

Going digital—the quiet revolution in the classroom

June 8 2016, by Julianne Evans



Children at a Manaiakalani (Hook of Heaven) school engaged in their digital learning.

Imagine classes of keen and engaged students who are learning at twice the average rate of their peers.

This is the Manaiakalani group, a cluster of 13 decile one primary and secondary schools in the Auckland suburbs of Glen Innes, Panmure and Point England who are doing almost all their class [work](#) on digital devices.

The idea is to give all students equal access to information regardless of their socio-economic background, raise their expectations of success and prepare them for a digital future.

Every student from Year 5 onwards at a Manaiakalani school gets a ChromeBook to do their work on, with the teacher running the class from a central control panel.

And new this year, Google Class on Air sees five teachers being filmed teaching a digital [class](#) which then gets put up online, alongside their lesson plans and students' work.

With so much up on the net, parents can see what their children are learning and teachers can learn from each other, says Dr Rebecca Jesson, a senior lecturer in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland.

Based at the University's Woolf Fisher Research Centre, Dr Jesson and her team have been both evaluating the programme and running the Manaiakalani Digital Teaching Academy, where first year teachers and their mentors upskill on digital teaching techniques.

She is excited about the students' improved results since the programme's introduction in 2010.

"It's about acknowledging that these kids are living in a digital world, most of them were born since the invention of Facebook, so let's make these tools [that they like and use anyway] smart and make them work for them."

Dr Jesson and her team are evaluating the roll-out of the programme to five more groups of low decile schools in New Zealand including Kaikohe in Northland, Papakura and Mt Roskill in Auckland, Hornby in

Christchurch and the West Coast of the South Island.

It will involve nearly 11,000 [students](#).

Manaiakalani schools have partnered with the University of Auckland, the Manaiakalani Education Trust, the Next and Spark foundations, Google and many others to drive and fund the project.

Provided by University of Auckland

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