

# TAITA COLLEGE

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR CHILDREN



### Meaningful pathways – student-centred learning the focus

*At Taita College we believe in offering meaningful pathways, where student-centred learning is the focus, says Principal Karen Morgan.*

*“This year we have implemented a new programme with one senior class, to provide a more authentic learning environment, that is an alternative to traditional academic curriculum,” she says. “The purpose is to fully engage students, allow them to have more ownership of their learning, enable them to experience success and believe in their future.”*

#### THE MEANINGFUL PATHWAY PROGRAMME:

The programme was initiated by Linda Pye, Assistant Principal responsible for curriculum at Taita College. Through tracking student progress in 2016 she, along with the other staff, were able to identify a group of Year 11/12 students who were potentially in jeopardy of not completing a qualification. Based on the statistics of this group of students, a pilot class was created to begin this year.

Karen Morgan says it was evident this group of students was confined by the traditional approach, and this impacted on their motivation, attendance and sense of belonging.

“As a school we wanted to invest time, energy and resources, to ensure this group of students had every opportunity to be the best that they could be. At Taita College our vision emphasises whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and kotahitanga – everyone counts and deserves to ‘taste’ success.”

The programme operates over a normal school week, but is a combination of going to school, WelTec Polytechnic, and out to work in the community. On Monday and Wednesday the students attend school, but instead of having five different teachers and five different subjects they have one homeroom teacher. Their teacher assigns them assessment tasks that link with their interests, their WelTec study and their work placement. In the class every student is

working on their own individual education plan – so learning is specific to meet their needs and capitalise on their strengths. On Tuesday the students attend a work placement which has connections into the trade they are studying at WelTec. On Thursday and Friday the students attend WelTec.

A normal week would look like this:

Monday	School (IEP)
Tuesday	Work Placement
Wednesday	School (IEP)
Thursday	WelTec
Friday	WelTec

Karen Morgan says the purpose of this class is to provide students with a meaningful learning experience that can assist them to develop pathways to progress to further study, training and employment.

“All of the students in this class are enrolled in an NCEA Level 2 WelTec course, and as a school we are already seeing the positive effects. Last year these students were dis-engaged and thinking of dropping out of school without their NCEA Level 1 or 2. This programme has enabled students to feel positive about school and learning, and has reinforced how education is the key to a bright future. Students in this class, on the programme, are now happy, engaged, confident and setting future goals.”

Alice Wilson, teacher says “students’ engagement through their attendance and work output is amazing. A critical component

to making it work is building strong relationships, based on high expectations where support is limitless.”

This programme is a success because as a college we have made a conscious effort to move away from the traditional timetable that exists and build a programme that best serves the students, Karen Morgan says.

“The programme also highlights the importance of partnership, and we are extremely lucky to have such a supportive community who are willing to have students in their courses and workplace, to mentor, guide and provide them with new and life changing opportunities. When we work together – we achieve together.”

Karen Morgan says it is important to realise 30 per cent of students go to university in New Zealand, so we collectively need to start ensuring the 70 per cent who don’t, have a viable and productive future.

“We must acknowledge that success is not bound merely to an academic pathway, and be able to promote the importance of life-skills, values, relationships, communication, employment and citizenship. Meaningful pathway programmes are a conduit that will enable students to become more resilient, and gain the capabilities and tools they need to be active and productive members of their communities.”

Year 13 students Te Amokurakahu Tihi and Ariana Judge are two members of the class who are now excited about what they can achieve when they leave school

– they can each see a future full of bright possibilities.

They say this year they are really engaged in the classroom, learning useful skills for the future and feeling a lot more “adult” about their learning; both are now confident of their learning pathways and the stresses of past school years have dissolved.

From “hardly attending” last year, Ariana says this year she is “just loving it” in Ms Wilson’s class.

“I have learnt so much about myself, my strengths in running meetings, I am confident dealing with others and I am a good listener. I want to do something in youth work or social work in the future and I am also planning to become a life coach. She is also planning to do a hospitality course at Weltec.



Te Amokurakahu has found his placement at Farmer’s invaluable.



(From left to right): Te Amokurakahu Tihi, Tutor Alice Wilson and Ariana Judge.

For Te Amokurakahu, who has his sights set on becoming a make-up artist, his work at Farmers has been pivotal, helping with product knowledge and new trends and dealing with the public. Next year he plans to take the Level 3 make up artistry course at Weltec.

Adds Alice Wilson: “as a teacher it has been a real privilege to be able to see these young people blossom with confidence and hope for the future. This is what education

should be like – we need to think that education support should be there to serve the students rather than the students have to serve the system.

“It allows them ownership to focus on what is important for their own futures.

“To see them happy, engaged, feeling there is still a space for them at Taita College – this has been by far the most rewarding teaching experience I have ever had.”

➤ PIZZERIA ➤ SHOP ➤ CATERING/OR  
PRIVATE FUNCTIONS  
➤ LIVE ENTERTAINMENT NIGHTS ➤  
COOKING CLASSES

PH 566 8232 337 | High Street | Lower Hutt  
Open 7 days | 8am – 9pm  
[www.medifoods.co.nz](http://www.medifoods.co.nz)