Students' learning wellbeing

in an Innovative Learning Environment

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Abstract

In the New Zealand context, students, whānau (extended family) and the wider community as well as the Ministry of Education have identified students' learning wellbeing as a matter of priority. Learning wellbeing is understood to be essential for students to feel safe and confident in themselves, and to engage and achieve in education and life beyond schooling. Correspondingly, in 2020, the New Zealand Government announced a funding initiative to promote the development of positive attitudes in students that would help them address learning challenges and achieve a sense of belonging and community. A particular focus within this initiative related to explicitly teaching about resilience and teachers developing ways of creating satisfying learning experiences for students. This initiative was introduced at a time when new design standards specifications regulated how refurbished classrooms and new schools were to align with the principles of Innovative Learning Environments (ILE). Interest in ILEs has arisen in response to national and international policy directives on the redesign of learning spaces. As yet, little is known about students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in such new types of learning spaces. My study aimed to contribute to addressing this gap.

To investigate relationships between students' learning wellbeing and new learning spaces, I used a single case study design with purposive sampling. Through this approach, I investigated students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in a newly built ILE school. For the purposes of my research, I defined students' learning wellbeing as a predominantly positive mood and attitude towards school learning experiences and challenges. Students demonstrating high learning wellbeing have positive relationships with other students and teachers, demonstrate everyday academic resilience, and experience a sense of satisfaction with their learning. For my project, I defined an ILE as an open-plan learning area where teachers facilitate personalised learning contexts. Other studies have found students are organised differently in these spaces from traditional classroom settings, with more than one teacher assigned to a larger cohort of students. These teachers commonly co-teach and combine subject areas, connected by cohesive teaching and assessment tasks. Other infrastructure elements include ubiquitous Wifi and a focus on learner agency. Both students and teachers participated in my research. Data collection took place via

participant-driven photo-elicitation, focus group and individual interviews, and documentary data analysis. I analysed participants' comments on their learning wellbeing thematically and inductively. By modifying the portraiture technique, I crafted three descriptive profiles of students' learning wellbeing. The portraits allowed me to make participant students' views visible, while protecting them as individuals, and create three categories of learning wellbeing.

My findings illustrate the value of the school's proactive approach to learning wellbeing through its learning wellbeing framework. It has three parts: 1) a dispositional curriculum focusing on students' everyday academic resilience, learner agency and self-regulation skills which are summed up in the CLOAK acronym; 2) Learning Advisors who foster the CLOAK values through individual, high quality mentoring, and 3) a badging system that functions as a recognition programme whereby students receive badges for displaying CLOAK values. Student data indicated that the three aspects of the learning wellbeing framework mutually inform and support each other to foster students' sense of learning wellbeing. The three-part learning wellbeing framework assisted students to make personalised learning choices in their curricular learning.

The three fictional portraits illustrate the characteristics of students with high learning wellbeing (HWB), medium learning wellbeing (MWB) and low learning wellbeing (LWB), offering a nuanced insight into students' various perspectives on their learning wellbeing. The portraits highlight that students' learning wellbeing is linked to their ability to make and act on positive learning choices: HWB students were distinguished by how they thrived in making learning choices while MWB and LWB students needed more support to make positive decisions for themselves as learners. The portraits point to a need to better understand the complexities in students' learning wellbeing in ILEs.

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To my family,
Laurence, I am lucky to have you by my side, thank you so much for your support and patience.
To my children Ida, Hilda and Heiko who enrich my life so much. Ich liebe Euch von ganzem Herzen.

I dedicate this thesis to my late father who, in his own way, taught me about the importance of wellbeing. Lieber Papa, ein Teil von Dir ist immer bei mir.

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Glossary

Ahurea Tuakiri	Ahurea Tuakiri refers to a person's cultural identity. In the study school, Ahurea Tuakiri refers to the concepts of Whakapapa, Tangata Whenuatanga and Hapori.
Ahurea Time	The study school devised Ahurea Time to build school culture and enhance students' wellbeing. Ahurea Time provides assemblies, Physical Education, pro-social programmes, specialised athlete training programmes, mindfulness activities and specific literacy or numeracy support for students in need.
Auaha Junior High School	Chosen pseudonym for the study school. Auaha means innovative in Māori.
BYOD	The school is a *Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)* school. Students use their own devices such as chromebooks, netbooks or laptops for learning and have access to Google Education products, such as Drive, Sheets and Docs.
CLOAK	The CLOAK is an acronym that represents the study school's values. It is viewed as an integral part of all learning at the school, supporting students' continuous growth towards personal and academic excellence. The CLOAK values are intended to foster students' abilities to manage their own learning and to make positive learning choices. The CLOAK acronym stands for - **C**hallenge your mindset - **L**earning is connected

	- **O**urselves as learners - **A**hurea tuakiri (cultural identity) - **K**indness and respect
CLOAK badging	The CLOAK badging programme tracks and assesses students' development of the CLOAK values. It aims to foster and support students' agency and their ability to self-regulate their learning. Students can obtain a blue, bronze, silver or gold badge for each CLOAK value. The colours imply degrees of challenge in recognising students' effort and achievement in displaying the specific value. Students pitch for a badge of their choice, by collating evidence and reflections of themselves displaying a certain CLOAK value across at least three Modules. The CLOAK badging process contains progressions for each CLOAK value, outlining specific criteria and making the CLOAK value tangible Students' acquisition of badges is celebrated. For instance, when students gain a gold badge they and their caregivers are invited to a special breakfast at the school.
Everyday academic resilience	This refers to a students' ability to successfully deal with the academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life. Students who display everyday academic resilience, bounce back from challenges such as poor grades, negative feedback, exam pressure or difficult schoolwork.
Flight Time	Flight Time is the term the school uses for courses designed for Yr9 and 10 students, giving them the opportunity to follow their interest, or explore activities they would like to know more about. Flight Times also supplement students' learning by utilising community expertise. Students who require

	specialist learning assistance are encouraged to use Flight Time to select courses to suit their needs.
Hapori	Hapori refers to a family or community.
Hapu	Hapu means subtribe in Māori. In the study school, a Hapu refers to a unit of approximately six Learning Advisories, designed to create a whānau-based environment. Students undertake a range of activities in their respective Hapu.
Hauora	Hauora is a Māori philosophy of health and wellbeing. This view on wellbeing comprises physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.
ILE	ILEs are open-plan learning areas where teachers facilitate personalised learning contexts. Teachers generally co-teach a large group of students. Other infrastructure elements include ubiquitous Wifi and use of digital technologies, along with mentoring programmes and dispositional curriculum.
ILT	At the study school, Independent Learning Time (ILT) provides students with the opportunity to work independently on tasks from their respective Modules. ILT occurs both during Learning Advisory Time and in Modules in dedicated time slots.
Iwi	Iwi means tribe in Māori. In the study school, an organisational principle is that several Hapu come together to form an iwi. There are three iwi in the study school, with four Hapu each.

Learner agency	Learner agency can be described as a complex mix of choices and reasoning associated with learner investment and motivation. Learner agency is closely linked with the idea of personalised learning. Agentic learners have a sense of accountability and control their own learning with teacher support.
Learning Advisory	Each student belongs to a Learning Advisory group for the duration of their time at the school. Advisories consist of approximately 20 students from year seven to ten (with students being 12 to 15 years old). One teacher is assigned as the Advisor for each group. Activities undertaken in Learning Advisory time are guided by the CLOAK values and the Learning Advisory Curriculum.
Learning Advisor	Advisors are seen as personal mentors who assist students in their personal learning journeys. Learning Advisors also enact the Learning Advisory Curriculum. For instance, Advisors are expected to establish strong relationships with each of the students in their Advisory and their students' whānau. Learning Advisors also monitor and reflect with students on their learning progress and they teach aspects of the Health curriculum.
Learning Advisory Curriculum	The study school devised a Learning Advisory Curriculum which is intended to teach the CLOAK values and the following aspects: - Whanaungatanga (students' sense of belonging and relationships at school) - learning to learn strategies (such as goal setting or reflection on learning)

	- social and emotional learning (explicit teaching of aspects of the Health Curriculum)
Learning wellbeing	Students' learning wellbeing describes a predominantly positive mood and attitude towards school learning experiences. Learning wellbeing is indicated by positive relationships with other students and teachers, everyday academic resilience, and a sense of satisfaction with learning experiences at school.
Modules	Modules organise Yr7 and 8 students' curricular learning. In Modules, students are encouraged to make learning choices for themselves. In Modules, Yr7 and 8 students are taught together. Two to three teachers co-teach 60 to 90 students, covering two curriculum areas. These two curriculum areas are assessed when students develop their personal Rich Learning Experience (RLE). Students create their own RLE with the help of teacher scaffolding. Yr7 and 8 students choose a set of three different Modules: - The first Module consists of English paired with another learning area - The second Module consists of Mathematics and Statistics paired with another learning area - The third Module contains two other learning areas - Yr7 and 8 students stay in their English and Mathematics and Statistics Modules for the entire year while their third Module changes after one semester (two terms).
Personalised learning	Personalised learning allows students to create their own learning programmes according to their needs and interests

	with teacher support. Students make choices about their own learning.
RLE	Rich Learning Experience (RLE). RLE refers to a project or artefact representing students' understanding of a context they learnt about in their respective Modules and Tautoro Modules.
Schoology	The school employs the learning platform Schoology as a learning management system (LMS) to manage and share learning content, submission of assessments and giving feedback and reporting assessment results.
Self-regulated learning	Self-regulation refers to students' constructive and intentional use of personal strategies to achieve academic and wellbeing goals. Self-regulation connects with the idea of personalised learning requiring forethought, planning, control and reflection.
Tangata Whenuatanga	Tangata Whenuatanga refers to the socio-cultural awareness and knowledge of the land (whenua) and the connection with the land.
Tautoro Modules	Tautoro Modules organise Yr9 and 10 students' curricular learning. Yr9 and 10s choose three Tautoro Modules per semester. Each Tautoro Module lasts one semester (two terms). Tautoro Modules are intended to promote learner agency, to foster the CLOAK dispositions and to prepare students for the senior school and post school life. In Tautoro Modules, students create their own personalised learning pathways. A Tautoro Module is taught by up to five teachers who work with up to 150 students. Students focus on two

	curriculum areas per Tautoro Module but there are opportunities to choose a combination of any two out of five curriculum areas. During the first term of a Tautoro Module, teachers individually teach important concepts of their learning areas during workshops. Students are in charge of organising which workshops to attend and when to schedule their Independent Learning Time. During the second term of a Tautoro Module, students develop their Rich Learning Experience (RLE) which reflects their understanding of a context that connected their learning from their two chosen learning areas.
Whānau	Family, including wider family and friends
Whanaungatanga	Sense of family connection. A relationship through shared experiences and working together, providing people with a sense of belonging.
Whakapapa	Whakapapa describes the acknowledgement of one's ancestry. It includes knowledge about family history and tracing of genealogy and is closely linked to a sense of identity.

Chapter one: Introduction and background

1.1 Background

Schools are important social institutions and students spend a large amount of time at school. The question is how schools could best contribute to students' overall wellbeing and in particular, students' learning wellbeing. Learning wellbeing focuses on students' attitudes towards school learning experiences. When teaching in a school that was built as an Innovative Learning Environment (ILE), I wondered how students felt about their learning experiences and how students perceived themselves as learners in the ILE. I also asked myself what helped students to deal with setbacks and challenges in the ILE. In New Zealand, The Ministry of Education acknowledges the importance of learning wellbeing, stating that those learners who feel safe and confident in themselves and their learning environments, are those who best engage and achieve in education and in life (Ministry of Education, 2020). Moreover, students, their whānau (the wider family), and the community identified wellbeing as a matter of priority (Ministry of Education, 2019c). In 2020, the government announced funding initiatives to support the development of students with a positive attitude towards challenges and a sense of belonging. A particular focus within these initiatives was the explicit teaching of resilience and the creation of satisfying learning experiences for students (Ministry of Education, 2020).

On a global scale, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as an organisation of economic development, has emphasised the importance for students to be lifelong learners (OECD, 2010). According to Gilbert (2005), a personalised education system can prepare students for the demands of a knowledge society since students' ability to think critically, self-regulate and adapt to new situations is recognised as being just as important as knowledge itself in the 21st century. The OECD published guidelines on how to facilitate these attributes, some of which gave rise to Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs) (OECD, 2010, 2013).

In response to the proposed changes to the education system just outlined, New Zealand began to develop education policies which focused on personalised learning experiences. At the same time, there was a growing recognition that some school buildings in New Zealand needed to

be improved or (re)built due to growth in local populations and the devastation of the Christchurch earthquakes (Starkey & Wood, 2021; Wright, 2018). In the light of these circumstances, the government announced a property plan to upgrade school buildings (Ministry of Education, 2011; 2019a). All new schools and refurbishments were to be built as Innovative (also called Modern or Flexible) Learning Spaces or Environments (Ministry of Education, 2021). Innovative Learning Environments require specific quality factors (such as acoustics, lighting and visual comfort, indoor air quality and thermal comfort) which are thought to contribute to students' and teachers' physical wellbeing. Prescribed features like breakout rooms and visual transparency (Ministry of Education, 2021) are intended to accommodate various learning activities and ILEs need to have the capacity to connect many groups of learners (Ministry of Education, 2021). These changes to schooling in NZ and innovations to learning spaces gave some schools the opportunity to make a fresh start and build different ways of thinking about curriculum and what type of learners the school wishes to produce. My study is situated in this dynamic context as I wish to investigate students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in an ILE.

1.2 What led me to start this project

Before beginning this study, I was a teacher in a brand new Innovative Learning Environment (ILE) school. I began there in 2016 and was involved in teaching teams with the aim of facilitating authentic, student-centred learning through an integrated curriculum in the open-plan design of the ILE. While I valued these experiences, I needed to complement my practical knowledge with a more theoretical understanding of best practice in an ILE. Like many teachers, I feel a sense of responsibility for my students' learning and wellbeing. Hence, I enrolled in the Doctor of Education Programme and started exploring the literature on teaching in ILEs as well as students' views on their own learning and wellbeing in ILEs. Through this exploration I realised that the limited literature on ILEs appears to neglect students' views of their learning experiences, leading me to wonder what characterises learning wellbeing in an ILE and how students perceive their learning wellbeing in an ILE. This question is at the core of my study. For convenience's sake (existing knowledge of the school, staff, students, culture and organisation), I chose to use the same ILE school in New Zealand in which I had taught.

1.3 The study school

My study examines how students perceive their learning wellbeing in an ILE. In order to frame my research, I will first describe the study school. My chosen pseudonym for the school is Auaha Junior High School. In order to protect the school and those who participated in the research, I have not included any websites which link to documents that I refer to. Instead, when I cite these documents, I will say "Auaha Junior High School website", "Auaha Junior High School prospectus" or "Auaha Junior High School blog".

Auaha Junior High School, a Yr7 to 10 (ages 11 to 15) middle school, opened in 2016, with 636 students across the four year levels. When I began my data collection in 2020, the roll had risen to approximately 1200 students. The school connects with a Yr11-13 (ages 15 to 17) senior school on the same campus. Auaha Junior High School deliberately fosters student agency through all aspects of its organisation and pedagogical practices. I wondered if this aim had anything to do with students' learning wellbeing and academic success. The physical design of the school is characterised by open learning spaces with movable furnishings. These features are thought to make collaboration for students and co-teachers easier than the types of spaces that have traditionally featured in New Zealand schools. The open learning design and movable furnishings are also intended to suit changing learning needs throughout the school day and facilitate access to technology and resources (Auaha Junior High School website).

Auaha Junior High School is a *Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)* school that uses e-learning strategies to assist students' learning in and out of school. Students use their own devices such as chromebooks, netbooks or laptops for learning and have access to Google Education products, such as Drive, Sheets and Docs. The school embeds these Google tools within Schoology, a learning management system (LMS). This LMS manages and shares learning content, assessment submission, teacher feedback and assessment results (Auaha Junior High School website).

At Auaha Junior High School, student agency is seen as student choice and ownership in learning. These aspects, in turn, are considered to require students to understand and reflect on themselves as learners and to self-manage, making decisions about their learning and setting goals in order to actively direct their own learning. Student agency is seen as key to students being flexible and adaptive in the future. The school describes personalisation as placing learners at the centre of their learning and using each students' whakapapa (knowledge about family history and

tracing of genealogy, see Glossary) to create authentic and relevant learning, fostering students' personal and academic success. Teachers responding to students' individual learning needs and fostering students' personal interests and strengths is an integral part of personalisation. The school views authentic learning contexts as relevant, real-life applications of learning that necessitate the integration of different learning areas (Auaha Junior High School prospectus).

More broadly, Auaha Junior High School developed a system to represent and articulate its values. This is the CLOAK. It is viewed as an integral part of all learning at the school, and the values are intended to foster students' abilities to manage their own learning and to make positive learning choices. The CLOAK acronym stands for

- **C**hallenge your mindset
- **L**earning is connected
- **O**urselves as learners
- **A**hurea tuakiri (cultural identity)
- **K**indness and respect

The first CLOAK value "**C**hallenge your mindset" focuses on perseverance, being adventurous in learning and adopting a positive mindset towards learning and learning challenges. The second CLOAK value, "**L**earning is connected" encourages students to think critically, creatively and to connect their thinking and learning. This value is thought to assist students to connect and merge subject areas to compose personalised learning pathways. "**O**urselves as learners" focuses on meta-learning, engagement and self-management, and aims for students to assume ownership and responsibility for their own learning. The CLOAK value of "Ahurea tuakiri" was a recent addition to the CLOAK acronym. "**A**hurea tuakiri" (cultural identity, see Glossary) is aimed at promoting students' reflection on themselves as persons, their values, individual backgrounds, morals and beliefs. "Ahurea tuakiri" contains the important concepts of Whakapapa, Tangata Whenuatanga and Hapori. Whakapapa describes the acknowledgement of one's ancestry. Tangata Whenuatanga refers to the socio-cultural awareness and knowledge of the land (whenua) and the connection with the land while Hāpori refers to a family or community. The value "**K**indness and respect" is aimed at fostering students' awareness and demonstration of Manaakitanga (kindness and support), Kaitiakitanga (guardianship and management of the environment), and Kotahitanga (unity and solidarity). Together, the dispositional CLOAK values are intended to promote students' abilities

to make positive learning choices as well as develop their confidence as learners and their aspiration for self-optimisation (Auaha Junior High School website).

To encourage students' engagement in these values as they undertake their learning at Auaha Junior High School, the school has developed a CLOAK badging programme. This badging programme encourages students to display the above mentioned CLOAK values. The CLOAK badging programme places importance on students' ability to reflect on how each value contributes to shaping their identity as learners. When students gain badges, they become signposts for students' development of the CLOAK values. The CLOAK badging process (see Appendix B) contains progressions for each CLOAK value, outlining specific criteria. The intention is to make each CLOAK value tangible (Auaha Junior High School website).

Students can obtain a blue, bronze, silver or gold badge for each CLOAK value, recognising students' effort and achievement in displaying the specific value. Students pitch for a badge, meaning that they collate evidence and reflections on themselves displaying a certain CLOAK value across at least three Modules or Tautoro Modules, so students must gather evidence from a wide number of sources. As students progress through the badges (blue to gold), the evidence they supply in support of their pitch is assessed by staff. Any teacher or the Learning Advisor can assign students a blue badge. When students collate three blue badges, their Learning Advisor will assign them a bronze badge. For a silver badge, it is the Hapu Leader's responsibility to assign the badge (see glossary) and for a gold pitch, students present their evidence to the Senior Leadership team about their chosen CLOAK value. The attainment of badges is celebrated. For instance, when students gain a gold badge, their caregivers are invited to a special breakfast at the school. It is of note that CLOAK badging is student-lead, meaning that students chose which badge they wish to pitch for and which evidence they would like to submit. Learning Advisors support students in this process (Auaha Junior High School website).

Structurally, each student belongs to a *Learning Advisory* group for the duration of their time at the school. Advisories consist of approximately 20 students from year seven to ten (with students being 11 to 14 years old) and one teacher is the Advisor of each group. Activities undertaken in Learning Advisory time are guided by the CLOAK values and the Learning Advisory Curriculum which is intended to foster students':

- Sense and understanding of Whanaungatanga (students' sense of belonging and relationships at school)

- Learning to learn strategies (such as goal setting or reflection on learning)
- Social and emotional learning (explicit teaching of aspects of the Health Curriculum)

Advisors act as personal coaches who enact the Learning Advisory Curriculum. For instance, Advisors are expected to establish strong relationships with whānau of learners in their Learning Advisory. Advisors discuss learning progress with individual learners, offer advice, and mentor students‘ learning progress. Advisors also teach aspects of the Health curriculum. Students attend a Learning Advisory every morning for 15 minutes. Learning Advisory and Hapu time also includes three timetabled blocks (90 minute duration each) per week. Hapu refers to a unit of approximately six Learning Advisories, designed to create a whānau-based community (see glossary). In these larger Hapu groups, students undertake a range of activities. For instance, Ahurea Time is dedicated to building school culture and enhancing students' wellbeing through assemblies, Physical Education, specialised athlete training programmes, mindfulness activities and specific literacy or numeracy support for students in need. Ahurea Time also provides pro-social programmes, while Independent Learning Time (ILT) means students can work independently on tasks from their respective Modules. ILT occurs both during Learning Advisory Time and in Modules and Tautoro Modules in dedicated time slots. ILT also means it is harder for students to argue they have no time to complete their academic work (Auaha Junior High School prospectus).

Modules and Tautoro Modules organise curricular learning. Yr7 and 8 (aged 11 and 12) students are taught together in Modules and Yr9 and 10 (aged 14 and 15) students are taught together in Tautoro Modules. Students are offered a range of Modules to choose from, under guidance from their Learning Advisor. It is important that students gain experience and exposure to all curriculum areas in this middle school. To demonstrate their learning, students develop a personalised Rich Learning Experience (RLE), which can be either a project or artefact that offers evidence of their learning growth (Auaha Junior High School prospectus).

For Yr7 and 8 students, each Module contains 60 to 90 students and is co-taught by two to three teachers, covering two subject areas. Yr7 and 8 students are given learning choices which are scaffolded by teachers. For instance, teachers provide integrated learning tasks for the students, covering two curriculum areas and students are given choices in the way they demonstrate their learning. These two curriculum areas are assessed when students develop their personalised Rich

Learning Experience (RLE). Students create their own RLE with the help of teachers' scaffolding. Yr7 and 8 students choose a set of three different Modules that are organised as follows:

1. The first Module consists of English paired with another learning area
2. The second Module consists of Mathematics and Statistics paired with another learning area
3. The third Module contains two other learning areas

Yr7 and 8 students stay in their English and Mathematics and Statistics Modules for the entire year while their third Module changes after one semester (two terms).

Yr9 and 10 (aged 13 and 14) have three Tautoro Modules (one semester/ two terms long) which are designed to afford students with more learning choices. Tautoro Modules aim to promote student agency and to foster the CLOAK dispositions, initiate students into their learning in the senior school and, it is hoped, beyond school. In Tautoro Modules, students create their own personalised learning pathways in consultation with their Learning Advisors, and are scaffolded as follows (Auaha Junior High School prospectus).

A Tautoro Module is taught by up to five teachers for up to 150 students. While Yr9 and 10 students continue to focus on two curriculum areas per Tautoro Module, there are opportunities to choose a combination of any two of five curriculum areas. During the first term of Tautoro Modules, teachers individually teach important concepts of their learning areas during workshops. For this purpose, each 90minute block is divided into three 30 minute sessions per block, totalling nine sessions a week. Teachers inform students through Schoology of the workshop timetable. Some workshops are repeated to avoid clashes between curriculum areas. Students choose which workshops to attend and when to schedule their Independent Learning Time (ILT) which allows them to concentrate on their respective learning tasks (Auaha Junior High School blog).

Teaching teams meet weekly to discuss individual students' progress and to review which concepts need covering. When teachers see overlaps between learning areas, they provide co-taught workshops for students. Once students make progress in their respective learning areas, teachers run workshops in pairs, covering essential curriculum concepts and exploring possible connections between the two learning areas. During the second term of Tautoro, students typically develop their Rich Learning Experience (RLE) which reflects their understanding of a context that connected their learning from their two chosen learning areas (Auaha Junior High School blog).

Flight Times exist for Yr9 and 10 students only. They are timetabled classes, within which students follow their own interest, or explore activities they would like to know more. This is the only time when students do not merge different subject areas. Each Flight Time course is offered each term. The topics are responsive to students' interests and needs. Flight Times also supplement students' learning through engaging with community expertise. Students who require specialist learning assistance are encouraged to use Flight Time to select courses to suit their needs (Auaha Junior High School website). The structures above are briefly described in the Glossary.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised as follows. Chapter One outlines my motivation for my topic and broadly introduces the school and its structures.

Chapter two reviews relevant literature about learning wellbeing and ILEs. I commence with a definition of students' learning wellbeing and the indicators of this that are used in my study. These indicators are students' relationships at school, their everyday academic resilience, and satisfaction with learning experiences. Then the literature on learning wellbeing in traditional classroom settings is analysed. I examine this literature in order to frame the conditions that students in ILEs are learning in. The focus then shifts to a definition and analysis of studies on ILEs with a particular focus on personalised learning, open plan learning spaces and digital technologies. Following this, the literature on students' learning wellbeing in ILEs is synthesised as a context for my research questions.

Chapter three outlines my chosen methodology, methods and analysis. Together they help me to outline the interpretivist framework and my reasons for choosing it to explore my research questions. Then I explain my research approach, including the use of a case study and photo-elicitation, interviews and documentary data as methods of data collection. I situate the data collection in the events of the COVID-19 pandemic and explain and justify amendments made to my methods. I then show how my inductive approach to reflexive thematic analysis assisted me to foreground students' perspectives about their learning wellbeing. I also demonstrate my engagement with the literature when developing themes that led to the representation of my findings through the portraiture technique. I conclude the chapter by identifying quality standards for interpretivist researchers and ethical considerations.

Chapter four and five are the findings chapters. In Chapter Four I present educators' views on students' learning wellbeing, providing the reader with an in-depth understanding of the people and structures in the study ILE.

Chapter five presents data and findings from students' perspectives on the structures that sustained their learning wellbeing in the study ILE. At first, I report findings on the role of the CLOAK values, the CLOAK badging programme and Learning Advisors in shaping students' positive attitudes towards learning wellbeing. Next, I outline the impact of personalised learning structures in Modules, Tautoro Modules, and Flight Times on students' learning wellbeing. I then outline the impact of particular physical and organisational ILE features, such as open plan learning spaces and the use of digital technologies, in relation to students' learning wellbeing. While not the focus of this study, students' home learning experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown are touched on. The chapter concludes with fictional portraits of students with high, medium and low learning wellbeing, synthesising the themes which arose.

Chapter six, the discussion, brings together key findings and literature, exposing key themes and ideas of significance. At first, I relate the impact of a multifaceted, school-wide framework for students' learning wellbeing to the existing literature on learning wellbeing in ILEs. Then, I discuss my findings on students' learning wellbeing in relation to the choices students have in their personalised learning pathways, the physical learning environment and the digital learning environment. An interpretive discussion of the three portraits as they pertain to the research questions follows. The impact of a COVID-19 lockdown on students' learning wellbeing is discussed. Limitations of the study are then outlined. I conclude with implications and my contribution to the field. Important implications for the study school are suggested, followed by implications for educators (such as principals, teachers), providers of professional development and policy makers, as well as for architects. Future avenues for research are recommended. The concluding section of Chapter Six summarises the major contributions of my research.

Chapter two: Literature review

This review focuses on student learning wellbeing in a school setting, specifically adolescent learning wellbeing in an ILE. This narrow focus assisted me to bound my literature scope to students' learning wellbeing in a specific educational context. I recognise the crucial complementary insights from sociocultural and psychological perspectives on learning wellbeing. Reviewing seminal works from both sociocultural and a psychological perspectives helped me to meld these two perspectives when characterising learning wellbeing in an ILE context.

Section 2.1 reviews ideas about students' learning wellbeing and how it connects with the context of my study. I devote substantial attention to research on learning wellbeing in traditional classroom settings given the dearth of research into learning wellbeing in ILEs. This section also details indicators for learning wellbeing. ILEs are becoming more widely established across New Zealand. To understand the nature and implications of this development, in section 2.2 I define ILEs as they are viewed in my study. In the final part of this review (section 2.3) I draw together ideas from studies on ILEs and learning wellbeing, and introduce my research questions.

2.1 Students' learning wellbeing and its indicators

This section provides a brief introduction to student learning wellbeing, leading into a definition of student learning wellbeing that I intend to employ in my study. Subsequently, indicators of students' learning wellbeing are outlined and pertinent results from the literature synthesised.

2.1.1 Students' learning wellbeing

There is a wide range of definitions of wellbeing, depending on context. While wellbeing is defined slightly differently in economic, health, philosophical, sociological and psychological perspectives (Grimes & Grimes, 2015; Hattie et al., 2004; Sengupta et al., 2012), these are not appropriate for my investigation. My project is centred on students' learning wellbeing in an ILE and therefore I focused my attention on positive education which is a relatively new subdiscipline of positive

psychology. Positive education aims to understand conditions and processes that contribute to wellbeing of individuals, groups and institutions (Noble & McGrath, 2018). This focus helped me review literature on adolescents' learning wellbeing in relation to school contexts. I use the term *learning wellbeing* because I wish to emphasise wellbeing in relation to students' learning.

Four broad definitions of wellbeing in relation to school and or learning appear relevant. Student learning wellbeing has been defined as a harmonious emotional state (Engels et al., 2004, p. 128), in which students "are functioning effectively" in a school setting (Fraillon, 2004, p. 24), or feeling "good" at school (De Fraine et al., 2005, p. 297). These definitions of student learning wellbeing follow either the *hedonistic* or *eudaimonic* perspectives on wellbeing (Kahneman, 1999; Waterman, 1993). According to the *hedonic* view, wellbeing comprises high levels of happiness or pleasure and reduced levels of pain (Kahneman, 1999) while the *eudaimonic* perspective focuses on notions of self-worth, the realisation of individuals' potential as well as their psychological and social functioning (Waterman, 1993).

One further definition appears to refer to both the affective and the functioning dimensions of student learning wellbeing. According to this definition, it includes both the *hedonic* and *eudaimonic* perspectives and offers a holistic view on student learning wellbeing. In other words, it suggests that learning wellbeing refers to positive feelings, attitudes and relationships as well as resilience, and satisfaction with learning experiences (Noble et al., 2008; Noble & McGrath, 2015). This broader view appears reasonable since the *hedonistic* and *eudaimonic* perspectives complement rather than exclude each other (Brugha, 2015). Noble et al. (2008) established this definition to describe a holistic and comprehensive approach to students' learning wellbeing in Australia. Their definition of learning wellbeing has subsequently been used by many researchers (for instance, Anderson & Graham, 2016; Madden et al., 2020; McGrath & Noble, 2012; Noble & McGrath, 2018; Waters, 2011) and educational organisations such as the New Zealand Education Review Office (Education Review Office, 2016). Noble et al.'s (2008) work therefore establishes a solid foundation for an holistic understanding of adolescent wellbeing in school settings. For these reasons I draw on their work to define students' learning wellbeing for my own study, which is:

> Students' learning wellbeing describes a predominantly positive mood and attitude towards school learning. Learning wellbeing is indicated by positive

relationships with other students and teachers, everyday academic resilience, and a sense of satisfaction with learning experiences at school.

I intend exploring students' perspectives on their own learning wellbeing within a relatively newly built ILE school. For this reason it is essential for me to identify and select indicators that might reflect students' attitudes to their learning wellbeing (Holfve-Sabel, 2104). The next section sets out indicators of student learning wellbeing: relationships, everyday academic resilience, and satisfaction with learning experiences as documented in the literature. I summarise findings from research in traditional learning environments as a precursor to a discussion about research on student learning wellbeing in ILEs. First, research on students' perspectives on their relationships at school will be explored. Then the literature on students' perspectives on their everyday academic resilience as well as teaching approaches to build resilience will be synthesised. Finally, the literature on students' satisfaction with school related learning experiences will be examined.

2.2.2 Relationships

Survey-based studies on students' perspectives of their relationships at school demonstrate connections between positive relationships at school and student learning wellbeing. Interview-based studies offer richer details regarding students' perspectives on the quality of their relationships with peers and teachers. This section investigates these collective findings and relates them to my intention of conducting an interview-based study.

Students' perspectives explored through surveys

An extensive corpus of literature suggests a strong link between students' perceptions of their relationships at school and student learning wellbeing (Aldridge et al., 2016; Anderson & Graham, 2016; Averill, 2012; Carroll et al., 2017; Holfve-Sabel, 2014; Lester & Cross, 2015; Simmons et al., 2015; Soutter et al., 2012; Suldo et al., 2008). Relationships amongst peers (Lester & Cross, 2015) and teacher-student relationships (Jose et al., 2012) appear to play a significant role in students' learning wellbeing. For example, Lester and Cross's (2015) large-scale Australian study investigated links between learning wellbeing and school climate factors, such as social connectedness, relationships and safety, during students' transition from primary to secondary

school. Over three years, Lester and Cross administered a questionnaire four times to students between 11 and 14 years of age. The questionnaire asked students to indicate their perceived levels of learning wellbeing related to school climate factors. Positive relationships amongst students were found to increase students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing during their transition from primary to secondary school, indicating potential connections between peer relationships and student learning wellbeing. This is a possible connection I can be mindful of in my study. In contrast, Jose et al.'s (2012) extensive New Zealand study stressed the importance of teacher-student relationships for learning wellbeing. Students from a variety of schools including primary, intermediate and secondary schools were surveyed. Jose et al. examined the impact of social connectedness, (i.e. across family, peer, community and school) on students' learning wellbeing over three years for 10-15 year old students. The students in Jose et al.'s (2012) study who reported positive relationships with teachers also reported higher levels of learning wellbeing, perhaps demonstrating the importance of positive teacher-student relationships for students' learning wellbeing. In short, these two survey-based studies indicate a strong link between students' perceptions of their relationships at school and their learning wellbeing. Gaining students' perceptions on these matters is therefore crucial if I am to understand learner wellbeing in my case study school.

Students' perspectives explored through interviews

Interview-based studies tend to offer more nuanced insights into students' perceptions of relationships and their impact on students' learning wellbeing than survey-based investigations. For instance, Simmons et al. (2015) explored how wellbeing was understood and facilitated in Australian schools through semi-structured focus group interviews with students. The interviews incorporated, depending on participants' ages, a mix of verbal, written and drawing activities that invited students to describe an ideal school for promoting learning wellbeing. Students from all age levels (6 to 17 years old) identified the importance of relationships to maintain learning wellbeing. Moreover, different age groups vocalised distinct needs in terms of their relationships. For example, 5 and 6-year-old students tended to value the emotional support and care offered through positive relationships, while 12-year-old students emphasised the importance of social inclusion as well as mutual respect from peers and teachers. Simmons et al.'s study not only confirms the importance of relationships for learning wellbeing but also demonstrates differences

across different age groups. Their findings also demonstrate students' ability to articulate their experiences of learning wellbeing when given the chance to do so. Similarly, Powell et al.'s (2018) research investigated students' views on learning wellbeing and how this is best facilitated. They gathered data through policy analysis, quantitative surveys and 67 focus group interviews (606 primary and secondary school students from 18 different schools). Students provided rich accounts of how they perceived their learning wellbeing and stressed the central role of relationships for their learning wellbeing. Students valued teachers who demonstrated care, support and encouragement. These teachers made an effort to converse with students, saw them as individuals, offered mentoring and made learning enjoyable. Friends represented a major source of support for students' learning wellbeing, for friends provided support, encouragement, understanding, constancy, guidance and humour.

Soutter et al.'s (2012) interview-based New Zealand study examined senior secondary students' and teachers' understanding of students' learning wellbeing through interviews (individual or small group) and classroom observations. Both staff and student findings identified that strong peer and teacher relationships lead to positive school cultures. In turn, this culture was seen to influence learning wellbeing. The quality of their relationships appeared to indicate positive learning wellbeing, especially when, as student data revealed, their relationships with teachers were based on mutual respect. When students felt treated like young adults, the approach fostered positive relationships with their teachers, which in turn positively influenced learning wellbeing. Soutter et al.'s study illustrates that students are able to voice nuanced perspectives about specific school relationships and their wellbeing. Soutter et al.'s findings also suggest that age/maturity affects students' perceptions of their relationships at school.

In brief, such literature indicates connections between peer and student-teacher relationships and students' learning wellbeing. Both peer and teacher relationships appear to be important. These findings are relevant to my study since I explore 11 to 15-year-old students' perspectives on their own learning wellbeing in an ILE. It is my hope that focus group and individual interviews will assist me to explore students' views in some depth and offer the kinds of richness visible in Simmons et al.'s (2015), Powell et al.'s (2018) and Soutter et al.'s (2012) studies.

2.1.3 Everyday academic resilience

There is consensus within the broader literature that resilience and wellbeing more generally are closely linked (Harms et al., 2018; Hu et al., 2015; Kuntz et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2017; Waxman et al., 2003). However, less research attention seems to have been given to *students' views on their everyday academic resilience in relation to their learning wellbeing* in school contexts. This is the link I first explore. Next, I review the literature for studies on possible interconnections between students' perceived resilience, learning wellbeing and relationships at school. Finally, I draw on the literature to identify approaches that may foster resilience in educational settings as these approaches are related to students' perceived resilience, which I will investigate through my research.

Students' perspectives

Resilience is likely to be important to my investigation, because it is usually defined as the ability to bounce back and adapt to challenges (Noble et al., 2016; Reeve et al., 2020). In schooling contexts, everyday academic resilience, or 'academic buoyancy' is defined as "students' ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life" (Martin & Marsh, 2008, p. 54). Everyday academic resilience is about how students cope with (or bounce back from) low-level adversities, such as poor grades, negative feedback, exam pressure or difficult schoolwork. Everyday academic resilience focuses on negotiating these ups and downs of daily school life (Martin & Marsh, 2008). The phrase everyday academic resilience is one that is likely to feature in my analysis of student data as I find out about their learning wellbeing. Students with high levels of everyday academic resilience apparently display adaptive behaviours which appear to be crucial to being academically resilient (Riley & Masten, 2005). These behaviours include seeking and accepting support or encouragement, reflecting on strengths and weaknesses, devising new learning strategies and altering approaches or increasing effort (Cassidy, 2016; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Significant predictors of everyday academic resilience include low anxiety and self-efficacy, which is students' positive belief that they can organise and carry out the actions required to achieve their goals (Bandura, 1997). Other predictors include control, planning, persistence and positive teacher-student relationships (Martin & Marsh, 2008, 2006, 2003). In turn, everyday academic resilience appears to predict enjoyment of school and class participation (Martin & Marsh, 2006). For instance, Martin and Marsh's (2006) survey

of 402 Yr11 and 12 Australian high school students at two schools, found that anxiety was the strongest (negative) predictor of everyday academic resilience. They also examined predictors of everyday academic resilience with more than 500 Yr8 and 10 students in five Australian high schools who rated their everyday academic resilience at two points in the school year: half-way and at the end (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Low anxiety, self-efficacy, academic engagement and teacher-student relationships were significant predictors of academic resilience on both occasions. Martin and Marsh (2008) stressed the pivotal role of anxiety in contributing negatively to everyday academic resilience. They suggested several ways for teachers to reduce students' anxiety and perhaps foster everyday academic resilience. These strategies included:

- Minimising the link students make between their achievement and their own self-worth
- Shifting students' focus to effort and learning strategies which are within students' control
- Creating co-operative instead of competitive learning environments
- Viewing poor performance as opportunities for improvement

In addition, Martin and Marsh (2006) recommend teachers foster students' self-efficacy, in order to raise students' everyday academic resilience in the following ways:

- Encouraging students' positive beliefs about their capabilities
- Increasing students' ability to plan and persist in learning tasks by assisting students to set learning goals and work towards the achievements of these goals where these are likely to lead to academic success and hence enhance students' self-efficacy
- Fostering students' sense of control by showing them how their effort and learning strategies are crucial to accomplish learning tasks (Martin & Marsh, 2006, p. 278)

It is likely that these pointers will aid my investigation, because they may indicate students' learning wellbeing in an ILE. It is possible that students with high levels of everyday academic resilience who have high levels of self-efficacy and low anxiety may feel positive about their learning and hence their learning wellbeing.

The few studies that explored *students' perspectives of their own resilience and learning wellbeing* confirm connections between resilience and wellbeing (Ager et al., 2011; Aldridge et al., 2016). For example, Ager et al. (2011) investigated students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing, demonstrating connections between everyday academic resilience and students'

learning wellbeing. Students aged 7 to 12 rated their learning wellbeing on a scale before and after being in a resiliency-increasing programme or in a control group. A comparison of the pre- and post- assessment data demonstrated that students in the intervention group perceived a significantly higher increase in learning wellbeing than students in the control group. Hence, Ager et al. (2011) propose that fostering everyday academic resilience can lead to improved learning wellbeing. Aldridge et al.'s (2016) extensive study, also conducted in Australia, investigated students' feeling of learning wellbeing, everyday academic resilience when facing learning challenges, life satisfaction, ethnic identity, moral identity and school climate variables such as peer relationships, teacher support and school connectedness. They surveyed 2202 students, aged 12 to 17 years, using a scale for each investigated item. Findings demonstrated that students who perceived higher levels of wellbeing also reported a greater sense of resilience. Students perceiving greater teacher support, peer and school connectedness were also more likely to report a greater sense of resilience. The model of the relationships between the study variables they developed demonstrated that students' everyday academic resilience positively impacted students' learning wellbeing. The model therefore connects everyday academic resilience and learning wellbeing. Aldridge et al.'s (2016) findings appear to demonstrate a link between learning wellbeing, everyday academic resilience and relationships at school. Together these may be important factors for my research to take account of, and while their study took place in Australia, their findings also resonate in New Zealand studies.

In New Zealand, for example, the survey-based study by Sanders et al. (2016), captured 12 to 17-year-old students' views on resilience. Their findings highlight that strong teacher-student *relationships* seem to positively influence everyday academic resilience. This was significant for students identified as "at-risk", who reported higher levels of resilience when teachers had built supportive relationships with them. Sanders and colleagues' findings offer an insight into connections between relationships and resilience as indicators of learning wellbeing in New Zealand secondary schools and reinforce my need to be mindful of such connections when I analyse my data.

Resiliency-building interventions

Since I will investigate students' perceptions about their everyday academic resilience and learning wellbeing in a specific school, it is important to ascertain what pedagogies can contribute to resilience-building. In their quantitative study, Blackwell et al. (2007) designed two programmes, one was about study skills while the other one was about study skills *and* incremental theory (also called a growth mindset). Incremental theory not only assumes that intellectual ability is malleable but also that it can be grown over time and that students can overcome challenges with effort, appropriate strategies and help from others. The two programmes were delivered to four intakes of middle school students: 373 students from the age of 12 to 15 years. Students' mathematics grades were tracked before, throughout and at the end of the intervention to indicate students' everyday academic resilience when facing learning challenges. On average, students' marks in the study skills group stayed the same, while students' marks in the study skills and incremental theory group improved over the two years. Blackwell et al. (2007) concluded that teaching incremental theory was not only a significant predictor of students' mathematics achievement but also of everyday academic resilience. Similarly, Yeager et al. (2014) demonstrated that a short and explicit teaching session of incremental theory could foster resilience. At the beginning of a school year, Yeager et al. (2014) taught 82 students aged 12 to 13 about the malleability of intellectuality (incremental theory) or about the malleability of athletic ability. Yeager et al. (2014) compared students' grades over the course of the year and found that students in the incremental theory group had a higher academic performance over the study period. Yeager et al. (2014) concluded that teaching incremental theory may promote everyday academic resilience as indicated through students' achievement. Together, these studies suggest that teaching students that they can overcome learning challenges through effort, suitable strategies and help from others appears to have a positive effect on their everyday academic resilience. Even though the reviewed studies are based on interventions, they assist me in identifying resiliency-building approaches for my research as I will investigate students' perspectives on their resilience in relation to learning wellbeing in an ILE.

In their comprehensive literature review, Duckworth et al. (2009), pointed towards a possible link between students' growth mindset, their ability to self-regulate learning and their learning wellbeing. Duckworth et al. claim that students' reflection on learning experiences as well as their forethought and perseverance is positively impacted by a growth mindset. Students with a

growth mindset are likely to reflect on experiences of failure as opportunities to grow and therefore try new learning strategies instead of giving up. For this reason, Duckworth et al. advocate that frameworks of self-regulated learning that incorporate explicitly teaching a growth-mindset may link well to schools' wider wellbeing agendas. Again, these findings are relevant to my study as I explore students' perceived learning wellbeing in an ILE which has an emphasis on self-regulated learning strategies.

In sum, the limited research into students' perspectives on their own resilience in relation to their learning wellbeing shows a connection between everyday academic resilience and learning wellbeing. Furthermore, the studies by Aldridge et al. (2016) and Sanders et al. (2016) demonstrated that everyday academic resilience, relationships at school and learning wellbeing are interconnected. In addition, there is some evidence that teaching practices can influence students' resilience. However, the research literature that I have been able to locate has not elicited students' views of their own resilience using qualitative research methods. To address this, I intend to explore students' perspectives on their own resilience and wellbeing in learning in an ILE through interviews.

2.1.4 Satisfaction with learning experiences

This section explores students' perspectives and satisfaction with their learning experiences in traditional classroom settings in relation to learning wellbeing. In this section I develop the third of Noble et al.'s indicators of students' learning wellbeing: "satisfaction with the nature, quality and relevance of their learning experiences at school" (2008, p. 31). In the context of my research, satisfaction is defined as a student's cognitive-affective evaluation of their learning experiences (Lodi et al., 2019). While research into a possible link between students' satisfaction with learning experiences regarding their learning wellbeing seems to be limited, I summarise three studies that relied on surveys to explore a possible connection between students' satisfaction with school and learning experiences and students' learning wellbeing. I begin with research conducted in Finland.

In their study, Katja et al. (2002) investigated the relationship between students' learning wellbeing, school satisfaction, and health behaviour in Finland. A total of 245 students aged 12 to 17 years were surveyed. School satisfaction was assessed through questions relating to the

enjoyment of schoolwork, which appeared to be a reliable predictor of learning wellbeing. Students who expressed high levels of school satisfaction also perceived higher levels of learning wellbeing as indicated through positive moods and attitudes (Katja et al., 2002). Perhaps this may mean that enjoying schoolwork may relate to students' learning experiences and such links between schoolwork-related school satisfaction and learning wellbeing may help my investigation. Correspondingly, I will investigate the potential relationship between students' satisfaction with the nature of their learning experiences and students' perception of their learning wellbeing.

In another study, Løhre et al. (2010) explored links between students' learning wellbeing, school work satisfaction and enjoyment and academic support in Norway. A questionnaire was administered to 423 students between the ages of seven and 16 years. School work satisfaction and enjoyment as well as academic support was shown to associate with students' learning wellbeing. As Løhre et al. (2010) noted, factors affecting students' learning wellbeing related to their lessons, indicating that students' learning experiences may impact students' learning wellbeing. Again, these findings relate to my investigation of students' perspectives of their learning experiences in relation to their perceived learning wellbeing, although Løhre et al.'s findings (2010) did not specify if and how students were satisfied with the nature and quality of their learning experiences.

In a study conducted in the USA, Zullig et al. (2011) investigated the influence of academic satisfaction and academic support (amongst a total of eight school climate domains) on student school satisfaction, using a questionnaire which was administered to 2,049 students aged 12 to 18. They found that students who received higher levels of academic support and academic satisfaction also reported higher levels of school satisfaction. They concluded that academic support and academic satisfaction may have an impact on the quality of students' school experiences as a whole and hence students' sense of learning wellbeing. Such ideas offer guidance for my own research project.

To review, I define learning wellbeing as involving a positive mood and attitude regarding school learning experiences, indicated by positive relationships with other students and teachers, everyday academic resilience, and a sense of satisfaction with learning experiences. This section has explored these themes, drawing on evidence from studies in traditional classroom settings, and identified that students perceive their relationships with teachers and other students to be important for their learning wellbeing. The reviewed literature also suggests there may be connections between students' everyday academic resilience and their learning wellbeing. However, it appears

that students' perspectives of their own everyday academic resilience in relation to learning wellbeing has received very little attention. While the link between both life and school satisfaction and learning wellbeing has been well established, possible links between students' satisfaction *with their learning experience* and students' learning wellbeing has not been explored through qualitative methods in traditional classroom settings. The following section examines the literature on ILEs.

2.2 Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs)

This section frames students' learning experiences in ILEs as they pertain to students' learning wellbeing: Firstly, I define ILEs with a focus on pedagogies relevant to them, such as personalised learning. Secondly, I review the literature on personalised learning in relation to ILE spaces and digital technologies. Thirdly, I suggest possible implications for students' learning experiences in relation to students' wellbeing as part of learning. This section incorporates both students and teachers' views since literature focusing solely on students' views appears to be scarce.

2.2.1 Defining ILEs

Despite an increasing number of policies about and studies into ILEs, there appears to be a lack of consensus as to what an ILE constitutes. This absence of consensus is reflected in the variety of terms used such as Innovative Learning Environment (ILE), Modern Learning Environment (MLE) and Quality Learning Environment (QLE). These terms are often used interchangeably, reflecting nuances in the authors' perspectives of the idea as well as different political contexts. I use the term ILE in this proposal in the way Benade (2021, p. 12) advocates. That is, I use the term ILE to "denote a whole school that is built in a flexible, non-traditional style", a definition which is congruent with the learning environment my study.

Definitions of ILEs typically denote a pedagogical and spatial dimension with strong references to the use of digital technologies and the internet (see for example Benade, 2017a; McPhail, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2019b; OECD, 2013; Prain et al., 2015b; Starkey & Wood,

2021; Wells et al., 2018; Wright, 2018; Wright et al., 2021). I discuss the implications of each of these dimensions next.

Pedagogical dimensions of ILEs

ILE contexts tend to focus on ***personalised learning*** (McPhail, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2019b; OECD, 2013; Osborne, 2013; Prain et al., 2015a; Wells et al., 2018). Personalised learning refers to students making choices for their learning and creating their own learning programme (Deed et al., 2014; Leadbeater, 2006). Following their interest and passions is meant to motivate students "to learn because they view the learning task or experience as engaging and meaningful, and as directly addressing immediate and/or longer-term learning needs" (Prain et al., 2015a, p. 13). Within ILE contexts, teachers tend to focus on offering students sufficient opportunities and support to develop their ability to make decisions and to self-regulate their learning (Ketelaar et al., 2013). Moreover, teachers are advised to provide multiple options for students to access learning content and to demonstrate their understanding (Byers, 2015; Byers et al., 2014), thereby catering for the diverse needs of students (Sigurðardóttir & Hjartarson, 2016). In ILEs, teachers tend to co-teach in such contexts; multiple teachers share a teaching space and collaboratively teach a group of learners in a shared space (Benade, 2017b; Sigurðardóttir & Hjartarson, 2016). This allows teachers to better cater for diverse students' needs, and provide diverse learning opportunities. Moreover, co-teaching allows teachers to combine their expertise when facilitating personalised learning experiences that are authentic and intersubject-based. Some scholars (compare Benade, 2017; McPhail, 2016; Wright, 2018) argue that combining subjects may provide different opportunities for meaningful learning and the possibility of fostering students' ability to recognise commonalities between subjects.

Mentoring programmes and dispositional curriculum

The regular and time-intense mentoring programmes, commonplace in many ILEs, have been shown to provide pastoral and academic guidance as well as individual support and encouragement to small groups of 16-20 students (REFS). These mentoring programmes are intended to assist students' in their personalised learning journeys (Farrelly & Lovejoy, 2015; Farrelly, 2014; Wright, 2018). Emerging research demonstrates that these programmes may assist students' in self-regulating their learning and to make positive learning choices (Farrelly & Lovejoy, 2015;

Farrelly, 2014; Wright, 2018). Possible impact of mentoring programmes and dispositional curriculum on students' learning wellbeing will be addressed in section. 2.3.1.

Spatial dimensions of ILEs

In the context of ILEs, ***spatial feature\s*** tend to be characterised by flexible, open plan designs and movable furnishings (Blackmore et al., 2011; McPhail, 2016; Wells et al., 2018; Wright, 2018). In New Zealand, the MOE has issued rules for the spatial design of ILEs which, in the latest iteration, are referred to as Quality Learning Spaces (QLS) (Ministry of Education, 2019b). QLS refers to physical aspects such as appropriate lighting, access to digital technology, acoustics, heating and air quality. Moreover, QLSs contain multiple zones which accommodate various teaching and learning approaches. For instance, bigger learning areas accommodate larger class sizes, while smaller break-out spaces can be used to facilitate workshops for smaller groups of students (Ministry of Education, 2019b). These spatial features represent a considerable shift from features of traditional single cell classrooms (Benade, 2017; Bradbeer et al., 2017; Byers, 2015; Byers et al., 2014). ILE furniture tends to be moveable in order to allowing shifts in pedagogical practices. The rationale is that "personalised, authentic and project-based learning requires collaboration, easy transition from one activity to a different activity, and the rapid dissolution of groups and reformation of new groups" (Benade, 2017b, p. 46). In this way, moveable furnishing in open-plan spaces provide teachers with the necessary flexibility for personalised learning.

Digital technologies and the internet in ILEs

There is evidence in the literature that *digital technologies* and the internet are omnipresent in ILEs so that both students and teachers use a range of digital devices as learning tools (Benade, 2017; McPhail, 2016; Wright, 2018). The suggestion is that digital technologies can assist students in their learning while making innovative and personalised teaching and learning approaches more accessible in ways that more traditional and analogue methods may not (Benade, 2017; Bradbeer et al., 2017). Digital technologies may assist students in gaining self-regulatory skills. However, teachers need to teach these skills explicitly (Fletcher et al., 2020). In this sense, teachers are responsible for teaching students appropriate self-regulation strategies when using their devices (Ryan et al., 2021).

It is important to note however that an ILE, in contrast to so-called QLS, is defined by the sum of its characteristics rather than each characteristic in isolation (Wright, 2018). It is the combination and "delicate balance" (Coleman & Luton, 2021, p. 173) of distinctive pedagogical, spatial and technological features that create the potential for innovative learning in an ILE. Therefore, in the context of my study, ILEs are defined as follows:

> ILEs are open-plan learning areas where teachers facilitate personalised learning contexts. Teachers generally co-teach a large group of students. Other infrastructure elements include ubiquitous Wifi and use of digital technologies, along with mentoring programmes and dispositional curriculum.

My definition places students' learning needs at the centre of the philosophy of an ILE through its focus on personalised learning, which is consistent with the OECD (2010) and Ministry of Education (2019b) policy statements. This focus on learners is important because it can shape and influence all other aspects of an ILE. Put another way, while I acknowledge that space factors, digital technologies and learning are intertwined, my main interest is in student learning experiences. Given this definition, the following sections explore personalised learning in ILEs in more depth. Then I discuss possible implications for students' learning wellbeing. This is important in my study since I explore if and /or how personalised learning, the open plan learning spaces and digital technologies shape students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing, as indicated through their relationships, resilience in the face of learning challenges, and satisfaction with learning experiences.

2.2.2 Personalised learning

This section discusses the literature of personalised learning and my use of the term. There appears to be general agreement in the literature that personalised learning is associated with increased motivation and engagement, meaning that it is important to foster (Katz & Assor, 2007; Paludan, 2006; Patall et al., 2008; Prain, et al., 2013). Personalised learning is free of "controlled use of time and space, hierarchical knowledge transmission, teacher regulation of learning routines and constraint on student agency" (Deed et al., 2014, p. 67). Within personalised learning, students are

positioned as competent decision makers about their own learning. *They* decide what, how, when, where and with whom they learn under advice from learning coaches (Benade, 2017a; Deed et al., 2014; Falk & Dierking, 2012; Prain et al., 2013). Personalised learning can be undertaken individually or collaboratively and can help students to establish meaningful connections and relationships with their peers (Leadbeater, 2005; Prain et al., 2013), something that is particularly important for those students who learn best with others. Learner agency, which can be described as a complex mix of choices and reasoning associated with learner investment and motivation, is closely linked with the idea of personalised learning (Deed et al., 2014). In this case, students are seen as active participants in their learning with a sense of responsibility and accountability, controlling their own learning while being mentored in their decision making (Chapman et al., 2014; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Irvine et al., 2013).

However, educators seem to have varying opinions about the extent to which students should be given choices or freedom in their learning (Paludan, 2006; Prain et al., 2013). Some educators argue that a teacher-led, differentiated curriculum provides sufficient opportunities for personalised learning. Others go further and propose that deeply personalised learning requires a higher level of customisation and student choice through a student-led curriculum in which students create their own learning pathways (Leadbeater, 2006). In this view, learning is customised to each individual student who follows their own interests and sets their own learning goals with teacher support. Giving students choices in their learning is seen to fulfil their fundamental need for autonomy, competence and relatedness which can enhance students' motivation and overall wellbeing (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci et al., 1996; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Katz & Assessor, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In order to fulfil these fundamental needs, choices need to be relevant to students interests' and goals (autonomy support), not too complex or numerous (competence support) and congruent with students' family and cultural norms (relatedness support) (Katz & Assor, 2007, p. 431-432). Moreover, in personalised learning environments, teachers and students tend to assume new roles and responsibilities with teachers scaffolding students' decision making in their learning and assessment (Furtak et al., 2012; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016).

In their case study, Deed et al. (2014) used interviews and observations to examine the link between personalised learning in open plan classrooms and students' agency. The latter was conceptualised as students' behavioural, affective and cognitive choices. Deed et al. concluded

that teachers' roles focused on supporting student autonomy in problem solving, as well as setting workable, purposeful tasks while students needed to take responsibility for their own learning, solving problems autonomously where possible, and using the resources provided to them. Deed et al. (2014) pointed out that teachers needed to provide sufficient support for students to develop their own adaptive agency and ability to self-manage their learning. As Deed et al. (2014) noted, this balance of students' ability and teacher support is important when challenging tasks require complex solutions.

Self-regulated learning is closely linked to the idea of personalised learning (Deed et al., 2014; Pintrich, 2002 and 2004). Self-regulation refers to students' "constructive and intentional use of personal strategies to achieve academic and wellbeing goals" (Prain et al., 2015a, p. 14). Self-regulation connects with the idea of 'personalised learning' requiring forethought, planning and activation (such as effort and perseverance), monitoring (such as tracking requirements), control (such as adaptive behaviours to ensure task completion) and reflection (such as self-assessing strategies) (Pintrich, 2002 and 2004).

Ketelaar et al. (2013) investigated teachers' implementation of the coaching role which was defined as facilitating personalised, self-regulated learning. These researchers surveyed 253 senior students in secondary vocational education and found that those teachers who were more engaged in implementing personalised learning also gave more feedback on students' self-regulated learning strategies. Moreover, as students worked on their respective projects, teachers remained subject experts but their roles as coaches to support and guide students became more significant. The findings by Ketelaar et al. (2013) are relevant to my research because they demonstrate how teachers can take on roles as facilitators and coaches, supporting students to develop their ability to make good choices in their learning. This finding on the role of coaching may be pertinent to how students perceive their own learning wellbeing in the study ILE. In a recent study by Davis and Hadwin (2021), university students used learning diaries to identify and reflect on learning challenges. When analysing the learning diaries, the researchers found that those students who effectively self-regulated their learning and who attained their learning goals displayed high levels of learning wellbeing and a high sense of autonomy. However, there is a paucity of research on the interplay between self-regulated learning and students' perceived learning wellbeing in ILEs.

The literature suggests that students may face various challenges in personalised learning settings. For instance, Campbell et al. (2007) claimed that some students may lack the necessary skills and competencies to make choices about their own learning, reinforcing the importance of teachers as guides to support student autonomy (Patall et al., 2010). Mitra (2006) and Nelson (2014) indicated that students can be less confident about taking on responsibility for their learning when they have only been exposed to teacher-centred learning contexts. Therefore, a gradual move towards student-led approaches of personalised learning is advised by Shier (2006) and Deed et al. (2014). Teachers can foster students' decision-making skills, offering choices at an appropriate level for students' ages and ability (Katz & Assor, 2007). Moreover, students need confidence to question and discuss how their learning could be different from traditional approaches (Claxton, 2007). As Leadbeater (2006) points out, personalised learning approaches may cross over school boundaries with students learning outside of school. Regarding personalised learning at home, Leadbeater cautions that not all students will have a conducive home learning environment, entrenching existing inequalities even further. Therefore, personalised learning approaches are ideally accompanied by sufficient resourcing at school and at home.

The above analysis of the literature on personalised learning is pertinent to my study since I aim to investigate how students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing may be impacted on by the way their teachers facilitate personalised learning within an ILE school which has a school-wide focus on self-regulation and learner agency. In the context of my study, personalised learning is defined as follows:

> Personalised learning allows students to create their own learning programmes according to their needs and interests with teacher support. Students make choices about their own learning.

Emerging research suggests that the affordances of open plan, flexible learning environments may enhance personalised learning practices (Deed et al., 2014; Deed, Lesko, & Lovejoy, 2014; Eiken, 2011; Lovejoy, 2014; Prain et al., 2013; Prain et al., 2014; Sigurðardóttir & Hjartarson, 2016). This collective finding supports my research focus. The following section analyses the relevant literature on open plan learning spaces in relation to personalised learning in ILEs and outlines possible benefits and drawbacks for students.

2.2.3 Open plan learning spaces

Wright (2017) argues that open plan learning spaces enhance possibilities for personalised learning, collaborative teaching and curriculum integration. Wright et al. (2021, p. 55) explain that well-designed spaces that invite decision-making and promote feelings of belonging will encourage socially inclusive and agentic occupation, assisting students to assert themselves as decision-makers. In this sense, open plan learning spaces may enable teaching practices "in which emphasis is placed on personalising learning to meet each individual student's needs" (Cardno et al., 2017, p. 122).

In another study, Byers (2015) also showed that the spatial design of ILEs may afford more student-centred and differentiated pedagogies compared with traditional classroom settings. Byers (2015) observed the teaching practices of 11 teachers while teaching either in an ILE or a traditional classroom in Australia. In the ILE, Byers found that teachers showed greater levels of activity differentiation spending more time providing individual students with feedback and future direction than those in a traditional learning environment. While this relatively small study doesn't allow for generalisation, it illustrates that the spatial design of an ILE can afford a greater level of differentiation of learning tasks and increase personalised feedback. The survey-based study by Imms and Byers (2017) with 52 students in Yr7 also demonstrated that a flexible, open-plan school design may afford more student-centred and collaborative learning experiences than traditional learning environments. Imms and Byers sought students' perspectives of their learning when they were either taught in an ILE or in more traditional learning environments. Students perceived higher levels of student-centred practices and engagement in learning when being taught in an ILE. Imms and Byers (2017) also inferred that an ILE design may facilitate learning experiences that require students "to exercise choice in how they solved problems, to take more responsibility of their learning, and ultimately to be more engaged." (p. 147). Combined, the studies by Byers (2015), Byers et al. (2014) and Imms and Byers (2017) indicate that a dynamic and flexible classroom design of an ILE may be an influential factor in teacher practice, possibly affording higher levels of differentiation, and learning experiences where students can exercise choice. However, this link is not causative and further research into this matter is necessary.

Kariippanon et al. (2017) demonstrated that teachers in flexible learning spaces facilitated students' personalised learning experiences as well as their self-regulation, autonomy,

collaboration and engagement. Karrippanon conducted open-ended interviews and focus groups with 12 school principals, 35 teachers and 85 students from four primary and four secondary schools in Australia. All participating schools were in the process of converting traditional classrooms to open plan learning spaces. Teachers reported that open plan learning spaces both necessitated and facilitated the shift towards pedagogies which fostered personalised learning experiences. This finding stresses the importance of focusing on pedagogical approaches to maximise the potential of open plan learning spaces. Both teachers and students in the same study viewed the personalised learning approaches as fostering students' self-regulation skills. For instance, students appreciated being given more autonomy in making choices for their own learning and they believed that the combination of the open plan learning spaces and personalised learning approaches positively contributed to their own engagement. Peer collaboration was facilitated in the open plan learning spaces through grouped table layouts. Students reported that they benefited from collaboration and particularly peer teaching during class time. Students expressed that the incorporation of digital technologies and educational school software into the open plan learning space enhanced their personalised learning experiences. For instance, they were able to investigate personal interests beyond the content being delivered to the whole class. These findings suggest that open plan learning environments coupled with personalised learning approaches and the use of digital technologies are likely to positively contribute to students' learning wellbeing. However, students also raised the concern that they were more often distracted in the open plan learning spaces than in traditional classroom settings. For instance, students reported that their distractions were due to an increased focus on peer collaboration and freedom to learn in various locations (such as secluded learning booths). Moreover, primary school students felt that increased noise levels in the open plan learning spaces hindered their learning. Teachers attributed the identified challenges to students and teachers transitioning into the open plan learning environment. They believed that effective teaching practice and students becoming accustomed to their new learning environment would assist in overcoming these challenges. Karrippanon et al.'s study is pertinent to my research since I will investigate students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing in a newly built ILE.

Deed, Lesko and Lovejoy (2014) used the term "personalised learning spaces" to describe the combination of open, flexible learning spaces and personalised learning approaches. Their Australian case study investigated how the teachers of two junior classes (Yr7 to Yr10) adapted

their practice to create personalised learning spaces. These researchers concluded that teachers needed to provide the framework for what is to be done while students exercise some control over how it is done and both teacher and students negotiate where and when it will be done (p.283). This means that teachers had to balance teacher- and student-led approaches. Deed, Lesko and Lovejoy stressed that neither of these two approaches were superior but that the amalgamation of both in combination with an awareness of the affordances of the virtual, physical and social space led to the creation of personalised learning spaces.

Adjusting to spatial and pedagogical aspects of an ILE may present some challenges for teachers and students. For example, Chapman et al. (2014) interviewed and observed teachers in three ILE primary schools, revealing that a focus on learner autonomy with students pursuing their individual interest in combination with big open spaces may make it easy for students to appear to engage in learning activities when they are in fact off-task. Teachers voiced concerns that there might be an over-reliance on students' ability to self-regulate their learning in ILEs which could contribute to students using devices off-task or attempting to distance themselves from the teacher within the open-space classroom. Therefore, Chapman et al. (2014) indicate that spatial features of ILEs may mean teachers have to adjust their practice, such as establishing behavioural expectations in these open-plan spaces. Furthermore, students may need to be taught explicitly to take responsibility for their learning in these less constrained settings and may need to be taught to self-regulate their learning on an ongoing basis (Chapman et al., 2014).

To conclude, the open and flexible design of an ILE may influence teacher practice and afford more student choices than those in traditional single cell classrooms. However, the spatial arrangement of an ILE does not in itself guarantee any pedagogical shifts. Nor does the spatial arrangement guarantee students' ability to self-monitor their learning or engagement in learning tasks. It appears that teachers are likely to need to make conscious efforts to adapt their practices so that they can facilitate more personalised pedagogies, which may be challenging. What I would like to understand more, is whether altering pedagogical practices positively affects students' learning wellbeing.

2.2.4 Digital technologies

This section examines the literature regarding both the use of digital technologies in ILEs and outlines possible benefits and drawbacks for students. In the present digital environment, teachers are no longer the only source of knowledge (Benade, 2015b; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Bolstad & Gilbert, 2012; Wright, 2017). Instead, knowledge can be easily accessed, used and even created by students (Järvelä, 2006; Tucker, 2017). The internet, digital devices and online learning platforms seem to make it easier for teachers to support personalised learning pathways for their students (Benade, 2017a; Järvelä, 2006; Ruano-Borbalan, 2006). In New Zealand for example, Benade (2017) investigated 21st century learning in four different schools through interviews, focus groups and observations. The sample schools consisted of one ILE primary, one ILE secondary, one primary school with a blend of ILE and traditional schooling, and one completely traditional secondary school. Benade reports that students in the three ILEs used software and various apps to produce videos and other products to reflect on learning. His study demonstrates ways in which digital technologies can facilitate creative and reflective learning across such schools. In another New Zealand study, Fletcher et al. (2020) surveyed 335 primary and secondary school teachers and principals about the use of digital technology and students' self-regulated learning in ILEs. A predominant view by teachers was that digital technologies could assist students in gaining self-regulatory skills but that teachers still had to teach these skills explicitly.

Some researchers caution that digital technologies may be associated with distraction and off-task behaviour (Dobler, 2015; Sullivan et al., 2014). Interviews with secondary school students conducted by Aagaard (2015) revealed that students made use of their laptops in productive ways to further their learning. However, laptops were also seen as an allure that tempted students to follow their own interests unrelated to the learning at hand, such as social media. Students tended to feel this pull especially when they struggled in their learning or when there were short lesson breaks or activity transitions. Aagaard (2015) outlined that simple teaching strategies, such as asking students to close the lids of their laptops, assisted students in developing good technological habits. As Ryan et al. (2021) argue, it is the teachers' responsibility to teach students how to self-regulate, especially in relation to appropriate device use. Taken together, these findings are important for my study since I explore students' perception of their learning wellbeing in an ILE which also uses digital technologies in learning.

This section has set out a definition for an ILE which focuses on student learning. It has summarised emerging evidence that suggests that personalised learning contexts in ILEs may provide students with opportunities to develop their ability to self-regulate and exercise choice in their learning. The spatial and digital features of ILEs may support these personalised learning practices but students require specific support to develop their self-regulation skills. The following section analyses literature on students' learning wellbeing in ILEs. In other words, I examine the literature that identifies if and how personalised learning, mentoring programmes with a dispositional curriculum, open plan learning spaces and digital technologies affect the way students perceive their learning wellbeing as encapsulated by their relationships, everyday academic resilience and their satisfaction with learning experiences.

2.3 Students' learning wellbeing in ILEs

This section outlines what literature there is on students' learning wellbeing in ILEs as encapsulated by students' perspectives on their relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with learning experiences. Given the dearth of research from students' perspectives, I include research into teachers' perspectives.

2.3.1 Relationships

Small mentoring programmes have been shown to facilitate positive teacher-student and peer relationships (Farrelly & Lovejoy, 2015; Farrelly, 2014; Wright, 2018). For example, in Wright's study (2018) of the newly built ILE called Hobsonville Point Secondary School in New Zealand, students in focus groups interviews expressed a high level of trust in their mentors, valuing their views and advice. Likewise, the Australian studies by Keeffe (2014, 2015) demonstrated that the Learning Advisory structure fostered students' learning wellbeing. Keeffe conducted a multiple case study into four newly built ILEs (2014) and a single case study into one of these ILEs (2015). Teacher and student voices from both studies demonstrated that a Learning Advisory structure was instrumental in fostering students' learning wellbeing. More precisely, the success of the Learning Advisory structure lay in its' contribution to students' learning wellbeing. This success also

depended on the quality of students' relationships within their Learning Advisory as well as the teaching of an explicit curriculum, fostering students' social emotional learning skills, self-awareness as learners and their ability to make learning choices. It appears that the mentoring programmes that were the focus of these studies may foster positive student-teacher relationships which in turn provides a nurturing and supporting environment for students in these ILEs. These findings, and particularly Keeffe's findings, may be important to my study as I investigate students' perceived learning wellbeing in an ILE that has an explicit curriculum focus on positive relationships, students' everyday academic resilience and self-regulation skills.

Large class sizes focusing on personalised learning are a contrasting feature to the more intimate Learning Advisory settings. There is evidence that reciprocal learning relationships between teachers and students may be fostered through personalised learning in ILEs (Benade, 2017). Benade associated personalised learning with the provision of learner autonomy and self-direction, encouraging students to self-monitor and a culture where teachers and students can learn from each other (Benade, 2017). This is in contrast to traditional school settings which tend to give teachers most of the power and control over learning. Benade (2017) observed personalised learning in all three ILEs of his study, with teachers placing particular importance on getting to know individual students and showing their care and concern for them. Moreover, Benade observed that teachers in these ILEs did not raise their voices, which was also an observation of students in Farrelly and Lovejoy's study (2015). According to Farrelly and Lovejoy, this led to a better social environment. Their multiple case study of the same newly built ILEs as Keeffe (2014) (reviewed above) investigated students' perceptions of learning wellbeing and relationships at school using two different questionnaires as well as open-ended interviews with students and teachers. Students in both Farrelly and Lovejoy's (2015) and Benade's (2017) study appreciated that team teaching provided them with a range of teachers to seek support from, which suggests that students liked having more than one teacher to talk to. However, none of the studies explored in further detail if or how team-teaching bigger class sizes of up to 90 students (Farrelly & Lovejoy, 2015) impacted students' views of their relationships with teachers and why students appeared to enjoy a greater choice of teachers. I was interested in these findings because I will investigate students' perceptions on their learning wellbeing when being taught by multiple teachers in classes with large numbers of students.

Some authors claim that the larger class sizes of ILEs provide students with more peers to interact with, leading to a greater potential for friendships to build (Benade, 2017; Farrelly & Lovejoy, 2015). For instance, students in Farrelly and Lovejoy's study affirmed in interviews that they enjoyed mixing with larger groups of students and that an open-plan environment had the advantage that they were able to see friends easily and interact with them. Chapman et al. (2014) conceded that some students may enjoy the fluid relations that ILEs provide. Yet, Chapman et al. cautioned that constant changes in learner groupings may prevent some students from building on group dynamics and consolidating positive learning relationships.

Thus, emerging evidence indicates that pedagogical, spatial and organisational structures in ILEs may impact the nature of relationships, and hence students' learning wellbeing differently. Teacher-student relationships may be fostered differently through a focus on personalised learning and a culture where students and teachers learn from each other. Students appear to appreciate that team-teaching approaches allow them to better connect with the teachers of their choice. Peer relationships may be differently shaped by greater class sizes. Benade (2017) and Farrelly and Lovejoy (2015) indicate that students enjoy the greater potential to interact with peers while Chapman et al. (2014) claim the opposite. However, further research is needed to better understand students' perceptions of the quality of their relationships at school in relation to student learning wellbeing. Moreover, current research does not indicate if or how students' views on their learning wellbeing within the given structures of ILEs may vary.

2.3.2 Everyday academic resilience

It has been difficult to find research into students' everyday academic resilience in ILEs. As outlined in section 2.2.3, everyday academic resilience may be fostered by teaching students about incremental theory or growth mindset. That is, educators can teach students that they can overcome learning challenges through effort, applying suitable strategies and eliciting help from others. Together, these actions may promote everyday academic resilience (Yeager & Dweck, 2012).

Fostering everyday academic resilience through positive mindsets to overcome learning challenges may link to an approach called productive failure. Wright (2018) observed productive failure as a teaching approach in a cross-curricular Module in an ILE where teachers aim to

"develop independent, confident learners who are unafraid of 'failure'" (p. 89). Productive failure describes carefully planned learning experiences where students attempt to solve problems independently before being taught the principles or methods that would help (Sharples et al., 2016). Experience in these learning impasses may assist students to identify what they need to know to problem-solve independently, thereby fostering students' ability to think sophisticatedly. Wright (2018) observed that students were able to seek peer help or teachers would explain strategies to overcome the learning challenge. While Wright (2018) does not explicitly refer to everyday academic resilience, it may be inferred that students' capacity to cope and bounce back after encountering learning challenges is likely to be fostered through a focus on deliberately induced productive failure. It can also be inferred that productive failure may possibly foster a mindset that focuses on overcoming challenges through effort, new strategies and help from others. Moreover, Wright (2018) explains that students spend up to four hours a week in so-called Learning Advisories with a teacher creating a supportive and nurturing learning environment through individual learning guidance, focusing on positive attitudes towards learning. Students voiced that they experienced success as learners. This success may be an indicator of resilience and may be attributed to the strong focus on positive attitudes about learning provided through the extensive guidance programme (Wright, 2018). Hence, a high quality mentoring programme along with teaching productive failure may have a positive impact on students' perspectives about resilience as part of their wellbeing as learners. However, this matter is yet to be explored in depth. I investigate how structures like the high quality mentoring programme and an explicit curriculum aimed to foster students' ability to overcome learning challenges may impact students' views on their everyday academic resilience as part of their learning wellbeing. I also explore variations in students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing in relation to ILE structures such as the mentoring programme and an explicit curriculum focused on overcoming learning challenges.

2.3.3 Students' satisfaction with their learning experiences

Since ILEs appear to focus on personalised learning as an organisational and pedagogical structure (see section 2.1) it is possible that students' experiences of and satisfaction with learning will vary from those in traditional settings. There is some evidence that this might be the case. The New

Zealand based study by Bradbeer et al. (2017) illustrates that teachers and principals perceive students to be more satisfied with their learning in ILEs than in traditional settings. In total, 337 principals and teachers from traditional schools and ILEs were asked to rate if they agreed or disagreed with statements such as: "In my opinion, students at our school find that at times studying makes them really happy and satisfied" (Bradbeer et al., 2017, p.5). Findings were that teachers and principals perceived students to be more satisfied with their learning in ILEs than in traditional settings. This represents a starting point into investigations of students' satisfaction with learning experiences in an ILE even though it reflects teachers' perspectives rather than students' views. Students' satisfaction with learning experiences as part of their learning wellbeing in ILEs in New Zealand remains under investigation. Of particular interest is knowing more about if and how ILE structures, such as personalised learning contexts, mentoring programmes with a dispositional curriculum, open plan learning spaces and use of digital technologies shape students' satisfaction with learning experiences and the extent to which students' views on this matter differ.

In sum, positive teacher-student relationships may be fostered through mentoring programmes in ILEs. In addition, some students may enjoy that the open-plan learning spaces with large numbers of students and multiple teachers provide students with a greater choice of students and teachers to interact with. It has been difficult to find research into students' everyday academic resilience in ILEs. It may be inferred that a sense of everyday academic resilience may be fostered through the aforementioned mentoring programmes which provide individual guidance. Since ILEs focus on personalised learning experiences, it is possible that students' experiences and satisfaction with these experiences may vary from those in traditional settings. I was able to locate one study indicating this may be the case. But this study investigated teachers' perspectives.

2.4 Summary and research questions

This chapter has defined learning wellbeing and explored studies from psychological and socio-cultural perspectives on this matter. I used the literature from traditional classroom settings to create specific indicators relating to learning wellbeing: students' relationships with teachers and peers, their everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with their learning wellbeing. Key points arising from the review are that there seems to be a clear link between students' perceived relationships and their learning wellbeing. A few quantitative studies suggest there may be

connections between everyday academic resilience and learning wellbeing. However, it appears that students' perspectives of their own everyday academic resilience in traditional classroom settings has received very little attention. A few survey based studies illustrated a possible connection between students' satisfaction with school and their learning experiences and learning wellbeing. However, possible links between students' satisfaction *with their learning experience* and students' learning wellbeing has not been explored through qualitative methods.

I have summarised emerging evidence that suggests that personalised learning contexts in ILEs may encourage teacher facilitation practices that provide students with opportunities to develop their ability to self-regulate and exercise choice in their learning. The spatial and digital features of ILEs may support these personalised learning practices. However, it appears that students do not automatically know how to do this, requiring explicit long-term focus across a variety of contexts, learning purposes, and takes time. This points to a need for long term student mentoring.

The review on personalised learning contexts pointed towards the importance of teachers mentoring students so that they can learn how to self-regulate their learning, make positive learning choices and gain autonomy in their learning. The few studies I was able to find on this topic, suggest that personalised mentoring in small groups and an explicit curriculum focusing on learner autonomy, self-direction and monitoring positively impact students' learning wellbeing. One outcome was improved teacher-student relationships.

My literature review suggests that a focus on students' ability to make positive learning choices involves different student-teacher relationships and roles and has the potential to foster positive relationships amongst teachers and their students. Furthermore, having small mentoring groups in ILEs seem to provide more intimate settings for teacher-student relationships to develop. These small mentoring groups are contrasted by team teaching with big groups of learners, which may alter teacher-student and peer relationships, providing students with a greater range of teachers and students to interact with (section 2.2.3). However, students' views of their relationships with teachers and peers in connection to their learning wellbeing in ILEs needs to be explored in further detail. What limited research there is shows that students' everyday academic resilience in ILEs may be fostered through a positive focus on overcoming challenges as well as a high quality mentoring programme which provides a supportive and nurturing environment for students. These findings pertain to my research since I investigate variations in students'

perspectives on their learning wellbeing in relation to ILE structures such as a personalised mentoring programme and an explicit curriculum focused on overcoming learning challenges.

Studies investigating students' satisfaction with their learning in personalised learning contexts in ILEs are of interest to my study as I explore variations in students' perceptions of their satisfaction with their learning experiences. The one study I was able to locate indicated that students' satisfaction with learning experiences in ILEs may be higher than in traditional learning environments. However, these findings were based on teachers' and principals' views working in ILEs and not on students' own perceptions of their satisfaction with learning experiences, so again research into student perceptions is a gap in the literature.

To conclude, various ILE features may impact students' learning wellbeing. These features include personalised learning structures, mentoring programmes with a dispositional curriculum as well as the open plan learning environment and digital technologies. Students' learning wellbeing, as indicated through students' perceptions of their relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with learning experiences in an ILE requires further exploration in New Zealand contexts. It would be of interest to investigate how ILE structures shape students' learning wellbeing and if and how students have different views of their learning wellbeing within the given ILE structures.

Based on a review of the literature and the identification of a number of gaps especially in relation to students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing in ILEs, I formulated my research questions. My research aims to investigate students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in the study ILE. The following questions guided my investigation:

1. Which ILE features shape learning wellbeing?
2. What characterises learning wellbeing in this case study ILE school?

Chapter three: Methodology and method

This chapter substantiates my choice of an interpretivist paradigm and case study design as appropriate for my research questions and justifies my choice of purposive sampling. I discuss my data collection methods, which are photo-elicitation, focus groups with students and individual interviews with educators as well as the collation and analysis of documents. I then outline the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on my data collection and my response to this event. Subsequently, I justify my choice of reflexive thematic analysis and an inductive approach for analysis and presentation of my data as well as my use of a variation of portraiture to represent the data. Finally, I outline quality standards for interpretivist researchers and ethical considerations as they pertain to my study.

3.1 The paradigm for my research

Identifying my paradigm of choice was essential to the process of clarifying the purpose of my research (Cohen et al., 2018) and guiding its undertaking (Patton, 2002). In selecting my paradigm I was informed by the work of Manion and Morrison (2018) who distinguish between the positivist, interpretive, and critical paradigms. The interpretivist paradigm is based on the belief that human behaviour is not deterministic and predictable (Cohen et al., 2018) and hence questions the validity of the positivist world-view (Cohen et al., 2018; Lather, 1992). The ontology of interpretivist researchers is relativist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and based on the notion that there is no single reality. Instead, reality is understood as subjective since people make their own sense of the world around them (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, interpretivist researchers focus on understanding people's perspectives. The epistemology of interpretivism is subjectivism, which defines social reality as the result of individual cognition and interpretation of personal experiences (Cohen et al., 2018). Correspondingly, the research methods of interpretivism tend to be qualitative (such as interviews, observations, field notes, analysis of documents), as these approaches are thought to be more adequate than quantitative methods in understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives because this world view explores participants' lived experiences in their environment (Cohen et al., 2018; Cowie & Bell, 1999; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Interpretivism considers that

human behaviour is based on individuals' interpretation and meaning making of the situations they inhabit. These various situations and contexts affect individuals' behaviours. Hence, human behaviour is as multifaceted as the world around them and researchers need to examine situations through the eyes of participants rather than the researcher (Cohen et al., 2018). I determined that interpretivism was the most suitable paradigm for my research since I aimed to investigate students' perceptions of their own learning wellbeing in a specific ILE. The interpretive paradigm was suitable for my study because it considers the complexity of human nature and aims to understand individuals' thoughts and intentions. Research approaches within this paradigm include phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, historical research and ethno-methodology which all enable a focus on participant's perspectives (Cohen et al., 2018). Interpretivism also lends itself to methods that are well suited to capturing student perspectives, such as interviews or observations, the goal of my research.

3.2 The research design

The research design was planned to align with the purpose of the study. My goal was to explore students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing and their learning experiences in an ILE. The literature review signalled that differences in pedagogies and spatial designs in ILEs impacted on students' learning wellbeing, a theme which directed me to look at student views and experience in their context. Given the available resources, this focus meant a single case study was an appropriate approach which allowed me to undertake an in-depth exploration into students' learning wellbeing in the study ILE.

3.2.1 Case study approach

For my study, I use Yin's (2009) definition of a case study. Yin argues that a case study centres on people in one or more contexts to examine a specific phenomenon. Case studies can show the reader how abstract principles and the lived experiences of people fit together (Yin, 2009). They can provide "powerful human-scale data on macro-political decision making, fusing theory and practice" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 378). In my context, the abstract principles and lived experiences

refer to the nature of the impact of the ILE structure and systems on students' perceptions of relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction.

I pursued an exploratory, single case design (Yin, 2009) in a newly built ILE school. An exploratory case study aims to explore new aspects of specific phenomena, which makes it an appropriate approach to my study since I sought to discover the various aspects of learning wellbeing in a particular ILE. A single case design was more feasible than a multiple-case design, given the resources and time available to me (Patton, 2002). Within the school the unit of analysis, or the entity that is being examined and "holds a study together" (Yin, 2006, p. 43), were students in one Hapu (more traditionally called a 'house' in a school). Hapu function as sub-units within the study school and therefore presented a logical choice for a unit of analysis. I was able to provide rich, detailed descriptions of instances of students' perceptions of learning wellbeing to enable readers to draw logical connections to other cases (Kvale, 2011; Yin, 2009) by focusing in depth on the students who belonged to one Hapu.

In sum, my exploratory single-case design focused on one school as an appropriate and feasible approach for me to explore students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in an ILE. Within the school the unit of analysis for the case was the students of one Hapu.

3.2.2 Recruiting participants

My strategy for recruiting participants was purposive (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). I contacted the principal of the study school, explained the research and supplied information letters and research consent forms (Appendix D-H). The principal presented these letters and consent forms to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and once I gained the BOT's and principal's consent, I started contacting Hapu leaders. The first Hapu Leader I presented the research to agreed to participate, so no further Hapu Leaders were contacted. The Hapu Leader gave consent for me to carry out the photo-elicitation activity with his Hapu and agreed to participate in an interview, so that I could also explore his views about students' perceived learning wellbeing. Hapu teachers also consented to supervise the photo-elicitation activity but they did not participate in any interviews, due to time constraints. Each Hapu contains a cross section of students from Yr7 to Yr10 and I invited all students in the chosen Hapu to participate in the research. I explained the research and supplied

them and their caregivers with information letters and consent forms. All participants who agreed to be part of the research were volunteers who willingly offered their perspectives. I relied on the Hapu Leader's advice about group dynamics; to ensure that students would feel comfortable during discussions.

In addition, I invited one of the Deputy Principals to take part in an interview to elicit her views on how the school understands and aims to support students' learning wellbeing. I also contacted three teachers for an interview to gain their perspective on student learning wellbeing. I chose these teachers because they had shown a particular interest in the research when I was on site explaining the research to students. These teachers were not linked to the Hapu but they taught some of the students in their modules. They taught a range of different year levels and subjects which allowed me to gain a breadth of perspectives on students' learning wellbeing in the study ILE.

3.2.3 Data collection methods

Exploratory case studies aim to explore aspects of specific phenomena about which little is known. In my case study, I explored students' views of their learning in the study ILE. In undertaking this research I was informed by Lincoln and Guba (1986) who argue that diverse methods help to establish credibility in research conclusions. The methods I chose were participant-driven photo-elicitation, focus groups and individual interviews, supported by collection and analysis of documents. My research has a cumulative character since my chosen data collection methods build on each other. I explain each of these methods in turn and illustrate why they were a good fit for my study question.

Photo-elicitation as a research approach

Photo-elicitation involves participants taking photographs which are subsequently used by a researcher during interviews to evoke responses from participants as interviewees (Collier & Collier 1986; Meo, 2010). In participant-directed photo-elicitation (Bates et al., 2017), sometimes also called participant-driven photo-elicitation (Eirnstardottir, 2015; Pyle, 2013; Thomson, 2008), participants are asked to take photographs themselves as opposed to the researcher providing the images (Yan et al., 2005). It is suggested that giving responsibility and ownership of the creation

of images to participants can empower them throughout the research process (Bates et al., 2017; Meo, 2010). For example, Meo (2010) investigated how students aged 15 to 17 years dealt with the social and educational demands of their teachers and schools. Meo used both traditional (semi-structured) interviews and semi-structured interviews based on participant-driven photo-elicitation and compared the outcomes of both approaches. Meo concluded that participant-driven photo-elicitation empowered participants throughout the research process, mitigating the power-imbalance between researcher and interviewees. Numerous studies endorse Meo's findings, demonstrating that participant-driven photo-elicitation can assist in facilitating a positive rapport between researcher and participants (Allen, 2012; Bates et al., 2017; Einarsdottir, 2005; Meo, 2010), potentially leading to more pleasant and comprehensive interviews and richer data (Collier, 1967; Dennis et al., 2009; Foster-Fishman et al., 2005; Meo, 2010). The argument is that participant-driven photo-elicitation can break down barriers between researcher and participants. This was particularly important in my study because students might have seen me as a teacher who expected one right answer rather than a researcher who was interested in the exploration of students' various perspectives of their learning wellbeing.

Participant-driven photo-elicitation assists in the exploration of abstract ideas, such as identity (Ziller, 1990) or satisfaction (Bates et al., 2017). For example, Bates et al. (2017) utilised participant driven photo-elicitation to explore students' satisfaction in the higher education sector. These authors conceptualised satisfaction as the outcome of complex and multi-dimensional experiences in a manner similar to my conception of satisfaction with learning experiences. Their participants were asked to take photographs that they felt best represented their experience at university. During the subsequent individual interviews, photographs were used as prompts for participants to reflect on their lived experiences at university. Bates et al. (2017) affirmed that the use of participant-driven photo-elicitation assisted in capturing students' lived experiences and revealed influences on student satisfaction. In the New Zealand context, Wright and McNae (2019) investigated students' and teachers' understanding of agency and ownership of learning in a newly built ILE school. Agentic behaviour was divided into categories (decision-making, belonging and meaning-making) and participants were asked to create digital artefacts which they felt represented these categories. These images then served as prompts for group or individual semi-structured interviews. Wright and McNae (2019) concluded that this process of student-created images assisted students to articulate their ideas, compensating for a possible lack of vocabulary.

In line with these exemplars, in my study, I intended to give students ownership and responsibility in the research process, as this seemed to correspond well with the school's philosophy of encouraging student agency. As the study by Bates et al. (2017) investigated similar concepts to my study, I anticipated that participant-driven photo-elicitation would be a suitable approach to gather student voices on the complex notion of learning wellbeing and satisfaction with learning experiences. I also anticipated that some students might not have the vocabulary they needed to express their understanding of wellbeing, therefore participant-driven photo-elicitation appeared to me to be a suitable research tool to assist my participants to articulate their views. In the ensuing section, I explain the steps I undertook to conduct photo elicitation in my study.

Photo-elicitation in my study

I conducted a multi-step photo-elicitation activity with all 123 Yr7 to Yr10 students in the study Hapu at the beginning of the school year. This photo-elicitation exercise was held during Learning Advisory Time and took approximately one hour. The photo-elicitation exercise comprised the following steps:

- I briefly introduced myself and my interest in in students' ideas about their "learning wellbeing" and explained the photo-elicitation exercise.
- I asked students to take a photo individually, in pairs or in small groups (depending on their choice), capturing an aspect that they felt reflected learning wellbeing at the school. However, on observing them, I quickly realised that students were struggling to photograph aspects reflecting their learning wellbeing. In response, I changed the instructions to photographing an aspect that positively linked to their learning wellbeing and one aspect that negatively linked to their learning wellbeing. Students seemed to be able to follow these instructions. They used their own devices and stayed in the Hapu area when taking photographs. Teachers assisted in supervising this activity.
- Students were encouraged to write a short heading for their photo, stating why it depicted their idea of learning wellbeing at school.
- Students emailed me their selected photo and heading.
- Students' photos were used as prompts for later focus group interviews.

When designing the photo-elicitation exercise I considered the organisational aspects of the process, such as how to work with a large number of students at the same time in the open space of the Hapu and what might be any sensitive issues when students were taking photographs about their learning wellbeing. I asked students to create a heading for their photo in order to stimulate students' thinking about their learning wellbeing. Asking students to title and submit only one photo per individual, pair or group, encouraged students to be thoughtful and limited the number of submitted photographs, hence avoiding the generation of a cumbersome number (Dennis et al., 2009; Pyle, 2013). I did not record students' conversations about their headings but the teachers and myself were present to ensure that conversations were appropriate.

I asked students to email me their photo to ensure that students only had access to their own photos. This allowed students to have privacy in disclosing photos of their learning wellbeing with me. Asking students to take photographs and to email them to me generated 99 images.

I used photos taken by students as prompts for follow up interviews; I did not supplement students' photos with any additional photos. This contrasts with the approach of some authors who provide their own photos to supplement students' photos during interviews (e.g., Bates et al., 2017; Pyle, 2013).

The photo-elicitation process helped my young participants to reflect on the complex idea of learning wellbeing. It was an appropriate strategy given the data was collected at the beginning of the year when students were easily excited about working with their peers. The process was based on my intention to give students ownership of the creation of photos and anticipated that the photographs would support students to talk about their learning wellbeing in the interviews. I did not intend to analyse photos or include photos in the findings chapter because I anticipated students' comments to speak for themselves.

Unlike other researchers (Hong & Goh, 2019; Pyle, 2013), who provided cameras, students used their own devices that they were familiar with. This was likely to make them feel comfortable and excluded the need for me as a researcher to give technical instructions (Bates et al., 2017).

I took action to minimise the potential for any sensitivity issues arising during the photo-elicitation exercise in a number of ways. As is required, I gained the informed consent of the principal, teacher as well as students and their caregivers for the photo-elicitation exercise/activity. The information I provided as part of the informed consent process made it explicit that students may appear in each other's photographs (see Appendix D-H). However, I asked the students to be

careful not to take pictures of other people if they hadn't asked them first. Students took photos within the physical boundaries of their Hapu at prescribed times while teachers were present to answer questions and to ensure some level of control should any issues arise while photos were taken. I pre-selected photos that were discussed during later focus groups, ensuring that students in the photos were not embarrassed throughout focus group discussions.

In sum, my photo-elicitation activity was designed to be a non-threatening way to collect data in the setting of the study, considering participants' ages, needs and familiarity with taking photos. Students' responses indicated that the activity empowered students and helped break down potential barriers and power relationships between myself as a researcher and students during the later focus group interviews, leading to enhanced rapport and richer data. Furthermore, photo-elicitation opened up unexpected areas of interest for my study, meaning it proved to be an appropriate tool for collecting baseline data at the beginning of the research process.

Focus groups

Focus groups involve a group of people discussing a topic which the researcher has provided (Morgan, 1997). In contrast to interviews, the purpose of focus groups is to encourage a variety of viewpoints on a particular topic. The researcher adopts a non-directive interview style, acting as a moderator who introduces topics and facilitates discussions. Focus group interviews can create stimulating discussions, with spontaneous comments and various emotional perspectives on learning wellbeing (Kvale, 2011). This said, it is important to choose a group size that will provide opportunities for most participants to contribute and ensure analysis is manageable from group to group and overall (Cohen et al., 2018). Open-ended questions can elicit interviewees' various views while allowing them to freely share their views (Bates et al., 2019; Meo, 2010; Wright & McNae, 2019). Using photos that interviewees have taken as prompts can put students at ease, addressing a possible power imbalance between researchers and interviewees (Kvale, 2011; Meo, 2010; Pyle, 2013). This is particularly appropriate for use with students in my study aged 11 to 14 and it is likely to make them feel comfortable to share their views on their learning wellbeing in interviews.

Student focus groups in my study

I conducted four student focus groups at each year level throughout the period of data collection. A total of 22 students participated in focus groups (see below for more detail). In addition, I invited four of these students back to follow up on their comments.

Focus group interviews 1:

I used the photographs that students had taken during the photo-elicitation activity as prompts. I also prepared some open-ended questions and followed up on comments students made about the photos. However, overall the focus and trajectory of focus group discussions were largely shaped by the students which may have contributed to students feeling comfortable and confident to speak up.

Yr7: 23/ 03/2020 (n=7)
Yr8: 23/ 03/2020 (n=4)
Yr9: 18/06/2020 (n=4)
Yr10: 18/06/2020 (n=6)

Focus group interview 2

I elicited students' perspectives on how they felt as learners in the ILE. In this context, students discussed Modules, Tautoro Modules and Flight Times. Additionally, I interviewed Yr9 and 10 students about their perspectives regarding the implications of home learning during the COVID-19 lockdown on their learning wellbeing. I deemed these interviews as feasible since Yr9 and 10 students were eloquent in their responses.

Yr7: 21/09/2020 (n=5)
Yr8: 21/09/2020 (n=2)
Yr9: 19/10/2020 (n=4)
Yr10: 19/10/2020 (n=6)

Focus group interview 3

Students discussed what the CLOAK and the CLOAK badging programme meant to them. I also asked students about any assistance they received from Learning Advisors and their perceptions of learning challenges.

Yr7: 9/11/2020 (n=7)
Yr8: 9/11/2020 (n=4)
Yr9: 2/11/2020 (n=4)
Yr10: 2/11/2020 (n=6)

Focus group interview 4:
I presented students with a summary of ideas on their learning wellbeing. This provided an opportunity to obtain further verification and clarification and elicited more nuances in students' perspectives. I also selected photos that had either led to meaningful discussions in previous focus groups (e.g. a photo of a laptop) or that could represent themes that had emerged (e.g. a photo of students with their Learning Advisor representing the relationship between them). I asked students if they still felt that these photos were relevant to their learning wellbeing. This question assisted in confirming students' prior comments on this matter.
Yr7: 16/11/2020 (n=5)
Yr8: 16/11/2020 (n=2)
Yr9: 23/11/2020 (n=4)
Yr10: 23/11/2020 (n=6)

Follow up focus group interviews:
Follow ups with a total of four students - they talked me through their Rich Learning Experience
Yr8: 9/11/2020 (n=1)
Yr9: 23/11/2020 (n=2)
Yr10t: 23/11/2020 (n=1)

During focus group discussions, students appeared very comfortable in sharing their, at times contrasting, perspectives on their learning wellbeing. I prompted and probed students' comments which assisted me in gaining a deep understanding of their views.

Individual interviews

An interview is literally an exchange of views between two persons (Kvale, 2011). Interviews differ from normal conversations since the interviewer determines the purpose and structure of the

talk. Qualitative research interviews serve to gather knowledge through careful listening and questioning (Kvale, 2011). Open-ended and responsive interviews produce qualitative evidence to demonstrate the uniqueness and complexity of the topic discussed (Morrison, 1993).

Semi-structured interviews sit between structured and unstructured interviews. The purpose of semi-structured interviews is for the interviewee to describe certain lived experiences and phenomena (Kvale, 2011). Researchers tend to adopt a more directive style which is characterised by open-ended questions. At times, researchers adjust the sequence and wording of the interview questions and focus to meet the needs and interests of interviewees (Cohen et al., 2018). In order to gather in-depth data, researchers may use prompts and probes, seek clarification or ask interviewees to elaborate and add more detail on a certain issue (Denscombe, 2014; Wellington, 2015). It is essential for the researcher to be both sensitive, open and clear in their communication but also critical, and not afraid to ask for clarification if necessary, in order to gain in-depth data (Chrzanowska, 2002; Kvale, 2011). Providing interviewees with transcripts of the recorded individual interviews, meets the quality standards for interpretivist researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Kvale, 2011). These characteristics align with my practice. I intend to gather in-depth data, using prompts and probes and seeking clarification where necessary. I also intend to provide participant teachers with a transcript of their interview and make amendments if teachers wish.

Individual interviews with educators in my study

While teachers' perspectives were not the focus of my study, I gathered them in order to provide the background to students' views of learning wellbeing. I carried out a total of six individual, semi-structured interviews with four educators. All educators were Learning Advisors and teachers of Modules or Tautoro Modules. They also held roles as Hapu Leader, Curriculum Leader or Deputy Principal. Three interviews were conducted in person and three interviews were conducted via zoom during the lockdown.

I conducted the initial interview with the Hapu Leader in March in person. Due to the Covid lockdown, I then interviewed two teachers and the Deputy Principal team via zoom in May. Conducting interviews with educators at the start of data collection provided me with various avenues to explore during student focus group discussions. In November I conducted one follow-up interview with a teacher and one follow-up interview with the Hapu Leader, clarifying topics

that had arisen in their previous interviews. In interviews I asked open-ended questions about students' learning wellbeing, Learning Advisories, the CLOAK, personalised learning, relationships, everyday academic resilience and agency.

Documentary data

The collation and analysis of documentary data can add another perspective when conducting case-studies. Documentary data can be described as any pre-existing data, be it qualitative, such as online forums, websites or magazines (Braun & Clarke, 2013) or quantitative, for example official statistics, institutional records or national surveys (Cohen et al., 2018) and I sought to collate qualitative data. Examining documentary data allows researchers to cross-check data, increasing the trustworthiness of their study (Guba & Lincoln, 1986; Patton, 2002). Exploring pertinent documentation provides a non-intrusive way to examine perspectives in the study site (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

I collated and examined documentary data in the form of the school's official Facebook page, the school website, ERO reports, newsletters, blogs, posters and signs around the school. All the documents I examined were in the public domain. Viewing the documents which the school made freely available helped me to understand the overall context and identify values and attitudes towards learning wellbeing within the research setting. Examining the school's intentions towards fostering positive student learning wellbeing was vital since students' experiences are embedded in a school's values and attitudes towards learning wellbeing. In sum, examining relevant public school documentation assisted me to cross-check my data collated through other sources, as a way of enhancing the trustworthiness of my study. Moreover, an analysis of relevant documentation gave me an insight into the school's portrayed values around student learning wellbeing.

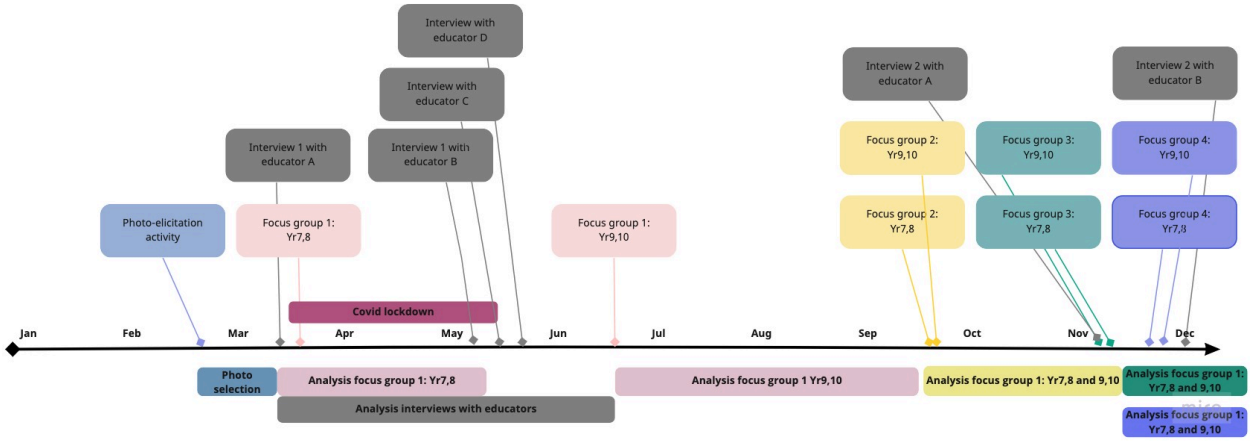
My data collection process was impacted on by the Covid-19 pandemic. The following section situates my data collection in the events of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to outline disruptions from the COVID-19 outbreak as this has possible impediments and implications relating to students' learning wellbeing.

3.2.4 Situating my data collection in events of the COVID-19 pandemic

At the start of data collection in term one, when I undertook the photo-elicitation exercise, no COVID-19 cases were reported in New Zealand. Two days before my planned interviews with students, the Government announced the implementation of a 4-tiered alert system to combat the COVID 19 outbreak and a move to Alert Level 2. This alert level included a range of measures, including social distancing. The day before my interviews, the study school announced a rotating timetable to comply with Level 2 requirements. Therefore, only Yr7 and 8 students were present at school while Yr9 and 10 students completed their learning tasks at home. Consequently the Yr7 and 8 interviews were carried out with students sitting at a distance from each other. On that same day, New Zealand moved with immediate effect to Alert Level 3 and within the following 48 hours, to Alert Level 4 which meant that the entire nation went into self-isolation (also referred to as lockdown). During the lockdown students were learning from home meaning I was unable to collect any student voice data from 25 March to 18 May. Instead, I conducted teacher interviews during this time. The school reopened after seven weeks of distance learning and I resumed student interviews. This meant that the majority of student interviews were conducted during term 3 and 4, 2020.

Timeline of data collation

The timeline below illustrates collation of data through photo-elicitation, focus groups and individual interviews. Furthermore, the timeline illustrates how data generation and data analysis proceeded hand in hand, assisting me to develop interview questions for subsequent interviews. Data analysis will be explored in more detail in the following section.



3.2.5 Data analysis approaches

As outlined in section 3.2.3, students took photos that reflected on their learning wellbeing. Since these photos served as prompts in interviews they were not analysed and not included in this thesis, instead, students' comments from focus group interviews were analysed. I identified key themes within students' voiced perspectives on their learning wellbeing using a thematic approach in an inductive way. To explain my choice, the terms inductive, and deductive are addressed then I note why reflexive thematic analysis was appropriate in the context of my study. I then detail how I conducted the reflexive thematic analysis.

Inductive and deductive approaches

As an interpretivist researcher, I relied extensively on qualitative data analysis approaches since I aimed to understand a social phenomenon from participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My intention was to identify frequent or significant themes within participants' data, gathered during photo-elicitation, focus groups and interviews. Inductive data analysis suits the interpretivist paradigm since this type of analysis uses data to identify concepts, theories and explanations in a bottom-up approach. Inductive data analysis allowed me to be guided by participants' comments which aided me to explore their perspectives on student learning wellbeing in an ILE. In contrast, deductive data analysis first requires the formation of theories and hypotheses and the subsequent data analysis serves to determine if the collected data is consistent with these presumptions. This approach appeared to be less suitable in my context because it doesn't allow and would potentially constrain the exploration of participants' complex perspectives. Moreover, not much is known about students' views of their learning wellbeing on which to form a framework to use for analysis. Looking in more detail, thematic analysis (which can be used in an inductive and deductive way) appeared to be an appropriate method for data collection. The following section sets out why reflexive thematic analysis was used in an inductive way to identify themes.

Reflexive thematic analysis

Thematic analysis can be used in both inductive and deductive ways to analyse data. It is an umbrella frame for a set of approaches that focus on developing themes from qualitative data (Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2022). Within thematic analysis, themes are more than a recurring

feature in the data. Instead, themes capture patterns relevant to the research question to provide meaningful and important insights (Braun & Clarke, 2013). According to Braun, Clarke and Hayfield (2022) there are three broad different thematic approaches: 'coding reliability', 'codebook' and 'reflexive'. Coding reliability thematic analysis is underpinned by the positivist assumption that there is one reality in the data which can be captured through the use of structured codebooks and multiple independent coders. Coding reliability thematic analysis is advocated for by researchers such as Boyatzis (1998) and Guest et al. (2012). Coding reliability thematic analysis is generally used in an attempt to answer research problems of a more practical nature. Codebook thematic analysis comprises approaches such as template analysis (King & Brooks, 2017), framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) and matrix analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codebook thematic analysis generally originated in applied research and is shaped by pragmatic concerns, such as many members of a research team separately coding the data which may necessitate a common codebook. While codebook thematic analysis approaches are based on a broadly qualitative paradigm, they tend to use structured codebooks, conceptualising themes as analytic inputs and topic summaries. In contrast, reflexive thematic analysis themes are developed as analytic outputs, created from codes and through researchers' active engagement with their data. Coding becomes an organic and open process, evolving as data analysis progresses and researchers' understanding changes, deepens and develops more nuance (Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2022). Reflexive thematic analysis can help answer research questions concerned with people's experiences, their views and perceptions. Reflexive thematic analysis supports an iterative process of data analysis in tandem with data generation and can be used in conjunction with various types of data, regardless of data collection methods (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These characteristics made reflexive thematic analysis an appropriate approach to my data analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2021) propose that reflexive thematic analysis involves six phases which inspired my approach to data analysis. I followed these phases recursively.

1. Familiarisation with the dataset
2. Coding
3. Generating initial themes
4. Developing and reviewing themes
5. Refining, defining and naming themes
6. Write up

Braun, Clarke and Hayfield (2022) argue that researchers need to explain how they engaged with these phases, including their active decision making. Therefore, I next outline how I analysed my data by working through these phases. In this way, I demonstrate my active engagement with the data and I also recognise that I read my data from a position.

Reflexive thematic analysis in my study

My research had a cumulative character with my sets of interviews taking place over time and data analysis naturally occurring as I undertook its generation (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Cohen et al., 2018). These early insights about my data helped shape subsequent interview questions and built on earlier interviews. Overall, my analysis process followed this pattern:

1. After each focus group interview, I transcribed the audio data, then familiarised myself with the transcripts, reading and re-reading them.
2. I worked systematically through my data transcripts, identifying segments that appeared interesting or meaningful for my research. This inductive approach to data analysis reflects my focus on students' lived experiences. I used NVivo software to make brief annotations to capture my insights, thoughts or wonderings. NVivo allowed me to code densely, with some sections of the focus group and interview transcripts being attached to several nodes (themes). For instance, in the round one focus group interviews, a student commented on a photo of a visual representation of a Hapu tree, saying that it created "more of a family feeling in our community". In this early stage of developing themes, I attached different nodes to this quote: "sense of belonging" and "Hapu".
3. As the research progressed, my understanding of students' perspectives became more nuanced. This was reflected in the way I rearranged and reassigned nodes and created initial themes for the nodes. For example in regard to the quote above, I went back to the initial interview and reread it. Upon reflection, I realised that Learning Advisors made a conscious effort to create this family feeling, that they attempted to create positive relationships with each student in their Learning Advisor and amongst students. This led me to adding the category "relationships".
4. I then developed and reviewed themes, considering the relationship of themes to the research questions. For instance, I realised that the CLOAK provided students with a commonly understood language to talk about their experiences. In response and in order to

honour the inductive approach which foregrounds participant views, I decided to use the CLOAK values as themes. I created two major groups of themes: the first group consisted of the structures shaping students' learning wellbeing while the second group provided a characterisation of the individual nature of students' learning wellbeing. Structures shaping students' learning wellbeing consisted of two sub-themes: 1) CLOAK values, CLOAK badging, Learning Advisory role, 2) personalised learning structures, open plan learning areas and use of digital technologies. The second group contained the themes of the quality of students' relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with personalised learning experiences.

5. When refining and defining themes, I ensured that each theme was clearly demarcated and labelled. This proved, at times, difficult because the themes and subthemes were inextricably linked. For instance, one student commented that her Learning Advisor assisted her to apply the CLOAK value "challenge your mindset" when she was setting herself the goal to pursue in her math learning. The student also explained that the prospect of gaining a badge encouraged her to challenge herself to persevere which ultimately resulted in her succeeding in her math and feeling positive about her learning. In this example, I named this quote after the CLOAK value "challenge your mindset" because this idea was essential to the students' learning wellbeing and prominent throughout the entire quote.
6. My writing process was also iterative. I started drafting the findings from phase three onwards with the research questions in mind. Initially, I crafted sections about each theme, using quotations to illustrate my findings. I then connected the stories about individual themes, reviewed them and created formal chapters for the final write up. This iterative writing process, and the conversations I had with my supervisors about my writing, deepened my analysis because I attempted to be as concise and clear in my wording as possible. Sometimes, my supervisors' comments made me realise that I had not yet identified what themes were going to be more important than others. In such cases, I revisited my quotes and asked myself what the possible implications of the quotes were, how they fitted in with my entire data set, my research questions and the literature review.

By inductively applying a reflexive thematic approach I took a bottom-up approach to explore student participants' view of their learning wellbeing at school. By applying Braun and Clarke's (2021) six phases of reflexive thematic analysis to my data analysis process, I generated themes, helping me to depict participants' rich perceptions in the findings chapter (section 4).

In the analysis preceding the creation of the portraits, I foregrounded students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing while taking particular account of the three indicators of students' learning wellbeing as outlined in the literature review (section 2.1). While analysing students' perspectives, I took particular notice of the three key indicators I chose to use for my study (students' relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with learning experiences). However, student data showed that not all students had the same view or display them in their learning behaviours the same way. I asked myself how I could best reflect what the students had told me. One teacher had noticed that there seemed to be categories of students' perceived learning wellbeing, prompting me to return to the literature to discover if others had created portraiture of categories. I then decided on using a variation of the portraiture technique to illustrate the individual nature of students' learning wellbeing. My approach to data analysis allowed me to meld psychological constructs and definitions such as everyday academic resilience with the socio-cultural context of students' perspectives about their learning wellbeing. My variation of the portraiture technique is explained in the following section.

In sum, using the reflexive thematic approach in an inductive way allowed me to take a bottom-up approach to explore student participants' view of their learning wellbeing in the study ILE. The six phases of thematic analysis enabled me to generate significant and salient themes, which in turn has allowed me to depict the rich and contextualised perceptions of participants in the findings chapter (section 4).

3.2.6 Representing the data - the portraiture technique

Portraiture is a particular kind of qualitative method that is used to document and present research findings (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). Specifically, the portraiture technique explores participants' lived experiences through the creation of in-depth narratives to illuminate key themes emerging from the data (Hackmann, 2002; Hampsten, 2015). Portraiture affirms researchers' creativity in

the composition of the portrait since they actively select themes to craft the portrait (Chapman, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997; Quigley et al., 2013). Portraits can not only highlight strengths and success within research settings but also recognise that weaknesses and imperfections are always present in complex social systems and there is something to be learned from both (Hackmann, 2002; Hampsten, 2015; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). A particular strength of portraiture is its ability to capture nuances and emotions and complexities of participants' lived experiences, producing "scholarship that is compelling, empathetic, and accessible" (Hampsten, 2015; p.468). Paradoxically, portraiture can produce both analytic rigour and human connection (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).

Lawrence-Lightfoot, the pioneer of the portraiture technique, explored the characteristics and culture of six American high schools in an attempt to document what made them good schools. Lawrence-Lightfoot then developed the portraiture technique, "seeking an authentic representation of what [she] was seeing" (2005, p.6). Also relevant to my approach is the work of Auerbach (2007). In her case study, Auerbach (2007) explored the perceptions of parents' role in their children's learning of working-class families of colour. She developed a typology of parent roles, one that reflected parents' contrasting social and cultural perceptions of their children and the school. In her data analysis, Auerbach noted themes along a continuum of parental support and used portraiture to present three types of parental support for their children's schooling. Auerbach's study and approach was important to my study since I investigated students' perceptions and attitudes towards their school learning experiences and their learning wellbeing. In addition, I used a typology of characteristics in the creation of portraits of students' learning wellbeing. In her doctoral thesis, Trask (2019) used portraiture in a similar context to mine. Trask investigated teachers' and students' experiences of science learning in three ILE schools in New Zealand. She utilised portraiture to present a cross-case synthesis illustrating what science teaching and learning *might* look like in an ILE setting. In contrast to my study, Trask drew data together from across her three case studies to create a single narrative of possibilities. These two studies illustrated that portraiture can be used to demonstrate the complexity and nuances of lived experiences through detailed description of contexts and voices making it relevant to my study goals. At the same time, I wanted my subjects to feel seen and recognised (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) and I wanted to reach the reader on a personal level (Hampsten, 2015). I constructed the three fictional portraits to achieve this and to illustrate the personal nature of learning wellbeing.

They distilled the characteristics of students displaying high, medium or low levels of learning wellbeing by drawing together recurring and salient themes in students' comments on their learning wellbeing in the study ILE. To ensure that my portraits encapsulated students' voices, I included student quotes in the portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005).

To sum up, portraiture is an appropriate technique for my research in that it allowed me to draw together the most salient features of students' descriptions of their learning wellbeing in a way that I hope has made their experiences accessible and meaningful to readers.

3.3 Quality standards for interpretivist researchers

Trustworthiness and authenticity provide a coherent framework for quality standards within interpretivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In this section I outline these concepts and explain the actions I took to attain trustworthiness in my study. Following this, I establish how I fulfilled the authenticity criteria in my research.

3.3.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness can be explicated in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Credibility refers to a researcher's ability to reflect situations and participants' views on situations in a plausible manner (Cohen et al., 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Patton, 2002). I increased the *credibility* of my investigations through prolonged engagement and cross-checking (Cohen et al., 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Patton, 2002). I immersed myself in the research setting over the course of a year to identify salient events and features of the setting. I also used member checking, meaning that I asked participants to check transcripts of interviews and summaries of focus group discussions. I used multiple methods for data collection, including photo-elicitation, focus groups, and interviews and documents made available by the school (Cohen et al., 2018; Keeves, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Triangulating these sources allowed me to provide a more complex description of my research setting and increase the trustworthiness of my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Transferability signifies that the reader determines the relevance of the study findings, when judging the degree of comparability and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). I have sought to assist readers in deciding if my study findings are applicable to other situations through thick descriptions of the research setting, data collection processes and student views. This approach is recognised as enabling readers to compare and contrast the research findings to other contexts (Cohen et al., 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Dependability and confirmability refer to a researcher's intention not to let their personal values and motives influence the results of their study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To achieve confirmability, I established an audit trail that will allow an external auditor, such as my supervisors, to track data to the source.

3.3.2 Authenticity

The authenticity criteria ensures that all interactions between researchers and participants are ethical. Lincoln and Guba (1986) base authenticity on five criteria: fairness, ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical authentication which I will elaborate on in turn.

Fairness is defined as a balanced view of all participants' values and belief systems. I carried out continuous member checking to ensure and build participants' confidence that their views were being represented fairly. Ontological authentication refers to an improved conscious experience of the world by participants. Educative authentication refers to each participant being educated about other participants' perspectives throughout the research process. The photo-elicitation activity and focus groups gave participants an opportunity for both ontological and educative authentication since students were encouraged to listen to other participants' perspectives on learning wellbeing. Catalytic authentication is also known as feedback-action validity and describes the intention that participants benefit from identifying problems in the world around them. The photo-elicitation activity stimulated students' thinking about their learning wellbeing and encouraged them to reflect on it. Tactical authentication refers to participants being empowered through the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I established positive relationships with participants to ensure that all interactions throughout the research process were positive and meaningful.

In summary, I ensured trustworthiness through cross checking of data and establishment of an audit trail. I also depicted the context of the study through rich descriptions, enabling readers to judge if the findings of my study are applicable to other studies or situations they may have encountered. Moreover, I established ethical relationships with participants to ensure fairness as well as ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical authenticity.

3.3.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical Approval has been gained from the Division of Education Human Research Ethics Committee (FEDU092/19). I summarise some key points here.

Insider researcher is an important consideration for my project. Insider researchers belong to the group that they conduct their research with (Unluer, 2012) which might be in a specific society, profession or workplace (Adam, 2013; Innes, 2009). I have worked in the school where I conducted my research. At the time of data collection I was not working in this setting, yet I could still be considered an insider researcher since I had specific knowledge of the school. For example, I had a deeper understanding of cultural and organisational aspects of the school than an outsider might have (Unluer, 2012). I had some understanding of what might be an appropriate way to approach people in the study school, which has been found to assist in gaining access to people, knowledge and resources relevant to a research study (Unluer, 2012). This can be an advantage but on the other hand I had to be cautious that my prior knowledge of some participants might affect the way I understood and responded to their comments. Some students knew me as a teacher. However, I anticipated that photo-elicitation would mitigate this power-imbalance between myself and students, breaking down possible barriers. I enlisted my supervisors to audit my data collection and analysis to establish dependability and confirmability and ensure that my investigation was trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

I anticipated that student faces would appear in some of the photos from the participant driven photo-elicitation. I explained this to students prior to the photo-elicitation activity and in the information letters and consent forms for all participants. I asked students to seek permission before taking photos of other students. I also explained in the consent forms and in person that I would inform students if I selected a photograph they took or if they appeared in someone else's

photograph that was used as a prompt for later group and individual interviews (Appendix D-H). Following this I gave them an opportunity to withdraw their photos if they wished.

The small number of possible target ILE schools meant that the study ILE might be able to be identifiable even if only broad descriptors such as location and enrolment numbers were provided. In addition, due to the use of focus groups and photo-elicitation, confidentiality and anonymity could not be guaranteed during the data collection processes. This was clearly stated in the information letters to students and caregivers. I explained the need for confidentiality to participants in the focus groups as they began. I have used pseudonyms when referring to individuals. All identifying details of participants have remained confidential to me with digital records stored in a secure location.

3.4 Summary: Methodology and methods

I chose Interpretivism as a paradigm for my research because this paradigm considers the complexity of human nature, aiming to understand individuals' thoughts and intentions. This aim to understand individuals' perspectives was important to me since I intended to investigate students' perceptions of their own learning wellbeing in an ILE. I employed a single case study research design working with one ILE. The research methods I used were participant-driven photo-elicitation, focus group and individual interviews, and collection and analysis of documentary data. Photos from the photo-elicitation activity served as prompts for subsequent focus groups. I chose not to include students' photographs in the findings chapter of this thesis because students' comments spoke for themselves. My data collection was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and I have described my response to this event. Data generation and data analysis proceeded in tandem which allowed me to create interview questions for subsequent interviews. I analysed data in an inductive way which allowed me to identify common themes in students' lived experiences of learning wellbeing in a bottom-up way. I used reflexive thematic analysis to develop themes. In addition to presenting these themes, I created three fictional portraits to synthesise the most salient features of students' descriptions of their learning wellbeing.

Cross checking of data and establishing an audit trail were employed to help ensure trustworthiness. In the following chapter I provide thick descriptions of themes to enable readers to judge if and how the findings of my study may be applicable to other situations. I ensured

fairness as well as ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical authenticity in establishing ethical relationships with all participants.

I gained Ethical Approval for the study from the Division of Education Human Research Ethics Committee and addressed the fact that I might be considered an insider researcher since I had worked at the study school prior to undertaking this research. I also gained informed consent from students to use their photographs from the photo-elicitation activity as prompts in interviews. I informed students if I chose their photo or if their face was visible in a photo, and I gave them an opportunity to withdraw their photos if they wished. The small number of possible target ILE schools meant that the study ILE might be able to be identifiable. Moreover, anonymity could not be guaranteed during data collection since I used focus groups. This was clearly stated in the information letters to students and caregivers. To protect individuals, I have used pseudonyms. All identifying details of participants have remained confidential to me with digital records stored in a secure location. The next chapter illustrates pertinent findings about students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing in the study ILE.

Chapter four: Findings on educators' views

A distinctive feature of my project is students' voices about their learning wellbeing in the study ILE. However, I decided to foreground educators' comments to enable the reader to gain an in-depth understanding of the people and structures in the research setting. Educators gave their perspectives on students' learning wellbeing, the CLOAK, Learning Advisories, personalised learning, relationships, resilience and agency.

I carried out a total of six semi-structured individual interviews with four educators. I also conducted two follow-up interviews with two of the educators towards the end of the year. All educators were Learning Advisors who also taught Modules or Tautoro Modules. In addition, these educators held roles as Hapu Leader, Curriculum Leader or Deputy Principal. For convenience's sake I will refer to participant educators as Learning Advisors when I illustrate findings about Learning Advisors' role. Likewise, I will call them teachers when outlining findings on Module and Tautoro Module teachers' role.

4.1 Promoting learning wellbeing through the CLOAK values and badging

The school's dispositional values are summarised in the CLOAK acronym. As noted in Chapter 1, these are posted on the school website. All four teachers commented on the link between the CLOAK values, CLOAK badging and students' learning wellbeing. For instance, Catherine described the CLOAK curriculum as the "most important thing about our school" and outlined its contribution as follows:

> I think *the* most important thing about our school is the CLOAK and I would argue that if the kids get the CLOAK, that everything else will fall into place because the CLOAK is all encompassing. It's learning to learn, it's knowing themselves as a person and as a learner, it's making connections with their thinking, it's being kind, respectful. And then it's Ahurea Tuakiri which is around knowing your past, present and future and your sense of belonging in this place.

> So it's really holistic, building the whole person and helping them be the best they can be in all of those well-rounded aspects. And I just would argue that if they have all of those things firing, it would be impossible not to be academically successful because they'll be showing high motivation and they'll be showing great self-managing.

Catherine appeared to have a well-developed notion of students' learning wellbeing. She linked the CLOAK values to students' awareness of themselves as learners and their capacity and aspiration for self-optimisation, that is to become the best learners they could be. Catherine asserted that academic achievement would result from students embracing the CLOAK values.

Linda encapsulated teachers' views, stating that students' resilience when facing learning challenges "is definitely explicitly pointed out through our CLOAK. You have different descriptors like 'Do I keep persevering when things get hard?' and so resilience comes under 'Challenge your mindset'". Jeanne highlighted that the CLOAK badging programme focused on students' progress towards the CLOAK values pointing out that:

> Badging is progress based, not achievement based. So it's very much like "You are *learning to* challenge yourself", not like "You got an A in this, well done, badge". So the focus on progress really helps with building resilience.

She emphasised the role of regular reflection on the CLOAK values:

> The CLOAK values come alive through self-reflection. So on a weekly or fortnightly basis, I do a little reflection with students. I think "Ourselves as learners" and "Challenge your mindset" come alive the most. And I think the language that the teachers use when they're talking with students and talking about their learning what's not going well and "You need to challenge yourself a little bit more".

Jeanne also highlighted the link between the CLOAK values, badging and students' wellbeing saying:

> I think the school is doing a good job of building up learning dispositions and having a focus around the badging around those learning dispositions, which leads to good wellbeing. A lot of the stuff that's in the CLOAK helps with wellbeing.

Overall, it appears that teachers saw a strong link between the CLOAK values, CLOAK badging and students' learning wellbeing. Teachers seemed to have a clear vision of promoting learning wellbeing and how to foster students' aspiration for self-optimisation.

4.2 Learning Advisors' role as "mini-parents"

All participant teachers perceived the Learning Advisory role as one of nurturing students' learning wellbeing. They reportedly addressed students' learning wellbeing through the Learning Advisory Curriculum. This focuses on the CLOAK values as well as learning-to-learn strategies, whanaunatanga, social and emotional learning, and aspects of the Health Curriculum, such as Hauora (see Glossary). Jeanne asserted that the Learning Advisors' focus was on helping students know themselves, deal with their emotions and expand their Hauora. Catherine noted that the Advisors' "deliberate acts of teaching" were about unpacking what wellbeing is and looks like and that this is "essential". Having the time for this development through the three lots of 90 minutes per week in the timetable was seen as a key to their success in fostering students' learning wellbeing. The small size of the Learning Advisory groups was thought to contribute to being able to forge close bonds with students as learners according to both Catherine and Jeanne. Linda explained that the leadership team had decided to keep a small number of students in the Learning Advisory so that students have more possibilities for one-to-one care, saying:

> They (Senior Leadership Team) identified from the start that relationships were really key and so that they've made room for that. They tried to keep the numbers small with Advisors so that they're better connected and students have better pastoral care wrapped around them. So they're aware of the wellbeing and what it could look like for the learner in terms of having that one on one care.

Dave, Catherine and Jeanne reported that Learning Advisors acted as significant, caring adults in the students' lives. For example, Dave stated that "having those relationships established really helps the students to have that significant other person". Similarly, Catherine illustrated that the high level of Learning Advisors' care impacted students' learning wellbeing, suggesting that:

> If our learners are feeling cared for and loved by their teachers and that *one person* at school really, really knows them I believe that has a really positive impact and relationships tend to be pretty deep.

Jeanne said "You need to have really close relationships and trusting relationships with students to be able to help them." Jeanne perceived her role as being like a "mini-parent" who helped students to maintain positive levels of learning wellbeing and who assisted students to become adults. She said:

> My job isn't about English [her subject area]. My job is about the students and knowing the students and helping them learn and knowing what's going on in their life to support them. I see that role as an Advisor as supporting them to become an adult. Like a parent on a smaller scale, trying to develop not just students' learning dispositions, but also dispositions in life, like being a good person. Challenging themselves, taking risks, trying new sports. Encouraging them to pursue things that they love doing, noticing when they are doing well and acknowledging their strengths. So I think of the role as like a mini parent.

Catherine further highlighted the value of strong teacher-student relationships if teachers were to support student academic learning:

> It's not effective to jump into rigorous academic learning if we don't have a relationship and know each other and know that the learner is okay and is in a place where they can be open to learning.

Linda reported that one-on-one coaching allowed Advisors to monitor students' resilience when facing learning challenges when she explained:

> With the Advisors, coaching students one on one may be a helpful structure [for students to develop resilience]. And the check ins, like circle times when Advisors are asking them how they are or what's on top.

Within the Hapu, Catherine described relationships as “very whānau. I think it's family”. Dave outlined how students’ sense of belonging and safety in their Hapu contributed to their confidence to speak up:

> Most of the students are happy to contribute because they know the people pretty well and they spend a lot of time with them. Hopefully they trust their Advisor and they feel safe in that environment. So in my experience everybody's happy to say something and put their hand up.

The spatial structure of each Hapu featured in teachers’ discussion of students’ learning wellbeing due to Learning Advisors from the same Hapu sharing an office within the Hapu area. Jeanne explained:

> We have our offices built around Hapu teachers, not around curriculum areas. The Art department at another school would be all focused on Art and when you walk into an Art office, the teachers are all talking about Art and how to teach Art. When you walk into your Hapu office it's about the wellbeing of the students. I suppose this creates a different atmosphere and a different focus.

Together, the key idea these teachers expressed was that they viewed their Learning Advisor role as a nurturing one, and students’ learning wellbeing was their first priority, similar to that of a mini-parent.

4.3 Fostering learning wellbeing in Modules and Tautoro Modules

Teachers explained that they took on a different role during Modules and Tautoro Modules, without losing sight of their pastoral care role. Jeanne commented that in her role as a Module teacher, she focussed more on curriculum learning, in her case the English curriculum: “As an English teacher in my Module, I definitely put this hat on and I am much more focused on English learning and making sure I'm getting them important skills around English”. In Modules and

Tautoro Modules, teachers saw their role as creating challenging personalised tasks to foster students' everyday academic resilience and learning wellbeing. Linda encapsulated teachers' views by describing resilience as an "ability to keep trying and something that you need to practice in different situations and something that can be cultivated." Jeanne said her role was to help students become resilient by creating challenging learning experiences, but help them to use their Learning Advisory learning and CLOAK skills to cope with learning opportunities that take them out of their comfort zone. Jeanne further stated that she wanted her students to develop "an awareness that when I get stuck, I have the power and control to change my situation." Catherine too believed that students were most likely to develop resilience when they hit a spot in their learning that made them feel uncomfortable:

> We don't want the learning to be so terrible and tough that you are drowning. But we want you to be comfortable being a little bit challenged, a little bit panicky or a little bit "argh, this is how this feels, really uncomfortable", but just trust that there are lots of people around and lots of tools around that we will get you there. You'll get there. You just have to trust in yourself and give yourself a break and have another go and all those things.

Catherine further emphasised that challenging learning experiences can contribute to students' self-efficacy as learners, stating that this assisted in "growing their self-belief and resilience and confidence. So I think that's good for their wellbeing." Jeanne pointed out that it was challenging for teachers to differentiate learning tasks so that *all* students in a Module felt both safe and challenged. As Jeanne noted, sometimes this was not achievable because the learning task was too complex for some learners who might be pushed out of their comfort zone and begin to suffer anxiety and or frustration:

> With the larger groups sometimes supporting those lower learners can be really hard. I think it's a natural flaw of the system that with *that* many kids trying to differentiate for them appropriately can be really hard. So some are out of their comfort zone too far and they're in what they perceive as a danger zone. I think that does happen with the lower learners.

However, teachers saw some degree of a learning struggle as an opportunity to support students in their personal and academic growth. Broadly, they thought that allowing students to struggle in their learning may help them to develop the skills and resilience needed to overcome learning challenges. Such circumstances may send the message to students that teachers have confidence in their abilities to overcome learning challenges. Catherine noted parents sometimes remove struggle which denies students the opportunity to build the resilience skills needed to deal with learning challenges:

> I have noticed that sometimes some parents have been overcompensating and trying to do everything for their child and not allowing any struggle. And what that does is that it gives the child the message that they are not capable and they may never develop the skills to become capable. So we've got to make that judgement and make visible to the kids that it's OK to struggle. It's OK to have a little bit of angst about your learning. It's just what you do with that, that you are going to become a stronger learner. It's a lost opportunity for the child, for the Year nine student to actually develop time management, project management and study and effort skills [if parents intervene].

If students are to take risks in their learning to build resilience and persistence, then the pedagogies teachers use in their Modules and Tautoro Modules may have a significant influence. A teacher-centric approach, where teachers make the learning decisions and do not allow students to make mistakes does not help them develop learning resilience as Catherine explains:

> I think that micromanaging the kids and being too teacher centric and too parent centric is path smoothing but it's not allowing the kids to make choices or to be agentic and make mistakes. And I feel like if they never get a chance to make mistakes we become risk averse. I don't think they should be taking wild risks and, you know, making mistakes doesn't feel great. But I do feel like they need to have some space to get some stuff wrong and then to be able to learn from that.

Catherine viewed her role as a teacher as developing students. Catherine also reported that the creation of personalised learning pathways in Modules and Tautoro Modules assisted students to

develop their agency. She commented “I think an agentic learner is a learner who is given the opportunity and the skills to be able to drive their own learning.“ Catherine explained the “feeling of agency” from a teacher’s perspective:

> It's like walking into a Module and making an observation in the first five minutes of the Module: Are they leaning back in the chair and waiting to passively receive? Have we taught them to be powerless or are they high energy, purposeful, is there kind of a sense of urgency about getting down to the business of learning? And I feel like that's the feeling of agency. I think it's like that flexibility for them to learn how they like to learn. I think that we've got a lot of kids who are agentic.

Teachers appeared to value learner agency as a contributing factor to students’ everyday academic resilience. Jeanne commented that giving students agency in their personalised learning pathways in Modules and Tautoro Modules assisted them to develop the appropriate skills to overcome learning challenges. She commented:

> In Modules, there are so many opportunities for agency in driving their own learning that if they’re starting on that journey, they are able to develop some really good learning skills and resiliency through those opportunities.

Teachers seem to encourage students to make learning decisions and take risks (with teacher support) in their learning as part of the process of growing in their abilities and belief that they can deal well with learning challenges.

Overall, teachers saw their role as creating challenging, personalised learning experiences and encouraging students to take learning risks. These learning experiences were thought to assist students to develop their everyday academic resilience and to grow as learners. Challenging, personalised learning tasks were intended to foster students’ everyday academic resilience, self-regulation skills and agency. As Jeanne pointed out, creating differentiated tasks that challenged *all* students was difficult and, at times, some learners may struggle and feel out of their comfort zone.

4.4 Organisational structures impacting students' learning wellbeing

Teachers reported that some organisational structures, such as co-teaching a larger number of students in open plan learning spaces, impacted students' learning wellbeing in various ways. For example, Catherine thought that collaborative teaching had positive effects on student-teacher relationships and students' learning wellbeing. She argued that students appear to appreciate having a choice about who they ask questions in their Modules and Tautoro Modules since they may connect better with some teachers than others. Catherine explained this as follows:

> Kids have told us that they appreciate having choices about who they ask questions of, and knowing that they have a range of teachers, and a range of personalities. And also kids just connect differently with different personalities and they will open up to one teacher or work well with one teacher. And that must be good for their anxiety and them feeling safe at school.

Catherine suggested that access to more than one teacher at a time might give students "some choice and power in their learning. So that must help them". Adding to this, Jeanne considered collaborative teaching approaches in an open plan learning context may lead to greater consistency in terms of learning expectations and behaviour management across a school. This, according to Jeanne, contributed positively to students' learning wellbeing and resilience when facing learning challenges:

> You are seeing other teachers teach all the time. The fact that you're having to constantly collaborate with teachers is that you're constantly discussing your take on the school vision and challenging the vision, challenging the approach to achieving a vision. So I think collaborative teaching makes us better teachers, which then has better outcomes for the students. I think consistency for students is important. And if they're going to multiple different places around the school and getting multiple different messages, it probably is quite tricky for them to navigate through that. So I think that's going to be good for wellbeing, having a consistent approach in terms of behaviour management and consistent approach

> in terms of the learning expectations and it is not all looking foreign in different areas. That probably has good impacts on wellbeing and resilience.

Dave commented that teachers tried hard to establish positive relationships with students in Modules and Tautoro Modules quickly. Yet, Jeanne and Linda found it harder to get to know students in their curriculum-focused Modules and Tautoro Modules than in Learning Advisory groups. For Jeanne, she felt that "I think you get to know less about the students in your module than if you were in a class with 30 kids". Likewise, Linda said:

> I find it quite hard getting to know that sheer number of students. I've got a hundred and twenty kids to get to know on a one to one basis. So I think by the end of the semester I know a good chunk of them quite well or their abilities, but there's still that pocket that I just don't know as well.

Some Modules and all Tautoro Modules changing half way through the year (after one semester) may present a challenge in building close teacher-student relationships. As Catherine noted, "in these Modules, we just don't have the time, the same length of time that we've known each other [in Advisory groups]".

In terms of the open plan learning environment, Dave stated that particularly Yr7 and 8 students needed time to adjust to the open plan learning environment. He said:

> There's certainly groups within the Yr7 and 8s who find it difficult to manage themselves in this environment. Whether that's to do with the number of distractions around them? Because in some spaces, there's up to four Modules which is close to 200 kids. So it's a lot. There is lots of stuff going on. And the other side of that is because there's lots of people within their class, there's so many different relationship dynamics as well. If they were in a traditional environment, they might be in a class with 25 students, whereas within their Module set they're with 50 to 60 students. Again, it comes back to Advisory learning, Whanaungatanga, building those skills. So some students do struggle with that. But many students just get on with it and they're happy to do what they need to do.

Dave pointed out that Learning Advisory equips students with the necessary skills to deal well with any distractions in the open plan learning environment. Moreover, Dave pointed out that relationship dynamics amongst students may be complex because students have many peers to mingle with in Modules and and Tautoro Modules. However, Dave seemed confident that Learning Advisors were able to assist students with building the skills to deal with this.

Linda mentioned that she perceived the open plan learning environment as crowded. She commented:

> On top for me at the moment is how overcrowded we are. So the sheer numbers for me and the sheer openness of our buildings is quite overwhelming and overstimulating for me. I feel like our physical buildings have never added positively to what we do. I always remember that quote, that if a building can neither be made more open or closed, it's not flexible. So there's not a lot of flexibility in the way we move and the way we are because we are so open and crowded. But just for me and for the students, I think the volumes and the way we're laid out could impact.... I know it impacts on *my* wellbeing.

Linda linked the "sheer openness" of the building to a lack of spatial flexibility. She also reported that the open-plan learning environment negatively impacted her wellbeing as a teacher since it was "overstimulating".

4.5 Students' satisfaction with learning experiences

Teachers discussed students' satisfaction with personalised learning experiences which were facilitated through Rich Learning Experiences (RLE). All four teachers thought that the majority of students were very satisfied with their learning experiences. For instance, Dave commented that his observations of students led him to the conclusion that out of all "the students that I teach across our Hapu and in my Modules, I would say 95 percent of them love being in school." Catherine reported students feeling "inspired" and "excited" and "buzzing" about their learning. However, Catherine also pointed out that some students may perceive assessment through RLEs, that is students' creation of an artefact representing their personalised learning journey, rather than exams as a lack of academic rigour. Jeanne linked students' learning dispositions and self-management

skills to their satisfaction with learning experiences. Jeanne believed that the more students are able to manage their learning, the higher their satisfaction with learning experiences are:

> Kids that have really good learning dispositions or developing them, I think they're really satisfied. The ones that are learning and just seem to have some motivation to develop their skills, I think their satisfaction will be high. The kids who are lacking learning dispositions or self-management ... I don't know how satisfied they would be with their learning. But in saying that, I think that a lot of teachers try really hard to engage those students. So actually I think they would be somewhat satisfied.

Jeanne emphasised that teachers attempted to engage students who seem to have limited self-management skills and poor learning dispositions which she thought may enhance those students' satisfaction with learning experiences. Jeanne explained her view on the link between students' learning dispositions and their satisfaction with learning experiences. She said:

> I think that the students with good learning dispositions seek out a lot of feedback and they get a lot of feedback. That student teacher relationship is quite strong. The middle kids, I think there is a lot of support for students to develop those skills. And the kids with lacking learning dispositions, honestly their attitudes are a bit ... there's maybe other things going on in their lives that are stopping them from being able to enjoy school or seeing it as a satisfactory experience. It links to their attitude which surely links to their home life and what's going on there."

Jeanne perceived students with a high level of learning dispositions to be very satisfied with their learning while students with poor learning dispositions would be less likely to be satisfied with their learning experiences.

4.6 Summary: Educators' views

In sum, teachers' comments illustrated how the CLOAK values and badging structure were intentionally created to foster students' learning wellbeing. Their commentary indicated that the

CLOAK values were intended to raise students' awareness of themselves as learners, their learner capacity and their aspiration for self-optimisation (that is to become the best learner they could be). The progression-based nature of the CLOAK badging programme was thought to focus students on progressing towards the CLOAK values. In addition, Learning Advisors appeared to intentionally foster students' learning wellbeing and acted as "mini-parents". This became clear since all participant teachers perceived the Learning Advisory role as one of nurturing students' learning wellbeing as a significant, caring adult in the students' lives. The Learning Advisory Curriculum seemed to assist Learning Advisors to explicitly teach what wellbeing looked like. Learning Advisors also said that they supported students' academic learning and monitored their everyday academic resilience through regular check-ins. The spatial structure of each Hapu appeared to shape Learning Advisors' focus on students' learning wellbeing since Learning Advisors from the same Hapu shared an office within the Hapu area. Participant teachers described their role as Module and Tautoro Modules teachers as creating challenging, personalised learning experiences. These learning experiences were thought to push students slightly out of their comfort zone, assist them to develop their everyday academic resilience and to grow as learners. Taking learning risks (with teacher support) was seen as another way to promote students' everyday academic resilience since it allowed students to make mistakes and learn from them. Moreover, challenging, personalised learning tasks were intended to foster students' self-regulation skills and agency. However, creating differentiated tasks that challenged *all* students appeared to be difficult which could possibly leave the lower learners feeling out of their comfort zone. In terms of organisational features, the collaborative teaching approach gives students a choice about who they approach in their Modules and Tautoro Modules as they may connect better with some teachers. In addition, collaborative teaching in the open-plan learning environment may increase consistencies in learning expectations and behaviour management which may positively impact students' learning wellbeing.

All participant teachers commented on the centrality of establishing deep relationships with students quickly since some Modules and all Tautoro Modules changed halfway through the year. These changes and larger numbers of students may make it harder to build relationships. It appeared that some Yr7 and 8 students needed time to adjust to the open-plan learning environment. Teacher commentary indicated that the large open-plan learning spaces may be overstimulating for some students. However, the Learning Advisory is thought to equip students

with the necessary skills to deal well with any distractions in the open plan learning environment. All participant teachers assumed students to be very satisfied with their learning experiences. Students' satisfaction with their learning experience may link to their ability to self-manage their learning, indicating that the more students are able to own and self-regulate their learning, the more satisfied they could be.

Chapter five: Findings on students' views

This chapter describes the ILE structures which students identified as impacting on their learning wellbeing. First, I outline students' views on the CLOAK values, with a particular focus on the "Challenge your mindset" value, in relation to their learning wellbeing. Then I concentrate on how the CLOAK and the CLOAK badging programme work together to shape students' perceptions about a positive school culture for learning wellbeing in the study ILE.

Subsequently, I demonstrate how the Learning Advisory structure impacts students' learning wellbeing and their sense of belonging in the study ILE. A specific focus is on individual coaching, guided by the Learning Advisory curriculum, particularly the CLOAK values as they relate to students' everyday academic resilience, agency and self-regulation.

In the next section I share students' perceptions of how the personalised learning structures in Modules, Tautoro Modules and Flight Times affect their learning wellbeing. I also illustrate students' views on open plan learning spaces and use of digital technologies. Additionally, students' perspectives on their home learning experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown are detailed.

The final section consists of three fictional portraits which synthesise the key characteristics of students' learning wellbeing that I identified in the data. The three portraits characterise students with high, medium and low levels of learning wellbeing (HWB, MWB and LWB). I then draw together a picture of the structures sustaining students' learning wellbeing and the perspectives of the students in their respective categories.

5.1 The CLOAK values and students' learning wellbeing

As outlined in section 1.3, the CLOAK acronym encapsulates and represents the school's values. The teachers I interviewed asserted that these values are integral to all learning activities at the school. The CLOAK acronym stands for:

- **C**hallenge your mindset
- **L**earning is connected
- **O**urselves as learners

- **A**hurea tuakiri (cultural identity)
- **K**indness and respect

Students' comments from all year levels revealed that they perceived the CLOAK values as important. Their views are presented on the different CLOAK values in the same order as the letters. Student views are represented in the order of Yr7 to Yr10. However, Yr9 and Yr10 students were more articulate than Yr7 and Yr8 students and hence their comments are predominantly represented. Yr10 students' comments in particular revealed that the CLOAK was deeply embedded in their thinking which may be due to the fact that they had been at the school for the longest period of time. Nonetheless, Yr7 students *were able* to discuss the meaning of the CLOAK for their approach to learning, suggesting that the CLOAK values were important to them.

5.1.1 Challenge your mindset

The school documentation describes the "Challenge your mindset" value as adopting a positive mindset towards learning, involving a focus on perseverance and being adventurous in learning.

A positive attitude towards learning challenges

The CLOAK value of challenging your mindset was explained as students adopting a positive attitude toward learning and persevering with learning challenges. When Yr7 students were asked how they knew if somebody was following the CLOAK, Scarlett stated: "They don't have a bad attitude" and other Yr7 students nodded in agreement indicating it can be assumed that Yr7 students link the CLOAK with a positive attitude towards learning and learning challenges. In addition, Ezra stated that the CLOAK inspired him, and Cooper further explained that the CLOAK was "something to try to work towards to do the things that it says". Sophie linked the CLOAK to her efforts to improve her work through explicit mention of "Challenge your mindset":

> "Challenge your mindset" means that you push hard on yourself. Just trying to adapt. …. So the writing that I did the other day, I would edit it and make it more specific by using the hard words. So I pushed harder and I can get better grades and get better work.

Yr8 students also stated that the “Challenge your mindset” value encouraged them “to do better” as learners. For instance, Emma explained:

> “Challenge your mindset” means to challenge yourself to do better and stepping out of your comfort zone and probably trying new things. Sometimes it can make me nervous. But I know it's good to try to challenge myself and do better.

Yr8 students discussed the difference between “challenging yourself” and “being challenged by learning tasks”. Evie explained:

> If you're being challenged and sometimes it's kind of all over the place because you might not know what you're actually trying to do, whereas if you're challenging yourself you might know what to do for the next step and you just take it up a level. If you're challenging yourself, you're usually more willingly going to do it because you have a choice and it kind of makes you feel better because you feel free to be able to do it and not pressured.

Evie’s comment indicates that she distinguished between working on a challenging task where she was not sure how to proceed and challenging herself where she had formed an idea of what the next steps were and she was motivated to take these steps. It is of note that she portrayed challenging herself as a more positive experience, one she associated with having a choice, and as leading to a higher level of understanding in her learning.

Two Yr9 students provided a different perspective on learning challenges, which they referred to as being in the learning pit. When asked what the learning pit was, Liam named it as one of the terms used by teachers to describe learning challenges. He related that the CLOAK value of “challenging yourself” was essential to get through learning struggles associated with the learning pit:

> There's lots of versions of the learning pit, we have "challenging yourself". That's an aspect of the learning pit. (...) So we have the CLOAK and that sort of helps us get through the learning pit.”

Alice (Yr9) explained: “If you get stuck in the learning pit, instead of going "this is too hard" and giving up you persevere and you show resilience and you try to get out.” Here we can see that

Alice is using the words perseverance and resilience. Her use of these words and the documentary data analysed suggest that the school uses the words perseverance and resilience to unpack the idea of facing learning challenges and to offer suggestions for what students could do to address learning challenges.

Isabelle (Yr10) gave a concrete example how the CLOAK had helped her persevere when she found mathematics tasks difficult:

> Sometimes we think about strengths and weaknesses when we do goals. Last year my goal was *just doing* Maths because I *hate* Maths. So I challenged myself because we were forced to make goals and because I had to follow the CLOAK and also because then I got to pitch for one of my blue badges, so I could use that as an example. Now I just find Maths alright because I challenged myself more and just pushed myself and now I'm actually kind of good.

It appears that the CLOAK provided a framework and an impetus for Isabelle to develop a personal goal to do with learning mathematics that she would otherwise not have had. The idea of a badge as evidence of her achievement also seemed to be a strong motivator for Isabelle. (The badging system is discussed in more detail in the next section.)

Seeking out new learning opportunities: Getting out of your comfort zone

Students from all year levels reported that the CLOAK encouraged them to "challenge themselves". When prompted as to what this meant, they referred to an openness towards new learning experiences that might be outside their current skill set. For example, Jacob (Yr7) commented: "I feel good when I feel challenged because I think it's a good opportunity to learn new things for the future. It can help me that I actually learn those things." Meanwhile, Arlo (Yr8) referred to a willingness to move outside his comfort zone and try new things: "So it's about getting outside your comfort zone and doing stuff you wouldn't usually do. So for me, there's things like speeches because I'm not a public speaker." Zara (Yr9) talked about "pushing yourself and just trying to extend your knowledge, so get out of your comfort zone. So that's like 'go ahead and try new things' instead of being stuck in the same area where you're comfortable". Alice (Y9) expressed a similar view when she explained: "When you do stuff over and over again you're just good at that one thing. But when you try different things then you're spreading yourself." Rob

(Yr10) also perceived the CLOAK value of "challenge yourself" as inspiring him to seek out new knowledge, saying:

> I think another good thing about "challenging yourself" is that it kind of opened my eyes a bit more into wanting to learn new things. An example of that is that recently for my digital tech class we've been looking over the different programming languages and that has inspired me to try and learn one which they didn't necessarily tell us to do.

Taken together these students' comments indicate that the CLOAK value of "Challenge your mindset" value is interpreted by students at all year levels as encouraging them to seek out and embrace new learning experiences that were outside their comfort zone. Students commented readily on "Challenge your mindset" but they only commented on other CLOAK values with more prompting. The sections that follow are structured according to the CLOAK acronym.

5.1.2 Learning is connected

"Learning is connected" is the second value in CLOAK. The school's focus on "Learning is connected" aimed to encourage students' critical thinking, creative thinking and connected thinking. This value is thought to assist students to connect and merge subject areas to compose personalised learning pathways. Students provided a number of comments which indicated that they understood and appreciated the value of making connections across school subjects and to out of school learning. Arlo (Yr8) pointed out that his learning out of school connected to his learning at school, saying "you learn stuff outside of school and that's connected to stuff in school." Hunter (Yr8) explained how personalised learning projects, called Rich Learning Experience (RLE, see section 1.3) support students to connect subjects:

> With the whole new RLE system, we get to choose our RLE and what we do. So we can connect any of our subjects that we have so the learning is connected because we could connect all of our learning, but we can do just two subjects or we can do one big project, which has all the subjects in it.

From this comment it appears that Hunter recognises he has choice and agency in deciding which learning areas he connects. Mia (Yr10) provided the following example of how she displayed agency when connecting ideas from maths and science for her RLE:

> I think especially with our RLEs coming up, connecting all of our subjects and taking past knowledge and other things you may have learnt from other subjects and using that to help people progress in new things. So taking our learning and relating it all so you can get the best outcome. I'm currently doing my science and I know we've done a lot of work on measurement. So I'm looking at the planets, the distances apart and the diameter and all that kind of stuff, making sure everything is to scale with my method from science.

Emma (Yr8) focused more on the creative aspect of making connections. She explained, "I think it's important to be creative because if you're always following the rules your stuff will never be different from other people." Overall, students' comments indicated that the value of "Learning is connected" was that it prompted them to be agentic and creative when looking for connection as part of crafting a personalised learning pathway that was directed towards their interests or the 'best outcome'.

5.1.3 Ourselves as learners

"Ourselves as learners", the third CLOAK value, was described in the school documentation as a focus on meta-learning, engagement and self-management (see section 1.3). "Ourselves as learners" seemed to encourage students to understand what was needed to support their learning, to communicate these needs and to make positive learning choices. For example, Arlo (Yr8) displayed a sense of ownership and responsibility over his learning, stating that it was crucial to be prepared to learn: "It's like making sure you're ready for your classes, and that you're on time, ready to learn." Hunter (Yr8) added how knowing his strengths and weaknesses enabled him to choose appropriate workshops when planning and monitoring his own learning:

> So it's knowing yourself as a learner and knowing your strengths. And it's also managing yourself, so if you know that you're gonna talk, I would move away from my friends if I had a lot of work to do. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses, because if there's optional workshops, if you know that you're really good at something, you don't go to that. And then there's one that you know, you're not very strong at and they're at the same time, then you go to the one that you're not strong at.

Like Hunter, Rob (year 10) explained he reflects on his learning needs to maximise his learning opportunities in terms of where and who he sits with:

> Ourselves as Learners is about managing yourself, especially with this Tautoro thing, knowing how you work. If you want to sit with friends or if you work better by yourself. So you're putting yourself in the right situation to learn the best you can. Like, if you know that you get distracted easily, it wouldn't be the best idea to go over to the big group of friends and start talking to the whole class. You always want to maximize your learning, especially with the amount of work that we get now in Tautoro. So you want to get the most you can do in class.

From this comment, making the most out of learning opportunities and the time given in class to complete learning tasks appeared to be important to Rob, revealing a sense of ownership. Phoebe (Yr10) offered a slightly different view of sitting with friends. She explained:

> If you're working with friends, some people might find it easier because you're able to bounce ideas off each other but then some people might find it harder because you're just getting distracted and off topic.

Overall, Arlo's, Hunter's, Rob's and Phoebe's comments established that reflecting on themselves as learners enabled them to plan and monitor their learning, make positive learning choices and act on agency given to them. This in turn assisted them in maximising their learning opportunities, albeit in different ways. Moreover, their comments pointed towards a sense of ownership and self-efficacy since students believed that they had the abilities to organise and plan their learning to achieve their learning goals.

5.1.4 Ahurea Tuakiri

Ahurea Tuakiri was a recent addition to the CLOAK values which may explain why only four students commented on it without prompting. Ahurea Tuakiri contains the concepts of Whakapapa, Tangata Whenuatanga and the Hapori. Whakapapa describes the acknowledgement of one's ancestry, Tangata Whenuatanga refers to the socio-cultural awareness and knowledge of the land (whenua) and the connection with the land while Hapori refers to a family or community. Ahurea Tuakiri is aimed at encouraging students' reflection on themselves as persons, their values, individual backgrounds, morals and beliefs. None of the year Yr7 students in focus groups were able to explain what Ahurea Tuakiri meant to them which may be due to them not being long at the school. Yr8 students initially struggled to explain how Ahurea Tuakiri related to them but then Hunter said:

> Ahurea Tuakiri, that's knowing where you're from, your ancestors, that's what whakapapa means, like where you're from and where your home is.

Alice (Yr9) stated "Ahurea Tuakiri, that's about knowing yourself as a learner and your true identity." Then Liam (Yr9) commented that Ahurea Tuakiri focused on a person's identity and how relationships with whānau and wider community can shape a person:

> Ahurea Tuakiri means knowing yourself as a person. It's about other people and how they can have an impact on your life. It's about how you interact with people and how that can change you and change them.

Mia (Yr 10) explained how Ahurea Tuakiri furthered her understanding of herself as a person and how this affected her learning:

> My understanding of it is knowing yourself as a person, your identity, upbringing, the people around you, what effects that had on you and all that kind of stuff. I think Ahurea Tuakiri is a lot about values and beliefs and what's important to you and why they're so important to you. I personally learned a lot about it through the badging where you have to talk about your upbringing and the people around you and your morals and beliefs and why you think those are important to you and how you've learnt those from others. I got that badge (silver

> badge for Ahurea Tuakrir) and I was talking about mum doing shift work and all the hard work and how the things she did had an effect on me and how I make sure I'm putting my work into it. It's probably one of the harder badges to show. It's good to think about your morals and beliefs and why they impact you.

In this example from Mia, she has reflected on how her mother's hard work has inspired her to do her best in her school work, linking this to gaining a silver badge for Ahurea Taukiri. The four students who commented on this each identified that Ahurea Tuakiri focused them on self-knowledge. Hunter also focused on how Ahurea Tuakiri linked to a sense of belonging and Liam linked Ahurea Tuakiri to interpersonal relationships. Alice and Mia linked Ahurea Tuakiri to knowing themselves as learners and understanding their motivation behind their learning.

5.1.5 Kindness and respect

The school documentation explicates that "Kindness and respect" consists of Manākitanga (kindness and support) Kaitiakitanga (guardianship and management of the environment) and Kotahitanga (unity and solidarity). Students from all year levels referred to "Kindness and respect" as values that they appreciated. Jacob (Yr7) simply stated that kindness and respect were part of the school values. In comparison, Arlo (Yr8) commented: "Kindness and respect. That one (referring to CLOAK values) is easy. You gotta be kind and respectful, like you open the door for someone." Alice (Yr9) stressed that it was important to show initiative rather than "waiting to be told" when being kind and respectful to others:

> Kindness and respect is about always being kind, helping people. Always going out of your way to help people. Not waiting for someone to tell you. Respecting the place, respecting people."

Students are encouraged to be agentic when showing kindness and respect and to look for opportunities to "go out of their way" to help people.

From these comments we can see that the CLOAK value of Kindness and respect encourages students to think about other people's needs. Phoebe (Yr10) explained this value as

doing “the simple things” for others including, for example, being tidy and helping fellow students when they were challenged in their learning:

> Kindness and respect is something really good to have, just be kind and respectful to others. It’s just doing the simple things like tidying up your spaces, opening doors to people, helping someone if they're stuck because sometimes you can just tell when someone's struggling.

Phoebe’s comment illustrates that some students appreciate that being kind and respectful includes being aware of their peers’ learning challenges and offering support. Seen this way, this value would seem to foster positive peer relationships. It was also apparent that older students’ comments on “kindness and respect” were more sophisticated than those of younger students.

5.1.6 CLOAK values and self-optimisation

Yr9 and 10 students in particular commented on the aspirational nature of the CLOAK. They appeared to see all the CLOAK values together as a set of criteria that supported them to strive for self-optimisation. The latter refers to students’ awareness of their own strengths and abilities and their willingness to use this knowledge to maximise their potential. The CLOAK seemed to communicate the belief that students had the potential to become better learners. This view was encompassed in the following comment by Liam (Yr9):

> You can always improve, no one is the best learner they can be. And I think the CLOAK always helps us to improve. So it's just a guideline that helps us to improve, to learn and succeed really.

All the Yr9 and 10 students agreed that the CLOAK served as a guide for continuous self-optimisation, either by directly commenting on this aspect or nodding their agreement to comments by other students. Alice’s (Yr9) comment is representative of their view:

> Each CLOAK aspect helps us become the best of the best we can be. Being a good learner helps you to succeed in life and to be a good person. The CLOAK helps you to get lots of qualities for the future.

Mia (Yr10) described the CLOAK as a compilation of:

> Good practices, like the skills that our school wants us to have to prepare us for the real world. So it's about having good habits to get into for life. It's a good way to remember them and they (teachers) try to include the CLOAK in all of our work.

Mia seemed to perceive the CLOAK skills and practices as 'good habits' the school wanted students to gain because these habits were those that would be useful beyond school life. This comment, consistent with that from other Yr 9 and 10 students, indicates that the students see value in the CLOAK criteria for themselves as people, not just as learners at school.

Overall, student commentary indicates that the CLOAK provides a set of values and criteria that assist students to develop a positive attitude towards learning challenges and seek out new learning experiences. Moreover, the CLOAK values prompt students to be agentic and creative when looking for connection as part of crafting a personalised learning pathway. The CLOAK values also promote students' abilities to plan and monitor their learning and to make positive learning choices. Furthermore, students are also encouraged to reflect on how their cultural identity affects them as learners. The CLOAK values also encouraged students to be kind and respectful, including being aware of peers' learning challenges and offering support. Together, the CLOAK values also appeared to encourage students to strive for self-optimisation and to promote students' self-efficacy, fostering their belief that they have the ability to plan and monitor their own learning to achieve learning goals. It was of note that as students went up the school years, their comments tended to be more sophisticated. The next section sets out students' explanation of how badging assists them to incorporate the CLOAK values into their learning.

5.2 The CLOAK badging programme and students' learning wellbeing

The CLOAK badging programme was designed by the study school as a framework to foster students' agency and ability to self-regulate their learning. Badging is intended to encourage students' efforts to display the CLOAK values and it is student-led. Students choose which badge

they wish to pitch for and which evidence they would like to submit. Learning Advisors support students in the badging process (see section 1.3). Student comments emphasised that the CLOAK badging programme celebrated their efforts to live the CLOAK values. Their comments suggested they perceived the CLOAK badging programme as assisting them to self-regulate their learning.

5.2.1 Celebrating students' efforts, creating pride and excitement

Students from all year levels attributed great importance to the badging programme. Their commentary suggested the badging programme acted to bring the CLOAK values to life. For example, in an interview during term three, Poppy (Yr7) stated:

> My learning is going well. I've really experienced the learning here and how it's going. My grades and my badging are going well. I've got two bronze badges.

Here Poppy's comment indicates that she is aware of both her learning and its progress, she links progress in her learning as evidenced in her grades and her badging, seeming to attribute equal significance to her learning and the badges.

Students from all year levels spoke of the badging process as challenging but they seemed truly excited about the prospect of being able to conquer this challenge and proud to receive a badge or award for their efforts. Jacob (Yr7) commented: "The CLOAK badging makes you feel proud, when you get an award." Ezra (Yr7) stated:

> It makes me feel happy, excited to see if you can get a badge. Once you get a badge you get responsibilities, like sit in the cafeteria or elevators or you get to cut in line.

Hunter (Yr8) explained that he enjoyed the rewards associated with receiving a badge:

> So when you get your bronze badge, your silver badge and your gold badge, you get benefits around the school. So it encourages you to do those kinds of things (CLOAK behaviours).

It appears that showing off their badges on their uniforms and receiving awards and/ or privileges that were associated with earning badges was an important motivator for Yr 7 and 8 students.

Yr9 and Yr10 students were equally excited about the rewards associated with the CLOAK badging programme. However, they also commented more often on the intrinsic value of following the CLOAK values. Liam (Yr9) referred to a sense of pride when he commented: “I think that the badges are to celebrate because you do good stuff, that you’ve done those things and that you can be proud of that.” Zara (Yr9) stated that teachers encouraged students to ‘go for’ badges so they could be the best version of themselves. She indicated that working for badges helped students to strive for self-optimisation through the CLOAK values:

> The teachers are trying to get everybody to go for badges so you could be like, again, be the best version of yourself with badges around the CLOAK. And they try to push us to *be* part of the CLOAK aspects, to be the best learner we can be.

Alice (Yr9) reiterated this point. She stated that the badging system instilled in her a desire to try her best:

> Badging is about pushing to be as good as possible. The CLOAK is just put there so we know what to do. But badging is to push and go "I want to be able to do this”. If you get a badge it makes you feel better or noticed for something you’ve done.

In this comment Alice also identifies that the badging programme serves to publicly recognise and affirm accomplishments. Lucy (Yr10) reported that it was the precise wording of the CLOAK badging criteria that assisted her to understand how she could improve her learning behaviour:

> The CLOAK makes it easier to find out what you're doing *right* and wrong because they can say "You can work on this area of the CLOAK" because normally in other schools they'd be like, "You’re a kind student dadada". But the CLOAK explains exactly what you're doing right. So they can say "You're using the K aspect of the CLOAK".

Lucy’s comment echoes the comment by Poppy (Yr7), detailed earlier in relation to the value of CLOAK and the badging programme in assisting students to monitor what they had learned and the growth in their learning.

5.2.2 Self-regulation

Students from all year levels indicated that the CLOAK badging programme supported them to self-regulate their learning. However, beyond the comments by Jacob that, “They [teachers] want us to follow it [the CLOAK]” and Scarlett’s assertion “Everybody could get a badge but they would have to try really hard” the Yr7 students did not make any in-depth comments on this aspect of the CLOAK badging programme. On the other hand, Hunter (Yr8), emphasised that the CLOAK badging programme encouraged him to self-manage and make “smart decisions”:

> Badging encourages you to try and get the badges to self-manage, like make smart decisions - so the badges encourage and help to get people to do those kinds of things.

Hunter appears to consider the CLOAK values and badges foster students’ ability to make good decisions and manage themselves. Alice (Yr9) and Rob (Yr10) also considered that the CLOAK badging encouraged students to be agentic and self-driven learners. Alice said:

> When the teachers talk about the CLOAK habits, they’re trying to make you a good learner and force good passions so you're always doing it (displaying CLOAK values), you're not constantly getting reminded. It's always, "I'm just gonna go and challenge myself.”

Rob (Yr10) commented that the CLOAK badging programme was based on and required students’ initiative:

> With the CLOAK, it’s not the teachers telling you "We're doing this today and this is how you're gonna do it". The CLOAK is more of a thing that *you* need to follow by yourself, so it's like the whole school, it's more self-motivated than other schools.

Alice and Rob both seemed to perceive the CLOAK badging programme fostered students’ initiative and self-regulation skills.

Overall, the badging programme was significant for students; they were excited about the prospect of earning badges that celebrated their efforts to live the CLOAK values. The badging programme was also highly personalised since students chose which CLOAK value they wanted to pitch for and which evidence they wanted to submit. The choices were manageable and relevant to students. The badging programme appeared to motivate students to live the CLOAK values through the way it affirmed and recognised their achievements. The badging programme validated and elevated the CLOAK values by recognising students' efforts to display specific CLOAK behaviours. Moreover, Yr9 and Yr10 students' comments also revealed that some students found it intrinsically rewarding to follow the CLOAK values since they saw how this could assist them in seeking self-optimisation as learners. The CLOAK badging programme appeared to make the specific CLOAK behaviours more tangible and understandable to students, and to assist students to display self-regulation learning skills.

5.2.3 Case study: Mia and CLOAK badging

In order to provider a richer insight into the link between CLOAK badging and learning wellbeing a case study is provided. The case study illustrates how Mia (a Yr10 student) pitched for a Silver badge. In doing so, Mia had to reflect on her development of a set of criteria linked to the CLOAK values and she had to provide evidence of her development. Mia's reflection details how the CLOAK values impacted her attitude towards learning challenges.

Mia reflected on the criterion: *Mindsets - I have developed habits of continual improvement.* Striving for continual improvement meant for Mia that she had to learn to trust her own and her peers' capabilities as this would improve her ability to work with others:

> A trait that I have had to develop is my trust in myself and others. Trusting that I have done something correctly but also trusting others that they will get it done so that I am not rushing in and taking over just because I need reassurance. Now I am capable of giving myself a list of things within my capability so that I am not always thinking "what if" about things I can't change. This means I am getting more sleep as I am not as stressed but also getting through more work because I have a clear head.

Mia described how she developed her ability to focus on things "within her capability" which seems to benefit her learning wellbeing as her stress levels have decreased and she has a "clear head". Perhaps Mia's quote indicates that the CLOAK badging programme assists students to reflect on and develop their coping strategies when faced with difficult learning situations.

Mia reflected on the criterion *Perseverance - I keep going despite challenges and find ways to overcome them.* Mia described how she had displayed her ability to "bounce back" from learning challenges and articulated her thought process when receiving negative feedback:

> I have had to bounce back from a few challenges this past semester. When I hand my RLEs in for grading and feedback and I don't necessarily get the mark I want it is always a bit of a knock to the confidence. When this happens I always have to bounce back and reset my head so that I can try and improve. Examples are English writing samples and PE RLEs (Rich Learning Experience). If I let it bother me, I start getting into a downward spiral and think real negative and when I am like this I can't do anything to better my work. It is times like these that I have really had to challenge myself and take on the feedback rather than look at the marks and then I can keep pushing to get the mark I want.

Mia described her conscious thought process of focusing on the teacher feedback instead of the marks that she had received. This strategy seemed to help Mia to adapt to her learning challenge and "better her work" in order to get the marks she is aiming for. Focusing on strategies in her control seems to provide a positive focus and way forward for her.

In her reflection on the criterion *Adventurous - I willingly try new things and appreciate the role risk plays in my learning*, Mia detailed her thought process when she was scared of a high rope challenge on school camp:

> I am normally ok with many activities but I have a bad habit of talking myself out of them or coming up with worst case scenarios. This happened this year on school camp with high ropes. I am reasonably ok with heights but I was really freaking out about these two activities. I was walking on a log between two trees right up in the tree tops and all I could think about was falling although I did have a harness on. This freaked me out because I knew that even though I'd be caught on the rope I would be falling for a bit before the rope picked up slack.

> The first time I did it I made it to halfway before coming down. This was huge as I didn't want to do it at all, I was able to manage my breathing and thoughts and this allowed me to do it. I then challenged my mind and thought about how I may be disappointed afterwards that I didn't make it the whole way to the other side so at the end I asked to go up again. I was nervous but I thought it would be worth it so I slowly but surely made my way to the other tree. Afterwards I felt really proud and it was awesome to know that I had done it and conquered my fear.

Mia's reflection demonstrates that she uses the "CLOAK language" of "challenging her mind" to work through this high rope challenge. Moreover, Mia details how managing her breathing and her thoughts around her anxiety allowed her to push herself to walk across a log.

This example of Mia's presentation to pitch for her Silver badge illustrated her apparent ability to reflect on her own attitude towards school learning experiences. Mia's example of pitching for a CLOAK badge also demonstrates positive language and perceptions around meeting learning struggles and overcoming them. It seems plausible that the badging programme assisted her, and other students, to reflect deeper on their own learning-related thoughts and emotions. It appears that the specific CLOAK values in association with the badging programme assist students to develop and sustain positive attitudes about what they can achieve. Moreover, considering suitable strategies when facing learning challenges may assist students to achieve their academic and learning wellbeing goals in the future.

5.3 The Learning Advisory role and students' learning wellbeing

This section explores students' perspectives of how the Learning Advisors and Learning Advisory Curriculum and the use of space in the ILE affected their learning wellbeing. Learning Advisors use the CLOAK values and Learning Advisory Curriculum to support students' sense and understanding of Whānaungatanga, learning to learn strategies, and social and emotional learning (see section 1.3). Whānaungatanga relates to students' sense of belonging and relationships at school, while a focus on learning to learn strategies such as goal setting or reflecting on learning,

support a wellbeing goal. Aspects of the Health Curriculum connect strongly with social and emotional learning.

In this section these aspects are addressed in terms of: students' sense of belonging; one-on-one coaching and self-regulated learning, and the Health Curriculum. Students' comments from all year levels revealed a strong sense of belonging in their Learning Advisories. Moreover, students valued Learning Advisors' one-on-one coaching which fostered students' ability to self-regulate their learning. However, only a few students commented on the explicit teaching of the Health curriculum, which may demonstrate students' low level of appreciation of it.

5.3.1 Students' sense of belonging - a sense of family through team activities

Students of all year levels expressed a sense of belonging in their Learning Advisories and their wider Hapu (which comprises several Learning Advisories). Even students who, at the time of the first interview, were only seven weeks into being at the school, commented on how they were helped to feel like they belonged. Poppy (Yr7) encapsulated this idea when she said that "Your Hapu is like a **family".** During a second interview in term three, Evie (Yr8) emphasised that being part of a Learning Advisory group, which is limited to 20 students, contributed to her ability to connect with others and build relationships as well as be noticed. Evie contrasted this with her experiences in Modules of up to 90 students. Evie said:

> Learning Advisory is important because it's a small group of people who you usually know well. It's a small group of people just to talk to and to work with. Since Learning Advisories are generally smaller than classes, it's probably easier to be noticed there. Whereas in Modules there are a lot of kids, so it is easy to go unnoticed.

Mia encapsulated the feeling of the Yr9 and 10 group on time spent together as a Learning Advisory when she said:

> Being with the same group of people helps as well. You get to feel like you know that person a lot better. So we see them every day before school and during Advisory blocks.

These comments show how valuable the dedicated and regular meeting time (every day plus 3x90min blocks a week) for each advisory group was to its members.

Sports, learning and team building activities undertaken in Learning Advisories contributed to students' sense of belonging, regardless of their year level. For instance, Zara (Yr9) stated that "doing stuff" together assisted her to build relationships with her peers, building a sense of group identity within the larger Hapu. Zara commented:

> You just feel like it's another family, cause your advisory, your Hapu is like your family you *do* stuff together. You're together as one. So when you go out there, you're like, "Yeah, I'm part of Muka [name of the Hapu]".

Meanwhile, Lucy (Yr10) explained that group activities undertaken within her Learning Advisory had helped her bond with her peers when she was new to the school:

> I came to the school last year. But it was a lot less scary than I expected because I made friends right away because you're forced into it in Advisory. That sounds harsh but it's like forced friendship, but in a good way. Like you're not a loner.

Mia's and Rob's comments (both Yr10) shed more light on the term "forced friendships", detailing *how* group activities assisted students to bond. For example, Mia observed that "The activities that we do as a group, [such as] sports during Advisory, just help bond with everyone because you're doing stuff with them so you feel you know them." Rob added that physical games and team building activities functioned as ice breakers amongst students:

> At the beginning of the year you do a lot of things in Advisory and that's to help build those friendships and get them started. A lot of the things you do are team based, like we do challenges outside. So you're encouraging your friends to do well. Let's say, doing a game like minefield, you want to encourage people, even that you don't know, to come and pass through. And then once they made it

through you feel like you're more friends with them because you helped them and you help each other.

Rob's comment identifies other intangibles, such as being supportive of others and connecting on various levels. They indicate that team building activities played a key role in fostering students' sense of belonging in their Hapu and Learning Advisories. As Rob comments, these activities provide a scaffold for students to comfortably interact and bond with each other. Given Rob's view that "helping each other" made him feel "more like friends", these activities also encourage a culture of mutual support amongst students. In the above quote Rob also recounts teachers' comments about "getting friendships started at the beginning of the year", referring to the school's explicit intention of fostering a sense of Whānaungatanga through the Learning Advisory Curriculum. Such a focus on students' sense of belonging at school might be important in establishing and sustaining students' learning wellbeing. A representative comment in this regard was made by Phoebe (Yr10) when she stated "Whenever there's a family feeling, you feel a bit safer and a bit more confident to speak up and voice your opinion".

Overall, students from all year levels displayed a strong sense of Whānaungatanga. This was fostered through regular meetings in small Advisory groups as well as learning, sports and team activities undertaken as a Hapu. This "family feeling" positively contributed to students' sense of belonging, based on getting to know each other and offering each other support which in turn led to a sense of safety and confidence. The following section illustrates how Learning Advisors contribute to students' ability to self-regulate their learning and students' overall learning wellbeing.

5.3.2 One-on-one coaching and self-regulated learning

As outlined in section 1.3, Learning Advisors use the Learning Advisory Curriculum as a coaching tool to foster individual students' personal development, particularly students' ability to self-regulate their learning. Learning Advisors act as personal mentors for students in their respective Learning Advisories. The importance of this coaching role was reflected in comments

by students from all year levels. Key areas related to this support are outlined here using representative quotes.

In an interview towards the end of the school year, Sophie encapsulated the Yr7 students' view that Learning Advisors represented relatable adults who made themselves available to students for help of any kind. Sophie commented:

> She is the *best* teacher (other students in the focus group agreeing strongly). She just understands us. And she asks if we need help. Or she'll say "You can just hit me up on email if you're too embarrassed to ask for help."

Other students explained that Learning Advisors act as a first point of contact for students, guiding them "in the right direction whatever it is" as Evie (Yr8) put it. Another important role of the Learning Advisors seems to lie in coaching students to develop their self-regulation skills and attitudes towards learning. For instance, Alice (Yr9) explained that her Learning Advisor fostered her ability to monitor her learning and, in particular, manage her workload. Her Advisor helped Alice to learn how to prioritise urgent tasks:

> For me, my Advisor helps me with managing my time. My Advisor sits down with me some days and goes, "What needs to be submitted and what can be done later?" It's about prioritising your work. So Learning Advisory makes me happy and relieved because we become less stressed. My Advisor has also helped me with my badging a lot. She'd be pushing me, helping me find evidence for my Bronze and Silver.

Here, Alice explains how her Learning Advisor provides personalised support to her which in turn seems to contribute to Alice feeling positive about herself as a learner. Moreover, Alice's Learning Advisor appears to assist Alice in reflecting on her work towards gaining badges when Alice pitched for a Bronze or Silver badge (see section 1.3).

Meanwhile, Mia's (Yr10) Learning Advisor assisted her to manage her tendency to "overthink everything":

> I think quite often the Learning Advisors help break it (work) down because a lot of the time, it's quite easy to overthink everything you have to do. I think I overthink things a lot. So having someone to help talk everything down and

> break it down a little bit. It definitely helps with the stress and when you're less stressed it's a bit easier.

Mia's Learning Advisor, through this supportive act, helped alleviate Mia's learning-related anxiety when facing challenges as a learner. This is one instance which demonstrates how Learning Advisors support their students as individuals.

5.3.3 The Health Curriculum and social emotional learning

It was of note that out of *all* focus groups, only four of the six Yr10 students commented on the delivery of the Health Curriculum. These students seemed to feel that the yearly delivery of the Health Curriculum was superfluous because the same aspects seemed to be repeated. A representative comment was made by Rob: "Every year is kind of a repeat, at first you do mental health and sexual education and then you do careers. It's the same thing repeated every year." Rob's comment is of interest since it indicates that students may not see the value in repeated, isolated teaching of the Health Curriculum. Moreover, Lucy suggested that some aspects of the Health Curriculum, such as dealing with emotions, should be optional since she felt already competent in this area:

> I just think that some of the work they give us is kind of pointless because I feel it should be optional. Like for mental health, Hauora, we had to write about how to control anger. And I was like "Some of us don't need to do it and we could be doing other work instead". And they were like "That's a good point".

Lucy's comment may indicate a high level of emotional maturity since she doesn't feel that she needs to learn how to control her anger. Overall, the Yr10 students interviewed for this study would have had the highest level of exposure to the Health Curriculum and they indicated that they feel saturated by the repetitiveness of its focus ideas. They found some aspects 'pointless' in the sense of being about aspects they considered they had mastered.

In sum, students' comments indicate the Learning Advisory structure of Learning Advisors and a Learning Advisory Curriculum contributed positively to students' learning wellbeing. A specific focus to foster students' relationships through team building activities appeared to help

students bond with peers in their Advisory and Hapu meaning they were confident to offer and ask for help. The Learning Advisors acted as coaches, providing one-to-one personalised support for students in managing their learning and their workload. Students recognised that Learning Advisors fostered their self-regulation skills and how they thought about the challenges they faced in their schooling. By contrast with the positive affirmation of the Learning Advisory structure, there was very little explicit reference to the Health Curriculum. Yr10 students' comments indicated that students may feel saturated by the repetitive focus on the Health Curriculum which in turn may relate to Yr10 students having been exposed to this for four years.

5.4 Personalised learning structures

This section sets out to illustrate how personalised learning and opportunities for learner agency within the Module, Tautoro Module and Flight Time structure related to students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing. Yr7 and 8 are taught together and Yr9 and 10 are taught together. Yr7 and 8 students choose *a set of three Modules, two of them* over the course of a year and one Module changing after one semester. Each Module is co-taught by two to three *teachers who provide integrated learning tasks for the students*, covering two curriculum areas. Students demonstrate their learning through their personal Rich Learning Experience (RLE) - a project or artefact representing their understanding of a context that connects their learning from both curriculum areas covered in Modules. Yr9 and 10 students choose *three Tautoro Modules* with each Tautoro Module lasting two terms (one semester). Tautoro Modules are taught by up to five teachers and any one Tautoro Module can consist of up to 150 students. During the first term of each Tautoro Module, teachers individually teach important concepts of their curriculum areas during workshops. Students focus on two curriculum areas per Tautoro Module but they can choose a combination of any two out of five curriculum areas. Students are in charge of deciding which workshops they attend and when to schedule their Independent Learning Time (ILT). The latter allows them to work independently on their respective learning projects which lead up to their RLE. When teachers see an overlap between curriculum areas, they organise to co-teach workshops for those students who have chosen the respective learning areas. In these workshops, teachers cover essential concepts and explore possible connections between curriculum areas. During the second term of Tautoro Modules, students develop their RLE. In this way, students

create their own personalised learning pathways. The level of choice and personalisation increases across the school year levels. For example, Yr7s can only choose sets of Modules and have fewer choices in their RLEs whereas Yr 10s can choose three Tautoro Modules where they can select which curriculum areas to combine and which workshops to attend. In recognition of these differences, perspectives of Yr7 and 8 students are illustrated first followed by those from Yr9 and 10 students.

5.4.1 Yr7 and 8 students and personalised learning in Modules

Yr7 and 8 students seemed to appreciate being able to choose their sets of three Modules. For instance, Hunter (Yr8) commented "It's good that you get to choose your classes so you can choose some around your interest". Jacob (Yr7) and Sophia (Yr7) reported having choices in the completion of their Rich Learning Experiences (RLEs). Jacob stated:

> I like my RLEs. You take together most of the things you learnt in Modules and then do a big assignment.

Luna (Yr7) explained that for a RLE, "you have all your learning mixed together. And then you have to work on from there." In the November focus group Sophie (Yr7) elaborated that students were in charge of merging subjects for their RLEs:

> So with the merge - we have full control over it because we get to choose how we add our curriculum areas together. So the teacher sometimes doesn't really help us. This school, they want us to build our confidence and make us know what control we have over learning.

Here, Sophie seems to be aware of the school's intention to foster students' control and confidence in their learning. When I asked Sophie how she knew the school's intention for her as a learner, she referred to a recent Principal assembly where the principal had explained this vision for their learners. Neither Sophie nor any of her peers made any further comments on this matter.

The seven Yr7 students agreed that they found the completion of their RLEs in a timely manner stressful. Sophie encapsulated their perspective when commenting:

> A lot of RLEs are stressful. They are pretty different subjects and we have to memorise all six RLEs to finish them in one whole day. They have a limited due date and they were all due on Friday.

Jacob concurred that meeting deadlines was “stressful”. In comparison, Yr8 students commented more often on connecting different curriculum areas for their RLEs. Thomas (Yr8) gave an example of how he connected Health and PE with technology in order to create a VR game:

> I'm gonna make a VR game or video to improve someone's Hauora because for PE we're doing Hauora and wellbeing. So it's for people that *aren't* able to do activities like mountain biking. And so they just watch it and so it's like *they*'re doing it.

Emma (Yr8) explained how she connected Social Sciences and Technology. She commented:

> I'm creating a toy out of spare material. So I'm focusing on sustainability and I decided to go for a stuffed bear.

Thomas’ and Emma’s examples illustrate how Yr8 students are afforded choices in the way they integrate curriculum areas for their RLEs and the interesting ways they take up these choices. Hunter (Yr8) described how choice is associated with opportunities for connecting his learning:

> With the whole new RLE system, we get to choose our RLE and what we do. So we can connect any of our subjects that we have, so the learning is connected.

Evie (Yr8) illustrated her perspective on personalised learning in detail when she expressed feeling grateful for the level of “variety” she experienced in her learning:

> I feel thankful. I think we’re pretty lucky. The resources are good. We have a lot of different spaces that we can use like the kitchen and the workshop. So we have lots of different things that we can do. We also have a lot of variety in our learning. So that's pretty good because we don't just have to stick to one thing. We can go off and choose different ways of learning. For example, for our RLEs they don't just say "Here's some work, can you fill out the sheet?" They go "You've got to create your own idea". And then you can talk about it. So it's not

> just the same for everybody. For our sewing and design class we focused on different needs - that could be any type of needs. So for my RLE I chose "sick kids in the hospital" and we get to make something that can help the person. So I am making a doll kind of thing just to comfort them.

Here Evie describes that she is able to follow her interests since teachers ask her to create her own idea. Evie not only talks about choice in topic focus (making a doll for sick children in hospital in sewing and design class) but also students were able to choose where to learn - the kitchen or workshop.

In sum, both Yr7 and 8 eight students seemed to value that they were able to have a choice in their Modules. However, the Yr7 students outlined fewer experiences of having choices and opportunities for personalised learning than the Yr8 students. Yr7 students also indicated that, at times, they felt overwhelmed by the challenge of completing their RLEs in a timely manner. In comparison, Yr8 comments seemed to be more sophisticated as Yr8 students commented often on the complexity and pleasure of connecting different learning areas for an RLE of their interest. They seemed to appreciate the range of decisions they could make and the agency that they had in their learning.

5.4.2 Yr9 and 10 students and personalised learning in Tautoro Modules

Tautoro Modules

Some students reported that the Tautoro Module structure gave them freedom of choice in their learning which led to a sense of ownership and confidence they were ‘on track’ with what they were doing. Isabelle (Yr10) explained her perspective as follows:

> Tautoro makes me feel really confident because you get to work on your passions. And for me I'm already on top of everything. I know what I'm doing and I'm on track. I feel confident because instead of just telling you what to do, teachers give you the freedom to choose what you want to do. There's a lot more choice. Instead of just sit down and be told, "Oh, you have to do this, this, this and this is your RLE", you’ve got to make it your own.

Isabelle indicates she is confident that she is able to monitor her own progress when she says she is “on top of everything” and enjoys making decisions about her learning. Likewise, Will, a rather quiet Yr10 student, reported that he felt confident during ILT (Independent Learning Time) in Tautoro because he was satisfied with his learning progress:

> I feel quite confident in Tautoro. The people around me are quite into learning and they're friendly so I feel safe. So I just get work done and when I look at the time halfway through, I'm able to say, "Oh yeah, I think I've done quite well. I'll move on to my next subject" and I just get stuck in.

Monitoring his own learning progress closely motivates Will to pursue his own learning. Moreover, Will enjoys being around people who like learning and with whom he feels safe, both of which he indicates contribute to his positive sense of self as a learner. Isabelle and Will experience a high level of agency. The latter appears to link to their confidence and self-efficacy as learners since they both referred to their abilities to accomplish their learning tasks.On the other hand, while Mia (Yr10) commented she enjoyed following her passions in Tautoro, she also stated that she felt stressed due to a high workload:

> I'm happy but stressed at the same time because with my RLE I'm enjoying that. I'm being encouraged to base it around my passion and then link in my subjects. So I can work on something that I enjoy but still cover the subjects that I'm doing. So for one of mine I'm doing social science, English and P.E. but I'm doing a project on physiotherapy. So I think I want to do physiotherapy when I'm older. I'm able to research that and figure out how the subjects that I'm currently doing relate with that which I think is quite cool. We've got six subjects across Tautoro, and each subject assigns you four or five things, even if they're just small things. But having so many tasks, even if they're just small from all classes, can be quite overwhelming.

Here Mia signals she appreciates the opportunity to relate her current learning to possible career options as a physiotherapist and that assisted her to build long-term goals for the subjects she was doing and to link these towards that goal. Mia also voiced that she felt stressed by her workload across the different subjects. This view was echoed by her four peers in the Yr10 focus group and

by three out of four Yr9 students. For example, Alice (Yr9) explained that she enjoyed creating a personalised learning path and integrating subject areas herself but she disliked the associated workload. Alice stated:

> Tautoro is more work because you have to do work for each of your subjects. So you have to do the work for that class as well as figure out how to merge them. Teachers don't come up with tasks to merge them together - *you* have to merge them. It is kind of cool coming up with your own ideas because then you can come up with your own learning path but I don't like that amount of work.

As outlined in section 1.3, teachers offer workshops, assisting students to see where subjects overlap so that students can come up with their own ideas to merge subject areas for their RLEs. Alice's comment indicates that she enjoys this challenge even though it adds to her workload. Meanwhile, Noah (Yr9) and Lucy (Yr10) considered teachers did not communicate enough with each other about the scale of workload they set for students. Noah stated:

> I feel frustrated with Tautoro ... I've said some good things because we get to choose our own things but there is no talk amongst the teachers of how much work to set so we get stressed out of our minds. And then our teachers wonder why we don't get our work done.

Likewise, Lucy linked her high workload to a lack of teacher communication:

> I think teachers need to communicate a little better when it comes to giving out work because they don't really know they all give a ton of work. So you get six pieces of work a week because you get weekly tasks for each subject.

Noah and Lucy perceived their workloads were high and teachers' expectations of them to complete their tasks were unrealistic. Noah in particular, seemed to find this very frustrating. In this regard, Phoebe (Yr10) explained that attending workshops during Tautoro didn't leave enough time for her to complete her learning tasks or project, or live up to teachers' expectations:

> I do feel quite stressed about the workload. It's just that we don't really get much time to do our actual learning because workshops are taking up most of the time during class. So I find the Tautoro a lot more work and a lot more stressful than

> Modules used to be. It seems like the workload has gotten a lot bigger and a lot higher expectations of us with a lot less time to do it.

Lucy (Yr10) added that deciding and organising which workshops to attend as well as integrating the subjects of her choice was challenging, especially when some topics overlapped:

> I like being told what to do and I preferred it previously. So I'm just confused and stressed. What stresses me out is the workshops overlapping and teachers not knowing what the other workshop's doing and then they're not really helping us connect subjects that much. So you're kind of like "I have to go to this workshop, do this ILT, do all this work".

In sum, Mia, Noah, Lucy and Phoebe's comments indicate that they were faced with many complex decisions and at times overwhelmed by these. For instance, students were tasked with deciding on, organising for and attending workshops. It seems that the level of planning, monitoring and reflecting on their learning that is expected of students requires a high level of self-regulation and agency which some students find difficult. In addition, Mia, Noah, Lucy and Phoebe seemed to struggle with merging their subjects even though teachers offer workshops to help students understand how subjects can complement each other (compare section 1.3). Noah and Lucy presumed that a lack of teacher communication may have led to an increased workload for students despite each teaching team meeting once a week to discuss the progress and teaching of their Tautoro Module (see section 1.3).

Flight Times

Yr9 and 10 students are able to choose from a range of Flight Times. These allow students to focus on their interests and or needs (see section 1.3). During Flight Times students are not required to merge different subject areas. Yr9 and 10 students Liam (Yr9), Mia (Yr10) and Lucy (Yr10) frequently expressed their appreciation of Flight Times. Liam, for example, emphasised the value of being able to focus on his passion:

> I'm happy and excited for Flight Time because you're doing your personal interests and it's normally just fun stuff so you don't get much work for it. You really just push your passion.

Lucy and Mia (both Yr10) regarded Flight Time as a break from Tautoro, a time that allowed them to focus their learning on their personal interests. Lucy commented:

> I'm relieved about Flight Times because I find them to be less work and more about your passion, and you kind of get a break from all the Tautoro stuff.

Mia added:

> I'm thankful for Flight Times. You're still learning, but it doesn't feel as busy. There's not as much work and it's not like Tautoro. You don't have multiple subjects - you can just focus on your passion. So it's just a chance to have some downtime but still be learning.

Mia's comment reveals a contrast between Flight Times and Tautoro Modules. Flight Times appeared to provide time to pursue her passions without the need to merge subject areas. Their comments suggest Liam, Lucy and Mia felt excited, relieved and thankful for Flight Times. They valued the fact that they could pursue their own interests and they felt less "busy" than in Tautoro.

In sum, Yr9 and 10 students expressed appreciation for the ownership they have over their individual projects (RLEs) in Tautoro Modules. They recognised that pursuing personalised learning paths required them to self-regulate their learning to a high degree and to make many positive learning decisions. Some students thrived in creating their RLEs. Their comments indicated a high level of self-efficacy as students believed that they had the abilities to accomplish their RLEs and they were excited about their learning, suggesting that they positively experienced learning wellbeing. Other students struggled to organise and attend workshops, complete learning tasks and plan how to merge subjects. These students felt frustrated and stressed by Tautoro Modules. In contrast to Tautoro Modules, the lower level of self-regulation required for Flight Times and a focus on one subject area at a time offered a well needed break to students.

5.5 Open-plan learning areas and digital technologies

This section outlines themes focused on students' learning wellbeing regarding students' interactions with teachers and fellow students in open plan learning areas, students' perception of

time spent together with teachers and fellow students, and the use of digital technology in the study ILE.

5.5.1 Open plan learning areas

Interactions between teachers and students

Modules and Tautoro Modules took place in large open plan spaces with moveable furnishings. These spaces were suitable for teaching up to 150 students at a time (see section 1.3). Students were able to move relatively freely in these open plan spaces meaning there was a high level of movement within the space and also a high level of interactions between the students and different teachers. Within these spaces students sometimes chose to move *away* from the teacher. For example, Alice, a confident and high achieving Yr9 student, stated that sometimes she chooses to sit far away from her teacher:

> I was too scared to go to the teacher because I knew I was going to get feedback and I didn't really want to do feedback so I just kind of sat back in the classroom. Sometimes I move away. I don't do it that often, but I've moved to another area in the space. I find it [moving away] easier in an open plan environment because there's a lot of people.

As Alice commented, when wanting to avoid scrutiny of their work, the number of students in a large learning area may enable students to distance themselves physically from their teachers and their teacher's input and expectations. Mia, Lucy, and Isabelle (all Yr10) commented that students were, at times, able to leave a teaching space without teachers noticing straight away; there were no physical boundaries between learning areas, teachers and students were able to move between areas with ease. Mia reported:

> It's *so* open plan and there's *so* many people that the teachers don't always notice when a student is missing. I think they [students] leave just because they can and then they can always meet their friends in the other Tautoro.

Lucy compared Tautoro Modules and Modules (see section 1.3), explaining that she preferred the Module set up which consisted of approximately 60 students and two teachers instead of the Tautoro Module learning design which comprised 150 students and five teachers:

> In Tautoro it is easy to leave and teachers don't notice because there's tons of people. I just preferred when it was just Modules when you just went to that certain class. You were kind of more enclosed.

Lucy's reference to feeling more "enclosed" during Tautoro Modules may point towards the impact of how a space is used rather than the space itself since Modules comprise fewer students and teachers than Tautoro Modules. Lucy and Isabelle described how teachers attempt to counteract students wandering in between learning spaces:

> If you don't have a relationship with the teachers much, you can literally just walk out of class and they wouldn't actually notice that you're missing. But you can't do that now because there's teachers *everywhere*.

Isabelle referred to an increased teacher presence in the large open plan spaces to prevent students from leaving their designated Tautoro Modules. Meanwhile, Mia commented on teacher facilitation practices in the open plan learning areas. Mia appreciated teachers who proactively circled the entire learning area and or undertook regular "one-on-one" check-ins:

> In Modules, people are a bit more spread out than in Advisory. Some teachers, they're very good and they do circling and once a week or once a class they'll come and they'll check in on everyone. Whereas other teachers, they run the workshops and they're more focused on, "If you need help, you come see me and we can work together" sort of thing. So it depends on the teacher. So with the teachers that aren't necessarily circling the whole area, just kind of their allocated area, so if you're not really there or you're not approaching the teachers then you're not necessarily getting the help that you need.

In this quote Mia also recounts that some teachers may not intentionally interact with each student in their learning area on a regular basis. In this case, she assumes teachers think it is students' responsibility to reach out to a teacher rather than vice versa.

Overall, large open plan learning spaces offer the potential for students to move freely within and in between learning areas. It appears that Yr9 and Yr10 students have a high level of awareness of this freedom. Students, at times, choose to move closer to or away from teachers depending on whether they wanted assistance or avoid what they think will be negative teacher feedback. Overall, students valued teachers' intentions to connect with them in person on a regular basis.

Interactions amongst students

Students were asked about their views about how large open plan learning spaces influenced their opportunities and the ways they interacted with peers. The Yr8 students reported that having the freedom to choose which peers to sit and work with helped them learn. Arlo (Yr8) said: "If someone is being annoying, you just move." Hunter (Yr8) asserted that students did not need to ask their teacher for permission to move: "We just move. It's really just easier to do work". Hunter's comments indicate that the freedom to move relatively freely within the large open plan learning area meant he could better manage his work.

Yr10 and 9 students displayed a high level of awareness of peer collaboration in the ILE. Yr10 students in particular commented on the value of learning with their peers. For instance, Rob (Yr10) recounted how he and his peers worked together purposefully when completing a difficult group learning task:

> In my group we managed to get everyone together and everyone played their part. And so now towards the end we're getting it done and everyone is really happy with the final product. And that's kind of the team work that we have and the relationships between students is that together you can work so well. And I think the school is good because it enforces that sort of thing, like working together rather than sitting at desks and working by yourself.

Rob seems to be in favour of the school's intention to foster, even enforce, student collaboration. Moreover, Rob's comment indicates a link between positive peer relationships and a sense of achievement with his learning and learning wellbeing.

It is noteworthy that Yr10 students discussed peer communication during ILT (Independent Learning Time), which is when students work on their own projects. For instance, Lucy said:

> I like open plan when it comes to communication with your friends in ILT with people from different sections. When you're in ILT you can sit with whoever because you're all in the same space.

Phoebe (Yr10) added that students work on personal projects during ILT, yet sit together and do "work together":

> I might be doing Maths and PE in that class but Mia might be doing English and Social Science in that class but if our ILTs align we can sit together and do our work together. So we can just sit together and do our own separate work.

Phoebe's statement resonates with an earlier comment by Will about the enjoyment of being around people who were "into their learning" during Tautoro (section 4.3). When asked how doing their "separate work" assisted students in their learning, Mia explained that when there are like minded students working in the same space, they can bounce ideas and help each other:

> If you're not so sure, you're just bouncing ideas, helping each other out. It works, even if you're working on different things also because, say if it's like English or Maths, everyone has English and Maths, so you're doing the same stuff. So if they've done more than you, you just help each other and even just with revision.

Mia appreciates being able to sit with her peers' and them helping each other with their respective learning tasks even when they are working on different learning areas and content. In this case it appears that the open-plan environment and ILT organisation enable a high level of interaction amongst students: students can sit with their friends and support each other in their learning even when working on personalised learning paths.

It is noteworthy that Yr7 students did not comment on working with their peers. Instead, they focused predominantly on the noise stemming from collaboration which, at times, they felt, acted as a distraction. This aspect is explored next.

Distractions in open plan learning areas

When discussing implications of the open-plan environment, the Yr7 students Scarlett and Luna voiced that they found the noise and visibility of other classes distracting. Scarlett stated:

> Sometimes it's hard to learn in the spaces because you can see everyone around you and it's really distracting because I like to look and it gets distracting. It's because the space is really loud and then it's hard to focus because you can hear them even when you're working.

Similarly, Luna stated that she "couldn't help but get distracted" in the open space:

> You can't really help it that you're getting distracted. It's an open space. So if you get distracted you can't really focus - it's *that* open.

Meanwhile, Poppy (Yr7) attempted to cope with noise levels by focusing on her laptop screen, yet she conceded that she found the noise around her distracting:

> It's kinda hard cause people talk to you even though I'm always on my screen and all around me is talking.

The five Yr8 students seemed to have a more differentiated view on noise levels than the seven Yr7 students. When asked what made it hard for students to learn, all students in the Yr8 focus group agreed that noise from neighbouring classes, including from any movies a class might be watching, could easily become a distraction For instance, Emma commented "It can get quite loud" and Hunter added:

> Obviously there's a lot of people around you. So especially when the other classes are watching a movie and you try and move away as far as you can [from the noise]. But it's hard [referring to dealing with distractions].

Yr9 students offered another perspective on noise levels in the ILE. Alice stated that she had "got used" to it:

> You kind of get used to the noise because when my brother came for the open day this year, he was like, "It was so noisy." I was just like, "I didn't even notice the noise".

It appears that, over time, Alice has developed strategies that help her focus. However, Alice commented on the lack of "quiet time":

> Sometimes the open plan can be frustrating because they got rid of all the breakout spaces. The only closed spaces are the teachers' offices. If you need quiet time, you can't go in there and do your work. But otherwise the open plan is fine. It also depends on what class you have, what you're doing.

It seems that Alice would like the option to retreat to a quiet space, yet these were unavailable. Perhaps, within the open plan environment, there is always some residual background activity that students have to "block out" if they want to fully focus on the learning task at hand. Breakout spaces could provide more secluded learning spaces, offering respite from the distractions of open plan learning areas.

Yr10 students identified that while peer collaboration was helpful to them, it also led to a certain noise level. For instance, Isabelle commented:

> When it's nice and quiet, then you can focus more. For me, if it's quiet I can focus more. But then you are also needing to ask your friend for a question to do with your learning.

There appears to be a tension between the need for a lower level of noise so students can focus better on individual tasks and collaboration which necessitates students conversing. This tension was also apparent in Lucy's comment, she seemed to prefer a lower noise level and fewer distractions at specific times, especially during workshops:

> When it comes to workshops, I'd rather it was closed off, especially if the teacher is like, "Come and sit in this section." And there's another section workshop right next to us. You just hear what they're doing instead. But other than that it's fine.

Broadly, students from all year levels commented on the distractions created through noise and visibility of students and teachers in other Modules or workshops. Yr7 students appeared to have more difficulty in coping with these distractions than older students who seemed to have developed

strategies to manage themselves within this open plan environment. Overall, there appears to be a tension between the benefit of collaboration and the noise that it entails, with a suggestion that this could be alleviated with breakout spaces.

Time together and interactions between teachers and students and amongst students

Students stay in their Learning Advisory over the course of their schooling, consequently meaning students spend an extended period with the same Learning Advisor and fellow students. Mia (Yr10) indicated, and her peers in the focus group agreed, that the continuity of Learning Advisory group relationships contributed to a sense of connectedness and provided a framework for peer relationships to flourish. Mia said:

> Learning Advisory is a smaller group of people and you're closer and they're always there. In Advisory you stay in your area so you're quite close and you're there often with the same people. It's not constantly changing like in all your classes.

Here Mia contrasted the Learning Advisory with her other classes - the large, frequently changing spaces of her Modules. Yr9 and 10 students' Tautoro Modules change each semester which means that they may have different teachers and peers each semester. Phoebe and Mia (both Yr10) discussed the change in Tautoro Modules and agreed that their relationships with Tautoro teachers were, in comparison to those with their Learning Advisors, relatively tenuous. Phoebe explained that time played an important role in building relationships with teachers as over time they came to know her as a learner which meant that they were well placed to support her learning:

> For *some* of my teachers, I end up building a little bit of a relationship with them. Some of the teachers that I've had throughout our four years of being here, they know me as a learner and know how I work. So they are able to help me.

Mia stated that the high number of students in Tautoro Modules (in comparison with Learning Advisor) acted as a deterrent to approaching their Tautoro teachers:

> I think it's just because Tautoro Modules are bigger and you don't spend as much time as in Advisory which is smaller. And you go and see your Advisor all the

> time but Modules they're bigger so you're really only going to see your teachers if you need help.

Similarly, students considered that changing Tautoro Modules each semester influenced peer interactions. Phoebe (Yr10) commented that the two-term duration of Tautoro Modules encouraged her to interact with her close group of friends rather than socialising with the entire class:

> Yr9 and 10 you don't really spend that much time actually socialising with other people. It's more just you and your group of friends doing your work whereas when you had sets (referring to choosing a set of three Modules as is the case for Yr7 and 8 students), I felt like you socialised with the other people in your class a lot more because you're with them for a whole year (...).

Mia and Phoebe both remarked that they didn't tend to establish new friendships with peers in her Tautoro Modules. It appears that in comparison to the year-long Modules for Yr7 and 8 students, the shorter duration of Tautoro Modules and the high number of students in each Tautoro Module creates an interpersonal learning environment that doesn't encourage students to seek out interactions with teachers or peers that they do not yet know.

5.5.2 Students using digital technologies

The study ILE has a deliberate focus on the use of e-learning strategies to assist students' learning. Students are expected to use their own devices as learning tools and the school has a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) policy (see section 1.3).

Yr7 students indicated that they sometimes struggled with online learning platforms such as Education Perfect, Schoology (an online learning management system) and with emails. For instance, Scarlett reported finding managing these systems as well as her device overwhelming:

> Laptops are pretty annoying sometimes, like when you do your work and Schoology is crazy. And when your computer dies and when you don't have a charger. And it's hard to keep track of Schoology and your emails and Education Perfect.

Scarlett's struggle to manage her own device and online learning tools may be due to the fact that, at the time of this interview, she had only spent seven weeks at the study school and she was yet to find her feet in this new school system. Similarly, Sophie (Yr7) found it difficult to understand her teacher's instructions when using Google Drive. Sophie commented:

> A lot of teachers in our Modules don't really tell us specific instructions. They say "You just go in this folder and do this and do that". And we don't really understand and then after the class, after the work we learnt, they asked us questions about it and none of us knew it. But I couldn't really understand what work I was supposed to do. And every time I try to answer the question, I get that question wrong and then it's pretty embarrassing.

On the other hand, Sophie commented positively that Google Docs provided the potential to keep her work organised:

> It's better to write on your computer than writing down on your paper because you could lose your paper anytime and they can get crumbled in your bag and imagine you do like five papers each day. And then you'll have a whole year worth of papers.

The five Yr8 students appeared to be comfortable using their own devices and online learning platforms. For instance, Emma commented that she was *now* familiar with using a laptop and Schoology, which allowed her to keep all her work in one place:

> The laptop is pretty important because we do most of our learning on it and we check our emails and submit tests to Schoology. And it's a lot more convenient to have all of our tasks on Schoology so we can submit them to one place. I find it pretty easy to find stuff on Schoology. Initially I found it a little bit hard but then I got the hang of it.

Hunter added that he enjoyed the convenience of being able to "find all of the information for assignments" on his laptop. Emma and Hunter's confidence in using online learning tools on their devices seems to be in contrast to the Yr7 students' view as encapsulated by Sophie's comments above.

All Yr8 students in the focus group stated that they used their devices to contact teachers. For instance, Hunter commented: “Laptops are an easy way to communicate with your teachers” and Emma added, “Yeah, cause you can email your teachers if you have any concerns.” When prompted, Thomas stated that he “sometimes” emailed his teachers and Arlo specified that he would email teachers if he couldn’t attend class. All the students in the Yr8 focus group asserted decisively that they checked their emails every day. Arlo commented that sometimes his mother (who is a teacher at the school) reminded him. Emma stated that her Learning Advisor would sometimes remind her to check her emails. Hunter said that especially at the beginning of the year, Learning Advisors would ask their students to check their emails daily: “They tell us ‘Every morning you come and get your laptops out, check your emails’”. Even while Yr8 students expressed confidence in using online learning tools and their devices, they still appreciated reminders from their Learning Advisors. These reminders consisted of managing tools and establishing positive habits, such as checking emails daily.

Yr8 students seemed to enjoy having choices when using their own devices. For example, the Yr8 focus group agreed with Thomas when he stated: “It's good that we can choose how we want to learn. Like if we want to do it in a doc or if we want to do it in our book.” Overall, Yr8 students indicated they were capable of making choices, such as using their exercise book or a Google Doc.

Yr9 students appeared confident in using their own devices and the school’s online learning platforms even though they made few comments on this topic. For instance, Alice (Yr9) stated in a matter of fact way: “Laptops are important because laptops and books are your main way of learning because it's BYOD.”

Yr10 students perceived a wider scope of uses for their devices. Rob encapsulated the group’s view when he outlined negative and positive effects of using devices for personalised learning pathways in Tautoro Modules:

> Devices as a whole really contribute to our learning. Negatively and positively I reckon, because of course, the Internet is just like a storehouse of information. Especially with this new Tautoro system - devices make everything more

> linked instead of having a textbook for English, a textbook for Maths and then having to learn from those. You just have the Internet so it's quite easy to link things. Plus, it's a lot easier if you're gonna go home and do homework because you can access your work and documents remotely.

In this comment Rob points out that students can use their devices and the internet to connect ideas from different learning areas and their learning across home and school. However, Rob pointed out that some students were off task surfing the Internet, even accessing 'bad websites' instead of working on learning tasks:

> There's a lot of stuff that isn't too great on there that the students access. Like getting past the stuff that the school blocks, getting on bad websites. It's also really easy to get off task while you have a device. I know a lot of people who are surfing on the Internet while they are meant to be doing their normal work.

Students' comments suggest that the level of sophistication in device use increases with students' age. Some Yr7 students seemed to struggle with the use of online learning tools and devices which led to some frustration. In contrast, Yr8 to Yr10 students became increasingly confident in using digital tools for learning. In particular Yr8 students commented that they would connect with their teachers via email. They also commented on their ability to make choices such as which media (for instance, Google Doc or paper) to use for their learning. Yr8 students described how their Learning Advisors assisted them to create positive habits such as checking their emails daily. Yr10 students' comments stood out because of students' awareness of the potential uses of devices. Yr10 students' use of devices seemed to link to their personalised learning pathways since students used the internet to connect learning areas as well as home and school learning.

5.6 Students in lockdown

Yr9 and 10 students only were interviewed about their perspectives on home learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. An emerging finding is that students appreciated the freedom to choose when they would undertake learning tasks when they were at home. For instance, Alice (Yr9) chose to do her "important" tasks first and leave the "fun" tasks for later in the week:

> I think it's about prioritising your work from "most important" to "the least important" because at the beginning of the week, I would knock out all my Maths and English work, that's the top priority and then I would do all the fun little tasks that the teachers set us, like the art tasks later in the week.

Alice illustrated her ability to prioritise and plan her work according to what *she* deemed important. Perhaps, leaving the "fun" tasks to the end of the week also served as a motivation for Alice to complete her "important" tasks first. Likewise, Mia aimed to utilise the flexibility of home learning to create free time when it suited her:

> You can start earlier than when you'd normally start school and you can work during your break times and after school as well. Often I would put in the extra work and I just keep going and I wouldn't necessarily finish in the time we would finish at school so that I would have more time at the end of the week.

Alice and Mia appear to have a high level of forethought and ability to plan their learning, managing so that, in Mia's terms, they were "able to do what subjects felt right at the time but still covering them". Likewise, Zara (Yr9) appreciated that she was able to adapt her plans according to her mood:

> At home you still have to do the work. But you can do it whenever you want. If you're stressed you can have a break but when you're at school you can't.

It appears that Alice, Mia and Zara valued being in charge of planning, monitoring and controlling their learning while at home. Their comments mirror previous comments by Isabelle and Will (both Yr10) who indicated that having choices in their learning contributed to their confidence and a positive sense of themselves as learners (section 4.3.2). Perhaps, these comments may point towards students' choices as part of learning wellbeing crossed contexts.

Meanwhile, Liam (Yr9), and Phoebe and Lucy (both Yr10) said that home learning was more time efficient than their learning at school. Liam valued that he was able to learn at his own (fast) pace. Liam said:

> More and more it's on my mind as to how much time you waste at school. Because at school you have the people that take a while to get their work done.

> So you've always got to wait for them. At home, teachers would give you one thing that you have to do and then you just sort of get it done and you don't have to wait for anybody else.

Phoebe (Yr10) thought home learning was more efficient because it eliminated the time for teacher instructions. She commented:

> You got more work done because you had a lot more time. Because in the classroom, the teacher will talk for the first 10, 15 minutes of your class and you only have a half an hour workshop.

Lucy (Yr10) commented on not needing to spend time going to school:

> I really liked being in lockdown rather than school because I prefer having time because you cut out the time for biking to school and the break. And then you can still talk to your friends online because of social media. So it felt the same. So overall, I just thought it was better.

In this comment Lucy points out that despite being isolated when learning at home she was able to connect to her peers through social media. Similarly, Isabelle maintained her connections to fellow classmates and teachers through zoom calls. She said:

> In some of the calls that we'd have with the teachers, like my Flight Times Writers Workshop, it was really nice because we could share our journaling work that we'd been doing over lockdown. That was just a good way to connect with the class and people and the teacher.

The comments above indicate that these students adapted well to learning in lockdown. They demonstrated how capable they were of planning, monitoring, controlling and reflecting on their learning. However, some students raised the point that the lockdown experience altered how they felt about their learning. For instance, Rob (Yr10) linked the home learning situation to the learning in Tautoro Modules, alluding that both home learning and personalised learning pathways in Tautoro Modules required a high level of self-motivation and his fellow students strongly agreed.

> Covid definitely changed the way I think about learning. A lot of the learning was more self-motivated. Covid showed the teachers what type of learner you are. In Covid there were *always* workshops available, there was *always* a time to learn, it was more if you *wanted* to learn. If you're a good learner you'd be in every workshop, always trying to do the best you can and actively paying attention. If you're not, you'd skip half the day doing whatever, didn't attend workshops and almost blamed it on everything else.

Rob talked about the qualities of a good learner such as "always trying to do the best" and a willingness to learn even in difficult learning situations like the home learning during lockdown. These qualities link to the CLOAK values and the aspiration for self-optimisation (see section 4.1.1.) pointing towards the importance of the CLOAK values for students when faced with the home learning situation during the Covid lockdown. Noah (Yr9) admitted, he tended to procrastinate during home learning:

> And then there's me. When you're at home, that's procrastination time. Leave everything to the day it was due and then do it on that day. And then I'd have some days where I'd be like "Right, today is my chill day".

Here we can see Noah was aware that he was delaying his work to the last minute. Despite prompting, he did not comment why he did not act on this self-knowledge, or if this approach caused some concern. It is of note that no other Yr9 and 10 students in focus groups commented on this aspect. This lack of comments could be due to the group make up since teacher comments and data indicated that the majority of study Yr9 and 10 students were very capable learners and perhaps, the few students who may have struggled didn't want to admit this in a group situation.

Overall, the majority of Yr9 and 10 students in interviews reported they had adapted well to the home learning situation during lockdown. They appreciated being in charge of planning, and monitoring their learning while at home which is similar to student commentary about Tautoro Modules. Moreover, students seemed to value that they were able to prioritise and plan their work according to their own preferences and work at their own pace. Students perceived home learning to be more time efficient, cutting out travel time to school and teacher instructions. Students still seemed to feel connected to their peers through social media and zoom meetings. Only one student

commented that he procrastinated during home learning. Despite this self-awareness he did not comment further as to why he tended to procrastinate.

5.7 Portraits of students with high, medium and low levels of learning wellbeing

My analysis identified three broad categories of students' learning wellbeing: Thirteen students with high levels of learning wellbeing (HWB), seven students with medium levels of learning wellbeing (MWB) and two students with low levels of learning wellbeing (LWB). Students were categorised based on the three indicators described in section 2.2. These indicators are (i) the quality of students' relationships at school, (ii) their everyday academic resilience and (iii) satisfaction with their learning experiences in the ILE. This section sets out the three fictional portraits of students with either HWB, MWB or LWB. I constructed these portraits by synthesising key aspects of students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing at school based on their commentary throughout the focus group interviews. The three portraits are intended to capture the characteristics of a typical student within each of the three categories.

5.7.1 Portrait of a HWB student

Nicola (a fictional name) is a student with high levels of learning wellbeing (HWB). She is in Yr10 and throughout her time at the ILE school, has established deep and trusting relationships with her peers and teachers. Nicola feels particularly valued and safe in her Learning Advisory where she has her "school whānau". She compares her relationship with her Learning Advisor with that of a warm and demanding parent. She would confide any issues, be they learning related or pastoral, knowing that she can count on their support. Her Learning Advisor assists her to identify her learning needs and to act on this knowledge. Nicola appreciates this support to make good decisions for herself. She compares her relationship with Module teachers to that of an extended family member and feels comfortable reaching out for learning support from Module teachers. Overall, Nicola has a mature outlook on her relationships with teachers Even when she isn't

"particularly close" to teachers, she won't let this get in the way of seeking support from them. Nicola has an established circle of friends and she socialises predominantly with peers (both in Learning Advisory and Tautoro Modules) who are highly capable of assisting her in her learning and probably vice versa. Together, they have a strong sense of responsibility to take care of each other's learning wellbeing.

Nicola is highly adaptive to academic setbacks typical of school life in the study ILE. Her everyday academic resilience is manifested in various ways such as proactively and persistently reaching out for help, encouragement or support when she needs it, regardless of what her peers might think of her. Nicola also acts strategically. In Tautoro Modules she will enlist one of her teachers if she needs help to approach another "scary" teacher.

Nicola not only reflects deeply on her strengths and weaknesses, but is also highly aware of her own thoughts and attitudes towards learning challenges. She can shift her thinking from negative thoughts, such as "I don't like Maths" to helpful thoughts like "I am not very strong at Maths and I want to become better". Once Nicola identifies her aspirations, such as becoming better at Maths, she has productive conversations with her teachers that assist her in reaching this goal. She will adapt her approach and try new strategies independently. For example, she may look at online learning tools and resources on Schoology or Youtube to clarify her understanding. Nicola's aspiration for self-optimisation and her readiness to "challenge herself" is evident in her willingness to increase her efforts when facing academic challenges, believing that her efforts will lead to success in the future. Nicola notices, accepts and works through uncomfortable learning related emotions associated with academic challenges (such as feeling overwhelmed, stressed or feeling unsure of herself). This attitude helps her to embrace and overcome learning challenges.

Nicola is very satisfied with her learning experiences in her ILE school. She appreciates the choices and the control she has in her learning. It excites her to create her own learning pathway. Nicola is proud of her efforts and achievements in her learning and sees intrinsic value in her learning tasks. Nicola uses the freedom and flexibility in the open plan environment in a productive way, collaborating with her peers while managing any distractions well.

5.7.2 Portrait of a MWB student

Paul, a Yr9 student, displays medium levels of learning wellbeing (MWB). Overall, he has positive, although often superficial, relationships with his teachers, yet feels safe and a sense of belonging s in his Learning Advisory. Paul believes that even while his Learning Advisor knows him very well, he suspects that his Learning Advisor doesn't sincerely care about him or support him when he is struggling. Instead, Paul compares his Learning Advisor to an authoritative parent who would "always tell him what to do". Paul also believes that his Learning Advisor dislikes his weaknesses; and he avoids asking his Learning Advisor for help when he needs it. On the other hand, he connects well with those Tautoro teachers who make an effort to build a relationship with him. However, he often feels unnoticed, "in a sea of people" and feels he is "going under the radar". Paul admits that sometimes he is "afraid" to ask for help and that he needs to make a conscious effort to challenge himself to reach out for learning support when he needs it. On one hand, Paul would love to connect with his teachers but on the other hand his anxiety gets in the way of seeking assistance so he doesn't persist in this. Hence, Paul wishes that teachers would approach him when he has learning difficulties. Paul generally has positive relationships with his peers. They usually support Paul in his learning and vice versa. Sometimes, Paul and his peers distract each other. Paul is aware of this and he has a range of strategies to deal with these situations but he doesn't always act on this knowledge. Paul feels closer to his peers in Learning Advisory than those in Tautoro Modules which, at times, seems to leave him feeling judged or disconnected from his peers in that setting.

Paul displays medium levels of everyday academic resilience which is manifested in the few adaptive behaviours he displays. As mentioned before, he only approaches teachers for assistance when he already has an established relationship with them, even though he knows that seeking help when needed is crucial to overcoming setbacks and challenges. Paul shows a limited ability to reflect on his strengths and weaknesses and he relies on teachers to scaffold these reflections instead of doing this independently. Paul displays a limited awareness of his own thoughts and attitudes when facing learning challenges. Instead, he is generally content with telling himself that he "just doesn't like" whichever challenge he is facing. However, Paul is conscious that maintaining his efforts is likely to assist him to overcome any school related challenges and setbacks and with encouragement from teachers and parents, he is able to do so. This is when Paul

tends to experience success and he is then able to shift his thinking from negative thoughts such as "I am going to embarrass myself" to more positive thoughts that enable him to persevere.

Paul is sometimes excited about his learning but he more often feels indifferent about his learning tasks. Paul has a tendency to avoid learning situations that he doesn't enjoy, such as "long lectures", and withdraw from his teachers, physically moving away in the big open learning areas. Paul sometimes struggles to see value in his learning tasks and lacks motivation to complete them. Extrinsic rewards, such as treats or free time help him enjoy his learning but he is disappointed if he misses out on these rewards, feeling like he has "worked for nothing". Noise and visibility in the open plan learning areas distract him, even when attempting to focus on the task at hand.

5.7.3 Portrait of a LWB student

Elena, in Yr7, experiences low levels of learning wellbeing (LWB) and has needed time to orientate herself as a new student even though she feels safe in her Learning Advisory and has a sense of belonging. She has strained relationships with her Module teachers, feeling unsupported and ignored. Elena also believes that her teachers overreact and growl at her too much when she is "just having fun and a little giggle". She doesn't like asking her peers for help because she struggles to understand their explanations. Moreover, Elena is worried about being embarrassed in front of her peers when she doesn't know the right answer. This insecurity, coupled with a sense of frustration and resignation over her learning struggles, contribute to Elena's feelings of isolation as a learner.

Learning tasks often overwhelm Elena, "stressing her too much". She displays little resilience in the face of learning challenges which is evident in being unable to demonstrate adaptive behaviours: In interviews, she neither mentioned if or how she reflected on her own strengths and weaknesses, or whether she devised new strategies when facing learning challenges. Elena generally doesn't reach out for teacher support because she believes that teachers would ignore her or that they wouldn't be able to help her. At the same time, Elena expects her teachers to approach her when she is struggling, since she would "sit there in class most of the time wondering when this teacher is going to come by". Elena has little self-efficacy and despite her teachers' encouragement to "keep going" and persevere, she often thinks that she "can't do any

more". Elena tends to focus on her perceived inability to cope with learning challenges and seems unable to shift her focus away from these negative thoughts and emotions.

Elena often feels frustrated with her learning, she perceives little opportunities for choices in her learning and she can be reluctant to engage in her learning tasks. Elena “doesn’t feel happy normally because she doesn’t want to do the work” and she attributes her lack of engagement to teachers “not making learning fun”. Overall, Elena feels dissatisfied and overwhelmed with her learning experiences. Elena struggles to focus in the open plan environment because “she likes to look” and see what other students are doing and because “the space is really loud’.

5.8 Summary: Students’ views

The CLOAK values, CLOAK badging programme, and the Learning Advisory structure are central infrastructural elements in the study ILE impacting students’ learning wellbeing. School documentation states and teachers commented that the CLOAK values are essential in fostering students’ development of their learning skills in the ILE. Student comments indicated that the CLOAK values assisted them to develop and sustain positive attitudes towards their school learning experiences. Moreover, students’ comments suggested that the CLOAK values were deeply embedded in the school culture and in students’ thinking. The CLOAK’s “Challenge your mindset” value seemed to encourage students to embrace challenging learning experiences and to persevere. In addition, “Challenge your mindset” appeared to foster students’ willingness to actively seek out new learning opportunities that were outside their comfort zone. Students seemed to see this value as crucial to becoming the best learners they could be. The value of “Learning is connected” appeared to prompt students to use their agency and creativity to look for connections when creating a personalised learning pathway. Students commented that the “Ourselves as learners” value encouraged students’ responsibility towards and ownership of their learning, assisting them to understand their own learning needs so that they could make positive learning choices when planning and monitoring their own learning and take full advantage of the learning opportunities they were presented with. Four students commented on the recently added value “Ahurea Tuakiri” (cultural identity). They explained that this value focused on how their identity and beliefs and their relationships shaped them as a person. The value of “Kindness and respect” seemed to encourage students to be aware of their peers’ learning challenges, offering support

where possible. The findings suggest that older student participants had a more sophisticated understanding of "Kindness and respect" than younger student participants. Taken together, findings suggest that the CLOAK provides a set of values and criteria which make it easier for many students to address learning challenges. The CLOAK values assist students to develop an understanding of themselves as learners and what their learning needs are. The CLOAK values also encourage students to take ownership over their learning to plan and monitor their learning and to make good learning choices for themselves. In particular the "Challenge your mindset" value seemed to play a key role, assisting students to adopt a positive attitude towards learning challenges. Moreover, the CLOAK values fostered students' sense of self-efficacy and their aspiration for self-optimisation.

The CLOAK badging programme provided relevant and attainable targets for students, encouraging them to use the CLOAK values for themselves and with their peers. The badging programme was personalised since students choose which CLOAK value to pitch and submit evidence for with their Learning Advisor's support. Findings indicated that the badging programme made the CLOAK values more understandable and tangible to students and contributed to students' self-regulated learning skills. Students appeared to be excited about earning badges since this celebrated and rewarded their efforts to live the CLOAK values. This public recognition of students' efforts also seemed to assist in validating and elevating the CLOAK values with students portraying these values as of great importance to them. In particular Yr9 and Yr10 students commented on how displaying the CLOAK values could assist them in seeking self-optimisation as learners.

Students commented that Learning Advisors fostered their self-regulation skills and influenced how they thought about learning related challenges. Learning Advisors were guided by the Learning Advisory Curriculum in their one-on-one coaching of learning to learn strategies, providing a structure for students within which they were able to learn to manage their own learning. Moreover, the Learning Advisory Curriculum had a specific focus on fostering students' relationships through team building activities which appeared to assist students to bond with peers in their Advisory and Hapu, meaning they felt safe and confident to offer and ask for help.

Through the combination of the CLOAK values, its badging programme and the Learning Advisory structure, students encountered stability, safety, personal connections and guidelines for personal growth and self-regulation. This multifaceted, school-wide support framework anchors

and prepares students for the complex personalised learning structures in Modules, Tautoro Modules and Flight Times. Students also reported this support system acted to foster their positive mindset about learning since it helped equip them with options, strategies for goal setting and time management of their learning.

In terms of students' learning experiences in Modules, Tautoro Modules and Flight Times, findings revealed that students were faced with many complex decisions. To address these, they needed to apply the self-regulation and CLOAK skills and values: Students were afforded different levels of ownership over their learning across the school years: Yr7 and 8 were taught together and both Yr7 and 8 students were able to choose *a set of Modules* with each Module covering two subjects. Teachers provided integrated learning tasks in each Module, but students were in charge of combining the two subject areas for their RLE (Rich Learning Experience). Yr7 students perceived fewer choices and opportunities for personalised learning than Yr8 students. In terms of their RLEs, Yr7 felt, at times, overwhelmed by the challenge of completing these on time which seemed to impact their learning wellbeing as they felt stressed. This is possibly due to them being new to the school and school systems for learning. In contrast, Yr8 students focused on the complexity and enjoyment of connecting subjects for their RLEs. Yr8 students appreciated the agency and variety of options they had for personalised learning and they indicated having freedom to follow their interests when combining different subject areas for their RLEs.

Yr9 and 10 students were taught together. They had *three Tautoro Modules* which afforded them with a greater level of learning choices. Each Tautoro Module covered five subjects and students were in charge of selecting (at least) two subjects for their RLE. This also meant that Yr9 and 10 students chose workshops covering the subject areas of their choice. Yr9 and 10 students recognised that pursuing personalised learning paths required them to self-regulate their learning to a high degree. Some of the Yr9 and 10 students expressed a sense of self-efficacy and excitement in being able to create their personalised learning pathway. This suggests that their learning wellbeing was broadly positive. At the same time, Yr9-10 students found it challenging to organise and attend workshops, complete learning tasks and plan how to merge subjects. This led to some students feeling frustrated and stressed by Tautoro Modules. Yr9-10 findings suggest that they appreciated that Flight Times required a lower level of self-regulation, which seemed to lead to positive attitudes about these opportunities.

Students' movement within and between the open plan learning areas was relatively unregulated. Findings suggest that teachers' facilitation practices were important in the large open plan spaces if they were to successfully create spatial and relational proximity with students. It also made it easier to encourage students to stay within their learning areas. Otherwise, the open plan learning areas in combination with large student numbers and mid-year class changes for Yr9 and 10 students was said to present an impersonal learning environment. High levels of interaction amongst students was easy to accomplish in the open-plan environment and ILT (Independent Learning Time) organisation. Students were able to sit with their friends and support each other in their learning even when working on their respective personalised learning paths. Four of the seven Yr7 participants reported that their learning focus was, at times, disrupted by the noise and visibility of neighbouring classrooms. Fewer of the Yr8 to Yr10 students reported this. Perhaps this suggests that students had got used to tuning out these distractions. Nonetheless, two of the six Yr10 participants commented that they would prefer less noise. There also appeared to be a tension between the benefit of collaboration and the noise that it entails, with one student suggesting that this could be alleviated with breakout spaces.

Students' confidence, skill and sophistication in the ways in which they used their digital devices and online learning tools also seemed to increase with age. While younger students tended to focus on simple choices, such as using Google Docs or exercise books, older students reported using their devices to connect different learning areas for their personalised learning paths.

The move to home learning due to COVID-19 posed a considerable challenge to all the participants. The majority of the Yr9 and Yr10 students interviewed about this reported a high level of self-regulation in their home learning. Findings suggest that applying the CLOAK values may have assisted some of them to adapt to their home learning situation. Yr9 and 10 participants' views on home learning mirrored the comments they made about their personalised learning pathways in Tautoro. Having choices in their learning contributed to their confidence and a positive sense of themselves as learners. It seems that in this case these students' choices as part of learning wellbeing transferred across contexts and perhaps assisted them to self-regulate their home learning.

Findings revealed diversity in students' learning wellbeing as indicated by students' relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with learning experiences. This diversity is categorised into three broad levels: high (HWB), medium (MWB) and low (LWB) of

students' learning wellbeing. Out of 22 students, 13 students were classified as HWB, 7 students as MWB and 2 students as LWB. Three fictional portraits synthesised key aspects of students' perspectives about learning wellbeing at school.

Students with high levels of learning wellbeing (HWB) had positive relationships with teachers and peers across Learning Advisory and Modules, benefitting their learning. HWB students needed little support in their academic resilience, being able to embrace learning challenges and the associated frustrations and discomfort. Students in this category thrived on "conquering" and reframing challenges into learning opportunities. They reported feeling very satisfied with their learning experiences. They expressed feeling excitement, pride, and intrinsic joy in their learning experiences.

Students with medium levels of learning wellbeing (MWB) had some positive relationships with teachers and peers in Learning Advisory. At other times, they felt unsupported or unnoticed by their teachers. In some cases, MWB students' peer relationships didn't appear to benefit their learning. Sometimes MWB students felt judged by their peers. This broad group displayed lower levels of everyday academic resilience, requiring assistance when facing setbacks or challenges at school. MWB students appeared to be predominantly satisfied with their learning experience, especially when promised extrinsic rewards for their learning, such as lollies.

Students with low levels of learning wellbeing (LWB) tended to have strained relationships with their Module teachers. This group most noticeably felt unsupported or ignored. LWB students seldom sought teacher or peer support and struggled to articulate their learning needs adequately. LWB students passively faced setbacks and challenges. Their seeming lack of initiative in seeking help with the typical challenges others generally took control of, marked this group as the ones not applying the mindset behaviours implicit in the CLOAK values. LWB students reported dissatisfaction with their learning, mostly feeling overwhelmed, frustrated or confused. LWB students indicated they sometimes feel reluctant to engage in learning tasks.

The next section discusses pertinent findings. A particular focus is to relate the impact of a multifaceted, school-wide approach on students' learning wellbeing to the existing literature on learning wellbeing in ILEs.

Chapter six: Discussion and conclusion

The previous chapter illuminated the perspectives of learners about their experiences of learning wellbeing in the case study ILE. Drawing on student data, I developed a number of themes concerning the aspects of the ILE structure that impact on students' learning wellbeing. The three aspects that emerged most strikingly as having a positive impact on student learner wellbeing were the CLOAK values, individual coaching by Learning Advisors, and the CLOAK badging system. The participants' narratives suggest that these three dimensions work together to provide an integrated and supportive learning wellbeing framework. Also emerging from the findings were a range of responses to the personalised learning structures, the open plan learning spaces and the use of digital tools. These findings will also be unpacked here to address the first research question, and the relationship to the literature evaluated.

The previous chapter used the portraiture technique to provide composite pictures of students with high, medium and low levels of learning wellbeing as indicated through students' relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with learning experiences. Discussion in this chapter will probe the contribution of these portraits to an understanding of what characterises learner wellbeing in an ILE, addressing the second research question. I next evaluate the impact of a COVID lockdown on students' learning wellbeing.

The concluding sections of this chapter evaluate the research study, its limitations and its potential usefulness to a range of people such as educational leaders, educators and architects. Drawing on this evaluation, I highlight potential areas for future research. I then conclude with a final assessment of the key contribution of this research inquiry.

6.1 Features shaping students' learning wellbeing

This section discusses findings which help to address the first research question: *Which ILE features shape learning wellbeing?* Firstly, I explore findings about the ways in which the school's multifaceted and school-wide framework fosters students' learning wellbeing and discuss these findings in relation to the literature on learning wellbeing in ILEs. Secondly, I discuss my findings on students' learning wellbeing and their choices in terms of their personalised learning pathways,

the physical learning environment and the digital learning environment. In the course of this discussion, I make a case for fostering students' everyday academic resilience, learner agency and self-regulation skills so that students can take advantage of personalised learning structures.

The discussion of my findings highlights that two elements in the ILE learning architecture worked together to support students' learning wellbeing. The first was a learning wellbeing framework consisting of values that acted as a dispositional curriculum, high quality mentoring and a recognition programme. The intention of the framework is to equip students with the attitudes and abilities for everyday academic resilience, agency and self-regulated learning. The second was a set of personalised learning structures that provided students with scaffolded opportunities to put these attitudes and abilities into practice.

6.1.1 A learning wellbeing framework that is more than the sum of its parts

As a proactive approach to fostering learning wellbeing, the school's learning wellbeing framework has three parts: 1) the CLOAK values: a *set of dispositional values* that constitute learning wellbeing and everyday academic resilience, acting as a dispositional curriculum focusing on students' agency and self-regulation skills; 2) Learning Advisors: teachers who foster the dispositional values through *individual, high quality mentoring*; and 3) the CLOAK badging system that functions as a *recognition programme* whereby students receive badges for displaying the dispositional values.

My findings reveal that explicitly stated and publicly endorsed ***dispositional values*** can inform students' thinking about their learning wellbeing through support for their agency, self-regulation skills and everyday academic resilience. Student data demonstrated that students were aware of each of the dispositional CLOAK values and that they used all of them, albeit to different degrees. Students' feedback showed that the CLOAK served as a curriculum that, in conjunction with mentoring and public affirmation, seemed to scaffold the development of a set of dispositional values. These in turn fostered and supported their agency as learners, when this is understood as a complex mix of choices and reasoning concerning assuming responsibility for their own learning (see section 2.2.2). In this respect, my findings corroborate those of Keeffe (2014). Keeffe also identified the value of an explicit curriculum, that combines social and emotional learning and the

skills required for personalised learning, as a support for students' learning wellbeing in an ILE. The congruence of my findings and Keeffe's position emphasise the importance of making key skills and dispositions explicit to foster learning wellbeing in an ILE.

Keeffe (2015) argues that explicitly fostering students' awareness of themselves as learners positively contributes to their ability to make informed decisions. She asserts that nurturing this awareness provides students with an "influential life experience" (Keeffe, 2015, p. 218). In line with Keeffe's argument, my participant students reported on the value of each element of the CLOAK for themselves, both as learners and people. Of note, students highlighted that the "Challenge your mindset" value contributed to their everyday academic resilience. I define academic resilience as "students' ability to successfully deal with academic setbacks and challenges that are typical of the ordinary course of school life" (Martin & Marsh, 2008, p. 54). Findings indicate that the "Challenge your mindset" value encouraged students to actively seek out and embrace new learning experiences, and persevere with them and with learning challenges. Findings also suggest that the value of "Challenge your mindset" is that it prompts students' awareness of their own attitudes towards learning challenges and assists them to reframe these as opportunities for growth. In this way, the "Challenge your mindset" value explicitly teaches students how to deal with academic setbacks and challenges during the course of school life. One detailed example of how this may work was demonstrated when Mia referenced "Challenge your mindset" when she reflected, as part of her portfolio for a Silver badge, on how she had bounced back and kept pushing herself when she received grades and feedback that did not meet her expectations (section 4.1). Through examples such as this my study adds to Yeager et al.'s (2014) description of the impact of a resiliency-building teaching intervention. Along with the explicit value statement of "Challenge your mindset", my study suggests that the recognition programme of the badging system helps to motivate resilience and perseverance. The findings also revealed that the second CLOAK value of "Learning is connected" encouraged students to display their agency and connect their learning from various subjects when creating a personalised learning pathway and their sense of agency seemed to be further supported through the "Ourselves as learners" value. This third CLOAK value encouraged students to take responsibility and ownership for their learning by making learning choices. "Ourselves as learners" supported students to understand their own learning needs so that they could make positive learning choices and take full advantage of the learning opportunities that were presented. This finding about the importance

of learner agency is consistent with previous research where students are seen as active participants in their learning with a sense of responsibility and accountability (Chapman et al., 2014; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Irvine et al., 2013). The "Ourselves as learners" value also encouraged students to develop their ability to self-regulate their learning through planning, monitoring and reflecting on it and, in this respect, is consistent with Pintrich's (2002, 2004) notion of learner agency as forethought, planning, monitoring, controlling and reflection (see section 2.2). Alongside the fostering of learner resilience, learner self-awareness and self-regulation, findings suggest that the CLOAK values helped to foster broader personal, ethical and social values. Student data showed that the "Ahurea Tuakiri" (cultural identity) value fostered students' understanding of how their identity and beliefs shaped them as a person, while the value of "Kindness and respect" encouraged students to be aware of their peers' learning challenges, and to offer them support where possible.

Overall, students commented most frequently on "Challenge your mindset". Nevertheless, findings suggest that the entire set of CLOAK values represents a dispositional curriculum which assists students to develop an understanding of themselves as learners and as people and identify what their learning needs are. In this regard, my research adds to existing research (Deed et al., 2014; Martin & Marsh, 2008, 2006, 2003; Pintrich, 2002 and 2004) indicates that explicit attention to the skills necessary for agency, self-regulation and everyday academic resilience, positively impacts students' learning wellbeing. Moreover, my findings suggest that when sets of dispositional values (like the CLOAK) act as a curriculum, students' self-efficacy and aspirations for self-optimisation are likely to be fostered. The dispositional values constitute aspects of learning wellbeing, shaping students' perception of their own learning. As Alice (Yr9) said, each CLOAK aspect helped her to become the best learner she could be so she could succeed in life and be a good person (section 5.1). Alice's point about learning to become good people, is so far not addressed in research literature.

My findings illustrate that ***high quality individual mentoring*** has a positive impact on students' learning wellbeing (see section 4.2) and works in tandem with the CLOAK values. Students' comments showed that Learning Advisors provided students with a safe and supportive environment to develop their understanding of themselves as learners. At the same time, Learning Advisors nurtured students' abilities to make decisions about and for their learning. The role of support systems like the Learning Advisors has been recognised in other research conducted in

ILE schools. For example, Keeffe (2014) and Wright (2018) reported that the schools they investigated provided high quality individual mentoring, corroborating my findings that such mentoring appears to be a significant factor in the school's pastoral care provisions. Keeffe (2014) asserts that systems akin to the Learning Advisory structure are instrumental in developing a student-centred approach to learning and in raising students' confidence in decision-making. Likewise, Wright (2018) observed that teachers acting as learning coaches within the school's strength-based approach to students' learning needs, fostered students' abilities to monitor their learning trajectories, make good learning choices and self-regulate their learning. Their findings resonate with those emerging from my study. In my study school, Learning Advisors assisted students to reflect on and monitor their learning, for they not only mentored students to adopt positive beliefs about their capabilities, but also supported students to set goals and persist in pursuing them.

A unique contribution of my research is the findings on the significance of a ***recognition programme*** in fostering dispositional values in students like those articulated in the CLOAK. The recognition programme served the purpose of validating and elevating these dispositional values to the same level as content learning. In other words, the CLOAK's set of dispositional values are valued equally with academic success as demonstrated in section 5.2 (students' interviews) and 4.1 (teacher interviews). This equivalence is crucial because it communicates to students that their learning wellbeing matters. While research in traditional learning environments has focused on self-regulated learning skills (Duckworth et al., 2009; Carr & Claxton, 2002; Wolter et al., 2003) and everyday academic resilience in relation to academic achievement (Cassidy, 2015; Martin and Marsh, 2006, 2008), my findings highlight a more nuanced interpretation. Findings suggest that a school's recognition programme can foster students' awareness and positive perceptions of their development of the school's dispositional values that are aligned with its pastoral care curriculum, and promote students' learning wellbeing through students' everyday academic resilience, agency and self-regulated learning skills. A major purpose of the recognition programme is to make the dispositional values more visible to students and others. This recognition encourages students' investment and commitment (section 4.1). Students reported that the recognition programme kept them accountable for developing their dispositional values, and was especially helpful in providing precise criteria for students to strive to attain. Such pastoral care systems and practices are not yet visible in research literature.

While I have discussed each of the three elements of learning wellbeing separately, my findings illustrate the impact of the school's learning wellbeing framework derived from the way the elements worked together to mutually inform and support each other. The three elements came together to develop students' awareness of their own strengths, abilities and needs and their willingness to use this knowledge to optimise their learning potential and to promote students' self-efficacy as learners. Taken together the three elements constituted a framework for articulating, fostering and endorsing everyday student academic resilience, agency and self-regulated learning. The three elements in combination provided students and teachers with the concepts, routines, support systems and practices needed to foster students' learning wellbeing. While both Keeffe (2104, 2015) and Wright (2018) highlight that students benefit from a dispositional curriculum and mentoring, their research did not address a recognition system like badging to support the fostering of students' learning wellbeing. My research points to the value of a learning wellbeing framework that explicitly and systematically addresses dispositional values and recognises students' achievement of them.

Important to their impact, each of the three elements of the school's learning wellbeing framework were **personalised.** For instance, students reflected on their personal development of the CLOAK values with their Learning Advisors' assistance when pitching for a badge of their choice. The personalisation of the learning wellbeing framework corresponds to Katz and Assor's (2007) assertion that choices are motivating when they are relevant to students' interests and goals, are not too numerous or complex, and are congruent with the values of the students' culture. They propose that when this is the case, students' need for autonomy, competence and relatedness is fulfilled which can enhance students' motivation. The personalisation of the school's learning wellbeing framework reportedly led to students' engagement and interest in the dispositional values and their motivation to participate in the recognition programme (sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3). My findings highlight that a personalised learning wellbeing framework can communicate the idea that learning wellbeing is different for different students and that there is not "*one* right way" for learning wellbeing. This positive approach to learning wellbeing can encourage students to participate in activities related to the learning wellbeing framework, such as reflections on their strengths and weaknesses.

Overall, through their experience of a learning wellbeing framework comprising a curriculum focused on dispositional values, individual mentoring and a recognition programme,

findings indicate students can learn to integrate dispositional values that support their resilience as learners and assist them in building a repertoire of learning and self-regulation strategies. It appears that learning wellbeing frameworks, such as those in my case study, can support learning wellbeing. These frameworks can do so through fostering students' awareness of their own skills and the support systems available to them which can set students up for success in their personalised learning pathways. Connections between the learning wellbeing framework and students' personalised, curricular learning in Modules, Tautoro Modules and Flight Times are discussed next.

6.1.2 Personalised learning structures, open plan learning spaces and digital technologies

The important learning wellbeing framework in the school is accompanied by a number of significant ILE features. This section discusses how ILE features, specifically personalised learning pathways, open plan learning spaces and digital device use, complemented the learning wellbeing framework, offering students opportunities to put their skills into practice so that they grow as learners. These aspects and the findings about how each one impacted on students' learning wellbeing are addressed in turn.

My research contributes new understandings about the relation between students' perceived learning wellbeing and ***personalised learning structures***. Previous research has focused on teacher facilitation practices when fostering students' abilities to make choices about their learning, such as the work of Furtak et al. (2012) and Lazonder and Harmsen (2016). Likewise, the research of Deed et al. (2014) and Katz and Assor (2006) stressed the importance of teachers setting workable tasks when providing students with learning choices. Deed et al. (2014) concluded that teachers needed to scaffold students planning for, and monitoring and reflecting on their learning. Similarly, Prain et al. (2013) argued that the quality of personalised learning experiences depends on teachers' expertise to support students in setting and pursuing their own learning goals. These findings resonate with my research since student and teacher data emphasised the value of teachers' expertise in using deliberate, systematic strategies to facilitate goal-setting and achievement.

My findings also contribute new insights into students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing in relation to their learning choices in an ILE. Student voice demonstrated that students' self-efficacy can be fostered through an appropriate level of learning choices. My findings highlight that students can develop and exercise their agency, everyday academic resilience and self-regulation skills when they make learning choices regarding their personalised learning pathways. This is why teachers' expertise in fostering these skills is so important. Particularly, the mentorship by Learning Advisors contributes to students' ability to make positive learning choices.

Planning their personalised learning trajectories gave students many scaffolded choices, such as which subjects to integrate or which workshops to attend. Students who applied the aforementioned skills successfully, reportedly grew in their self-efficacy and their learning wellbeing. For example, Isabelle said, she felt confident because she had ownership in her learning and was entrusted with making her own learning choices. In this regard, my findings resonate with Katz and Assor's (2006) assertion that choices which are relevant, not too numerous or complex and congruent with students' values can positively contribute to their need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. My findings point towards the value of personalised learning for students' learning wellbeing.

Alongside the opportunities for personalised learning in the ILE, open plan learning spaces characterise the study school. The findings of my research need to be discussed in relation to previous research on open plan learning spaces and the implications for teachers and learners. One theme that recurs in prior literature is the implication for teachers' facilitation practices. Previous research suggests that ***open plan learning spaces*** may precipitate changes in how teachers facilitate learning (Byers et al., 2014; Deed, Lesko, & Lovejoy, 2014; Imms & Byers, 2017; Kariippanon et al., 2017). Wright, Thompson and Horne assert that "the scale of a learning space, its acoustics, ambiance, and contents, *together with a teacher's facilitation practices,* serve to build either belonging and safety, or tension and stress" (2021, p. 55 [my emphasis]). Chapman et al. (2014) note that teachers may have to teach students how to self-regulate their learning on an ongoing basis in the less constrained open plan learning areas. As both Wright and Chapman et al imply, teachers' expertise may be critical.

My findings corroborate research on teacher facilitation practices in open plan learning spaces (Byers et al., 2014; Deed, Lesko, & Lovejoy, 2014; Imms & Byers, 2017; Kariippanon et al., 2017), indicating that teachers facilitate personalised experiences where students are given

autonomy to make choices about their learning, movements and interactions in open plan learning spaces (sections 4.4 and 4.5). In addition, my findings emphasise that teachers' facilitation practices, such as establishing relational proximity, can contribute to students' perceived learning wellbeing.

In terms of interactions between teachers and students and amongst students, Benade (2017), Farrelly and Lovejoy (2015), Keeffe (2015) and Prain et al. (2015b) claim that larger class sizes in open plan learning spaces provide students with more teachers and peers to interact with. My findings support Farrelly and Lovejoy (2015), Keeffe (2015) and Prain et al.'s (2015b) findings that in conjunction with a learning wellbeing framework, open plan learning areas can make it easy for students to collaborate with peers and/ or approach teachers for assistance. However, while some Yr9 and 10 students valued such opportunities for interaction, their comments also indicated a need for such interactions to be extended and reinforced through teachers making a conscious effort to interact with each student in their learning area. Student data indicates that regular contact creates not only relational proximity between students and teachers, but also opportunities to discuss students' personalised learning trajectories, which in turn positively impacts students' learning wellbeing. Students' desire for one-to-one interactions, even in these bigger spaces, is an important finding.

On the other hand, Chapman et al.'s (2014) findings illustrate that larger class sizes combined with constant changes in class make-up can be difficult for some students who struggle to build on group dynamics and consolidate positive learning relationships in ILE settings. My findings also resonate with Chapman et al.'s (2014) findings and emphasise that changes in class make-up can impact on interactions between students and teachers and amongst students. Student and teacher data revealed that the shorter duration of Tautoro Modules required positive learning relationships to be established faster than in year-long Modules.

Previous studies identified that different learning activities benefit from specific spatial arrangements (Starkey, 2021; Wright 2017) and that spatial arrangements may affect learners in different ways. As Wright et al. (2021) suggest, students need to be able to use space in a way that suits themselves as learners, to connect with other learners and to express their ownership and belonging. They "need spaces for both intimate and less intimate learning" (Wright et al., 2021, p. 54). Students also need quiet spaces, a recognition that also emerged from my research. (section 4.4). While students reported that, at times, they needed quiet spaces to suit their learning needs,

they *can* learn to cope with distractions within learning spaces, by managing or moving away from distractions within their own learning areas. On the other hand, noise and distractions from students in adjacent learning areas is not something individual students can easily fix for themselves and some students reported. that they were distracted by noise and occurrences in other learning areas. Visual and auditory separation for classes has been a challenge for the school and is something it has been actively working to address. Perhaps my findings might provide the evidence it needs to establish ways of resolving this difficulty.

Previous research suggests that ***digital technologies*** can assist in personalising students' learning (Benade, 2017a; Järvelä, 2006; Ruano-Borbalan, 2006) and my findings corroborate this view. However, activities using digital devices need to be at an appropriate level of complexity and accompanied by sufficient instructional support to contribute positively to students' overall learning wellbeing (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2017; Winter et al., 2008). As Kucirkova (2018) noted, it is probably wise for teachers to mediate the level of agency and personalisation according to students' ages and abilities when using digital technology. This need for teacher mediation and support with using digital technologies was expressed by Yr7 participant students in particular. Such students, often new to using online learning systems, thought they would benefit from teachers' explicit explanations and demonstrations to increase their proficiency and confidence in using their digital devices for learning (section 4.4.3). Student voice also demonstrated the importance of individual high quality mentoring for appropriate device use so that students are able to use their devices with confidence and for the purpose of connecting their learning from various subjects. Yr10 students also reported that some peers use their devices for off task behaviour and this is consistent with previous research (Aagaard, 2015; Arnesen et al., 2020; Chapman et al., 2014; Fletcher et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2021). In the light of these concerns, Aagaard (2015) recommends that teachers scaffold students in using their devices. Overall, my findings strengthen previous research, suggesting that digital devices can assist in personalising learning for students when their learning use is properly developed through teachers' explicit strategy instruction and support.

In sum, my study illustrates how a learning wellbeing framework can equip students with the necessary skills to exercise everyday academic resilience in facing learning challenges, self-regulate their learning and be agentic in their decision-making. The school's learning wellbeing framework acts not only as a cohesive device at the whole school level, but also on an individual

student level. The dispositional values of the learning wellbeing framework are core to the school's operation. All practices, routines, mindsets and attitudes emanate from the dispositional values, instilling the belief in students that they can overcome learning challenges and giving students the encouragement to be the best learners they can be. Students' commitment to these is enhanced by the recognition given by the badging system and the precision of the criteria that need to be met to attain them. The school's context presents students with many complex learning choices and opportunities to put their acquired skills into practice, ably supported by teachers as Learning Advisors. In this way, the combination of the learning wellbeing framework and the opportunities for decision making in the ILE can equip students with the attitudes and skills to develop self-efficacy as learners.

6.2 Discussion of portraits of students with high, medium and low learning wellbeing

Associated with the goal to identify the impact of the chosen ILE on student learning wellbeing, I sought to characterise the features of student learning wellbeing. The ensuing discussion examines the contribution of the portraiture technique to addressing the second research question: *What characterises learning wellbeing in the case study ILE school?* The employment of portraiture allowed me to render students' views on their learning wellbeing visible, while protecting their anonymity (Auerbach, 2007; Hampsten, 2014; Trask, 2009; see section 3.2.6). The three portraits which were constructed based on my findings clarify and exemplify differences in how students perceive their learning wellbeing as **indicated by their relationships, everyday academic resilience, and satisfaction with their learning experienc**es. These three aspects are key elements of my definition of students' learning wellbeing. The literature on traditional learning environments demonstrates a link between students' learning wellbeing and their quality of relationships (Powell et al., 2018; Simmons et al., 2015; Soutter et al., 2012). Likewise, research in traditional learning environments outlines that everyday academic resilience and school satisfaction are connected to students' learning wellbeing (Ager et al., 2011; Aldridge et al., 2016). Research in ILEs suggests that pedagogical, spatial and organisational structures in ILEs shape relationships differently (Chapman et al., 2014; Farrelly & Lovejoy, 2015; Keeffe, 2014, 2015).

Very little attention has been given to students' perceptions of their own everyday academic resilience and their satisfaction with their learning experience in relation to students' learning wellbeing. My research addresses these matters.

Within the framework of relationships, resilience and satisfaction, I crafted three levels of learning wellbeing: high (HWB), medium (MWB) and low (LWB) learning wellbeing. In terms of students' perceived relationships in the ILE, my findings add to those identified by Keeffe (2014). I distinguish between HWB, MWB and LWB students' perceptions regarding relationships, illustrating how the organisational features of the ILE shape students' perceptions of their relationships. For instance, there was a strong distinction in the way the thirteen HWB students, seven MWB students and two LWB students perceived their relationships with their teachers and peers. HWB students indicated that they established deep and meaningful relationships with peers and teachers. They compared their relationships with their Learning Advisor to that of a warm and firm parent and their relationships with teachers to that of an extended family member. In comparison, MWB students reported relationships with their Learning Advisors and teachers appeared to be shallower and MWB students compared their Learning Advisors to an authoritative parent who would tell them what to do. LWB students didn't comment on their relationships with Learning Advisors and they had strained relationships with their teachers. This distinction between HWB, MWB and LWB students' perspectives on their relationships in the ILE is a contribution to the literature.

Previous findings from traditional learning environments suggest that some adaptive behaviours are essential for students to be academically resilient. These behaviours include seeking support or encouragement, reflecting on strengths and weaknesses, devising new strategies and altering approaches to study or increasing effort (Cassidy, 2016; Riley & Masten, 2005). In addition, Martin and Marsh (2008, 2006, 2003) identified that low anxiety, self-efficacy, control and planning as well as positive teacher-student relationships are significant predictors of everyday academic resilience. Research into ILEs has suggested that students' hesitation in seeking help from a teacher may be reduced in ILEs because students are able to choose from more than one teacher (Prain et al. 2015b). The portraiture technique illustrates that this understanding may not be valid for all students. Students' uptake in seeking help from teachers and peers is variable and connects closely with their level of learning wellbeing. HWB students for example, actively sought help, while MWB students did not mention the value of seeking help from more than one teacher

at a time, but expressed a lack of confidence in seeking help. LWB students seldom approached any teacher for anything, but felt ignored.

In addition, HWB students and their peers assisted each other to overcome learning challenges and they had a strong sense of responsibility to take care of each other's learning wellbeing. HWB students were willing to increase their efforts when facing learning challenges and they aspired to self-optimisation. In contrast, MWB students tended to question their Learning Advisor's and teachers' care and support when they were struggling. MWB students were also afraid to ask for help and they had to make a conscious effort to seek support when needed. This is why MWB students expressed the wish that teachers would approach them when they were struggling. On the other hand, it may be difficult for teachers to know such students struggled if they did not make their needs known. Also of concern is that LWB students felt unsupported and isolated as learners because they believed that their teachers ignored them. LWB students felt too insecure to ask their peers for assistance because they were scared that they wouldn't understand their peers' explanations which could be embarrassing. Such feelings and insecurities might pile on each other to overwhelm students if they cannot seek help. This is an important attitudinal perspective that the case study school could well be unaware of, especially if it fosters agency and self-determination. My research adds new findings to the existing literature, illustrating students' various perspectives on essential behaviours for everyday academic resilience and connecting these to their learning wellbeing. These distinctive findings about students' perceived everyday academic resilience and their learning wellbeing provide a new contribution to the literature.

Previous research demonstrates a link between students' school satisfaction and their learning wellbeing (Katja et al., 2002; Løhre et al., 2010; Zullig et al., 2011). My study contributes findings about students' satisfaction with their learning experiences and their learning wellbeing and how it connects with motivation. Variations are demonstrated through the use of portraiture. HWB students were very satisfied with their learning experiences and thrived on making learning choices. HWB students also used the flexibility to move in the open plan environment to their advantage, for instance for peer collaboration. HWB students also managed any distractions well. MWB students displayed a lower level of satisfaction with their learning experiences and they felt, at times, indifferent about their learning. MWB students used the flexibility of the open plan learning environment to avoid learning situations that they didn't enjoy by physically moving away. MWB students sometimes felt distracted by the noise and

visibility of the open plan learning areas even when they tried to focus on their learning. LWB students displayed very low levels of satisfaction with their learning. LWB students often felt frustrated with their learning, perceiving only few opportunities for learning choices. LWB students also tended to feel overwhelmed with their learning experiences and they struggled to focus in the open plan environment due to noise and distractions. These insights and distinctions in relation to students' perceived satisfaction with their learning experiences in the study ILE is a new contribution to the literature.

Previous research indicates that open plan learning spaces make it easier for personalised, and agentic approaches to occur (Benade, 2017a; Dovey & Fisher, 2014; Prain et al., 2015b; Wright et al., 2021). The learning wellbeing portraits add to these findings. They highlight the differences in students' self-reported agency and skills to self-regulate their learning and to make positive learning choices, and indicate the value of explicitly teaching about them and celebrating with the badges to demonstrate students' dispositional achievements. As a set the three LWB portraits reiterate the importance of explicitly teaching students how to self-regulate their learning and how to make positive choices for their learning to foster learning wellbeing. My findings also indicate that teaching self-regulated learning and decision-making skills lifts all students' learning wellbeing. Findings also make clear that HWB students are more likely to transfer these skills with more ease than MWB and LWB students. Perhaps this indicates a need to focus on MWB and LWB students' behaviours as learners to encourage more satisfaction with their learning relationships and achievement.

6.3 The impact of a COVID-19 lockdown

Participant students were impacted by COVID and the national lockdown that accompanied it. Up until the Covid lockdown they had spent the first seven weeks of the school year together in class with their peers and teacher, following the timetable and school routines. There was a strong emphasis on the use of online learning and using digital devices. From the start of their intermediate school career, these students were exposed to a range of digital media and ways to learn from them and connect with each other .Other research studies have examined the impact of the lockdown on students' learning. For example, Yates et al. (2021) note, with the Covid lockdown, students had to cope with a loss of routine, physical isolation from their peers and being

confined to their home environment, possibly with stressed family members. The first set of interviews for my study occurred at the very beginning of the pandemic, which Merryl et al. (2020) suggest was characterised by a high level of uncertainty about the future. Flack et al. (2020) claim that these changes significantly challenged many students' learning wellbeing. Case study participants were no exception.

In terms of their home learning, the Yr9 and 10 participants appreciated having choices about when and how much time to devote to certain learning activities. This is consistent with Yates et al.'s (2021) findings. Additionally, some students stated that they learnt more during lockdown, attributing this to their time management, fewer distractions, fewer time constraints and less teacher talk in class. Yates et al. (2021) also found the same, noting that those students who devoted less time to schoolwork, unsurprisingly felt that they learnt less than at school. In my study, only one student admitted that he had procrastinated during lockdown. However, other students referred to their peers not managing their learning well. Perhaps this connects with Yates et al.'s (2021) view that some students lack the skills and/ or motivation to manage their learning at home. What is unknown was their prior learning wellbeing status (high, medium, low). Yates et al. (2021) suggest that possible distractions, family obligations, lack of routines, extrinsic consequences, or an inability to access teacher help may have had a negative impact on students' home learning. Overall, my Yr9 and 10 participants displayed a high level of self-regulation when learning from home. These students referred, albeit implicitly, to the dispositions incorporated in the CLOAK values such as everyday academic resilience and agency as guiding their learning at home. Perhaps having an existing high level of agency in their personalised learning trajectories prior to lockdown assisted these students in managing their learning from home during the lockdown. This may point to highly effective teacher practices in these students' schooling prior to lockdown, and/ or existing student dispositional behaviours.

Flack et al. (2021) claimed that many educators were concerned about students' lack of connection with their peers and teachers during lockdown home learning. However, participant students in my research did not mention any feelings of isolation. Instead, they stated that social media allowed them to stay connected to their peers. My findings reflect those by Yates et al. (2021) who reported that teachers and students used social media and other familiar messaging and videoing platforms to help students collaborate on their learning tasks when learning from home. While it may be that participant students felt connected through social media, it is also

possible that those students who felt isolated did not want to speak up during focus group interviews.

Despite the major disruption to their learning routines that lockdowns created, the majority of my participant Yr9 and 10 students indicated that they had adapted well to the challenges and, managed their learning well while maintaining positive attitudes about their learning. Yr9 and 10 students stressed the importance of being agentic learners in order to overcome challenges when learning from home. This finding suggests that these students incorporated the CLOAK values in their lockdown home learning situation, suggesting too, that the dispositional CLOAK values can connect to learners beyond school and be useful in times of unexpected stress and change.

6.4 Limitations of my study

Discussion of my findings and their contribution in relation to the existing literature has highlighted significant insights that have emerged from this research inquiry. Inevitably, there are also limitations to its significance. I undertook a single-case study, focusing on four focus groups of four to seven students from one Hapu (large grouping) within an ILE school. My research context, therefore, is small scale and the findings are of most interest to the school itself. However, since I have provided rich representations from multiple data sources, findings may resonate with or transfer to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Yin, 2014). I used participant-driven photo-elicitation at the beginning of my data collection to reduce possible barriers between me as a researcher and former teacher and my participants. I anticipated that this would lead to open and in-depth discussions about students' learning wellbeing. Asking students to take their own photographs was consistent with the school's focus on developing agency and ownership. These student-taken photos of their perceived learning wellbeing were the prompts that assisted them to articulate and elaborate on the complex idea of learning wellbeing during interviews. These photos reduced any reluctance for students to talk during focus group interviews, making the process pleasant and relaxed.

Portraiture illustrated the nuances in students' perspectives about their learning wellbeing. It allowed me to synthesise the salient characteristics that students with high, medium and low learning wellbeing display.

The 2020 Covid lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand meant a significant shift in students' learning experience, as they needed to get used to learning from home. This was not the focus of my study, but necessitated changes to my data gathering. I decided to gather students' perspectives of their learning wellbeing during the lockdown *only* from the Yr9 and 10 students, for two reasons. First, given the time frame for the research and the fact that the Yr9 and 10 students had tended to be eloquent in interviews, this presented a feasible approach that I anticipated would not place too much pressure on participants. In my judgment, these students enjoyed the post Covid lockdown interview process. Second, I considered they had sufficient experience in the ILE to compare and contrast their home learning situation with their learning experiences at school. Omitting the years 7-8 group post lockdown may be seen as a limitation.

Finally, I acknowledge my subjectivity as a researcher has shaped my noticing during data collection and analysis. I am an insider researcher since I worked at the study ILE up until the beginning of my data collection. To address possible bias associated with this, I used the strategies of researcher reflexivity, participant checking and cross-checking. These strategies are often used to enhance trustworthiness and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

6.5 Implications

This section discusses implications arising from this study for the study school, educators (such as principals, teachers), providers of professional development and policy makers, as well as for architects.

For the study school an implication emerging from my findings is that they would be advised to continue their approach to students' learning wellbeing. They could usefully pay close attention to variations in students' abilities to make decisions for their learning as well as students' perspectives on their level of autonomy and learning wellbeing. I anticipate that the three portraits of students' learning wellbeing will be of particular value in this, assisting teachers to recognise the range in student approaches to their learning. Moreover, the study school could consider approaches assisting students to take their learning wellbeing skills outside of school life. Senior school leaders and teachers would be advised to seek out student voice to inform and refine their school wide approach to personalised learning. The school may want to take into consideration that changes in class make-up halfway through the year can impact on interactions between

students and teachers and amongst students. In terms of open plan learning spaces, my findings imply that students also need quiet places with a low level of visual and sound distraction, if they are to be able to consolidate and to expand their learning wellbeing. Policy makers may want to consider the development of policies for this to happen.

The portraits could be used to raise teachers' awareness of variation in students' learning wellbeing. Teachers at the study school as well as in other ILEs may benefit from this nuanced illustration of students' perspectives. In conjunction with this, schools could be assisted to develop systems that may enable students to move developmentally from LWB to MWB to HWB.

One recommendation is that since learning wellbeing is intimately connected with students' learning satisfaction, other schools may find it valuable to investigate what their own learning wellbeing framework might look like and how it might become embedded in the fabric of the school. A number of schools already have success with such a system, and so other students in other schools could benefit if implemented locally.

Policy makers and architects may want to consider students' needs for a quiet and low level of visual and sound distraction. It may be beneficial for architects and educators to engage in an open dialogue so that architects can deepen their understanding of pedagogical practices taking place in ILEs and how spatial arrangements can support these practices.

6.6 Future research

This section outlines further areas for research which emerged from my study. The portraits I developed point to a need for deeper understanding of the complexity and nuances in students' learning wellbeing in ILEs. I investigated students' learning wellbeing in one ILE context and it would be useful to research students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in other ILE contexts. A particular research focus would be on the structures shaping students' perceived learning wellbeing, such as school wide approaches to learning wellbeing. Given that ILEs' learning spaces vary across New Zealand, it would be also interesting to further investigate the link between students' perceived learning wellbeing in a range of schools- perhaps including traditionally designed schools. Extending the research to multiple ILEs would also involve more participants which would assist in gaining further insight into students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing in various kinds of schools across New Zealand.

Further research into factors and practices enhancing students' ability to transfer these skills into different learning and possibly life contexts would be useful. My research showed that some students applied self-regulation skills with more ease than others to various personalised learning contexts. My study also provided an insight into students' perspectives on their learning wellbeing over the course of a school year. It would be interesting to research how the learning wellbeing framework affects students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing over the course of their school life and beyond the school years. In addition, future research could address how other ILE schools have implemented different kinds of approaches to address students' learning wellbeing. Another consideration that would be worth exploring would be the role of the home in relation to students' learning wellbeing in an ILE. Fostering students' ability to learn successfully in ILEs is also in line with the MOE's intent to better address the kinds of learning needed for this century (Ministry of Education, 2011).

6.7 Conclusion

My research set out to investigate which features of an ILE impacted on students' learning wellbeing and synthesise the features that characterise students' learning wellbeing in an ILE school. Of particular interest was how students perceive their learning experiences and which ILE features shaped their learning wellbeing. Through student photo-elicitation and focus groups and teacher interviews my research demonstrated that students' learning wellbeing is positively impacted by a learning wellbeing framework. This framework in the study ILE consisted of an explicit curriculum fostering students' everyday academic resilience, agency and self-regulated learning skills in combination with personalised mentoring and a recognition programme assessing and celebrating students' development of these skills. The three aspects of the learning wellbeing framework acted together and provided safety, stability, personal connection and guidelines for students to develop capacities to make positive learning choices. Moreover, findings revealed how personalised learning structures impact students' learning wellbeing and pointed out that students need the aforementioned skills in order to take advantage of the personalised learning structures such as those in the study ILE. Personalised learning trajectories afforded students with agency and the ability to exercise learning choices. Students were able to choose where and with whom to sit in the open plan learning space, how to use their digital devices and which of their teachers to

approach for help. The learning wellbeing framework assisted students to develop capacities to make positive learning choices and the personalised learning trajectories provides a system whereby students could use these capacities. In this way, the two aspects, the learning wellbeing framework and the personalised learning trajectories together, shaped students' learning wellbeing. The three portraits of HWB, MWB and LWB students illustrate the distinction between students' perceived learning wellbeing and how this is shaped by the learning wellbeing framework and the ILE. Moreover, the three portraits demonstrate that students' learning wellbeing, as indicated by their relationships, everyday academic resilience and satisfaction with learning experiences is linked to their agency and their ability to self-regulate their learning in the study ILE. This nuanced and detailed illustration of students' various perspectives on their learning wellbeing and how this is shaped by the ILE features is the major contribution of my research. HWB students thrived in making positive decisions for themselves. However, for MWB students making these choices sometimes proved difficult and LWB struggled with making these decisions. My three portraits of students' learning wellbeing point to a need to better understand the complexities and nuances in students' learning wellbeing in ILEs. Moreover, the portraits stress the importance of fostering students' self-regulation skills so that students are able to make good learning choices in the ILE. This said, some of the specific features of the study ILE such as continual changes in class make-up and teachers as well as the lack of breakout spaces in the open plan learning environment presented a challenge to students' learning wellbeing regardless of their level of learning wellbeing, suggesting that these aspects require careful consideration. The insights that students have provided about the learning they experience in an ILE, albeit *one* ILE, should provide useful information for educators to evaluate current teaching practices in ILEs schools. Students, whānau, the wider community and the government have identified wellbeing as a matter of priority for learners in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2019c). My research demonstrated that the learning wellbeing framework impacted how students felt about themselves as learners which is of significance for the students, the study school and other schools. My research contributes to an emerging field of research regarding students' learning wellbeing in ILEs. The contribution is significant since ILEs are becoming a more common part of the New Zealand education system and need to draw on evidence-based research in order to optimise their benefits for learners.

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Appendices

Appendix A Table of quotes illustrating students' perceptions of their learning wellbeing

Indicator: Relationships with Learning Advisors and level of support			
Themes	HWB	MWB	LWB
Depth of relationship	I feel that Learning Advisors are like parents because they get you in line, but they're still there to help you and support you. (Alice, Yr9)	Learning Advisors are [like] the parents. They always tell you what to do." (Noah, Yr9) Sometimes over the years I feel like it's the longer time I've had my Advisor, the more they dislike me. Sometimes your Advisor is annoyed at you because they know you. And then they're like "Oh no, this	No comments made on relationship with Learning Advisor

		person - not them again. (Isabelle,Yr10)	
Quality and depth of personalised support from Learning Advisor	My Advisor helps me a lot with my work. They can help you with your workload and help you manage that and also personal issues. It just makes me feel good. Like if you've got problems with your friends, they help you with that as well. (Alice, Yr9)	You could call the Advisors the middleman. So you've got the teachers giving the workload and then you've got the Advisor in the middle to help you sort everything out."(Noah, Yr9)	
	My Advisor supports and encourages me. He pushes me to work harder and do what's best for me. Like at the end of last year he encouraged me to go for Hapu Leader, Manukura. (Phoebe, Yr10)	To be honest, I don't think the Learning Advisors actually help that much. So for mine, sometimes when I'm stressed and stuff, she'll go "Maybe go talk to someone about it." They really just take your roll in the mornings and they're just	

		someone you can talk to easily. (Isabelle,Yr10)	
Fostering independence and decision making skills	They're not just there to tell you "Oh, do this, do that". They tell you some things but then you need to work it out or figure it out yourself or they're like "If you have any other questions you can ask me. (Zara, Yr9)		
Indicator: Relationships with Module and Tautoro Module teachers and level of support			
Themes	HWB	MWB	LWB
Depth of relationship	Module teachers are still part of your family but they're not as close as your Hapu. Maybe like your cousins and grandparents. (Alice, Yr9)		

Availability of Module and Tautoro teachers' support	If you need help you can just send an email or you try and go ask. If you can't go ask, then send an email. (Jacob, Yr7)	Well sometimes when you go to the teacher and ask them "Can you help me?" then they're like, "Yes, sure I'll be a minute". But then they go to someone else and they don't go to you when you asked. They just go to someone else and that gets me really frustrated. (Poppy, Yr7)	I'm really mad at my Maths teacher because we had a learning assistant who comes in and helps us and the teacher said that we were relying on the assistant and you don't need that help, but sometimes we do. And then when we don't get our work done, the teacher is like, "You should have this done". But I said I needed help. And then the teacher said, "No, you don't". And then the assistant doesn't come in every day now and she goes around the whole class and she doesn't help you as much as she did at the start of the year. Some of the teachers help you when you're stuck but most of the teachers don't really.

			... They ignore you. (Scarlett, Yr9)
Quality and depth of personalised support from Learning Advisor	I had an English and Social Science class and I'm definitely not the strongest in English. And so I was learning all this new information in Social Science but then having to write about it and bringing the English aspect into it was really hard for me, especially because I wasn't close with my English teacher. I suppose you could put it like that. I worked more with my Social Science teacher. I really had to put my pride to the side and I spent quite a lot of time next to my English teacher asking for	I kind of do go under the radar. I just do my work and don't really talk to the teacher. When asked if this bothered her, Lucy replied: Sometimes because other students get talked to sometimes and I don't. But I don't really mind. (Lucy,Yr10) Every teacher definitely got their favourites, but it depends on the teacher. Personally, say, if you know the teacher well, then they'll probably notice you more. Say you're just the quiet	Sometimes the teachers can get annoying. They growl at you and they sort of get upset at you and then I get upset because they shout halfway through the class like "You better be doing your work". And any time we're having fun, that's when we're getting growled, like a little giggle and then they separate us. (Luna, Yr7)

	help. I was really driven to get it done and I'd rather ask for help and have to go and sit next to a teacher for a lot of the class and feel like I was failing. So that was that kind of drive to get it all done. And being able to say "I got it done". (Mia, Yr10)	kid in class, you don't talk to anyone, then most likely they're not going to talk to you. So it depends on your relationship with them. Some teachers don't tend to build relationships with the students and they tend to have just favorites and talk to them all the time which also doesn't help everyone else because they're kind of like, "Oh I need help but I'm afraid to ask. (Isabelle, Yr10) I used to try to go under the radar because I was afraid of the teachers and I was afraid of people in general. So I tried to make sure that they don't know me. But that's changed because I've become better with the	

		teachers and got more confidence to talk to them. Probably because I'm noticing that if I had their assistance with stuff that I get stuck on, it'll be easier to get high grades. I've learnt this by failing because I felt embarrassed and I didn't ask the teacher about this one Maths equation because I didn't understand it. And I kind of failed that thing." (Isabelle, Yr10)	
Indicator: Relationships with peers and peer support			
Themes	HWB	MWB	LWB
Quality of peer relationships	I'd say friends in Learning Advisory are important	You can get judged by other students in Modules. But they don't judge you as much in your	Sometimes I do feel embarrassed when we're in a group and you get it wrong and some people laugh

	because they motivate you and help you. (Rob, Yr10)	own Advisory. They're nicer than the people in your Modules because you know them better. (Poppy, Yr7)	at you. Like any time if you get something wrong and kids laugh and say you should know that because you're at this age. Sometimes, the teachers will pick you out and you have no idea what it is and then they're like "you should know this" and it gets stressful. (Scarlett, Yr7)
Peer support	Friends are important because they help you when you get stuck and you don't really know what to do. They help guide you into the right direction and kind of take care of your well-being as well as you. Friends are like little teachers. And they're there to help you, as I said before,	Being with friends helps you learn cause sometimes there's people that talk a lot. You can't really focus and then your friends, they just stay quiet. (Poppy, Yr7)	Most of my friends are usually working, so I don't want to distract them while they're working. So I just basically leave them. I don't mostly get it when I ask my friends. They can't really do anything about it but they try to help me. Or most of my friends just ignore me. (Luna, Yr7)

	they're part of wellbeing. (Evie, Yr8) They put me in high groups for algebra even though I'm kind of average. So I had to learn from the other kids, what they were doing. It was kind of cool learning from the others because they can tell you to tell you their strategies of doing algebra. And sometimes there are several ways of solving a problem and my friends just show me their ways of solving it. My friends, they could see that I was a bit lost. They asked me "Are you alright?". (Alice, Yr9)	There's always the one person in your group of friends that you think is pretty annoying. And then there are the people in your group of friends that you can sit with and you're not constantly talking and they'll help you. (Hunter, Yr8) If you need to get your work done, the conversation with your mates normally goes like this: 'I'm going to move away to get work done' and then your mate says 'Ah, you dawk'. But if you move away depends how important the work is. Sometimes it's like "I'll do it	

		later." Or if we can do it at home. It's like "I'll do it then." (Hunter, Yr8)	
Indicator: Everyday academic resilience, displayed through adaptive behaviours such as (i) Reaching out to others for support or encouragement (ii) Reflecting on strengths and weaknesses (iii) Devising new strategies and altering approaches to study (iv) Increasing effort			
Themes	HWB	MWB	LWB
Reaching out to others for support or encouragement	Having the multiple teachers kind of helps because you can choose a teacher that you're more comfortable with and they can help you talk to other teachers. So you can talk to one of your Module teachers and then you and your Module teacher go and talk to the other	Occasionally I ask teachers for help. It depends on the teacher so if the teacher is scary we won't ask for help because we're frightened to. But if they're nice and we know them and we've got a relationship with them then we'll probably go. It helps building relationships with them when you're just able to	I feel challenged - especially in RLEs because nobody can help you. And also on your exams at the beginning of the term. That's really hard because the teachers can't help and there's a certain time and normally I don't get the exams finished because it's so fast. (Scarlett, Yr7)

	Module teacher about the problem. (Mia, Yr10)	talk to them and to know the teacher well, by having them in past classes. (Isabelle, Yr10)	When you stress too much - Then you have a mental meltdown at home. And then the teachers are like saying "you can do so much better than this". And you're like "I can't do any more". (Scarlett, Yr7) It's hard when you say, "you can't do it", and teachers are like "you can - just keep going" and then they walk away if you need help. They just ignore you. Like I sit there in class most of the time wondering when this teacher is going to come by. I get pretty mad because I just find it annoying when teachers just give you what you don't understand, thinking that you do understand it or they just keep adding up the

			work and then it gets challenging for me. But the teachers say “challenge yourself” because they think you can do it. (Luna, 7Yr)
Reflecting on strengths and weakness	It probably helps to identify your weakness so that when you realise that "Actually I'm not good at Maths". Even though you don't like Maths, that is something you have (emphasis) to work on and you're doing it to get yourself better at it. So you’re trying hard because you know that if you want to get better and if you want to work hard, then you're going to have (emphasis) to push through	You know that you’re good at something because you're in different groups for different things, so teachers give you levels, so your level might be really strong and then your level might be not so strong. (Hunter,Yr8)	

	the challenge and just do it. (Phoebe, Yr10)		
Devising new strategies and altering approaches to study	In Adobe, if I don't know how to do something I just go to YouTube or I look at tutorials and I try to figure it out myself. I think trying new strategies is more about working towards finding that solution and figuring out how to do that. (Liam, Yr9)		
Increasing effort	When I challenge myself I feel pretty proud because I know I'm going an extra mile to try to learn something or do better. So I feel that I can decide to do it and I think I can find ways to work through challenges. (Emma, Yr8)	Last year I had this 'round the bridges' class which is a twelve km run. I did do it in the end but I regretted choosing that class because I put it second, thinking I wasn't gonna get it. And then I got it and then my parents forced me to do the running	

	In class I had to do realistic drawings of people's faces. And I could never draw people's faces. And then I managed to draw it symmetrical and then I was pretty proud of myself. I stuck to it because my teachers gave me encouragement. He said, "Just give it a try and then see how it goes." And then I said, "okay". And that's where challenging your mindset comes in. I did my best, I think. And then when you try your hardest, it ends up being pretty good. I wanted to try my hardest because it was something I wasn't good at. I wanted to be good at it	aspect of it and I told them "Oh it's optional so it's okay". And they were like "No, do it". So the teachers made us train like lots of 8kms and 5kms every lesson and I really hated it and I was like, "I'm not gonna do the run, I'm not gonna do the run". And then I did it and I was really proud. I felt relieved, because I did it with my mum and I beat her and we made it there and I got some money out of it. But in the end I actually wanted to do it. When I got to the place and they were putting numbers on us, I was like "Too late, I'll do it". What kept me going was that I started to enjoy the training after the first couple of days you got used to it. And I	

	because I'm bad at it. Seeing that other people were able to do it as well, but I couldn't. And it was like, "Well, if they can do it, I'm sure I can do it as well." That changed my mindset and made me want to be good at it. (Arlo, Yr8) In English, sometimes I find punctuation hard. I handed in my RLE and then I got some feedback after I received my grade to work on my punctuation. When I first got the feedback I think I was a bit nervous because I knew I really wanted to do well. But I found that fine cause I needed to work on it and the feedback just gave me something to	wouldn't hyperventilate as I did the last time. Some people were slower than me, but most of the class was way faster. And I'm more a paced person. So I was like, "I don't want to do it. I'm gonna embarrass myself". But then I actually got like, not with the fast people but just behind them. That pushed me to do it." (Lucy, Yr10)	

	work on which made me feel less nervous because I actually knew what I had to work on. And the teacher has given us things that we can do to work on it. So I felt okay. The feedback made me want to challenge myself to do better and I did more practice. (Emma, Yr8)		
Indicator: Students' satisfaction with learning experiences			
Themes	HWB	MWB	LWB
Level of motivation	I have an English and Art class that's really fun because we learn different art techniques that we can explore and then we also do English and we're doing film studies and it's like a beast class, so it's like Harry	My favourite RLE - mainly because I got a day off school to do - was when we had to do some community stuff. So basically we had no clue what to do. And what I decided to do with two of my friends, we did	

	Potter's "Fantastic Beasts". We create our own beast and we have to write about it like it was (emphasis) in the book. (...) Creating the beast was really fun and writing about it, cause you could use descriptive language (...) and we used different mediums. You can do 3D models like clay or you could paint it. You could also choose up to five different animals to mix your beast with. (...) I quite liked the English side of it cause it was just fun to come up with your own ways to write it descriptively and you use different language features. (Zara, Yr9)	baking over at my house and then we took it over to the Salvation Army. Unknowingly, it was volunteers week. So we got lucky on that one. That would have been for social science and Maths. (Noah, Yr9) In science we're doing moons so we got this worksheet. But the thing that got me going to do the worksheet was we got Oreos and then we got to eat them. It helps when teachers say "If you do it, you get a reward" like lolly or something like that. It helps me want to do it and then I just focus for a really long time. The thing is, sometimes you don't actually get the treat. Then I feel like I worked for just for nothing. (Poppy, Yr7)	

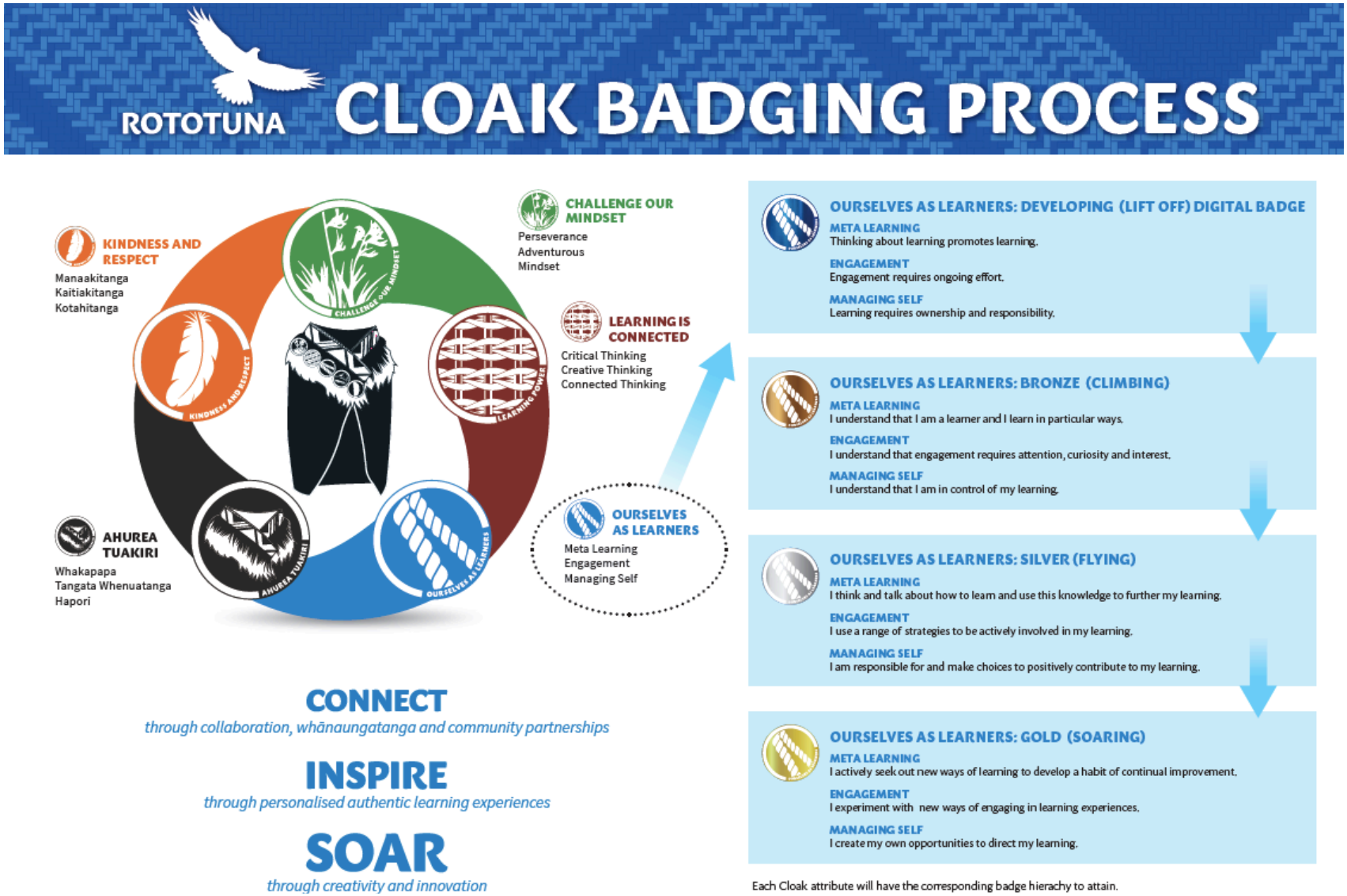
Appraisal of personalised learning experiences	I had my art and technology Module and we got given an overall brief and so our projects are basically all about the future. And then from there it was kind of free range. So I quite liked the fact that everyone's putting their own spin on the brief. So some people are doing fabric and fashion whereas others are doing 3D intellectual drawings. So I can just pursue what I (emphasise) want to do. There's no limits. I just think having that free range and doing something you're passionate about is really cool. (Mia, Yr10)		I like how at other schools, they have work and then there is "may do's" and you can do anything you want, you can do art, you can do science, you can choose. (Luna, Yr7) I think we should have free time on a Friday. And then the teachers get mad because they say, we have all this ILT time. And that's when you have time to finish our work. But sometimes I don't understand the work (...) and then it's frustrating. (Scarlett, Yr7)

Learning related emotions	The way you feel about your learning depends on what context because all the classes are kind of different and they have different challenges and it depends on you personally. If you're not very confident in one subject, then that can be worrying until you get it right. But then the other classes that you're fine at, that's fine. For example, I really like English and I do in my spare time as well. I write books on my laptop. So I'm proud of myself for that. I'm passionate about creative writing. I just like the imagination and being able to put it down in some form. In class, we usually do at least a piece of writing over a few	I feel bored. I just get bored easily. I'm not the type of person that likes long lectures. If the teachers explain something, then I'll just be at the back. And if it takes too long, then I'll be zoned out. (Noah,Yr9)	I don't feel happy normally cause I don't want to do the work. I wish the teachers could make it fun but learn at the same time because it's not really fun. It's just normal work but they could add a fun thing to it because I remember at the end of the term we usually do a fun thing. (Scarlett, Yr7)

	days. When I got my teacher's feedback for our RLE I was proud of that. My teacher said that my vocabulary was pretty good. I used most of the language features that we were supposed to do. And I was proud of that. I'm happy about my learning when we get an RLE and think this is challenging, but it's not super duper hard and it's not *really* easy. So you think "Yes, I know this. I can do it." And then after that it's also quite relieving. And also when you're happy about the things you're learning about and just overall excited about your learning because it's kind of		

	hard to be passionate about learning and try your best if you don't like what you're learning about. (Evie, Yr8)		

Appendix B The CLOAK badging process



OURSELVES AS LEARNERS: DEVELOPING (LIFT OFF) DIGITAL BADGE

META LEARNING
Thinking about learning promotes learning.

ENGAGEMENT
Engagement requires ongoing effort.

MANAGING SELF
Learning requires ownership and responsibility.

OURSELVES AS LEARNERS: BRONZE (CLIMBING)

META LEARNING
I understand that I am a learner and I learn in particular ways.

ENGAGEMENT
I understand that engagement requires attention, curiosity and interest.

MANAGING SELF
I understand that I am in control of my learning.

OURSELVES AS LEARNERS: SILVER (FLYING)

META LEARNING
I think and talk about how to learn and use this knowledge to further my learning.

ENGAGEMENT
I use a range of strategies to be actively involved in my learning.

MANAGING SELF
I am responsible for and make choices to positively contribute to my learning.

OURSELVES AS LEARNERS: GOLD (SOARING)

META LEARNING
I actively seek out new ways of learning to develop a habit of continual improvement.

ENGAGEMENT
I experiment with new ways of engaging in learning experiences.

MANAGING SELF
I create my own opportunities to direct my learning.

Each Cloak attribute will have the corresponding badge hierachy to attain.

Appendix C The CLOAK

Appendix D Information letter: Principal

Student Learning Wellbeing in an Innovative Learning Environment

Dear_____,

As a staff member on maternity leave undertaking doctoral research, I would like permission to involve the school as a case study for my research. I am investigating ideas of wellbeing in terms of students' experiences with learning. I would like to find out what it means to be a confident learner at the school and how students perceive their own learning wellbeing at RJHS.

I would like your permission to interview members of the Senior Leadership Team and Hapu Leaders about student wellbeing. I will invite Senior Leadership Team members and teachers to be part of my study and interviews. I expect the interviews would take a maximum of 60 minutes and a further 10 minutes to review transcripts of interviews. Furthermore, I would like to investigate students' perspectives on wellbeing, with your and their parents' consent.

To initiate my research project, with your and Hapu Leaders' consent, I would like to carry out a wellbeing-related activity with one Hapu during Learning Advisory time. I will discuss the process with the Hapu Leader and teachers and seek their agreement. The activity would involve students taking photos depicting wellbeing as a learner. Photos may be analysed and used as prompts in follow-up interviews. Please be aware that students' faces may appear in photographs although I will ask students to avoid this. If it is possible I may want to include particular photographs where students' faces are visible in my thesis, academic journal articles and presentations I will seek parent and student permission to use these photographs, blurring faces if they request. I would also like to invite up to 32 students from the Hapu to group interviews and/or individual interviews. Group and individual interviews will be held three times throughout the year.

Students can choose to be involved in the following activities:

1. Photo activity: 60 minutes
2. Group interviews: 30-60 minutes x 3 times = 180 minutes maximum,

Checking summary of group interview: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

3. Individual interviews: approximately 20 minutes x 3 = 60 minutes maximum,

Reviewing transcripts of individual interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

This means that if students opt for the photo activity and group interviews this will take up to 4,5 hours in total. If they opt for the photo activity and individual interviews this will take up to 2,5 hours in total.

I hope that my research will contribute new knowledge about what wellbeing in learning means for students who are in an Innovative Learning Environment. I anticipate that my findings might help RJHS and other schools to better support students in their wellbeing as learners. The school will have access to a copy of my thesis. Upon completion of my thesis, I will consult you on how widely the summary of my findings may be disseminated. I am more than happy to present my findings to the Board of Trustees and staff members and publish a summary of findings with a link to my thesis in the school newsletter.

Participation will be voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw from the research if they wish to by telling me. No reasons will be required. I will not use the school's name or participants' names in any publications and I will keep all data confidential. I will be careful when including contextual information to reduce the chances the school might be identified but anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed.

Please fill in the google form if you and the Board of Trustees are happy for me to proceed with this project. I will ring you soon to answer any questions. If you consent I would also like to arrange a time to talk with you about how and when I might approach Hapu Leaders. Please feel free to contact my chief supervisor, Professor Bronwen Cowie (Email: _____; Phone: _____), if you have any further questions.

Kind regards,
Anke Richmond

Email: _____
Phone: _____

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on 4/12/19. Approval number: FEDU092/19.

Appendix E Information letter: Hapu Leader

Student Learning Wellbeing in an Innovative Learning Environment

Dear _____,

Want to help me with my research?
As a staff member on maternity leave undertaking research, I am investigating ideas of wellbeing in terms of students' experiences. I would like to find out what it means to be a confident learner at the school and how students perceive their own learning wellbeing at RJHS.

What will I do and how much time will it take?

1. I would like to interview you due to your role. I might ask you how you view students' wellbeing and about the factors that impact students' learning at RJHS. I expect the interview will take approximately 60 minutes. I will audio record the interviews. You will be able to review the transcript of your individual interviews, which will take about 10 minutes.
2. I would like to ask you for your support to work with students in your Hapu. This means that I would like you to pass on information to parents about this research project and I am asking you to give some Hapu Time for the following things:
    1. An activity where students take photos of wellbeing at school - during Learning Advisory. During this activity students will take photos which I may analyse and use as prompts in follow-up interviews. Students' faces may be included in some of the photos and so these students will be able to be identified. With parents' and students' permission, some of these photos may be published in my thesis, academic journal articles and presentations. I will blur students' faces if requested. The entire activity will take approximately 1 hour.
    2. Group interviews and individual interviews with students, three times during the year.

To recap, students can choose to be involved in the following activities:

1. Photo activity: 60 minutes
2. Group interviews: 30-60 minutes x 3 times = 180 minutes maximum,

Checking summary of group interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

3. Individual interviews: approximately 20 minutes x 3 = 60 minutes maximum,

Reviewing transcripts of individual interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

This means that if students opt for the photo activity and group interviews this will take up to 4,5 hours in total. If they opt for the photo activity and individual interviews this will take up to 2,5 hours in total.

What will other people know about the research?

I will keep your comments confidential and will not use your name or the name of the school in any publications or my thesis. I will keep all data from your interview in a password secured folder which only my supervisors and I will have access to.

Changed your mind?

1. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the research. You don't need to give any reasons why you don't want to participate any more but it would be courteous to tell me that you don't want to be part of the research any more. You can withdraw any comments you made during individual interviews up until the time that I give you a transcripts of the interview.
2. Your participation is completely voluntary and you don't need to answer any questions I ask during interviews.

What if an issue or conflict occurs?

First, please raise any issues or concerns with me so we can find a solution together. If this isn't possible, I will seek advice from Bronwen Cowie as my chief supervisor. If you feel unable to raise an issue with me first, you can email Bronwen Cowie yourself (Email: _____, Phone: _____).

What now?

If I have covered everything you would like to know, please fill in the google form to let me know if you are happy to participate in the research. If not, please email me (_____) or phone (_____) so I can address your questions.

Kind regards,

Anke Richmond

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on 4/12/19. Approval number: FEDU092/19.

Appendix F Information letter: Teachers

Dear_____,

I would like to ask for your support with my research. As a staff member on maternity leave undertaking doctoral research, I am investigating ideas of wellbeing in terms of students' experiences of learning in an Innovative Learning Environment. I would like to find out what it means to be a confident learner and how students perceive their own learning wellbeing at RJHS as a specifically designed Innovative Learning Environment.

What will you need to do and how much time will it take?
I would like to interview you about your views of student wellbeing as learners in an Innovative Learning Environment. I might ask you how you view students' wellbeing and about the factors that impact students' learning at RJHS. I expect the interview will take approximately 30 minutes. With permission, I will audio record the interviews. You will be able to review the transcript of your individual interview, which will take about 10 minutes.

What will other people know about the research?
I will keep your comments confidential and will not use your name or the name of the school in any publications or my thesis. I will keep all data from your interview in a password secured folder which only my supervisors and I will have access to.

What if you change your mind?

1. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the research. You don't need to give any reasons why you don't want to participate any more but it would be courteous to tell me that you don't want to be part of the research any more. You can withdraw any comments you made during individual interviews up until the time that I give you a transcript of the interview.
2. Your participation is completely voluntary and you don't need to answer any questions I ask during interviews.

What if an issue or conflict occurs?

First, please raise any issues or concerns with me so we can find a solution together. If this isn't possible, I will seek advice from Bronwen Cowie as my chief supervisor. If you feel unable to raise an issue with me first, you can email Bronwen Cowie Yourself (Email: _____; Phone: _____).

What now?

If I have covered everything you would like to know, please fill in the google form to let me know if you are happy to participate in the research. If not, please email me (_____) or phone (_____) so I can address your questions.

Kind regards,

Anke Richmond

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on 4/12/19. Approval number: FEDU092/19.

Appendix G Information letter: Parents and caregivers

Student Learning Wellbeing in an Innovative Learning Environment

Dear caregivers,

Re: Wellbeing research project

What is it?

I am Anke Richmond. I am undertaking research and I want to know more about what students think about their wellbeing as learners at RJHS. I will write a thesis, and possibly journal articles or do presentations about what I learn from my study. The school will receive a summary of findings which it may share with its community. Please email me (ar209@students.waikato.ac.nz) if you would like me to send you a summary of findings.

Why do I need to know?

You need to understand how I wish to work with your child during the research. Your child, if you give consent, will be engaged in:

Photo activity

I will work with students and teachers during Learning Advisory Time. For my research students will be invited to take photos about what wellbeing for learning means to them at RJHS. Students will share their photos with me and also share and discuss their photos in small groups as part of this activity. This whole exercise will take up to an hour. I may also analyse photos and select a few photos to be shared as prompts during later interviews.

I will ask the students to be careful not to take pictures of other people if they haven't asked them first. Students' faces may be included in some of the photos and so these students will be able to be identified. If I anticipate I might use a photograph where your child might be identified in my thesis, academic journal articles and presentations I will seek your and your child's' permission and blur your child's face if requested.

Interviews

I will invite your child to an interview about their views of wellbeing for learning. They can choose if they prefer to be part of a group interview or be interviewed by themselves. In the interviews we will discuss some of the photos from the photo activity. These interviews will take place three times during the year, spaced over several months. I will audio record the interviews. If your child chooses an individual interview (this will take about 15-20minutes), your child will be asked to approve, amend or alter the transcript as a check that the transcription reflects what was shared. If your child chooses a group interview, your child can review a summary of key points from that group interview. This interview will be about 30-60minutes long.

The photo activity and interviews will take the following times:

1. Photo activity: 60 minutes
2. Group interviews: 30-60 minutes x 3 times = 180 minutes maximum,

Checking summary of group interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

3. Individual interviews: approximately 20 minutes x 3 = 60 minutes maximum,

Reviewing transcripts of individual interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

This means that if your child opts for the photo activity and group interviews this will take up to 4,5 hours in total. If they opt for the photo activity and individual interviews this will take up to 2,5 hours in total.

How will you keep my child safe?

During the research phase, you child may agree to take part in the activities listed above. Please note that your child's face may appear in photographs that may later be used in the thesis, presentations or other publications. Both you and your child need to be comfortable with this possibility. I will blur your child's face in the photograph if requested. If I use something your child says during research, it will be anonymised. This means that your child's name will not be associated with it. However, if your child is part of a group interview, other people in the group will know what each student said, and so complete anonymity may not be possible to guarantee.

What if I change my mind, or my child wants to withdraw?

1. You can freely withdraw your consent, and so can your child. Please just let me know, so that I am aware of this. I will inform your child if I select a photograph your child took or if they appear in someone else's photograph as a prompt for later group and individual interviews. Your child does not have to agree to me using their photo and can decide to remove any of their photographs from the study up until I start follow up interviews in February 2020.
2. Your child does not have to answer any questions during either an individual or group interview. Your child can withdraw any comments from an individual interview transcript.

What if an issue comes up?

First, please let me know of any issues or concerns that come up so we can find a solution together. If this isn't possible, I will seek advice from Bronwen Cowie as my chief supervisor. If you feel unable to raise an issue with me first, you can email Bronwen yourself (Email: _____; Phone: _____).

What now?

If I have covered everything you would like to know, please fill in the google form to let me know if you are happy for your child to participate in the research.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me under:

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Kind regards,

Anke Richmond

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on 4/12/19. Approval number: FEDU092/19.

Appendix H Information letter: Students

Dear students,

Re: Wellbeing research project

What is it?

I am Anke Richmond. I am undertaking research and I want to know what you as a learner think about wellbeing at RJHS. I will write a thesis or maybe journal articles about the things I find out or I might do presentations. Please email me (_____) if you would like me to send you a summary of the findings.

Why do I need to know?

If you would like to, you can chose to be part of the following activities:

Photo activity

We will do an activity during Learning Advisory Time where you take photos. These photos will be about wellbeing at RJHS. You will need to be careful not to take pictures of other people if you haven't asked them first. I will ask you to email me your photos during Advisory Time and to share and discuss some of your photos in a small group. This whole activity will take up to an hour. Afterwards, I will analyse the photos and select a few of the photos emailed to me for use as prompts during later interviews.

Your face may be included in some of the photos. If it is possible I might select some of these photographs to be included in my thesis, academic journal articles and presentations. I will ask for your permission to be sure you are comfortable with this and I will blur your face in the photograph if you wish.

Interviews

I will invite you to an interview about your views of wellbeing for learning. You can choose to be part of a group or an individual interview, whichever you prefer. In the interviews we will discuss some photographs from the photo activity. These interviews will take place three times during the

year, spaced over several months. I will audio record the interviews. If you chose an individual interview (this will take about 15-20minutes), you will be asked to check if the transcript reflects what you shared with me. If you chose a group interview, you can check a summary of key points from that group interview. This interview will be about 30-60minutes long.

The photo activity and interviews will take the following times:

1. Photo activity: 60 minutes
2. Group interviews: 30-60 minutes x 3 times = 180 minutes maximum,

Checking summary of group interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

3. Individual interviews: approximately 20 minutes x 3 = 60 minutes maximum,

Reviewing transcripts of individual interviews: about 10mins x 3 times = 30 minutes maximum

This means that if you opt for the photo activity and group interviews this will take up to 4,5 hours in total. If you opt for the photo activity and individual interviews this will take up to 2,5 hours in total.

Will other people know what I said?

I will not use your name or the name of the school in any publications or my thesis so nobody knows what you said in interviews. However, if you are part of a group interview, other people in the group will know what you said. I will only publish photos you might be pictured in or a photo that you took yourself if you allow me to do this.

What if I changed my mind or I don't want to participate any more?

1. You can withdraw from the research at any time. Please just let me know, so that I am aware of this. I will let you know if I select a photo you took or if you appear in someone else's photo as a prompt for the group and individual interviews. You do not have to agree to letting me use your photo. You can also decide to remove any of your photos from the study up until I start group interviews in February 2020.
2. You do not have to answer any questions during either an individual or group interview. You can withdraw any comments from your individual interview transcript.

What if an issue comes up?

First, please let me know if any issues or concerns come up so we can find a solution together. If this isn't possible, I will seek advice from Bronwen Cowie as my chief supervisor. If you feel unable to raise an issue with me first, you can email Bronwen Cowie Yourself (Email: _____; Phone: _____).

What now?

If I have covered everything you want to know, fill in the google form to let me know if you want to participate in the research.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me under:

Email: _____

Phone: _____

This research has been approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on 4/12/19. Approval number: FEDU092/19.