

Local Bicultural Learning: Engaging with Māori Cultural Experiences and Giving Back

This advisory is intentionally focused on bicultural learning and Te Tiriti-responsive practice in Aotearoa. It complements, but is distinct from, broader multicultural professional development.

NZSTA encourages members to engage with local cultural experiences in their own regions as part of ongoing professional and personal development. Cultural learning does not need to be centrally curated or delivered by NZSTA; some of the most meaningful learning occurs through **local, community-based engagement**.

Why Engage Locally?

- Develop deeper cultural competence and understanding of local contexts, including tikanga and kawa appropriate to your rohe.
- Strengthen relationships with iwi, marae, and community organisations.
- Enhance professional practice through lived, place-based learning.
- Support personal growth, reflection, and confidence in culturally responsive practice.

Opportunities for Engagement

1. Workshops and Learning Experiences

Members may wish to explore:

- **Te reo Māori and tikanga workshops** run by marae, wānanga, community centres, or local providers.
- **Māori arts and cultural practices** such as weaving, kapa haka, carving, storytelling, or waiata.
- **Cultural safety or community-led learning sessions** offered by iwi organisations or regional groups.

These experiences often provide valuable insight into local tikanga and ways of being that directly inform respectful professional practice.

2. Community and Cultural Events

Local events can offer accessible, authentic learning opportunities, including:

- Marae open days or community hui
- Regional Māori festivals and celebrations
- Heritage, language revitalisation, or wellbeing events
- Iwi- or hapū-led initiatives open to the wider community
- Visit the Waitangi Treaty grounds, which include Te Kōngahu Museum of Waitangi and Te Rau Aroha Museum of the Price of Citizenship.

Participation helps build understanding of local histories, values, and aspirations.

Giving Back: Contributing to Communities and Promoting the SLT Profession

Local engagement also offers opportunities for SLTs to **give back** and strengthen relationships through reciprocity.

Ways Members Can Contribute

- Share SLT knowledge at **community hui, kura, kōhanga reo, or whānau events** (e.g. communication development, language, swallowing, wellbeing).
- Support **community-led initiatives** where SLT input is invited or appropriate.
- Help raise awareness of the **speech-language therapy profession**, particularly in regions where services may be less visible.
- Inspire rangatahi by sharing information about SLT as a career pathway.

Members are encouraged to take a **partnership approach**—listening first, responding to community-identified needs, and respecting local tikanga.

Finding Opportunities in Your Region

Members can identify local opportunities by:

- Connecting with hauora or education Māori teams at your workplace (e.g., large employers such as Te Whatu Ora and the Ministry of Education).
- Contacting **local iwi offices, rūnanga, or marae** directly. Some hapū have a published cultural narrative that tells the story of how they settled in particular areas, why places were named as they are, and how they used different parts of the land for different purposes.
- Checking **regional or city council event calendars**.
- Following iwi, marae, and cultural organisations on **social media**.

- Connecting with **tertiary institutions, wānanga, libraries, or community centres**.
- Talking with colleagues, educators, or community networks about what is happening locally.

Professional Development and Reflection

Local cultural engagement can complement formal CPD by:

- Supporting reflective practice and cultural competence portfolios.
- Informing case reflections, discussion pieces, or peer learning.
- Enhancing confidence and responsiveness in professional roles.

NZSTA encourages members to view professional development as **both structured and self-directed**, grounded in community relationships as well as formal learning.