He ākonga ārahi mō āpōpō | Innovative ākonga leadership

Waiho mā te tangata koe e kōrero
Let others sing your praises

Actions for kura and schools

Broadening the definitions of student leadership helps students to value and understand their strengths and capabilities, and the mana they have as part of a community.

Explore kaupapa Māori approaches to leadership and encourage students to apply principles of manaakitanga, kotahitanga, tino rangatiratanga, inclusion and wairuatanga to school and community initiatives.

Recognise diverse leadership styles and capabilities beyond the traditional 'benchmark'. Consider students who are collaborative, organised, and willing to create space for others.

Set up structures that support students to develop their skills and capabilities. Ask senior leadership to support and co-create roles and activities with students to meet their needs.

Give students a voice, and allow them to feed into important decision-making processes, and fill civic roles in their schools and communities. Ensure that leadership opportunities span across students' educational journeys.

Identify ways for students to represent their communities, cultures, and unique backgrounds. Diverse student leadership ensures that all students are represented.

Develop inclusive leader selection processes alongside ākonga. Help them to identify how to work as a team and the unique strengths that others can bring to leadership roles.

Empower students to identify and harness their strengths, whether that means being a public speaker or creating space for others.

Foster ongoing reflection and evaluation by considering and implementing feedback from students.

Te Wero | The challenge

The traditional model for student leadership often feels unattainable for many ākonga. Schools and kura are realising that restrictive definitions of leadership do not foster innovation.

Traditionally, leadership roles such as head boy/girl and prefects often favour students who fit a particular mould – they're confident, visible figures among their peers. However, this model can be a disadvantage for students who are part of marginalised groups.

All students can become effective leaders if they understand their strengths and the various roles that leaders fulfil beyond being a visible, public figure.

Tangata i ākona ki te kāinga tū ana ki te marae tau ana
Learn at home with your people so you're skilled when you get up in public

Supporting all students to develop their leadership capabilities gives everyone the opportunity to:

+ develop important learning and job-related skills
+ accelerate their personal development by setting and achieving personal goals
+ enhance their self-esteem, confidence, and resilience
+ strengthen their academic engagement.

Supporting all students to grow their leadership capabilities also offers rewards to the school community, including:

+ growing the leadership potential of students from diverse and marginalised groups
+ fostering positive school culture and increased collaboration
+ encouraging civic responsibility and positive change in the school and community
+ improving school governance and student voice.

So the key question for schools and kura is:
How can we offer leadership opportunities to all students?