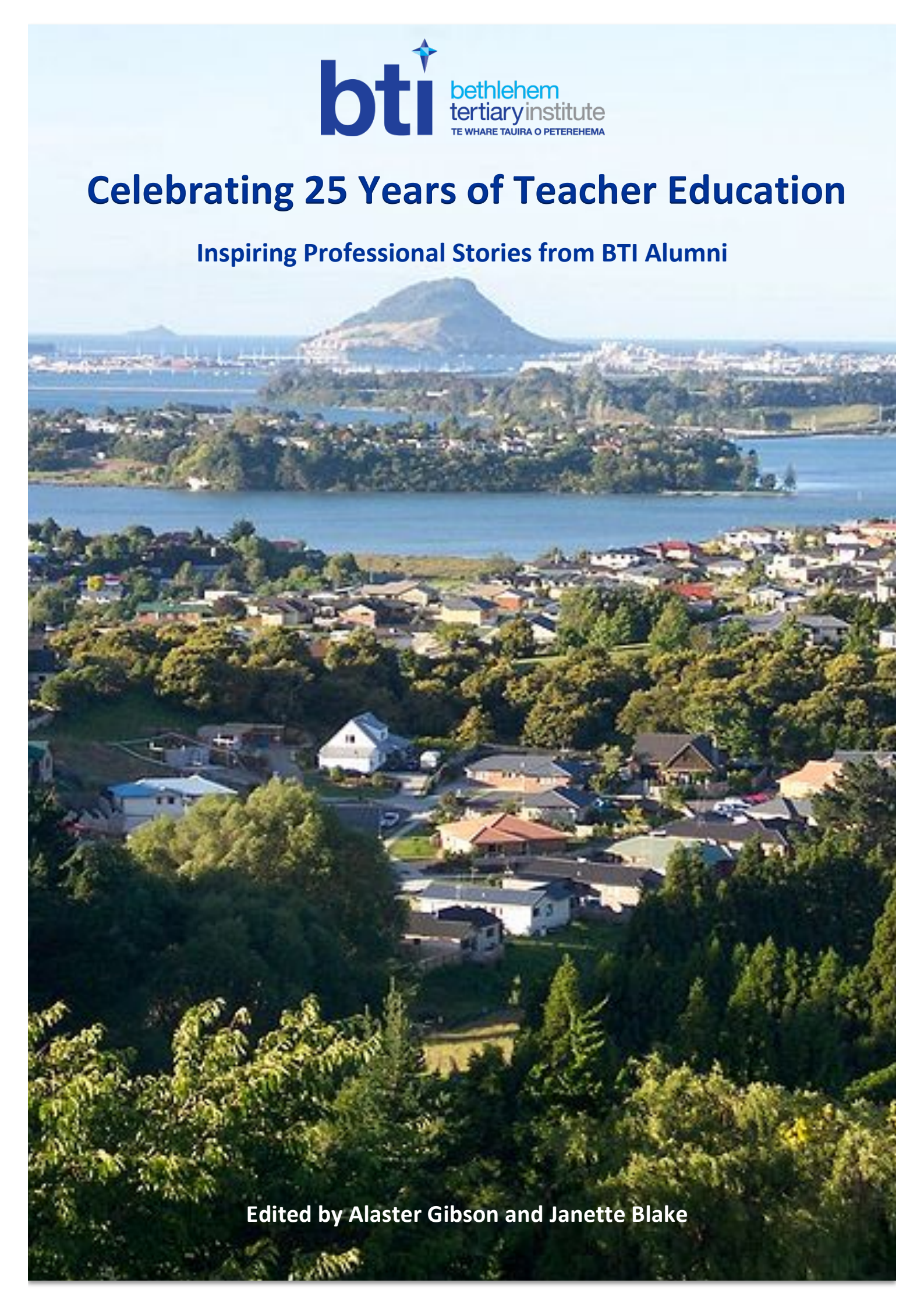


Celebrating 25 Years of Teacher Education

Inspiring Professional Stories from BTI Alumni



Edited by Alaster Gibson and Janette Blake

Celebrating 25 Years of Teacher Education 1993-2017

Inspiring Professional Stories from BTI Alumni

ISBN

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Cover photo: View across Tauranga to Mt Maunganui (Mauao).

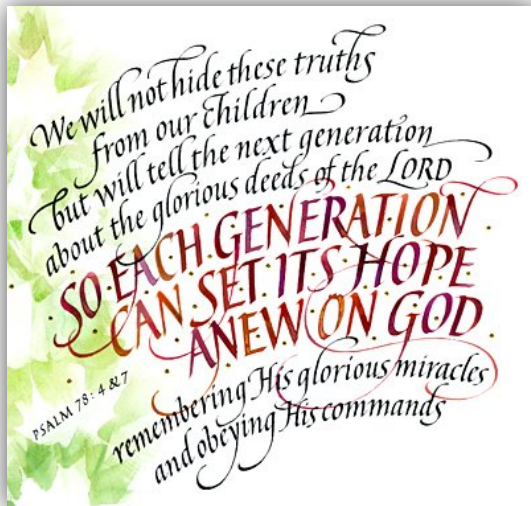
Preface

The subtitle of this little book is *Inspiring Professional Stories from BTI Alumni* – and inspiring they certainly are. The amazing thing about stories is that they invite us into someone else's reality and help us understand, empathise and celebrate the steps along the way so that we may be strengthened and envisioned ourselves.

Titiro whakamuri, Kokiri whakamua
Look back and reflect so you can move forward.



Two particular passages of scripture come to mind when I think about why it was important to capture these stories on this momentous occasion. The first is from Psalm 78:4 (NIV) where we read of the importance to tell the



next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power and the wonders He has done. The result of this telling is that others would “put their trust in God” (v. 7). The stories within this volume involve some ‘leap of faith’, a sense that God was leading, prompting, equipping and providing. As we read them we are, once again, encouraged to trust that He can do the same for us (Psalm 37:23).

The second is from Habakkuk 2:2 where the prophet encourages his hearers to write the vision so that others may run with it. This book of inspirational stories is part of passing the baton from those of us who have been here for many years to those who follow and continue the vision in their practice around the corner in Tauranga, in other parts of New Zealand, and across the world; within early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary or other educational contexts. The authors within the book have written about “finding myself challenging my staff with the same questions my lecturers challenged me” (Emily), and note that BTI equipped them with “valuable tools for life and learning” (Hannah). As we live out our learning we will continue, with God’s enabling and empowerment, to influence the future for good.

Thank you for sharing your stories with us.

Dr Bev Norsworthy

Deputy Dean, Head of Teaching and Learning

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Foreword

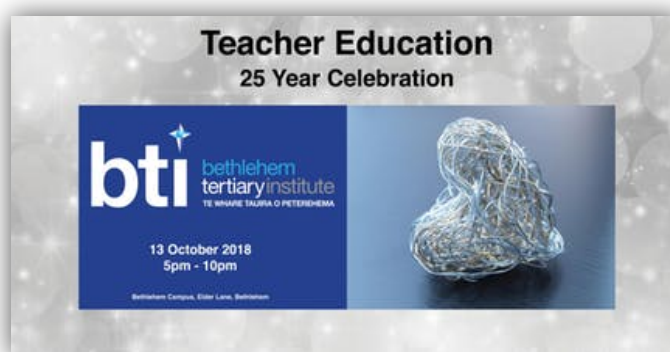
As I read through the stories in this delightful volume, I was struck by three words again and again: gracious, secure and teachable. A number of the stories in here use those exact words; in others, it can be read between the lines. And what was particularly apparent was that these three words did not necessarily mean 'easy' or 'fair' or 'a walk in the park'. They all required hard work, demanding decisions, difficult choices, 'blood, sweat and tears' as these prospective teachers learned that before teaching out of who you are, you first have to know who you are. And that journey of discovery, while hard work, was also clearly rewarding as can be seen in the life, vibrancy and passion of those in this e-book who have gone on to shape great hearts and minds.



There's another common theme here too: the profound and positive impact of the teaching staff at BTI. A number are named in these pages, and rightly so. Our staff, as you shall see, are committed to investing whole-heartedly into the lives of our students and do so with as much 'blood, sweat and tears' as the students themselves.

BTI has a rich history of 25 years of graduates, of which these are only a slice. But there are many others who are impacting lives, as their own lives were impacted by their experience of BTI. I commend this publication to you; you will find it moving and encouraging. I especially thank Alaster Gibson and Janette Blake for their dedication in compiling and editing it, and to all BTI staff, past and present, who have given of who they are to develop graduates for influential service.

Dr Andrew Butcher
CEO and Dean



Introduction

I am currently sitting in my office on this gorgeous first day of spring, 2018. The sun is streaming in my window and a beautiful tui is singing its heart out in the kowhai tree by the BTI Reception. It is somewhat surreal to be realising that BTI is celebrating its 25th year.

While I have lived and breathed the Bethlehem Campus vision for most of my life, my first formal involvement with what was then called Bethlehem Teachers College, was as an associate teacher for some of the first intake of student teachers. At that time, I was teaching in the primary school at Bethlehem College. In those days, the student teachers' practicum experiences were designed around what was called, an apprenticeship model. Student teachers would join a classroom every morning for two terms then in the afternoons they would return to Bethlehem Teachers College for their lectures.



Pictured here on the left is the first intake of student teachers, who 25 years ago, took a step of faith and risked enrolling in a 'not yet accredited' Diploma of Teaching on the Bethlehem Campus. In the process they put a stake in the ground for Christian Education in New Zealand. To this day, I am still grateful to Gina, Andrew and David, my first three student teachers, for all they taught me, as together we sought to serve and teach the children in my class.

I never would have thought that my connection to BTI would extend to becoming more intimately involved. Firstly I moved out of teaching in the primary school to serving within the Diploma of Children's Ministries in the year 2000. This led on to my becoming one of the lecturers within the primary teacher education programme, and then finally, to become the Programme Coordinator overseeing the B.Ed. (Teaching) Primary programme in 2003. While over the years this role has changed annually, what has remained constant is my passion; my heart to teach; to love, walk alongside, laugh and cry with, pray for and cheer on, the amazing people who courageously put their hands up to stand in the gap for our nation's next generation.

To commemorate this 25 year milestone we have collated over thirty inspiring stories from some of the courageous graduates of our teacher education programmes. It has been wonderful to read about the variety of places our graduates have been to, both here in New Zealand and across the nations. It has been delightful reminiscing over the incredible people we have had the privilege of getting to know. What a wonderful opportunity to pause and consider God's vision, provision, and faithfulness, as well as the hard work of staff, students and their support crews to see this vision realised.



As you read this book, I hope you will be encouraged by the graduates' passion, fortitude, and the variety of teaching contexts in which they have served since walking across the graduation stage in a funny black hat and gown. As I have read through these stories and taken the time to enjoy the photos, it is humbling to consider how many are contributing in such a variety of ways to make a significant difference in young people's lives... I am feeling grateful and encouraged, and I hope you will be too! God is GOOD. Together we give God the glory for His enabling presence over the past 25 years. Bring on the next 25 years!

To conclude, I'd like to share the following verse with you from The Passion Translation of the Bible; Romans 15:13.

Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope.

Cathryn Bell

Primary Programme Leader

Alumni stories

Julie Smith

Studied at Bethlehem Teachers College 1995-1997; BTI 2006

First of all congratulations BTI on your 25th anniversary! I am one of the first graduates from what was originally called, Bethlehem Teachers' College.

I remember feeling blessed when I heard that I had been accepted to train as an educator, and was beyond blessed that my training would be immersed in Christian education. I am biased, but I think our cohort of learners was one in a million; who knew we'd be friends for life.

After graduating, I taught mainly Year 8 students at Matamata Intermediate School. I still vividly remember setting up my first ever classroom. The memories of my first year of teaching will always be held dear to me. Beginning teaching came with 'wobbles,' but on a whole, I felt 'well-trained' and ready for action. I'm still thankful to this day for the other young beginning teachers, who I worked alongside, and for the memories made. There are three colleagues from my beginning journey who are now successful Principals around the Bay of Plenty. We were all passionate about our profession and have supported each other through thick-and-thin.

After a short time at Matamata Intermediate, I moved to Otumoetai Intermediate; a much larger school. My memories of teaching at Otumoetai Intermediate are very positive. I received lots of support and experienced a lot of fun! The 'Light-Bulb' Learning programme was at the beginning stages of development. This was a programme that stirred child-led learning and inquiry. I grew a lot professionally during this time and felt challenged to allow my students to inquire more into what they were learning and to enable them to inquire into what they actually wanted to learn. This was my first experience with inquiry-based learning, and I really enjoyed it. Little did I know that my career would only get stronger in this approach to teaching and learning.

Then, praise the Lord, I was able to return to my 'roots' and worked in the Primary School at Bethlehem College. Wow, what an amazing time in my career this was. Dave Bell was the Principal, and what a guy! During my training at BTI, I was a student teacher under Dave's care. It was such a great celebration and a privilege to work under him as my Principal. His pastoral heart for each and every child and staff member was so appreciated my many. I learned a lot under the leadership of Dave, and for this I am thankful. Glenn Davies was my Team Leader at the time, and I was blessed to work alongside someone who was a natural teacher and a keen musician. He was also passionate about children guiding their own learning. We developed and taught some amazing units, and the excitement to learn was infectious. I had no idea that Glenn and myself would meet up again in the future, in a very



different setting serving within International Schools. I was so excited to hear about, and observe Glenn grow in his profession. He is now a Principal in Cebu, in the Philippines.

During my time at Bethlehem I fell pregnant. It was with mixed emotions that I resigned my position as a classroom teacher and moved into motherhood. Teaching was so natural to me. If I had an area of concern or lack of knowledge, I could read up about it, implement it, and move forward. However, it didn't matter how many books I read on bringing up a child, or how much advice people gave me, raising my own my child was challenging; no one specific strategy worked. But it was an incredibly rewarding time of my life.

It was around this time that we had some very close friends and family members working overseas in International Schools. A dear friend knew that my Diploma of Teaching would not be a sufficient qualification to enable me to work in International Schools. She encouraged me to complete my Bachelor's degree. I worked incredibly hard, being a new mum and a student. However, it wasn't long before I graduated again, this time with a Bachelor of Education (Teaching), Primary, degree through the renamed Bethlehem Tertiary Institute.

I am thankful to the staff at BTI for their support as there was a lot going on in my personal life; but I pushed through and achieved my goals. The Bethlehem campus was, and always will be, a special part of my life. It wasn't long before I realised I just couldn't keep out of the classroom. I fulfilled a number of part-time, 'fixed-term' positions at Bethlehem College, Primary. They ranged from relieving to SENCO, through to teaching English at the International School and teaching Music alongside Ruth Sweatman. I had a blast! Helen Armstrong was also a significant person in my life at this time. I am very thankful to these two lovely ladies for their support as I delivered the Music programme at BC. During this time Helen Armstrong talked about her journey at an International School in Brunei as a music teacher. We would often chat about her experiences. I always felt a 'fire' in my soul as we spoke.

Within my family unit we had to make some tough decisions due to ill health. My husband, the most amazing man, was no longer able to work full time. We knew my passion for education was forever burning, so we decided to swap roles. My husband became house-dad, the best decision ever. To this day I owe sincere thanks to my husband Geoff Smith, for all of his support within my career. He has believed in me since day one. He sees my passion, he hears my crazy ideas, he pushes me, challenges me, encourages me to strive for excellence in all I do. It is because of him that I have pushed past fear and self-doubt many times, and moved into roles within education I could have only dreamed of.

In 2006, we moved to Dubai (United Arab Emirates, UAE), and I worked at Uptown School, an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. Coming from the NZ curriculum into the IB curriculum had its challenges. I was relieved to discover that I entered the IB programme with a strong 'tool-kit' from all my experiences as a NZ educator. I think my biggest strengths were being able to demonstrate and sustain my dedication to the classroom ethos expected by the school. I came to Dubai as the Performing Arts teacher. I taught music, dance and drama to students from the pre-kindergarten age through to Grade 9. The IB Curriculum took my teaching and learning to a whole new level. The collaborative approach

to learning outcomes was phenomenal. The music teacher role was not a stand-alone area of the curriculum. The music curriculum was embedded into the units of inquiry taking place within each Grade level. This meant that my planning meetings were with the Grade level teachers and the learning taking place spilled over into the Performing Arts room.

I absolutely loved this approach to teaching and learning. It was however, a lot of hard work- forever meetings. In saying this, the outcome for the students far outweighed the hours of planning and preparation. There was a true sense of learning outcomes which were often celebrated through large, stage performances. Uptown School, like most International Schools had high fees, so the expectations on teachers, was high. I absolutely loved my time at Uptown, especially because of the professional development I received and of course, the amazing people I worked with. Due to the global financial crisis which hit hard in the UAE in 2008, we needed to move on from Dubai.

After three years in Dubai we moved to Brunei. Yes, all of those conversations with Helen Armstrong paid off. I still to this day remember opening up the music resource cupboard in Brunei and discovering amazing planning folders with Helen's name on them. I felt like I had stepped into her shoes. Due to my experience in the IB curriculum, my role was to implement a similar approach in regards to ensuring that the music programme had links to units of work taking place within the classrooms. This was a challenge as the International School in Brunei (ISB) was not an IB school. However, it didn't take long for at least one unit to become embedded within the music room.



These were great days. My principal, Shane Nathan, was a great leader who supported me in the development of the music curriculum at ISB. Over time, ISB grew in student numbers and redeveloped its campus. I was involved in the transition from an old, run-down campus to a brand new 'modern learning environment', built for purpose. I worked in the music department for three years and then transitioned back into the classroom as a Year 2 teacher.

I had my eyes and heart set on potential senior leadership positions, as this was always a career goal, but I knew I needed to be back in the classroom in order to fulfil that goal. I moved from strength to strength as a classroom teacher and before I knew it I was appointed Assistant Head within the Primary School, on the Primary Senior Leadership Team. I am truly thankful to those who believed in me and knew the passion I had for teaching and learning within the Junior School. I had the privilege of this position for a number of years. The professional development on offer was fantastic, and I grew in my leadership role. Thailand was often the place for our Professional Development. My role

included the appraisal process for the Junior School staff, admissions for both Primary and Secondary students, and a range of student and community events. Being part of the Primary Leadership Team was a rewarding position which of course came with its challenges.

Having returned to NZ, I am now working at Hillview Christian School in Christchurch as a Year 1 teacher. Transitioning back to NZ with Senior Leadership experience, but no recent NZ Curriculum experience, meant that I was not able to continue within leadership. This has been a humbling experience, one which has allowed me to reflect on my leadership skills, as I am now back at the ground level of the classroom. It has been an amazing 18 months. I am truly blessed to be working with such wonderful colleagues and being back with Christ at the centre of all learning, which brings so much joy. The other added gift from God was reuniting with Claudia Pennell. We trained together at Bethlehem Teachers College – God is good!



My parting words to all who read this e-book, is that we never know the journey ahead. I encourage you to focus on what is right in front of you; embrace it and be strong in what you are passionate about. Keep learning; converse with those who are experienced. Learn from those who are experts in their field. I am truly thankful to all who have been placed within my path of life. Thank you BTI for all that you did, and have done for me.

Rachelle Hulbert (née Hinton)

Studied at Bethlehem Teachers College during 1995-1997

Like many teachers I have had the privilege of working with over the last 21 years, I wanted to be a teacher from a young age. My childhood memories are filled with 'playing teacher'; marking the roll, creating activities for people to complete, giving out gold stars and arranging my desk. Growing up, school for me was a happy place of learning. I was inquisitive, I loved books, and reading stories to people was a favourite past time. From a young age I decided that I would train to be a teacher at Auckland Teachers College and I made sure I told people this.



Rachelle 2017, Takapuna, Auckland

My parents followed God's calling to attend Christ for the Nations Bible College in Dallas, Texas, when I was 13. This was a quite a change for our family and it meant that I lived my teenage years in the good ole USA. Living six years at the Bible College campus certainly opened my eyes to the world around me. It was an international college and we were blessed to sit under the teaching of some amazing men and women of God; both lecturers and guest speakers. We were from New Zealand and not many people knew where that was; it certainly wasn't on any of the large metal globes that adorned the many buildings and public spaces in the area. For some reason the world stopped at Australia. After graduating from the local High School, I enrolled in the Bible College to study towards an Associate's Degree in Practical Theology majoring in youth ministry. I was going to use my creative ideas and combine these with teaching in order to minister to young people.

Upon graduation I moved back to New Zealand and lived in Katikati where I began working as a youth coordinator in a local church. It was during this time that I heard about Bethlehem Teachers College. I knew that it would combine my passion for teaching with my love of the Word and my faith in God. Another draw card for me was the prospect of learning in an environment where I would have greater opportunities to be in classrooms with experienced teachers on the campus. My interview, more of a conversation, was in Graham Preston's office with both Graham and Martin Codyre. I knew it was where I was meant to be. It was, however, a leap of faith to accept a studentship in 1995 as at that stage our cohort was the third intake and the college had not yet gained NZQA approval for the diploma they were offering.

I loved learning to be a teacher, and I especially enjoyed the curriculum classes. Martin, Marion Sanders, Dr. Bob, Tony Hawkins and David Giles shared their wealth of teaching experience with us, and for me, it felt like we were one large family. Some of my fondest memories include: camp discussions, drawing upside down in Explorations in Learning and Teaching, making musical instruments out of recycled containers, creating colourful mind

maps, and making mathematics games and resources. I also recall a hikoi up Mauao, trips to the Tauranga recycling station and water treatment plant, completing a high ropes course, writing and teaching units of work on bees, bread and India. And of course I remember practicum experiences at Bethlehem College, Tauranga Intermediate, and Brookfield and Maungatapu Primary Schools. Last but not least, I remember graduation; no regalia in 1997.

Life during study was not always easy; there were difficult times, one of which occurred when I was driving to my parents' home in Whakatane to attend a wedding after a night of waitressing. I fell asleep, crossed a lane and rolled my car on the Matata Straights. It was like it all happened in slow motion, but I remember calling out to God saying, 'Not Yet!' I knew my time was not up and I had work that needed to be done. I knew God had a call on my life. It was also challenging when I received news on Valentine's Day that one of my closest friends had been killed in a motorcycle accident. It is in these times that I held onto God's promises, that he had a plan and a purpose for my life and that I had to trust in Him to bring it to pass.

On a romantic note, my classmates will remember that I stared out of the window a lot. This was because our classrooms were at the back of Bethlehem College, where the Junior Secondary Technology classes are now. It just so happened that the Bethlehem College Kindergarten was behind our building and the teachers walked their children down to the buses every day. I took an interest in this activity as there was one particular teacher that I wanted to develop a *friendship* with. Needless to say, on the 6th of December, 1997 - two days before graduation - Glen and I were married at the Bethlehem College Chapel and we had our wedding reception at Mills Reef. Yes, I went to Teachers College to get a degree and finished with all that and more!

After getting married and graduating, Glen and I moved to London where we started married life and made our home for 8 years. Teaching in London was interesting. I am thankful for this start to my teaching career as it made me a better teacher. I thought teaching would be a breeze. However, anyone working with children knows that it is a challenging mix of agony (working with disaffected families and dysfunctional behaviour) and elation (when you see that 'ah ha' moment). The professional development opportunities that were made available to me added to my learning from Teachers College and, being a learner, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Very early on in my teaching in the Wandsworth Borough area of SW London, I was asked to take on various responsibilities. My love of reading and plentiful professional development opportunities, including the National Literacy Strategy, saw me taking on literacy leadership roles. I was able to do the Newly Qualified Teachers PD. However, as I only had a Diploma in Teaching, I was unable to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status. I was fortunate enough to work in a small Church of England School on a large estate. My colleagues were amazing. I believe we all worked in that school for such a long time because of our relationships and genuine concern for each other's well-being. It was not an easy place to teach. The brokenness we saw in students' lives on a daily basis, is difficult to put into words.

As Kiwis, I feel we take a lot for granted. Some of my fondest memories are of taking my inner-city London children on trips outside of the classroom. I remember camping in canvas tents at Sayer's Croft, going to the seaside at Brighton and attending a play at the West End. When children living four kilometres from Big Ben have never seen it, it stirs up something within you. I remember lessons in which I used pictures of different settings as motivators to draw out descriptive language, including beach settings. I also remember thinking, 'How can children really use all of their senses if they haven't experienced the setting or context?' I think it was an 'ah ha' moment for me.

In order to gain Qualified Teacher Status, and because of my teaching and leadership experience, I was able to enrol part-time in a postgraduate Master's Degree, through Kingston University, London. After starting the course I found out I was expecting a baby, Samuel. Then in the second year I found out I was expecting another baby, Thomas. I still remember sitting in hospital beds, organising people to take in my assessments so that they were completed on time. I can't say it was without its challenges juggling work, new-born babies and study, but walking across the stage of the enormous Barbican theatre in London to receive my degree, was worth it.

Our family unit returned back to New Zealand in 2005, where I was fortunate enough to gain a teaching position at Tauranga Intermediate School. Again, this was a great school for me to grow in various leadership roles through the professional development and opportunities offered to me. Looking back, I know that God has guided my steps.

At the end of 2012, I applied for a teacher educator position at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute and, here I am. God knew that I needed a Master's Degree to work here. He has given me so many life experiences to bring me to this point. Part of my work at BTI



Rachele 2018, with student-teachers in Noh Boh; Thai-Burmese border

involves providing an intensive English course in Reading and Writing to student-teachers at Noh Boh, a village on the Thai-Burmese border. I know now, that God can use me to train teachers who will then teach many more children than I could ever reach.

Shaun Brooker

Studied at Bethlehem Teachers College during 1996 – 1999.

After graduating, my wife Bron and I taught at Pukeoware School, a small country school near Waiuku. We then went to England for six months where I taught Maths and Computer Science at a High School in Kent, and Bron taught in a school on the Isle of Sheppey. We then moved to Triple C School in the Cayman Islands. Bron taught Grade 1, and for two years I taught K-12 PE and Grade 12 Physics. In my third year there, I was Head of Elementary and taught Grade 2.



We then returned to NZ where I took up the Principal's position at Timaru Christian School and Bron taught NE-Y4. We then started our family and Bron left formal teaching. We stayed at Timaru Christian School for six years before heading to Auckland. In Auckland, I had the privilege to head up the then new Elim Christian College Junior Campus. After five incredible years at Elim, I moved into my current role as Principal of Hamilton Christian School, where I have been for two years. Bron is teaching Year Two. I have been honoured to serve on many Trusts and various Boards, and am currently Chair of the New Zealand Association of Christian Schools, executive member of the Central North Island Schools' Principals Association and on the Australasian and Asian Education Advisory Board for Apple.

The following edited transcript is derived from Shaun's speech, delivered at our 2018, BTI Graduation Ceremony, in Tauranga. His speech provides further insights into his professional story...

I am honoured to stand before you today. I know that it is not because I was the student with the top grades over the past twenty-fives years of BTI's history. The truth is I would be lucky to be the student with even the 'middlest' grades. And I certainly am not standing here today because I epitomised the model student - I certainly got to know Martin Codyre, David Giles, Dr Bob Katterns, Lyn Lewis and Dr Marion Sanders in quite a unique way.

However, I do stand before you as someone who graduated in the last millennium, where we were taught what way to put the overhead transparencies on the overhead projectors, and how to plug the RCAs (old connector cables from your T.V.) into the VCR (video-cassette recorder). I guess I also stand here today as someone who believed in the importance of being faithful with the little that God has given me. I stand here as someone who absolutely believes that if we allow Him to, God can do amazingly and immeasurably more through us than we can ever dream of or imagine is possible.

But before I get to that, I would like to congratulate Bethlehem Tertiary Institute for their 25 years of service. The actualisation of vision of Graham Preston and the late Martin Codyre, to establish a tertiary institute with a difference, was no small accomplishment. BTI provides a point of difference that not only equips students with the skills to do the future

job God calls them to, but to challenge students to see the world in a way that the Bible describes it.

Unfortunately, many people struggle to articulate what Christian Education really is. Most often, I feel people see it as secular education with the Christian bit added on the side. However, last week I had two councillors from the Hamilton City Council express it to me, in a clear and articulate way. It all happened at an art competition that our students had been very successful in over the past couple of years. During the award ceremony, the presenter would show the painting that a student had submitted and would read what that student had written that had been their inspiration for the piece of art. Three of the councillors found me, and explained how impressed they were with the submissions from our school. In their eyes, not only did the students have the refined skills to create an aesthetically pleasing piece of art, but the depth of perspective that the students articulated about how the world around them had inspired them, was head and shoulders above the other contestants.

Christian Education is not merely the teaching of skills and worldview, competing for time in the class; rather Christian Education is how the teaching of skills and worldview complement each other to give each other more value. To love the unlovable, to forgive the unforgivable, to accept the unaccepted, to help the helpless, to hurt with the hurting, to pursue others success, selflessly, and to speak the truth in love. BTI exists to be a relational, responsive and transformative Christ-following tertiary learning community, committed to growing a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God on Earth. The institutes vision for itself will serve you well. But be careful. It is easy to observe relational, responsive and transformative as words defined as the world sees them. But you are called to a different 'relational', 'responsive' and 'transformative'. You and I are to love unconditionally, to respond with grace, and to continually be transformed by the renewing of our our mind in a way that enables us to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.

People are an essential aspect to your calling here on Earth. There will be days as a teacher, that the thought will cross your mind, 'my life would be so much easier if there were no students'. But remember, everybody you interact with is more than a body and a mind...they are a soul, a spirit in need of the Redeemer. You are all walking into a world of lost and broken people. As a society we have never been more disconnected and more lonely. As a society we have become more tolerant and less loving. But there is an answer, there is a way, and there is a Redeemer. Many people just do not know Him yet.

You have an understanding of a biblical worldview. You have developed a range of professional skills; now go and make a difference in the world. But you will need courage. Our God is much bigger than you and I can ever comprehend. If you trust Him in all your ways, fully trust Him, know that He will pour out His blessings on you and will do immeasurably more than you could every dream possible.

I know this too well, because I am a living testimony of it. Just ask Marion, Hazel and Bev.

Denice Morgan

Studied at Bethlehem Teachers College during 1997-2000

I have some fond memories, not only of my holiday to New Zealand in the summer of 1996, but also of the day my feet touched the grounds of the Bethlehem Teachers' College campus to inquire about teacher education courses and to collect a prospectus. After an inspiring conversation with Graham Preston and an interview with Martin Codyre, Dr. Bob Katterns and David Giles, I was accepted into the Diploma of Teaching programme in Early Childhood Education, beginning the following year. The three-year Diploma was followed by an extra year to complete a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) ECE degree. The study was challenging and inspirational.

I learnt so much from my fellow students in the Early Childhood and Primary Teaching programmes

along with the wonderful staff; their inspiration, words of wisdom and kindness, have stayed with me

to this day. To cap it all (pardon the pun), I have such happy memories of the graduation in December 2000, when I celebrated with my fellow students and dearest friends, Kath Mackie and Raewyn Stewart.



*Graduation 2000: Llyn (back left), Melody (2nd back right) Hillary (back right).
Denice (2nd front right) with Kath and Raewyn either side*

I began my teaching journey in 2001 with excitement, armed with knowledge gained from early childhood lecturers Hilary Monk, Llyn Gammin and Melody Stuckey, as well as the new early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. With a heavy kete, I took my first job as an early childhood teacher as an infant and toddler teacher at First Class Education and Care, working with Colleen Fryett and her staff, in Tauranga. After a few months teaching infants and toddlers I was promoted to Head Teacher with the three to five year old children. This was a pivotal experience in my career, as Colleen empowered me use my creativity and innovation in the ways I inducted new staff, supported student teachers, and taught young children. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our early childhood curriculum, and include children and their families in the planning and assessment processes.

In March of 2002, I went back to my homeland of Wales, to take on a role as Information Communication Technology Officer in the village I had grown up in. During this time, I developed an educational project for children and young people (age range 3-14), to engage them in their learning. This included working with children with learning disabilities, and emotional and behavioral difficulties. I liaised with schools and other agencies within the community, and used the Information Communication Technology Centre to raise local

educational standards. During this time, I was given the opportunity to complete a number of courses to support my teaching. The course with the National Open College Network in 2005, covering basic approaches to Counseling Ethics, Theory and Practice, proved a great asset. It helped me develop a broader perspective on how to recognise the emotional and psychological needs of the children I taught. Through the knowledge I gained, I was able to help the whole person. I was beginning to meet the diverse needs of the children I taught, and started to fulfill my desire for children to discover their God given potential.

Through these prior teaching and learning experiences, I believe God was prompting me to further my study. I listened to God's call and enrolled in the Master of Arts in Education Drama programme, at Trinity University College, in Carmarthen. While studying I worked part time as an early childhood teacher and assistant manager at a nursery school in my home town. During the latter part of my study, I moved from my home town and worked part time as a learning resource assistant at Trinity University College in Carmarthen. Little did I know that all these learning and teaching experiences were preparing me for what God had planned for me next.

After completing my Master of Arts in Education Drama, I was contacted in 2010 by Dr Beverley Norsworthy, and offered a position teaching in the early childhood programme at Bethlehem Institute of Education (later renamed as BTI). I was delighted to accept the offer and began my new role in August 2010 as an early childhood teacher educator, alongside Karyn Robertson, Susan Turner, Phillip Ozanne and Siulolo Ahio. God had brought me back to New Zealand where once again, my feet touched the land of the Bethlehem campus.

I have had some incredible opportunities to teach students from a biblical perspective and my prayer is that they will develop confidence in God's plan for their lives; being equipped to influence the next generation, to be compassionate, and creative problem solvers. I have also enjoyed opportunities to teach with early childhood colleagues which now include Jocelyn Flett. In addition, I have had encouraging experiences teaching alongside some of the primary, secondary, counselling and social work lecturers. I have also been able to share some of my knowledge and skills through early childhood teachers' professional development workshops at BTI and at the Christian Early Childhood Education Association (CECEAA) conferences. One of my personal joys from last year was to have my first article published in the CECEAA, Te Hono magazine. The article was titled, 'Beliefs and values that support sustainability.' This article has inspired me to conduct a small, related research project, in the near future.



You never know where God will take you and what adventures are ahead. Just think, I was blissfully unaware the day I walked onto the Bethlehem Collage campus in the summer of 1996 to collect a prospectus; little did I know that the events of that day changed the course of my life. It has truly been an exciting and sometimes a scary adventure, but one I am glad to have taken. I listened to God's call on my life to become a teacher, and I am blessed to have joined this admirable profession.

Lynn Nicholls

Studied at Bethlehem Teachers College during 1997-2000

As a mature student with a secure Christian faith, I felt the call to seek training that would enable me to make a difference in people's lives, so I completed my Bachelor of Education, (Teaching) Primary degree, at BTI. In the course there was an elective paper which included an introduction to teaching English as a second language. It was this opportunity, and the inspiration from the late Ruth Smith who presented the paper, that set the journey for my future career.



2000 graduation photo

After graduating in the year 2000, I started teaching part time for the International School at Bethlehem College. During this time I became very interested in the development of teaching English as a second language as my teaching role had expanded to include responsibilities of academic and pastoral dean for international students. Getting to know these students provided valuable insight into the complex learning challenges they faced when living and studying in our kiwi culture. These factors influenced my decision to complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Second Language Teaching in 2006. A change of direction for international students at the school presented a leadership opportunity, and in 2009, I was appointed Director of Bethlehem College International. After 14 years training and teaching at Bethlehem College, my journey then took a new direction.

In 2011, my husband had the opportunity to work in a developing world situation in training eye-care skills in the Pacific. So for the next two years we lived in Fiji. My desire and passion to continue working with second language students now had a new context. During this time I completed a thesis for my Master of Philosophy in Teaching a Second Language degree. I had the rich experience of focusing my research on high school teachers and students from English language classes in three different educational contexts in Fiji.

Now back home in Tauranga, I am focused on teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) within my own community. I have recently introduced a conversational English class for migrant groups in our local church. At a tertiary level, I have been working at Toi-Ohomai Institute of Technology with teams developing and teaching a syllabus for the New Zealand Certificate in English Language course and preparation classes for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). I have also worked with local language schools as a specialist consultant when needed. And lastly, at a regional level, I serve as the convenor of TESOLANZ Bay of Plenty; co-ordinating professional development workshops for primary, secondary and tertiary teachers.

Congratulations BTI for 25 years of service. Thank you for the nurturing environment you provided which allowed me to achieve and go beyond my goals. I only felt confident because I was well-prepared and well-trained. I have loved my journey of teaching students and working with different teams of people in different contexts. I feel I have really been able to make a difference in helping others achieve their goals too.

Kath Mackie

Studied at Bethlehem Teachers College during 1997-2000

My first introduction to BTI was initially through a phone call I made, asking if they could possibly send me information about the new early childhood course I had seen advertised in the local paper. During this call I was invited to come in and have a chat with one of the lecturers who would be teaching the course. I had been out of a school environment for the last twenty



Raewyn Stewart, Llyn Gammin (Lect.), Kath Mackie, Melody Stuckey (Lect.), Hilary Monk (Lect.), Denice Morgan

years, and was frankly, extremely nervous about returning. A face-to-face chat with one of the lecturers seemed like a low stress way to gain information about the course. My little chat with the wonderful Llyn Gammin soon turned into an informal interview with Hilary Monk and then David Giles over a cup of tea and biscuits. To my amazement I was accepted into the programme. I was absolutely elated and slightly terrified at the same time; life was never going to be the same.

Being the first group of students in a new early childhood programme was both exciting, and just a little daunting. We laughingly called ourselves the guinea pigs. We worked hard, laughed a lot, ate really well, had amazing lecturers and built responsive and reciprocal relationships (had to put a little *Te Whāriki* in there) with both our lectures and fellow cohorts of student. Oh, and we learnt a lot as well.

After graduating in 1999 with a Diploma of Teaching in ECE I decided to do another year of study to gain my Bachelor of Education in 2000. In 2001 it was time to put the knowledge into practice. I was given the opportunity to do this at First-class Education and Care, which at the time was owned by Colleen Fryett. I was appointed as the supervisor of the 3-5 year old age group. Colleen was an employer who encouraged and supported her staff, and was always happy to listen to new ideas and discuss any concerns. I learnt a lot from Colleen, her care and support of the children, families and staff, as well as drive to get things done.

Half way through 2002 I was given the opportunity to come back to BTI, this time as part of the ECE teacher education team to work alongside Hilary Monk, Melody Stuckey, and Llyn Gammin. Being on the other side of the desk was a new challenge. Thankfully I had great

support not only from those mentioned above but from the whole teaching team at BTI. I think it was in my second year at BTI that I was given the role of practicum coordinator. I loved this role organising practicum placements for students, talking with different supervisors, visiting centres and seeing how students progressed in these busy environments. For some of my time at BTI I was also able to work at least one day a week initially at First Class Education and Care and then later on at Shalom Kindergarten, Otumoetai.



After several years at BTI I decided to take a break from tertiary education and do some ECE relieving. During this time I taught at several places including the Greerton Early Childhood Centres. Both the Emmett and Mitchell Street centres in Greerton were owned by Lorraine Sands. This was a particularly interesting time as her facilities were part of the Ministry of Education Centres of Innovation programme focused on strengthening the implementation and development of the curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, within ECE contexts.

After almost a year of relieving the opportunity to work as a full time staff member at Shalom Kindergarten came about, and it was there I spent the following seven years teaching. Through this time I had the chance to work with Raewyn, my fellow classmate, guinea pig and longtime friend. My supervisor was Gwen Binns. Her experience was invaluable in my growth as a teacher, and the amazing Sharon van Ameringen was there too, who taught me what it really means to value people for who they are, not what you or I would like them to be.



Visiting Sienna, Italy 2016

In early 2015, I decided to take a year out, spend time with family, travel a little, and generally potter about. By the end of the year I was over pottering, and back among the pre-school children. At present I relieve at both Shalom Kindergarten and at Country Kids, which is owned by Joanna Bennett, a former BTI student, and Neal her husband.

I feel very lucky to be able to continue my teaching, back amongst friends and past students- Happy days.

Kate Moore

Studied at BTI during 2000-2003

My name is Kate Moore (née Smith). I attended BTI from 2000 – 2003 studying to be a primary school teacher. I started my first year part-time as I was a single mother to a young child. I then ended up studying full-time for the last two years. I still remember being interviewed by Dr Bob Katterns and David Giles. I remember feeling incredibly intimidated and nervous by their obvious intellectual presence, but they were very welcoming and I managed to make it through. I enjoyed my time at BTI immensely and ended up being involved with student council as the vice president.



After finishing my course, I actually struggled to find a job which was very discouraging. I did relieving for a few years and also worked in early childhood; still applying for jobs, hoping, yet having no success. In the meantime I got married and had a baby. I continued to work taking relieving jobs wherever I could, all the while feeling more and more discouraged. I was visiting a family member in hospital one day when I bumped into Dave Valentine, a fellow member of my class from BTI. He mentioned that he was working in a special needs unit at Te Puke High School and that there was a .3 position going if I was interested. I had never considered working at a high school level and most certainly never considered working with students who have special needs. But I thought, what the heck, students are students, and applied for the job. Little did I know, but that day would be a catalyst for the next ten years, working with students who have special needs.

I worked at Te Puke High School for three years teaching children with both special needs and literacy needs. I also taught a Year 9 Social Studies class. I really missed working with younger children, and after moving to Western Australia in 2012, I ended up working in a special needs school that catered solely for primary aged students. I taught classes from between 4-10 students and also had the support of up to 7 teacher aids at a time. I soon learnt that managing and leading teacher aides was a vital part of my job and not something that I ever learnt at Teachers College. I wasn't used to giving orders to grown adults and felt quite self-conscious about it. I soon learnt that I needed to give clear explicit instructions from the get-go. I learnt that I needed to have everything in place so that they could do their job efficiently and that it was okay to be bossy; in fact they needed me to be bossy.

Working with students with special needs has definitely changed my whole outlook on teaching and learning, as well as my outlook on life. In special education our accomplishments are so huge and yet so small. I remember working in Australia, and I was standing outside with a student while he ate his lunch with all the other children. I was standing close to him and holding a "Finding Nemo" book in my hand. I remember thinking, if anyone was walking past they probably wouldn't think much of it, but what they wouldn't know was that I had just managed to get this student outside for the first time in months

due to his fear of seagulls. What they also wouldn't realise was that the book I was holding was the only thing that was calming him down and keeping him out there long enough to eat his lunch.

That's the way it goes in my classes. We have amazing triumphs, that nobody ever sees, that literally changes the lives of students and their families. I have had the privilege of seeing many great achievements. Students that are achieving goals who have never encountered a positive experience in school before, students who are learning for the first time, students who are eating better, socialising better, making friends for the first time, who are learning how to communicate with the outside world and who are learning to understand their environment better. As special educators we are often the last step for many students. There is nowhere else for them to go, we are often dealing with parents who have had their hearts broken and who have lost faith in the education system. I work as a team with occupational therapists, psychologists and speech therapists.

One thing I learnt from BTI that has underpinned all my work as a special education teacher is the importance of building relationships. This applies to the families I work with and the staff and specialists I rely on. Above all the papers I completed and all the lectures I attended, this has been the most powerful resource that I have used in my job. This is something special to BTI and I am very grateful that I learnt it when I was there.

I am now living and working in Nelson in the South Island. I am the lead teacher in a satellite unit at Maitai Special Needs School. We are currently growing at a very fast pace. It has been interesting being involved in the future planning for our school including the design of the playground and buildings.



Emily Reid (née Myers)

Studied at BTI during 2001-2003

In 2001, I arrived at BTI, having been accepted on “provisional entry” as I was only 16; the youngest student in my class. Following my interview for the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree, nearing the end of 2000, I was informed that although I lacked the grades to officially be accepted, they felt that God was leading me, and them, to have a try. I feel like that sums up my three years study; ‘try’ with lots of hard work too. I remember sitting in lectures feeling frustrated that there seemed to be no answers, but more questions. However, now I’m forever grateful because the lecturers taught me to think, research, and create my own ideas and opinions. Also, the staff demonstrated the incredible value of people through love and prioritising relationships.



Following graduation, I was blessed to secure a job teaching a composite class of Year 3-5 students at Paeroa Christian School until 2005. I taught part-time, releasing the principal, which was an amazing experience. I think I learnt more than the students! After gaining my full registration, I married a local Waikato dairy farmer and opted for a change of scenery.

The next few years involved many changes. Firstly, I worked as a coordinator of a before-and after-school programme at Whitiara School in Hamilton. I also taught in part-time positions for teachers who had classroom release time and for beginning teachers when they had release time. As the wife of a farmer, I even entered the cow shed as a farm-hand when my husband was injured, before taking on short-term and long-term relief teaching in Te Aroha.

In 2007, I was offered a job as a host at Totara Springs camp, in Matamata; specifically focusing on school and education groups. This was one of my all-time favourite jobs; working with teachers and schools, in helping create a fun and safe experience. Not only that, it meant teachers could finish camp having ticked off many of their curriculum objectives when they returned to school. I loved getting to serve other teachers and ideally make their life easier.

Having grown up in a Christian home, as a missionary pastor’s kid, my childhood dream was to go into missions myself. When I trained as a teacher, I saw it as a stepping stone in preparation for this. Unlike my classmates, I didn’t dream of having my own classroom with 20-30 students. Although I did enjoy teaching, and counted it a privilege, I saw it as a way of God equipping me for work abroad. My husband and I began saving money to go into YWAM, Australia, for a year. I opted to pop back into teaching for six months prior to this, and the door opened for me to do a New Entrant overflow class at one of Hamilton’s lowest

decile schools. Though my time there was short, I learnt the power of simply being present and being the safe person; creating a safe place where students knew they could find love and acceptance.

While working in YWAM, outback Australia, I wore a variety of hats: from heading up catering, to pioneering a ministry visiting the local brothels where we offered the girls English lessons and friendship. I also did my Certificate IV in Training and Assessing, and became the Training Coordinator for our location. Then I went on to oversee our Discipleship Training Schools (DTS) and led outreach teams throughout South East Asia and ran six-month schools. This is where my passion for discipleship was lit and I started working with adults in an educational setting.

Following our three years in YWAM, my husband and I returned to New Zealand for just over two years, as we felt we needed a season of refreshing and re-equipping. For me this meant entering the school classroom again and becoming re-registered as a teacher. Again, an amazing door opened where I became the teacher of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) at a school I'd previously worked at, which had recently, built a modern 'innovative learning environment'. While there, I gained a scholarship to do my post-grad TESOL certificate through Massey University. The following year, I went back to being a student fulltime, and joined my husband at Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies in Gordonton, north of Hamilton. There I gained a certificate, in "Intercultural Studies," in preparation for going to work full-time in cross-cultural ministry abroad.

While at Eastwest College, we were invited to move to Stung Treng, Cambodia, to be team leaders at a non-government organisation, Asian Outreach Cambodia. Shortly after arriving, I was asked to be project leader of developing and creating The Hope Centre.

The aims of this centre are to help break the poverty cycle in rural Cambodia, restoring hope and dignity to people's lives through various soft and hard skills training. With my qualifications and experience, we were able to legally register the centre, with me as the Director. Around the same time, I stepped into a shared role of Operations Director with my husband, overseeing the various community development projects; working with health, hygiene, ministry, agriculture, and children.



Map source: <http://www.local-adventures.com/stung-treng/>

This year we have over 6000 beneficiaries in our projects. However, what excites me is that through all the projects and work we do, it all starts with a foundation of education. In order for change to happen in any field, there needs to be an input of knowledge. Through

The Hope Centre, I get to be part of a wide range of activities, for example: training local teachers, coordinating parent workshops, and teaching English and computer skills. I also help organize happy clubs in the village with children where the kids enjoy colouring in, singing songs, and hearing Bible stories. My role even includes organising leadership development with our staff, and other local leaders/pastors, all with the goal of helping people reach their potential.

I'm now into my fourth year in Cambodia, and find myself challenging my staff with the same questions my lecturers challenged me. It's hard work, trying to break a cycle of thinking in a society where the history of rote learning has hindered them from thinking or creating for themselves. More than ever, I'm passionate about education, in a way I never thought I'd be. Training the children of today, means we're equipping the leaders of tomorrow; which while this is true everywhere, I feel especially honoured to be able to do it in a nation still bearing the pain and trauma from civil war.

My desire is to help restore hope and break the poverty cycle through helping equip tomorrow's leaders with keys, which will empower many generations to come. Sometimes, I feel like I have nothing to give. However, I am reminded that the greatest hope we can give is by sharing God's love. What is love? Love is patient and love is kind.



Often, I sit in awe of where I am today. I honestly believe I can see God's finger prints leading me here, all the way back to that young 16 year-old who didn't have the grades, but was provisionally accepted to study at BTI. I want to finish by saying thank you, from the bottom of my heart, to those who chose to listen to what they felt God was saying, and not being fixed on the legalities of the grades they saw. I am thankful for the deep relationships that were created and for the lecturers who modeled the value of people, through focusing on love and relationship.

Vanessa Millar (née Cannon)

Studied at BTI during 2001-2003

When I started my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree, BTI was called Bethlehem Institute of Education. For my first year, we had most of our lectures in the big, yellow building on the Bethlehem College campus. A few lectures were held in the high school classrooms.

After our graduation ceremony, I finally secured a job in Tokoroa, teaching New Entrants. It was a wonderful opportunity, where I had the chance to complete my provisional registration, lead my school in the development and implementation of the Numeracy Project, and be the acting Team Leader for a time.

In 2007, I left New Zealand to work as a camp counsellor in Maine, USA. After some travel, I settled in London. Finding relieving work in London was easy once I had signed up with a supply agency. Vibe Teacher Recruitment were a supportive company run by ex-pat Aussies, and they soon found me full-time work at a school in Paddington. My biggest achievement during this time was working as the Special Needs teacher for 3 days per week. It was an opportunity that allowed me to put into practice what I had learnt from Hazel Warnes about teaching children with special needs. Furthermore, I often filled in for the school SENCO teacher, completing paperwork, running meetings, and providing staff development sessions on how to take Reading Records using the PM Benchmark resource. I also taught in Year 3, with 29 or 30 children being ESoL. Most of these children were refugees from Iraq and Iran, and had a lot of trauma and subsequent learning difficulties to cope with. It was a time of huge growth for me as a teacher, and I am so thankful to my principal from Tokoroa who encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone, and spread my wings.

On moving home to Tauranga in September 2010, I found it difficult to get a job. Praise God, I had contacts back in Tokoroa and here in Tauranga, who offered me long-term and short-term relieving. As a result, I gained a position at Matua School in 2011. Since being at Matua School I have held various roles of responsibility. In particular, I enjoyed the position of Information Technology Leader, where I have been involved with the introduction and implementation of digital technology, including iPads and Google Apps for Education.



More recently, my career has taken on a different path as I am enrolled in BTI's Master of Professional Practice programme. I look forward to completing my thesis and making a difference in the area of learning and achievement in reading.

Throughout my career one thing remains constant; that of the importance of relationships in education. From the lecturers at BTI instilling in us the importance of relational teaching, and to the relationships I developed at BTI, which still remain strong today, to the relationships I develop each year with the children in my classes. This is where I see God's love in the world, through these relationships. I am blessed to be able to share His love in this way.



Peter Maslin

Studied at BTI during 2002

The following is an edited transcript of an interview with Peter.

I studied at BTI in 2002, which was up on the new campus, here at the top of Elder Lane. I did the Graduate Diploma of Secondary Teaching. I think the highlights of my time here were being in a place where I got a real confirmation about the call to teaching, a real desire and seed sown about a passion for Christian education, and the role that a Christian teacher could have in students' lives. In other regards I met some really cool people during the course here. Our year level was small, but we had a lot of fun. We would go off and do lectures at Dr Bob's bach at Onemana Beach. I have fond memories of Dr Bob's stories, and mentoring by Lyn Lewis; particularly in the teaching of social studies, which was very influential in the way I have taught since. I also immensely enjoyed my interaction and engagement with people such as Howard Youngs and Peter Grootenboer who really had a lot of influence on developing my approach to education.

Following my graduation, the next leg of the journey was a quick walk up the road to Bethlehem College to my old school, where I became the teacher in charge of history. That was an excellent journey for five years. I had a lot of fun at Bethlehem College; it was a great place to be, with great mentors. I learned a lot about Christian education in the context of the Christian school. I had a lot of fun in my other area of passion, coaching sport (cricket and hockey), going away to tournaments, having lots of experiences like that. Also visiting other Christian schools like Pacific Hills in Sydney and meeting the principal, Ted Boyce. Real highlights for me were again teaching under my history teacher at Bethlehem College, she inspired me... and also working under the former principal of Bethlehem College, Phillip Nash. He had a strong influence on who I am as a person, and why I want to be a teacher.



In about 2008, the next move was into the area I hadn't considered I'd be good at or have an interest in teaching, and that was in an all-girls school; Tauranga Girls College. It was probably the most daunting context I could think of teaching in. But I think God moved me in there because he really wanted to challenge me about where I could teach. He wanted to teach me a lot about how Christian education is not just about the specific school context, but it's about the teacher and the call that God puts on their life, *in any context*. In particular I learnt about developing Christian education inside a secular context. That was a really good challenge for me... but I also got to see a lot of excellent Christian teachers at work within that context. They inspired me. Again, I had a lot of fun there. I really enjoyed my time coaching the girls' cricket team.

One anecdotal story I would like to share was a challenge I experienced on the first day. I was teaching about ancient Egypt, and I was talking about the after-life with them, and

talking about what the ancient Egyptians took with them into the after-life. I used my probing questions and asked the students what they would take with them into the after-life, if they could take anything with them. Then this young student from down the back of the classroom popped her hand up and spoke out and said, 'I'd take you, Sir.' It was a direct challenge to see how I would react. I replied very calmly, 'That's really nice; but I don't think I'll be able to because I think my wife might have an issue with that.' And the girls laughed and it broke the tension really well, and it established a really good relationship with that class.

I also got to teach some new subjects at Tauranga Girls College such as tourism and animal care and technology. So I think I'm the only person at Tauranga Girls that has had a dog show on the back field as part of their course. And I brought a pet lamb into school... So that was just a year and a half there on a short term contract. But it was probably one of the most rewarding times of my teaching career.

After that I got the call to go to Katikati College, where I again resumed a head of history position and got to experience a secular rural school; different context and different environment. At Katikati College I taught history and I took on a range of new roles. I went into middle management as a dean and experienced working on the pastoral side of things, collaborating with senior management, working with students with behavioural issues, working in creating strategic plans for students, working in running a whole year level and ensuring they got academic and pastoral support. I coached rugby league which was really cool, and we went on to win the Western Bay championship. So that worked really well... I would say that if I hadn't got the opportunity to come to BTI I would still be there very happily progressing my career. I was at Katikati, 2010-2011.

What happened next? I had always been interested in the research and academics side of secondary teaching, and teaching teachers, and contributing that way; particularly developing the next generation of Christian educators. But one day I met Bev Norsworthy in a sushi shop at Fraser Cove. I knew Bev from my time at BTI, and we had a conversation. The outcome of meeting Bev in the sushi shop was that two years later I took up a position here at BTI in the Graduate Diploma in secondary education programme. And I have been here ever since.

The roles that I've served in here at BTI have involved teaching in a range of papers. I'm passionate about the philosophy of education and Christian education. So it's been great to engage a whole range of students in regards to those ideas in the ECE, primary and secondary contexts. It's been fun to learn a whole new range of pedagogies; particularly the development of digital pedagogies with students. I've love working with a wide range of people. I think the teams that I've worked with here have been fantastic. Particular highlights for me have been opportunities to teach overseas. I am really enjoying my time teaching intensives each year in Tonga, at Tupou Tertiary Institute. I



find those experiences very challenging and rewarding, both in the classroom with the adult students, but also in through the collegial conversations and fun that I've had getting to know the people. Additional highlights have been the range of professional development conferences I have been able to participate in. The real highlight for me was getting the opportunity to go to an IAPCHE conference in South Korea in 2016. This enabled me to present a paper in a field of Christian education and to get to meet a wider range of colleagues from other parts of the world who share similar passions. I got to visit some of the sights in Korea such as the demilitarized zone with North Korea.

Another highlight of my work at BTI has been the opportunity to pursue my interest in Holocaust education. This resulted in my being accepted into the scholarship programme in 2017 which included a trip to the international school of Holocaust studies at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel. We spent a two week intensive studying the Holocaust and visiting a number of sites around Israel. From a faith perspective, this was a real highlight to me. I've always wanted to go to Israel and I'm thankful to God for opening the door educationally for me to pursue that passion, and to see the places where Jesus had walked, which really brought the Bible stories to life. I've been able to bring what I learned; concepts such as, 'safely in, and safely out'. And being an *upstander* not a bystander. It has also opened up a door with the Holocaust foundation of New Zealand to allow me to do continued research with them.



The other major journey for me at the moment is my engagement with and entry into a PhD. I've just been accepted into my PhD programme officially at Auckland University of Technology. I'm interested in identity formation and how the digital identity of student teachers is being formed. I'm going to be working with first year student teachers in ECE, primary and secondary programmes, probably at either AUT or a range of institutions across New Zealand. I'm hoping to use life-narrative research methodology, involving a lot of interviews and focus groups; hearing the real life-voice of teachers.

One of the key words that transformed my career was a staff briefing at Tauranga Girls and the principal Pauline Cowens said, 'Teaching is a profession of hope.' That engaged me; that's why I'm in the classroom... to give hope to students that their life can be awesome, and because I believe in Christian education I have a relationship with Christ, that idea of a profession of hope is also about creating moments where you allow students to see eternal hope. So my encouragement to teachers is to pursue development in a way that helps you bring Christ's redemptive message into your practice, wherever it may be. If you pursue God, he'll be there, and empower you, to do it. Forgot also, that I met my wife when I was at BTI as a student, she was a graduate of the previous year's ECE cohort. Great futures do indeed start at BTI!

Jess Dickinson

Studied at BTI during 2003-2005

This afternoon, I am sitting in a small planning room; there is one computer on a bench, a chair, lots of toys, as well as various activities and art resources around me. I have been writing learning stories, planning an excursion, reflecting on the last month and thinking about the journey I took to get here. It is like so many of the planning rooms I have worked in over the last eleven years since I became 'a teacher'.

I had always dreamed and planned on becoming a teacher so when I finished college I began my studies at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute. I started my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary, in 2003. The 2003 intake was small, with the majority of us coming straight from college. Being a small intake we got to know each other 'very' well; we attended class together, studied together, socialised and attended church together. I loved studying, being a part of the BTI community, making new friends and facing the challenges of completing assignments on time. And above all, I enjoyed my professional placements, the two times a year when I was in a class, face to face with beautiful children. For three years I was working towards my goal of becoming 'a teacher'.



As 2005 came to an end, I was offered a job at a Christian holiday camp, planning programmes and linking them to the curriculum. I worked with teachers planning their camps, choosing activities, organising the timetables, and I worked with the children during their time at camp. This followed on from my third year research project into the benefits of education outside the classroom (EOTC). I learnt many skills and developed a deeper knowledge of how children learn, especially outside of the class. I worked there for a year before returning to Tauranga to begin my first teaching position in an early childhood centre.

From the first day, the first hour I loved it, caring for, nurturing, and teaching young children. I enjoyed the team environment of early childhood education. I enjoyed the close relationships I developed with the children and their families. I learnt that teaching was so much more than the planned curriculum. I returned to BTI that year, 2007, to study my Graduate Diploma of Teaching (EC) by flexi programme. Studying by flexi was so different to the on campus experience and I had to be a lot more self-motivated. The benefit of it was being able to work and study at the same time. Once I finished my studies for the Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Education I began working full time at the centre I was at.

The planning room I am sitting in today is at the fifth centre I have worked in full time. I have worked in small one room centres with 25 children through to large six room centres

with 125 children. I have worked with babies through to five year olds. I have worked in large cities and small rural communities.

Now I am in Melbourne, Australia. I am running a government-funded kindergarten programme, with a class of 33, three to five year olds, with a team of three educators. We have a play-based programme that centres on the children's interests. We have fun together as we learn together. We have a wide range of excursions to enhance our learning. I still love EOCT. We have excursions to the museum, the zoo, the planetarium, the library, the supermarket, the bush and where ever the children's interests take us.

I am the Educational Leader at our centre. I have created the programme based on the curriculum. I support the educators in the centre to implement it, assess its effectiveness and most importantly ensure that we are creating a safe and secure learning environment for the children in our care. I am a fully registered teacher, and have just completed the training to become a teacher mentor for provisionally registered teachers. I enjoy participating in many different professional development opportunities.



Source: <http://maps-melbourne.com/melbourne-australia-map>

BTI started me on the path of gathering the teaching knowledge, growing personally and spiritually, to become the teacher I am today. A teacher with a love for the children I work with, a passion to inspire, and the commitment to life-long learning.

Lisa Phillips

Studied at BTI during 2004-2006

When I first graduated with my Bachelor of Education (Teaching), Primary degree, I had no concept of how broad the application of my studies could be. At 19 years old, I was full of the enthusiasm of a new graduate, and was convinced that my professional future would be in schools. I had designed the layout of the rooms I would teach in, and had planned the lessons for the students I had yet to meet.



I began my teaching career in rural northern schools. I can still clearly remember my first classroom full of students. I can still remember their names and watching them filter in nervously on their first day, assessing me as I welcomed them in to the classroom that I had been preparing for them since 6am. Was it warm enough? Had I remembered everything they needed for their first day? I quickly learned about the unfiltered honesty of rural students. These students were not shy to provide their feedback on my teaching practice, and their comments enabled me to quickly develop the teaching methods required to balance the idealistic heart of a young teacher. Soon, the practice of teaching became natural, and I gained my full registration while continuing to sharpen my teaching practice.

As time went on, I felt compelled to work more specifically alongside students who were not best supported by the structure of school based education. I was working with young people who vocally challenged the structure and meaning of school based learning. I knew there was something I needed to do to ensure these young people were heard and catered for in terms of their education. I sought out opportunities to align myself with a method of learning that would allow these young people to thrive.

I relocated from Tauranga to Wellington, where I accepted a role managing three alternative youth education centres. Working with young people in alternative education re-motivated me. I found I had renewed energy, creativity and grit in this setting. These young people had often experienced difficulties and conflict in their lives, and many had been expelled from their previous education provider.

In this role, I was able to gain experience teaching and speaking with professional groups on topics such as youth trauma, and the impacts of trauma on learning. The combined experiences I had gained in teaching and learning allowed me to travel internationally and teach on these issues. I gained an increased sense of commitment to ensuring that people who had experienced significant trauma were not excluded from learning as a result of their challenging behaviours. I was forced to reflect on my own journey, and became increasingly aware that the challenging behaviours expressed by these young people were just more honest, outward expressions of the depth of feeling we can all experience at times.

I felt a greater sense of determination and purpose in alternative education, and the challenges of the role highlighted gaps in my knowledge that needed to be addressed. I completed postgraduate studies in addiction and mental health to strengthen my education practice in alternative settings. The foundation that the Bachelor of Education provided was critical in gaining a fuller understanding of the impact of mental health and addiction on the developing mind.

These additional studies opened the door for work in residential addiction services, where I took up the role of clinical team leader in a residential recovery programme, as well as a community based social detoxification programme. My education background allowed me to fully re-design the nine week recovery curriculum, weaving teaching and learning principles throughout group based and one to one recovery planning. During this time, I gained my full registration as an addiction practitioner, as well as maintaining my teaching registration.

I gained an increased interest in the relationship between education and health, and this interest motivated further Masters study, focussing on the impact of employment in healthcare roles on practitioner wellbeing. This research highlighted the crucial relationship between continued education and the ability to maintain stamina in the role of a practitioner. Although my career pathway was not the one I imagined I would follow on graduation day, I am convinced that my B.Ed. was fundamental in allowing me to have the sense of purpose I have today.

The values that underpin education drive my practice. I have relentless hope in the ability of people to learn and recover. I maintain the belief that people can, and do, change. I have seen the tenacity of people who have had to fight tooth and nail to change the direction of their lives, and education has been a core component in their ability to do so. I have enriching memories of families reunited, people reconnecting with their humanity, the spark returning to the eyes of men and women following a painful detox. I have a life that allows me to give back, and completing the B.Ed. contributed to this. I see the world differently because of the doors that my education has opened.

To any person who is considering completing a B.Ed., run towards it and don't look back. Doors will open for you, and life will lead you down paths you never expected. You will be challenged beyond your imagination, and with these challenges, you will build the mental and emotional determination required to find your purpose and relentlessly pursue it. You will get angry, hopeful, lost and dedicated. You will ensure that you live a life that means something. You will become dissatisfied with the way things are, and have the skill required to do something about it. Have faith in yourself, and in your ability to learn.

In the words of Bukowski (2002), "You'll do it, despite the worst odds. And it will be better than anything else you can imagine. If you're going to try, go all the way. There is no other feeling like that. You will be alone with God, and the nights will flame with fire. You will ride life straight to perfect laughter. It's the only good fight there is."

Heather Kalisch

Studied at BTI during 2004, 2006-2008

My journey at BTI goes back quite a few years. I first came to BTI in 2004 to do a Diploma in Communication and Expressive Arts instead of my last year at high school. I had wanted to be a primary school teacher ever since I was little and this was a bridging course to get me in the right direction. I then went on to complete my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree in 2006. My three years completing my degree were full on! I remember all night study sessions in 'the Hub' and the computer room, and drinking lots of coffee. There was blood, sweat and tears but mostly tears. I have very fond memories of Thursday night teas at Cathryn's house, and the BTI ball. My absolute favourite thing about BTI was the friendships I made that continue to remain strong. I sometimes look back and long to be a student again! All the late night 'study' groups, McDonalds runs and random road trips made all the hard-times studying worth it.



As all those who have studied at BTI know, it can be very difficult at times! After the three years of my degree, I was absolutely exhausted and wondered if teaching was the right thing for me. So, instead of pursuing a teaching job, I did a six-month Discipleship Training School (DTS) with Youth with a Mission (YWAM) to allow myself time to breathe and rediscover God's purpose for me. I always loved travelling and working with people, so missions seemed a logical plan. After completing the DTS, I still felt strongly God's call to teaching, but wasn't sure how to go about it. So I started relief teaching here in Tauranga, and that eventually turned into a fixed-term contract at Tauranga Adventist School. Whilst in the midst of my second contract, I continued to pursue my love for travelling, and on one of those trips I met a man and fell in love! He was Australian so I moved to Adelaide, South Australia, and was very fortunate to get a fixed-term position straight away which then lead into a permanent position. I taught middle and upper primary at Prescott College Southern for three years before finally convincing my husband to leave a cushy job and move to NZ to be closer to my family.

Since moving back to NZ I have been relief teaching and teaching part-time at Mamaku Primary, near Rotorua. At the beginning of this year, I began to work part-time at BTI as the Practicum Coordinator for the Primary Programme. I'm so excited to be back at BTI and love seeing it all from a different perspective. A lot has changed in the 9 years since I was a student here but the core values are still the same and many of the lecturers are still the same! My time at BTI prepared me as best as it could for the realities of teaching. There's so many things about teaching that cannot be taught in lectures! The main idea from BTI that I've tried to hold on to is to always have a teachable attitude. As teachers, we expect our children to be learning constantly and we encourage them to learn from their mistakes. It is equally as important to be a teacher that is continually learning and changing. This is a truth that applies not just to teaching, but to all areas of our lives.

Christine Kay

Studied at BTI 2004-2006

My journey since leaving BTI.... I spent the first six months after finishing, not in the teaching profession, but as a full-time caregiver at Homes of Hope in Tauranga. The children I cared for often displayed challenging behaviour, and I felt ill equipped to manage them. However God had a bigger picture in mind, because the skills and insights that I gained in that season have been invaluable in my *current* teaching position.



The following year, I made the decision to take up a teaching opportunity in the Kingdom of Tonga. This was my first full-time teaching experience, and I was excited to start the journey. Upon beginning the year in Nuku'alofa, I discovered that many of the children in my class did not speak English. The language barriers and the cultural differences were quite overwhelming and if it wasn't for regular visits from Marion Sanders, I think I would have packed my bags, and jumped on the first plane back home. The support given to me from the BTI community was a lifeline and truly sustained my overwhelmed heart, especially in that first year.

After spending two years in Tonga, I felt the Lord leading me back home. In the first few months back, I struggled to find employment. God had a plan though, and when visiting Hazel Warnes, a BTI lecturer who was living in Rotorua, God began to reveal the next season he was leading me into. Hazel shared that a group had come together and were seeking to open a Christian school in Rotorua. As she began to explain the vision for the school, I found myself getting excited. It so aligned with the vision for education that God had grown in my heart while I was living in Tonga. When the job was advertised in the Education Gazette, I eagerly applied. I was invited to an interview, and to my delight, was offered the position of Junior Teacher. The school opened its doors in Term 2 of 2010 with two beginning teachers at the helm; myself and one other BTI graduate. It still amazes me to this day, that the vision and hopes of so many people was placed in the hands of two beginning teachers.

While I was in Tonga, the whole of the New Zealand curriculum had been rewritten, National Standards had been introduced, and primary school education had undergone some significant changes. I had some catching up to do! Again, I was enveloped in the BTI community. Graham and Vicky Preston were leading our school, with Graham as the Principal and Vicky as the Office Manager. Hazel Warnes was my beginning teacher mentor, and many faithful visitors made the trip over from Tauranga to offer support, advice, and to celebrate the work that was happening in Rotorua. It most certainly was a Rotorua-based, BTI community.

In those early years we had two Education Review Office (ERO) reviews. One night, as I lay in bed, anxiously thinking about the impending second visit, crying out to God for

wisdom, the Holy Spirit gently reminded me of the words that had been sown in my heart while I was at BTI; be gracious, secure, and teachable. Peace immediately came. While I couldn't determine the ERO assessors' perception of how we were doing, I could control my response. I have carried those words with me throughout my teaching career, they have kept me grounded and have enabled me to grow my capacity as a teacher. I stayed at Chapman College for five years, and then God gave me a much-needed sabbatical. I spent time travelling across Europe, resting my mind and heart from the realities of teaching.

Upon returning to Rotorua, I started to make plans in my head to move overseas again in the following year. Unknown to me, a friend had passed on my name, as a potential relieving teacher, to a local primary school in Rotorua. To my surprise, I received a phone call one morning at about 8am. I was very much in need of money, so without much thought, I agreed to give relief teaching a go. The school was Western Heights Primary; a decile one school, with many students who face significant social and emotional challenges. However, I have discovered that this school is a hidden gem! The children are loved and thriving, the staff welcoming, and the principal is a strong leader, who is passionate about seeing the community thrive.



After two days relieving, the principal approached me with a job offer. This certainly wasn't in my plans. However, I eventually, reluctantly agreed to work for the school for one year, but no more! After several months, it became apparent to me that this school community was actually the adventure I was looking for. I was offered a permanent position the following year, and by that time my heart was captured. The saying on the school logo translates, '*Stand tall as a mountain.*'

I remember a time, when a BTI student-teacher asked me if BTI had prepared me well for my teaching career. My answer was a resounding yes! Curriculums change, planning templates vary, and content knowledge changes depending on the year level you are teaching. What doesn't change is being teachable and having the ability to critically examine, and respond to ever changing educational philosophies and government-imposed structures. BTI taught me that relationships are at the heart of teaching, and that as teachers we must always be guided by the Word, empowered by the Spirit, motivated by love, and saturated in prayer.

I currently have a Year 3 class and I am also the school Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). When the time is right, I am looking forward to more study in the area of education. The BTI community is no longer present in my day to day life, but principles learned at BTI are imbedded in my DNA as an educator, and always will be. I will be forever grateful for that.

Gemma Tong

Studied at BTI during 2005-2007

You know, when I first began my journey at BTI back in 2005, I could only but dream of a moment in the future where I could be standing in front of my very own class of children, yes, as THE TEACHER. As I reflect back on those days at BTI, a whole ten years down the track, I am incredibly grateful for the impact it had on my life and on the lives of the young people who have been entrusted to my care.

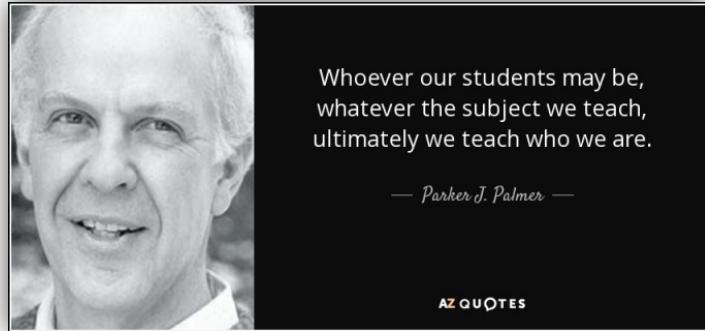
Yes, for sure, the journey has not been without its highs and lows and I have shed many-a-tear on numerous occasions. But on the whole, it has been a season in my life of growth and learning, of change and challenge and of learning to see the world through the most beautiful of perspectives - through the eyes of a child. Awe and Wonder; a little piece of heaven touching Earth.



As I stood in my classroom, the other week, beside two young students as they folded their hands, bowed their heads and opened their hearts to their heavenly Father, I was witness to the most beautiful testimony that underpins the entire reason behind why I do what I do every day, and why it was that I chose to apply to BTI all those years ago. All of heaven celebrated, as a tear of joy slid silently down my face. Because, you see, it's never been easy. But BTI never promised us 'easy'. It's often seemed 'not fair'. But BTI didn't promise us 'fair'. It certainly hasn't been without blood, sweat and tears. I'm pretty sure that might have been mentioned on an occasion or two! However, it has been, worth it, and BTI did promise that.

You see when we walked across that stage on graduation day, in reality that was just the beginning; the beginning of a daily opportunity to spread seeds of hope in the lives of young people. It was the beginning of an opportunity to be a part of a bigger change - a change not only within that immediate classroom, but within a community, a city, a country and even right across the globe. As each backpack has been hung on each and every hook, and taken down again, as walls have been displayed, endless pencils sharpened and unending supplies of caffeine consumed, it has never really been about the books and charts and topics. It has always been about each beautiful set of eyes staring back at me; eyes that reflect beauty, sometimes pain and sometimes heartache; eyes that shine with wonder and with love, eyes that soak in daily new adventures, eyes that cry when life is tough.

As each little heart has carried a beautiful rhythmic beat all of its own; together they have joined to become a masterpiece of hearts sharing love and laughter, life and joy. Each fingerprint has reflected a unique identity, gift and call. Each handprint has carried stories of days gone by, and dreams yet to be fulfilled. Each footprint paved a way for days to come. Days filled with purpose, call and wonder; days not yet charted or planned or maybe even hinted at yet. And each heart, both big and little, has carried a sense of adventure and a love for fun. Joy has always been the anthem, and precious smiles have always been the golden win. With each hug or high five or handshake, the symbol of a journey shared; because learning has always been about the journey and not the destination or the end product. The little person and his or her family, has always been the main focus of each and every day. As Parker Palmer (1997, p. 7) has said, “We teach who we are.” So yes, it has been important to remain grounded, with a heart full to the brim with love; to always remain soft-hearted, despite challenges sometimes out of our control.



Palmer, P. J. (1997). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

But you know, sometimes we discovered beauty from the ashes; and some days, gold where rust once lay; because each and every child was worth it, and each and every one of them counted for now and for eternity. As we sought to serve and to challenge, we gained a whole new appreciation and outlook on life. For sure, for me, the pearl of wisdom was the GEMS model learned in PIPI. To be always guided by God’s Word, empowered by the Holy Spirit, motivated by love and saturated with prayer. For sure these were the keys to unlocking hearts and minds, of shaping futures and of speaking into situations that often seemed bleak and dark. They were the keys that unlocked a transformative adventure, touching hearts and impacting lives. For all of this I will be eternally grateful; both now and on the other side; for all I was gifted at BTI during my journey, and for all the incredible young people and their families I have had the privilege to encounter along the way. Transforming hearts leads to changing futures, bringing hope to generations yet to come. Seeds of faith and hope have been planted, and watered with an outpouring of love.

It is with excitement and celebration that I share with you the new chapter God is writing into my story. Since moving to Tauranga in 2005 to begin my journey studying at BTI, I’ve ended up staying with this campus and working for and serving the Christian Education Trust for 11 years in their schools in Te Awamutu, Tauranga, Rotorua, and back here in Tauranga again. At the close of 11 years of teaching, I will get to stand at the end of the guard of honour and watch as one of my first classes as a beginning teacher walks down *The Way*, as they graduate from their time at Bethlehem College. It has been a privilege to serve on missions teams in the Solomon Islands and in Kenya, and I will treasure those memories for all my days. As of the end of this 2018 school year, my time with Bethlehem and the Christian Education Trust will come to a close, as I will become a children’s pastor for our incredible church whanau at Tauranga Elim Church.

Hetha Robinson

Studied at BTI during 2007-2009

I have always done well practically. However, I have always struggled academically. Being at a smaller tertiary institute like BTI to study, helped me a lot. Through having fewer students in my class and greater access to tutors, I was able to achieve success.

I did not have good experiences of school growing up. I hated going to school and in looking back, I recall very few teachers who had a positive impact on me. I didn't love learning and I had to work hard to get average grades. My reports would always say "Could do better if she tried more" and "Talks too much." In the

past, my teachers never looked beyond my behaviour, to see if there was a reason, to see if there was something else causing me to behave the way I did. Now I notice that in the children I teach and I know that it is the outworking of something they are struggling with.

I was drawn to teaching because I don't think it is necessary to hate school. It doesn't take much to be a kind and caring teacher. I teach little kids; I love being able to start them off well at school. They come through the door telling you they missed you, even though you saw them yesterday. They will comment on your earrings and nail polish and bring in their mother's lipsticks for you because they know you love to use them too. When you ask them who loves counting, or who is great at art, they all put their hands up. They have no reason to dislike learning and they don't doubt what they can do. They come in with some letter sounds and number knowledge and leave at the end of the year reading, writing and problem solving. What a privilege to be able to have such an impact; to create a place of security and a love of learning. Every year, I think I couldn't possibly love any class as much as I have loved this class, and then the next year comes and I think the same.

I taught in New Zealand for a few years. But I have been travelling and teaching overseas for the past five years. The plan was for two years, but I've just kept going. Living in different countries and cultures, and teaching so many different students has made me not only a better teacher, but a better person. I have learned that you can teach through doing; that you don't need to be able to understand every word to teach well. It has helped me understand what my students go through when they learn a new language and are nervous to practice out loud. Anyone can learn how to deliver a curriculum, but how to be a teacher, how to recognise anxiety or identify learning difficulties or to simply form beautiful relationships, is not so easily taught. I have worked in a remote Aboriginal School in Western Australia and International schools in Moscow, Russia, and in Jakarta, Indonesia. Now I am learning my 5th curriculum and teaching at a local school in London, UK. Everywhere I have gone people say they love to have New Zealand teachers because they know how to teach well, and that they themselves were taught well. It makes me grateful that I have been able to have that experience. It is pretty awesome to know I have left my mark in so many different countries and with so many different children around the world.



Rachael McKoy

Studied at BTI during 2009- 2011

I have been fortunate enough to grow up with a mother who loves music. It is a part of her; making music, enjoying music, and sharing her talents with the world. She is a very passionate woman who I look up to greatly, and I am blessed to have had this love for music passed on to me. I grew up with music surrounding me, and learnt to play multiple instruments throughout my school years. I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher, but it was this passion for music that I felt the need to share – this is what really drove me to apply to study the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree at BTI. At the heart of my desire to teach, there was always music.



Prior to my training I had been an itinerant music teacher at various schools. During my training at BTI, I was able to have my teaching placements at schools that had thriving music services, so that while I trained as a primary classroom teacher I could also learn a little more about teaching music. These practicum experiences helped me to see into classroom life and envisage what music could become for a whole group of children at once. I was also given the opportunity to write and direct full school musical productions, which extended my experience across the performing arts.

While music was at the heart of being a teacher for me, I discovered through my training that I really loved teaching in all areas. I loved the opportunities to build relationships with my own class which was different from that which I would have achieved in a music teacher role. I loved teaching all subjects and all ages, and to begin with in my teaching career, this is what I did.

After completing my teacher registration, my husband and I decided to move to London, England. I spent a few weeks working as a relief teacher, being sent to schools in different locations every day. I was, however, always on the lookout for a permanent job in a good location. It didn't take long before I received a call from my teaching agency, saying that a music teaching opportunity had come up in an area called Tooting in South West London. I secured the position; initially teaching three days per week, but this quickly grew to five days and a permanent position, which I held for five years.

Going into this role was a strange thing. There wasn't really a job description; they just knew they needed music coverage in the school. The UK National Curriculum for music in primary ages is very vague. It gives just two or three sentences about what students should be achieving at the end of each key stage – that's it! My first challenge was to set expectations and achievement objectives for each year group, and decide on my curriculum content so that students could make progress throughout their primary years. But what I

assumed was that I would actually be given the opportunity to teach music, given that this was what I was employed to do!

Unfortunately, as is becoming more and more the case in many countries, the UK has very strict guidelines about what must be taught within each classroom. Certain quantities of each subject must be taught each week; it is hugely assessment based, with many teachers teaching to the tests and very little time for creative approaches to lessons. Students must achieve a number of sub-levels of progress each year, and if the correct percentage per class does not achieve (regardless of external factors that may have contributed to this), then teachers often lose their jobs or miss out on pay rises (as they are performance related). Schools are largely graded on their ability to see children achieving the grades, so they have the job of employing teachers who will get them there; for the future livelihood of the school. Teachers are therefore under a lot of pressure, and unfortunately, the creative subjects are the first to be compromised.

The actual teaching role that I had at my school was a *cover teacher*. Every teacher is entitled to half a day out of class per week for planning, and it was my job to cover their class while they were out. I taught students from Nursery (three year olds) to Year 6. I loved the variety of ages that I was able to work with, but was surprised when what was supposed to be time for me to teach music lessons became me teaching normal classroom subject content, and receiving lesson plans from teachers. It was definitely *not* their preference to do so. Such are the pressures on the school system in the UK. So I faced a huge hurdle, how to teach music to a school that didn't give me the opportunity to teach it.

By the end of Year 6, students had to be able to perform in solo and group settings, improvise, play a range of tuned and untuned instruments with accuracy and fluency, compose their own music, read music with some fluency and write using the correct musical notation, and have a thorough knowledge of the history of music. For some classes, across some terms, I would be able to teach 45 minutes of music every week. This was the ideal; the best it ever got. Some classes didn't have a music lesson for over two years due to how I was scheduled in the classrooms; a fact I was powerless to change.

Then there were additional factors that I had never encountered in New Zealand. As we were a multicultural school, we had children representing many different religions. Some students claimed that while they were respecting the time of Ramadan (a month of fasting for the Muslim community) they were unable to listen to or partake in music of any sort, for religious reasons. There was nothing that I or anyone else could do! I would have students in my music classroom with their heads down against their desk and their fingers in their ears for the duration of my lesson – not an ideal way to teach!

Fortunately, I was still able to work effectively within the area of music in the school. I ran weekly music assemblies; started a school choir that was recognised in London for their high level of skill and talent; began an orchestra; musically directed three bi-annual school productions; taught staff ukulele lessons to upskill and enable staff to bring music into the classroom for themselves; interviewed and hired, then consequently managed, a team of itinerant music teachers to teach a range of instruments privately; introduced full class clarinet lessons for year four students; and introduced a performing arts week. The

performing arts weeks were a particular success, as for that week in the year, everything else took a back seat. I arranged for theatre groups to visit and run workshops; dance tuition; performances by professional music groups; and the recording of a full school CD (each class learnt two songs to record, and we had a full school item too) which parents were able to buy afterwards.

The highlights of my UK teaching experience have been firstly, working with every child in the school. Every age group has such wonderful qualities that make teaching them such great fun for a whole variety of reasons. I couldn't pick a favourite age group, and while music is definitely a huge passion of mine, I do love that I have been able to teach every other subject area too.

Secondly, as behaviour challenges have been much more difficult than what I had experienced in my NZ career, I was reminded time and time again of the teaching at BTI of Jesus as Master Teacher, and using this as a perfect example of who I strive to be like. Jesus is love, and everything that He is as a teacher comes from love. How good and how true is this example, and it was a privilege for me to teach and to discipline students from a place of love. It was also wonderful *to be a light* in a setting with so many other gods being worshipped. While I could never directly talk about Jesus, I could be His hands and His feet, and simply love. In my role as music teacher, I sang and made music daily for the Lord, with all of my being. What a blessing to teach children to be able to make music too.



After five years of teaching in London, my husband and I are returning to New Zealand with our one-year-old daughter, where I will be doing whatever it is that God has in store in this next chapter.

My heart, O God, is steadfast. I will sing and make music for you with all that I am!

Psalm 108:1

Justine Russell (née Owens)

Studied at BTI during 2009-2011

BTI was a saving grace in a time when I was extremely confused about where my life was going; which sounds very cheesy. But the truth is, BTI was the exact thing I needed. I was living in Tanzania, in East Africa with my parents, having a heart to teach kids, yet no training or qualifications.



Justine and her husband Skyler

The initial plan was to move back to Canada to study in a giant university, where my face would be swimming amongst the many 100's in each lecture room. Thankfully circumstances changed, and so did my life direction. In a confused, tear-filled state, and with no idea where I was meant to go in life, BTI was presented to me by a Kiwi missionary teacher friend. I literally had to look up where Tauranga was on a map! As I researched further, the heart message of the institute resonated with my core values; you teach out of who you are. Be creative, because not all students learn the same.

Five months later, I found myself in New Zealand at BTI in a teacher-education classroom, where I knew everyone's name, and the professors (teacher-educators) had an open door policy for students to discuss concerns or issues. I felt at home in this down-to-earth, innovative, passionate community. It equipped me, challenged me, stretched me and even made me hunger for the constructive criticism that would shape me into being a better teacher. The teacher-educators lived passionately what they preached and it was inspiring to be sitting in those lectures.

I appreciated what I received from BTI then, but that appreciation has grown even further, as I have now spent four and a half years teaching abroad. I've taught three and a half of those years at an international school, in Arusha, north eastern Tanzania, using a British curriculum. And I have spent the last year teaching in Phoenix Arizona, in the United States. This past year particularly shook me as I was given a literal script to read out to my first graders, test them immediately on the content (due to lack of time in the curriculum schedule), and then post their test scores as their grades. The HORROR! No need for adaptability or creativity. One professional development conference speaker said, 'Creativity in a lesson is fun, but that's all it is. You need structure. Kids need to learn, not to have fun. Lord help us all.'

As you could probably guess, there's been many times where I felt like I was taking crazy pills and had WISHED my BTI lecturers were in the room with me... at least to see their expressions! Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, you are a pure gem of a place. You equip, care, create, disciple, and change the nations through your work. You've made me the ever-learning, ever-reflecting, ever-creating teacher that I aspire to be. Happy 25th Anniversary! Here's to the next 25 years and the many generations that will benefit from the work of this institute.

Graeme Cook

Studied at BTI during 2009-2011

My *sentence* began nine years ago when in 2009 I deluded myself into thinking that living on a student allowance to earn a degree in Primary Education would be a step towards being called a 'grown up' and allow plenty of time to go fishing and surfing. The best place to base myself for outdoor activities was the Bay of Plenty. So at the age of 33 with my priorities completely upside down, I filled out the BTI enrolment forms with the usual stuff they want to hear and sealed my fate at the Post Shop.



Kendal and Graeme Cook, Noh Boh, Thailand, 2018

What followed did not exactly go to plan. My life was not my own for the next 3 years as we all lived from one assignment to the next. Free time was what you had when you slept, and the outside world only ever happened for three glorious months over the summer where even hard manual labour was a welcome relief from study. But despite the hardships, something was happening to me that God was orchestrating through various staff members of BTI. Sometimes it was through their words, but more often through their character. I had travelled to many places but here I found some of the most genuine people I have ever met.

And so it was that late in 2011, with my sentence almost completed, I foolishly entered into a conversation with the then Dean, Dr Andrew Smith about a visit he had just been on to a refugee camp on the Thai/Burma border. This conversation set the wheels in motion, for where I find myself today. I have never been to prison (not marriage, I mean a tangible prison) but I guess this is what it feels like when you are denied parole!

Two weeks after my innocent conversation with Andrew, I was called to his office (every student knows that's never a good thing), and the meeting went something like this, "As you know BTI has been approached by an organisation who supply education to refugee camps in Thailand. We don't know where you could live, who you will teach, we have no curriculum yet, and there is no money, how sayeth you?" (Andrew is English).

Not exactly the first job offer I was expecting to pay back my student loan with, but despite all the logical arguments as to why I should decline, and there were many, the

moment this opportunity was presented to me my spirit said yes straight away, and my brain caught up about a month later. Besides, it sounded at the time like an adventure and I had never been one to listen to logic anyway!

So, to cut a long story short, I travelled to Mae La refugee camp on the Thai-Burmese border to begin my first teaching assignment. The first week inside the camp was hectic. Andrew was meeting with new students who turned up every day, and I watched Andrew teach a hastily put together



programme (we had no idea the training would begin on day one of us being there). I was left at the end of that first week in the nearest town called Mae Sot; a 45-minute drive away from the camp, to fend for myself.

I was to live inside the camp Monday to Friday, and return every weekend to this town on the back of a local transport truck to plan and get resources. I was one of the first foreigners given permission to stay inside the camp of 40,000 people. My first teaching assignment was to train 20 adult students (mainly Karen refugees) how to teach primary subjects. In effect, I was to teach what I had just learned at BTI. My students were from over the border in neighbouring Burma, which was and is still going through the longest civil war in recent history. My students' life stories humbled me, and changed my life forever.

Some of the students shared how they had run away from their villages when the Burmese soldiers attacked. Many villagers were killed, some were raped; often the soldiers would burn their homes. Some of the students recalled how they had fought as child soldiers against the Burmese Government forces. Other students had fled with their families from political and religious persecution. Some of my students arrived in the camp because they had heard there was a chance for extending their education and even the possibility of migrating to safer countries.

Having been tricked by Andrew Smith into committing for six months, I soon realised what sort of person would I be if I left so many in need in such a short space of time. I finally understood the words of Jesus when he said, "he who desires to save his life will lose it and he who gives up his own life will save it." After 10 months in the camp, Kendal Waterston came to visit. We had gone through BTI together and what started as a good friendship became whatever you call it, when you're not just friends anymore, but not in a relationship either. Before our relationship could go any further I wanted to see her reaction to the refugee camp and the students. She was a big help over the phone during my first

months at the camp, helping me with lesson ideas and encouragement. She fell in love as I had with the people, and we were married on the beach at Cape Reinga, New Zealand in December 2012. We returned back to the refugee camp for our honeymoon! I could not imagine ever being here and doing the things God has called both of us to do without her support, guidance and abilities. I know of no other person who could have taken the many hardships we face in her stride, and would still willingly choose to live under such difficult conditions; to put others' needs before her own.

After one year in the camp we moved to a small village, called Noh Boh, right on the Thai-Burmese border, where it is less strictly controlled by the Thai authorities. Seven years later, we still work as volunteers with support from BTI and an Australian aid agency called Effective



Some of the trained teachers and student-teachers; Noh Boh, 2017

Aid International (EAI). EAI is the original organisation that approached Andrew Smith to see if BTI could train people from Burma to be primary school teachers. The original programme has grown well beyond just training teachers, to include the building, resourcing and staffing of several schools in villages with no education located in jungle regions. Currently we have 23 graduate teachers serving in five primary schools, teaching around 400 children. They endeavour to teach a Christ-centred education and the hope that this can bring to children's lives.

We are also in negotiations with various Burmese Government ministers and leaders hoping to move our teacher training college to Burma next year (2019). This is a tight-rope walk through a political minefield. If we are given the go ahead, we will be the first and only non-government teachers' college in the country of 58 million (that we're aware of). We could be given an opportunity to teach newly introduced subjects to as many as 500 student teachers, as Burma looks to modernize its curriculum.

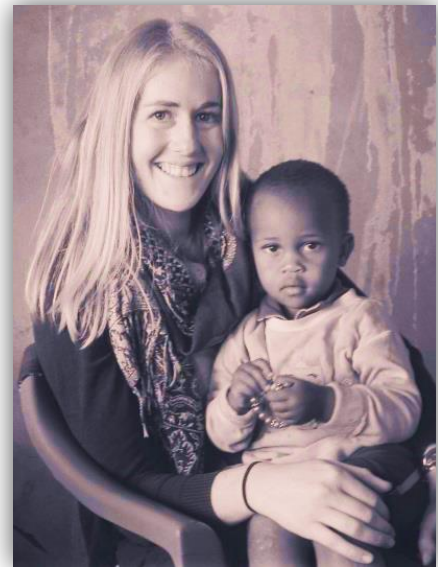
What sets BTI apart I believe, is the character and integrity of the people that work there and their greater understanding as to why they are there in the first place. I have seen this example time and time again, as various staff members have visited and continue to do so with humility and grace, and with the ongoing commitment to what God is doing through all of us over here. I will not name people for fear of missing one out but in my three short years as a student at BTI the staff that spoke into my life set a course for change I never thought was possible. You know who you are and I continue to teach the lessons you never had to speak.

Rachel Judd

Studied at BTI during 2009-2012

I began my training at BTI in 2009 and completed my Bachelor of Education (Teaching), Primary degree in 2012. My story has been very diverse since finishing BTI, which is part of the beauty of teaching. Teaching opens several doors and does not always have to be outworked in a New Zealand classroom. For me, my journey of being a teacher started at Lilliput Preschool in Tauranga where I taught the 2-4-year olds and ran the 4-year-old transition to school programme for three and a half years.

I was then ready for a change so I moved to Tanzania in Africa as a missionary. While in Tanzania, I volunteered as a mentor teacher and new entrant teacher at the Joshua Foundation for all of 2016. This was one of the best years of my life to date.



After a year in Tanzania, my student loan was gaining a lot of interest so reluctantly I came home and managed to secure a job at a little country school in Reporoa. I am now in my second year there as the New Entrant teacher. It has shown me that no matter where you go in the world all kids have the same need; to be loved

I enjoyed my time at BTI and know that I am only where I am today by the grace of God, and because of the incredible support and encouragement from my BTI lecturers. Thank you for never letting me quit, for believing in me and helping me to believe in myself.

There were times during my training where I truly doubted myself and I remember crying in Marion's office. She then confirmed my calling as a teacher but said that I might not end up being a teacher in the traditional sense, but God would use me in significant ways. She then set me up to do a practicum with an incredible associate teacher, Shelley Barnard, who restored my confidence and passion for teaching. Thank you!

My passion is overseas missions and children so I know that my future will include both of these aspects. My training to be a teacher has prepared me to go out and love kids and make Jesus known.

Lynden Cook

Studied at BTI during 2009-2011

After graduating from BTI, God led me on a life-changing journey. I have looked to Him to use my BTI transformed 'Heart and Mind' in the communities and work places I have been involved in. I began my career with some short term work in Tauranga, before moving to Hamilton to take up a teaching role at Rototuna Primary School. I can't express enough how important strong mentors and leaders are. My time at this school proved a strong training ground where effective leaders coached and guided me in the development of my classroom and leadership practice. I was soon involved in leading information and communication technology, mentoring junior staff, assisting with school productions, and serving as a team leader (syndicate leader). These roles certainly required me to be gracious, teachable and reflective, for which I was well prepared for by BTI.



Having served my time at Rototuna Primary, I felt God was calling me to other things. I soon landed at Deanwell Primary School (south of Hamilton), initially as Team Leader of the Junior School, and then Assistant Principal. Working with Year 1 and 2 students was both rewarding and draining with their high energy and enthusiasm for everything. This was an excellent experience for me, reinforcing the importance of understanding and developing early literacy and numeracy skills, as well as how to integrate key competencies and learning dispositions.

This year I have just begun a new season as Head of Primary and Middle School, at Hamilton Christian School. I have teamed up with Shaun Brooker (Principal) who also studied through BTI, and my Mum is also a teacher here. Together we are serving the Hamilton community, equipping young people with skills and a Biblical worldview to seek God's purpose for their lives as part of His kingdom.

Anneliese and I are expecting our third precious boy in October, to join Rowan who is four, and Jordan who is two.

Thanks to BTI for building within me a strong foundation for teaching, leading, and enjoying God's amazing creation as we strengthen, and restore our communities together.



Snapper fishing off the Coromandel Coast

Rachel Tetley-Jones

Studied at BTI during 2010-2012

I first attended Bethlehem Tertiary Institute in 2010 when I was fresh out of high school. I had wanted to do Primary Teaching ever since I was in primary school myself. BTI was a logical choice for me, as I had previously attended Bethlehem College for my high school years. Knowing that I would attend an institute that supported and aligned with my faith was a huge bonus. My three years of study went by quickly and, though it was hard at the time, it was an enjoyable experience as it brought me closer to reaching my dream.

I still remember so clearly, getting my first interview for a real teaching job in Pukekohe. I felt so young at the time, not quite 21. My colleagues occasionally remind me of how scared I looked as I went into that interview! I'm pleased to say that I've grown plenty since then! I have been at KingsGate School for over six years now; completing my two Beginning Teacher years, and then progressing in my skills and capabilities. I have felt blessed to be working in a Christian school; it made the transition from study to teaching much easier. I have worked with some really great people who have shaped and moulded me into the type of teacher I am today.



This year I was approached by my principal about stepping into more leadership and at first I was really scared by it. I know that God has been preparing me along the way, as I've grown in my skills and abilities. I love the verse 1 Timothy 4:12 – “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity”. I have been proud of the way I can look back over my teaching journey thus far and see the progress and achievements I have made. Looking back to my practicums makes me see the journey I have made; when I thought that teaching a small group on my first practicum was challenging! It's true what they say about teaching; that you learn through doing. I have improved my skills from trying again and picking myself up when things didn't go to plan.

At present I am learning the role of deputy principal and currently I still teach my lovely class of year 3-4s. I really enjoy teaching, yet I am also enjoying learning about the new facets of leadership. It's been a journey this year in learning how to lead colleagues, to make decisions, to delegate and be the 'go to' for behaviour and other things. God opened this door for me, and though it wasn't on my agenda in the near future, I trust His plan for my life and am thankful for the gifts and dreams he has given me. In over a year, our growing school will be moving to a bigger and purpose built site; which we are all excited about. Who knows what the next few years will look like! I know that I still have a lot more to learn (after all, we are lifelong learners!) and I'm excited to see what's down the track! BTI connected me with some amazing people, some who I am still in contact with eight years later! It taught me to teach from who I am and to anchor Christ in all areas of my profession. Thanks BTI for the role you have played in supporting me in my journey of being a teacher.

Michelle Wynne

Studied at BTI during 2010-2012

I officially commenced my time at Chapman College in Rotorua (now known as Bethlehem College Chapman) four and a half years ago. However, July 7th 2017, will be a day that remains permanently etched in my memory. It was the day I was beautifully blind-sided by “this little school with the big heart”. My friendship with Hazel McVicker-Warnes meant that Chapman College had been in my heart since it opened in April 2010. I had already been privileged enough to be a part of the school in its initial pioneering days through attending their official opening ceremony, inaugural prize-giving and through time spent with their music teacher, Mr Martyn Heath. Although I was still training at BTI, Chapman College firmly wiggled its way into my life and into my soul.



As my studies for my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree drew to a close, I received a very specific and personal word from God to re-locate to Rotorua to be a part of what He was doing at Chapman College. I spoke to Hazel about it and together we forged a plan in terms of moving to Rotorua. It was a huge faith step, but we trusted God for the provision and to open doors. The day before I was due to move, I received a call from a school principal in Auckland, who had been given my name. She offered me a long-term relieving position over the phone within her school. The job hadn't even been advertised yet, and I was so humbled by her offer. I had a matter of hours to try and figure out what to do. In the end, God reminded me of the word He had given to me a couple of months earlier and I knew that my obedience to Him mattered more than guaranteed financial provision. Along with that, my heart was wired for Christian education, so I politely declined the Principal's offer and stuck with plan A, which saw me move to Rotorua the following day.

A week or two later, I was officially welcomed by the students and staff of Chapman College at their incredible powhiri on Day 1 of the 2013 school year. At that time, Mr Graham Preston was the Principal, and the school only had four teachers, along with Hazel's role of Deputy Principal and Vicky Preston's role as office receptionist extraordinaire. I started out as a volunteer and quickly moved into a whole variety of other roles over the coming years including relief teaching, choir director, teacher aide, music teacher, French teacher, and specialist teacher in literacy and numeracy. I've also served as teacher of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and been involved in team-teaching in Junior Secondary. There were also times when I covered the office, wrote research reports, adjudicated Primary level speech competitions, made cups of tea for staff and visitors, put plasters on grazed knees, covered playground duty, vacuumed floors, organised prize-giving ceremonies and Easter services, and tried to step into any other gap at a moment's notice.

BTI prepared me wonderfully for many aspects of teaching, but no one mentioned that I would have to stand deep in the Waipa Forest being a marshal for cross country, wishing I

had worn my Eskimo suit. I missed the “lecture” concerning the sleepover at school in 2016, where no sleep was had and Hazel, Lisa and I were on pancake duty at 6am. I missed the memo that I was leading the whole school in a waiata with no warning when dignitaries were visiting, or that I would spend teacher-only days cosied up to the laminator! What a journey it was, with many moments of “stretch” and opportunities to once again grow in being “gracious, secure and teachable”. Suffice to say when God whispered once again and ultimately brought my precious Chapman College season to an end, I was both grief-stricken and excited. That’s how I found myself blind-sided on July 7th, 2017. My treasured Chapman College whanau held a surprise assembly in my honour with musical items, gifts, speeches, prayers, and a rousing haka, which will remain forever engraved in my spirit.



Following my departure from the daily life of Chapman, I was gifted a trip to Samoa to spend two weeks with my Aunty who lives there. Shortly after I returned, I landed a job at Rotorua Kip McGrath Education Centre, tutoring Maths and English. Within a few short months, I was made the Assistant Manager and only five weeks ago at the time of writing this, I became the co-manager. I am jointly responsible for 180 young people aged 5-18, ten staff members and all of the leadership tasks that come with being a Principal/Director. I still tutor 35 young people a week as well. We don’t have a receptionist or a caretaker, so, just as I did at Chapman, I am often trying to answer the phone, fix the photocopier, speak to a parent, reassure an anxious child, point colleagues towards resources and empty the full rubbish bin simultaneously. Even though I am now in a secular work place, God has continued to be right in the middle of everything. This year I’ve also been able to be in the vocal ensemble for “Mary Poppins” and I continue to sing in the Rotorua District Choir. Additionally, I had two books published in 2015 and 2016 respectively, so people still ask me about this. Writing remains my side-project.

The past six years have been far from easy for a whole myriad of reasons, but I can confidently say that God is a good Father. He is faithful, and He has sustained me in every season. Almost daily I think of the things I learnt at BTI, but most of all, I remain thankful for the people I met during my BTI season, many of whom I still have significant relationships with today.

Congratulations BTI for reaching this auspicious 25th Anniversary. All glory to Him for what has been and for what is yet to come!

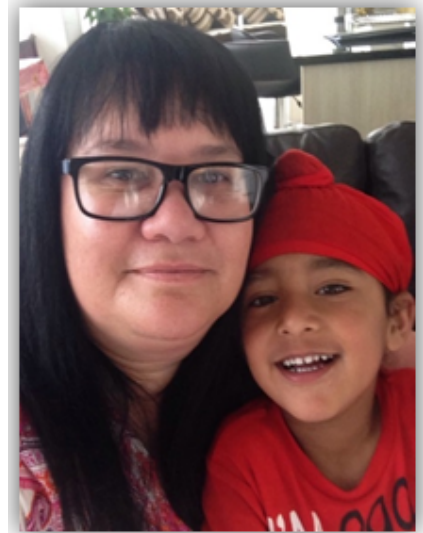
Courtney Wood

Studied at BTI during 2011-2013

Kia ora,

My name is Courtney Wood and I would like to share my journey since leaving Bethlehem Tertiary Institute in 2013 where I completed my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Early Childhood Education degree. I can honestly say my time at BTI shaped me for my next big adventure.

After living for twenty years in the beautiful Bay of Plenty and Mount Maunganui areas with my whanau and friends, I packed up the house and my children and we moved to Tamaki Makaurau, Auckland. My oldest son was attending a kura kaupapa, and I believed my calling was to be in Auckland. I come from a very diverse whanau, and I grew up in South Auckland, and I totally understood that often our young tamariki don't attend any preschools before they turn five. I meet with Nicole Fleming (Head Kaiako) who had previously worked at Bethlehem Preschool and we set up a community preschool in Te Papapa.



The preschool was built inside the Primary school grounds in the old school hall. Nicole had been there throughout all the renovations and I came in towards the end of the hard mahi and we had play days twice a week, open to all the whanau in the community, as we waited for Ministry of Education to licence us as a preschool. We were truly blessed as most of the resources were donated from local churches, schools, and businesses in the community.

When I was at BTI I was so lucky to travel to Tonga with Siulolo Ahio (BTI lecturer) to be part of the conference and visit all the preschools in Tonga. This was a big part of why I moved to Auckland and chose to be part of a community where English is often your second language. When we opened our doors for our preschool, the tamariki were always excited to be at the kura and they flourished in an environment where they were loved, valued and respected. Their home language was spoken and it was a place where all tamariki loved to learn in an unhurried environment and at their own pace.

I must write that the BTI saying of GST, gracious, secure and teachable, was present in my daily life. Most of our whanau attended the Hippy programme which was in our local whanau room. We provided breakfast and all meals, if needed, for our tamariki and we were open to our whanau to making a cuppa and having kai also. Our whanau were multicultural and celebrated with lots of kai, dance and laughter when it came to celebrations. Being in this kura, taught me the true meaning of being part of a community, manaakitanga, and to be humble. My time at Te Papapa preschool was incredible and I have built strong relationships with whanau, tamariki and the wider community from this experience.

But it was time to move on to the next challenge, so we packed up the house again! This time we moved over the bridge to the North Shore of Auckland. I decided to move out of my comfort zone and I was up for a challenge, so I went to work at Playschool Education as a programme co-ordinator/teacher. My area is East/South Auckland and we provide an education programme for our whanau where they are in a home-based setting.

Playschool is a privately-owned company and I have been here over three years now. In this position you need to have very strong relationships and connections with the families you come alongside. Interactions vary from whanau to whanau and the values are different in each whanau. Our team in Auckland is fantastic and we are all respected and valued as individuals who come with different strengths. Going into families' homes to visit Nanna, Koro and the tamariki that care for our next generation is very humbling.



Our curriculum includes some old school values taught from grandparents. We also have *au pairs* who come to Aotearoa for a working holiday. They care for our tamariki and

live with our families; they also have a New Zealand, Kiwi experience. We have our challenges also; the traffic in Auckland and the cost of living is high. But you learn patience, perseverance and to be gracious in the traffic. Being part of Playschool Education has challenged me to grow. Every-day is different and my teaching practice has developed with strong quality interaction with tamariki and educators, where every child has the independence and opportunity to reach their full potential, at a pace which is right for them.

I have shared my kete of knowledge around authentic biculturalism in practice with our team at playschool throughout Aotearoa. I am blessed to spend time away with our *au pairs* who travel from Germany, France, and all around the world. I can go away with them and see all the amazing places in New Zealand, and I have shared my whakapapa, principles and values. Playschool has taken me to Thailand which was such a great experience and I can say we are just like a big extended whanau. My colleagues are so amazing and we all have strengths that we share with each other to help each other grow. Take up a challenge and step outside the box, I did and it has been so rewarding.

"Teachers who love teaching, teach children to love learning"

Nga mihi

Hannah Harward

Studied at BTI during 2011 –2015

It was a five-year journey for me with BTI. I began my teacher training in the primary programme in 2011. After three years of study I experienced a setback during my final practicum which became the catalyst for me to rethink my direction and passion for teaching. Around this time I had the opportunity to relief teach at Country Kids Preschool where I discovered a love for learning and teaching in the early childhood years. As a result, I transferred my course of study and completed my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) in Early Childhood Education, at the end of 2015.



During my 18 months of early childhood education studies, I continued to relief teach at Country Kids which enabled me to experience teaching children aged from six months to five years. I also worked as a teacher aid in the centre.

At the end of my teacher training I was offered permanent, part-time employment at Country Kids Preschool, teaching the two and three-year-olds in “Steady Bears.” I am currently still teaching in this role. During my time at this preschool I have had the opportunity to take on the responsibilities of being a team leader through a season of staff changes. With the support and guidance of my wonderful mentor teacher, Tania Moss, I have also completed my full teacher registration this year.



I am a country girl at heart, and what I love most about teaching at Country Kids is the beautiful farmyard setting that our learning community enjoys on a daily basis as we care for our animals. In this environment our tamariki develop a growing connection with the land, and we see them blossom as they grow in their sense of belonging and identity. It has been a season of growth for me too, personally and professionally. I am excited to see what lies ahead for my own learning and teaching journey.

Although my journey with BTI had its challenges and setbacks, I believe it has been a transformative season, equipping me with valuable tools for life and learning. One of my fondest memories happens to be at the very start of my journey, at my interview when Alaster and Raymond opened in prayer. With this came a beautiful sense of peace and God’s presence, reassuring that I was right where God wanted me for the season ahead and that He would be with me every step of the way. The promise of His presence remains an anchor of hope in the changeable sea that the journey of learning and teaching seems to be. For now as I continue on my journey in ECE; I hold fast to that hope knowing that whatever may come God will always be there walking alongside me.

Eve O'Brien:

Studied at BTI during 2011-2013

My journey began at BTI when I started my training in the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary programme in 2011. As I think back on my journey to becoming and being a professional educator, the theme that comes to mind is, 'loving the one in front of you'. The idea is that we cannot change the whole world through our own feeble human efforts, but we can make a difference by loving the people God places in our path.

Studying at BTI helped me to understand how to 'love the one in front of me' in the context of teaching. The examples displayed through how our lecturers lived, stuck with me most of all. This showed in their willingness to go beyond their job description and set class hours, to make time for people even when it might be inconvenient; to invest in people, to respond with grace even when circumstances were challenging.



Key Summit, Fiordland National Park, 2017

I might have forgotten a lot of the things I 'learned' about teaching but I still remember how our teachers interacted with us as people of value and worth. When I am tired at the end of a long day of teaching, and really do not feel like following up with a particularly challenging student yet again, I remember my gracious BTI lecturers who would give up precious time to listen to my smallest worries and concerns. These are the examples I have sought to emulate since I left BTI and followed my own path into the education profession.

My journey as a professional after completing teacher training at BTI was not a linear pathway. My first two years after BTI included several extended overseas outdoor adventures, along with time back in New Zealand working in Central Otago. Primary school relief teaching opportunities were limited in this region, so a family friend encouraged me to volunteer to work with her in a learning support class at Dunstan High School, Alexandra. What started as a few hours of volunteer work soon blossomed into a range of paid and volunteer opportunities including relief teaching in special needs education, learning support tutoring, teacher aide work, ESOL support, and reader/writer roles. These were valuable experiences that God used to refine my calling as a teacher and to reveal the contexts that most energised me as a professional.

During my time working at Dunstan High School, several things became clear. Firstly I had a surprising realisation that I really enjoyed working with teenagers. Secondly, I discovered the amazing rewards of working with those students who had given up hope of being successful, and who struggled to find a place in the learning community. I began to see that behind the veil of ‘behavioural issues’ there was often a young person desperately trying to compensate for feeling like a failure. It wasn’t easy work, but the challenge of helping change their mindsets from hopelessness to hopefulness was like a giant real-life puzzle.

It was a puzzle that I was determined to be a part of solving, and my personal passion for being in the outdoors seemed like part of the solution. I was working with young men who struggled to do basic mathematics or write a paragraph, but could describe in detail how to hunt deer or compete in bull-riding. This was an eye-opener: to see normally apathetic attitudes change to animation and interest at the mention of outdoor adventures. It made me wonder if giving young people room to use these practical strengths could be a key to unlocking their potential in other learning areas also.



Rock climbing, Port Chalmers’ quarry, 2018

I carried these thoughts with me on personal outdoor adventures to the United States and Canada. I distinctly remember one summer night, while in a small tent, deep in a Canadian pine forest, a friend asked me what my dream job would look like. I told her, “Working with teenagers who haven’t experienced success in traditional school settings, teaching them about outdoor topics but also linking their love of the outdoors to other necessary skills such as literacy and numeracy. But I don’t think that’s actually a real job”.

Fast forward to 2018; I am in my third year of running an outdoor leadership programme, at Community College, Dunedin. This one-year programme, gives students aged 16 – 19 years old a hands-on industry-focused opportunity, not only to develop their leadership, communication, and outdoor skills, but to also gain NCEA Level 2 and a Level 3 National Certificate in Outdoor Leadership (bushwalking). A typical week involves at least one or two days out in the beautiful landscape of beaches, hills, and valleys surrounding Dunedin. Each outing provides a real-life context for the literacy, numeracy and theoretical learning that is imbedded in the outdoor programme. For example, during a recent rock climbing and abseiling lesson series, we gathered data on climbing times as part of our statistical enquiry into the correlation between height, Ape Index (arm-height ratio), and climbing ability. It seems my dream job has become a reality!

It is a reality filled with experiencing many mountain top moments along with times in the valley depths. My dream job challenges me daily to put into practise all the great

principles learned at BTI. Having a focus on building strong learning relationships based on trust and mutual respect has been foundational to success. My students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but almost all of them come with stories of school experiences mired in anxiety, frustration, disappointment or anger. For many, we are the last chance at formal education. This is a huge responsibility, but to see young people learning to trust, laugh, learn, and contribute as part of community is a great privilege, and one that makes all the hard yards worthwhile.

My classroom community is built on relationships. First and foremost is my relationship with a heavenly Father who gives me wisdom on how to 'love the ones in front of me'. This wisdom helps me not only in the process of getting to know my students individually, but also in helping mould a diverse group of individuals into a learning family where we challenge, and inspire one another to greatness. My ability to live under the Lord's guidance and invest unconditional love and value into my classroom environment has come to fruition through having seen these principles lived out in the lives of my BTI lecturers. I value the lessons learned at BTI where these principles were embedded deep into my approach to teaching, and I look forward to further exploring their application as I continue my professional journey.



Alarna Sutton

Studied at BTI during 2012-2014

Currently I am a Year Two teacher at Papatoetoe West School. I began my teaching training at BTI in 2012. As I took my first steps towards The Hub (student centre) on that rainy day, I did not know what to expect. Little did I know that I was beginning a journey that would change my life forever.

The programme of study that I completed was a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree. I'm incredibly grateful for the encouragement and belief that all my lecturers had in me throughout the whole process. Their open hearts and generosity towards helping others achieve their goals was a culture that I believe inspired me. No other tertiary facility could have prepared me better for teaching than BTI, which I believe is due to the PIPi course that established the person behind the teacher and their relationship with God.



One experience, I am most thankful for, was the opportunity to go on practicum in Auckland with the wonderful Heather Bell (past principal of Rosebank School). This was one professional connection that God would continue to flourish in the years to follow. The process of applying for my first job was something that was totally unexpected. I told God that I did not want to send out more than twenty C.V.'s to find a job. If He had a school for me, then He would make it happen. It wasn't long before I had a Skype interview with West Gore School. The interview was almost too good to be true as one of their questions directly related to one of the assignments Hazel Warne assigned with the focus on teaching children with high needs. One week later, it was confirmed, and I had a fixed term (one year) position at West Gore School. After double checking where this was on a map, I eagerly packed my belongings in my parents' car, and with me in my car we convoyed 1,507km to New Zealand's country music capital, Gore.

My first year, as a teacher of a composite year three and four class, was filled with exciting moments and challenges. I learnt an immense amount about teaching administration, behaviour management, professionalism, being confident and stepping into the unknown, and most of all, trusting God and his plan for sending me somewhere that was completely out of my comfort zone. He provided me the opportunity I needed to explore and appreciate the artistry that is the South Island. I felt that I had experienced everything I learnt at BTI in the first week which was very overwhelming!

I was incredibly blessed to be guided well by Cathi Knowles (mentor) and Linda Fraser (principal). God also put me in a school where Bible in Schools was still present and I had the privilege of having Simon Barnett's mother lead that in my class. My favourite memory of living and teaching in Gore was experiencing snow falling in my backyard. I can only assume my students thought I was a bit strange when I instructed them to get their coats on

in the middle of a lesson and go play in the snow. Their poems they wrote following this experience were amazing. Hazel and Marion, you were right - great experiences produce great writing.

As the year began to come to a close I sent out C.V.s to many places and got many rejections, especially from places that I wanted to go to. It was hard during this point because I had to remember to have faith that God had a plan and He had a school that was suitable for me. Patience worked; Papatoetoe West School contacted me via Skype for a permanent

position and after a ten minute interview and five minutes of waiting they offered me a position. After



much praying and discussing with Cathi (my mentor), I ended up flying up to Auckland and seeing the principal Diana Tregoweth and looking around the school. I immediately felt at home, and after another 1,507km of travelling I was on my way to the Big Smoke to teach Year Twos in a low decile school. Isn't God good!

Over the past two and a half years I feel like I have accomplished many things. I have become a fully registered teacher with the helpful mentorship of Debbie Keung, been awarded a scholarship by the Auckland Literacy Association to attend the NZLA Literacy Conference in 2016, and have been the treasurer for the Auckland Literacy Association for the past two years, working with Heather Bell and other well-known people in the literacy community. This year, 2018, I have been training to be a Reading Recovery teacher which has been the best literacy professional development that I have had throughout my career. I am currently a part of my school's ICT, and Māori Curriculum teams and have been a part of the Science, and Literacy teams in the past.

The most encouraging aspect from BTI, that has continued to guide my teaching, was the action of creating a passionate creed. Mine is, 'Courageously love unconditionally; henceforth, inviting His kingdom, facilitating amelioration and cultivating joy' which continues to remind me why I teach. I want to be led by love, to have the Holy Spirit present every day, to challenge my students to grow beyond what they believe, and maintain an environment that is full of laughter and joy. Relationship is a cornerstone to helping children learn, and I believe that BTI made sure that every teacher understood the importance of this.

My future goals are to be an associate teacher and a mentor teacher to those who are only beginning their educational journeys as a teacher. I would love to help cultivate the same joy and passion that I have for teaching in others. My biggest dream would be to complete a Master's in Educational Leadership which would help scaffold my journey to becoming a team leader and eventually a principal.

Johannah Prasad

Studied at BTI during 2012-2014

Since teachers college I have relieved in four different early childcare centres in Auckland and worked in three different schools in Masterton and Auckland. My *life* after teachers college, oh yes; well to sum it up it sounds a little bit like this; homework to high heels; students to stilettos; maths to modelling; teacher by day, and beauty queen by night. A day in the life of Johannah currently, may include, an early morning box fit workout before heading to school to relieve a class for the day, assist with a dance group during lunch break, meet with a girl I may be mentoring for dinner, prepare and speak at an event in my crown and sash, and then a debrief with my director.



Photo: Wairarapa Times-Age, 2016

After finishing my Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree, I set out to educate and inspire young people having no idea how it would pan out. I packed up my positivity and other things and moved away to a place, where I knew close to no one, securing my first teaching job at Lakeview School in Masterton. I went all out on my classroom, decorating it with bling and sarees and soft toys. Ready was my middle name. Little did I know what was about to unfold. I threw myself into it being very optimistic and excited, and ready to deal with anything the kids threw at me.

It was not long before I was faced with some hard truths. I got my first role as a teacher expecting to be the one teaching and helping others to learn, but in the end, I felt as though I was receiving the educational experience. As you all know, we are lifelong learners and I was beginning to learn a lot more about myself and the students in my class. I learned why one particular child was always loud, and why the next child never raised her hand. I taught children with silver spoon upbringings and others with a not-so-shiny start. In these moments of realization, God showed me I had the opportunity to become more than just "Miss Prasad." I could become a positive influence; someone who the kids looked forward to greeting each morning.

I was challenged by the Chinese proverb, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn". If these children need someone to show them first-hand what it means to put yourself out there, and be not afraid to take risks, then I'll lead by example in being an advocate for children while doing pageants. I see my involvement in pageants as a real honour, and a privilege to be in a lead role at such a pivotal age, where children are learning so much that will set them up for life. I count this as an incredible privilege to be on such an empowering journey. I love watching children grow. I love watching the joy and excitement a child feels when they answer a question they didn't think they could solve. I love seeing a child find their passion and own it, like a young boy who stole the show during an assembly with his dancing. I love seeing kids who pray the most sincere and honest

prayers. I love it when a child knows and sees that you believe in them, so they'll try that extra bit harder and go that little bit further until they get there. I also love how brutally honest kids are, either showering me with compliments or telling me I have lipstick on my teeth. The children have taught me so much, and as much of an impact that I leave in them, a greater impact they leave on me. The kids I have taught have been an inspirational part of my journey. They are part of the reason I've gone and taken these other opportunities that have been presented to me.

Going against the current is as normal as wearing yellow lipstick: you stick out and people notice. But if there's one thing I've learned from my journey after Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, it's that standing out is sometimes necessary, because you teach from who you are, even if that means you become known as the teacher in stilettos. What can I say? We learn to take risks and it's the teacher's job: to inspire others. If anyone would have told me that this was what I'd be doing after I finished my teaching degree, I would not have believed them. But it's amazing what can happen when you give God your simple, "yes".

My class couldn't have been happier for me, when I won my first pageant title. My community and the children's parents showed me such wonderful support. The kids used to, and still often ask if they are super good, that I might put on my princess dress, shoes, sash and crown. They also make me laugh about the way they carry on saying their teacher is a real beauty queen. Whether a beauty queen or teacher, I have little sets of eyes watching and learning from my every move. Although the expression of it may look different, whatever the platform, my heart and message remains the same. I am looked up to as a role model.



During my reign as Miss Five Crowns New Zealand Legacy Queen (awarded October, 2017), I've travelled around the world and back. The children I have taught reignited a fire within me. And with God holding my one hand, and my education from teacher's college holding the other, I get to change lives. I guess you could say I'd wear yellow lipstick if I had to. Not only have I had the privilege of being a role model to kids in New Zealand but I've also been given the opportunity to help in orphanages, hospitals and special needs schools overseas. Since finishing at BTI I have traveled to 12 countries including Cambodia to represent New Zealand at the international beauty pageant Miss Global 2017 where God opened up some amazing doors.

I have also had the privilege to help leave my own legacy by completing a Discipleship Training School (DTS) with Youth with a Mission (YWAM) at the University of the Nations in Kona, Hawaii. God showed up in more ways than I could have imagined and I was privileged enough to be a part of team who went to multiple destinations to assist those in need. Once again I was the one receiving a humbling education on the reality of what some people go through.

Kristy Hitchens

Studied at BTI during 2013-2015

Many teachers have a story that goes something along the lines of, 'I've always known I wanted to be a teacher. When I was little I used to play schools with my teddy bears...' I am the opposite. I never wanted to be a teacher, and in fact was vehemently opposed to the idea. However, as the story often goes, God had other ideas and seven years ago, I found myself moving to Tauranga to begin studying for a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Primary degree at BTI. I wasn't sure what to expect, and was still unsure about the prospect of becoming a teacher. Luckily, throughout the three years of study, I became more comfortable and confident in the direction in which I was heading. BTI was absolutely instrumental in setting me up for the future that God had prepared for me.



My time at BTI was a whirlwind of placements, assessments, and reflections. Looking back, however, it's not the assignments or the long days of lectures that I remember the most. At the beginning of our first year, one of our lecturers tied a bunch of sticks together; symbolizing the need for unity. These sticks remained bound over the following three years. While I thought it was lame at the time, subtly rolling my eyes at the cheese, this image has stuck with me. Even now I find myself imagining myself, and those I love, as bound together, stronger and more unified; collectively much more than just individuals. This metaphor came to feel very real to our year group as we studied. The community that grew around our cohort, both students and lecturers, is the image I remember most in forefront of my mind when I think about my time at BTI.

Immediately after finishing my studies, I was offered a job teaching Year 7 students at Middleton Grange School, in Christchurch. I have stayed in the same job since moving there and am now in my fourth year of Year 7 teaching. Several opportunities have presented themselves and I have been fortunate enough to take part in such things as short term mission trips, camps, leadership training and school productions. I have had four fantastic classes with whom I have loved forming relationships and building stories. From the boy who made my baby rabbit a bed, to the boy who licked my shoe. From the kid who spent his lunchtime building a ramp so that a girl could get her wheelchair over a small bump in the doorway, to the girl who told me I look like a teacup pig.

I've experienced tears of laughter, tears of frustration, and tears of heartbreak. From being a support, to needing support, and making some of my closest friends in the process. From meeting kids when they were 11, to now when they are 15 and they are some of the most incredibly funny, strong, courageous people I know. The journey has been long and varied, and I have loved every second of it, except maybe a second or two of the late night essay writing! BTI was so foundational in developing my thinking and setting me on the path that I am walking now. He tangata, he tangata, he tangata. It is the people that have had the influence and made the change: the lecturers, my fellow students, and the pupils I teach now. The adventure is just beginning.

Kayla Norris

Studied at BTI during 2013-2015

I moved countries to go to BTI. Growing up as a missionary kid, we visited New Zealand every couple of years to see my parents' families. Even though I had an American accent, I still loved connecting with my Kiwi heritage every time. So when it came to choosing a university, BTI was a no-brainer. I grew up in small Christian schools, and loved the fact that BTI was so focussed on teacher education. And, being a Lord of the Rings fan, I was sold.



Despite being a Kiwi citizen, and having a good handle on phrases like “sweet as” and “yeah nah”, my first several months at BTI were culture shock, to the say the least. I had no grid for primary school students in prim uniforms (or just uniforms in general) and to me, a diary was only what girls wrote secrets in, not a planner. I navigated feeling like I didn't belong in my own country, in the midst of learning how to write lesson plans and turn in my own assignments before that rapidly-approaching 4:30 pm deadline. Yet I wasn't alone- far from it.

My lecturers understood. I still remember sitting in Cathryn's office, when she simply told me it was a big deal that I had moved countries. In the flurry of assignments, I hadn't ever stopped to consider that it was a huge life transition, and it was okay if I wasn't always okay. And it was the same with every person I met, whether staff or student. They were always ready to answer my questions and let me know I belonged, whatever my accent. And that meant the world to me.

When it came to choosing what to do next, I applied for various teaching jobs around the region. But when I prayed about it, the message I kept getting was to stay in Tauranga. It didn't make sense to me. Hadn't I spent three years training to be a Kiwi primary teacher and I should get work wherever I could? But it turned out that God was still concerned about providing me with a place of belonging before the “doing”.

The January after I graduated, close family friends of mine in Tauranga invited me to help home school their two primary-aged girls. They were no strangers to moving countries and their whole family understood the tension of being from more than one nation. As I taught the girls maths and literacy, I was also mentored and encouraged. My life looked completely different from what I thought it would be. But I finally felt at home.

From this place of belonging, I remembered a childhood dream that I'd let go of in my goal of becoming a Kiwi primary school teacher. I wanted to do a Discipleship Training School. This five-month course was with Youth with a Mission (YWAM); an organisation I'd known about it all my life. Cross-cultural missions were second nature to me; not only had I grown up with them, but BTI also encouraged us to follow God's call to the nations. I had definitely seen myself being a missionary in the future. But could it be so soon?

Two months later, I started my DTS in Newcastle, Australia—with a community I’d visited often since I was young. That was just the beginning. In the last four years, I’ve joined Youth with a Mission full-time in New Zealand and travelled across nine countries. I’ve been able to draw Bible verses for tourists in inner-city Amsterdam, give first-aid care to remote villagers in Fiji, and trek the Himalayas where we saw a girl give her life to Jesus in a brothel. I told my story about how God gave me a place of belonging, and I continue to tell it today.

Some primary teachers have come through our YWAM courses, and they always ask me the same thing. “Will you ever go back to teaching?”



Himalayas, 2017; Kayla, 2nd behind Southern Cross

I take a moment to think about it. I wonder if I’ll ever be in a “normal” classroom; but back to teaching? The reality is I never left. Although I expected to be in full-time missions at some point in my life, what I never guessed was how I would use my degree every day. Whether I’m teaching a Bible course to missionaries-in-training, facilitating a small group on an outreach overseas, or of course, leading the children’s ministry—I’m a teacher through and through.



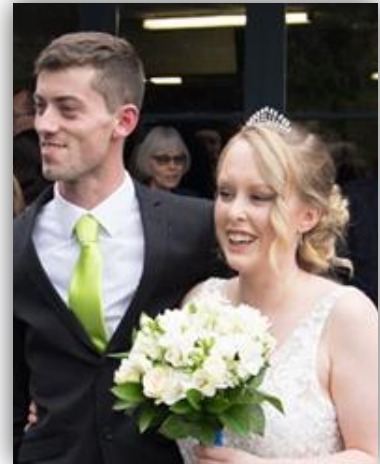
Kayla, 2017, during a DTS to the Himalayas

As I think of BTI turning 25, I chuckle a little, because I can never forget how old BTI is. All the people in my class who came straight from high school will know what I’m talking about. We turn 25 this year, too! So this October, as I’m celebrating my quarter-of-a-century birthday here in Tauranga, New Zealand, I’ll also take a moment to remember why I moved here in the first place, and the people who made this journey possible.

Alyssha Little (née Drager)

Studied at BTI during 2014-2016

I was Alyssha Drager when I was studying at BTI from 2014-2016. I graduated with a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Early Childhood Education degree. Before I graduated I was relieving at a few centres until I could find a full-time job. After I graduated, one of those places mentioned that I could fill in for a year while one of the teachers went on maternity leave. So I started full-time in September 2017 at Active Kids.



When my husband and I came back from our honeymoon and missions trip, Active kids could only give me a part time position; they could not guarantee the fifteen hours a week I needed to complete my registration. So I informed them that although I appreciated the job they had given me, I needed something full-time. They understood perfectly and kept giving me work till I had found a place.

When I came out of studying I handed a few CVs out and one centre rang up and asked would I like a job in two years. I was surprised about that question because I was in need for a job right then and there, but I said sure. Early Childhood Centres must get a lot of CVs. In all honesty I wasn't going to go back to this centre that offered me a job in two years' time, but I feel God led me there. So once again I went in knowing they had a job available and they seemed pretty happy with me. A few days later I had an interview and I got the job, YAY! So now I am a full-time teacher at Nestlings Preschool. I started working here in April this year and they are supporting me well with my registration. They are such a lovely team to work with and I love being able to share with the children about God.

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute was the best place to study at. I went through a lot of not so good things in my first year. Two friends died, and they were around my age, my boyfriend of two and a half years broke up with me so you can imagine how life was during that early time of my training. BTI became a family to me; your class mates and teachers were there not only for your work but to really get to know you and see how you were going. My being at BTI, made my year so much easier to get through. But most importantly, I give God the credit for opening up a place for me at BTI; something for which I am very grateful.

I will never forget the people that I met there and the teacher educators that I had. Yes the work can be hard, but the lecturers are happy to help, because they wanted to see you succeed. Never be afraid to ask questions or think that your questions are stupid because there is a chance that someone else in your class is thinking the same question but won't ask it. Asking questions brings more revelation and understanding about what you don't know. BTI also has an awesome academic support team that can help you too, so make use of them as much as you can.

Stephanie Tupaea

Studied at BTI during 2015

Kia Ora,
Ko Taupiri te maunga
Ko Waikato te awa
Ko Rangitane te waka
Ko Pakeha te iwi
Ko Tupaea te hapu
Ko Saint Patrick's Catholic Church te marae
Ko Stephanie taku ingoa
Kei te mahi ahau tuarua o Tuakau
Kei te noho ahau ki Pukekohe
Nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa



My name is Stephanie and I attended BTI in 2015, completing a Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary). Immediately after finishing my programme of study, I went on to get hired as a permanent English Teacher at one of my practicum schools, Tuakau College. My first year of teaching was challenging, because as much as BTI prepared me, there were just so many things that I was unfamiliar with and had to learn. Designing effective lessons and resources in an under-resourced department, dealing with challenging student behaviours and learning about school procedures were my maunga teitei (high mountain), in that first year.

But after one year under my belt and two amazing mentors (Julie Lawson & Ursula Aitken) guiding me, my second year went better. I knew what to teach and what to expect and I knew how to handle student behaviour a lot better. Gone were the days where I would struggle to be assertive or issue consequences. I had become a wiser teacher, knowing that if I didn't lay down the law, things would get very difficult for me. I also got stronger too and more secure in my identity as a teacher (I know, because I recall it from the BTI Graduate Profile). My students came to know that I had high expectations of them. I was a kind and supportive teacher, but I would not accept rudeness or a half-pie effort. Most of my students appreciate this trait. They want someone to believe in them when they don't believe in themselves; they want someone to stubbornly see their potential, and cheer them on, even if it means cracking the whip sometimes.

As I grew more familiar with the curriculum in my subject area, as well as the assessments, I also started to improve my planning. I remember reading something by Bev Norsworthy when I was at BTI that always resonated with me. She said that amateur planning or teaching is when you ask how instead of why. Her argument was; that effective teaching comes from asking why should that tool, strategy, resource be used, because then you are a responsive teacher that is tailoring learning to the needs of the class. It wasn't until my second year that I really began moving from, 'How do I do this?' To, 'Why should I do it this way?' I've become a better teacher because of it.

In my second year of teacher, feeling like I had now settled in my role as a classroom teacher, I applied for a House Leader position and got it! This was an opportunity to build some experience in leadership and contribute to the school on a larger scale but within my level of ability. This led me to getting tapped on the shoulder for an opportunity in our Māori community. Nearly half of the roll is Māori, so we have a gathering called Pumanawa, which is an opportunity for our Māori students to connect with their culture every morning before school and for an hour on Wednesdays. I was asked to be a Pumanawa teacher, because the Principal had heard of my positive attitude towards culture. I accepted, but not without recognising my responsibility to learn te reo Māori formally, so I enrolled at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi.



I have now been learning te reo since February, and am proud to say that I have almost graduated to Level Two. This has been pivotal for my development as a teacher, because it has made me go from being less tokenistic and more normative about the way I use culture in the classroom. The way students treat me now or the relationships that I now have because of my efforts, has been very humbling to experience. I need to acknowledge BTI for this in some ways, because it was at BTI that my preconceived ideas about culture were challenged for the better.

Last week I sent off my application for full registration and boy, did it feel good! That has been my goal since I was 13 years old and received a calling from God to be a teacher. Now that that is done, I am unsure of what God wants for me next professionally. I know that I have a desire to teach in a Catholic School and possibly do a Master in Education degree one day, but I will only decide once I feel God's guidance. There are so many things that can distract you in this world, like accruing power, money and status, so I want to keep my eyes on Jesus. "Your kingdom come, your will be done."

I proudly believe that BTI was part of God's plan for me. The things I learned, the people I met just would not have happened if I hadn't gone to BTI. I think back fondly on all those I met, because they are such genuine and nice people. I also am proud to have learnt at such a competent university. There are so many things that I recall on a daily basis just from the readings; readings on classroom management, self-efficacy and being professional have made me the teacher that I am. Even my mentor at school comments on the quality of my training when she hears me recall content from the literature I absorbed while studying. BTI is clearly a blessing from God that I am so happy to praise him for!

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