Editorial

"*The limits of my language*", the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein famously proposed, "mean the limits of my world" (Wittgenstein, 1961). In this issue of *set* many articles join in a conversation about expanding the limits of learners' language, and hence growing their worlds.

At the Waitangi Tribunal hearing on te reo Māori (the Māori language) held in 1986, the Tai Tokerau leader James Henare succinctly expressed the relationship between language and mana Māori: "Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Maori (the language is the life force of the mana Maori)" (Waitangi Tribunal, 1989, p. 34). Georgina Stewart, writing for primary classroom teachers who cannot easily speak and write te reo Māori, reminds us that "the great majority of Māori children develop their learning identities in English-medium primary classrooms". Stewart distils current policy documents, particularly *Tau Mai te Reo* (Ministry of Education, 2013), pertaining to the use of te reo Māori in the classroom. All primary teachers are now expected to support children's learning of te reo Māori, and Stewart presents useful guidelines on how to provide this support. She focuses on two areas—teaching, and content—where individual teachers have significant agency. Both areas carry with them a need for professional learning opportunities and high-quality classroom resources. The current policy has implications for teacher education and school resourcing as teachers take up dual challenges: to set a supportive classroom language policy; and to assume roles as "learning facilitators" rather than "classroom experts".

Turning to a different linguistic domain, Claire Berry and Margaret Kitchen focus on three English-language learning episodes in a Year 1 classroom. They explore how sensitised native-speaking students, when paired with English-language learners, may act as language builders. Here, the teacher manages a collaborative learning process. Berry and Kitchen also describe how classroom observation and interpretation, coupled with reflection, can enable the improvement of known effective methods and the cultivation of an "adaptive professionalism".

Working within the key competency of *using language, symbols, and texts*, Michael Drake's study of acquiring and using vocabulary to aid understanding of mathematical measurement is located at an interface between the (oral) language of instruction and visual texts—here, linear scales. *The New Zealand Curriculum* notes that "each learning area has its own language or languages", and that teachers need to help their students to learn "the specialist vocabulary of the learning area; how to read and understand its texts; how to communicate knowledge and ideas in appropriate ways; how to listen and read critically" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 16). While a student from Minsk may solve a problem in much the same way as a student from Mahia, the symbols and graphics which they use do need to be taught and learned in the language of classroom instruction. "Having the appropriate language", notes Drake, "will then enable students to think about the topic, to ask meaningful questions, and to discuss their learning with their peers."

What language do we use to express quality? And whose voices do we listen to? Belinda Haig and Steven Sexton ask the question, "What makes a good teacher?" Haig and Sexton used focus groups to gather data on primary-aged students' perceptions. The three main areas discussed by students were the student–teacher relationship (which provided emotional support and trust); teachers' personal attributes (key ones were to be helpful and nice); and teaching ability (here, the ability to be fun and interesting, and firm but fair). Haig and Sexton leave us with a question about performance criteria for teachers: "how will good teachers in New Zealand be judged? Will it be on standardised test scores and meeting 'graduation' targets, or will students be asked for their perspectives on good teachers?"

Value, and goodness, are addressed in Donald McMenamin's article on narrative therapy as an alternative to suspension and exclusion. If language delimits one's world, what happens when a young person's identity story—a story of "who I am and what is important to me"—is formed and reinforced when disorder is in the ascendant? Is that young person at risk of being lost to schooling? How can we further reduce the use of suspension and exclusion, while also enhancing the wellbeing of school communities? Proceeding from the

premise that "people make sense of themselves and others through socially available ideas in the form of stories", McMenamin discusses how alternative accounts of the self may be formed through a process of community re-authoring. In this process, peers, teachers, family and community members explore and sustain a young person's nascent and untroubled identity claims.

Before crisis, what of daily pastoral care? Jennifer Fraser and Robyn Averill consider the role of the dean in relation to student wellbeing and achievement. Along with Haig and Sexton, they note the widely accepted view of the "importance of care and caring relationships between students and teachers (and their relationship to positive outcomes for students)". However, the dean's role is challenging. While the dean's role is to be "responsible for all students within a year level", attention may be focused on, and time spent reacting to, issues arising from a small group of high-needs students. One effect is that a great middle band of students ("the greys", in one interviewee's phrase) is left out of focus: these students may, for example, end up attaining NCEA Achieved results when they have potential to get Merit. Fraser and Averill see value in a collaborative approach to care, concluding that when pastoral direction, roles, and responsibilities are clear, and all staff are prepared to handle lesser difficulties, deans may in turn anticipate issues of wellbeing and achievement, and work off the front foot.

The next two articles focus on NCEA. Gaenor Stoate explores how the inquiry-learning method Mantle of the Expert (MOTE) can be used in a devising task to meet a Level 2 Drama achievement standard. In so doing, Stoate limns the nuanced, balanced relationship between teacher and students when all are role-playing. She explores the efficacy of building through MOTE an effectively interacting shared learning community which is teacher *inclusive*, rather than teacher *driven*. MOTE is one way in which students in many-voiced "culturally, technologically and linguistically complex classrooms of the 21st century" may develop the skills to work creatively together.

Martin Davison, Mary Hill, and Claire Sinnema address the problem of gauging progress in NCEA history—and their findings surely are applicable beyond their subject. They focus on the development of historical empathy, where students shift from a presentist perspective and gain an ability to walk in another's shoes

(or World War One soldiers' boots, in the Gallipoli example that is used). Davison et al. consider typologies, and graphical representations of progress, and discuss how teachers can "guide and involve students in working with these representations". As a caveat, they also discuss several risks associated with a mechanistic application of typologies.

In Assessment News, Charles Darr rounds out this issue by observing that it has become increasingly common for students in New Zealand schools to sit tests using a computer rather than paper-and-pencil. This raises immediate questions: does it matter whether paper-and-pencil or online modes are used? Do students' overall scores differ between modes? Does the percentage correct of the items in each mode differ? Darr reports on a small-scale study that compared Year 8 student results from the pencil-and-paper and online versions of the Progressive Achievement Test: Mathematics. The online test was designed with a plain screen interface and minimal or no scrolling. The colour palette and artwork were the same in both test modes. The difference between modes was statistically insignificant in this study, and is likely to be so "when the computerised version of the test involves low technical demands and replicates the look of the paper-and-pencil version". However, "schools should use different test administration modes critically".

If language sets limits to the world, it seems clear from the articles in this issue that the limits need be neither fixed nor finite. And in expanding the world for learners, there is reciprocity for teachers. We live and learn in an expanding universe.

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