

Fairfield College physical education teacher, Michael Mayne said the experience for the students was priceless as they learnt skills that will be crucial to their lives after school.

"As an educator I am very pro anything that can expose our students to this country's amazing outdoor opportunities, especially those that promote leadership and connection to each other and the environment. So trying to create an opportunity to work with the NZ Sailing Trust was something I hoped we could provide for our students," Mayne said.

"Interpersonal skills and being able to complete tasks with people you may not always connect with day-to-day is a hugely important skillset to have when you leave school. So seeing our students being able to complete their roles and responsibilities for the greater good of the trip is something we value as educators.

"When students are exposed to challenges where they are responsible for something other than themselves, it puts them in a position where they must be open to hearing other ideas and negotiating as a group so that they all play a part and have input. On this trip there were plenty of opportunities where our students had to lead, but also be an active and positive 'follower' which is almost just as important in dynamic group situations."

Mayne, who is also the assistant coach for the Under 20 All Whites and the Under 17 Football Ferns, said the rise of online gaming platforms have meant that some students are lacking in face to face communication skills, and that programmes like the NZ Sailing Trust is helping fill the void.

"I believe any opportunity where our youth can solve problems and work positively in group situations is one worth exploring and offering. I think more than ever it is easier for students now to work in isolation and almost remove the element of face-to-face interaction completely.

"This is amplified by the increase in technology, gaming, and online platforms. So what we see often is that our students lack the skills sometimes to just have and hold a conversation with real substance to it. And due to this, the ability to work in group situations has reduced.

"We try as educators to provide opportunities that can help fill that void. Thankfully, the NZ Sailing Trust have various programmes that give our students plenty of safe and enjoyable experiences to work as a group and develop important leadership skills."

Mayne said the feedback from the students was positive with some already making moves for future leadership roles.

"Our students were extremely grateful to the Auckland Maritime Foundation and the NZ Sailing Trust for the five day trip."

"One of the big goals for our school was to inspire some of these students to want to give back to the school in our leadership roles. Since this trip we have had three go on to apply and take

up lead student roles for 2021 which is a great outcome for the students and the school. It's an experience they won't forget and one they all highly recommend to any other schools."

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Content is extracted from an article on the NZST in the Waikato News (Nov 2020). You can read the full article [here](#).

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