

# DE-STREAMING

## RESOURCE: THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF STREAMING IN AOTEAROA

Titiro whakamuri, Kōkiri whakamua

Look back and reflect so you can move forward

**Purpose** *(Why you might use this resource)*

To

- Give historical perspective on the issue of streaming in Aotearoa

**Audience** *(Could be one intended, or several)*

Classroom teachers

PLD facilitators

SLT

**Key Points**

**Link(s) to key documents to be used for discussion**

- The July 2022 Panui ending streaming from Tokona te Raki  
[15/07/2022 - Ending Streaming in Aotearoa - July 2022](#)
- [‘To Stream or Not to Stream?’](#) Warwick Elley, 1976, NZ Council Education Research, Set 76 number 2.

## Suggestions for Use

This is an article written about an historical item that gives us insight into educational thinking comparing 1970s to 2020s thinking about streaming.

A useful discussion starter to introduce where perspectives have come from and where our personal theories and perspectives not only come from but how we hold them and why we need to evaluate these as educators in Aotearoa today.

### 1. Distribute the articles from and use strategies such as:

- [Structured academic controversy](#) A highly structured, small group discussion that is designed to help participants achieve three goals: 1) to gain a deeper understanding of an issue, 2) to find common ground, and 3) to make a decision based on evidence and logic
- [Save the last word for me](#). This discussion technique encourages meaningful classroom conversations by eliciting differing opinions and interpretations of information and supports discussion where participants must listen and not interrupt while others are giving their perspective.

### 2. The following is the body of text relating to the Warwick Elley article, July 2022 panui from ToKona Te Raki written by Piripi Prendergast

I was surprised to learn recently that we have almost a century of research informing us about streaming. In 1976, Warwick Elley, then Assistant Director of NCER, published an article that concluded: "The best research to date shows that streaming offers no real advantages for pupils, and more importantly a number of benefits to be gained from not streaming." This is a great read that tracks Aotearoa's ability grouping journey over many decades, and really reinforces what we have known for a long time - that streaming is damaging.

Elley starts by quoting research from 1932 about ability grouping and asks why we are still streaming over 40 years later. A 1935 Department of Education regulation required all intermediate schools to classify pupils 'in accordance with their attainments and aptitudes', and regular surveys showed this regulation was being followed. It was a 1969 PPTA report that signaled a new period of questioning the practice of ability grouping. Elley canvassed both New Zealand and overseas research and found evidence that:

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- Students were very aware of the streaming process and that it coloured their motivation toward their schoolwork.
  - Some studies showed early advantages for 'bright children' in streamed groups, but this advantage faded into insignificance over time.
  - Students in non-streamed groups developed significantly better study habits, healthier self-concepts, a better feeling of belonging, and generally had fewer personal problems.
  - A 1962 NZ study found that the majority of primary school teachers believed that streaming would raise attainment levels for pupils of both high and low ability, would decrease the incidence of undesirable pupil behaviour, and would lead to students working harder.
  - Another study in the 1950s in NZ found that 75 percent of a sample group of parents favoured ability grouping or streaming.