

Engaging the Community, Engaging 'good' Students

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The Community



Kiwi Leadership for Principals

The importance of relationships

Principals know how important building and sustaining good community relationships is to the well-being and culture of their schools. Relationship building prepares the ground for creating partnerships between the school and its community. When the community engages with the work of the school, the positive spin-offs invariably benefit both teaching and learning.

The Context

- Large urban Decile 10
- Mixed community – ‘arty’, professional, English, ‘green’

Events

- Conflict within the BoT
- Resignation of the Principal

Results

- Staff – saw parents as ‘dangerous’ – ‘Not to be trusted’ - ‘needing to be managed’ – ‘give them an inch and they will be all over you’
- Management – protect and back the staff at all costs – bureaucratic approach to problem solving - tendency for problems to escalate
- Parents – Lost trust – felt the Board had kept them in the dark – Issues were likely to become battles – need to be very assertive

The Good News

- A well organised and managed school with very good systems
- Very capable Senior Management Team
- A good team of teachers and support staff – diverse skills – dedicated to the children – quality teaching practice
- Delightful children – generally high standards of conduct – this hasn't happened by accident
- High levels of student achievement especially in literacy

Levels Of Perspective

(John Edwards – Bill Martin)

Level of Perspective	Desired future
Vision	What is part of our description of the way the school will be in 6 years?
Mental Models	What values, assumptions & beliefs are needed to realise the vision?
Systemic Structure	What kind of systemic structures (either invented or redesigned) are required to operationalise the new mental models and achieve the vision?
Patterns of Behaviour	What are some of the behaviours that will act as indicators that the desired vision is becoming a reality?
Events	What are some of the specific events that illustrate how the vision is operating on a day-to-day basis?

What to do?

- Tread very carefully – observe and not change things initially – let the place settle down
- Acknowledge that what people felt was real and valid for them so not dismiss it
- Communicate expectations to the staff about relating to parents
- Remain positive – model the expectations

Relating to parents

- Demonstrate in your dealings with children and parents that we genuinely enjoy and value the privilege of working with children (nothing is going to reassure a parent more than believing their child's teacher feels this way)
- Develop appropriate self confidence to engage openly and respectfully with parents to be able to hear and identify useful feedback on issues and not become defensive
- Be able to admit where a mistake may have been made or where things can be improved
- Be an active listener and use facilitative questioning to understand what people's points of view or concerns are – be aware of and respect the emotional dimension of issues – particularly those relating to parents and their children
- Be seen to follow up on concerns
- You don't have to respond or react immediately – there is nothing wrong with saying you will think about it, talk to someone etc and get back to them (as long as you do)
- If in doubt ask or seek support from a senior staff member or me – some matters may well be better referred on in the first instance.

“What would you like me to do?”

- Listen carefully - empathise
 - Let them get it off their chest
 - Don't defend or justify
 - Acknowledge their feelings
-
- What would you like me to do?
 - Do it
 - Tell them when it is done

Vision Values Goals (the school's strategic plan)

- Engaged both the staff and board in developing the vision and goals
- Communicated – process and draft versions

Goal No 3

Review and develop strategies to enhance the community & parent – school relationship and the involvement of parents in their children's learning

Processes & Structures

- Initiate PTA – careful planning and advice – competing agendas
- School communications
 - Newsletters
 - Development of new website
 - Parent information seminars
 - Teacher – Parent email
- New report - sharing data
- Achievement reports – shared targets
- Class parent Scheme
- Parent tutors – maths & reading

Events

- School picnics
- Mid Winter dinner
- Discos
- Y6 Graduation
- Gala
- Sausage sizzles and Sushi Fridays
- Stationery

The Students Teaching as inquiry



What did we notice?

In year 5

Some 'low level' unacceptable behaviour

'Attitude'

Low motivation

Clever kids who seemed to be 'coasting'

Mostly boys

Initial Goals

- Prioritise boys' engagement with learning.
- Find out more about student's experience of school
- Identify factors contributing to effective classroom working environments.
- Establish a shared, effective and consistent approach to behaviour management – Positive Assertive Discipline
- Develop home/school communication systems.

TPS Positive/Assertive Discipline

Defining Principles:

- *You, as the teacher, have the right to determine what is best for your students, and to expect students to follow instructions.*
- *No pupil should prevent you from teaching, or keep another student from learning.*
- *Students have a right to expect an orderly, well-managed learning environment.*
- *There is never any acceptable reason for misbehaviour (Biologically based*
• *misbehaviour may be an exception and require an individualised approach).*
- *Teachers must react assertively, as opposed to aggressively or non assertively.*
- *Students who model and exemplify rules should receive as much time and feedback from the teacher as those who do not.*

Action Required	Strategies	Costs / Resources	Target Date
Create an action plan for focus areas in Syndicate 1	Alan Jackson Carol Yates	N/A	Term 1 2009
Establish improved boys' engagement and opportunities for achievement as a priority in Y6.	Observation Snapshot Engagement self-review. Look for opportunities for boys to take lead roles/responsibilities. Survey students (boys & girls)/PMI Enriched curriculum: (Waterwise, Basketball team, EOTC.) Laptops in Y6 rooms. Cross-gender grouping. Gender balance for responsibilities (librarian/road patrols etc).	Laptops. User-pays end of year trip.	Term 4 2009
Further develop communication with parents.	Early intervention and positive feedback where practical.	N/A	Ongoing
Review the current homework requirements in Syndicate 1 and establish a consistent approach across the classes.	Optional homework project agreed per term linked to topic.	N/A	Ongoing
Ensure that emails are checked by staff regularly, and that parent enquiries are answered within a reasonable time-frame.	24 hr email response guidelines in place.	N/A	Term 2 2009
Ensure that classrooms and communal areas are tidy and represent an effective and stimulating working environment.	Integrated into checkpoints feedback.	N/A	Ongoing
Reinforce clear boundaries, high expectations and behaviour management strategies with consistency across the syndicate.	Implement system of positive/negative consequences and positive assertive system. Class/individual incentives. Consider class credit system. Report system involving senior management.	Possible end of year trip – user pays.	Term 4 2009
Emphasise a “quality rather than quantity” approach to planning and curriculum coverage,	Trips and visits to be kept to a reasonable level of disruption – avoid morning programmes.	N/A	Ongoing.

Name: _____ **Rm:** _____

Engagement Survey

Do you enjoy school?

What do you like best about your lessons?

Is there anything you don't enjoy?

Do you like the topics you cover in class?

If you could choose a topic for next term, what would it be?

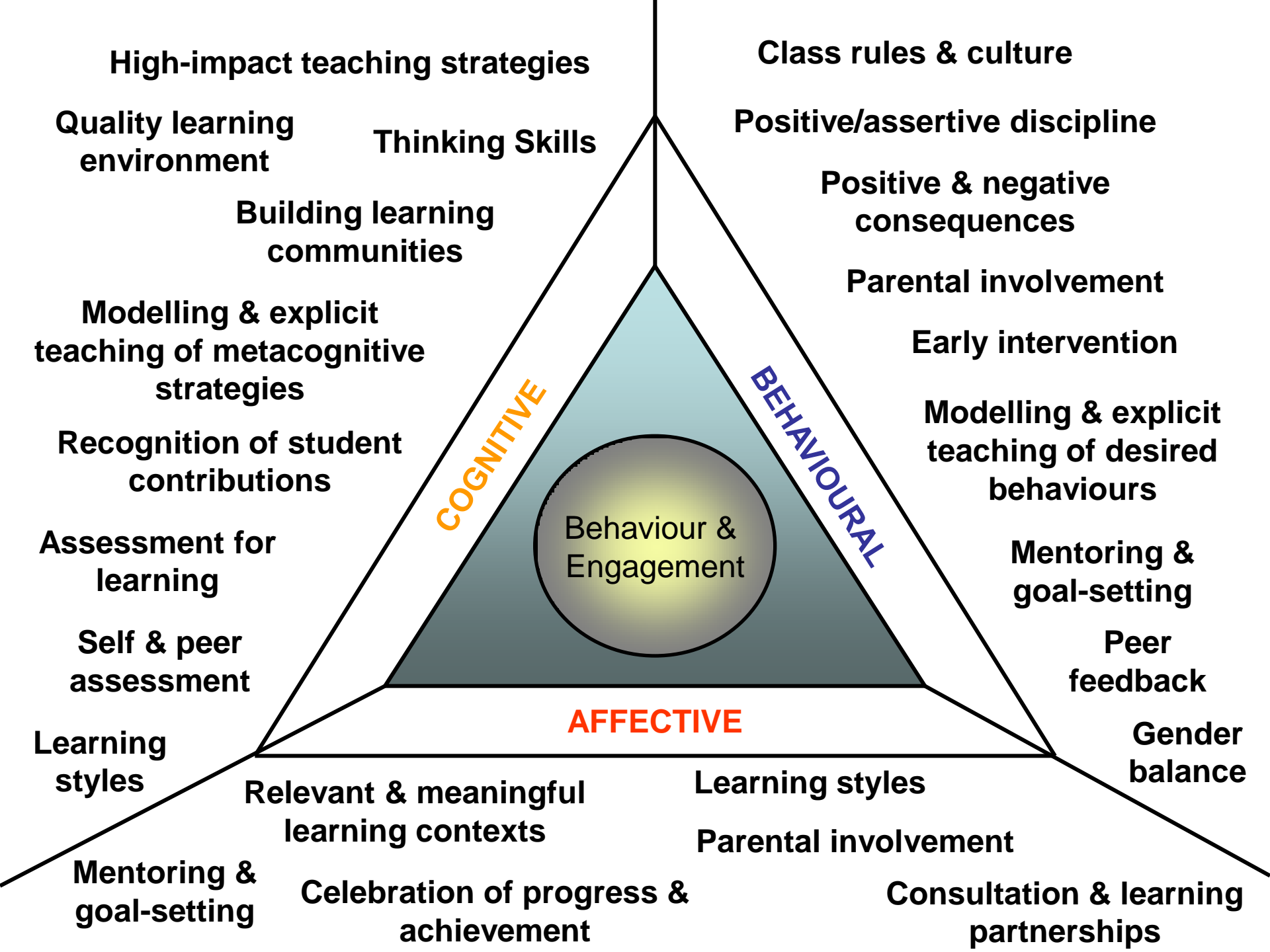
What excites you about school?

What the kids said

- School is boring
- Teachers talk at us too much
- We are not picked to answer questions
- We don't have much choice in the kinds of learning activities we do – we would like more choice e.g. in topics

(There was a sense of opening a flood gate – they were keen to know “when could we have this conversation again”)

		1 - Disaffection	2	3	4 - Engagement
Behavioural	Was I paying <i>attention</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I didn't pay attention, ● I was easily distracted. ● The teacher reminded me to listen a lot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I paid some attention. ● I listened to what was being said, but the teacher had to remind me sometimes, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I listened most of the time. ● I followed instructions ● I paid attention when others were speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I used active listening skills. ● I made eye contact. ● I followed instructions carefully.
	Did I <i>manage myself</i> well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I didn't organise the things I needed to do my work. ● I didn't try to finish, and the teacher had to remind me to get on with my work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I had some of the things that I needed to get on with my work. ● I some work, but I didn't complete the task as well as I could have done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was quite well organised during this lesson. ● I concentrated on my work most of the time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was very efficient and well-organised throughout this lesson. ● I concentrated on my work at all times.
	What was I <i>doing</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was slouching in my seat, ● I was staring around. ● I was fiddling with things. ● I shouted out when I wanted to speak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I sat up straight some of the time. ● I was in an OK position at my desk. ● I sometimes remembered to raise my hand when I had something to say. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I sat with good posture most of the time. ● I usually remembered to raise my hand when I wanted to speak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I sat with excellent posture. ● I always raised my hand up when I wanted to speak.
Cognitive	Did I <i>focus</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I did not get on what I was supposed to be doing during this lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I didn't try very hard to get on with what I was supposed to be doing during this lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I concentrated on my work most of the time. ● I tried to meet at least some of the success criteria for the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was focused on the learning intention, the task and the success criteria for the whole lesson.
	Was I <i>thinking</i> about my learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If it was too hard, I gave up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I thought about some of the things we studied in this lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I thought about how well I understood what I was learning in this lesson, and asked questions when I didn't understand. 	<i>I reflected on my understanding by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussing/asking questions/looking for information. ● I thought about what I had learned.
	Did I use good <i>teamwork</i> skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was not helpful when I worked with others. ● I was not respectful towards others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I helped a little when I worked with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was a useful member of the team when I worked with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I worked very effectively with others to solve problems and complete tasks.
	Did I <i>participate</i> in the lesson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I didn't join in this lesson. ● I didn't try to answer questions or make suggestions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I joined in a little during this lesson. ● I answered questions when I was asked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I joined in well during this lesson. ● I answered questions and gave my opinion without being asked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I made a very useful contribution to discussions, showing respect for the views of others.
Affective	Was the <i>work level</i> OK for me?	<i>Tick one</i>			
		<input type="checkbox"/> The work was much too easy for me. <input type="checkbox"/> The work was much too hard for me.	<input type="checkbox"/> The work was quite easy for me. <input type="checkbox"/> The work was a little hard for me.	<input type="checkbox"/> The work was an OK level of challenge for me.	<input type="checkbox"/> The work was just the right level of challenge for me.
	Did I get a sense of <i>achievement</i> in this lesson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I didn't achieve anything I was proud of in this lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I did some things well in this lesson, but I could do better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I made some good progress during this lesson. ● The teacher was pleased with my work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I felt a strong sense of achievement during this lesson.
	Was I <i>interested</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I felt bored during this lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I wasn't really interested in this lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This lesson was OK, and some parts were quite interesting/enjoyable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I felt excited and enthusiastic about my studies during this lesson, and want to find out more.



Things to do

PD focused on high-impact teaching strategies

Thinking skills curriculum mapping

Guided inquiry

Develop class display guidelines

Student involvement in data analysis

AFL

Rewards & incentives

Hands-on projects

Science, Tech & ICT

Develop criteria for fun, engaging class topics

Achievement assemblies

Choice of learning activities

Regular class exhibitions

Choice of topics

Gender balance for responsibilities

Enhanced parental involvement in learning activities

Introduction of positive/assertive discipline procedures and principles

School values visible & revisited regularly

Student-led conferencing

Peer conferencing

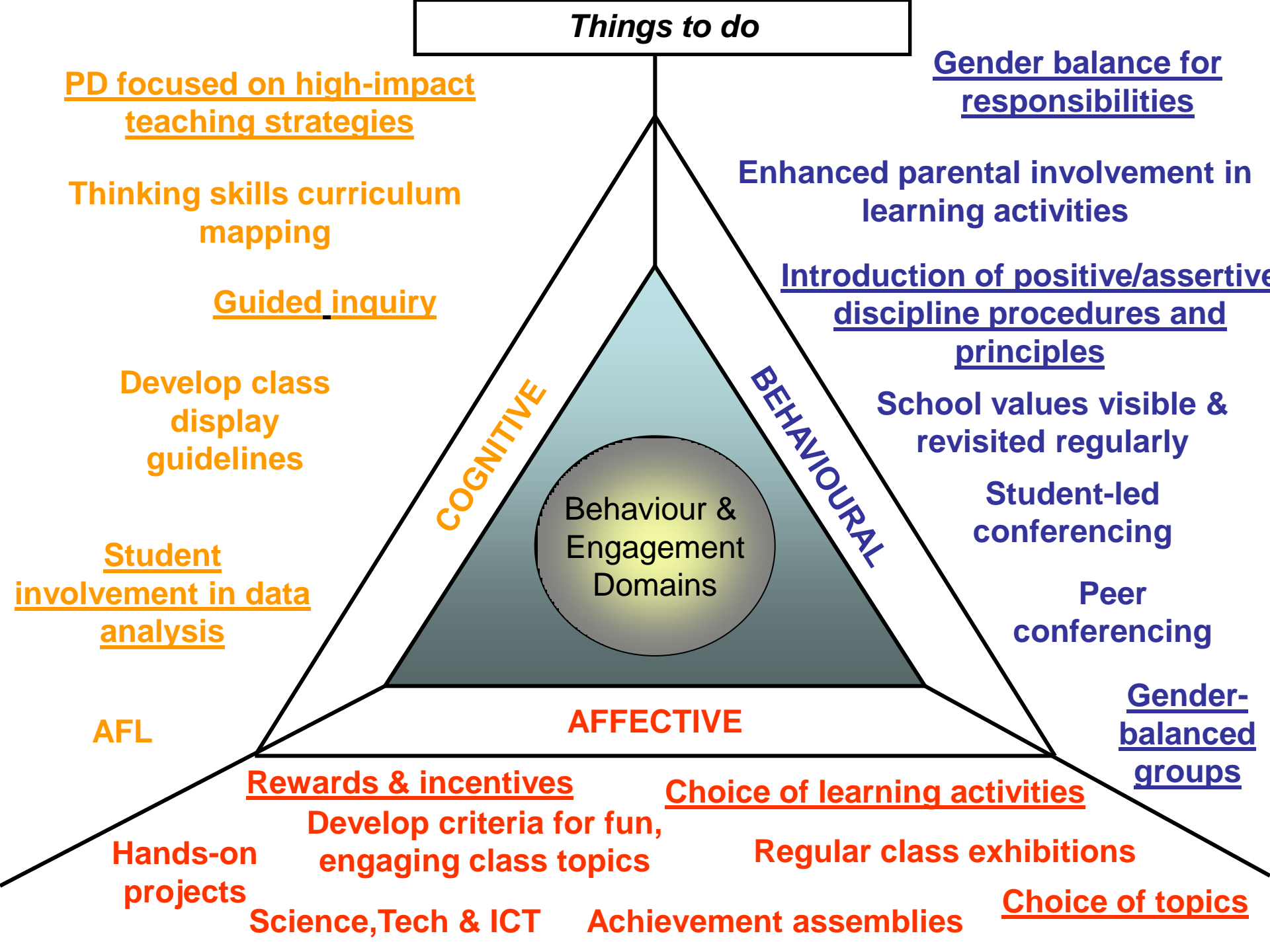
Gender-balanced groups

COGNITIVE

BEHAVIOURAL

Behaviour & Engagement Domains

AFFECTIVE

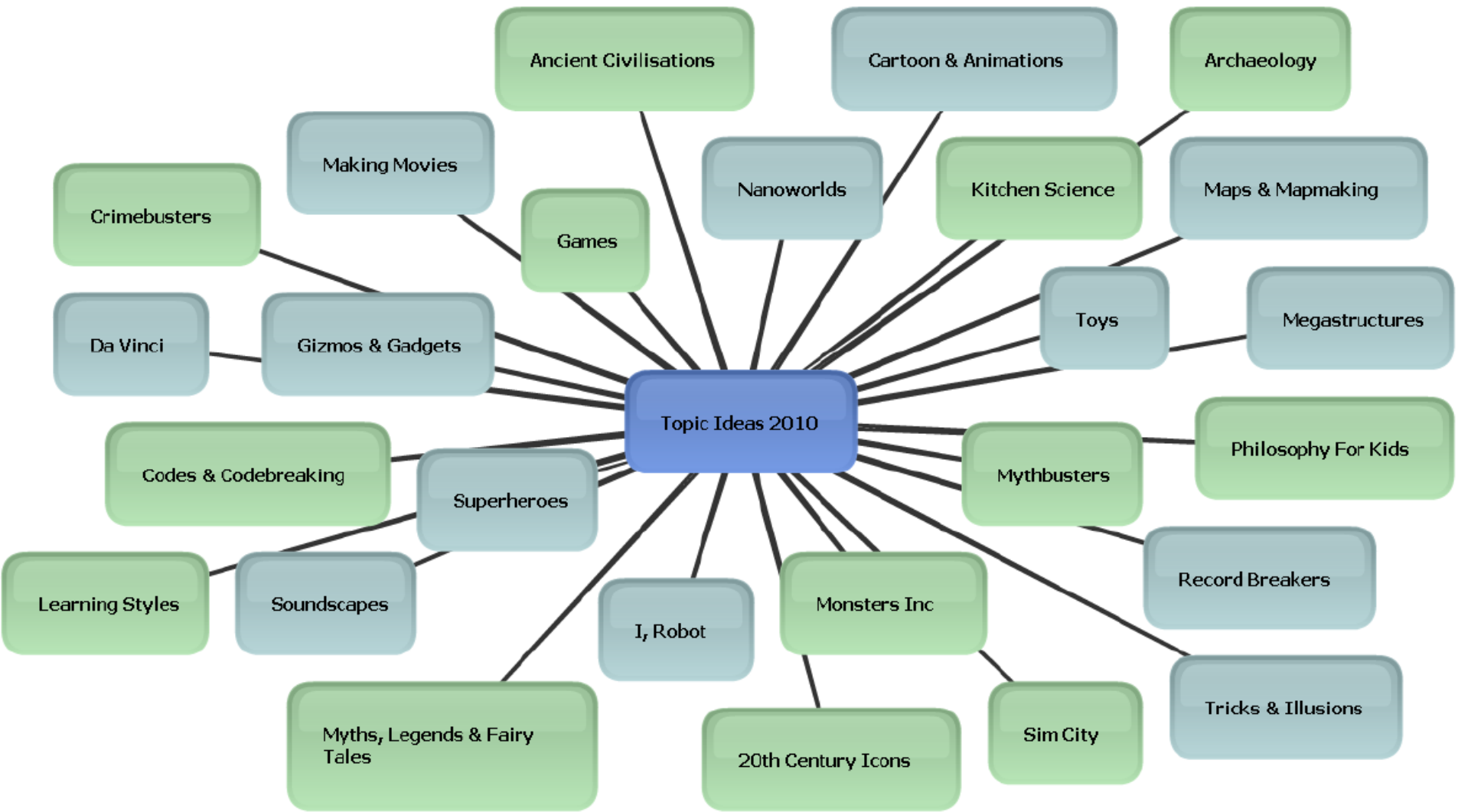


Implementing the revised NZC Implications For Curriculum Mapping?

- **Engagement**, and **relevance** as key criteria in topic selection.
- Student consultation in selection of topics.
- Opportunities for kinaesthetic activities – Science, ICT and Technology.
- Plan for “high impact” teaching strategies.
- Co-construction and self/peer assessment of success criteria..
- Increased student choice for tasks/activities.



Based on "Green Light Teaching" by Rich Allen



Where to from here?

- In strategic plan – BoT
- This is about engagement for everyone
- Staff PD – high impact teaching strategies
- Year 5 & 6 Learning Circles – sharing what has worked well – new ideas tried
- Continued inquiry into students experiences – early identification of most ‘at risk’