



By

Māia Centre for Social
Justice & Education



 MĀIA

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATION
| U PŌA TAUMATA RAU | BRAVERY HAS MANY RESTING PLACES

About Brave Learning



We launched Brave Learning as a way to support young people whose experience of education is affected by their responsibilities outside of school - such as caring for their family, employment, or contributing to their community.

This was made more urgent by the impact of the Covid-19 Lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 which left a large number of parents and caregivers (especially in low-income, Māori and Pasifika communities) without employment. For many year 12 and 13 students this meant making the impossible choice between going to school or contributing more to their whānau.

But this isn't a new reality. Many young people from these communities have always had responsibilities and commitments that compete with school for their time and attention - we want to tautoko these young people for the bold, brave and honourable way in which they work to balance these commitments and responsibilities, which sometimes leads them to spend less time at school or withdraw completely.

In the spirit of our kaupapa, Māia aims to support all young people to continue working towards their learning goals in the ways that are best for them and alongside whatever commitments and responsibilities they have.

You can read the more detailed report about Brave Learning and the research on which it is based [here](#).

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More information



- Brave Learning is run by Māia Centre for Social Justice and Education, and you can learn more about this organisation on our website here: www.maiacentre.org
- Watch a video of our kaihautū Tony and our Brave Learning students Levi and Marina talking about Brave Learning here: <https://vimeo.com/776831411/12a50e07a2>
- Read our Brave Learning Research Report here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ujXvb_gS6ntoZmx623b6fc_t1idmMMzz/view?usp=sharing
- See this slide deck as Googleslides here: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/13FZKwjjvQkiaatpoLem399SDUXCh2B058d1CTRmk920/edit?usp=sharing>



How Brave Learning works

Guided by our Kaihautū (guides/ navigators), we offer responsive support to young people who have withdrawn from school or at risk of doing so, tailored to their needs and goals. We do not impose particular learning aims (e.g. academic goals, reintegration to school, career entry), and we try to adapt how we work to realities of their lives. We do this in 3 main ways:

In School

We run individual and group sessions in our partner schools with students who are still enrolled but have been identified as at risk of withdrawing.

Intensive

We run intensive one or two day wānanga with groups of young people who are either enrolled, partially enrolled or who have withdrawn from school.

Beyond School

We work with young people individually and in small groups who have withdrawn from school.



Some stats

Although we have been delivering Brave Learning for only about 4 school terms, the following are some emerging statistics that summarise its effect to date.

5

Schools

Brave Learning is working in partnership with four decile 1 schools and one decile 3 school in South Auckland.

These schools collectively serve c.5,000 young people, of whom 77% are Māori or Pasifika.

72

Students

Collectively in 2022, Brave Learning has enrolled and worked with 72 Māori and Pasifika young people from years 11 to 13 who are at risk of withdrawing or have partially withdrawn from school. These young people have each attended weekly group sessions and/ or an intensive wānanga led by our brave Learning Kaihautū.

100%

retention

Our understanding is that, of the young people we have worked with, all have remained enrolled in school to the end of the school year. Many have achieved specific learning goals, such as gaining employment, gaining a drivers licence or growing in confidence.

82

NCEA Credits

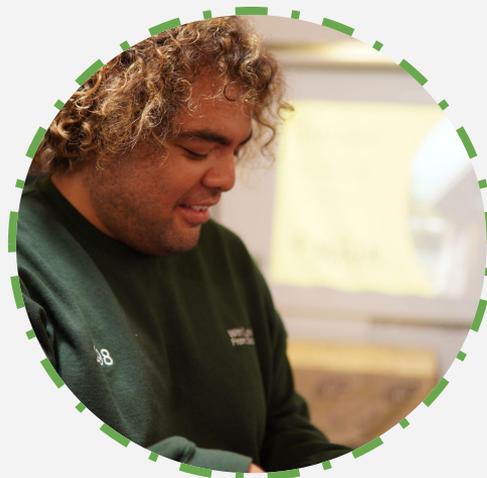
As a result of attending intensive Brave Learning wānanga, 10 students (14%) have each gained between 4 and 11 NCEA Level 1 credits, allowing them to complete year 11 and continue into year 12.

Ngā Kaihautū



Tony Patolo

Tony is a former teacher from One Tree Hill College and currently a PhD student and associate teaching fellow at UoA. He is Samoan and grew up in South Auckland.



Zech Soakai

Zech is a former teacher from Papakura High School, a spoken word poet, and youth worker. Zech is Tongan Samoan and grew up in Palmerston North.

Example

Manurewa High School

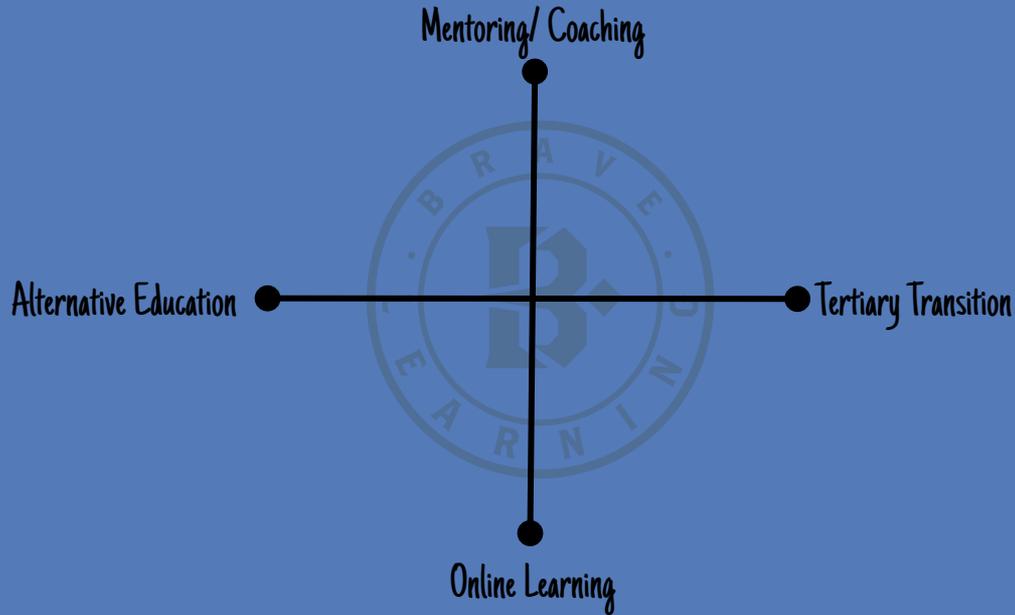
Tony has been leading weekly ninety minute sessions at Manurewa High School since Term 1 this year. MHS initially identified 20 students who were at risk of withdrawing, and this has grown and changed throughout the year. Tony has worked with c.35 MHS students this year.

Tony has developed a programme for working with the students which draws on elements of mentoring and coaching and his own experience as a teacher to support these young people to set learning goals and develop plans for achieving them through the year.



What we've learned
#1

How Brave Learning fits, and what's different about it



Our research interest is in:

- What effective support is required for young people from low-income backgrounds who have chosen to leave school earlier than expected (as a result of Covid-19) to continue to work towards their learning goals?

Our emerging answers are that, to be effective:

- We need to provide support which draws on elements of mentoring, tertiary transition, alternative education and online learning
- This support needs to be responsive to the needs and goals of individuals students
- We need to build strong relationships with schools, but also work beyond them
- We need to work with those who are at risk of withdrawing, as well as those who already have.

What our Brave Learning students say



Levi
Year 12
Manurewa High School



On school

"I was a bit of a naughty boy in Year 9 so I had to make a change. I was very naughty I used to jump the fence just go wag school. When I was Year 9, my parents been getting you know complaints about me wagging school. I thought if I changed, I could make them happy."

On working with Tony

"... he realises that not much students talk about our personal stuff because he knows a lot of students go through a lot through their personal stuff. And he wanted us to, you know, kind of open up"

"... with Tony, you know, it was different, you know? It felt like for me, I had someone to lean on, someone to share my problems, my pain with him. He's really helped me a lot."

What our Brave Learning students say



On Covid-19 Lockdown

"it's kind of stressful because I'm more of the kind of person who's who likes to be there in my class, like face to face kind of wise, not really the, you know, the online work.

So yeah, it's kind of hard to be on engaged on the online work."

On Brave Learning

"Being with Tony gave me confidence, gave me that understanding of like saying my mind out to everyone and teamwork"

*Marina
Year 12
Manurewa High School*



Example

Māngere College

Tony and Zech delivered a two-day intensive workshop with ten Year 11 Māngere College students identified by the school as at risk of withdrawing or already partially withdrawn. The school has identified that, at the end of 2022, up to 60 students (8% of total roll) have withdrawn or are at risk of withdrawing from school.

The wānanga focussed on whanaungatanga and hauora throughout the two days, but also ensured that every student also gained a minimum of 4 and up to 11 NCEA Level 1 Credits, meaning they could continue on to NCEA Level 2 in 2023. This group will continue to work with Brave Learning in 2023.



"It was a really positive experience for our young people and some who were not initially targeted joined in, so the inclusive nature was great.

Students enjoyed the workshops and discussed their learning when they came to chat about the sessions.

Tony and Zech were professional throughout and their robust comments when returning student work ... was really appreciated.

I can definitely see Brave learning being a success next year with our taura"

Aidyn, Acting Deputy Principal



Our Goals for 2023



1

Continue

Our initial funding from MoE ends in June 2023, and we are seeking funds to continue our work.



2

Grow

We are currently working in 5 schools, and have interested from a number of others.



3

Evolve

From what we have learned so far, we want to evolve how we operate, including by drawing on research and developing a unique and scalable approach to working with young people



4

Beyond school ...

So far our biggest challenge has been connecting with those young people who have already withdrawn from school. We want to crack that question ...