Embracing Culture at Odyssey School

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Who we are – about Odyssey School

- Part of Odyssey Youth Services
- Our rangatahi – incredible young people
- Kaupapa Māori model
- Young adults – tuakana teina
What does CULTURE look like at Odyssey School?

Dual Aspects of Culture:

1. Co-creation of a school ‘culture’ to empower learners

2. Cultural connection/reconnection
What makes us different and why this works for our rangatahi

- Whanaungatanga - foundation
- Focus on strengths, passions and learning styles
- Co-create individual learning programme
- Adapt NZC to suit lived experience eg visual whakapapa & raps
- Café training programme
- Whānau feel, inclusive and loving
- Rangatahi “voice”

-> This is suited to how we best learn – not like mainstream school. Teachers focus on us individually rather than treating the whole class as just one because everybody is different.<<

Male, 17
Odyssey Pou

Tika
Pono
Aroha
Manaaki
Kaitiaki
Successes for rangatahi

- Restoration of diminished well-being
- Grow self belief as learner
- Different perception of school and learning
- Experience success – NCEA credits and more choice
- Able to reflect and identify own strength and resilience
- Future possibilities
- Empowerment

>> I thought I couldn’t read but now I know that I can.<<  
Male, 17 years

>> I like school now. It is my happy place.<<  
Male, 16 years

>> I feel like I have a second chance. I love learning now. <<  
Female, 16 years
Whakairo Rakau at Odyssey School

• Hands-on and physical – preferred learning style

• Learn about /connect to culture and whakapapa and ultimately themselves

• People, iwi, places, values and language

• Fun!
Visual Whakapapa

• English NCEA achievement standard
• Artistic talents – Tā moko
• Focus on tuakiri (identity), ahurei (uniqueness)
• Identify and explore connection to whenua and whānau
• Self expression is celebrated
• Life experience is valued
• Chance for 1-1 connecting
Examples of visual whakapapa
…has a tā moko stingray design because it represents my grandfather who I never met but who has inspired me my entire life. The designs down the centre of it show strength and courage. I am trying to have strength and courage so I can be a role model to my younger siblings. I am developing the confidence to have a better perspective for my future and leaving behind my past. …… I put on this quote to represent how I feel about the life I have lived and my past and I believe that making a change can impact on a better life for the future.
Examples of visual whakapapa
shows my two cultures. The top half being my Māori side and the bottom half being my Scottish side...the Ratana star and moon represents my Māori Faith.. a simple picture of New Zealand being my home and a little statement quoting “DON’T FORGET YOUR ROOTS” meaning never forget where you come from and be proud of that place you call home.... two quotes one in Te Reo and one in English. The quote in Te Reo is a verse out of the bible also The Creed of the Ratana Church and my quote in English is reminding myself that my good is better and my better is best, to be who I am and that those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.>>
Examples of visual whakapapa
…the dream catcher…I believe it is important to follow your dreams and my dream is to be a physiotherapist… tā moko design representing courage and strength…. shows my happy place, the sea. Inside the stingray is more tamoko design – showing my love of sport and also courage in battle. Right now I am battling my addiction for a healthy future.>>
Everything is linked by a chain that is also linked to my hand because my hands hold my life. I believe it is up to me to determine where I go and that is why it is linked with a chain. I see my life as a series of links on a chain and that it is important to keep the chain whole.
THIS IS WHAT I’VE DONE
I’LL TELL YOU WHERE I’M GOING …. 
Can’t even speak cause you’re cracked out
Front teeth smacked out
Yeah it’s that dirty South in your mouth
4 weeks in YJ
Then I cracked bail
Now I’m willing to learn
And make changes…….
Yeah I chose to act tuff
Always the one in hand cuffs
Can’t believe it’s taken me this long
To actually realise what I want

Out of this life that I live…….
But now I’m in rehab
And I’m showing them all
That I can do better
Than the year before,
Making some real money
Even cracked me a job,
I feel so fresh and clean
Without drugs and alcohol,
The younger ones look up to me ……
So I got to stand tall…….
Where would I be today if I wasn’t willing to make a change?
THIS IS WHAT I’VE DONE
LET ME TELL YOU WHERE I’M GOING DOWN THE RIGHT PATH CAUSE I’M OVER BEING STONEY
Rap writing

I cry at night hoping the pain goes away
I keep a smile on my face almost every day
It's been 8 full years I kept it bottled up inside
I didn’t tell no one because I wanted to die
I told myself that I’m strong see
What he did was wrong, touching up on me
Came into my room, crawled up on the bed
He was the monster in the dark

Had me wishing I was dead …..
Now I look at the world
From a different point of view
I am a victim of molest
And I still got through
So I kept it to myself
Cos it made me who I am now…

I’m better than ever
I got my whole life planned …..
I’m on my way to better days
I know about pain ………
A final word from our rangatahi….

<< I’ve achieved my seemingly unachievable goal of completing NCEA Level 2. I’ve really got into reading. I wasn’t into reading before I came. I’ve enjoyed school and have realized that I can enjoy learning, encouraging me to pursue further study. >> (and he did!)

<< I like how I have been cracking credits and I like bonding with my teachers. I am now more self-regulated and I now like reading and learning.>>

<< It is nice to have teachers who listen to me and try to understand how I am feeling.>>

<< I feel astonished with my progress… I have spiritual and cultural connections too. I am happy to be doing Kapahaka again. >>

<< I feel like I’ve achieved the most work I’ve ever done at school before. I thought I was dumb before. >>

<< When I was younger I used to go to school for the girls and the fights. But now I think it is sad when you lose knowledge like I have. I know now that school is valuable. It can get you a long way. >>
Celebration of Learning – learner as teacher
Thank you.

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