

# Strengthen student identity

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Enable students to learn about their culture
- Explore rangatira&shy;tanga – self-determination
- Identify and explore role models
- Visibly value students cultural backgrounds
- Reflective questions
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Support emotional wellbeing and positive mental health](#)

Suggestion: [Strengthen student identity](#)

Date

19 April 2024

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/strengthen-student-identity](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/strengthen-student-identity)

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## Enable students to learn about their culture

Offer students the option of learning about their culture in an ongoing way.

It can have a significant impact on a student's self-respect and readiness to learn.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/221214281>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Education Review Office \(NZ\)](#)

<https://vimeo.com/user65155179>

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## Explore rangatiratanga – self-determination

Offer students the option of learning about their culture in an ongoing way.

It can have a significant impact on a student's self-respect and readiness to learn.

Teachers can help by:

- acknowledging learners' expertise (for example, their knowledge of the significance of a particular place or cultural convention) and inviting them to share their knowledge and experience with class members
- taking the role of a facilitator of learning rather than holder of knowledge
- inviting students with specific skills to teach their peers and the teacher
- encouraging students to invent, that is, bring something new into being
- enabling students to develop a sense of their own identity through making art works
- setting students a task to make a series of photographs about an issue or interest they feel passionate about
- involving students in creating opportunities to exhibit and publish/perform their own work beyond the classroom
- involving students in discussion about where and how their work might best be displayed
- encouraging and supporting students to develop their own wellbeing initiatives.

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## Identify and explore role models

Role models who lead a meaningful life can have a positive influence on a student's identity.

Take a look at these discussion starter activities from [Mental health education and hauora: Teaching interpersonal skills, resilience, and wellbeing](#).

Script an interview called "Living a meaningful life":

- Ask students to identify a role model who lives a meaningful life.
- Ask students to imagine they are a journalist and their assignment is to interview the role model.
- Create a script of questions and responses.

Facilitate an interview with a student's role model face to face or on Skype:

- Ask the role model questions about how their life has unfolded, challenges faced, and the decisions they have made on the way.

Watch a series of interviews on video of a role model suggested by the class:

- Discuss in small groups what makes each person a role model?
- Ask what we can learn from the meaningful life of these role models?

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## Visibly value students cultural backgrounds



Source:

[Kelston Primary School](#)

<https://www.kelstonprimary.school.nz/>

[View full image \(1.1 MB\)](#)

Visually reflect the different cultures of your school community within the environment through language, signs, and images.

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## Reflective questions

If children and young people develop an awareness about their identity, they will better understand their own values and beliefs as well as those of others.

([NZCER](#)).

How do you support students to reflect and build deep understandings about identity in your classroom?

What actions do you take to ensure threats to rangatiratanga are identified and removed?

How are you providing an inclusive environment for students who identify as LGBTIQ+?

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## Useful resources



### Te Pītau o te tuakiri: Affirming Māori identities and promoting wellbeing in state secondary schools

A thesis by Arama Rata, exploring how social contexts (such as state secondary schools) impact on Māori identity development, and evidence of causal links between Māori culture, identity, and psychological wellbeing.

Publisher: Victoria University of Wellington

[Visit website](#)



### Strengths: Sparklers

Classroom activities designed for students in years 1–8.

Publisher: Sparklers

[Visit website](#)



### Identity and self-worth: Me – right now!

Suggested activity for strengthening identity and recognising difference.

[Visit website](#)

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