

# Communities@Work

## Galilee School

The journey towards creating a *positive culture of writing*



# Background

**WHO?**  
**WHAT?**  
**WHY?**

## School context

**Who** **The Galilee School** is an independent, secondary, special assistance school for disengaged and vulnerable young people between the ages of 12-16 who have been unsuccessful at mainstream schools. The Galilee School is a proud part of the Communities@Work organisation.



- **Why LNCA** program?
- **Why choose writing?**
- **What** is the long term **goal?**

# The Journey

The writing journey was.....

## The Challenges-How to begin **Galilee's** *'Culture of Writing'*

### Critical events

- Staff changes
- New enrolments
- Trauma Informed

### Key actions

Writing as healing

- Writing timetabled
- Writing on teacher meeting agenda
- Creating a writing environment
- Coaching staff/ mini-lessons
- Script writing and monologues



# Stage One of the Journey cont'd

## Key Data

Students two to five years behind based on achievement standards.

Students refuse to write

Student writing-no planning or understanding of text structure

## Staff feedback survey

*“Students feel like failures” Youth worker*

*“Writing needs to be a focus in all subject areas.” Teacher*

*“Environmental print helps students” Teacher*

*“Need for low stakes writing, students react badly to complex tasks” Youth worker*

*“Writing successfully can improve self-esteem and learning in general” Teacher*

## Key reflections

- Support from staff essential
- Staff actively planning writing scaffolds and modelling
- Writing to heal-low stakes

## First Step Trauma Informed-lower the stakes

- Success can heal!
- Writing can heal!
- I enjoy and love my passion because it takes me away from my life problems, I forget what's happening and has had happened in the past. I've learned a lot about basketball since I've played in a team like drills and all the rules of the game. I share my passion with my team, family and all the basketball lovers out there.
- When I came out of my room I saw mum and dad, mum was in tears. I sat down and held her hand ,she said," Your father and I have decided to separate."
- I immediately burst into tears. To this day I'm still hurt badly. I'll never forget that day.
- Every day I try my best at school to get high grades. But I feel like I always fail, I feel like everybody would do better without me around. If I ran away from home would my parents even care, well I mean they don't really recognise me when I'm at home. I feel like I have nobody to talk to.

# Terms 2/3 of the Journey 2018

## The challenges

- How can we continue to help the student grow as writers?
- How can we support staff to teach writing in an explicit way?
- Introducing film scripts and personal monologues



# Terms 2/3

## Key Actions:

- **Presentation Professional Focus Days**
- **Introduced mini-lessons with a focus on structure of lessons, providing ten minutes teaching an explicit writing skill, modelling, students trying skill and conferencing. Gradual release of responsibility to students.**
- **The introduction of script writing and storyboarding.**

## Key reflections

- Building relationships first priority.
- Modelling is important in mini-lesson structure
- Early success is vital. Small chunks.
- Differentiation integral.

# Summative Findings

## **What was the impact on the teachers?**

- Benefits across subjects
- Self esteem building
- Teacher skill development

## **What was the impact on the students?**

- Writing beyond lessons
- Greater confidence and willingness to write and read out loud in class

## **What was the impact on the school?**

- Writing has become part of the culture, created team and professional discussions
- Students less stressed. Can regulate when asked to write.

## **What was the impact on you as the coach?**

- Enjoyed sharing my experiences as teacher of literacy
- Relationships with staff and students built.
- Focus on my skills and plan for future writing development

# Discussion

## Overall successes? Why?

- Trauma informed- a classroom that is safe, not risk averse, writing and success heals
- The impact of the writing program was positive and impressive.
- Galilee staff worked as a team by continually striving to improve writing engagement in an unique and challenging environment.
- Being persistent and consistent.

## Overall Challenges

- Disengaged youth – previous failures
- Keeping up the writing culture momentum
- Providing professional development
- Assessment

Any questions?????

# Conclusion

- *“ I had not written anything at school for a long time. I thought writing was shit. I feel really proud when I read my writing out loud now. This year I feel like I have improved my writing because the work is chunked and I know exactly what I need to do.” Galilee Year 9 student.*

*The dedication and expertise of the Galilee staff enabled the culture of reading to flourish!*