

Taita pupils hack science lessons



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Students from Taita College helped hack science, as part of a competition to open up the subject for others in their class.

Malachi Rangī, Eru Kepa, Marshall Kennedy-Newton and Brody Sowry all took part in a two-day Hackathon. Secondary school students from around the region gathered at Victoria University to tackle what made science difficult to learn and to see if they could solve the problem.

Malachi and Eru struck on the idea of making science kits for students to use. Their idea impressed the judges and the team won \$1000 for Taita College's science department.

“Everyone else had the idea to do something digitally. Our approach to the problem was going to be that but we realised that's not physically helping the students,” fifteen-

yearold Malachi said.

The Tertiary Education Commission and Wellington ICT Graduate School set up the Hackathon event to see the solutions students could come up with.

Malachi and Eru were helped at the event by Wellington ICT graduate student Gurtej Singh, and were also joined by a Wellington Girls' College.

Malachi said they aimed the kits at Year 9 and 10 students, since they were entering NCEA and were often just starting to learn more about science.

He hoped the money the team won for the school could go towards making some of the kits to use in class.

As for students looking to get into



Taita College students Malachi Rangī, 15, left, Marshall Kennedy-Newton, 14 and Brody Sowry, 15 took part in the first annual Hackathon at Victoria University Wellington.

science, Malachi had a message for them: “Just do it. You'll never find out if you don't try.”

The team's proposed kits cover

simple scientific experiments such as making soap or paper. They estimated kits would cost no more than \$15 each and would include easy-to-source, recyclable materials.

The Hackathon took place over two days late in February. Around 30 students took part and the contest was won by a team from Wellington High School and Onslow College for Crackerjack, an online program they designed to help teach chemistry.

Malachi and Eru's team wasn't the only success for Taita College. Marshall, Malachi and Brody all received \$120 spot prizes at the Hackathon - organisers wandering around the event kept an eye on the teams and handed out prizes for teamwork.

Taita College principal Karen Morgan said the students were outstanding ambassadors and able to apply their knowledge and skills to solve a problem.

