

2020 Boma Education Fellow Project Idea

18th April 2020

What if teaching and learning could happen anywhere?

COVID-19 has caused month-long school closures worldwide forcing teaching and learning to take place from home. Teachers and students are quickly adapting to this new process. Whilst most miss the human interaction, many enjoy the new opportunities arising and thrive in adversity.

As we emerge into a new world from the various lockdowns and restrictions, I propose that schools enable both teachers and learners to work from anywhere, instead of being required to be physically present at school. Teachers could deliver a learning program one day per week from a place of their choosing. Selected students actively spend one day per week learning outside school.

Many students are already doing this by attending courses from external providers, or miss school days regularly due to sport or other extra-curricular commitments. Equally, many teachers are absent from school as they organize EOTC trips, look after a sick dependent or attend courses. However, the current system is ineffective because students are often not expected or enabled to work if they can't attend school on a given day, and teachers are required to set relief which is cumbersome and rarely of benefit to the students. Many teachers attend school when they would prefer not to (feeling unwell, needing a break (mental health day), desire to do EOTC) because it is easier than to arrange relief. This is clearly undesirable for all stakeholders involved (students, parents, teachers, relief coordinator, senior management, taxpayers). COVID-19 is showing us that there is no need to restrict teaching and learning to a school building.

As a 2020 Boma Education Fellow, my project idea is to develop a framework that a school could implement to encourage teaching and learning to take place outside the classroom. I will seek to convince my own school, Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery, to enable keen teachers and learners to trial the framework, and I will create examples of how this could happen in Christchurch in the context of learning about Science and Biology.