa Jelichich, Angus Nicoll.

**Collated and edited by:**

Jude Arbuthnot



Westlake Boys High School  
Te Kura Tuarua o Ngā Taitamatāne o Ururoto

