



AUT SPORTS PERFORMANCE
RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEW ZEALAND



Action Learning Action Research Association

11th Action Learning Action Research and 15th Participatory Action Research World Congress

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Putting Global Collaboration at the Heart of Action Research

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Bhanot, G (2025) **Empowering Co-Agency for Establishing Visionary Strategists**

At Westlake Girls High School, we are committed to providing student-centred learning experiences that develop, support, and empower our mana wāhine. We strive to foster a positive school environment that supports student growth and ensures they leave Westlake as confident and proud citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand. Our school community is diverse and multicultural, and we recognise this diversity as a strength. We embrace differences in cultural background, gender identity, individual strengths, religious beliefs, and accessibility needs, fostering an inclusive environment where all students are respected, valued, and supported throughout their time at school.

At WGHS, our role as part of Te Kāhui Ako o Pupuke is guided by Te Aro Ako, which is a learning journey grounded in co-agency, where we learn with and from our ākonga. Co-agency allows us to design meaningful, inquiry-rich experiences that nurture curiosity, critical thinking, and independence. Through reflective, evidenced-based practice and culturally responsive teaching, we create adaptive environments where ākonga feel safe to take risks and grow. By modelling the values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and kaitiakitanga, we inspire confident, capable learners who shape their own future pathways.

Geetu Bhanot, a Science and Chemistry teacher, will present her 2024–2025 Action Research on co-agency, exploring shared power, collaboration, and student autonomy. Co-agency is a transformative approach in education that emphasises shared responsibility, partnership, and student voice to prepare learners as visionary strategists in a rapidly evolving world. Despite its potential, limited research has been conducted on the long-term implementation of co-agency practices within secondary school settings to foster equitable and inclusive learning environments.

During the reconnaissance phase, data gathered from surveys, interviews, and classroom observations revealed teacher concerns around time constraints, diverse learner needs, and levels of student participation. Approximately 68% of students responded positively to guided inquiry-based learning (IBL). In the implementation phase, Bybee's 5E model was used to foster active participation, inquiry, and discovery. Student feedback showed that 90% felt more engaged and experienced a stronger sense of interdependence. The research highlights the need for ongoing professional development, hybrid teaching models, and systemic support to embed and sustain inclusive co-agency practices.

To be presented: In person in Auckland