

**Investigating Factors Influencing the
Retention of Maori Students
within Secondary Education in
Aotearoa-New Zealand**

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ABSTRACT

Maori students in mainstream schooling in Aotearoa-New Zealand are significantly disadvantaged by inequitable education outcomes. Some blame the students themselves or their families for this situation, while others argue that other factors, such as low socio-economic status are to blame. This thesis argues that the perpetual poor outcomes of education for Maori are the direct result of misguided and ineffective government policies which have sought to assimilate and to control Maori students for many decades. Despite the promises of equality and protection of taonga (*education being a taonga*) contained within Te Tiriti o Waitangi, successive governments have failed to uphold those promises and education for Maori has had a devastating effect on their mana, their language and their economic status within mainstream society. Education has had the effect of relegating Maori to the status of servants in their own country by replicating the culture, language and customs of a Pakeha majority within schools and educational institutions while simultaneously marginalising Maori language, Maori knowledge and Maori cultural practices. The result for generations of Maori students has been disengagement from education and early exit from school.

This study sought to examine the factors which influenced a group of thirteen Maori secondary school students to continue their secondary education into Year 13, the last year of secondary school. It was conducted in two Auckland secondary schools of differing deciles during 2010 and it focused on student voice by using semi-structured interviews as the primary means of gathering in-depth qualitative data to form its findings. The study sought to approach the research from a strengths-based perspective, in keeping with the intent of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education, 2008b) to identify some factors which contributed towards the students remaining in school. The findings show that the students identified their whanau as having the strongest influence on them, followed by community and school influences such as teachers, sports coaches and the whanau of the local marae. The significance of this is that collaboration with whanau has the latent potential to positively impact on the educational experiences of Maori students, to improve their achievement and to increase their life chances in the future, *if schools are willing* to consult and collaborate.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study investigates factors which influence the retention of Maori students within secondary education in Aotearoa-New Zealand in 2010 in order to illuminate the reasons why some students remain at school for much longer than others and are consequently able to graduate to tertiary education or employment.

Maori are the indigenous people of Aotearoa-New Zealand. From the time of British colonial settlement in the early 1800s, Maori children have been predominantly educated within an education system which promoted, and continues to promote, a western worldview. The curriculum and assessment regime imposed on Maori was developed and delivered through a monolingual and monocultural English lens, and for the most part, still is today. Within this system Maori students have been labelled as academic under-achievers, primarily in relation to a Pakeha-constructed definition of achievement, and this situation has existed for many years. The repetitive nature of the 'under-achievement' has become so entrenched that society has come to accept it as quite normal for Maori to fail (Jenkins & Ka'ai, 1994). There have been many government and other reports which have illuminated the problem repeatedly over decades such as:

- 1944 Department of Education (Thomas Report)
 - 1961 Report on Department of Maori Affairs (Hunn report)
 - 1962 Department of Education (Currie report)
 - 1967 NZEI Committee on Maori Education report
 - 1970 National Advisory Committee on Maori Education (NACME)report
 - 1974 Maori Education: Policy Statement (Amos report)
 - 1978 Department of Education (Johnson report)
 - 1980 National Advisory Committee on Maori Education (NACME) report
 - 1982 NZEI Committee on Maori Education
 - 1988 Administering for Excellence (Picot report)
- (As cited in Metge, 2008, pp. 17-20; and Jones et al., 1995, pp. 70-74)

Despite such reports, the education system continues to produce inequitable outcomes for Maori students and there is a significant, growing 'gap' between the achievement outcomes of Maori and non-Maori students. Successive governments have made largely ineffective attempts to rectify the situation through various education policies as will be explained later in this thesis, and yet government obligations and promises under the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi have not been fulfilled. The only effective and positive policy intervention has been the radical initiative of constructing the alternative schooling option of Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Maori, an initiative developed by Maori, for Maori and about being Maori (Tooley, 2000).

Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success: The Maori Education Strategy (2008-2012) (Ministry of Education, 2008b) is the new ministry strategy for Maori education which is focused on participation, engagement and success for Maori students. The ministry has an expectation that implementation of the goals of *Ka Hikitia* will ensure effective teaching for Maori learners, particularly in Years 9 and 10, as well as improved whanau-school partnerships. Ministry reports on Maori education do not acknowledge the part that socio-economic disparities may play in low achievement outcomes; nor do they state how schools and teachers will be resourced to implement the new ministry goals of *Ka Hikitia* or how the government will contribute towards realising equitable outcomes for Maori students however. The 2009 annual report on Maori education (Ministry of Education, 2009a) does state that the ministry will “focus professional leadership development on improving Maori student presence, engagement and achievement” and will “strengthen school planning and reporting processes by increasing the expectation that schools will have an explicit focus on Maori student presence, engagement and achievement” (Ministry of Education, 2009a, p. 32), which perhaps signals an emphasis on increased accountability for schools in the realm of Maori education.

In order to gain the academic requirements for entrance to university in Aotearoa-New Zealand, students must study up to the end of Year 13 (the fifth and final year of High School). The retention of students is therefore an important issue, and a challenge that schools have not been able to adequately meet in the past. Many Maori students have left school with little in the way of qualifications, as will be discussed later in this thesis.

The problem is exacerbated by the large numbers of Maori students exiting the education system *before* Year 13. Many of them leave before they reach 16, which is the legal school-leaving age in this country. For each cohort of Maori students that enters Year 9 (the first year of secondary school), approximately 60% will leave school before they reach Year 13 (Ministry of Education, 2009a).

Poor educational results for Maori have been described as a wastage of human potential which affects the nation as a whole, not just Maori alone (Hoani Waititi 1961, cited in Metge, 2001), and this wastage continues to occur annually in Aotearoa-New Zealand. In 2010 Liz McKinley, the director of Auckland University's Starpath programme, (operating in five Auckland and Northland schools to lift achievement for students from poor families) commented that the latest figures point to the same group of mainly Maori and Pacific students in poorer areas still lagging behind. She advocates for an accelerated 'closing of the gap' policy, stating that even if improvements follow the trend of the past five years, "you are still looking at putting two or three more generations through school before you come anywhere near getting those equivalent pass rates, so you have generations of kids who are being wasted to the country" (Collins, 2010).

There are opposing schools of thought as to the cause of the problem, with one attributing poor results to the students themselves, as well as their whanau or the homes they come from. This is known as 'deficit-theorising', and recent research in the field of Maori education (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003; Hill & Hawk, 2000) indicates that this school of thought is still alive and well in our country's schools. The alternative view is that the mainstream education system is to blame, that it is failing to educate Maori students, and that its structures and values, based on the British colonial model introduced early in the 19th century, do not meet the needs of Maori students. Consequently, they continue to be alienated from the education system.

Whether the problem is framed as a 'Maori problem' or as a failure of the education system is insignificant when one looks at the social ramifications of under-achievement for both Maori youth and for the rest of society. A lack of educational qualifications or a

history of a lack of connection with schooling has been connected to low-paid employment; unemployment; benefit dependence and even crime and imprisonment (Department of Corrections, 2007). Probably the most concerning statistic of all, is that Maori make up 50% of the prison population despite being only 15% of the population of this country and that generally, prison inmates have significantly lower rates of literacy and numeracy than the rest of the adult population (Department of Corrections, 2007; Lashlie, 2003; Walker, 2007). A 2007 study into the over-representation of Maori in the criminal justice system found that 45% of sentenced prisoners had left school *before* reaching Year 11 (about age 15), three times the rate for the general population (Department of Corrections, 2007).

The Ministry of Education's *State of Education in New Zealand: 2008* report states:

Students who disengage, and in particular leave school early, are more likely to face hardship in the labour market as well as being excluded from necessary learning opportunities later in life. Students from socio-economically disadvantaged communities and Maori students (who are over-represented in these disadvantaged communities) have relatively poor rates of student engagement, continuing the trend of previous years (Ministry of Education, 2008a, p.4)

Ministry of Education (MoE) statistics for 2005 showed that only 6.9% of Maori boys and 11.5% of Maori girls achieved university entrance compared with 28.9% and 39% for their non-Maori counterparts and that approximately 50% of Maori students left school without any qualifications at all, compared with 21% of non-Maori school-leavers. Furthermore, 41% of Maori boys and 39% of Maori girls left school *before* they turned 16, the age they are legally allowed to leave school (Cited in Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2009). However, the ministry website (Ministry of Education, 2010a) indicates that the proportion of Maori school leavers achieving a university entrance standard increased by 77% between 2004 and 2008 taking the percentage from 11% to 18%, which is still comparatively low as the proportion of Asian school

leavers achieving a university entrance standard was 68% and for European students it was 50%.

The issue of truancy, combined with early leaving exemptions, has in recent years, been responsible for the absence of up to 28% of 15-year-old Maori students from secondary schools on a daily basis, although in the last few years the ministry has significantly reduced the number of exemptions granted to students. Early leaving exemptions can be granted by the ministry on the basis that a student is likely to derive minimum benefit from mainstream education and they have a job or training programme organised. Caccioppoli and Cullen (2006) suggest that early exemption from school became "...a convenient way for schools and Maori to give up on each other" (p. 22), and they cite Ministry of Education statistics showing early exemptions granted to Maori students increased from 298 in 1998, to 1424 in 2004, an increase of 478%. A Ministry of Youth Affairs (2000) review of evidence of student retention in schools indicated that retaining students in school led to reduced delinquency in young people and also found that rates of retention of Maori students are typically twenty percentage points lower than those of other students at ages 16 and 17 (McLaren, 2000).

Fifty percent of all Maori students attend schools in the poorest communities (Ministry of Education, 2009a) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's (NZQA) analysis of student performance in NCEA (2005-2007), acknowledges there is a significant trend in the rates of achievement of both NCEA Level 2 and Level 3 between schools in different decile bands, with the highest rates for Decile 8-10 schools, and the lowest for Decile 1-3 schools. However, another significant trend the NZQA identified, which is very relevant to this study, is that the longer low-decile schools *retain* their students, the closer their qualification acquisition rates come to those for middle and high-decile schools (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2010).

Differences in achievement between Maori and non-Maori have in the past been attributed to socio-economic status rather than ethnicity and a 1997 report commissioned by the Ministry of Education to review Maori participation and performance in education concluded there was nothing significant about 'being Maori'

that affected education success and that disparities were due to socio-economic disadvantages associated with poverty (Chapple, Jefferies & Walker, 1997). However, an analysis of data from two large studies of New Zealand secondary schools found that the lower achievement of Maori students was linked to more than socio-economic status. After the socio-economic status of the student's family and the decile rating of the school had been accounted for, there remained an additional negative effect arising from the interaction between schools and Maori ethnicity (Bishop, et al., 2003; Harker, 2006). The research also highlights the critical part that high-quality teaching plays in successful outcomes for students.

Maori are less likely to attend an early childhood education facility before entering primary school, are far less likely to leave school with upper-secondary-school qualifications, are also less likely to gain formal or tertiary-level qualifications when compared to other New Zealanders and are disproportionately featured in unemployment and crime statistics (Department of Corrections, 2007; Department of Labour, 2010). As education is considered a crucial site of struggle for the redevelopment of Maori in the face of widespread high and disproportionate levels of socio-economic disadvantage (Smith, 2002), knowledge of what influences and supports Maori students to pursue education is important. Furthermore, as gaining *entry* to university is essential for anyone wishing to pursue a university education, the role that secondary schools play in preparing Maori students for tertiary study can be seen to be pivotal in increasing the life chances of young people. Thus, secondary schooling can be seen to act as a gatekeeper to higher education, broadening the life chances of those who succeed, while limiting the future opportunities of those who fail.

My interest and concern around this area of education has emerged over the last four decades, through parenting Maori children and grandchildren, in primary teaching, and more recently in working with Maori students in secondary schools. From the beginning, the driving purpose for the research was related to social justice, the need to achieve equitable outcomes within education, and, as a stakeholder myself, a wish to find some answers.

Thesis Aims and Methodology

This study sought to investigate the historical context for Maori educational achievement and to identify some key factors that enabled or encouraged the research participants (who were Maori secondary students in two Auckland secondary schools) to stay at school until Year 13 despite many of their peers leaving earlier with few or no qualifications. It also sought to understand how these factors had impacted on the participants' decision to remain at school. It was considered that a greater knowledge of the factors could influence schools to strengthen pedagogical policies and practices in order to improve the retention rates of Maori students. The strengths-based methodological approach was in keeping with *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education, 2008b), which calls for a shift away from deficit discourses towards a reconceptualised view of Maori as being successful on their own terms.

Illuminating and legitimating student voice was the basis of the qualitative methodology which used the 'collaborative storying' approach developed by Russell Bishop in his research (Bishop, 1996b). In collaborative storying, the meanings that the interviewees themselves attribute to their experiences, within semi-structured interviews as conversations, are the meanings that feature in the final narrative. The sense they make of their own experiences, interactions and relationships is explored and explained through their own ways of theorizing and explaining, rather than those of the researcher (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). I used this methodology as a Pakeha researcher wishing to avoid making assumptions or drawing conclusions which could unwittingly affirm any prejudices presently held as a member of the dominant group in society.

The thesis relates, from the students' perspective, the main factors which contributed to the retention of the sample group of students within their schools. The students were selected from two Auckland co-educational secondary schools, with quite different deciles. Students were well-informed about the aims and methodology of the research before choosing to participate. Data was collected during focus-group interview sessions and categorised before preliminary findings were shared back for consideration by the students and their schools.

The questions the research sought to answer were:

- What is the historical context for Maori educational achievement?
- What major factors have contributed to (the sample group of) Maori students remaining at school through to Year 13?
- How have these factors contributed to them remaining at school?
- What are some implications for schools with regard to the student articulations of their experiences and aspirations?

Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is arranged in six chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, provides an overview of the present state of Maori education in Aotearoa-New Zealand, explains the rationale for the research and outlines the research aims and questions. The second chapter reviews the literature around Maori education, beginning with the historical perspective, leading on to the present situation and discussing the perspectives and findings of various educationalists, authors and researchers. As well as outlining how the present system has evolved 'for Maori', the review encompasses a set of key themes which arise in the literature. Those themes are: the perpetual problem of inequitable education outcomes for Maori students; the impact of socio-economic disparities within education; the mismatch between Maori culture and the mainstream education system; unequal power relations in schools and within the education system; the re-assertion of Maori aspirations for tino rangatiratanga (autonomy; self-determination) and the influence of whanau (families) on the achievement of students.

In the third chapter the methodology and methods of the research are discussed in detail and the fourth chapter reports on the data findings. Chapter five presents an analysis and interpretation of the main findings of the research in relation to the key themes discussed in chapter two, and chapter six, the concluding chapter, discusses the implications of the research findings for schools and relates these back to evidence-based suggestions of ways forward.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This first section of this literature review on Maori education begins with an overview of the historical background, explaining how education has evolved for Maori since colonisation, from the early Mission Schools where education was provided by the missionaries, following on to the government-established Native Schools, and then merging with the government-administered public education system. An historical approach is “of fundamental importance in revealing the origins of today’s inequalities” (Coxon, Jenkins, Marshall and Massey, 1994, p.16) and this chapter will argue that historical evidence reveals the education ‘system’ has done much to maintain and reproduce these inequalities by contributing to the securing of Pakeha economic and political dominance in the 19th century and to the maintenance of that dominance throughout the 20th century.

The historical section also covers a discussion of educational policies which impacted negatively on Maori, either by suppressing or ignoring their culture and language, or by placing Maori culture, language and knowledge in an inferior position to western culture, the English language and to western knowledge as defined in the prescribed curriculum. Features of the present ‘system’, including the Maori-established Kohanga Reo (Maori language nests for young children) and further kaupapa Maori schooling initiatives, (based on Maori pedagogies and values) are also discussed in this section.

The review then moves on to the main themes which arise in the literature as outlined in chapter one: the perpetual problem of inequitable education outcomes for Maori students; the impact of socio-economic disparities on Maori students’ education; the mismatch between Maori culture and the mainstream education system; unequal power relations in schools and within the education system; the reassertion of Maori aspirations for tino rangatiratanga (autonomy; self-determination) and the influence of whanau/families on the achievement of students.

How the Education System has Evolved for Maori

In order to understand the position that Maori as a group occupy within the education system, and indeed, within wider society in Aotearoa-New Zealand, knowledge is needed of the events and processes that have occurred before and since colonisation began. Historically, Maori education existed long before the arrival of the European in the form of specialised schools of learning, or *whare wananga* (Metge, 1980). These *wananga* functioned as places where the development and transmission of knowledge in specialised subjects occurred and scholars were trained and developed. Experts, or *tohunga*, who were *tapu*, were revered for their specialist knowledge and great *mana* and they acted as gate-keepers of that knowledge as well as advisors and healers. *Tohunga* were often people of high rank, chosen for their role at birth. Knowledge itself was perceived as sacred and hierarchical, and although much of the knowledge needed for daily living was transmitted orally and through observation, some knowledge was considered too important for commoners and was passed on only to those who showed an aptitude towards it and who would guard it with great respect and treat it with the sacredness it deserved through rituals and *karakia* (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). However, it was the *whanau* and *iwi* and not the individual, who retained ownership of all tribal knowledge (Metge, 1995).

The Policy of Assimilation

During the 1820s the Church Missionary Society set up the first formal schools in Aotearoa-New Zealand, with one purpose: “to further the spread of Christianity and to show the natives the way to salvation” (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974, p. 2). During this time the language of instruction was Maori and literacy and numeracy skills were acquired enthusiastically and with relative ease (Simon, 1994). After the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the new colonial state began to subsidise the missionary schools as they were seen as a means of civilising the natives (Barrington, 2008; Walker, 2004; Simon & Smith, 2001) and of promoting the state policy of ‘assimilation’ (the absorption of Maori into Pakeha society) by encouraging Maori to abandon their traditional cultural values, customs and language in favour of European ways which were considered by the European colonisers to be superior to the ‘uncivilised’ Maori ways (Barrington, 2008).

This continued until the land wars during the 1860s saw Maori virtually abandon the Mission Schools. It was then that the state, seeking a new vehicle for its assimilation policy, set up the Native Schools system by passing the Native Schools Act in 1867 (Simon & Smith, 2001). The Native Schools system ran parallel to the public primary school system and Maori pupils could attend either. However, once Maori pupils reached Standard Six (equivalent to today's Year 8) there was no state-funded secondary schooling available. Until the Maori District High Schools were established in 1941, the only secondary education available for Maori in rural areas (where most Maori lived) was through the Maori denominational boarding schools, either with a Department of Education scholarship or parents paying the fees (Matthews & Jenkins, 1999). The pedagogy and content of the curriculum was the prerogative of the Inspector of Native Schools, who declared English to be the medium of instruction once past the junior classes in order to promote assimilation (Walker, 1991).

Over the next half-century, schooling acted as the *suppressant* of Maori language and cultural identity and instead of education being embraced as a process of growth and personal development, for Maori children, school became an arena of cultural conflict. In effect, it was the equivalent of a *Trojan horse* in the midst of Maori tribal regions (Walker, 1991). Acknowledging the institutionalisation of racism within the Education Department and its schools in past years, and the deliberate delivery of an inferior curriculum to Maori students (Walker, 1991), assists us to understand the existence and entrenched nature of the education gap between Maori and Pakeha. Western European language and knowledge codes were imposed on Maori at the expense of their own language, *matauranga Maori* (Maori knowledge) and worldview (Glynn et al., 1997) and because of this imposition, an almost irrelevant curriculum was delivered to Maori children in schools to the extent that when a Senior Inspector of Native Schools visited them in 1931 he commented that there was practically nothing Maori in the schools except the children (Barrington, 2008).

This situation continued for many decades and in 1986 The Waitangi Tribunal report on the Te Reo Maori claim by the Maori people stated:

The promises of the Treaty of Waitangi of equality in education as in all other human rights are undeniable. Judged by the system's own standards Maori children are not being successfully taught, and for that reason alone, quite apart from a duty to protect the Maori language, the education system is being operated in breach of the treaty. (The Waitangi Tribunal, 1986, p. 58)

The Maori Denominational Boarding Schools

The Maori denominational boarding schools which had been established for Maori girls were: St. Stephen's, established in 1846; St. Joseph's (1867) and Hukarere (1875). The schools established for Maori boys were: St. Stephen's (1845) and Te Aute (1854) (Matthews & Jenkins, 1999). The missionaries who ran these schools were keen to place intellectually-able Maori youth where they could educate them in a European environment. They wanted to teach them to worship God, and to practise European ways so that when they returned to their homes and villages they would take their newly-found lifestyle back with them and hence would pave the way for the assimilation of Maori into Pakeha society and the adherence to Pakeha norms, considered by the Pakeha settlers and the missionaries to be more civilised than those of the Maori (Matthews & Jenkins, 1999; Walker, 1991). Hence, the construction of the curriculum within the Maori boarding schools was designed with the intention of creating a class of Maori which would perpetuate good Maori 'citizenship', as perceived by its Pakeha counterpart and defined by bureaucrats within the state education department (Matthews & Jenkins, 1999).

However, around the turn of the century, the policy of confining Maori to lower academic achievement was being defied from within Te Aute College, as the headmaster John Thornton, with the encouragement of Archdeacon Samuel Williams, its Chairman of Trustees, was successfully preparing many Maori boys for the University of New Zealand Matriculation (entrance) Examination, thereby demonstrating the capacity of Maori to achieve academic excellence (Openshaw, Lee & Lee, 1993). The inspectorate

in the Education Department was, however, adamant that the Te Aute curriculum had to radically change to include an emphasis on manual and agricultural subjects to prepare the Maori for his place in society as a manual labourer, living in his own rural community (Matthews & Jenkins, 1999; Barrington, 2008). Having been graduates of Te Aute and then gone on to university and careers in the professions themselves, Apirana Ngata and Te Rangi Hiroa (also known as Peter Buck), who were by 1906 Members of Parliament, vigorously defended the college's right to teach an academic curriculum but also advocated the adoption of agricultural subjects for those boys wishing to return to their land to farm. The 1906 Royal Commission inquiring into the school supported the department's calls for agricultural subjects to be taught and for the removal of academic, matriculation-oriented courses (Openshaw et al., 1993). Thornton conceded on the first department-directive and in 1906, proceeded to set up farming courses on 600 acres of land. However, he would not give in on the second directive, and the teaching of academic subjects to prepare boys for entry to university continued. The penalty for Thornton and his Board refusing to comply with department directives was the withdrawal of government scholarships (Matthews & Jenkins, 1999).

It is interesting to note that Maori parents did not support the agricultural subjects introduced at Te Aute and by 1930 nearly three times as many pupils were taking the matriculation course than the agricultural one (Openshaw et al., 1993; Barrington, 2008). It was plain to teachers and to Education Department staff that Maori parents wanted what most parents want for their children: an education that allows them to enter an occupation or profession, that enables a good standard of living and equitable outcomes, and for this reason they favoured examinations and the academic subjects (Openshaw et. al., 1993). Walker (1996) described Te Aute College as a model which succeeded where others had failed, because the aims of the principal coincided with the aspirations of the people who had, through Thornton's support, expressed their rangatiratanga. Furthermore, the success of the Te Aute graduates demonstrated Maori academic potential and competence.

The Native District High Schools

By the late 1930s a new challenge emerged when Maori leadership realised that their total land resources left for farming purposes could only support a small proportion of the fast-growing Maori population and that this threatened to subvert the long-established educational philosophy that the vocational future for Maori was in agriculture (Openshaw et. al., 1993). It was calculated by Ngata that only about 40% of Maori children could expect to remain on the land and to be economically self-supporting. The majority of them would have to seek work outside their rural community. Department of Education attention then became focused on the lack of post-primary education facilities in the predominantly Maori communities and thus began the process of opening a number of Native District High Schools. In 1941 the first one opened on the East Coast at Te Araroa, followed by two more in 1942, at Ruatoria and at Tikitiki. Before these schools were established only about one-third of Maori primary school leavers were able to continue their schooling, and most of them were forced to board away from home to do so. From a tribal perspective, these children were lost to the district (Openshaw et. al., 1993). However, the curriculum of the Native District High Schools was an inferior one in comparison to the academic curriculum of the board high schools in the urban areas and to that of the Maori denominational boarding schools (Openshaw et. al., 1993).

The boarding schools continued to make good academic progress and in 1954 Te Aute College was admitted as an accrediting school for University Entrance because of the high number of passes in school certificate in the previous two years and the presence of a large sixth form (equivalent to Year 12). The following year St Stephens was also admitted (Barrington, 2008). However, the success of these schools was in direct contrast to what was occurring elsewhere for Maori secondary school students.

In 1955 a National Committee on Education met to examine Maori education. Three of its chief recommendations were: that New Zealand should work towards a uniform system of education for Maori and Pakeha; that an officer for Maori education should be appointed to bring closer co-ordination among the various organisations concerned with Maori education; and, that greater emphasis on Maori culture would be given in all

schools (Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 1966). These recommendations were in direct contrast to previous policies which promoted the suppression of Maori language and culture, and controlled the curriculum to effectively deny Maori access to tertiary education and the professions.

The Policy of Integration

By 1960, when the then Labour government commissioned a report on the Department of Maori Affairs by its Acting Secretary J. K. Hunn, it was made clear that the Native Schools (including the District High Schools and the Maori denominational boarding schools), under the direction of the Department of Education, were not delivering an education that enabled Maori secondary students to progress to tertiary level and Maori representation at universities was only one eighth of what it should have been in relation to Maori and Pakeha proportional data (Hunn, 1961, p. 25). Hunn recommended that the schools be abolished. His report, which became known as the 'Hunn Report' advocated better education for Maori, which would promote better employment, leading to better housing, better health, better social standing and better education again, thus moving through a chain reaction intended to encourage closer 'racial integration' of the Maori and Pakeha 'races' (Hunn, 1961). The report stated that integration was the aim and policy of the Department of Maori Affairs, that this was inevitable, and that inter-marriage and urbanisation would assist in achieving this aim.

Between 1955 and 1968 the Department of Education gradually transferred control of Maori schools to the district education boards (Metge, 2008). Although the Native Schools (built on Maori land gifted by Maori to establish the school) had been set up to implement assimilation, they had become valued features of Maori communities and did at least focus on perceived needs of Maori children. In contrast, "Education Board schools treated Maori children with indifference or hostility if they did not fit in with the Pakeha-orientated system" (Simon, 1994, p. 72). The urban migration of the post-war period saw many Maori students alienated from high schools because of a range of factors, including: their minority status; cultural incompatibility between them and the schools; low teacher expectations; social breakdown of extended family support; and racial conflict (Walker, 1996). The schools were an alien environment, unwelcoming and

prejudiced against Maori students who were unfamiliar with Pakeha cultural norms and values, and the general posture of the state was still to 'victim blame'. Blaming the victim was easier because it let the state and its systems off the hook (Coxon et al., 1994).

Despite the recommendations and initiatives of both the Hunn report and a further Commission on Education report initiated in 1962 (known as the Currie report after the commission chairman, Sir George Currie), in 1966 the Maori Education Foundation Report noted that 85.5% of Maori pupils left school without recognised qualifications (cited in Walker, 1991). Assimilation policies, which had included a 'mastery of English' and the emphasis on the 'practical', that is, manual, domestic and agricultural subjects, rather than the 'academic', had left Maori as a group of underachievers in society (Barrington, 2008). The explanations for this disadvantage tended to fit a cultural deficit model (Irwin, 1988) which emphasised perceived cultural and 'racial' deficiencies rather than structural disadvantages which existed within the schools and institutions (Walker, 1996). Despite the success that Te Aute College had in producing an initial wave of graduates, there followed a gap of fifty years between the first and second waves of Maori graduates. This gap was identified in the Hunn report as a 'statistical blackout' (p. 25) which the high schools were responsible for, acting as "the choke-point that allowed only a thin trickle of Maori into tertiary education" (Walker, 1996, p. 164) although the inferior curriculum they were delivering was that which was stipulated by the Education Department. Unfortunately, another fifty years on from the Hunn report, the education gap still has not closed, as I will explain later in the chapter.

The Policy of Multiculturalism

The new 'integration' policy of the 1960s and 1970s failed to rectify inequitable achievement outcomes for Maori and in 1976, 70% of Maori students still left school with no formal qualifications. The policy 'masked the realities of differential access, participation and outcomes' (Jones, et. al. 1995, p. 176) for Maori in education and led on to a new attempt at addressing the problems, by acknowledging 'cultural difference' (Jones, et al., 1995, p. 176). In the past the state had addressed 'cultural difference' through policies aimed at assimilating and eradicating 'differences' but this policy,

promoted as 'multiculturalism' by the National Advisory Committee on Maori Education (NACME) in 1971, (backed by Duncan MacIntyre, the Minister of Maori Affairs at the time, but not introduced until 1972 by the incoming Labour government), was considered to be the way forward for integrating Maori education into a broader network (Jenkins & Ka'ai, 1994).

The new policy of multiculturalism acknowledged cultural differences between Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders and placed the onus on teachers to take cognisance of these differences and to cater for them in their planning and delivery of teaching programmes. The notion of 'cultural difference' assumed that Maori children brought with them different characteristics caused by their cultural heritage and was a challenging concept for the teaching profession to come to terms with as the majority of teachers were from the Pakeha dominant culture and many were totally unfamiliar with the lived reality of Maori culture as it was for Maori children. Professional development and resources built around 'Maoritanga' were provided for teachers who wished to learn more and teachers colleges offered Maori Studies as an optional subject for trainee teachers. However, although children were taught about cultural diversity, the teaching practices used and values taught were not necessarily applicable to Maori students and Bishop and Glynn wrote of the time that "Contemporary Maori culture remained invisible in the majority of mainstream classrooms" (1999, p.40). There was no attempt by educational authorities to examine the underlying systems which constantly reinforced a dominant Pakeha cultural way of operating and the result was that the educational status of Maori as a group remained the same, and Maori students often found themselves operating between two cultures, that of home and another of the school where, ironically, they were considered to be 'culturally different' in their own country (Jones et al., 1995).

The emphasis on catering for the 'cultural differences' of many cultural groups tended to subsume Maori as an ethnic minority as schools sought to adapt to the influx of people from the Pacific Islands in the 1970s and later, from Asia and other countries, with the end result that Maori were relegated to the position of being just another 'minority group'. During the 1970s this led to a growing number of calls from Maori

educationalists and others for the government to honour the partnership that the Treaty of Waitangi had established between Maori as tangata whenua (the indigenous people) and Pakeha people (as the colonisers) by consulting with Maori and allowing them more say in their own education. It was considered by Maori that educational structures were denying Maori people opportunities to succeed. Education was actively destroying the self-esteem of Maori pupils through a process of cultural denial and through deliberate practices such as the moderation of School Certificate Maori Language pass marks (Mitchell, 1984, cited in Jones et. al., 1995). The dominant Pakeha majority still controlled how, and to what degree, the education system responded to the needs and aspirations of Maori at all levels (Tooley, 2000). The policy of multiculturalism, still aspired to in some schools today, is impossible to achieve, as it plays off the interests and aspirations of the ethnic minorities against each other, while maintaining the status quo for the dominant group and thereby doing nothing to address unequal power relations (Jenkins and Ka'ai, 1994). It also fails to recognise the particular status of Maori as the indigenous people of this country and the protections of this status that were outlined in the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Policy of Biculturalism

The idea of a partnership between Maori and Pakeha was enshrined in the Treaty of Waitangi and 'biculturalism', as a general principle, has gained momentum since the Maori activism of the early 1970s, but its implementation in specific areas of government policy has been slow and often controversial (Sibley & Liu, 2004). The introduction of the policy of 'biculturalism' into the education arena was a Maori response to the policy of 'multiculturalism' and to the Pakeha 'one people' ideology (Walker, 1996) which is often used as justification for not providing for the social and cultural needs of Maori (Simon, 1986). It was Ranginui Walker himself who first used the term 'biculturalism' in 1973 when discussing the under-achievement of Maori children and to highlight the importance of individual children becoming familiar with their own culture and identity (Tooley, 2000). Walker (1996) describes 'being bicultural' as understanding the values and norms of the other culture, being comfortable in either Maori or Pakeha culture, and power-sharing in the decision-making processes of the

country at a political level. As a policy, 'biculturalism' was designed to create real structural change rather than continue the domination of society by one cultural group (Jones et. al., 1995). However, biculturalism is inherently colonial, and it positions Maori in junior 'partnership' with the crown while oversimplifying the cultural and political makeup of both Maori and Pakeha groups (O'Sullivan, 2007a).

It is interesting to note that, while Maori have had to be bicultural, that is to operate competently in both Te Ao Maori and Te Ao Pakeha (the Maori world and the Pakeha world), Pakeha have not. Aspirations of biculturalism within education were, in practice, an attempt to educate Pakeha about Maori culture, but did nothing to promote the educational advancement of Maori children. Nor were the wider structural inequalities within education addressed.

Research by Judith Simon (1986) in the 1980s revealed that a majority of teachers in the study held deficit views about Maori children and their home environments. Many teachers and principals justified not catering for the cultural and social needs of their Maori students by citing pressure on the school timetable and other barriers and expressing such ideologies as the 'one-people', egalitarian ideology whereby all children are 'treated the same' to avoid 'unfair' treatment of others. Simon found that the 'taha Maori' policy of the Education Department was being subverted within schools and that actions of the mainly Pakeha staff, reflected ideological views which preserved and concealed relations of domination and power in the name of cultural egalitarianism (Simon, 1986, p. 33). Of further concern were views concerning the inclusion of Maoritanga in the school curriculum. Some teachers thought the inclusion of Maoritanga was a favour to Maori children which they should forego when it was seen to interfere with the rights of others. They did not recognise the significance of the indigenous culture of Aotearoa-New Zealand, did not see that it had any benefit to others, and thus relegated it to the minority status of other cultures apart from the dominant majority (Pakeha) culture (Simon, 1986).

The Policy of 'Closing the Gaps' or 'Raising Achievement and Reducing Disparity'

Since the 1990s Ministry of Education policy for Maori has included 'closing the gaps' and 'raising achievement and reducing disparity' (Coxon et al., 1994) although in recent years this rhetoric changed to a more general position that refers to 'all New Zealanders' (Ministry of Education, 2009b, p. 3; Ministry of Education, 2010b, p.10) in response to political criticism which labelled 'closing the gaps' policies as 'race-based' policies (Walker, 2004). In 2008 the ministry released a new policy document, 'Ka Hikitia' which expressly aims to reverse the longstanding deficit discourse by valuing being Maori as the basis for 'realising Maori potential' (Ministry of Education, 2008b). The achievement gap is still mentioned in ministry documents each year however, as seen in this recent example: "There is a disproportionate number of Maori students and Pasifika students in the low achieving groups" (Ministry of Education, 2010b, p.10).

These gaps or disparities are defined by the ministry as different schooling outcomes between Maori and non-Maori, however Jenkins and Jones (1994) assert that "the great disparity Maori seek to address is the chasm between the Pakeha world in which they are isolated and the Maori world of which they are the keepers and in which, paradoxically, they often cannot speak with confidence" (p. 144). They argue that, when Maori can speak with confidence about the Maori world, then the disparity will have truly been reduced, although that is not to say that disparities in educational achievement are not important to address, just that the Maori measure of achievement is not only economic, but based on fluency in te reo me ona tikanga (Maori language, values and knowledge). The most notable feature of the 'closing the gaps' and 'reducing disparities' policies, is that the 'gaps' in educational achievement between Maori and non-Maori have continued to occur, despite policy intended to eradicate them.

Kaupapa Maori Schooling Initiatives

The Kohanga Reo (language nests) movement, begun in 1982 by Maori parents, kuia and kaumatua, is testament to the importance of te reo me ona tikanga to Maori. The movement arose from concerns about the loss of Maori language, as a reaction to the revelation that education policies had been 'short-changing' Maori for years (Walker,

1991) and from a desire to nurture and develop children through a kaupapa Maori approach to education. Richard Benton's research into the health of the Maori language in the 1970s had highlighted the dramatic decline in the number of Maori language speakers. In the 1940s *most* of the Maori population spoke the language, yet only thirty years later, *only a quarter* were fluent (Benton, 1979). The death of Maori language was imminent despite it being 'taught' in schools. This was acknowledged in the 1986 Waitangi Tribunal report on Te Reo Maori as being a failure of the education system (The Waitangi Tribunal, 1986).

Since the first Kohanga Reo opened, over 800 of them and approximately 40 Kura Kaupapa Maori (Maori immersion primary schools), as well as four Whare Kura (Maori-medium secondary schools) and three Whare Wananga (Maori tertiary institutions) have opened (MacFarlane, 2004) although many Kohanga Reo closed in subsequent years as they struggled to comply with Ministry of Education requirements in order to obtain funding. In 2010 there are 475 still operating (Te Kohanga Reo National Trust, 2010). The success of kaupapa Maori educational initiatives is demonstrated in the areas I have highlighted in the table below. Between 2002 and 2007 the percentage of school leavers from Whare kura who qualified to attend university *doubled*, from 21% to 42.8%, achieving a figure very close to the percentage achieved in mainstream education by non-Maori students.

Year	Number of school leavers qualified to attend university		Number of school leavers		Percentage of school leavers qualified to attend university	
	Māori immersion and bilingual schools	Non-Māori from English-medium schools	Māori immersion and bilingual school leavers	Non-Māori English-medium	Māori immersion and bilingual school leavers	Non-Māori English-medium
2002	26	13,438	124	43,099	21.0	31.2
2003	46	14,509	188	43,782	24.5	33.1
2004	94	16,608	280	45,049	33.6	36.9
2005	72	17,559	271	46,405	26.6	37.8
2006	151	19,029	384	46,095	39.3	41.3
2007	151	20,128	353	45,983	42.8	43.8

(From: Ministry of Education, 2010a. Progress against Maori education targets, p. 7.)

Maori students in Maori-medium schools are also more likely than Maori in English-medium schools to meet the literacy and numeracy requirements for Level 1 NCEA by the end of Year 11 and to gain age-typical senior school qualifications such as Level 1 in NCEA in Year 11 and Level 2 in Year 12 (Ministry of Education, 2007a). Despite the growth and success of kaupapa Maori educational initiatives, 90% of Maori students are still located within mainstream education (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). There is therefore an urgent need for educational initiatives and improvements which will effectively address the problem of inequitable outcomes for Maori students that still exists in our schools today.

Inequitable Education Outcomes for Maori

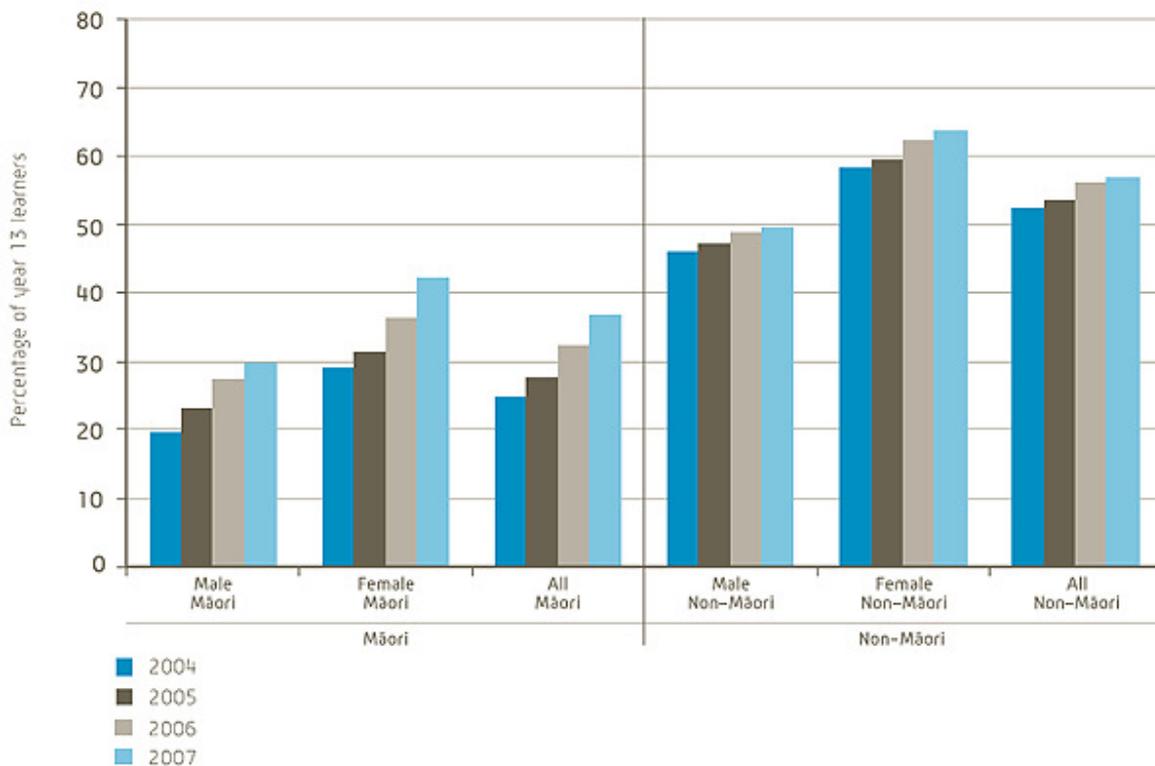
By far the most prominent, recurring theme that stands out in the literature on Maori education is that of under-achievement of Maori students in comparison to other ethnic groups. MacFarlane (2004) comments that since a 1973 Department of Education report on secondary education, students have been presenting schools with increasingly severe and diverse learning and behaviour problems and Maori students in particular continue to be over-represented at the negative end of the continuum.

In addition to poor achievement statistics, truancy and suspension rates for Maori students have been steadily rising relative to school attendance (Ministry of Education, 2007, cited in Marie, Fergusson & Boden, 2008) and reflect the disengagement of Maori students in disproportionate numbers. Professor Anne Salmond, in defending Dr Pita Sharples' (Robinson, 2009) recent call for open entry to universities for Maori students, pointed out that while 66% of Asian and 44% of European students leave school with University Entrance and/or Level 3 NCEA, only 20% of Pacific and a mere 18% of Maori students currently gain these qualifications (Salmond, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2009a), a statistic that in my opinion is truly shameful and would evoke national outrage if it were publicised as being the result for European students rather than that of Maori.

To illustrate how serious the gap in educational achievement in Aotearoa-New Zealand is, the following graph demonstrates that: only 37% of all Year 13 Maori students achieved at Level 3 NCEA in 2007; only 30% of Maori boys in Year 13 achieved at

Level 3; and, these results do *not* equate to university entry – only 18.3% of Maori student-leavers achieved the equivalent of university entrance in 2007. Most significantly, the graph shows the 2007 results for those students who were *retained* to Year 13. The approximately 60% of Maori students who exited secondary school prior to Year 13 are *not included* in these statistics as all statistics are calculated using a denominator of student roll (Ministry of Education, 2007a).

Graph 1: Year 13 Māori and non-Māori learners to gain an NCEA Level 3 qualification or higher, 2004/07



(From: *Nga Haeata Matauranga – The Annual Report on Maori Education, 2007/08*, Chapter 3: Section 3.5 Statistics.)

To illustrate the seriousness of Maori student disengagement from secondary schools, the following table of ministry statistics collated for the 2001-2007 period, shows that the 2001 cohort of 13,043 Maori students aged 11 years old, (who should have been present in the 2007 group of 17 year olds), has reduced to a group of only 5,127 Maori

students still at school by age 17. In fact, the table reveals that many have already left school *before* they are able to be included as 16 year olds, in 2006, and that numbers begin to significantly decline between the ages of 14 and 15. This table shows a reduction of approximately 60% of the original number of enrolled Maori students for the 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 groups of Year 13 students. I have highlighted it to show each cohort progressing through the secondary system from Year 9 to Year 13. It also clearly shows that the decline in roll numbers begins between the ages of 14 and 15.

AGE	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
5	12,720	12,674	13,302	13,061	13,700	13,497	13,016
6	13,414	13,350	13,438	13,648	13,454	14,036	13,987
7	12,998	13,548	13,679	13,567	13,749	13,393	14,065
8	13,216	13,128	13,765	13,668	13,478	13,726	13,405
9	13,493	13,368	13,328	13,806	13,656	13,361	13,691
10	13,395	13,591	13,643	13,384	13,776	13,602	13,472
11	13,043	13,495	13,791	13,658	13,637	13,863	13,643
12	12,637	13,167	13,650	13,852	13,825	13,586	13,820
13	11,806	12,298	13,184	13,738	13,913	13,707	13,679
14	11,113	11,618	12,259	13,117	13,492	13,444	13,438
15	9,297	9,907	10,421	11,092	11,630	11,849	12,303
16	6,372	6,394	6,965	7,402	7,686	7,979	8,440
17	3,783	3,682	3,807	4,395	4,580	4,763	5,127
18	915	871	874	950	910	907	1,083
19	168	195	157	199	196	133	183
20	110	99	87	124	117	90	97
21	70	72	66	71	61	59	47
22+	1,040	1,099	854	1,000	674	390	525
TOTAL	149,590	152,556	157,270	160,732	162,534	162,385	164,021

(From: *Nga Haeata Matauranga – the Annual Report on Maori Education, 2007/08*, Chapter 3: Section 3.5 Statistics.)

Explaining Inequitable Outcomes in Education

The capture of education by the middle-class dominant group in society, enabling those children most familiar with middle-class values and practices to excel while

disadvantaging the children of minority or marginalised groups, is a phenomenon that has exacerbated educational disparities in this country (Thrupp, 2007). This matter will be discussed further in a later section. A range of education researchers have identified other major problems which they see as being responsible for inequitable outcomes for Maori, such as the numbers of mono-cultural educational practitioners who lack the skills, sensitivity and knowledge to teach children whose culture differs from their own (Hook, 2006; Walker 1991); poor teacher-student relationships (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003; Jefferies, 1998; Simon, 1986); the disadvantages associated with unequal power relations and being subjected to an education system and curriculum imposed on them (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Simon, 1990; L. Smith 1999; Smith, 2002; The Waitangi Tribunal, 1986; Walker, 1991); the negative consequences of the colonisation of tikanga Maori (Mikaere, 2003; Walker, 1991); and the crucial role that socio-economic disparities play in disadvantaging children within the education system (Chapple, Jefferies & Walker, 1997; Marie, Fergusson & Boden, 2008; Marshall, Coxon, Jenkins & Jones, 2000; Thrupp, 2006; Thrupp, 2008b). As long ago as 1973, Ranginui Walker stated that Maori children saw little of relevance to them in the education system, and that their parents feared education: for its alienating effect on the individual, for the loss of Maori cultural values and for the fear of losing their children to the Pakeha world (Walker, 1973). In more recent times Walker (1996; 2004) has reiterated his earlier conclusions and those of others in clearly stating that the problems within the education system are structural, not cultural, and describing the Maori-Pakeha educational relationship as 'necrotic', as evidenced by language loss and cultural erosion.

A similar pattern of inequitable educational achievement between Maori and non-Maori in New Zealand can be seen in the educational statistics from the United States of America (USA) between Black American and other ethnic groups and is referred to by Ladson-Billings (2006) as the 'education debt'. She argues that focusing on the *gap* is misplaced; instead we need to focus on the education *debt* that has accumulated over time. She says this debt comprises historical, economic, socio-political, and moral components and should be regarded as a national budget deficit, to express the significance of the education debt. She questions why factors like 'race' and class

continue to be strong predictors of achievement when gender disparities have shrunk, and laments the fact that, across the USA, a gap in educational achievement persists between minority and disadvantaged students and their white counterparts, a situation similar to the New Zealand and also the Australian situations for indigenous children (Bishop et al., 2007b; Gray & Beresford, 2008; Ringold, 2005).

Describing the huge wastage of Maori potential as a 'debt' is apt when one considers the consequences for future generations of elderly New Zealanders in economic terms. Economists constantly warn that, based on projected demographics, the country's future workforce will be unable to sustain the financial level of support that is presently offered to old-age pensioners. Perhaps as more working people approach retirement age and these warnings start to sink in, New Zealanders may become more concerned about Maori students who leave school with few or no qualifications to face a life of unemployment or low-skilled, low-remunerated work, though at present, the public silence on this monumental problem of educational failure and social deprivation is deafening. As Anne Salmond (2009) points out, New Zealand has a relatively youthful population and an increasing number of these young people are from Maori families, so the problem of Maori under-achievement is a major one for all New Zealanders. Unless these students can succeed in higher education and gain the skills required to access good employment that drives the economy, the less likely it is that future senior citizens will be well looked after and that the country will prosper (Salmond, 2009).

Addressing Inequitable Education Outcomes - the Kotahitanga Project

The Te Kotahitanga Project is a research-based, kaupapa Maori solution which began in 2003 with the aim of improving the educational achievement of Maori students in mainstream secondary schools. It encompasses on-site professional development and support for teachers to improve and maintain their relationships and pedagogical skills when working with Maori students. There are now (in 2010) 49 secondary schools involved in the government-funded project. The initial research carried out for Te Kotahitanga had concluded that the main reason for low achievement by Maori students was deficit theorising by teachers as it led to low teacher expectations and a downward-

spiralling, self-fulfilling prophecy of failure (Bishop et al., 2003). The project chose to focus on Maori students in Years 9 and 10 because this was where the statistics on low achievement, retention and suspension problems were at their worst. A significant feature of the research interviews was that *most* of the student participants reported that being Maori in mainstream secondary schools was a negative experience (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). They described a range of issues such as: having their names mispronounced, not being allowed to wear taonga (special Maori body ornaments), being ignored when they were 'being good', with the focus on negative interactions only, and teachers resorting to overt negative stereotyping of Maori students as well as covert racism. *All* of the students identified the relationships they had with their teachers as the most influential factor in their ability to achieve in the classroom. The Kotahitanga Project delivers professional development to teachers to implement the Effective Teaching Profile (ETP) that the project developed.

Results from twelve schools that were involved in Te Kotahitanga since 2001 showed NCEA Level 1 achievement rates increased from 49% in 2005, to 60% in 2006, and 62% in 2007 for all learners in Year 11 who were taught by Te Kotahitanga teachers for all their secondary schooling. The increase was significantly greater than the increase for similar schools nationally. The research also showed "fewer learners whose teachers were engaged in Te Kotahitanga had unexplained absences from school, more were engaged, and more learners said their relationships with teachers had improved" (Ministry of Education, 2009a, p.38). Although there has been some criticism of the findings of the project by Roger Openshaw (2007), such as: the data does not take into account other initiatives that may have been operating in the schools alongside Te Kotahitanga; there were no control groups with which to compare outcome data; the capacity of teachers to alone shape the achievement of students is overstated; and, socio-economic differences and family factors are not taken into account (Openshaw, 2007), the NCEA results supplied by NZQA, and the affirmations of the student research participants cannot be disputed.

Maori Education and the Impact of Socio-economic Disparities

Various authors writing about Maori education often comment on the link between under-achievement and socio-economic disparities, citing the lower socio-economic status of Maori directly restricting access to the resources known to influence education participation and attainment (Bishop, 2008; Chapple et al., 1997; Marie, Ferguson & Boden, 2008; Walker, 1991; Walker, 1996). When discussing the classroom context and socio-economic disadvantages, Walker (1996) describes a 'big picture' where socio-economic disadvantage is linked to educational failure which is in turn linked to high unemployment. He argues that socio-economic disadvantage, educational failure and unemployment are the concomitants of an unjust social order arising out of the colonial experience. An historically-inferior, state-controlled curriculum was imposed on Maori, and the loss of land and an economic base (as a result of colonisation), relegated Maori to the lowest strata of the new nation state so that they "score lowest on the social indices of health, life expectancy, education and unemployment" (Walker, 1996, p. 161).

Educational and socio-economic gaps between Maori and Pakeha were *officially* exposed for the first time fifty years ago in the 1961 Hunn Report, but despite successive governments' attempts to address the educational and socio-economic discrepancies, a Ministry of Social Development Living Standards Survey for 2008 showed that Maori were still behind, with Maori and Pacific people having hardship rates which are *two to three times* that of non-Maori, and that their children are still significantly over-represented in the hardship group (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). Further to that, the unemployment rate for Maori was 13.3% in the year to March 2010, more than double the unemployment rate for non-Maori, (which was 6.4%), and the rate of 15-24 year olds *not* in education, employment or training, a key measure of youth disengagement, was 19.8% for Maori males and 15.5% for Maori females (compared with 11.6% and 9.8% for non-Maori) (Department of Labour, 2010).

In 1997 the Ministry of Education, Te Puni Kokiri and Treasury commissioned a report on Maori participation and performance in education (*commonly known as The Chapple Report after one of the authors*) with the main aim of finding ways to close the gap in labour market performance between Maori and non-Maori. The report found that overall

Maori were more likely than non-Maori to be unemployed and to earn less than non-Maori. It also found that there was no single reason for the gap in education but that the gap in family resources between Maori and non-Maori was *the key reason* and that Maori parents were much more likely to be unemployed, to have lower incomes, to have less education, or to own their own homes, than non-Maori parents. They concluded by bluntly stating that their research showed Maori students do worse at school than non-Maori students mainly because Maori parents have less money and less education than non-Maori parents and therefore the gap begins at birth. Significantly, the report attributed about two-thirds of the education gap to many Maori families having fewer resources, and the other one-third to other reasons such as racist comments at school, attitudes of some teachers, negative experiences of school by older peers, and a lack of Maori or other teachers who understood the students (Chapple, Jefferies & Walker, 1997). These findings match the experiences of the Year 9 and 10 Maori students who were interviewed for the Te Kotahitanga project in 2003 (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). They related issues of poor relationships, inability to access help and support, and instances where they were made to feel 'dumb' or 'poor'.

The Link between Socio-economic Disadvantage and Educational Achievement

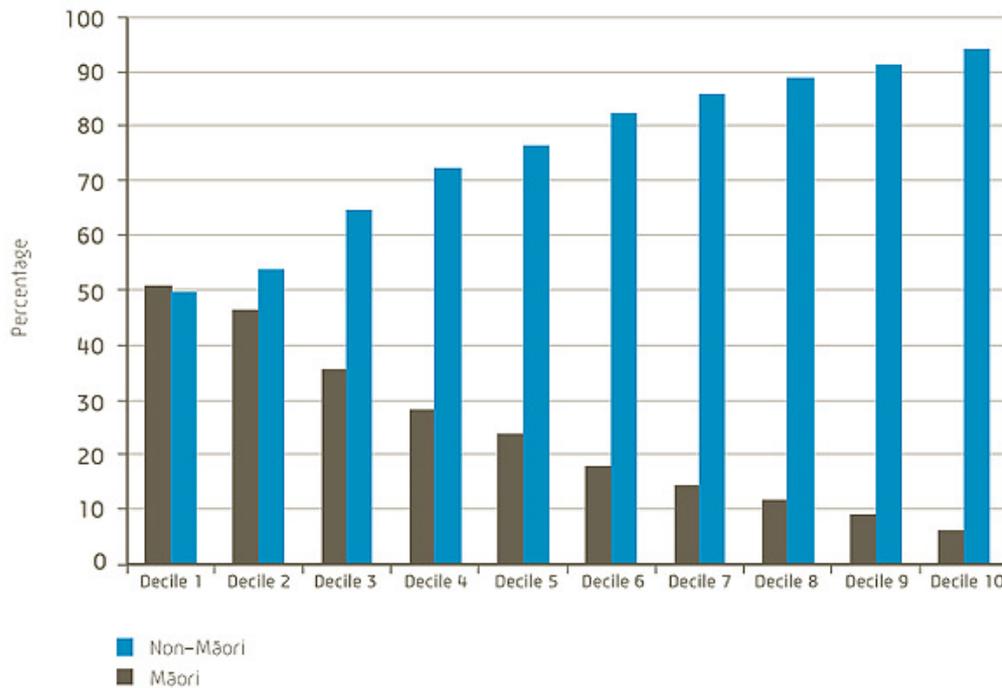
Enduring disparity in educational achievement between Maori and non-Maori has been described as being one of the most well-established features of the New Zealand education system (Marie, Fergusson & Boden, 2008). A report on educational achievement of Maori and the roles of cultural identity and social disadvantage which used data gathered over the course of a 25-year longitudinal study to examine the links between ethnic identification, social disadvantage and educational achievement concluded that educational under-achievement amongst Maori could be largely explained by greater levels of *socio-economic disadvantage during childhood*, rather than by ethnic identity, a summary that supported the findings of the Chapple report of 1997. Although it acknowledges the school of thought which attributes Maori under-achievement to colonialism and the continuous disadvantages associated with having a culturally-inappropriate education system and curriculum imposed on Maori, the report contends that socio-economic disparities, rather than cultural differences, are at the

heart of the problem since Maori have historically not been able to gain access to, and participation in, New Zealand's capitalist economic system. The authors of the report assert that there are strong links between economic status, resource capacity and educational performance; that educational under-achievement arising through limited access to resources is not unique to Maori; and that the lower socio-economic status of Maori directly constrains access to those resources known to influence participation in education and educational achievement.

Their findings support those of the Competent Children study carried out by the Council for Educational Research (NZCER) between 1992 and 2008, which found that parental income during the early years of childhood (0-5 years) continues to affect children's achievement throughout their primary schooling, regardless of whether their family income improves later in childhood; that parental education and income levels carry more weight than do gender or ethnicity; and, that there is little evidence that transition to secondary school changes patterns that were previously established (Wylie, 2001; Wylie, Hodgen, Hipkins & Vaughan, 2008). These findings do not bode well for Maori children who live in families with low income levels.

The following graph clearly shows that most Maori students are located in the poorest communities and subsequently attend the lower-decile schools there (decile 1 is the lowest and decile 10 the highest, based on Department of Statistics socio-economic information taken from census returns).

Graph 2: Learner distribution by decile, Maori and non-Maori, 2007



(From: *Nga Haeata Matauranga—The Annual report on Maori Education, 2007/08*, Chapter 3: Section 3.5 Statistics.)

The Ministry of Education ‘State of Education 2008’ report states: “Students who leave from a high decile school are much more likely to leave school with UE or a Level 3 qualification or higher, while low decile schools are more likely to have students leave with little or no formal attainment” (Ministry of Education, 2008a, p.7).

Middle-class Privilege and the Ideology of Equality in Education

While there is little doubt that socio-economic factors play a part in educational success, Thrupp (2007) posits that schooling has become increasingly geared to the interests and concerns of the middle classes and that “there is at various points public, practitioner and policy denial of the problem” (p.77) and a predominance instead of other discourses such as ‘school improvement’, ‘educational leadership’ and ‘teacher quality’ which distract from the reality of growing class inequalities and increasing middle-class advantage. The way the education system perpetuates advantages for the middle classes is a central problem in our society that intersects with other problems, for

example: Maori under-achievement, the resourcing of schools and class inequalities in other sectors such as housing and health (Thrupp, 2008). Thrupp (2006) suggests there is *no* equality of educational opportunity in Aotearoa-New Zealand and that there are very real historical and structural difficulties that must be overcome if the schooling chances of New Zealand's poorest children are to be improved. He cites Jean Anyon's 1997 research in the United States which concluded that, without a long-range strategy to eradicate the underlying causes of poverty and racial isolation, sustainable progress in educational achievement for minority groups could not be made (Thrupp, 2006).

A 2004 New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER) review of secondary schools concluded that students from families and schools with greater financial resources were advantaged in multiple ways (Hipkins & Hodgen 2004). High-decile and state-integrated schools gained more local funding from school fees and fund-raising, hosted higher numbers of (fee-paying) international students, and were less likely to experience the need to pay for damages resulting from vandalism. Parents of students in these schools also spent considerably more on all aspects of schooling, including out-of-school tuition. Most schools had a policy for countering educational disadvantage for Maori students, but this was seldom seen as a priority for target-setting within the school planning and review framework (Hipkins & Hodgen, 2004). However, as necessary as they are, school policies designed to raise teacher expectations of students and to increase teacher effectiveness, are unable to eradicate the causes and effects of poverty and unlikely to reduce social disparities in educational achievement, the causes of which are embedded in the history and structures of the education system (Nash, 2004; Thrupp, 2006).

High Maori unemployment and over-representation in low-skilled jobs is sometimes explained as the fault of Maori themselves. It is said that Maori have failed to take advantage of what the education system has to offer and therefore it is their own fault that they are unemployed, but this explanation relies on the assumption that equal opportunity is available to all members of society through education which has been described as the ideology of equality (Walker, 1991). In a critique of current educational theory around teacher expectations of students Nash (2004) pointed out that when

children in New Zealand enter school at the age of five, there are already sharp differences in literacy and numeracy skills associated with *class* and *ethnicity* and these continue throughout their schooling, an observation that casts doubt on the existence of equality of opportunity for all and leads one to conclude that unless children have access to the resources known to foster high educational attainment and the culture of the home matches the culture of the school, they will be disadvantaged at school and will struggle to learn within the schooling context.

The Mismatch between Maori Culture and the Pedagogies of the Mainstream Education System

The New Zealand education system is predicated on the knowledge, practices and traditions of the western world which contrast quite markedly with the Maori worldview in fundamental ways. As one example, Maori society is built on collective, co-operative values and processes and the education system is built on the notion of individual achievement and competitiveness. Maori face a disadvantage when attempting to cope with the individualistic aspect of learning which is contrary to cultural practices they are used to. The western schooling structure promotes the individual: individual competition and individual attainment which “enhances the life chances of European children while undermining the cultural beliefs and practices of Maori” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 36). One study which focused on determining effective teaching practice in Decile 1 schools found that co-operating and working as a collective was, for Maori and Pacific Island students, a familiar way of getting things done and that, when extended within the class, students responded well to sharing, co-operating, supporting and producing as a group (Hill & Hawk, 2000). The findings reinforce Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) suggestion that Maori learn better in more social conditions with whanau being the focal point, thus promoting the achievement of the group, not the individual. Glynn et al., (1997) attribute the cultural mismatch within the education system to successive educational policies that required Maori to sacrifice more and more of their language, culture, and their own indigenous aspirations to the needs and goals of the nation, as determined largely by the Pakeha majority. They comment that “participation in mainstream education in New Zealand has come for Maori at a cost of their own language and culture” (p. 111).

The issue of cultural incompatibility was raised as long ago as 1973, when Dr Ranginui Walker responded to a Department of Education review into problems in secondary schools. Walker referred to a Pakeha 'frame of reference', which, he said, often stereotyped Maori success as restricted to limited domains such as sport and music. He noted that when this is added to the notion that conventional schools run counter to important Maori cultural values, the issue of incompatibility of cultures presents a major challenge to education (Walker, 1973). In more recent times Walker (2007) has reiterated his earlier assertions that the 'gaps' in Maori educational achievement are structural and are related to the monocultural nature of our collective society and its power structures, which derive from colonialism.

Describing Maori academic under-achievement as providing disturbing patterns in education reports over many years, MacFarlane (2004) suggests there is hope if people are prepared to "listen to culture", a point reiterated by others (Bishop, 1996a; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). MacFarlane contends that it is important to establish where educational processes *are* succeeding for Maori students and to look at their life experiences, their knowledge of Te Reo and Tikanga Maori and their cultural contexts, as many Maori students live their lives in cultural and community contexts that are quite different from those of the school and the mainstream community. He suggests that ignorance of Maori customs and practices on the part of educators may be a critical factor in the failure of Maori students in mainstream settings where the customs and practices are based on the dominant majority culture.

Smith and Smith (1995) comment that Maori people, through kaupapa Maori initiatives, "are demanding that their educational needs be seen as an extension of their cultural survival, not an alternative" (p. 183). However, they note that the establishment of Maori initiatives, *within* state schooling will only ever have limited autonomy and limited freedom to pursue preferred choices, because of the parameters of unequal power relations.

Unequal Power Relations

It has been argued that the root cause of Maori under-achievement in education is the unequal power relations between Maori and Pakeha in a society which accepts the structural relationship of Pakeha domination and Maori subjection as a natural state (Walker, 1996). Walker (1996) asserts that the end result of colonialism is Pakeha dominance and Maori subjection, with that dominance predicated on notions of cultural and racial superiority. He considers that this is what is responsible for the unequal balance that exists today within the country's educational and other institutions. Parker (1991) describes a system of institutionalised *inequality* and *injustice* which has served to oppress the people of the land. She argues that Pakeha attempts to collate, analyse and interpret the data around disparities amounts to naivete at best, fails to translate into meaningful action, and fails completely to address the real issues of power and control – rights acknowledged and guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. Walker (2004) comments that when the 'closing the gaps' policy of the 1990s became a 'poisoned chalice' and was subsequently dropped when the opposition party claimed the policy favoured Maori, (thereby leading to potential voter backlash), it confirmed to Maori that the gaps were in fact a structural problem of Pakeha power and domination (p.321).

Classroom Interactions

The issue of unequal power relations is not just one of government, or government representatives, having power over Maori and either ignoring or denying Maori aspirations. It is an issue that exists within school structures, and indeed, within classrooms, with Bishop and Glynn (1999) referring to "a pattern of dominance and subordination and its constituent classroom interaction patterns (pedagogy) that perpetuates the non-participation of many young Maori in the benefits that the education system has to offer" (p.131). They identify teachers as having power over the curriculum and classroom interactions by creating and participating in teaching contexts that represent the knowledge bases, beliefs, values and practices of a western worldview while assuming this is appropriate for all children. MacFarlane (2004) reminds us that when the powerful dominant culture asserts that all children are the same (homogenises

differences) there is a real danger that individual differences, cultural identities, and culturally-preferred values and practices will be marginalised and ignored.

The Entrenchment of Western Hegemony

Hegemony is a way of thinking that occurs when oppressed groups take on the dominant majority group's thinking and ideas uncritically and as 'common-sense', even though those ideas may in fact be contributing to forming their own oppression (G. Smith, 2003a; G. Smith, 2003b). The policies and practices of the current education system were developed, and continue to be developed, within a framework of neo-colonialism. As a result, they continue to serve the interests of a mono-cultural elite, comprising mainly middle-class European (Bishop et al., 2009). As Maori have had no real say in mainstream education, the inclusion of Maori knowledge and values in the curriculum, in pedagogical practices and in organisational forms has been minimal (Penetito, 2005) and Walker (2004) asserts that "every gain made in the second half of the 20th century was achieved by struggling against the hegemony of Pakeha power" (p.357). Smith and Smith (1995) go as far as to state that "the political, social and economic domination of Maori is facilitated by a schooling and education system that serves the interests of Pakeha society" (p. 195).

Socialist theory identifies *class distinction* as the cause of much of the inequality and injustice that those in the working classes suffer. Maori are included in these exploited classes because, as indigenous people impacted by colonisation, they have lost their 'capital' and the power that goes with it (Eketone, 2008). The hegemonic power of the current capitalism-based economic system relies on hegemonic processes of education and mass media to ensure that working people remain submissive to their role as a readily-exploited workforce. Kaupapa Maori theory, with its focus on emancipation and the exposing of power relations in societies, belongs alongside critical theory, as kaupapa Maori theory seeks "to affect the unequal power relations inherent in New Zealand society" and to provide "resistance to Western hegemony" (Eketone, 2008, p.3).

Deficit Theorising

While the ideologies of race which controlled Maori access to 'knowledge-power' in the earlier colonial past may no longer be promoted, they were however, replaced by 'cultural deprivation' and 'cultural deficit' theories from the 1970s onwards. Cultural deficit theory, being closely aligned to issues of power relations and class control, has been described as victim-blaming and even "a convenient cloak that covers both racism and incompetence" (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006, p. 9). Recent studies which used student voice to collect and analyse data, concluded that reasons for low achievement by Maori students not only included low teacher expectations and deficit theorising by teachers, but that good teacher-student relationships are not just important to Maori students, they are a *crucial aspect of their education*, and are *prerequisite* for any learning to take place (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003; Hill & Hawk, 1996; Hill & Hawk, 2000). However, good relationships are unlikely to emerge while teachers hold deficit theories about Maori students. The 2003 Best Evidence Synthesis on The Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement in New Zealand (Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph, 2003) discusses the negative impact of deficit theorising on the educational achievement of Maori students in this country, explaining:

...these ideas continue to have a major negative effect on the successful participation of Maori people in mainstream society in general and education in particular. These deficit theories collectively blame the victims by projecting a 'pathology' perspective, that is, by assuming that the problem stems from lack of inherent ability, lack of cultural appropriateness or limited resources. (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 56)

While Walker sees unequal power relationships as the root cause of Maori under-achievement in education, researchers agree, particularly when it is combined with deficit discourses and low teacher expectations of Maori students (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006; Shields et al., 2005). The issue of cultural incompatibility in schools raised by Walker (1991) and others (Bishop, 1996a; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hook, 2006), as well as the issue of power imbalances between Pakeha administrators and Maori parents, and Pakeha teachers and Maori students, are issues

that have contributed towards the Maori call for tino rangatiratanga in education as being both a right and a solution to the crisis in education still facing Maori today.

Maori Aspirations for Tino Rangatiratanga

The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi promised Maori “te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua, o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa” (unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands, villages and all their treasures) (Orange, 2000). As knowledge, accessed through education, is considered by Maori to be a taonga (Metge, 1984; Walker, 2007), calls for tino rangatiratanga within education are not only justifiable, but essential, to enable Maori to address the imbalance in educational attainment and the issues associated with it that have existed for decades (Bishop & Glynn, 1998). Under Article One of the treaty, Maori ceded governorship or administrative control (kawanatanga) to the Crown; however, under Article Two, they retained their sovereign rights to define, promote and control the creation, retention and transmission of language and cultural knowledge (Glynn et al., 1997).

The discourse around tino rangatiratanga (autonomy; self-determination) has arisen within Maori education since the 1970s but was nationally revealed with the birth of the Kohanga Reo movement in 1982. It recurs in the literature constantly (Bishop et. al., 2007a; Durie, 1999; Durie, 2002; Glynn et al., 1997; Maori Education Trust, 2009; Smith & Smith, 1996; Tapine & Waiti, 1997) and is a concept in direct contrast to both past government policies of assimilation and the recommendations of the 1961 Hunn report which promoted integration and cultural uniformity (Hunn, 1961). The desire for autonomy was in response to the lack of programmes and processes within existing educational institutions that were designed to ‘reinforce, support or pro-actively co-opt Maori cultural aspirations in ways which are desired by Maori themselves’ (G. Smith, 1992, cited in Bishop & Glynn, 1999) as well as a reaction to the growing realisation by Maori that their language was in danger of dying. According to Tapine and Waiti (1997), the underpinning theme of tino rangatiratanga within education is that Maori want the power to determine their own destiny and an education that empowers them, both to participate in, and to determine what is appropriate education for Maori.

The call for tino rangatiratanga in education is in response to a lack of decision-making power; critical analyses of education and schooling; and, as part of a wider move towards Maori development, particularly at iwi level (Smith & Smith, 1996). The failures in education and in other social policy areas were identified as major barriers to Maori development and therefore Maori welcomed the educational reforms of the early 1990s thinking they would be more likely to be able to exercise tino rangatiratanga through involvement on boards of trustees. They assumed they would be able to exercise some control on behalf of Maori interests within schooling and education sites. However, the outcome of that belief was that the strong influence of Pakeha-dominated state control was exposed and many Maori were left disillusioned. Smith and Smith (1996) assert that state control of Maori educational sites such as Te Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Maori is even apparent and that tino rangatiratanga is only an illusion as the problem of state-derived funding and its necessary accountabilities ensures state control and power is maintained by ruling-class interests.

Government Support for Tino Rangatiratanga

In 1999, after extensive consultation with Maori, the Ministry of Education published the first Maori Education Strategy containing three main goals, the first goal being to raise the quality of English-medium education for Maori. This was nothing new as successive governments over many decades had expressed that wish; the significance of the Strategy was that the other two goals supported the *growth of high-quality kaupapa Maori education* and *greater Maori involvement and authority* in education, hence supporting Maori aspirations for tino rangatiratanga.

In 2007 the ministry released another draft Maori Education Strategy *Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success* combining the ministry's 1999 goals with actions and targets to achieve the goals. In 2001, in response to the Hui Taumata Matauranga, held at Turangi and Taupo, Professor Mason Durie had developed a framework for considering Maori educational advancement (Durie, 2001a). This framework included three main goals: to live as Maori; to actively participate as citizens of the world; and, to enjoy good health and a high standard of living. In order to reach these goals he postulated a set of principles and differing pathways to guide educators and it is this Maori-designed

framework which forms the basis of the redeveloped Maori Education Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2008b).

A major focus of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* is “Maori enjoying education success as Maori” (Ministry of Education, 2008b). *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* takes an evidence-based, outcomes-focused, ‘Maori potential approach’ and has three key underlying principles:

- Maori Potential: all Maori learners have unlimited potential
- Cultural Advantage: all Maori have cultural advantage by virtue of who they are – being Maori is an asset; not a problem
- Inherent Capability: all Maori are inherently capable of achieving success
(Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 19)

These underlying principles are in direct contrast to the historical deficit theorising whereby being Maori was viewed as a disadvantage. Research by Bishop and Glynn (1999) indicated that culture does count; culture affords the student to feel valued and research indicates that “students are more likely to achieve when they see themselves, their whanau, hapu and iwi reflected in the teaching content and environment and are able to be Maori in all learning contexts” (Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 20)

When the Maori Education Foundation (now the Maori Education Trust) was established in 1961, its basic objective was to encourage Maori into tertiary education through grants and scholarships. It continues to promote improvements in Maori educational attainment to this day; however, with the added objective of “promoting Tino Rangatiratanga” in education development (Maori Education Trust, 2009, p.3), an aspiration that has been transparently on the Maori education agenda for around thirty years.

The Influence of Whanau/Families on the Achievement of Students

The importance of the whanau/family as a strong influence on education outcomes for Maori students has been identified in several research studies (Kay, 2008; Mikaere &

Loane, 2001; Te Puni Kokiri, 1994). A 1994 Te Puni Kokiri survey of 1889 senior Maori students drawn from 118 schools around the country found that the students had received a lot of encouragement from their parents and active support of their school activities. 85% of these students said they talked to their parents about things that happened at school; nearly two-thirds said they talked to their parents specifically about their homework; and over two-thirds said their parents had actively encouraged them to stay on at school. Typically, this encouragement arose out of parental concern about the obtainment of good qualifications and consequently, good employment. A 2001 survey by Mikaere and Loane of 182 Maori parents whose children did well at school concluded the children's high achievement was because they came from a stable home environment and had strong whanau support from parents and others who valued education and took an active interest in the child's education.

The findings in a 2008 case study involving senior Maori students also found that the whanau had the greatest positive influence on *all* the students who were interviewed, and that in particular, one significant family member had played a major part in that influence. *All* the students stated that their parents valued education (Kay, 2008). The importance of parents, whanau and community in supporting achievement is acknowledged in research findings by Bishop et al. (2003) but they warn that relations between mainstream secondary schools and Maori parents are "at a standoff, exacerbated by discourses of blame and guilt" (p. 204). They suggest that classroom relationships and interactions must be addressed before home and school relations can be.

Conclusion

It is clear from the literature that the problem of inequitable education outcomes for Maori students is a complex one grounded in the history of Maori education, and that there is no single factor that can be said to be the main influence on the achievement of Maori students in mainstream education. However, there are several strong factors which can be identified from the literature such as: teacher-student relationships; cultural compatibility; power relations; deficit theorising; socio-economic disparities and

the influence of whanau. The understanding gained from studying the historical context and these factors has enabled me to appreciate the barriers that Maori students, their whanau and their schools face in their collective desire to improve educational outcomes for Maori, and hence, advance the life chances of the students and their future whanau.

The main themes that emerged in the literature which influenced the basis of my research with the students were: the extent to which whanau influence a secondary student to stay on at school; whether teacher-student relationships are crucial to student retention or not; the nature of the impact of socio-economic disparities (if any exist) on the student's ability to stay at school and whether the school plays a mediating part in alleviating this impact; and, whether or not the students felt there was a cultural mismatch between schools and Maori students. I was interested to find out if any of the Year 13 students identified these as factors that influenced their decisions to stay at school, as well as to discover any other explanatory factors that the students might identify.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research questions, describes the methodological approach used and explains some of the limitations of qualitative research and how these were mitigated. It then aligns the methodology with a discussion regarding research which involves Maori participants and the incorporation of a kaupapa Maori perspective. This discussion covers models that can be used to guide non-Maori researchers, researcher competencies deemed necessary for engagement with Maori research participants and a brief description of kaupapa Maori research in relation to the context of this study. A description of the sample group of participants and an explanation of how the data was collected and analysed is then provided. The last section covers a discussion of key ethical issues in the research and how these were addressed.

The Research Questions

The purpose of the research was to investigate significant factors which had contributed towards the sample group of Maori students remaining in mainstream secondary school until Year 13. The questions which guided the study were:

- What is the historical context for Maori educational achievement?
- What significant factors have contributed to the sample group of Maori students remaining at school through to Year 13?
- How have these factors contributed to them remaining at school?
- What are some implications for schools with regard to the discussions of the students' experiences and aspirations for the future?

Methodological Approach

This study sought to focus on positive factors which had influenced the sample group of Maori students to remain at secondary school until Year 13 and adopted *qualitative*

research methodology as most suitable to gaining a depth of understanding of their experiences and opinions. In reviewing the literature on Maori education to ascertain the historical context for Maori educational achievement, it was noticeable that a lot of the research was centred on the under-achievement of Maori students within the mainstream system, and the perceived historical, cultural and socio-economic reasons for disparities that exist between Maori and non-Maori students. The strengths-based approach of this research study was in contrast to most of the existing research but was in keeping with 'Ka Hikitia', the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Maori Education Strategy which calls for a shift away from deficit discourses. The use of student voice as a methodology is in keeping with *The New Zealand Curriculum* vision of "Young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners" (Ministry of Education, 2007b, p. 8). One of the stated characteristics of effective assessment in this document is that it *involves* students and "They discuss, clarify, and reflect on their goals, strategies, and progress with their teachers, their parents, and one another." (p. 40)

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an inherently political field of research methodology which is shaped by multiple ethical and political positions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It aims to uncover the lived reality or constructed meanings of research participants by gathering a rich description of the phenomenon of interest with the aim of illuminating the experience or understanding of it for others (Mutch, 2005). In this research study, those 'others' that the study seeks to inform are the educational community: principals, teachers and whanau, of which I am also a part. As a teacher and a parent of Maori children and grandchildren, I am more than just interested in what affects Maori students in education. I am concerned from a social justice perspective – the present system is delivering unjust outcomes to Maori students.

The 'phenomenon of interest' of this study is those factors which encourage, motivate and enable Maori students to stay on at secondary school. The research method used

in this study was the focus-group interview which has been referred to by Kvale (1996) as a “construction site of knowledge” (p.2).

Qualitative interviews are enhanced when the interviewer has established a relationship with the research participants before interviews begin, and a comfortable environment conducive to people speaking freely and without interruptions is also required (Mutch, 2005). Although establishing trust and openness is essential in qualitative research, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stress, there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual as “Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity” (p. 21) and it was these lenses (*Pakeha; female; older; teacher/researcher*) that I was very aware of and sought to neutralise as much as was possible through the collaborative storying method of the focus-group interviews which Bishop (1996b) describes as a kaupapa Maori approach to research.

Limitations of Qualitative Research

It has been said that if the researcher uses only one method of research, the validity of the research can be compromised as the *interpretation of the data* is influenced by the researcher’s own experiences and by his or her powers of reasoning (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) which may be quite different to those of the researched. Therefore, any research done with Maori by non-Maori must take this into account by choosing a method of interpreting the data that allows the research participants control over the data interpretation. This study used participant-validation of the interview transcripts and the interim findings of the research to counteract the possibility of compromising research validity. LeCompte and Goetz (cited in Bryman, 2008) argue that internal validity tends to be a strength of qualitative research (p. 376).

Another limitation of qualitative research is what Kvale (1996) sees as “steering the interview” (p. 126) when the interviewer introduces topics into the discussion then uses leading questions to direct the course of the interview although it is hard to imagine a qualitative research tool that does not employ the interaction of people to produce new knowledge, as the two are interdependent (Kvale, 1996). However, because of the potential for researcher-bias in qualitative research, researchers have now begun to

accept that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering and analysis (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). In this research study, a genuine attempt to minimise researcher-influence on the content of the data was made by using the semi-structured interview; by refraining from asking 'leading' questions; through asking open-ended questions; in using brief 'prompts'; and, by deliberately building in tikanga Maori to the research methodology to empower the research participants. Similarly, by using participant quotes verbatim and obtaining participant verification of the data, misinterpretation of the data was minimised.

As this research involved a small number of participants it is not possible to generalise the findings to a sector of the population, or even to a larger group, therefore the scope of the findings is limited to those involved in the research only and is not representative of all Year 13 Maori students. However, as Bryman (2008, p. 391) states "... the findings of qualitative research are to generalise to theory rather than to populations."

Research Involving Maori Participants

Early Pakeha research about Maori people has been described as being "one of colonialism's most sordid legacies" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 1) and Linda Smith (1999) describes the word research as "...probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1). In the past, Maori experience of Pakeha research has been that the researchers construct the research questions, decide how the data is to be collected and which statistical tests will be applied to the data and, despite initial researcher assurances that there would be no biases to the research, it is Maori who are then constructed as having a deficit when compared to a Pakeha population (Cram, 1993). This has been a common complaint amongst indigenous peoples who have argued that deficit theories imply that the positions they occupy are somehow their own fault, due to their inherent inferiority to their coloniser counterparts (Bishop, 1999). Within New Zealand, cultural deficit theory and the mass of research it promoted in the 20th century had a very negative impact on Maori people (Jones et al., 1995). The political implications of this victim-blaming research are far-reaching when it is used to inform government assimilationist policy and as Cram (1993) stresses, research that

informs solutions and facilitates change is what is needed, rather than research which is merely descriptive and tells Maori nothing that they don't already know.

An important aspect to research involving Maori research participants is that the researcher's racial or biological origin or skin colour is less important than the ability of the researcher to operate comfortably in both cultures, to be bicultural and preferably bilingual too (Stokes, 1985). The issue of Pakeha researchers working with Maori research participants is addressed by Smith (1990) who proposes four models that enable Pakeha to carry out culturally appropriate research:

- The *tiaki model* (mentoring) where the research process is guided and mediated by authoritative Maori people
- The *whangai model* (adoption) where the researcher is 'adopted' as one of the whanau
- The *power-sharing model* where community assistance is sought by the researcher to develop the research in a meaningful way
- The *empowering outcomes model* whereby the research delivers answers and information that Maori want to know such as the Richard Benton research about Maori language that informed concern about the survival of Te Reo.

This research can be described as incorporating both the tiaki and power-sharing models and was guided by my supervisor, Dr. Jenny Ritchie, who has experience in working collaboratively with Maori co-researchers. I was also guided by Maori members of the education community who were interested in the research and assisted me by providing access to a marae venue, helping with afternoon tea for the students and providing affirmations of encouragement and support towards myself, my co-facilitator, and the students themselves.

Addressing Ethical Considerations

Before embarking on this research project an application was presented to, and approved by the ethics committee of Unitec New Zealand. In outlining the research, assurance was given that the research process was consistent with the provisions of

the Treaty of Waitangi and that the ethical principles governing research and teaching activities with people would be adhered to. Those ethical principles, which are explained further in later sections, are:

- Informed and voluntary consent
- Respect for rights and confidentiality and preservation of anonymity
- Minimisation of harm
- Cultural and social sensitivity
- Limitation of deception
- Respect for intellectual and cultural property ownership
- Avoidance of conflict of interest
- Research design adequacy (Unitec New Zealand, 2009).

Obtaining Consent

Before embarking on the research component of this study, permission was sought from the principals of the schools concerned; contact was made with pakeke (adults) from the marae committee of the marae adjacent to one of the schools, with a whanau representative on the school Board of Trustees and with the Deputy Principal and the Head of Department/Maori language teacher at the other school. This series of hui (meetings) took place prior to any contact with the students. Following this, a meeting was held (at each school) and groups of Year 13 Maori students identified by the schools were given information about the aims and methodology of the intended research, a question and answer session was held, and they took away information sheets to discuss the intended research with their whanau. At the next hui, those who attended were invited to participate in the research and were given consent forms to take away with them. A total of thirteen students consented to being interviewed.

At one of the schools the participating students and the marae committee representative decided that interviews would be conducted at the marae beside the school and the other school provided a comfortable and private meeting room as a venue. The students at each school decided the days and times when they would come and in

keeping with the principles of manaakitanga, koha and reciprocity, I provided afternoon tea or lunch, depending on the time of day each interview was held.

Kaupapa Maori Perspective

Because this research concentrated on a sample group of Maori students, it included a kaupapa Maori perspective which incorporates correct tikanga such as mihi, karakia, koha, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga when interacting with the students and/or their whanau. As kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face to face interaction) is an important concept in Maori terms (Bishop et al., 2003; MacFarlane, 2004), this methodology determined the dominant method of engagement with participants in order to assist them to feel comfortable, to establish trust and to enhance validity. Time was initially spent 'chatting' with the students to establish a relationship as this was imperative to enabling trust and openness to emerge for both parties to the research. I was aware of criticisms that in the past Maori have been victims, rather than beneficiaries, of poor research which has applied a predetermined template to the research process and that the Maori worldview has not been given credence in the development of research designs for research directed at selected Maori populations (A. Durie, 2002; Bishop, 1998). It was therefore appropriate to seek guidance from members of the Maori community associated with the schools, to involve them in the process and to follow the research participants' decisions regarding the venue, days and times of the interviews. This is consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership and participation as defined by the 1988 Royal Commission on Social Policy (Kingi, 2007).

Researcher Competencies

Some competencies which have been identified *by Maori researchers* as necessary for engagement with Maori include:

- an understanding and willingness on the part of the researcher to abide by a Maori system of ethics and accountability;
- a willingness to give participants access to draft findings for critique or comment;

- acknowledgement by the researcher that their role is that of a broker of knowledge; and,
- researcher-identification of the benefits for Maori in the research (A. Durie, 2002, p.67).

This study attempted to build all of the above attributes into the research. Although the research participants themselves were not going to directly benefit from the research, this topic was discussed on several occasions and all the participants stated they were willing to contribute any information they thought may be of assistance towards the education of future Maori students.

Kaupapa Maori Research

This research was located within the framework of mainstream education for Maori students and took cognisance of the participants' backgrounds, the Maori worldview and tikanga Maori. Maori-preferred methodologies, such as appropriate tikanga, whakawhanaungatanga and manaakitanga were incorporated to ensure that the process protected the mana of all participants and that the outcomes were shared. This research did not profess to be conducted as Kaupapa Maori research; however it was informed by Kaupapa Maori research models (Bishop, 1998).

The word kaupapa is defined as philosophies or ways of thinking about issues and is not a new term. However, the academic terminology of *Kaupapa Maori research and theory* is relatively new. Kaupapa Maori research locates Maori understandings as central to the research design, process, analysis and intended outcomes. Kaupapa Maori theory is a framework that draws upon and affirms matauranga Maori (Maori knowledge) as fundamental to Maori understandings (Pihama, 2001) as well as offering a framework for culturally safe research (Irwin, 1994, cited in Pihama, 2001). However, this research project was fundamentally about collecting and analysing data that may assist the effectiveness of mainstream education to deliver successful outcomes for Maori students and *not* about matauranga Maori or kaupapa Maori alone, although for any research about Maori to be valid and reliable, the researcher must have a good understanding of the Maori worldview and the values of manaakitanga, kotahitanga,

whanaungatanga, wairuatanga, rangatiratanga and mana (Mutch, 2005). As research is vital in the formulation and implementation of suitable and effective policies for Maori, the methodology must be culturally appropriate (Jahnke and Taiapa, 2003).

The Sample Group

The research participants were all Year 13 Maori students from two Auckland co-educational secondary schools. A total of 13 students were interviewed over a series of focus-group interviews, six boys and seven girls. The small sample size was deemed appropriate in order to gain in-depth data from each student and to give maximum opportunity for the student voice to be heard.

Six students were from a decile ten school with six percent of its student population being Maori and two percent Pacific Island students. The other seven students were from a decile four school with 20% of its student population being Maori and 29% Pacific Islander students. The decile four school is very multi-cultural and includes students who travel from lower decile areas to attend the school. Three of the students who attended the decile ten school also lived in low-decile areas but were bypassing their local schools and travelling there by bus each day, one of them for up to an hour each way.

Data Collection

Data was collected during a series of five focus-group interviews with two-four participants and two co-facilitators at each interview. Focus-group interviews are structured or semi-structured in-depth conversations with a specific purpose (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Once the topic of the interview was introduced, participants were encouraged to comment individually and as part of a dynamic group dialogue. The primary purpose of these focus-group interviews was to identify the factors which had influenced each student to stay on at school *from their own perspectives*, therefore it was preferable for the students to do most of the talking in response to open-ended questions and for the facilitators (myself and a counsellor-colleague) to prompt, but not to ask questions which could be considered to be 'leading' questions. Student voice is significant because it is *most central* to learning and therefore can provide promising

ideas in research and in truly transforming education (Seitz, 2007). Because the education system in Aotearoa-New Zealand evolved to replace the traditional Maori way of educating their children, and yet has failed to produce equitable outcomes for Maori, it is important that the voices of Maori students are heard.

The interview schedule was utilised as a guide to get the discussion started thus the interviews were semi-structured enabling participants to take 'ownership' of the process and for a diversity of related topics to emerge (Bryman, 2008).

Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were audio-taped, transcribed by the researcher and coded according to emergent themes. This thematic analysis approach (Bryman, 2008; Mutch, 2005) to the findings was done manually. Representative participant quotes are used in the chapter on the data findings (Chapter 4) to demonstrate each theme. Thematic analysis, or *constant comparative analysis* as it is also called, is a qualitative strategy that takes its categories emergently from the data, unlike the quantitative strategy of using pre-determined categories (Bryman, 2008). Follow-up hui were held with the research participants to allow what Bishop (1996a), terms *spiral discourse* (p. 121), whereby participants were able to consider the way data was being presented, and that it represented what they meant to say. Meetings were held to allow students to go over their transcripts and to make any changes they wished to make, and a few months later I met with them again to go over the interim findings of the research to check that quotes I had used had not been misinterpreted, and for them to add any further points or elaborate further on others. This participant validation of the data was sought to provide internal validity (Bryman, 2008) and, as Bishop (1998) advises, to address key research issues such as representation, legitimization and accountability in terms of the participants' own cultural preferences and practices (p.199).

Informed and Voluntary Consent

Organisational consent was sought from each school through a meeting with the principal who later presented the information leaflet supplied to the board of trustees.

These leaflets included information about the aim, purposes and methodology of the research (see appendix one). Both principals were very supportive and gave their written consent for the research to be conducted in the school. The research participants gave their voluntary consent after the meetings held to explain the purpose and intended methods of the research, and after they had discussed it with their whanau and had time to process the information (see appendix two). Before the actual interviews were conducted, I had met with all students twice, first to introduce myself and explain my intended research, and the second time to accept their written consent forms (see appendix three). At these meetings I provided morning or afternoon tea to compensate them for giving up their interval times to meet with us and to further build relationships in accordance with tikanga of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.

Respect for Rights, Confidentiality and Preservation of Anonymity

The students involved in this study were informed that the data they gave would be used for its intended research purposes only and that they, and their schools, would not be identified at all. Although I offered them the option of using pseudonyms of their choosing for the transcripts, they all declined on the basis that it was not necessary and they didn't mind if their name was mentioned. However, pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis and any identifying details were omitted, to preserve anonymity. The transcripts of the interviews were given to students to verify and to make any changes they wished to make and three students made some very minor changes.

Minimisation of Harm by Addressing Issues of Power Imbalance

While the Treaty of Waitangi is seen by many as a document which espouses partnership and power-sharing between Maori and Pakeha in Aotearoa-New Zealand, the reality is that a pattern of dominance and subordination within a framework of colonisation has been developed (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999) and this situation has had an effect on much of the research conducted about Maori. Most research with Maori has been done by Pakeha researchers who did not step outside their own cultural framework or try to view the research from the perspective of those being studied (A. Durie, 2002; Bishop, 1998). Because it has been said that New Zealand schools both

facilitate and reflect the processes of domination found in wider society by protecting the accepted cultural capital of the dominant group and maintaining their privileged position of power and control (Smith and Smith, 1995), I was very aware that unequal power relationships can be an issue for researchers working with Maori students. For example, the age difference between myself and the students; being a Pakeha researcher working with Maori participants; and, being a teacher and attempting to work with students on an equal basis, could all combine to have possible cumulative effects. These are different aspects of a power differential that I was aware of, so these issues were raised and openly discussed between myself, my colleague who was already known to some of the students and was going to co-facilitate the interviews, and the students. This occurred at the first meetings we had with the students. I introduced myself and referred to my co-facilitator on a first-name basis; I talked about my whanau and their experiences in mainstream education as well as in a Maori boarding school; I explained the process would be confidential and non-judgmental; and I allowed time for the students to ask any questions which were answered in an open and frank manner. It was also acknowledged that Year 13 is an important year for students and therefore if they chose to participate, we would ensure that the research would not impinge on any of their classes.

Cultural and Social Sensitivity

As this research was not initiated by Maori, specific efforts were made to ensure that it was *not* framed within a monocultural, dominant Western worldview and that it was addressing the issue of power imbalance. Steps that were taken towards addressing this included: asking the research participants to nominate a suitable venue for the interviews, agreeing to the time, place, and days that they wanted the interviews to take place and beginning each interview session with a shared afternoon tea I had brought along. Other methods employed to address power imbalances included: using first names only; dressing more casually; and taking the time to chat informally each time we met with the students. I also offered to obtain career information related to careers they had said they were interested in during informal conversation times, and passed it on to them at subsequent meetings. As the research participants were all aged 17 or 18 they

were able to give informed consent to participate (although whanau were consulted) and they were related to as fellow adults throughout the research process. Other ethical considerations such as gaining rapport with the participants before the commencement of the research, showing care and respect throughout the process, and protecting the feelings and dignity of the participants were adhered to throughout.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodological approach used in the research study and explained how that research was informed by kaupapa Maori research models. A description of the sample group of participants, how the data was collected and analysed, and a discussion of the key ethical issues of the research is also provided. Power imbalance is a key ethical issue in any educational research which involves students and Maori, and Pakeha educators have a significant responsibility to address their complicity in what is essentially a mono-cultural system. However, Maori educational researchers have stated that there is a role for Pakeha as researchers in this context, provided that issues of representation, legitimization and accountability are properly addressed on Maori terms (Bishop, 1998; Smith, 1999; A. Durie, 2003). This requires the researcher to consciously participate “within the cultural aspirations, preferences and practices of the research participants” (Bishop, 1998, p. 199).

A series of five hui were conducted to discuss the interim findings of this research. These were held to enable the research participants to read and discuss the findings of the research and to change anything they did not agree with or add to the data if they wished. This participant-validation was an important step in the research process, as it allowed the research participants control over the data interpretation. No changes were made to the findings of this research; however the students made positive comments that validated the findings such as:

I'd like to read the whole report. (Hine)

That's really cool. (Hohepa)

I wanna read it all when it's finished. (Huhana)

In the following chapter the students' comments from the focus-group interviews are used to demonstrate each particular theme or sub-category of a theme which emerged during a detailed analysis of the data. The quotes used illustrate a range of experiences that students described and are written verbatim to reveal and to honour their voices (Seitz, 2007).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter outlines the data collected from the focus-group interviews. Demographic interview data is presented first to provide information about the research participants and the schools. The focus-group data is presented in thematic form to highlight the key issues that arose within the interviews or from material added by the students when they read through their interview transcripts and discussed issues again with myself and the other participants. The analysis of the data revealed that the main themes were: the influence of whanau; community influences, such as the kapahaka group and sport outside of school; school influences, for example, teachers, friends and sports coaches; and negative influences such as financial difficulties. Each theme and its sub-categories are addressed in the order in which they are outlined on Table 3 (below). Supporting data relevant to each of the main themes is presented in the form of participant quotes, verbatim, to demonstrate each particular theme or sub-category. I have chosen this method of data reporting in order to maximise the student voice. The quotes used are illustrative and representative of the range of experiences articulated by the students. Pseudonyms are allocated to all students throughout the thesis and teachers' names are abbreviated to ensure anonymity.

The Participants

As outlined in the previous chapter, a total of thirteen Year 13 Maori students, six boys and seven girls, were interviewed over a series of focus-group interviews. The research participants all had quite diverse backgrounds in terms of their cultural identification and cultural practices. Some lived as Maori, identified strongly as Maori, and participated in Kapahaka, marae events and extended whanau gatherings on a regular basis; others lived as Pakeha, knew they were Maori but did not strongly identify as Maori and did not know what iwi they came from. None of the students were fluent in the Maori language, although four of them had been to Kohanga Reo in their pre-school years and had spoken the language then.

Analysis of the Data

Analysis of the interview data revealed four main themes which influenced the retention of the sample group of Maori students within mainstream education. These themes were then broken down into related sub-categories. The themes included: the influence of the whanau, the influence of the school, community influences and negative influences. The sub-categories stemming from within each of these themes are shown in the table below.

Whanau Influences (13 students)	Community Influences (7 students)	School Influences (11 students)	Negative Influences (10 students)
One or more significant whanau member has directly influenced the student to stay at school	Church member(s) or Youth Group has directly influenced the student to stay at school	The principal has directly influenced the student to stay at school	The student got into trouble in Years 9, 10 or 11 but 'settled down' with counselling or guidance from teachers or family
Parent(s) dropped out of school early and they want the student to get a good education as they did not.	Sport(s) outside of school and sports coaches have directly influenced the student	A specific teacher or counsellor has formed good relationships with students who like him/her and this has contributed towards the student staying at school	Other students (friends) had dropped out of school – in some cases this had a positive outcome for the Year 13 student
The student does not want to end up in the same predicament as close family members, i.e. unemployed, on a benefit or in low-paid employment	Being in a Kapahaka group with other students from the same school and having close-knit ties within a whanau atmosphere has influenced the student to stay on at school	The presence of good friends has influenced the student to stay at school – to be with their friends as well as to support each other with school work	The student experienced a form of racism at school – this then had the effect of making the student more determined to stay and to achieve
The student wants to make his/her parent(s) proud of him/her and wants "to have a future"	The student has derived personal strength and support from having access to the marae at school and to adults there	Participating in sports at school, has been a factor that influenced the student to stay at school	The student's family is struggling financially and the student realises that he/she needs to get a good education to get good employment

The students identified the theme of whanau as having the strongest influence on them. In particular, many of them identified a significant family member who encouraged or urged them to stay on at school.

Part One - The Influence of Whanau

All of the thirteen students involved in this study cited whanau as having a large influence on them staying at school through to Year 13. A recurring theme was that parents had dropped out of school early and that they had told their children they did not want them to do the same thing. For most of the students it was a parent who had influenced them the most, although one boy said his older cousins had influenced him, and for one girl it was her grandmother with whom she lived. Hohepa related how his father had taken him along to his workplace to show him how hard he had to work in a manual occupation and told him:

'I don't want to see you work here', so that kinda gave me a push. I don't want to disappoint my Dad.

Pita talked about his older cousins and how they had influenced him:

I have to say it was probably my family. When I was going through my hoodlum phase I went to go stay at my cousins a lot.... I spent a lot of time with my cousins who are a lot older than me....they used to sorta bear down on me, sort of, "Why do you wanna do this? Why do you wanna do that? You think it's cool?"after a while I started being a lot more like them. I was about 14 then.

Another boy, Rawiri, had been getting into trouble during Year 10 and his mother had tried her best, despite financial hardship, to keep him at school.

In Year 10 I got suspended from school and my Dad wanted me to drop out and put me into a course but my Mum didn't want me to 'cos she dropped out when she was 15 and my Dad dropped out when he was 14, so my Mum helped me through that time.My Mum's got a strong heart. She sticks up for us children...she tries her best and does everything. She tries to get money into the house....

Grace said her family was the most important influence on her because:

When I was younger I was always with the family and it was a very tight family and doing sports every weekend and getting together doing picnics just like as a really close-type family, which is why it's hard to express myself to a teacher.

Several girls had close relationships with their fathers and related conversations their fathers had with them about staying on at school. Huhana joked that her Dad said:

'If you drop out of school, I'll give you a hiding!' I'm like – mmm – I think I'll stay at school.

Grace said her parents talked about school often and she joked that:

They didn't want me to leave; they did NOT want me to leave...unless I had a plan on what I was going to do, which I didn't so they said, well, then...my Dad left when he was 15...there's just one thing that he wished he could have done, which was stayed in schoolso I knew if I didn't pass then I was grounded, so...

The parents' own experiences of having poor educational outcomes in the past meant that some families had struggled to bring up their families and run a home. Werahiko described his family's experiences:

Well, for my own family, I'd be the first to go there (university) if I make it in this year. Compared to all my family members, in fact none of them have made it any further than Year 10 or Year 11 and so that has given me the incentive to keep going because they never made it that far, so I want to. I see a lot of my family members, and they're content with what they've got and for some of them, it's not a lot and I don't want to be in that position when I grow up.... My Mum has a huge influence on me going to school too because my family aren't a very wealthy family, in fact we struggle a lot in terms of finances....and my Mum sacrifices a lot to keep us going to this school because she knows that there's doors and opportunities that are available to us here.

And this from Huhana:

Ever since we were young it's been that way. Stay at school and get a certificate because he dropped out of school when he was like Third Form. So he's got, like, bad job, bad money...ever since being young it's just been drilled into us....I was scared to drop out of school. He kept lecturing and lecturing and lecturing on. My

Mum and Dad were going through tough times with not having enough money to keep the mortgage and stuff like that. So that just pushed us even more to succeed.

Some of the students spoke candidly about knowing that some members of their whanau were disadvantaged in life because they were either unemployed, on a benefit, or in low-paid employment, and they did not want to end up in the same predicament.

Hine summarised her feeling about this:

Yeah, I don't want to be like a dropout and be a bum and have to go on the dole and stuff. I'd rather support myself and have a job that I love doing.

And Rawiri expressed the hope that he would not have to go on a benefit also:

'Cos of my parents – 'cos my Dad dropped out when he was 14 and where my Dad is now; I don't wanna be like that. And my Mum, I don't want to be like that either (on a benefit?)...yeah, I don't wanna be on a benefit.

Terehia reiterated the comments of others when she stated:

I think seeing my family and where they were at, and just like they (the others) said, I don't want to be like that. I wanna make something of myself. You don't wanna be like that. They're at places where they have the potential to do better, but they're just lazy and they didn't work hard for something that they could have achieved.

Later in the interview Terehia spoke about the education system, saying that she studied Level 3 history, so she knew Maori had been disadvantaged since:

... all the historians argue that the European education system wasn't adapted for Maori. It was just put there and Maori were expected to follow it and they didn't understand the different culture so it's kind of – its only 200 years ago that it happened and I don't think that Maori have adapted or understood it.

Hohepa added to Terehia's comments about wanting to make something of herself, by assertively stating:

I want to have a future!

Part Two: Community Influences

Although the main influence for all the students was their whanau, seven of the students in this study also said that something they were involved in within the community had influenced them. One boy belonged to a church youth club and credited the church and his pastors with encouraging him to do well at school. Three other students belonged to outside sports organisations and had excelled in their chosen sports. Of these three, one described his sports team as “*being like another whanau*” and another said that sport had kept him going and had kept him “*out of trouble*”. One girl was so active in sport that she played everything she could possibly be involved in, “*from ground sport to water sport*” and was involved in practices or games every day. She belonged to outside clubs and a sports academy but also took advantage of whatever she could be involved in at school, and loved the fact that physical education was a part of the school curriculum.

One boy spoke passionately about the marae and his sense of belonging there. In his own words:

Like, we have a school marae; not many schools have a marae, but the thing that gets me worried is that not many people use it, you know. Me, I like to use it. I like to go there and just think or draw. A marae is where you think, that's where we use our brains, that's where we belong!but if we open that marae up to a whole variety of cultures – well, like, a while ago, some Indians said “Why don't we open a temple at the college?” And I thought what? We do have a temple – the temple is the marae! They're not showing respect to us. If they did, we'd show respect to their culture too. We are a race that are warriors but we're also a race that have brains and we don't acknowledge that – that isn't acknowledged.like, we have the marae but everyone can go there – you don't have to be Maori, and everyone does go there but I wouldn't like to see something that only the Maori students were allowed to go. (Arapeta).

Belonging to the kapahaka group and being a part of the whanau that supported it was a strong influence on three of the students who were enthusiastic about the kapahaka group, its performances, and the confidence-building aspect of performing on stage to an

audience. They emphasised that a lot of students belonged to it, but they were the only Year 13 students (still at school) in the group. Hohepa described these aspects of kapahaka:

Yeah, I love kapahaka...the friends I've made through kapahaka – they're like our second whanau ay Bro? And I see every one of them every day, like even on the weekend, yeah... Before, I just wanted to participate in kapahaka and I had to stay at school, but now it's for art and for kapahaka... Before kapahaka I used to be one of the shyest boys, but since kapahaka, I've opened up. Kapahaka gave me confidence...I think being in front of audiences, like singing in front of audiences, makes you confident, gives you friendship too.

Pita and Rawiri added:

We were quite lucky that we had the kapahaka group. The kapahaka group made me stay away from trouble, reform. I'm still with most of my friends from back then, but I don't do the stuff that they do, like, they've all dropped out of school, at an early age, where I got into the kapahaka group... our parents were involved with it too. They'd come along, ay, cook our feed... (Pita)

...it definitely helps to make you want to stay at school. When I came into kapahaka the discipline changed it... it really helps to have something we can relate to... (Rawiri)

Part Three: School Influences

Most of the students in this study acknowledged the part that various aspects of school life had played in influencing them to stay at school, particularly the relationships they had with teachers, deans or the principal. Mereana credited the principal's firm stance towards her behaviour as being a strong reason for her still being at school. She knew she had been difficult to deal with in Years 9 and 10 when she was experiencing problems adjusting to a new school and area, and he had helped her to make the most of her time at school.

She stated:

...people who I thought that never believed in me. This may sound weird but, Mr Q... I was well-known to his office when I was a lot younger. He used to give me the hard word and I'd be, like, who cares? I'm from the south and I can do this or that... but then he had talked to the sports co-ordinators by fifth form, and the deal was that if I don't buck up my ideas and my attitude, then I'm not going to be allowed to play sport for the school but I could play sports out of school... that was his rule that if I don't do as I'm told... so I went through a phase of counselling and trying to get back... I'm kind of happy that he did...

Others spoke positively about specific teachers who they respected, who were 'cool' or funny, who knew how to communicate well with them but were professional, and who they liked, admired and were motivated by. One boy had been so encouraged and 'inspired' by his art teacher and other teachers, he had decided that he was going to become an art teacher himself. Others made general positive comments such as:

*My teachers want me to go to Victoria University because I want to do politics.
(Huhana)*

Yeah, I really like some of the teachers that I've had...can I name names? Like, Mr X 'cos I really liked him; he was my favourite teacher. I had him from Year 10. I think he had a good balance, like, he was able to talk to us, like socially, but he remained professional as well. He was just really cool, yeah, he's really funny. I like his teaching style too. He's very good. Yeah, he's really funny. (Terehia)

Yeah he is! He's a cool teacher! He acts young! (Hohepa)

A lot of the teachers have had an impact on us. You get the good teachers where you really enjoy going to their classes even if you may not enjoy school. The right teacher can make a boring subject good... (Pita)

And the teachers. They're really nice and they're really cool... (Grace)

It was my dean, as well as my tutor, both of them. Miss M. and Miss W. Without them pushing, I probably wouldn't still be at school... (Hine)

The presence at school of good friends was a positive and supportive influence for five students who made specific mention of their circle of friends. One girl said her friends were a big influence on her in a positive way because they had formed a study group together to study for assessments and exams “during lunchtimes and stuff”. She had had the same friends all the way through high school and acknowledged that having them there “to talk to” was very helpful. Others enjoyed the whanau atmosphere of being with friends who they had known since they attended Kohanga Reo together and were now in the kapahaka group with, and some students who were heavily into sport spoke of fellow sports team members as being close friends whose company and friendship they enjoyed. For instance, when asked what he had enjoyed the most over the past five years of high school, Anaru replied:

My mates – being with my mates – and sports, yeah sports. I play rugby and touch.

Sports featured strongly in some students' lives and were interwoven with school life and friendships.

Part Four: Negative Influences

Six of the students related stories about getting into ‘trouble’ during their first few years at high school. Several of them stated that when this had occurred they had counselling, and/or their parents got involved. Others said that once some of their friends had left school, they had settled down, had decided to put more time and effort into school work, or had ‘grown up’. Three of the students who had been in ‘trouble’ in Years 9 and 10 said they had been involved with ‘the wrong crowd’ although they were still in contact with a lot of their friends who had left school. Huhana and others spoke of friends who had left:

By the end of the year my friends had all been kicked out and stuff and all that bad influences around me were gone and I realised like, I actually came to school to learn so I could get a good job and stuff like that. (Huhana)

Well, my mate, he actually had a child. (He dropped out). Yeah, that was what turned me 'cos I was hanging out with him a lot and his mate too. So I was hanging out with their crew and that's what turned me bad. But then I came into kapahaka and then the discipline changed it. (Rawiri)

...like when all my mates were getting into trouble and stuff. Sometimes they'd be telling me to stop going to school and then next day you'd be wondering where they are, and to hear that they've been locked up. (Anaru)

None of the students from the decile 10 school spoke of getting into trouble, although one had truanted on a regular basis, missing three months of her Year 10 school year.

The subject of racism was raised by seven students, across both schools. Some students spoke about personally experiencing some form of racism or discrimination, while others talked of noticing (what they perceived to be) racist actions, or hearing racist comments directed toward other students.

'Cos, um, sometimes, in classes, you'd feel like, well, everyone'd be talking and all of a sudden, you'd feel like, you'd be the one getting into trouble all the time. Yeah. I found it unfair sometimes. (Anaru)

Sometimes I think about it, you know, and well, the teachers think that just because we're Maori and we get scholarships easier than their families and that – well, sometimes the teachers just take that to advantage. Sometimes it just feels like they're discriminating against us just because we're Maori and that. So that makes us feel like we have to go outside too and then we can just muck around. (Arapeta)

You come across teachers who are racist and stuff and make racial comments... You've got the odd teacher, like back in fourth form, a teacher called us animals and she said: you're behaving like animals. That's what she said, and I said – shut up Miss, you're a rat. Then she came out with another comment mentioning animals (and) then I wanted to pick up a chair and throw it at her. (Mereana)

Sometimes with the race thing it's not even about comments. Sometimes you walk in the room and you look at a teacher or someone – where was it – Level 1?

I walked in and he'd put the only three Maori students and the only Tongan student, including me, in the very back row. Us four had the whole row to ourselves and he completely ignored us, for like the first six months of the year. He would talk to us and stuff but he wouldn't explain anything to us. He would look at us and just expect us to be playing up. Even when we weren't playing up, even when we were doing our work, he would always growl at us because he would just expect that we weren't writing what we were supposed to be writing... and that was just like from the moment that we walked into the class – we were at the back row. All the white people and Asians were sitting in the front two rows and they were all like – you do this and you do this and you do this and the teacher would hard-out explain and when we put our hands up he would be like – what? We'd ask him a question and he'd go – you should have been listening. He ignored us. (Huhana)

I think it's hard. It's hard because, not the school itself, but the students. You hear the students say, like "Oh, bloody Maoris. You just do this, so hori", and all that, and when you hear this, you just think, like, "Not all Maoris are like that!" It's just sad and even like, I've noticed this year, some of my friends have been like, "Oh, it's unfair with the Maori scholarships that are being offered. What about?!" But they don't understand. (Terehia)

Another negative influence on some of the students occurred when a student was aware that his or her whanau were struggling financially. Of course, this situation could result in students wanting to leave school and find employment to alleviate their parents' financial situation, but for the students who spoke about the subject, it only strengthened their resolve to get a good education so that they could get a good job – often to better themselves, to have a better life than their parents or other family members had, and to be able to provide adequately for a future family of their own. Te Aroha, whose own mother was bringing up her children as a single parent, explained her thoughts about this situation:

And I think in terms of education, the reason I stayed is that I've always grown up in a family that keeps pushing you to achieve to make sure that you are ready for your future and also because I know that in the future I want to be a Mum, so I want to make sure that I can give them a good home. I don't want to be like a bum.

Rawiri also spoke of having a family in the future and being more committed:

I think it's just my family too. My mother's side's all good but my dad, like, ...I want to be more committed to my stuff, cos, if he doesn't wanna work, he doesn't work and if he does want to work, he does. It's pretty much up to him if he wants to. He just dawdles along in life and my mum; she tries her best and does everything. She tries to get money into the house, tries her best for all her children and my dad doesn't really care. He'll do whatever he wants. I just want to, like, if I have a family, I'll be way more committed to the family, like work. I want to be a builder.

Werahiko was clear that he wanted a better future than what his older siblings had:

... my older brother left at Year 10 and my older sister went all over the place and then she stopped going to school altogether. (So have they all got careers now?) No, my sister's on a benefit and my older brother just works part-time. (So that's spurring you on – because you want better than that?) Yeah, I want better.

Conclusion

The findings from this study emphasise the influence of whanau on the education of Maori students, particularly the influence of parents who valued education but may not have been able to gain the benefits of a good secondary education themselves. It was significant that the students who had attended Kohanga reo in their pre-school years no longer spoke Te Reo Maori as their first language, and that none of the other students in the study did either. The students who were able to access marae and other distinctive aspects of Maori identity and culture, identified strongly as Maori, while

others did not, and were even unaware of *who they were*, that is, they did not know what iwi they came from, or their traditional iwi/hapu marae. The latter were enjoying educational success, but were not “Maori enjoying educational success *as Maori*” which is the basis of the new ministry strategy for Maori education in *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education, 2008b). While there are many Maori students who are experiencing success in mainstream school in Aotearoa-New Zealand, as MacFarlane (2004) states “It is no longer acceptable to many Maori that success at school in one’s own country should come at the cost of their own language and culture” (p. 14). The abandonment of indigenous identity in order to be successful within a largely monocultural society and cultural alienation, are issues which in the past have been attributed to negative mental health effects for Maori (Durie, 2001b).

A range of key themes which have emerged as findings in this study will be discussed further in chapter five and include: the influence of whanau (in particular one significant family member) on the student; the issue of poor past educational outcomes for parents of the students who participated in the study and how that has impacted on the students; the push for economic betterment within families; the importance of culture and identity and the concept of ‘nga matatini Maori’ which literally means *the many faces of Maori* (Durie, 1995); the issue of racism; and whanaungatanga (relationships), including teacher-student relationships and how they have affected the students in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the main findings of this study. The discussion is presented under themes which emerged during the focus-group interviews and these are explained in relation to issues which were covered in the literature review. In addition to examining ways in which findings from the research relate to key ideas from the literature review, two new areas of focus are introduced. These focus areas of racism and of the push for economic betterment of families emerged from the students' data, and are considered sufficiently important enough to warrant further exploration. The chapter sub-headings are therefore: the influence of whanau; how poor past educational outcomes have affected whanau and students; the push for economic betterment within families; the importance of culture and identity and nga matatini Maori (the many faces of Maori); the issue of racism; and whanaungatanga, including teacher-pupil relationships.

The Influence of Whanau

This study found that the influence of whanau was the most significant factor contributing towards the students staying at secondary school. The support of a significant adult (within the whanau) with whom the student had a close relationship was particularly important. This finding is consistent with other research which also found whanau influence to be highly significant in the educational achievement of Maori students (Kay, 2008; McKinley, 2000; Mikaere and Loane, 2001; Te Puni Kokiri, 1994). While other researchers have found that Maori whanau have high aspirations and expectations for their children, they have also identified barriers to positive home and school relationships such as negative parental experiences of schooling and being unemployed, both of which can affect the extent to which the whanau of a student can influence the student's education (Bishop et al., 2003). However, interestingly those same factors which may act as barriers to positive home and school relationships, had in this study had the effect of motivating the students to remain at school in order to get

a better education than their parents had received. The *Kua Korero Nga Akonga Beyond 16 Survey* (Te Puni Kokiri, 1994) conducted with Maori secondary-school students similarly found 70.6% of the 1889 students surveyed reported their whanau had actively encouraged them to stay at school, often because of the parents' concern that their child "obtain good qualifications and hence have a better chance of finding employment" (p.13).

How Poor Past Educational Outcomes have Affected Whanau and Students

The students who participated in this study reported that their parents wanted them to get a better education than they had. Most of the students also reported that either a parent or other family members had: left school early; had taken employment in low-skilled, low-paid positions; were unemployed; or were on benefits. The word 'benefit' had negative connotations for these students and they spoke as though it was shameful to be receiving a benefit. They talked about financial problems within their families and about the connection between getting a 'good education' and getting 'a good job'. Some of them had been told by a parent or other whanau member to stay at school as a way of securing better employment and to avoid 'going on the dole', and some of the students had seen the effects of poor educational outcomes on whanau members and they wanted to have a better life for themselves. Research which was carried out ten years ago to identify the aspirations and concerns of Maori parents/whanau found similar results in that the parents all said they valued education and wanted their children to have a better education than they had had (McKinley, 2000). They also believed that if their child was happy at school they would be more likely to stay there and to get a good job (McKinley, 2000).

Another consequence of poor past educational outcomes for Maori is that the parents of secondary students are often unfamiliar with the system and are unable to advise and guide their children when they make decisions about subjects to take for NCEA, about career pathways and about gaining entrance to university. Although Maori students may aspire to go to university, it is too easy for them to find themselves on NCEA pathways that foreclose this option (Salmond, 2009). In addition to that, many Maori students

attend schools in low-decile areas where they are statistically less likely to leave school with University Entrance than students from high-decile schools (Madjar, McKinley, Jensen, & Van Der Merwe, 2009). They are usually unable to access the high-decile schools in other areas, although two students in this study were travelling by bus from low-decile areas to a decile 10 school some distance from their homes because their parents wanted them to 'get a good education'. The impact of poor past educational outcomes for whanau is summarised by O'Sullivan (2007b) when he says "...mainstream schooling has not delivered Maori the levels of success required to participate fully in the modern economy" (p. 1).

The Push for Economic Betterment within Families

None of the students spoke about aspiring to material wealth but their comments about financial hardship and wanting 'better' for themselves and for their future children indicated they wanted to be able to adequately provide for themselves and for their families, without the constant challenge of 'making ends meet' that they observed of their parents' experience. While there was evidence that some Maori students lived in families where they experienced hardship, it had not impacted to the extent that they had decided to drop out of school. Both schools had mediated the difficulties that some of the students had with access to computers and the internet, by providing computers, email and the internet for students to use at school. The commitment to future economic betterment was significantly demonstrated by one whanau who lived in a low socio-economic area and were sending their son to a decile 10 school which was up to an hour away by bus.

Although the findings of this study cannot be generalised to a larger group, it seems significant that the students in this group spoke strongly of economic betterment as a motivating factor in their staying at school and as a subject which was discussed at home. It was clear that they saw education as a key to economic betterment and security in the future.

The Importance of Culture and Identity and Nga Matatini Maori

This study found that there was evidence of the loss of language and identity amongst the students. None of them spoke Maori and three of them did not identify strongly as Maori. These three knew they had 'Maori blood' but did not know anything about their ancestors, iwi, hapu or marae. Ethnicity is strongly linked to identity and belonging (Ritchie, 2005). Durie (1995) explains that there are at least three distinct Maori groups emerging within 'Maoridom' (*nga matatini Maori*) in this country and there is a need to be aware of this. Those who are of the first group participate in Maori activities on a regular basis, their children attend Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Maori schools, they participate in many Maori sporting and cultural events and they are involved in their local marae. The children of this group feel comfortable in a marae setting, are fluent speakers of Maori and participate in a great range of Maori activities. Members of this group identify strongly as Maori. The second group is more likely to be immersed in mainstream society and to live similar lives to those of their Pakeha counterparts but still identify strongly as Maori. The third group Durie describes as not participating strongly in either Maori or mainstream activities. They are relatively isolated, are likely to have high health needs and, although cut off from their cultural roots, still identify strongly as Maori. There are other sub-groups within these three main groups, hence the term *nga matatini Maori* – the many faces of Maori.

This group of students was representative of all three groups of *nga matatini Maori* as Durie describes, although they did not speak Maori. Some had attended Te Kohanga Reo, were enthusiastic members of a kapahaka group, participated in marae and whanau activities, and identified strongly as Maori; while others avoided taking Maori as a subject at school, did not belong to a kapahaka group and did not participate in any 'Maori activities'. One girl said her friends did not know that she was Maori at all, which is perhaps evidence of the success of past education policies which have promoted the *assimilation* of Maori into 'mainstream' culture and the *replacement* of Maori language and culture with Pakeha language and culture. At a subsequent hui held to discuss the findings of the research, this same girl added that when she told her friends she was

Maori they had suggested to her she could be South African rather than Maori. She stated:

My friends say 'you're not Maori; you don't look it - you look South African.' They think I want to be South African. (Hine)

Although the group which identified assertively as Maori did not have strong links back to traditional iwi/hapu marae, that void had been filled with urban representations which Walker (1990) describes as “highly symbolic cultural statements that Maori identity has survived the double trauma of colonisation and urbanisation” (p. 50).

Research conducted for the Kotahitanga Project in 2001 (Bishop et al., 2007a) found that whanau members felt that teachers needed to have a greater understanding of things Maori, “including the reality of knowing that Maori people have their own cultural values, aspirations, and ways of knowing” (p. 19). This was seen by the student’s whanau to be crucial to allowing *the student’s own culture* to be present, recognised and respected within the school and the classroom (Bishop et al., 2007a). The dilemma for some Maori students is that they must adapt and ‘fit in’ to a system which upholds individualist values of ‘excellence’ and ‘personal best’ when their values are about whanau, hapu and iwi, that is, collectivist (Penetito, 2010). Although *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education, 2008b) has “Maori enjoying education success as Maori” as the major focus of its Maori education strategy, this study found that some of the students involved were not enjoying educational success ‘as Maori’. They had either lost their culture and language entirely or were leaving it at the gate when in school and were ‘fitting in’ with the (majority mainstream) school culture. Some spoke of not enjoying school and were attending only to gain qualifications so they could get a ‘good job’. This finding is in direct contrast to the strategic intent of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*.

Walker (1990) asserts that the structural relationship of Pakeha dominance over Maori is reflected and reinforced in schools, and *is in itself*, an historical and ongoing sociological component of Maori identity. The education system, being predicated on the reproduction of Pakeha culture, serves to add to the Maori child’s ambivalence

towards his/her own identity and becomes an arena of cultural conflict. The child's rejection of Maori identity and identification with the dominant group in society is a response to negative public perceptions of Maori identity which may come from media representations of statistics or events involving Maori, or from racist attitudes within society (Walker, 1990).

Teachers looking for guidance in implementing the ministry goal of 'Maori enjoying educational success as Maori' will not find any specific strategies within *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* apart from a statement that 'identity and culture are essential elements of success' (p.18) and other references to Maori 'aspirations' and 'unique potential'. However, Durie (2003) provides an explanation when he states that the reference to living 'as Maori' means "to have access to te ao Maori, the Maori world – access to language, culture, marae, tikanga (customs) and resources" (p. 199). He contends that:

If after twelve or so years of formal education a Maori youth were totally unprepared to interact within te ao Maori, then, no matter what else had been learned, education would have been incomplete....being Maori is a Maori reality. Education should be as much about that reality as it is about literacy and numeracy. In short, being able to live as Maori imposes some responsibilities upon the education system to contribute towards the realisation of that goal. (p.199-200)

It is Durie's assertion that education should enable Maori not just to enjoy educational success 'as Maori' but also "to live as Maori" (2003, p.199).

Racism

Some of the students in this study spoke about situations when comments were made to them that were racist. These comments were attributed to both students and teachers. Some comments from non-Maori students are inter-generational in origin as they are phrases that have been used for many years such as 'bloody Maoris' and 'hori'.

These students knew that some of the offending remarks were intended to be derogatory and were hurt by them. A Ministry of Education (2001) discussion paper on Maori education confirmed that:

There is no doubt that Maori students face a certain amount of discrimination in schools, mainly in the form of teacher or school discrimination and racism from other students.... Teachers need to reflect on their own racial attitudes if they are to provide supportive learning environments for students. (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 16)

In discussing racism in Aotearoa-New Zealand Ritchie (2005), notes that Pakeha speak of racism as a *societal syndrome*, as negative attitudes rather than as 'felt effects', while Maori talk about their *experience* of racist power effects. The students in this study were clearly affected by racism directed towards them. For example, three students mentioned remarks that had been made to them about 'Maori scholarships' being unfair to Pakeha students and others. It is of concern that strategies which are aimed at addressing inequities in education are being interpreted as unfair by Pakeha, when these inequities are so serious and so entrenched within the education system. When these strategies are interpreted as unfair or racist, the debate is able to be shifted to focus on the strategy, rather than on the more obvious topic of inequitable and unjust education outcomes which leave Maori as a seriously disadvantaged group in society.

This thesis argues that any debate concerning Maori education should be about rectifying the situation of inequitable outcomes for Maori students, and not about 'unfairness' to Pakeha. It is Pakeha who have long enjoyed the social and economic advantages gained by succeeding in an educational system which facilitates their success by reinforcing the cultural norms and practices which are familiar to them. This has been described as 'dysconscious racism' which is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges and is characterized by an impaired consciousness, or distorted way of thinking about race (King, 1994, cited in Ritchie, 2005). In describing racism as an 'insidious under-current' that resides beneath the

surface of contemporary social and educational discourses, Ritchie (2005) suggests that it emanates from the assumption of racial superiority which colonisation was founded in and warns that educational settings need to be aware of “the accumulated baggage of multi-generational experiences of racism” that Maori children and their whanau have when they arrive there (p. 3).

The experiences that some of the students in this study spoke about are similar to experiences reported in other recent research conducted with Maori secondary school students in Aotearoa-New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2003). Although racism in schools is not a widely-debated topic, the findings of this study and other research referenced in this thesis confirm that it is still present in schools. In 2010 it should be brought out in the open and challenged. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) in reviewing the literature on culturally-responsive schooling (CRS) for Indigenous youth, describe racism as:

...a pervasive and consistent element in the schooling experiences of Indigenous youth. Students experience racism in a number of ways and from a variety of sources, including paternalism, prejudice, harmful assumptions, low expectations, stereotypes, violence, and biased curricular materials. (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 950)

In addition to the more obvious examples of racist discrimination discussed above, Milne (2009) describes another form of racism that exists at a systems level within schools and is accepted as normal and natural by the mainstream majority. She says “...the white is just ‘there’, as the background set of rules that dictate whose knowledge is important, what success looks like, what achievement matters, how the space is organised and who has the power. *That’s racism.*” (p. 2)

Whanaungatanga - Relationships

In two major studies undertaken as part of the Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007a) the development of caring learning relationships between the teacher and the students was identified by *both* groups of students as being *the most crucial factor* in their being

able to effectively engage in education. These studies had looked at the relative importance of influences on student achievement such as “whanau, home and community, classroom relationships and pedagogy, teachers, schools and school systems, the students themselves, and many contributing and confounding factors on learning and achievement including socio-economic contexts and systemic and structural conditions” (Bishop, 2008, p. 48).

In an earlier study by Hill and Hawk (2000), mutual respect, one of the most important dimensions to good teacher-student relationships, was identified as being a prime motivator for student learning. Students described how when the body language, tone of voice and actions of teachers indicated to them the teacher favoured ‘power with’ rather than ‘power over’ them, the students felt they were being treated as people and adults rather than students or children. Because the students in the Hill and Hawk (2000) study (mainly Maori and Pacific Island students) based their relationships on notions of reciprocity, when teachers showed respect towards them, they behaved respectfully in turn. Other attributes that successful teachers of these students exhibited were that: they understood the various worlds the students lived in and how they managed the tensions and conflicts between them; they were fair and patient; they enjoyed participating in activities with the students; and they were prepared to give of themselves – sharing their lives, feelings, failings and vulnerabilities with the students (Hill & Hawk, 2000). During the focus-group interviews for this research study, there were only two teachers who were referred to by the students who would have fitted the above teacher-description although each of them was mentioned by several of the students.

Teachers’ willingness to get to know the student was identified as being important in a Ministry of Education report on retention problems conducted in 2006. This report recommended that the principal, deputy principal or dean should meet with all students entering the school in order to ascertain the information from them that would enable the school to provide the most engaging curriculum for each student based on their needs and interests. It is also an effective *first step* in building a relationship between the school, the student and the student’s family (Ministry of Education, 2006). The two

teachers whom the students in this study identified as having close, mutually-respectful relationships with their students, had established positive relationships with students from the beginning of the year and had maintained them consistently with all their students. However, these relationships did not extend to the students' families. Establishing and maintaining relationships with students' families at the secondary school level is much more difficult for a teacher who may teach hundreds of students, unless the teacher lives in the same close community. A primary teacher with the same thirty or so students in their class all year is well-placed to do so however.

Other research has identified that the parents of Maori students felt that the quality of their children's relationships with their teachers was a major influence on their educational attainment (Bishop et al., 2007a). The students who participated in my research did not identify their relationships with teachers to be problematic in general and several students spoke very highly of particular teachers at their schools whom they liked and respected. Some did, however, complain about remarks made to them by individual teachers in the past. The teachers whose classes they always enjoyed were considered by the students to be outstanding teachers from whom they learned a lot. The qualities they considered these teachers demonstrated were the same qualities that have been identified in other studies where Maori students in secondary schools in Aotearoa-New Zealand have spoken about positive relationships they have with their teachers (Hill & Hawk, 2000; Hill & Hawk, 1996; Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006). The teachers who were liked and admired by the students in these other studies had kept up to date with modern technology and understood teenagers and the world they live in. The common qualities that the students spoke of these teachers as having included:

- They treat their students with respect and care about them as individuals
- They are well-prepared and their lessons are interesting because they use a variety of methods and media to teach and they explain the lesson well
- They are fair and assertive

- They have a sense of humour
- They know how to motivate their students

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the connections between the key themes from the findings of the study and from the literature. Some of the strongest influences on Maori students are: whanaungatanga (relationships with whanau and with teachers); poor past educational outcomes for Maori, particularly the students' own parents; and, being able to identify with their culture and thereby develop a sense of belonging and self-worth. Some of the students in this study were drawing strength and support from the whanaungatanga they experienced through belonging to a kapahaka group and sports teams, where both their culture and their identity as Maori were positively affirmed. The whanau supporting this group of students included many of the students' parents and family members and students felt a sense of belonging and an attachment to the marae where they met to practise. Because the marae was situated adjacent to the school, this also had the effect of connecting the marae and the school through the people who belonged to both. The close presence of the marae seems to have been a major factor for one of the schools in its ability to support Maori students. These students were fortunate in that they were able to develop and retain their identity as young Maori, whereas others were not. The reality with some students was that educational 'success' had come at the cost of their identity as Maori. In the following and final chapter the implications of the research findings for schools and suggestions of ways forward contained within the literature are discussed.

CHAPTER SIX: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Introduction

This chapter discusses some of the implications of the research findings for schools. The major implications, extracted from both the research conducted during this study, and from the research literature are as follows: the significance of relationships in the education of Maori students; the need for teachers to be aware of the importance of Maori students' own culture and identity; the hidden effects of racism in the education of Maori students; and how schools can utilise the latent potential of whanau to support and enhance the education of their children in secondary schools. The chapter also includes suggestions for interacting with Maori students and their whanau, considerations regarding the relevance of career counselling to the retention of students within secondary school, and strategies for establishing 'bicultural' partnerships.

The Significance of Relationships in the Education of Maori Students

Several of the students in this study reported that they had a good relationship with at least one staff-member at school (the principal, two teachers and a counsellor) and that this had influenced the student to stay at school. Other research has shown that good teacher-student relationships don't just play a part in learning for the Maori student; they are *crucial* to learning and must be present for learning to occur (Hill & Hawk, 2000). The concept of positive teacher-student relationships also underpins the Effective Teacher Profile (ETF) developed by Bishop et al., (2007a) from their research and forms the basis of the professional development programme delivered in Te Kotahitanga schools today. These researchers spoke with Year 9 and 10 Maori students about their experiences at high school. The implications from the research are threefold: firstly schools must appoint effective teachers who are known to relate well to Maori students; secondly, the school appraisal and professional development cycle must include an emphasis on positive relationships with Maori students as an important aspect of good teaching and teachers should be appraised on how well they relate to Maori students; and thirdly, teachers who are known to develop and maintain good

relationships with Maori students could mentor other teachers to develop the same skills.

Schools are accountable to their Maori communities and the attitudes that teachers hold about Maori students do contribute to their levels of achievement, motivation, desire to stay at school, resilience and the realisation of their potential (Penetito, 2010). As a majority of Maori students are leaving secondary schools without the necessary qualifications for employment or university, it is imperative that secondary teachers demonstrate a real awareness of the impact of classroom relationships on achievement and the retention of Maori students. This has implications for providers of pre-service teacher programmes in that they should actively recruit people who are bicultural, that is, people who can operate comfortably and competently in either a mainstream or Maori setting, and who demonstrate an ability to create and maintain positive relationships with Maori. The implications for providers of continuing professional development of teachers are that programmes should be designed around educating teachers about Maori-preferred practices and pedagogies and should assist teachers to become competent bicultural practitioners. What teachers (and others) need to grasp is that Maori are not merely a minority group within a diverse society in this country. Maori are the indigenous or 'first-nation' people of Aotearoa-New Zealand and as such occupy an equal place as an equal treaty partner alongside governing interests.

However, it is not just about teachers relating well to their Maori students. Inherent to establishing and maintaining good student-teacher relationships at secondary level is a transformation of power (Vercoe, 1998; Bishop & Glynn, 1999), both within classrooms and within other school structures since the patterns of dominance and subordination that exist in wider society are also present in classrooms and are often counter-productive to positive relationships (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). If schools incorporate more collectivist, collaborative pedagogies *most* students, not just Maori students, will feel comfortable and supported in their learning. The students in this study reported that they were often expected to work quietly on their own from a book or other source, and they wanted to be able to interact more to learn with and from each other. Other research has identified that the transmission mode of education, where the teacher is

active and the learner is inactive, remains dominant in mainstream secondary schools (Bishop et al., 2003).

The success of the Kura Kaupapa Maori schooling system for Maori students is in direct contrast to the failure of mainstream secondary schooling to deliver equitable outcomes for Maori students and should be studied by mainstream schools as a model of *best practice* in the teaching of Maori students. Kura kaupapa Maori schooling is based on principles of manaakitanga (caring for the students and the whanau), ako (the teacher is also a learner and students can also teach) and kotahitanga (unity and togetherness) (MacFarlane, 2004). Relationships are paramount and whanau are heavily involved, both in the administration of the school and the curriculum, and in supporting and enhancing their children's education out of school.

The Importance of Culture and Identity

The importance of cultural identity is significant in the formation of personal identity, and self-esteem and knowledge of te reo Maori and tikanga Maori is inextricably linked with cultural identity for Maori students (Walker, 1990). Cultural well-being has been identified as a powerful component of identity formation and *pivotal* for young Maori (Durie, 2001). The emergence of kohanga reo centres and kaupapa Maori schools in the 1980s and 1990s was vitally necessary for Maori education, not only for the maintenance and revival of Maori language, but to allow Maori children the right to practice their cultural values and language while at school and as a way of valuing and transmitting Maori knowledge for future generations (Keegan, 1996). The sad reality of the present status of Maori culture and language is encapsulated in a comment about the hierarchy of subjects in secondary schools by Wally Penetito (2010) when he says: "Te Reo Maori as a subject only just makes it onto the timetable, but tikanga Maori, in the context of the system, is little more than a figment of the imagination" (Penetito, 2010, p. 32). Because only a small percentage of Maori children are able to access kaupapa Maori education provision (90% of Maori students are educated within mainstream education settings), it is imperative that mainstream education in Aotearoa-New Zealand is able to deliver an appropriate education for Maori students and that it

improves to a position where Maori needs are addressed and educational outcomes for Maori are at least equal to those of non-Maori.

Because little consideration has been given to Maori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices within the educational environment and the curriculum, the result has been a 'dichotomy of existence' for Maori, alienation and disengagement from the education system, loss of language and culture, and Maori identity (Hook, 2007). Hook (2007) asserts that in order for Maori culture to be *reintegrated with education*, it "must be reinforced, rebuilt, re-established, and refurbished", and this can only be done "through the development of culturally appropriate educational programmes promoted and delivered within the marae environment" (p. 1). In order to reduce disengagement and early exit of Maori from education, Hook proposes that Maori assume the teaching of secondary school education to their children within Maori wananga and that a national Maori university that would allow the development of Maori scholarship to the highest international levels be established, within a Maori environment.

Thrupp (2006) advocates working towards 'curricula justice' to make a difference in educational achievement, by disrupting forms of curricula, pedagogy and assessment which privilege the cultures of some social and ethnic groups over others. This would require a fundamental shift in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to suit groups other than the 'white middle class', and would necessitate the inclusion of Maori knowledge, Maori-preferred methods of teaching and learning, and of assessment practice, thereby affirming Maori culture and identity for Maori students. The implications for providers of teacher education are that comprehensive professional learning programmes for both pre-service and practising teachers would need to be established and maintained in educational institutions to enable this shift in practice to occur. School leaders would also require professional development as it is this group which would ultimately be required to manage such a fundamental change to the way some schools provide education to Maori students. There would also need to be a restructuring of government funding so that such an initiative is adequately resourced to ensure its success.

The Hidden Effects of Racism in the Education of Maori Students

Racism has been identified in several studies that have looked at the achievement of Maori students (Ministry of Education 2001; Bishop et al., 2003; Milne, 2009) and is a subject that must be openly addressed within schools and indeed, within other non-educational institutions in this country. The present situation where the 'system' is biased towards the culture, values and practices of the mainly-Pakeha middle classes and continues to perpetuate the status quo (thereby advantaging some students above others), is inequitable and socially unjust. It can be described as institutionalised racism and is the result of successive educational policies that may have tinkered with the 'system', but never examined its structural power relationships. It has been accepted as 'normal' for Maori to occupy a lesser position within government educational structures and although 'consultation' may occur, decision-making is the prerogative of those in power.

Deficit theorising, discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, is based on prejudiced or racist thinking. Research conducted in the 1980s by Judith Simon identified deficit theorising about Maori children as featuring strongly amongst teachers (Simon, 1986). A decade later an Education Review Office (ERO) survey of 272 schools found that the majority of the schools identified children and their families as being the main barrier to their learning (ERO, 1995). This was still apparent in the finding by Bishop et al., (2003) of strong deficit theorising about Maori achievement by teachers. This thinking by school staff is in direct contrast to other studies that have found that Maori parents want the best educational outcomes for their children and that in some cases they had strongly articulated a desire for their children to succeed in a system where they themselves had had negative experiences and had left school without any educational qualifications (Bishop et al., 2003; Kay, 2008; McKinley, 2000; Mikaere and Loane, 2001). The students in this study also reported that their parents wanted them to get a good education. There is a need for some teachers to address their own cultural deficit theorising as well as the issues of power imbalances and how they may unwittingly participate in the marginalisation of Maori students. By doing this they will come to understand how the dominant culture maintains control over education, the part that

teachers play in that pattern of domination, and how their inter-personal relationships with Maori students affect student learning (Bishop et al., 2003). Educational provision in this country has been monocultural for well over a century, and 79% of teachers in schools are Pakeha (of European descent) while 10% are Maori (Ministry of Education, 2005). It is important therefore that teacher education institutions ensure that their graduates are able to competently deliver on the graduating standards of the New Zealand Teachers' Council which require that teachers are able to work effectively within bicultural contexts (Ritchie, 2010).

How Schools Can Utilise the Latent Potential That Whanau have

The students in this study all cited whanau and whanau bonds as being important in their lives and a strong influence on them. Despite approximately 200 years of the colonial experience, Maori society remains “basically collectivistic and tribal-oriented in the midst of a 21st century, highly developed capitalist society” (Penetito, 2010, p. 83) and it is this collectivist aspect which schools can tap in to, to harness the potential of whanau to assist the school and to support their children's education. A 2008 ERO report which sourced its information from 34 discussion groups and 55 parent questionnaires found that Maori parents or whanau: wanted to be involved in their children's school and learning; wanted teachers to have a range of skills and strategies to engage their children in learning; wanted their culture and values to be acknowledged and included in the curriculum and in school structures, such as having mihi and karakia at meetings; and that they wanted their children to become confident learners who accepted challenges and retained their personal mana (self-esteem and status) (Ministry of Education, 2009b). The challenge for school leadership is to create positive school-home partnerships that support valued outcomes for students and this involves teachers valuing the educational cultures of their students' families and communities *as well as* parents learning about and valuing the educational culture of the school. Therefore the principle of ako, (reciprocal learning and teaching) is fundamental to developing school-whanau connections that work (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009).

Listening and Responding to Students and Whanau

The students in this study expressed not only their willingness to participate in the research, but also their enjoyment from being heard. Maori learners consulted during the drafting of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* said they wanted schools to listen to them more and to communicate more with their whanau about their progress and other issues (Ministry of Education, 2009a), a point reiterated in findings from the Auckland University Starpath Project (which works to enhance the academic performance of Maori, Pacific and other students from low-decile secondary schools) as well as the 2006 Ministry of Education report *Consultation on Staying at School* which recommended listening to and talking with students to provide encouragement and positive reinforcement, and to build realistic expectations (Ministry of Education, 2006). An effective method of maintaining productive communication for Maori students is to establish mentoring relationships such as a tuakana-teina (older-younger) relationship. The student's mentor should be a respected senior student of their choice, or an adult (e.g. teacher, guidance counsellor, community leader) and he or she should be provided "for the duration of students' school-based education, not just for the crisis points" (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 6). The mentor would reinforce positive behaviours and encourage the student to remain within the educational system and to pursue their goals.

A 2008 ERO report found that barriers to Maori parents successful engagement with their child's school included teachers with negative or deficit views and attitudes about their children, rushed teacher-parent interviews, policies and procedures they were unfamiliar with, negative schooling experiences that had left them with bad memories of school, not having time to go on trips, and not having money to support school activities such as class camps (Ministry of Education 2009b). In my personal teaching experiences I have found over the years that all of these barriers are common but they can be overcome by holding whanau meetings (off the school site) where parents can discuss these things openly, with the support of whanau members around them, and collectively the whanau will find and implement a solution such as fund-raising to cover camp costs or school fees, lending school uniforms to another family, or perhaps standing in for a mother as a camp-parent. Whanau-support groups in schools can be

extremely effective collectives for solving problems and rallying support for a cause, whether it be to support a bereft family or to run a school gala day.

Career Counselling and the Retention of Students

Some of the students in this study had specific career ambitions but only two students knew the pathway to take and had deliberately chosen subjects they needed to obtain entry to their chosen careers. Some of the students hadn't planned anything and were still thinking about what they wanted to do. They needed information and assistance in career planning and appreciated the discussions we had with them and the information we provided.

In 2009 Starpath (Auckland University) released the findings of a major study which investigated how Maori, Pacific Island and students from low-mid decile schools made their subject choices, and the effects of those choices. The report, titled: *Towards university: Navigating NCEA course choices in low-mid decile schools* included a recommendation that schools needed to be better resourced to provide quality academic counselling and subject/course advice to students and their parents and that well-conducted academic counselling and target setting be implemented, as it is one of the *most effective* interventions available to schools which helps to raise the achievement of Maori and Pacific students (The University of Auckland Starpath Annual Report, 2009). The *Consultation on Staying at School* report to the MoE also mentioned this and recommended that schools help students with goal setting for their life, through exposure to potential futures, such as the realities of tertiary student life, working as a tradesman or as a professional. It also recommended that encouragement be given to students to reach their goals so that school is more meaningful and relevant to them (Ministry of Education, 2006) as students who find school relevant to their future goal are less inclined to leave early.

Establishing Bicultural Partnerships

When schools are supported by, or employ, community liaison officers who visit with families to help identify and understand issues, as well as involve the community in

school activities, the school environment becomes more welcoming and inclusive (Ministry of Education, 2006). However, in order for that person to be effective in working with Maori whanau, he or she must have an in-depth understanding of the Maori worldview and knowledge of contemporary Maori cultural practices, because, as MacFarlane explains, the Maori student is not an individual located separate to whanau, hapu and iwi, but is absorbed in the whanau as the whanau is absorbed in the hapu, and the hapu in the iwi. MacFarlane quotes Phinney and Rotheram's (1987) contention that "there are ethnically-linked ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are acquired through socialization" (MacFarlane, 2007, p. 32) to explain his point that Maori often have a different perspective to that of the majority mainstream culture. There is a wealth of language and cultural expertise that exists within Maori communities and if principals and teachers can learn how to work in partnership with their Maori community, they will be better placed to collectively address the problems that Maori students face in education.

Working in real partnership with Maori requires an understanding that the imposition of English language and western culture on Maori, which is still ongoing, has been devastating for Maori people and their language. It also requires an understanding of the Maori worldview and some knowledge of Maori language and the non-verbal subtleties that accompany expression of language and communication for Maori. Glynn and Bevan-Brown (2007), in a paper which argues that non-Maori need to invest more time and energy into gaining an understanding of the worldviews and understandings of Maori colleagues, students and their whanau, offer respectful methods of communication which non-Maori teachers can utilise to enter into effective and balanced working relationships with Maori. These include:

- learning to listen to the voice of Maori
- learning to think, speak, and explain themselves and their work using Maori icons, images and metaphors rather than relying on their own
- rejecting assumptions that the icons, images and metaphors of non-Maori language and culture will automatically be understood and appreciated by Maori

- validating and affirming Maori language and culture by allowing Maori people control over procedures and protocol in certain contexts where the majority-culture partner is in the less powerful position and is a visitor to someone else's cultural space.

These suggestions could form the basis of a programme of professional development in bicultural competencies for both pre-service and experienced teachers. It could be taught in conjunction with professional development on *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*, as in my experience, knowledge of this document, its strategy focus areas, goals and accompanying action plans, is sadly lacking amongst teachers in schools.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that culture and identity and positive relationships that affirm that identity are significantly important aspects of Maori students' lives. The findings of this study affirm the strategic intent of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* which is 'Maori enjoying education success as Maori' (Ministry of Education, 2008b). There is a need for mainstream schools to embed Maori cultural values and Maori language into *school structures* as well as the curriculum, and to include whanau members by genuinely consulting with them and establishing ongoing and productive home-and-school partnerships in the education of their children so that Maori engagement and achievement in mainstream education will be significantly enhanced. At the moment, schools are effectively responding to Pakeha cultural aspirations while simultaneously marginalising Maori culture. Creating an empowering school culture for Maori would involve an examination of grouping practices, labelling practices, the social climate of the school and teacher expectations of Maori student achievement and must be approached collaboratively. Establishing, and giving ongoing encouragement to a whanau-support group in a school can be an effective means of liaising and consulting with Maori whanau as they have the collective potential to make a huge difference in the education of Maori students.

The recent Education Review Office report, *Promoting Success for Maori Students: Schools' Progress* (2010) which surveyed 287 schools from full primary to secondary level notes with concern that “not all educators have yet recognised their professional responsibility to provide a learning environment that promotes success for Maori students ... a substantial proportion of schools do not review their own performance in relation to Maori student achievement” (p. 1). However, the propagation of a monoculture ideology by government is lending credence to the imposition of eurocentric values upon *all* students within schools and this may be undermining the ability of schools to provide the very learning environment that could ensure success for Maori students within mainstream education. The Education Review Office has signalled however, that “the impact of school practice on improving Maori success will now be a critical factor in deciding the timing of each school’s future review” (p. 3).

This thesis argues that it is unfair to solely blame teachers and schools for the present ‘crisis of failure’ in Maori education, as Pita Sharples (Associate Minister of Education) describes it (Tahana, 2010). The ‘crisis’ has existed for many decades and is a consequence of misguided government policies and government preference for school-based solutions (especially better teaching and leadership) rather than the more electorally-dangerous strategy of challenging middle class capture to achieve equitable outcomes for all groups within education (Thrupp, 2008). Maori have been powerless within a mainstream education system which is firmly held by the mainly-Pakeha middle classes who are able to dominate and dictate, oblivious to how their domination excludes so many ‘others’, especially the tangata whenua. Thrupp (2008) advocates disrupting the entrenched middle-class capture of schooling and asserts that not enough educators are defending the interests of the poor; in fact “teachers and principals are colluding with the middle classes as they seek out advantaged settings for their children” (p. 54). Overturning middle-class capture would involve radical reform of the education system to enable minority groups such as Maori to function within the system *on their own terms*, that is, on an equal, power-sharing basis. The present situation, where the mainly-Pakeha, mainstream majority exert power over ‘others’ within government institutions and schools, obstructs any attempts to confront and

overthrow the 'crisis' within Maori education, that of early exit from secondary school and poor outcomes for Maori students.

It is not just education policy that needs to be revised to enable changes in education to occur however. Government policies in other areas such as housing, health and employment can impact on children's education also, for instance when parents are forced to move to another area to find employment or better housing (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). Some of the students in this study told of their parents leaving school early without qualifications for good employment, and being confined to benefits or low-paid jobs for many years. Some mentioned their grandparents had done the same thing. Deficit education discourses have excluded Maori from accessing academic education in the past and the inter-generational impact is that today's Maori students are still experiencing the same difficulties that past generations of Maori students experienced.

Extending the Kotahitanga programme to include most mainstream secondary schools, and professional learning for teachers and school leaders that empowers them to achieve bicultural competency would assist in 'closing the gap' in educational achievement. However, this paper argues that for equitable education outcomes to be meaningful and lasting for Maori, radical changes to the education system must be made. Close examination of the principles and practices of the very successful Kura Kaupapa Maori schooling initiative as a model of 'best practice' and transference of power from the state to Maori interests within education needs to occur. It is the political nature of schooling, unequal power relations and the dominance of the majority group over 'others' which must be addressed if equitable outcomes for Maori are to be achieved within education in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

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APPENDIX 1



INFORMATION FORM

**Thesis Research: Investigating Factors Influencing the Retention of Maori Students
within Secondary Education in Aotearoa-New Zealand**

My name is Jenny Sheriff. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your assistance in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of the project is to answer the following: What are some significant factors which have contributed towards a sample group of Maori students remaining at secondary school until Year 13 in Aotearoa-New Zealand? The research seeks to add to the existing literature on Maori Education, particularly pertaining to the secondary sector.

In order to gather the data required for this study I am seeking the support of your school in the following way:

I would like to hold focus-group interviews with Year 13 Maori students who are willing to articulate their reasons for continuing at secondary school until Year 13, their experiences in education and their aspirations for the future. I will be co-facilitating the interviews with an experienced counsellor and will adhere to school and Maori protocols as appropriate. The interviews would involve a small group of students, in out of class time, so that their studies or sport practices are not compromised in any way, and participation would be completely voluntary. Students will be able to withdraw, should they choose to, at any time prior to the discussion of the preliminary findings of the research project.

These interviews will be recorded and transcripts will be made so that the data can be coded and analysed. The students will be given a transcript of the interviews to read and they will be able to change, add or delete information they have contributed. The thesis will not include any names of students, the school, or any information which may personally identify either the students or the school. Both myself and my supervisor at Unitec are the only people who may have access to the data. I hope that your school will agree to take part and that you will find this project of interest.

I would be happy to share a summary of the final report with schools which participate.

If you have any further queries about the research, you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

Her name is Dr. Jenny Ritchie and her telephone number is **815 4321 ext. 8317** or email jritchie@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2010-1064)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from April to November 2010. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

I _____, (name) _____ (position) of _____ (organisation), give consent for **Jenny Sheriff** to undertake research in this organisation as discussed with her.

This consent is subject to approval of research ethics application no: 2010-1064 by the Unitech Research Ethics Committee and a copy of the approval letter being forwarded to us immediately it is available.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2



E te hunga rangatahi, tēnā koutou katoa i roto i ngā manaakitanga o te wā. E mihi atu ana i roto i ngā tini tūmanako, wawata hoki kia eketia ai ngā taumata teitei o te mātauranga i roto i ngā kura tuarua. Ko Jenny Sheriff tōku nei ingoa. He kaiako taku mahi he kaiako i te kura tuarua, engari he tauira hoki ahau ki Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka.

E whai ake nei he kupu whakamārama mō te āhua ki tēnei kaupapa rangahau. Ko te hiahia kia whai wāhi mai koe ki ngā mahi e whai ake nei, arā, he whakawhitiwhiti kōrero. Ka noho katoa ēnei kōrero ki te tūmataiti, e kore ngā ingoa o ngā tauira me ngā kura rānei e whākina atu.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

My name is Jenny Sheriff. I am enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the School of Education at Unitec New Zealand (Unitec) and I seek your assistance in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a large part of this degree.

The aim of the research is to answer the following: What are some significant factors which have contributed towards a sample group of Maori students remaining at secondary school until Year 13 in Aotearoa-New Zealand? The research seeks to add to the existing literature on Maori Education, particularly pertaining to the secondary sector.

I am seeking your participation in the following way: I would like to hold focus-group interviews with Year 13 Maori students who are willing to articulate their reasons for continuing at secondary school until Year 13, their experiences in education and their aspirations for the future. This will probably take place over two sessions, each of about 45-50 minutes long and will not be held during your class times.

These interviews will be recorded and transcripts will be made so that the data can be coded and analysed. Later, the completed thesis may be published.

If you choose to participate, neither you nor your school will be identified in the thesis. The tapes will not be heard and transcripts of the interviews will not be read by any other person in your school. Both myself and my supervisor at university are the only people who may have access to the data.

You will be shown a copy of the transcript after the interviews and you are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given. You can, if you wish, ask to see the thesis before it is submitted to Unitec for examination.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will enjoy participating and will find it interesting. If you have any further queries about the research, you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

Her name is Dr. Jenny Ritchie and her telephone number is **815 4321 ext. 8317** or email jritchie@unitec.ac.nz

Ngā mihi, ngā manaakitanga anō ki a koutou katoa.

Nāku noa,

Nā Jenny Sheriff.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2010-1064)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 5 May 2010 to 4 May 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 3



Jenny Sheriff

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Investigating Factors Influencing the Retention of Maori Students
within Secondary Education in Aotearoa-New Zealand**

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this if I don't want to and I may withdraw at any time prior to the discussion of the preliminary findings of the research project.

I understand that everything that is said will be treated ethically and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be those present at the focus group.

I understand that the focus-group interview with the researcher will be taped and transcribed and that I will have an opportunity to view this and to delete or change any aspects that I am unhappy with.

I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet for a period of 5 years and that I will be able to see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Name: Signature: Date:.....

Project Researcher: Date:

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2010-1064)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 5 May 2010 to 4 May 2011. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.