

Merit

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On the 17th to the 18th of March our Year 11 class went on an expedition. We drove all the way to the surf club, ran to the mount and set up camp. In the morning, we kayaked from city bay to the park before running back to school. The focus of this expedition was to enhance kotahitanga. Kotahitanga is working as a team and being united as one to achieve a common goal, which at the time was to make it back to school together! Enhancing kotahitanga is important because it helps us build relationships with our peers and learn to trust each other, as well as knowing how to work with others and not just as an individual. In order to promote kotahitanga, I chose to apply two strategies, Manaakitanga and effective communication.

The first strategy I chose to apply to enhance kotahitanga was manaakitanga. This strategy is when you use uplifting and supportive words and phrases to keep your team persevering. It is important to use this strategy within your team because when people feel supported and valued, they are more likely to contribute to the team. I applied this strategy during our kayaking journey to the park, me and my buddy were quite a distance away from the rest of the group and V.P and I were determined to catch up. I saw that she was struggling, because when we were paddling she kept on stopping and putting her head down. She was also saying things like “My arms are sore” and “I’m so done”. So, I reassured her and said “It’s okay V, keep on going!” and when she started paddling again we picked up some speed and began to chase down everyone else. I said to her, “Good job, you’re doing good” and she replied and said “Thanks” putting one of her thumbs up to show she was very grateful for my words of affirmation. As a result of me saying these words to her, we grew closer together and caught up to the group, which showed how manaakitanga helped promote kotahitanga during the expedition.

Another example of how I showed manaakitanga was during our run on the beach from the surf club to the maunga. Before we started our run E.E was saying how she was very sick and how she couldn’t breathe properly which caused her to be a defect in our team. As we were running, I noticed that E.E was struggling to keep up with us. So instead of continuing my pace I said “Guys stop!” Everyone stopped and I went to E and said to her “Are you okay?” She looked at me and said “Yeah, but I can’t really run because my throat is really sore, and it hurts to breathe.” I patted her on the back and told her “You are doing really well considering that you are sick. Just keep on going!” She smiled and gave me a hug saying thank you. By offering this support to her I made her feel like she can rely on me and it made her feel included. I knew this because when we started running she could trust us to stop if she asked. So by doing this I not only helped E.E, but I made our team be united to get to the maunga as one promoting kotahitanga.

By using the strategy of manaakitanga, I know I promoted kotahitanga because I could see the team being more united and working together. For example, when me and V.P caught up to the group, it showed that my support helped us stay connected. I also saw our team relationship grow stronger when I stopped to check on E.E. on our run. Because I uplifted her, she felt included in the team and we got to the maunga together.

The second strategy I chose to apply was effective communication. This is typically used to converse with your teammates in a way they can easily understand and actively contribute to what you are trying to explain. I chose to use this strategy because strong communication helps a team to work efficiently and avoid confusion during tasks. An example of when I used this was also during kayaking. As well as our kayaking buddies, we had to pair up with another group to stick together with on our trip. V.P and I went with E.E and E.P. Everyone had just passed all the boats and this was when me and my buddy were still behind the group, but E.E and E.P were even further away than we were so I said to V.P “Stop, wait for them” so we could stay as one unit. This use of me applying communication supported kotahitanga by helping us function as one unit rather than separate groups. I saw that they were not paddling in sync, so I took the initiative to yell to them “Say right, left, right, left! It will keep you synced, and you will go faster!” This made a big change in their rhythm and made them stay a bit closer to us. Again, my communication helped promoted kotahitanga by keeping the paddling I sync which helped the group stay together.

Another specific example of when I used communication effectively was not at the expedition but in one of our movement activities at school. This was during a game of rippa rugby. We got put into even teams of 4 and started playing games and rotating to play each team. In our first game I saw that one of the girls E.E kept making mistakes, like passing in front and was just walking around cluelessly. I walked up to her after the game and she said that she didn’t know all of the rules of the game, so before we started playing again, I explained a couple of the important ones to her. The rules I explained to her were, “You can’t pass the ball forward, if you drop the ball, it’s a turnover, and you basically just focus on ripping the tags off them.” After I told her the rules, I could see that this led to EE trying to involve herself in the game more confidently thanks to my explanation. This showed how my communication helped the team act together towards a shared goal promoting kotahitanga.

In a later game I used communication to keep our team organised. At one point, I noticed that we were bunched too close together and there was a time that a player from the opposing team saw that gap and took the opportunity to score, and so he did. I told my teammate next to me, who was on the wing to spread out to fill the gap and then to everyone else, I said “Guys move down and fill the gaps”. As a result of me applying this strategy, I could see that my team stayed connected on defence and avoided making the same mistake which showed how my communication helped promote kotahitanga during the game as we were worked together has one on defence.

Because I used effective communication, I know it promoted Kotahitanga because my clear instructions helped our team work together towards our goal. For example, when I helped E.E our teams overall performance improved because everyone, including E.E was confident in playing rippa rugby. I also saw that helping E.P and E.E with their paddling kept us together and achieved our group goal of completing the task. Kotahitanga was promoted because our team was united.

In this unit, I found that manaakitanga and effective communication were perfect strategies for me to use to promote and enhance kotahitanga. This is because they helped motivate and build positive relationships with my peers and my team. A negative of using these strategies is that

sometimes I was too focused on helping better my team that I forgot to focus on my own performance. This can be helped if everyone in the team also applied these strategies to even further promote kotahitanga.

The best strategy I felt that promoted kotahitanga was manaakitanga because when I uplifted my struggling team mates, it boosted their confidence and it had a big impact on the unity of our team. If I were to use these strategies again, I would make sure to use them more consistently. I could use both of these strategies in the future when I am playing a sports game or even at school during a practical sports lesson.