



MEDIA RELEASE - THE EDUCATION HUB

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TEACHERS WIN BRIGHT SPOTS AWARDS FOR INNOVATIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVES

A group of Taupo teachers developing a programme to encourage young Māori women to enrol in STEM subjects and a Christchurch primary school designing an oral language programme for new entrants are among the winners of The Education Hub's inaugural Bright Spots Awards, announced today.

The Education Hub today announced five Bright Spots Awards winners – recognising teachers and educators who are leading innovative solutions and approaches to address some of the challenges facing New Zealand schools. The winners receive funding and a two year professional development programme funded by NEXT Foundation. This will support teachers to develop the initiatives and, where appropriate, share them beyond the school.

The Education Hub Chair Maury Leyland says she was very impressed with the calibre of entries.

“We knew that there was a lot of teacher-led innovation happening in our schools, but since this is the first year of these awards we thought it would take a while to tap into. Instead, we have been really impressed at the quality of the projects and the range of issues addressed. With 52 worthy applications from across the country and a phenomenal shortlist of ten projects, it has been a challenge and an honour to select the recipients of these five awards. We are excited to be working with them over the next two years and supporting them to design, improve, implement and evaluate these promising practices.”

NEXT CEO Bill Kermode said NEXT was delighted to support the innovation in teaching practice being developed in New Zealand schools and it was a privilege to help the five winners.

“Bright Spots is supporting teachers to create new models, and then helping them build their evidence for impact. That grows one of our country's most valuable assets – the next generation of New Zealanders.”

The five winners are:

- ***Te Waka STEM Innovation Hub - Tauhara College, Taupo.*** Increasingly worried about the low participation in STEM subjects of Māori girls at their school, teachers Dan Piper, James Lamb and Kris Watson designed a pilot programme for Year 9 students to improve engagement and enrolment in STEM subjects. The students will participate in project based learning around important local community issues, and use social media tools to communicate their findings to community stakeholders.

- ***Oracy Framework - Burnside Primary School, Christchurch.*** Realising that up to 70% of the children starting at their school lacked the necessary language skills to be confident learners, teachers Trudi Browne and Nic Rickard and speech language therapist Sharne Quickenden developed specific tools for use in their classrooms to support their new entrant students to build their oral language skills. Their collaborative work has shown positive early results.
- ***It Worked! Enhancing Student Achievement through Teacher Inquiry and Collaborative Quantitative Analysis - Gisborne Boys' High School.*** Frustrated at the lack of data to determine if teachers' efforts to improve their practice were effective, science teacher Darcy Fawcett trialled and developed a reporting tool to gather better granularity of achievement trends and provide data to help teachers build better strategies for improving student outcomes.
- ***The Student at the Centre - Hutt Valley High School, Wellington.*** In response to growing concerns in the Maths Department that their current teaching methods were both boring advanced students and leaving others behind, maths teacher Bernie Wills proposed "flipping" the experience. He and other teachers recorded short teaching videos covering a range of curriculum topics. Using these videos as a teaching tool allows students to work at their own pace and teachers to devote classroom time to working directly with students. Early results have been very encouraging.
- ***Unlock Achievement - Mount Aspiring College, Wanaka.*** Conscious that the language of NCEA assessment was targeted at educators and somewhat impenetrable for students and their parents, the team at Mount Aspiring College, led by English teacher Chris Waugh, developed a micro-credentialing system for use in secondary school classrooms. These digital "badges" are designed to support assessment of students across a breadth of curriculum areas. Micro-credentialing allows students to direct their own learning and promotes greater whanau understanding of and involvement in assessment. The school has seen positive engagement from students introduced to the concept so far.

About The Education Hub

The Education Hub has a mission to bridge the gap between research and practice in education. We are building the online and offline infrastructure to support the sharing of research, effective teaching practice and innovation in education in order to improve opportunities and outcomes for New Zealand school students. Visit our website at www.theeducationhub.org.nz to find out more.

About NEXT Foundation

NEXT Foundation was launched four years ago and will invest \$100 million over the next 10 years to create a legacy of environmental and educational excellence for the benefit of future generations of New Zealanders. For more visit our website www.nextfoundation.org.nz



For further information contact:

Sarah Mayo

sarah@theeducationhub.org.nz

021 140 6409