Effective pedagogy in relationships and sexuality education

Relationships and Sexuality Education

GUIDELINES | YEARS 1–13

RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) teaching in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) is based on constructivist pedagogy.

Constructivist pedagogy

….The constructivist teacher, drawing on constructivist models of learning, sees the learner not as an empty vessel to be filled up with knowledge, but as an individual "builder" of their own personal, internal intellectual constructs. Such teachers see learners as arriving with pre-existing sets of ideas which they are often satisfied with and reluctant to give up. However, where these pre-existing ideas … are blocking the learner's developing understanding of a new curriculum concept, they must be disrupted. Thus, the constructivist teacher's starting point is the learner's pre-existing ideas … The teacher's role is to access and understand these ideas, and then to design experiences that can build on, or, where necessary, disrupt them. (Gilbert, 2018, p. 18).

Gilbert, J. (2018). Untangling constructivism, knowledge, and knowledge-building for "future-oriented" teaching. *Set 2*, 18–24.

Relationships and sexuality education teaching in *The New Zealand Curriculum* is not about transmission of some predetermined 'facts' or knowledge about RSE. Nor does RSE reflect and represent only one world view.

A constructivist approach to pedagogy requires teachers to:

- Know what their ākonga do and do not understand about RSE topics through a range of data, and build on this knowledge through a teaching as inquiry approach. This requires the collection of evidence of learning though assessment for learning **practices**. It also means responding to ākonga interests and inquiring questions, and using these as a source of ideas to inform learning programme design and planning.

- Be aware of their own values, beliefs and world view. Be cognisant that their teaching is not bound by only one cultural or political perspective, or determined by the resources and services of an external provider. Instead, teachers provide a wide range of learning opportunities through which ākonga explore a diversity of ideas and come to learn about what is fair and unfair, inclusive and not inclusive, just and unjust. Teachers also need to challenge attitudes and values that do not promote acceptance and tolerance of **diversity**.

- Focus on big ideas and concepts — in the Health and Physical Education learning area this means hauora, the socio-ecological perspective, health promotion and attitudes and values **Link to Underlying Concepts part of redeveloped TKI HPE site**, and specific content knowledge is developed in relation to these ideas.

- Be prepared to deal with multiple and often disparate meanings on matters to do with RSE, accept tensions and ambiguity, and that there can be many possible 'right answers' in some situations.

- Develop ākonga key competencies in RSE contexts — that is thinking (critical and creative thinking), relating to others, using language, symbols, and texts, managing self, participating and **contributing**.

- Acknowledge that tamariki and rangatahi are surrounded by images and information related to sexuality and relationships. Where they are at developmentally will determine what sense they make of such material, and the selection of teaching topics and learning activities should be a reasonable reflection of that level of development.

- Use group work extensively — offering opportunity for collaborative and cooperative learning where ākonga share ideas and construct knowledge that is relevant and meaningful to them.

- Take on the role of a facilitator of learning in order to guide ākonga towards knowledge and open-minded understanding. Do this through using a wide range of resources (which is not bound by textbooks and worksheets, or externally provided resources and services).
- Understand that learning is a social activity that occurs through interaction.
- Remember that assessment of learning or gathering evidence of learning can come from multiple sources — ākonga learning artefacts produced from activities or learning processes (such as student inquiry), observations of group work and skills demonstration, and sometimes from more formal assessment of knowledge through specified tasks.

Why we teach this way in relationships and sexuality education

This approach to teaching provides:

- The foundations for culturally responsive pedagogy that enables teachers to adopt practices embraced by the cultural competencies in **Tātaiako** and the turu in **Tapasā**.
- The conditions needed for a teaching as inquiry **approach**, whereby evidence is gathered constantly to be able to monitor student learning achievement and progress, select learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful to ākonga, and decide next steps for learning.
- Opportunities for ākonga to:
  - learn transferable knowledge, concepts and skills
  - engage in forms of 'power sharing' with the teacher that positions them as agents for change, and in ways that they have control over their learning
  - have a say in what they learn, based on what is relevant and meaningful to them
  - develop critical insight and understand multiple world views
  - develop key capabilities for learning, such as cooperative and collaborative learning.

A culturally responsive approach to relationships and sexuality education pedagogy

The constructivist approach to pedagogical practice provides a foundation for culturally responsive pedagogy for all ākonga in Aotearoa.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education guides provide guidance around incorporating mātauranga Māori, te ao Māori, te reo Māori and Pacific world views when planning for RSE, as well as approaches to RSE that are culturally responsive for Māori and Pacific ākonga. These are found on the following pages:

Relationships and Sexuality Education guide	RSE and mātauranga Māori	RSE and Pacific world views	Approaches to RSE for ākonga Māori	Approaches to RSE for Pacific ākonga
Years 1–8	Pages 13–14	Pages 14–15	Page 35	Page 36
Years 9–13	Pages 14–16	Pages 16–17	Page 41	Page 42

Below, the competencies from Tātaiako and the turu from Tapasā are applied in context of RSE. When considered alongside the guidance from the RSE guides outlined above, applying these frameworks enables a culturally responsive approach to planning RSE programmes of learning for all ākonga.

Relationships and sexuality education for Māori learners

The five Tātaiako competencies are about "knowing, respecting and working with Māori learners and their whānau and iwi. This is so their worldview, aspirations and knowledge are an integral part of teaching and learning, and of the culture of the school" (Teaching Council, 2011, p. 1).

Cultural competency	Ideas for integrating into relationships and sexuality education
Wānanga Participating with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners' achievement.	• Engages in ongoing kōrero about RSE — including the two-yearly community consultation — in sensitive and inclusive ways. • Connects with whānau to inform them about the nature of RSE and invites them to ask questions. • Values ākonga voice to inform and shape RSE learning.
Whanaungatanga Actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapū, iwi and the Māori community.	• Partners with appropriate people in the community to guide the ongoing development of locally responsive RSE programmes of learning. • Communicates openly and respectfully with ākonga and their whānau.
Manaakitanga Showing integrity, sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture.	• Understands and integrates into RSE Māori values such as manaakitanga, mana whenua, rangatiratanga, kotahitanga. • Fosters respectful classroom discussions about diverse attitudes, values and beliefs in RSE contexts.
Tangata whenuatanga Affirming Māori learners as Māori. Providing contexts for learning where the language, identity and culture of Māori learners and their whānau is affirmed.	• Draws upon Māori models of wellbeing, including (but not limited to) Te Whare Tapa Whā, to explore RSE contexts holistically. • Māori kupu, stories, artwork, whakataukī and other cultural artefacts are woven into RSE programmes and used to explore a range of RSE contexts in a culture-affirming way. • Includes Māori cultural perspectives, for example on menstruation and takatāpui. • Invites local members of the community to provide expertise on local context, tikanga, history and language to support RSE.
Ako Taking responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners.	• Consciously plans and uses pedagogy that engages Māori ākonga and responds to their identified learning needs in RSE. • Validates and integrates ākonga prior learning and experiences in sensitive ways across RSE contexts.

Teaching Council (2011). *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori learners.*
<u>https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Code-and-Standards/Tataiako-cultural-competencies-for-teachers-of-Maori-learners.pdf</u>

Relationships and sexuality education for Pacific learners

Below, the turu from Tapasā are applied in context of RSE. The turu represent "behaviours and understandings at different stages of the teaching journey. While each turu is distinct, in practice they are interwoven and can be observed to be occurring all at the same time in a learning activity" (Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 8).

Turu	Ideas for integrating into relationships and sexuality education
Turu one Demonstrate awareness of the diverse and ethnic-specific identities, languages and cultures of Pacific learners.	• Understands that identity, language and culture is important, and RSE needs to be approached with sensitivity and as connected to identified ākonga learning needs. • Incorporates stories, legends and myths, events, activities and symbols that connect to ākonga cultures and realities in RSE contexts. • Incorporates RSE-related words and ideas from a range of Pacific cultures. For example, Pacific terms/ideas in the glossary in the RSE can be used to frame learning activities that explore historical and contemporary understandings. • Understands the values that are important, such as faith, spirituality (church) and family, and how these may impact on ākonga in RSE. These values might then be weaved into the learning through the selection of scenarios, resource material or questions posed to guide learning.
Turu two Establishes and maintains collaborative and respectful relationships and professional behaviours that enhance learning and wellbeing for Pacific learners.	• Connects with aiga to inform them about the nature of RSE and invites them to ask questions. • Treats ākonga with kindness, honesty, open-mindedness, understanding and compassion. This includes sensitivity when siblings or family members are in the same class. • Values a range of knowledges in RSE contexts that diverse ākonga possess, and draws upon these when teaching.
Turu three Implements pedagogical approaches that are effective for Pacific learners.	• A learner-centred, collaborative approach where power is shared — asking ākonga what they want to learn about in RSE and shaping RSE to suit their needs. • Small group work and classroom discussion to share ideas and construct RSE knowledge together. • Understand that Pacific learners are not a homogenous group, that they learn and engage in multiple ways and come into the RSE classroom with unique skills, talents and knowledge.

Ministry of Education (2018). *Tapasā: Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners.* https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Tapasa/Tapasa-Cultural-Competencies-Framework-for-Teachers-of-Pacific-Learners-2019.pdf

Teaching strategies and activities in a teacher's kete when teaching relationships and sexuality education content knowledge

Strategies and activities		Sample learning context where this activity could be used Some of these suggestions have obvious primary or secondary application while others, such as skill based activities, could be applied in basic or complex ways and in age-appropriate contexts.
Exploring the range of existing knowledge and ideas in a class	Post-box (physical or digital)	Collecting potentially sensitive ideas from students about their knowledge and experiences of cyberbullying
	Graffiti sheets	Collecting brainstormed information that shows existing student knowledge about the qualities of, and challenges to, relationships
	Anonymous question box	Posting anonymous RSE-related questions in an ongoing way whereby these can be responded to in a considered and timely manner
Engaging ākonga in critical thinking	Scenario-based activities using a talking or discussion frame of questions to help unpack the situation	Analysing a range of sexual relationship situations to determine if consent was given and, where it was not, what needs to change for promoting healthier, safer relationships
	Values continuums	Identifying and communicating value-based positions (i.e. agreement and disagreement) about the way the media portrays people's bodies and how this impacts on body image, or what is fair and unfair about the way people are treated
	Activities that require seeing situations from multiple and different perspectives	Assigning a role to students and having them answer questions in relation to a person in that role — e.g. a diversity/privilege walk, or being 'interviewed' in a focus group for their opinions on a gender or sexuality related topic
	Use of stories that use allegory or analogy	Using myths and fables to learn about different sorts of relationships and safe/unsafe relationships, or stereotypical gender roles
	Posing and solving social 'problems'	Presenting a range of evidence that highlights a particular RSE related 'problem' and suggesting what needs to change to promote wellbeing, along with actions to achieve this

Strategies and activities		Sample learning context where this activity could be used
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Sharing ideas	Group discussions using talking frames	Analysing a video where themes about diverse identities or different sorts of relationships feature, along with strategies for communicating respectfully or managing relationships
	Doughnut circles	Formulating and sharing ideas a with a range of other students about a topic of interest, such as gender differences and issues in the school
	Think-pair-share	Identifying what makes people unique and sharing these ideas with others to develop understanding of what makes us similar and different to each other
	Storyboards	Develop a storyboard using pictures to communicate how we can be kind to our classmates, and sharing this in a small group
Learning self-management and interpersonal skills	Learning the components of interpersonal skills	Developing knowledge of skills and demonstrating (by role-playing or rehearsing) these skills using RSE scenarios, for example: • effective listening to help understand someone else's views on, or experiences of, a relationship • assertiveness in relationships or sexual pressure situations • joint problem-solving when people want different things from a relationship • showing empathy when one person has had different or troubling relationship or gender-related experiences to another • advocating (on behalf of others) to make changes to school policy on uniforms
	Learning the components of self-management skills	Developing knowledge of skills and demonstrating the application of these skills using RSE scenarios, for example: • goal-setting (and action planning) to improve interpersonal communication skills in relationship situations • decision-making to work through the options available in a RSE situation and selecting the option that is most wellbeing enhancing for all involved • stress management and relaxation for managing situations where there is conflict or uncertainty in a relationship • help-seeking for when a relationship ends or isn't safe • positive thinking to support own identity and resisting pressure from media or peers to conform to a social expectation • seeking appropriate help to understand and be comfortable in their own identity

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Values exploration	Values continuum	Identifying own and hearing about others' values in relation to how fair and inclusive the school is on matters to do with gender (e.g. uniforms, toilets, access to sports and cultural groups, positions of responsibility, role models, etc)
	Values auction	Providing a RSE scenario for which a difficult decision has to be made (a 'lifeboat' or 'who gets the funding' type of scenario), but the group can choose only one option — the emphasis is on exploring the values to reach a decision, not the outcome of the decision itself
	Ethical dilemmas	Exploring ethical dilemmas that impact wellbeing in RSE contexts
	Debate, neutral chair debate	Using the format and principles of a debate to explore different sides of an issue, such as an ethical issue related to RSE
Participation in activities for the promotion of wellbeing and taking action	Self-management activities, such as personal goal-setting, decision-making, managing stressful situations	Using scenarios containing stressful situations in RSE contexts to suggest actions for managing the situation and enhancing wellbeing
	Skills rehearsal (or role-play) activities, such as effective listening, expressing feelings, assertiveness, negotiation, problem-solving	Using scenarios containing friendship conflicts to prepare an assertive response, then demonstrate this in small groups
	Cooperative and collaborative planning and implementation of action plans	Contributing to a classroom/school community, for example: • being kind to new members of the class • class safety guidelines that are enacted in the playground as well as in the classroom • cybersafety protocols • safe bullying-free schools • gender- and sexuality-inclusive schools
Inquiry-based investigation and exploration	The Action Competence Learning Process ⬚ **ACLP (or new weblink to this on TKI)**	Planning an investigation and taking action in relation to a RSE issue, such as creating a more inclusive school community for sexuality and gender-diverse students.

Strategies and activities		Sample learning context where this activity could be used Some of these suggestions have obvious primary or secondary application while others, such as skill based activities, could be applied in basic or complex ways and in age-appropriate contexts.
Managing sensitive subject matter	Class-negotiated safety guidelines	Developing a set of principles or protocols to guide how the members of the class expect to be treated by each other, and how they will safely and respectfully communicate their ideas and manage situations where they have different RSE-related values and beliefs or opinions
	Question box	Responding to questions in a specific aspect of RSE where students may not be confident to openly ask questions, e.g. pubertal development or sexual and reproductive health
	Students 'in role' to distance them from own experiences (creating an avatar or profile from which to respond to an activity and answer questions)	Responding to questions about a RSE situation, such as the way alcohol use impacts sexual decisions and behaviour, or gender inequities where there is an obvious imbalance of power in relationships in a social setting
	Using scenarios or other people's stories from print media, TV, film or internet sources	Learning about diverse family structures, or identity and diversity, through children's stories and developing language to talk about these
Sharing evidence of learning from individual and group activities	Class-negotiated safety guidelines	Reporting findings from an investigation into, and actions taken, to develop a gender-inclusive uniform and uniform policy in the school, which is then shared with the wider school community
	Question box	Health promotion posters (or other artefact) promoting safety in relationships or in an inclusive school community
	Students 'in role' to distance them from own experiences (creating an avatar or profile from which to respond to an activity and answer questions)	Artefacts from individual (or pairs of) students about school support and community-helping agencies for RSE-related matters are compiled into a single resource for the class to use
	Using scenarios or other people's stories from print media, TV, film or internet sources	Skills rehearsal demonstrating ways to be assertive in relationship situations

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Digital fluency and citizenship	See TKI information on ⬚ **Digital Fluency** or the ⬚ **Netsafe Kit**	Learning strategies for being safe online and learning how to respond or take action if distressing material has been received or viewed online
Literacy development	Expert jigsaw	Developing understanding of the findings of a New Zealand RSE-related research report, e.g Youth 2000 series
	Reciprocal reading	Developing understanding of a RSE-related news item, e.g. period poverty, activist group actions, news reports of new RSE research
	Picture books and novels	Reading with students a book that is focused on challenging traditional gender norms. Students discuss themes, attitudes, values and beliefs as well as links to people's wellbeing, and create their own text based on the story
	Vocabulary-building activities	Developing a 'dictionary' of RSE terms representing all home languages of students in the class (as a wall display or digital artefact) that also reflects what the class considers to be acceptable and appropriate sexuality and gender-related language to use
	Purposefully developed discussion/question ⬚ **frames** for recording ideas from discussion	Analysing a story or news item about a sexuality or gender-related matter currently in the news to understand what the item is about, what is fair or unfair, and what needs to change to support the wellbeing of the people involved
	Picture dictionary	Using a combination of words and pictures to develop understanding of the way RSE relates to all dimensions of wellbeing

For further guidance on effective pedagogy, including developing safety guidelines and facilitating role-plays, see pages 15–23 of Fitzpatrick et al. (2018). *Mental Health Education and Hauora: Teaching interpersonal skills, resilience and wellbeing.* Available from: ⬚ **https://healtheducation.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Mental-Health-and-Hauora.pdf**

Further information can be found at:

- Assessment online
  https://assessment.tki.org.nz/

- Effective pedagogy in the NZC
  https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Teaching-as-inquiry

- The NZC key competencies
  https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Key-competencies

- Key competencies and effective pedagogy
  https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Key-competencies/Key-competencies-and-effective-pedagogy

- Our Code, Our Standards Teaching standards and code
  https://teachingcouncil.nz/professional-practice/our-code-our-standards/

- Tātaiako
  https://teachingcouncil.nz/resource-centre/tataiako-cultural-competencies-for-teachers-of-maori-learners/

- Tapasā
  https://teachingcouncil.nz/resource-centre/tapasa/

- RSE guides
  https://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-Guidelines/Relationships-and-Sexuality-Education

- Local curriculum design (planning)
  https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Strengthening-local-curriculum/Leading-local-curriculum-guide-series

- Inclusive Education Guides
  https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/