

Student Well-being: A Collective Responsibility

Dr. Jean Clinton

The Six C's: Transferable Skills

DR. JEAN CLINTON: The massive shift of the Ministry of Education to actually be reporting on these transferable skills, I think, is very, very important. I think it's hugely important that there is adequate professional development about what they are and how to report on them should be in place. That's not always the case with things that come from the Ministry. But, you know, my thinking has been informed by Michael Fullen's thinking about deep learning the competencies and there's a massive overlap in the transferable skills and the six Cs. And when I've been talking with him and thinking about it, I truly believe that if we can support students' development of these competencies, of collaboration, of problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, compassion, you know, citizenship and compassion, then we are opening the door, first of all, for students who are coming in with cultural magnificence that is not seen or valued in our current system who don't necessarily have the skills that our current system values, but that they have massive knowledge and gifts to bring. I think that we're far more likely to tap into them from a framework of the six Cs. Thinking about collaborative inquiry. You know, how can we engage students through these processes? So, I see them as a hugely potential helping kids develop the skills that they need to combat some of the complexities of life that leads to mental health difficulties. So, for a concrete example, if we truly help kids recognise what communication and collaboration is, then they're not going to be devastated when they don't have 100 likes on Instagram because they'll recognise that that is not what true communication is about. But as one of the students here requests in her wonderful speech she said, "We're not learning anything about how to deal with technology. Nobody is saying, 'That isn't communication. That is random, hurtful information. It's not what you need in order to grow as a person.'" So, that's kind of a long way around to say that I really think a focus on those transferable skills -- really deeply embedding it, not just, "In addition to curriculum, cover these," but deeply embedding it in curriculum -- is a health promotion move and an equity move that will absolutely transform, but the devil's in the detail. How do we take and give enough information? Professional development with collectives of teachers learning from each other, with exemplary learning coaches so that it gets embedded and trickles down to the classroom teachers and the students' experience of the classroom?