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**Whakarongo mai!: Transformative teaching to support  
Māori identity and success in a mainstream school**

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
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by  
**Renée Gilgen**

The University of Waikato  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis topic emerged following a year's teaching experience in a mainstream classroom during 2009. My cultural assumptions of being a Māori teacher in a mainstream class were challenged predominantly by a group of Māori students in the classroom. The level of despondency I felt as a result of disruptive student behaviours forced me to reassess my own socio-cultural constructs which had influenced the formation of my identity as Māori and as a mainstream teacher.

The purpose of this study was to understand and explore a transformational behavioural shift which occurred within a group of Māori students during 2009 and the level of support they felt they received as *Māori* within a mainstream classroom context.

National and international literature demonstrates that transformative praxis is both reflective and active. Successful inclusive teaching requires a personal and professional commitment to firstly understand individual cultural constructs to then better understand how learners are perceived and positioned. Culturally responsive pedagogy ensures that all students' cultural practices and values are acknowledged and included into classroom teaching and learning programmes. In a New Zealand mainstream context, the Treaty of Waitangi principles of 'partnership', 'participation' and 'protection' serve as a bi-cultural 'power-sharing' metaphor from which all mainstream teachers of Māori students can successfully encourage student voice and foster reciprocal teaching and learning relationships.

My use of qualitative research methods and kaupapa Māori principles to guide the research process ensured that Māori cultural protocols and practices were honoured. My role as a Māori insider researcher meant that my relationship with the participants was already established. Our reflections as Māori students and a Māori teacher in a mainstream classroom context were based from shared teaching and learning

experiences during 2009. Researcher reflexivity has ensured that the research integrity, validity and reliability have remained high.

The research findings present the reflections of both the participants and researcher as Māori students and as a Māori teacher during 2009. Participants believed that teaching and learning programmes which incorporated te reo Māori served to honour their identity as Māori. However, their awareness of participating with tikanga Māori principles of whānaungatanga (relationships), manaakitanga (caring), ako (reciprocity) and aroha (respect) embedded within classroom activities that were exclusively in English, were not identified as being relevant to them as Māori. Similarly, the Treaty of Waitangi principles lacked transparency within my teaching pedagogy.

Two key implications for teaching and learning in mainstream schools and classrooms were identified. Firstly, there is an urgency for mainstream school managers, leaders and teachers to develop an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and its significance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century mainstream teacher and learner. A bi-cultural understanding of ourselves as treaty partners support Māori cultural values and practices within increasingly diverse mainstream school and classroom contexts. Māori students' success becomes the responsibility of *all* mainstream managers, leaders and teachers as treaty partners. Secondly, inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy demonstrates that Māori and non-Māori mainstream teachers are capable of effectively engaging Māori students with learning while acknowledging and reaffirming their cultural identity and language as tangata whenua.

Overall, my commitment for Māori students to be supported *as Māori* within mainstream school and classroom context has been enriched and strengthened as a result of this research study. The cultural and professional tensions I have experienced in mainstream contexts have challenged the socio-cultural constructs that I had accepted as being my cultural 'norm.'

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this thesis to our mother, Rangihuia Rupapere Gilgen. Her encouragement, perseverance and determination that my older brothers and I should always reflect, explore and critique knowledge, has steered our respective achievements – culturally, academically and socially. Her teachings and role-modelling for us as children and later as adults, cleverly wove many kaupapa Māori values as we developed our own identities as Māori while negotiating our way in a Pākehā ‘world’. I am forever blessed because of her strength to remain a proud Māori woman despite the many challenges she herself navigated throughout her own life-time.

To my children, my soul-mate, my brothers, cousins and friends, your guidance, encouragement and contributions has kept me thinking and well fed. You have demonstrated the true meaning of whānau across all levels.

My sincerest regards to my thesis supervisor Professor Ted Glynn, for the patience you have consistently shown me, even through my self-induced cognitive conflicts and yet, you have guided and encouraged my learning with much appreciated humour and grace.

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Ma te huruhuru, ka rere te manu  
Me whakahoki mai te mana ki te  
Whānau, Hapū, Iwi

*‘Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly’*

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This qualitative research study has emerged as a result of my teaching experience within a mainstream Intermediate School classroom (Years 7 & 8), during 2009. The level of disruptive student behaviours that I encountered as a Māori teacher, within the first week of school served to challenge the cultural and professional assumptions that I had carried into my classroom teaching. Critical questions I have explored in this research study were formed as I sought to understand the teaching crisis I experienced so early in the school year. The key questions were:

1. How could I move this group of students through some kind of process to learn new ways of communicating positively with each other and with me?
2. How did a group of students become so resistant to being involved with a level of communication which purposely sought to include them in classroom decision making?
3. Why were my<sup>1</sup> Māori students the majority of those involved with the classroom distraction and disruptions?

My thesis argues that classroom teachers must first understand their own cultural constructs to successfully address the learning and behavioural needs of Māori students in mainstream classrooms. I argue that effective transformative teaching is underpinned by understanding socio-cultural constructs of the 'self'.

I am located within this research study. I have endeavoured to explore the pedagogical shifts required to support Māori students to engage *as Māori* with inclusive learning and culturally responsive teaching in a mainstream classroom.

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<sup>1</sup> I have regularly used the pro-noun 'my' throughout this research study in reference to the classroom students I was professionally responsible for throughout 2009. How I have used the word 'my' represents when the possessor has, or had, no control of the relationships e.g. '*ōku* tamariki' and not as a possessive positioning of dominance over the students e.g. '*āku* tamariki'.

This research study has required that I explore international and national educational research literature describing the issues and subsequent challenges facing indigenous and minority communities within mainstream education settings. Classroom teachers are challenged globally to reverse the learning and engagement outcomes for learners who experience marginalisation as an ethnic minority. Research studies reviewed in Chapter Two show that pedagogy based on cultural knowledge and understanding reaches out to marginalised learners more effectively than pedagogies dominated by mono-cultural perspectives.

International and national research communities show similar educational achievement disparities experienced by ethnic minorities such as African-American and Latino in the United States, and Afro-Caribbean in the United Kingdom in mainstream schools. Research outcomes also parallel the disparities experienced by Māori learners in New Zealand.

However, while an ethnic minority, Māori are also tangata whenua (people of the land) and indigenous to New Zealand. As New Zealand citizens and as Treaty of Waitangi partners (Orange, 1989), Māori are entitled to access and develop their language and culture in state schools in their own country. The Treaty of Waitangi locates Māori in a different socio-cultural position from New Zealand's immigrant populations.

New Zealand's history demonstrates that immigration policies during 1960-1970 contributed to the rhetoric of multiculturalism to accommodate the growing Pacific Island community. These policies strengthened a societal belief that Polynesian, Māori and Pacific Islands could be viewed as minority groups of equal status vis a vis enabling Pākehā to further distance themselves from their responsibility as a Treaty of Waitangi partners with Māori (Jones, Marshall, Matthews, Smith, & Smith, 1995). Māori have been, and continue to be relegated to the societal 'margins' as if Māori were also 'voluntary' or 'involuntary' ethnic minorities to New Zealand.

Unlike New Zealand's immigrant minorities who have 'homelands' to return to where respective cultural practices and language are sustained and preserved (Hirsh, 1990), New Zealand is Māori 'homeland' and at present neither sustains nor preserves Māori cultural practices and language at the same level of the dominant majority of New Zealand (Byrnes, 2004; Orange, 1989). Liberal philosophical debates in New Zealand advocating a multicultural characteristic 'one law for all' rejects Māori rights to *choose* to live *as Māori* in their own country. O'Sullivan (2007) asserts, "Liberalism must recognise difference if it is to recognise freedom...freedom is not acultural...it [freedom] is deeply rooted and inseparable from cultural" (p. 126).

In contrast, bi-culturalism was a Māori response to the multi-cultural rhetoric during the 1970's because Māori status as *tangata whenua* (people of the land i.e. indigenous) in their own country was threatened (Awatere, 1984, as cited in Jones et al., 1995). The notion of bi-culturalism in education is viewed by Jones et al (1995) as a potential strategy for change based on the assumption that change involves greater education of non-Māori in their positioning as supportive partners in honouring the Treaty of Waitangi. In contemporary New Zealand society, a bi-cultural perspective is inclusive of 'other' non-Māori New Zealand citizens because of "...the extent which Māori and non-Māori experience overlaps and is interdependent" (O'Sullivan, 2007, p. 31).

Hence, I contend that transformative teaching needs to include culturally responsive pedagogy in addressing the educational disparities and marginalisation experienced by Māori in mainstream schools. Culturally responsive teaching honours the principles embedded within the Treaty of Waitangi and restores balance to the power relationship between Māori learners and classroom teachers.

Key factors that I have found to underpin the success of culturally responsive classroom teaching are those that enable teachers to become reflective practitioners, to move beyond traditional 'top-down' teaching

practices, to include students' collaboratively in setting learning goals and to share authority and power with their students. On the basis of my experience with this class in 2009, culturally responsive and inclusive strategies can be positioned within a Māori worldview and yet will benefit not only Māori students, but also all students. Implementing these strategies will enable teachers to:

1. Improve the learning outcomes of all students of other minority cultural ethnicities;
2. Honour the principles of the 'partnership', 'participation' and 'protection' embedded with the Treaty of Waitangi from within a classroom setting;
3. Meet teacher accountability to current educational legislation and school curriculum expectations;
4. Improve the quality of the student relationships within the classroom and school environment.

### **Thesis Structure**

Chapter One introduces my background and experiences which have prompted this research study. Chapter Two identifies international and national research literature which examines transformative praxis. These challenges are specifically linked to culture, identity, pedagogy and teacher practice, and culturally responsive pedagogy as ways of addressing educational disparities affecting Māori learners. Chapter Three presents the research approach I have employed to gather and analyse participant data and describes the ethical responsibilities I have had to consider throughout my research process. Chapter Four analyses participant data and presents the research findings. I have connected the findings to relevant national and international literature. Finally, Chapter Five presents the study's conclusions and reflections. Chapter Five also suggests further recommendations for educational research and reviews implications for mainstream schools and classrooms.

## Chapter One Overview

Chapter One is divided into three sections. The first section recounts the schooling experiences I feel have influenced my own identity as Māori and also as a mainstream classroom teacher. Section Two provides an overview of the current legislation pertaining to Māori learners in New Zealand's mainstream schools and classrooms and finally, the third section describes the classroom context and a culturally responsive pedagogy I engaged to support Māori student success *as Māori* within a mainstream classroom.

### Context : Personal & Professional Development

#### *Ko wai ahau? – Who am I?*

Ko Taupiri te maunga

Ko Waikato te awa

Ko Ngāti Tahinga o te tai hauāuru te hapū

Ko Opuatia te marae

Ko Tainui te waka

Ko Tainui te iwi

Ko Hans Gilgen rāua ko Rangihuia Rupapere ōku mātua

Ko David rātou ko Maynard, ko Ben, ko Karl ōku tungāne

Ko Renee Gilgen ahau

I was five years old when our dad passed away suddenly on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1973, and our mother was left as a young widow to raise me and my four older brothers. As our Dad was a Swiss immigrant to New Zealand, the cultural influences he contributed to our family had unfortunately gone with him and many of my memories of him faded during my early years. It was to be my mother's cultural identity and values as a Māori woman combined with those of individual school teachers that would have the largest influence on my personal growth and development.

I was to have my first and only Māori teacher (Mrs X) while attending public schools as a Primer 2 (Year 2) student during 1974. Mrs X taught our class te reo Māori (Māori language), waiata (songs) and initiated school-wide pōwhiri (traditional Māori welcoming process for visitors) for visiting sports teams from other schools. With my mother's support, Mrs X taught me to karanga (a process to formally call visitors onto the premises) for visiting groups and this was a role I performed at school throughout the course of the year. This early primary school experience gave me an example of how Māori students can be positively affirmed as *Māori* in a mainstream school setting despite the enculturation agenda embedded within educational policies of that time as a result of New Zealand's colonial history. Mrs X had raised my 'cultural' consciousness at a young age and set a standard for how I expected Māori learners to be 'valued' in a 'mainstream' school.

I was a student in Year 4 (Standard 2) in 1976 when my motivation to engage with learning decreased significantly. My perception of how my Pākehā teacher treated me and my Pākehā friends compared with her tone when talking to my Māori friends offended me. I suspected she had assumed by my colouring that I was also Pākehā and this offended me too. The teacher's 'attitude' towards Māori contrasted significantly with the attitude of Mrs X, from my previous years. For example, I recall a time when my Māori friend asked for help to solve a maths problem and the teacher ignored my friend but then went to a Pākehā student to help that student even though she had requested help 'after' my Māori friend. I noticed how the teacher would spend more time with my Pākehā friends in their reading groups than with the reading groups with more Māori students. I would frequently challenge her manner towards my Māori friends and as a consequence, there were several times when I was sent to the Principal's office and/or my mother was called to pick me up from school because of my 'inappropriate' behaviour.

It wasn't until I attended an English-medium private and religious based secondary school where the majority of the students and staff were Māori, that I experienced a collective sense of identity from a blend of Māori and religious perspectives. Māori cultural values and beliefs were understood as the 'norm' and we took for granted our 'style' of behaving and communicating with each other. The school fostered a strong sense of whānaungatanga (family-like relationships) amongst students and staff and I was fortunate to encounter a series of classroom teachers who successfully increased my motivation to engage with learning and who nurtured yet another level of my Māori identity. This added to the support and encouragement our mother provided in our home and was consistent with how she expected us to achieve both as Māori and academically. Consequently, I completed secondary school with both a 6<sup>th</sup> Form Certificate and a University Entrance (U.E.) at the end of 1984.

I was accepted as an American Field Scholar (AFS) exchange student to Thailand in lieu of my 7<sup>th</sup> Form (Year 13) in 1985. My experience of being totally immersed in a different culture and language forced me to reflect on my cultural identity as Māori and raised my awareness of the contrasting differences between my own culturally constructed 'norms' and the different world-view I then sought to understand. Not only did my student exchange experience enrich my understanding of another set of cultural practices but also persuaded me to seek a deeper understanding of my Swiss cultural heritage. Subsequently upon my return to New Zealand in 1986, I was presented with contrasting choices between entering teacher's college or embarking on further travelling experiences.

At the beginning of 1988, I formally withdrew from beginning the teacher training that I had been accepted into and bought a one-way ticket to Switzerland. My intention in travelling to Switzerland was to explore our father's whakapapa (genealogy) and to meet our Swiss whānau (family). I viewed this decision to travel as an opportunity to find out more about a father I couldn't recall. The experience of acquiring another new language,

living and working amongst a culture I had assumed I had biologically inherited presented me with further challenges of how I positioned myself within Swiss society. I found the way I interacted and responded with the Swiss whānau I met contrasted with their cultural 'norms.' For example, my visits needed to be pre-arranged at least two weeks in advance and to last no longer than 1 ½ hours. From my point of reference, I could have been a foreign visitor straight off the street, as opposed to being the grand-niece or step-granddaughter that I was.

I did however remain in Switzerland for a further three years, married and began a young family. It was early in 1992 that I moved from Switzerland to Ghana, West Africa. This time however, with two young children, I explored the options of further study towards a teaching degree at the local university. My drive to continue with tertiary studies was ever present, yet my attempt to engage in tertiary study in Ghana involved weaving through a bureaucratic mine-field and I realised I would have to return to New Zealand to complete my teaching degree.

Ironically, it was during three years living and working in Ghana that I came to my own realisation that being a 'guest' in the respective countries that I had experienced over several years served to strengthen my own understanding of my identity as Māori. I returned to New Zealand in 1995 with three children and feeling better prepared to further explore my own cultural identity and to complete the teaching degree I had intended to begin in 1988.

My full-time classroom teaching experience began in 2004 in an urban, mainstream Decile<sup>2</sup> 2 primary school located in Rotorua. The school roll consisted predominantly of Māori students (73%) and the number of Māori students in my own classroom reflected this percentage. At this time the teaching staff were involved with the Ministry of Education's 'Te Kauhua

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<sup>2</sup> Decile ratings are used in New Zealand that rank economic and social factors of the community immediately surrounding a school. Schools in decile one have the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds while schools in decile ten have the highest proportion of students from high socio-economic backgrounds.

Project' (Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins, & Broughton, 2004). This project sought to improve Māori student achievement levels by professionally developing mainstream teachers' understanding of the cultural capital inherent within Māori cultural values and practices. My personal reflections of my participation with 'Te Kauhua' included:

"I feel, as a Maori teacher within mainstream teaching and learning, that this contract supports me professionally with the kaupapa and whakaaro of the holistic approach I practise with my students, both Māori and Pākehā. For example, making and retaining contact with parents and caregivers, fostering a safe place within the classroom for the students to feel valued by demonstrating and practising values such as whānaunatanga, manaakitanga, tautoko and awhi, and most importantly raising expectation levels of achievement by scaffolding learning carefully both individually and collectively for student successes to be realised and celebrated."

Diary Entry, (04/09/2005)

While my classroom teaching practice connected with some philosophies and principles from Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) my involvement with the Te Kauhua Project contributed to my decision to seek a deeper understanding and commitment to finding ways to support me and my Māori students to positively develop our identity as Māori within a mainstream classroom and school. By 2006, I began my Post Graduate Diploma (Managing Behaviours in Schools) at the University of Waikato while teaching full-time to extend my knowledge base and enrich my practice as a Māori mainstream teacher. I completed the Post Graduate Diploma in May 2007.

I moved from Rotorua to Auckland in 2007 and began working as a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) based in a South Auckland cluster of schools. The culture shock I experienced while working in these schools and classrooms was greater than any other experience I had encountered while living in other countries overseas. I had *assumed* I would encounter among other teachers similar attitudes towards supporting Māori students in mainstream schools to those I had experienced in Rotorua.

In contrast I found:

- A preponderance of 'traditional' teaching and learning approaches which located students as 'passive recipients' of teacher knowledge and ignored pedagogical approaches that might include Māori learners positively;
- Māori students in some mainstream classrooms and schools were at risk of being marginalised and/or excluded from schools because the needs of the (non-Māori) student majority determined the cultural perspectives held by the school leaders and teachers as if all students belonged as one homogeneous group;
- Mono-cultural teachers working within multi-cultural environments but ignoring the bi-cultural positioning of Māori students as required within the context of honouring the Treaty of Waitangi.

I chose to leave the RTLB service after two years because I felt I could work more effectively for Māori students in a mainstream classroom and school by working collaboratively and culturally appropriately as a lead teacher with a small teaching team. I returned to the classroom at the beginning of 2009 in the same school where I had held my RTLB posting. This was an urban Decile 1 Intermediate school where the lead teacher position provided me with more managerial support than I had experienced as an RTLB working itinerantly across several schools.

Despite my confidently identifying as Māori and armed with my belief that being Māori would increase the likelihood of positive student engagement and participation within this new classroom teaching context, I was sorely tested by challenging behaviours from a small group of Māori students. The behaviours of these students impacted negatively on me and on other students in the classroom. I was taken aback by the intensity of the resistance this group of students displayed in order to avoid active participation in classroom activities and engagement with other students. My teaching experiences and student relationships in Rotorua were in stark contrast to what I was experiencing in this *one* classroom and I was

left feeling extreme *mamae* (deep hurt) for myself and my students as a result. Within the first two weeks of the school year my confidence as a Māori teacher in a mainstream class plummeted and I reluctantly adapted my teaching practice to resemble the 'traditional' and 'top down' teacher-dominant approach, because I found that this approach 'settled' the students more effectively than the style I considered culturally 'normal'. I found that I needed to re-evaluate my own cultural assumptions and develop an alternative approach to my teaching practice to positively re-engage these Māori students within our classroom interactions.

### **Background Context for Research**

The following section overviews the legal obligations of New Zealand schools to meet the learning needs of all students, including Māori. This section also presents statistical information around the current issues affecting Māori students and the accountability that New Zealand schools have for ensuring that their policies and practices honour the obligations founded within the Treaty of Waitangi.

I believe the following information is important to understand because Māori students and their cultural identity, knowledge bases, cultural practices and language are all at risk of being marginalised in mainstream schools especially in schools where Māori students are in the minority.

I contend that Boards of Trustees, school managers, teachers and parents need to be aware of their legal responsibilities to the Ministry of Education. Regardless of the number of Māori students in a school, whether large or small, the school is legally required to find effective approaches for ensuring that Māori language and culture are incorporated into their curriculum and pedagogy to ensure success for Māori students.

## **New Zealand Education Act (1989).**

The New Zealand Education Act (1989) de-centralised the governance, management and administration responsibilities of schools by shifting the role of developing local in-school policies and reporting processes from central government to individual school communities. The Ministry of Education (MoE) at the central government level however retained control of "... resource allocation (including funding), the curriculum and compliance with national policies" (Codd & Scrivens, 2005, p. 43).

Agencies such as The Education Review Office (ERO), The New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) and The New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) were therefore established. The specific role of the ERO is to assess, monitor and report to the MoE the degree to which education providers are meeting their legal responsibilities at the local level.

State school, integrated schools (State-funded schools of special character) and a large number of private schools are governed by Boards of Trustees (BoT's) comprised of elected members from the local school community. One of the 'Boards' collective responsibilities is to develop a school charter that meets the criteria within the following five documents namely:

1. National Education Goals (NEG's);
2. Foundation Curriculum Policy Statements;
3. National Curriculum Statements;
4. National Standards;
5. National Administration Guidelines (NAG's).

(Parliamentary Council Office, 1989)

It is expected by the MoE that school charters reflect policies which specifically meet the needs of all Māori learners. The National Education Goals (NEG's) and National Administration Guidelines (NAG's) provide a series of statements to guide Trustees in developing and articulating a school's vision, aims and goals.

## **National Education Goals (NEG's)**

The NEG's are 'statements of the desirable achievements by the school system' (Ministry of Education, 2010c). These goals are expected to be embedded throughout school policies to guide a purpose for teaching and learning practices. NEG's 9 and 10 specifically refer to acknowledging and meeting the needs of Māori and clearly state that schools must include policies which demonstrate a vision to support the unique needs of Māori learners in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi:

NEG's 9: 'Increased participation and success by Māori through the advancement of Māori education initiatives, including education in Te Reo Māori, consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.'

NEG's 10: 'Respect for the diverse ethnic and cultural heritage of New Zealand people, with acknowledgment of the unique place of Māori, and New Zealand's role in the Pacific and as a member of the international community of nations.'

(Ministry of Education, 2010c)

## **National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)**

The NAG's are statements of intent which serve as guidelines for BoT's to demonstrate how the NEG's are to be operationalised within their schools. The focus on the NAG's is to ensure all teaching and learning experiences achieve the goals as set by the NEG's. NAG's 1 (e) is directed specifically towards ensuring Māori learners and their community are being appropriately included with decision making and states:

"in consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community, policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students;"

(Ministry of Education, 2010b)

The MoE launched the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) in 2007. The NZC is a "statement of official policy relating to teaching and learning in English-medium schools" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 6). A key purpose of the NZC is to serve as a guide for school administrators and

teachers as they design 'tailor made' curriculum policies and programmes to meet specific teaching and learning needs identified from within their own school community.

### **The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) and the Treaty of Waitangi**

All reference to the 'Treaty of Waitangi' was initially excluded from the MoE's 'New Zealand *Draft Curriculum*' of 2006. Doig (2007) identified a strong concern about the Treaty's absence in the 2006 version of the 'draft' curriculum document and as a result of public consultation and an in-depth analysis of the subsequent feedback sent to the MoE, reference in support of the Treaty of Waitangi and the status and position of Māori was included into the final copy of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The NZC clearly states that the document is expected to "...help schools give effect to the partnership that is at the core of our nation's founding document Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 6).

### **The Treaty of Waitangi**

Signed in 1840 between the British Crown and 512 Māori tribal leaders, the Treaty of Waitangi acknowledged Māori as the 'tangata whenua' (indigenous people) of New Zealand, agreed for Māori and Pākehā (NZ non-Māori of British or European heritage) to work together as partners in decision making and to accord Māori the rights to protect their land, culture, language and other cultural 'taonga' (treasures) (Hirsh, 1990; Orange, 1989). Pākehā were accorded "...the right to settle and live in New Zealand and the government was guaranteed the right to govern" (Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005, p. 56).

However, the Treaty of Waitangi principles of 'partnership', 'protection' and 'participation' between the two signatories were slowly dismissed over subsequent years as laws were enacted by successive governments explicitly to support an assimilation process and secure a position of

dominance over Māori at the expense of the near extinction of Māori language, land and cultural knowledge (King, 2003). Such was the extent of Māori loss that John Logan Campbell commissioned an ‘...obelisk monument to Māori to stand on the summit of Maungakiekie (“One Tree Hill”) as an “...expression of respect and regret on the part of Pākehā who admired Māori” (King, 2003, p. 224). The same monument could also be viewed as a memorial ‘to the dying race’ (Shields et al., 2005) and considered as an artefact that visually represents the extent of the power imbalance which existed between the two Treaty of Waitangi ‘partners’ by the early 1900’s.

Current examples that could also be interpreted as power imbalances between Māori and Pākehā are reflected in the educational achievement statistics where Pākehā students dominate the positive statistics across all levels of schooling nationally, compared with Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2008b). I view the education achievement disparity between Pākehā and Māori as a hegemonic<sup>3</sup> outcome enacted and sustained by ongoing dominant discourses. These hegemonic outcomes have persisted despite attempts over the past two decades by the New Zealand Government and the MoE to redress and improve the educational outcomes for Māori through legislative processes.

### **Māori and Educational Statistics**

Māori students make up approximately 22% of the student population and are predominantly situated in English-medium (mainstream) schools while in contrast, 10% of the school teachers and management staff in these mainstream school are Māori (Teach NZ, 2010). Further data demonstrates that as of April 2010, 75% of all teaching and management

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<sup>3</sup> Hegemony: Oxford Dictionaries (2010) defines ‘hegemony’ as ‘leadership or dominance, especially by one state or social group over others’. Colonial dominance used assimilation processes and formal education as strategic, practical and powerful methods for developing, shaping and sustaining reconstructed societal ‘norms’. By first eradicating or marginalising value and belief systems shared by one group of people and then acculturating the same group of people to assume value and belief systems that was deemed ‘more appropriate’ by the dominant power, hegemonic outcomes are systematically realised (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Shields et al., 2005).

positions are held by Pākehā, 3% by Pacific Islanders and Asians respectively, while 8.9% are held by 'other' or 'unknown' ethnicities in state and state integrated schools (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

The numbers of teachers across all ethnicities has steadily increased between 2004 and 2010.

During 2009, 40% of Māori students attended Decile 1-4 schools with the majority enrolled in Decile 2 schools and 13% of Māori students attended Decile 5-10 schools. In contrast, 28% of Pākehā students attended Decile 1-4 schools while 69% attended Decile 5-10 schools (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

Stand down statistics show that in 2007, 5.7% of Pākehā students in state schools were stood down compared with 22% of Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2010a). Attendance statistics from 2009 show that Māori absence from school at 14.9% is slightly higher than the national rate of 11.6% however, Māori '...have approximately double the rate of unjustified absence when compared with NZ European...' (Loader & Ryan, 2010, p. 11).

To summarise, Māori students are predominantly enrolled in Decile 1-4 schools and have a high probability of being taught by a Pākehā teacher. Māori students are unjustifiably absent from school in larger numbers than the national rate and are over three times more likely to be stood down from school than Pākehā students.

National educational statistics pertaining to Māori learners have been an ongoing concern for educators and researchers. Subsequent reports identifying and reviewing government policies to reduce the level of disparity between Māori and Pākehā learners in New Zealand's mainstream schools have concluded that these policies have failed to significantly impact on these negative educational trends (Education Review Office, June 2010). The current education statistics continue to

mirror the same concerns that Hirsh (1990) identified in a report he prepared for the Ministry of Education 20 years ago.

Hirsh recommended four key levels where solutions should be sought to improve the educational outcomes for Māori students at that time and stated:

1. at the national level, with the development of new policy. In many instances the issues of NATIONAL IMPORTANCE can only be addressed within the Ministry of Education.
2. at the regional COMMUNITY and IWI level, which encourages local initiatives. Many issues could be best and most expeditiously handles at the local level provided resources are available and there is an understanding of the fact that at this level issues vary considerably from region to region.
3. at the local level, with BOARDS OF TRUSTEES, and SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND STAFF.
4. with individual teachers in CLASSROOMS.

(Hirsh, 1990, pp. 9-10)

Hirsh's fourth key level recommended as a solution to improve Māori students' educational outcomes was the classroom level. It is '*with individual teachers in classroom*' that my research thesis is located.

Current educational statistics demonstrate an increase of Māori students enrolled in mainstream schools between 2007 and 2010 and sociological projections predict an increase of people identifying as Māori in New Zealand over the next 20 years (Kiro, 2010, August). These statistics raise further implications for Māori students in mainstream classrooms because Māori educational achievement levels are almost guaranteed to remain within the 'tail-end' of the national achievement scale unless change for Māori students is instigated from within the classroom environments themselves under the guidance and support of inclusive and culturally responsive classroom teachers (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003; Hattie, 2009).

My analysis of culturally responsive pedagogy to support Māori students success 'as Māori' in mainstream classrooms attempts to purposefully

move beyond the 'rhetoric' and to restore honour to the principles of partnership, protection and participation as guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi within the classroom context.

### **Case Study: Classroom Context 2009**

This final section describes the classroom context I encountered at the beginning of 2009 followed by details of the personal and cultural challenges I experienced as I sought a culturally inclusive approach to build and strengthen our classroom relationships.

#### **Classroom Context – 'Ko au ko koe, ko koe ko au'**

My classroom was one of nine classrooms situated in an urban Decile 1 Intermediate School located in a South Auckland suburb. The school's student ethnic population was reflective of the local community and was predominantly Samoan (33%) followed by Tongan (24%) and then NZ Maori (15%) and Cook Island Maori (15%). Smaller ethnic groups represented in the school's population included Niuean, Pākehā, Sudanese, Middle Eastern and Indian. Classroom teacher ethnicities included three Samoan, two NZ Pākehā, one Cook Island Māori, one Indian, one Fijian Indian and one Māori (me). The school had two Samoan 'Bi-lingual' classrooms while the remaining seven classrooms were considered 'mainstream'. That is, the language of instruction, assessment and discourse was English.

I began the first week of school with 24 students on my classroom roll. Nine were Māori (38%), seven Tongan (25%), three Cook Island (13%), two Niuean (8%), two Samoan (8%) and one Sudanese (4%). Nine students were Year 7 and 15 students were Year 8. Twelve of the Year 8 students had been part of this class the previous year while the other three Year 8 students were moved into my class from other school classes. My classroom had the largest number of Māori students in the school and I was the only teacher in the school who identified as Māori.

The first week of school had only two teaching days before the 'Waitangi' weekend celebrations.

The first day of school started with 22 students (two students were absent). I welcomed the students into the classroom on the very first morning the same way I found appropriate and 'normal' in my previous classroom teaching role by introducing myself using te reo Māori (Māori language). I began with my own mihimihi (greeting) and whakataukī (proverb) followed by an English translation of my introduction. I wanted to give the students my whakapapa (genealogy) as a way to identify any connections or links that may be shared between us. I also interpreted my choice and meaning of the whakataukī 'Ko au ko koe, ko koe ko au' (I am you and you are me) as my guide for ensuring that respectful interactions were to be demonstrated between me and the classroom students. I then concluded my introduction with a short waiata (song) 'E hara i te mea'.

I invited the students to ask any questions they had and then we moved into a co-operative activity which encouraged the students to ask questions and record answers from each other before presenting their information collectively. The rest of the first day passed without any 'major' incident and I was able to 'tick off' the activities I had pre-planned and organised for the day (Teacher's Planner, 04<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2009).

The next day of school (5<sup>th</sup> February 2009) was a complete contrast from the first. All the students attended school that day. I had planned learning activities which required students to interview a partner, followed by a learning session to discuss the history of the 'Treaty of Waitangi' with co-operative follow up activities. The purpose of planning a session on the Treaty of Waitangi had two aims. Firstly as a preparation for the up-coming Waitangi Day celebration and secondly because I had intended to link the Treaty of Waitangi learning goals to collaboratively develop a classroom charter that would serve as a document outlining our own individual and collective responsibilities, values and consequences for the year. The students participated appropriately with the partner interviews but then the

distractions and negative behaviours increased once I began the introductory session on the 'Treaty of Waitangi'.

Several of my Māori boys frequently distracted each other by punching, swearing, mocking and shouting while also refusing to participate with our activities. A few of the girls contributed to the distractions by swearing at the boys and shouting at each other. My initial response was to 'roam' the classroom and I quietly approached each student and asked them individually to reduce their noise level and re-focus on the activities while also responding to any questions other students had. This was only as effective as my proximity to a student because as soon as I moved away to another student the noise, swearing and shouting resumed. I then decided to move everyone outside the classroom to a shaded area to complete the readings and activities because I wanted to see if the same behaviours would continue in a different setting. I observed that the students who were engaging with the learning activities were as much engaged outside as inside the classroom and the disengaged students were just as distracting and off task in both settings. So after lunchtime, we returned to the classroom and I asked the group of students who were distracting during the previous learning sessions what they wanted to do for the afternoon instead. They chose 'free time' and this meant 'chatting quietly about anything' so the rest of the students and I continued with the planned activities for the afternoon. I observed that the group of students who had demonstrated distracting behaviours throughout the day were less disruptive during the afternoon.

The disruptive student behaviours on the first day of the second week of school began as the previous week had ended. I abandoned the planning I had prepared for the morning's learning session and instead asked the classroom students what they expected from me as their teacher. It was a given expectation that this new classroom context required time for me and the students to settle and develop consistent routines. However it was the intensity and frequency of the disruptive behaviours that caused me

concern so early in the school year. I had not previously experienced the level of resistance this group of students demonstrated so openly towards me and towards other students.

In response to my question, several of my 'inherited' students suggested that I was 'too soft' and told me to 'harden up Whaea' (mother or aunty and in our classroom context the students referred to me as 'Whaea Renee').

When I asked the students to clarify 'harden up', I was told that I needed to be more like other teachers they had experienced and respected. 'Hard' teacher behaviours for which they felt would elicit their 'respect' were:

- Slam the big ruler on the window so it has a loud crack;
- Stick the big ruler right up to a students nose to scare them into silence;
- To lift a student on top of a shelf ;
- Shout loudly and 'mean it'.

(Classroom communication, February 2009)

The student responses shocked me because they described teacher behaviours that I considered highly inappropriate and well beyond my 'style' of teaching. I also became very despondent because my 'softness' was viewed by the students negatively. I was confused.

My assumption of being Māori and with a high number of Māori students in my classroom had together meant that I thought the students would naturally respond to cultural concepts such as 'ako' (reciprocity), 'whakawhānaungatanga' (building relationships) and 'manaakitanga' (care) as ways to develop respectful classroom relationships similar to what I had experienced successfully in my previous classrooms. The students' rejection of what I had considered 'culturally appropriate' felt like 'a kick in the guts' and I needed to find a different strategy in a relatively short amount of time to ensure the remainder of the school year was as

productive and meaningful as possible for me and my students. What I had 'done' as a classroom teacher so early in the school year had 'not' engaged or motivated my Māori students in this class.

I sought help from the senior school management team in order to create some reflective thinking space so I could review my own cultural assumptions and teaching practice while still meeting my teaching responsibilities.

The immediate response from the school's management team was to remove four students from the classroom, two of whom were Māori. While this saddened me to see the two Māori boys withdrawn, I also had to remind myself of my own personal and professional limitations as realistically as possible. I was determined to move forward with the remaining students to re-learn different ways of how they viewed teaching and learning and to develop a positive sense of whakawhānaungatanga amongst my classroom students. So it was within my own whānau that I sought further advice and guidance to find an *inclusive* strategy that fit within my own cultural worldview and experiences.

For the following weeks I reluctantly assumed total 'control' of my classroom environment and demanded obedience by increasing my use of the 'steps' system initiated within the school's 'Assertive Discipline' behaviour management system. According to Porter (2000) the purpose of applying Assertive Discipline is to '...maintain an effective and efficient learning environment through teaching obedience to authority' (p. 22). I noticed a decrease of swearing, punching, shouting and mocking within the third week of school yet I remained sceptical of the long term effectiveness of the 'steps' system because I could see that some students preferred to be 'sanctioned' and sent to the 'office' than to engage with learning. It also seemed that other students viewed being sent out of the classroom as 'cool'. The same disruptive behaviours would re-emerge soon after my students returned to the classroom albeit without the intensity I witnessed within the first two weeks of school. The only

'obedience' I noticed happening was my obedience to my 'steps' recording folder. I wondered how my students were expected to acquire self-reflective and behavioural management skills if they were viewed and treated by me as passive recipients needing to learn how to be 'obedient' to *my* 'authority' while being absent so often from the classroom context where the disruptive behaviours were being demonstrated.

During my time as an itinerant RTLB I had observed that many of the students who were often sent to a school's management team for classroom 'disobedience' accorded more respect to the senior managers than to their own classroom teachers. I suspected that my students had become reliant on the 'steps system' as a way of avoiding classroom activities and I also thought that some of my students had perhaps developed an 'immunity' to the consequences imposed by management because it was considered 'a badge of honour'.

Having consulted and listened to my own immediate whānau advice, I decided to action an intervention strategy that involved moving beyond the school's preferred Assertive Discipline behavioural management system (Canter & Canter, 1992) and I drew from a different range of skills and experiences influenced from my own participation in 'whānau Marae'.

My experiences as the marae committee treasurer suggested an example of how I could develop a classroom committee involving 'hui' (meeting) to establish processes and protocols. Our monthly whānau marae hui offered a framework for how a classroom committee could operate. I hoped that 'hui' as a metaphor might represent a culturally responsive approach for our classroom that would encourage student collaboration, co-construction of learning and behaviour goals, support student voice and create a classroom environment that celebrates individual and collective success in a similar way that our marae hui accorded my whānau in a marae setting. I wanted to create a classroom environment that was inclusive of *all* my students and would positively engage my Māori students.

The process of implementing a new pedagogical approach involved having to wean my students off the Assertive Discipline's 'steps system' as a behavioural management programme while they acquired new skill-sets to manage their own learning and behaviour as a classroom 'whānau'.

### **'Hui' as a metaphor to build positive classroom relationships**

By Term 1: Week 9, I introduced the students to the notion of 'hui' as a strategy to bring us together as 'whānau' and I felt it provided an opportunity for us to meet together regularly to discuss our 'take' (issues) and to problem solve our 'take' collaboratively. I retold my experiences of attending my whānau marae committee meetings every month and together as whānau, we were responsible for managing and organising the affairs of the marae for and on behalf of our marae beneficiaries. I talked about how we as committee members always began and ended our hui with karakia (prayer). I also described the roles and responsibilities we shared amongst ourselves within the committee such as having a chairperson, secretary and treasurer and finally how we followed an agenda to guide our meetings.

The students seemed outwardly supportive of trialling a committee meeting and we collectively agreed to schedule our first 'Class Committee Hui' for the following week to set up our systems and to nominate a chairperson and secretary. We had agreed that we would not need a treasurer for our committee and all students were considered beneficiaries and as such were accountable to each other.

Our first Class committee hui commenced on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009 and was opened with a karakia. The students decided to nominate two chairpersons, two secretaries, two 'encouragers' and two 'timer-keepers' so that there were reserves if any of the students were absent on a hui morning. The positions were to be filled by those students who felt they could serve the committee well.

The two chairperson positions were identified as a shared role for students who demonstrated positive leadership skills. This required the two nominees to discuss and identify their own and each other's strengths to the rest of the class before a final decision was made whether or not they were to be confirmed in their roles. The students also agreed that the secretary positions would require people who had strengths with writing. They felt that this would ensure all minutes would be recorded without everyone waiting for the secretary to 'catch up' with his/her writing. The 'time-keepers' and 'encouragers' were generated by students who wished to participate at this level of the committee but were too shy to put themselves forward as a chairperson. The remaining students were identified as both beneficiaries and committee members. Finally, It was agreed for the classroom hui to be held every Wednesday morning from 9.00am to 9.30am to accommodate all 'beneficiaries' before some would need to leave the classroom to attend other option classes.

Acknowledging and accepting individual's strength-based contributions for a collective purpose reflects Berryman's (2008) description of how effective marae committees are organised because expertise is shared. The students collectively created, nominated and supported the committee appointments successfully and my role as a facilitator to provide guidance over the process remained neutral. I did not impose myself on the decisions they were making. I was not asked, nor did I volunteer, for a committee role and instead I was positioned by my students as a fellow beneficiary. I was available for any support when and as requested by the committee leaders or beneficiaries.

The committee minutes (31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009) recorded the purpose of our classroom hui as '*Student Voice: a group of people, help / problem solvers*'.

The following meeting's agenda was duly organised by the newly appointed chairperson and beneficiaries while all recounts were being

recorded by the newly appointed secretary into the 'committee minute book'.

*"Agenda for next meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009."*

- *Bullying*
- *Swearing*
- *Sports*
- *School policy*
- *Mocking Area 6 people*
- *Adam's(pseudonym) behaviour*
- *Learning in class*
- *Behaviour in class*

*(Classroom Committee minutes – 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009)*

The agenda set the kaupapa or purpose for the first official committee meeting and reflected the issues and concerns of the students at that time.

The committee meeting followed a set structure. The chairperson opened the hui with a short greeting and invited a 'beneficiary' to volunteer an opening karakia. The karakia could be either a prayer or a 'thought' or a reflection given in a student's first or second language such as Samoan, Tongan, Māori, English or Sudanese. Next, the agenda was discussed point by point with the beneficiaries followed by the chairperson requesting any ideas as possible solutions to the issues. For example, two students were identified as playground bullies. Committee ideas for the two students were to instead 'play soccer' or 'kick back and relax' (Committee Minutes, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009). After further discussion, required outcomes were recorded and volunteers sought to monitor and follow up with the committee's outcomes. Finally the hui was concluded with a closing karakia.

All consecutive committee meetings followed the same general structure but included revisiting the outcomes of the previous hui to monitor the level of the suggested outcome successes. If the students felt there had been

little improvement they entered into discussions about what they could do next to achieve success.

The students' confidence with hui participation evolved throughout the school year and the committee minutes reflected a shift from student 'issues' being primarily focused on student behaviours in the classroom to organising collaborative 'plans of action' to mediate classroom, playground and school wide events before they happened. Here are several examples:

1. Two students were indentified as 'swearing too much' in the classroom so a 'swearing jar' was organised to collect fines from any offenders at a cost of 10c per swear word. The swearing jar was to be placed in a position for all people to pay any money owing (Committee Minutes, 01/04/2009);
2. Two students volunteered to help practise Mau Rakau (Maori martial arts) 'moves' with another student from 2.00pm-2.30pm every Tuesday afternoon to improve the student's co-ordination because he was wagging (absenting himself from) school Mau Rakau session days to avoid participation (Committee Minutes, 27/05/2009);
3. Swearing was shown to have decreased and the committee decided to raise the payment to \$1.00 for the 'F-word' and \$5.00 for the 'C-word' in an attempt to eradicate the swearing all together from the classroom environment ( Committee Minutes, 03/06/2009);
4. The committee decided to gather classroom temperature data for one week during Term 2 to attach the data to a collaboratively drafted letter forwarded to the school's Board of Trustees to request adequate heating for the classroom during the winter months (Committee Minutes, 09/06/2009);
5. The committee decided that all swearing jar money was to be donated to support the Samoan Tsunami survivors (Committee Minutes, 04/11/2009).

Similarly, consequences for breaching the committees' requirements for alternative ways of behaving showed a shift from being punitive to more positive in response. For example:

1. Consequences for disrespecting the Mau Rakau tutor ranged from 20 push ups, detention and picking up rubbish, writing lines, scraping bubble gum (Committee Minutes, 13/05/2009);
2. Consequences for flicking rubber bands in the classroom included taking the offending student to the deputy principal or social worker (Committee Minutes, 27/05/2009);
3. Consequences for misbehaving with a classroom teacher or relief teacher required the offender to write apology letters, tidy up the classroom, sit in the middle of the courts or hold the teacher's hand while walking around the school (Committee Minutes, 02/09/2009).

At the end of each term, my classroom students worked collaboratively to identify the 'positives', 'challenges' and anything of interest they felt had occurred during the term as an evaluation of our learning and behavioural achievements. The PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) evaluation data 'showed' a significant increase of 'positive' points and a decrease of 'minus' points as the year progressed.

For example, Term One PMI reflected 21 positive reflections, 24 challenges (minus) and 21 Interesting comments. Some reflections included:

**Table 1:** PMI Evaluation Data, Term One, 2009

<b><i>Positives</i></b>	<b><i>Negative</i></b>	<b><i>Interesting</i></b>
Being a good role model	Disruptive students	ICT in class
Classroom relationships	Name Calling	Swearing jar
Making new friends	Being bullied	Reduced yelling
Swearing jar	Fights	Learning from mistakes
Improved attitude	Not finishing work	Having fun after all

*(PMI Overview, Term One, 2009)*

Term Four PMI reflected 25 positive reflections, 21 challenges and 19 Interesting comments. Reflections included:

**Table 2:** PMI Evaluation Data, Term Four, 2009

<b>Positives</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Interesting</b>
We always tell our problems	People not paying attention	We know how to co-operate together
We explore our problems	People argue with others during class hui	No more people swearing
When we choose consequences for people	When the boys play too much	We learn about school policy during our committee meetings
We don't laugh when people tell their problems	Some kids are not opening up when we have our meetings	There have been no more stand-overs
The boys are more settled and quiet	People need to focus more and less talking	Self-control

*(PMI Overview, Term Four, 2009)*

I felt that my students improved markedly with how they managed their relationships and also that their learning engagement increased. Another change I noticed was an increased level of shared 'ownership' and 'commitment' my classroom students had collectively assumed for themselves. For example, by the end of Term 3, the committee meeting was duly held and recorded by the secretary despite my own absence from school during that week.

Other changes I observed of my classroom students included an increase of positive playground behaviour during break times, an improved willingness to discuss relationship disputes and positive progress with attitudes demonstrated towards teachers and students from other classrooms. For example, three boys volunteered to teach haka and waiata (songs) to students in the special needs satellite unit for the students' end of year performance at their base school.

This research study explored the narratives of my Māori students to gain their insight into the impact the classroom's weekly committee hui had on them as hui participants. This study also sought to understand whether and how my Māori students' cultural identity as Māori was supported through teaching and learning in a mainstream classroom.

## Summary

My attitude towards teaching and learning for Māori students in mainstream schools has been influenced and shaped by my early experiences within a public school system during an era when reference to the Treaty of Waitangi was excluded from educational legislation and therefore Māori identity was only as important as an individual teacher perceived it to be. The personal, cultural and professional challenge I experienced in my classroom at the beginning of 2009 forced me to re-evaluate my assumptions of my prior experiences as a Māori student and then as a Māori teacher in New Zealand's mainstream schools. By seeking beyond my own teaching experiences and introducing a Maori –centred way of interacting that was based from my experiences as a participant of my own whānau Marae committee, I believed my Māori students were motivated to engage with our classroom interactions in a style that improved our classroom relationships and learning engagement positively.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This literature review is divided into three sections and draws from a range of socio-cultural perspectives identified within international and national educational research studies.

Section One defines and explores transformative praxis. This is followed by the key social and cultural constructs which pose challenges to transformative teaching. These challenges are focused on teachers' own cultural influences for understanding how cultural 'norms' affect teacher perceptions of students who are ethnic minorities.

Section Two positions culturally responsive pedagogy as a response to transforming praxis and provides an example of culturally responsive pedagogy in a New Zealand context. The Te Kotahitanga Project serves as a high school based professional development programme for classroom teachers. The project improves teacher capacity to enable equitable learning experiences for Māori students within mainstream classroom by aligning kaupapa Māori principles with teacher pedagogy.

The third section overviews the Treaty of Waitangi principles as guidelines for ensuring success for Māori students as Māori in mainstream schools and classrooms in New Zealand. A consideration of a bi-cultural positioning is proposed.

### **Transformative Praxis**

#### **Overview**

Transformative praxis moves beyond 'teacher reflection' on classroom practice and actively seeks equitable change for classroom students who experience cultural and/or social marginalisation in school and classroom settings (Anderson & Saavedra, 1995; Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, & Lopez-Torres, 2003). Fielding (2004) contends, "Transformation requires a

rupture of the ordinary and this demands as much of teachers as it does of students” (p. 296) if change is to be authentically achieved.

Transforming teacher pedagogy is a critically reflexive process and challenges the ‘status quo’ where the ‘status quo’ is identified as a barrier for student engagement and participation with learning. Freire (1996) describes transformative praxis as a participatory and dialogical process. ‘Participatory’ refers to working *with* others rather than ‘for’ and ensures voices are heard and acknowledged (Anderson & Saavedra, 1995; Fielding, 2004; Robinson & Taylor, 2007). Freire (1996) uses the term ‘dialogical’ to refer to the ‘spoken word’ as both ‘action and reflection’ because without either, transformation cannot occur.

## **Challenges Facing Transformative Praxis**

### **Inclusion**

“Inclusion is a question of rights and concerns a philosophy of acceptance and requires a framework within which both schools and their students are able to adapt and change so that individuals can be valued, respected and enabled to learn”

(Wearmouth, Glynn, & Berryman, 2005, p. 22)

A philosophical view of inclusion relates to developing the self-esteem and sense of belonging (Carrington & Robinson, 2004; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). According to Messiou (2004) inclusion can be viewed beyond addressing students with ‘special needs’ and is just as relevant for those students who are marginalised because of race, class, gender or socio-economic status in school and classroom settings. Hence, inclusive schools and classrooms need to offer opportunities for marginalised students to engage with their learning environment so that all students develop appropriate skills and attitudes towards communicating and accepting differences respectfully (Wearmouth et al., 2005).

It is within these educational communities that 'inclusion', both as a philosophy and practice, has been expected to effect change from 'traditional' views of teaching and learning.

Moore *et al* (1999), suggest that the term 'inclusion' "refer to a set of beliefs that shift the focus from diagnosis of individual deficit to evaluation of instructional adequacy" (pg. 5). Stainback and Stainback (1996) classify the 'individual deficit' within a 'functional limitations' paradigm. This is described as a perspective that focuses on problems within the individual and is historically aligned with the medical model of identifying 'within' factors that need to be fixed through medicinal or psychological means. From this view, the individual is 'broken' or 'malfunctioning' and needs to find a solution to 'get fixed'. This form of deficit theorising locates learning and behavioural 'problems' within an individual, home or community (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; A. Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman, 2007; Shields et al., 2005). At worst, deficit theorising allows classroom teachers to abdicate responsibility to exploring alternative philosophies and pedagogical approaches that best motivate and engage learners who are marginalised.

Inclusive teaching practices are strongly advocated to promote a learning environment that embraces student needs both at a school and classroom level collectively. Interactive learning activities such as peer-tutoring, reciprocal teaching, co-operative and collaborative learning are inclusive practices that facilitate peer interaction and scaffold learning for all students (Parr & Townsend, 2002). It is possible that classroom teachers can unintentionally practice exclusively while promoting inclusion.

Exclusive practices that are identified within many mainstream schools and classrooms can be described as those practices that support competitiveness, categorising and labelling differences (Brown & Thomson, 2005). Exclusive practices can be viewed as a way in which some schools and teachers can avoid responsibility to fully engage marginalised child/ren by resorting to explanations that are located outside

the classroom and school to justify attitudes and practices that support exclusion. Inclusion, in contrast, challenges such attitudes, practices and beliefs by advocating changes at a systems level (Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

Wearmouth *et al* (2005) highlight the importance of addressing the learning and behavioural needs of Māori children within mainstream schools as critical due to the continual over-representation of Māori exclusion rates from New Zealand's mainstream schools. Bishop and Glynn (1999) further advocate that meeting the needs of Maori children in mainstream settings benefits all children because culturally responsive practices such as those that are drawn from kaupapa Māori values, are inherently inclusive practices. For example, classroom teachers who are prepared to share decision making collaboratively with their students have a higher chance of effectively engaging all children with learning. This links directly with the notion of building on the cultural capital that all children bring and is reflected within the philosophical sense of inclusion that is integral to maintaining cultural identity and a strong sense of belonging (Brown & Thomson, 2005; Bruner, 2004; Davies, 2004).

### **Culture & Identity**

“Even without our being consciously aware of it, culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these, in turn, affect how we teach and learn.”

(Gay, 2000, p. 9)

Culture concerns our fundamental values and perceptions of reality. Bruner (2004) uses the term 'culturalism' to describe the reality that individuals construct the world through their interactions with others. Culture is a concept that reflects the ways that groups of people collectively participate, communicate and organise shared knowledge and understandings within a community of practice. Culture can often be defined in terms of beliefs and practices reflective of ethnically grouped

communities and as such, is an “essential dimension of personal identity and well-being” (Wearmouth et al., 2005, p. 219).

### **Identity & Belonging**

Human learning and behaviour is developed through constructing meaning through shared verbal, written symbols and personal narratives of experience. Learning and behaviour are acquired within cultural communities and passed on to new learners through story telling, scripting and modelling. This is the major contributor to the formation of the self and identity which Bruner (2004) defines, as the primary function of education.

Education can either hinder or aid the development of self-esteem. It can either be inclusive or exclusive. The school can be described as a ‘community of practice’ and the classroom within the school as another community of practice. It is suggested that through engaging in and belonging to a community or group of like-minded people/peers, then a sense of belonging will develop through interactions that support similar views and practices (Davies, 2004).

Mutual respect, a sense of connectedness and strong intrinsic motivation are both the determiners and outcomes of a well functioning community of learners (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

The group values and practices, and the development and maintenance of rules support successful governance within communities of practice and form the ‘cultural’ realities for people involved. A sense of belonging is nurtured and indeed supported when there is mutual acceptance within communities such as schools and classrooms. These are the ‘communities’ where children spend a majority of their time during their ‘formal’ education.

The ‘cultural paradigm’ here refers to the socially constructed rules embedded within the formation of the beliefs, attitudes and interpretations as people engage and interact within their own families, communities and

personal 'world'. Diller and Moule's (2005) perspective that "people think through their paradigms, not about them" (p. 66) asserts that cultural paradigms are naturally formed as part of the normal 'growing up' process. However, the greatest personal and cognitive conflict people experience is an outcome of the clashing of contrasting paradigms. Understanding ethnically influenced cultural constructs, belief systems and culturally preferred practices enables classroom teachers to experience alternative ways of understanding student behaviours especially when teachers are of the majority culture within the education system (Bishop, O'Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010).

Teachers bring their own beliefs, values and learning histories into their classrooms (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; A. Macfarlane, 2007). The influence of a teacher's 'cultural tool-kit' and the impact this has on their approach and responses to student behaviours and learning is central to their success in engaging students with learning (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bruner, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Porter, 2000; Wearmouth et al., 2005; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Challenges and difficulties can arise when cultural belief systems conflict between a teacher and his/her students. This is often to the detriment of one or more students and at worst can contribute to classroom environments that are chaotic and fraught with high levels of disruption and low levels of learning engagement.

In the United States, Wlodkowski & Ginsberg (1995) identified how the majority culture can view their knowledge as the unquestioned 'norm' and are taken for granted as being more important than the knowledge of minority cultures. Gay (2000) also explored the assumptions that the dominant discourse have about ethnic minorities and indigenous learners which have served to sustain homogeneous practices and maintain cultural invisibility. Walker (1973) asserts that Māori cultural values and language remained invisible in mainstream schools because Pākehā dominated teacher numbers and failed to identify themselves as having a

culture of their own which was impacting on that of their Māori students. Therefore, all knowledge was understood as if it were a “non-cultural phenomenon” and non-Pākehā students were also assumed to be culturally neutral (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

From a contrasting perspective, Pearce (2005) provides an example of the cultural blindness she believed influenced her own classroom practice as a white classroom teacher in a multi-ethnic U.K. school. Pearce claims that “many white teachers do not see themselves as belonging to a racial or ethnic group” (Pearce, p. 2). She further explains that this has come about as a result of cultural norms being referenced from the worldview of the dominant majority and as such, only people of colour are considered ‘other’ from the dominant positioning. Pearce (2005) concludes that “the work that started years ago on exploring the terms black and Asian now needs to be done with the term white” (p.3) as a way to understand white ethnicity as an element of personal identity.

### **White Privilege as an outcome of Majority Rules**

The notion of white privilege is viewed as being a historical construct linked with European colonialism and the evolvement of societal ‘norms’ reflective of Eurocentric values and beliefs (Diller & Moule, 2005; Pearce, 2005). White privilege is reflected in the way power is distributed across all levels of European society and how social benefits are inherently accorded without disrupting white ‘norms’. Any challenge raised by minority groups against the ‘euro centric norms’ creates conflict and invites or sustains negative stereotyping or racism as viewed from within dominant discourses.

Racism is defined as “the systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power...by members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power” (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin and Love, 1997, as cited in Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 29). As Diller and Moule (2005) comment, having a dominant or majority

position gives power to making decisions that marginalise or exclude minority cultures as a consequence.

In educational settings, it is the lack of self awareness of how white privilege is inherently distributed and accessed by the dominant culture that impedes learning for those classroom students of minority status (Diller & Moule, 2005). Examples of individual and institutionalised racism are discussed in several research studies as a consequence of the dominant discourse embedded within a society's majority culture through policies and other levels of decision making.

Characteristics between individual, institutional and cultural racism are considered to be closely linked however, the outcomes vary. It is suggested that institutionalised racism manifests itself in a society's statistical data while individual racism is reflected in prejudice actions by a person. Cultural racism reveals itself as a sense of cultural superiority one group feels over another (Diller & Moule, 2005). For example, educational settings are conceptualised and theorised by the majority – or dominant powers of governance. Subsequently, the curriculum in State schools is largely determined by a nation's majority stakeholders and it is typically expected that all students are taught according to dominant majority's values and belief systems regardless of the cultural differences between the teachers and students (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Diller & Moule, 2005). One effect of the dominant discourses on the causes of students' challenging behaviour is reflected in the disproportionate number of stand-downs and dropout rates represented by minority groups, such as African-Caribbean in the United Kingdom and Māori in New Zealand (Wearmouth et al., 2005).

Racism is a socially and culturally constructed paradigm and as such, is demonstrated when a majority group holds a position of power that affects those members of minority status within the same society by limiting access to the same resources that is otherwise naturally assumed and available to the majority group.

## Deconstructing Racism to Understand Cultural Constructs

Pearce (2005) reflected from her own teaching experience about the issue of 'colour blindness'. She had sought to understand the notion of 'colour blindness' from her own dominant positioning:

“most teachers were quite comfortable with acknowledging the racial and cultural differences they saw around them, but far fewer were happy to confront the possibility of a power imbalance that was a direct consequence of those racial or ethnic differences” (p.85).

Teachers who fail to recognise and/or acknowledge their own power positioning in the classroom are more likely to take for granted that effective teaching renders invisible “...class, race, gender, ethnicity, or culture of students and teachers” (Gay, 2000, p. 22). A lack of awareness and acknowledgement of the impact of the 'power' teachers possess is the greatest barrier for personal and professional transformation (Robinson & Taylor, 2007).

Researchers have developed frameworks to deconstruct racism as a paradigm (Diller & Moule, 2005; Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2005). According to Helms, (1995 as cited in Diller & Moule, 2005) six stages of White racial-identity formation are “supported by a unique pattern of psychological defence and means of processing racial experience” (p.58). She proposes a continuum of stages towards raising levels of consciousness specific to racial identity formation.

**Table 3: Model of White Racial-Identity Development**

Stage	Description	Characteristics
<b>One</b>	Obliviousness	'Naïve belief that race does not make a difference' (Finkel, 1995, as cited in Diller & Moul, 2005, p.58)
<b>Two</b>	Disintegration	Realization that race does in fact make a difference
<b>Three</b>	Reintegration	Idealization of one's racial group and a concurrent rejection and intolerance for other groups
<b>Four</b>	Pseudo-independence	Reshaping of reality and selective perception of racial differences. Espouses liberal ideologies of social justice without emotional integration
<b>Five</b>	Immersion	Searching for personal understanding of racism. An effort to redefine one's Whiteness
<b>Six</b>	Autonomy	Raised level of own racial identity without prejudice towards other groups

*Diller & Moule (2005, p.58-59)*

Similarly, Cross et al's (1989, as cited in Lindsay et al, 2005) cultural continuum identifies individual or institution levels of cultural awareness and identifies their respective positioning (Table 4).

**Table 4:** The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Stage	Description	Characteristics
<b>One</b>	Cultural Destructiveness	Those who believe or engage with behaviours that reinforce the superiority of one race or culture over the other, with the resultant oppression of the group viewed as inferior.
<b>Two</b>	Cultural Incapacity	Those who have less actively destructive beliefs of behaviours, but are paternalistic and lack the skills to be effective with individuals from diverse groups.
<b>Three</b>	Cultural Blindness	Those who profess that culture, race and/or language make no difference and explicitly or implicitly encourage assimilation.
<b>Four</b>	Cultural Precompetence	Those who accept the need for culturally-competent policies and procedures, but do not proceed beyond tokenism searching for ways to respond
<b>Five</b>	Cultural Competence	Those who accept and respect differences and implement policies that support these beliefs and commitments.
<b>Six</b>	Cultural Proficiency	Those who seek to refine their approach by learning more about diverse groups through research, dissemination and fully inclusive practices.

*Cross et al (1989, as cited in Lindsay et al, 2005)*

Within the context of educational settings, Lindsay et al (2005) state that teacher responses to “cultural identities have a profound influence on what students learn and how they learn it” (p.53). It is within the classroom teacher’s own ‘power’ to develop his/her cultural competency especially if that teacher has a genuine commitment to achieving success for students who have a minority status as a basic human right.

Germain (1998) studied ‘veteran’ teachers from the United States who spent time teaching within Asia and then returned to American classrooms. As a result of this research she contends that “...teachers who move out of their own familiar context, their cultural comfort zones, can become cultural learners” (p.8). This parallels Hepi’s (2008) research findings which reflected how Pākehā identity as bicultural New Zealanders was initially formed as a result of the research participants living in a country other than New Zealand. It is when a person becomes positioned as a ‘minority’ that their ethnic identity and cultural values are challenged.

## Pedagogy and the 'Traditional' Teacher

"Teachers are major orchestrators in making classrooms into whatever they become, and within some broad trends, the variety of what they construct is considerable."

(Watkins & Wagner, 2004, p. 221)

The term pedagogy originates from Ancient Greece. Originally translated as 'boy' & 'leader', 'pedagogy' has evolved to encompass a broad range of intellectual development. It is more commonly applied within academic facilities across European nations compared to English speaking countries (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999). Watkins and Mortimore (1999), refer to pedagogy as a 'craft' and define pedagogy as "...any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance the learning in another" (p. 3).

Pedagogy through this alternative view intentionally shifts the 'science' and 'arts' focus with which pedagogy is more commonly associated. The term 'craft' instead, recognises the notion of unpredictability that occurs within a classroom. Pedagogy as a 'craft' challenges a traditionalist view that solving problems concerning human interactions proceeds as a linear process. Pedagogy therefore, is about *how* classroom teachers orchestrate, apply, monitor, assess and reflect on effective strategies to best manage the complexities of classroom interactions. For example, there is great complexity within the teacher role in facilitating learning and managing behaviours while simultaneously negotiating and implementing the official curriculum. Most importantly, pedagogy incorporates the knowledge bases and values of the learner (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999).

In a classroom context, pedagogy is underpinned by teacher knowledge and skills. The larger the knowledge base, the greater the chance a teacher has of choosing the most effective strategies to meet specific individual, group or classroom learning and behaviour needs (Fraser & Spiller, 2001).

Some effective teacher pedagogical qualities have been identified as:

- Having an underpinning rationale and clear learning goals;
- Knowing your subject;
- Being reflective and developing ongoing pedagogical knowledge.

(Fraser & Spiller, 2001, pp. 76-82).

Bruner 's (1996) term 'folk pedagogy' is based on traditionally held assumptions of teachers as being the ultimate 'gate keepers' of knowledge.

Examples of this positioning are:

“...assumptions about children: they may be seen as wilful and needing correction; as innocent and to be protected from a vulgar society; as needing skills to be developed only through practice; as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge that only adults can provide; as egocentric and in need of socialisation.”

(Bruner, 1996, p. 49).

Teacher resistance to reconstruct their own beliefs of students as learners is understood by Hargreaves (1992) as a 'teacher culture of individualism'. Examples of this individualistic culture include teachers working in isolation to avoid judgements and/or criticism and 'sticking to what is known' (as a conservative approach to pedagogy). Another example is refusing to explore and develop different teaching strategies and continuing to implement the same pedagogical practices despite poor student learning and behavioural outcomes because it is easier to do the 'same old, same old'.

Hattie (2009) states that “...effective teaching is not the drilling and trilling to the less than willing” (p. 25) and contends that teachers need to adopt alternative pedagogical practices when they recognise their own teaching strategies are *not* working for their students. However, supporting teachers to embrace change here relies on the assumption that teachers are critically reflective enough to know when they need more 'knowledge' and brave enough to seek further guidance and learning.

Classroom teachers who choose not to engage with professional development initiatives are placing themselves and their students at risk of failure in achieving their learning potential. In these cases, teachers are more likely to view learning as knowledge to be transmitted, memorised and applied for the benefit of students who 'know no better' (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999).

Traditional classroom *teaching* pedagogies are aligned with individual learning, competitiveness and teacher dominance (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Germain, 1998). Traditional classroom *behavioural* pedagogies locate 'power and authority' within the teacher's domain and is all too often characterised by negative reinforcement strategies and punitive consequences to demand student conformity and/or obedience (Lewis, 1996). While these strategies may have short-term effectiveness in reducing specific disruptive and challenging behaviours, pedagogies that supports such strategies can alienate and/or marginalise other students from engaging with learning.

### **Theorising Oppositional Student Attitudes and Behaviour**

Ogbu's (1992) earlier research studies identified differences between ethnic groups' achievement levels in mainstream schools in the United States based on immigrant statuses. Students from 'voluntary' minorities experienced higher learning achievement and less educational disparities in their 'host' countries when compared with students from 'involuntary' minorities. Involuntary minorities however are defined as those ethnic groups who live in the United States as a result of slavery, colonisation and conquest. Examples of the ethnic groups considered as involuntary minorities are the African American, Native Hawaiian, American Indian, early Mexican American, Māori in New Zealand, the Burakumin and Korean in Japan.

Involuntary minorities' oppositional attitude towards enforced assimilation within the nation's dominant culture can result in strengthening their

collective sense of an oppositional social and cultural identity. Ogbu (1992) contends that an oppositional attitude challenges the dominant discourse and has contributed to the academic disparity between African American minorities and the dominant white culture in the United States of America.

Wright & Weekes (2003) comment on how marginalised minority groups demonstrate oppositional attitudes. Findings from research studies in the United Kingdom on schools disciplinary sanctions showed that student resistance to schooling may become manifest in styles of clothing, speech and/or walking as a way that may appear 'anti-schooling'. Further findings explored the racialised positions that black students take up within mainstream schools and concluded that minority resistance "...is more likely to be directed as a challenge to the relations of power involved in schooling" (p.12).

As a way of addressing oppositional or resistant student behaviours in schools, Ogbu (1992) recommended that schools should find ways to encourage involuntary minorities to adopt dual cultural practices. He identifies this specific strategy as 'accommodation without assimilation' and is defined by separating "attitudes and behaviours that lead to academic success from attitudes and behaviours that lead to a loss of ethnic identity and culture or language" (p.12). Dual practices refer to affirming and supporting cultural practices within the home environment while developing the strategies to achieve within school environments without students having to lose their cultural and language identity. These kinds of practices spread the responsibility for improving the educational achievement of involuntary minority students, by locating this responsibility within the school and classroom, and within the home and community.

### **Student Voice**

Discursive teaching pedagogy differs from 'traditional' pedagogies by fully including classroom students into their own learning process. Discursive

pedagogy fosters a learning environment where classroom students and teachers learn together as co-inquirers and promotes an authentic power-sharing relationship (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

‘Student voice’ underpins the reciprocated relationships inherent to co-participation and co-constructed learning (Fielding, 2004; Freire, 1996; Robinson & Taylor, 2007) in a power-sharing educational model.

Comparisons between discursive and traditional pedagogies can be seen in Table 5:

**Table 5:** Comparison between Discursive & Traditional Pedagogy

<b>Discursive</b>	<b>Traditional</b>
Co-participate in ‘conversation’	Input of new knowledge
Doing, stating, theorising	Achieving Control
Wide range of assessment practices and purposes employed	Evaluation and assessment of set knowledge
Wide range of learning activities	Practising, listening, reproducing
Tasks vary among students	All students do the same tasks

(Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 147)

Communication is a social process and central to effective power-shared learning relationships. Student voice is an empowering and transformational process for both teachers and students as learners (Fielding, 2004; Schneider, 1996) because of the “...dialogical nature of communication” (Robinson & Taylor, 2007, p. 9). Freire’s (1996) argument that transformational dialogue seeks to ‘pose problems’ and not just ‘solve problems’ demonstrates how student input can critique and negotiate knowledge in ways that are extremely difficult within ‘traditional’ teaching pedagogies.

## **A Response in Support of Transformative Praxis**

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally responsive teaching has evolved as a form of pedagogy that aims to consciously reduce the disparity of educational achievement experienced by minority students located in mainstream schools. Located

within the premise that learning is a social and cultural process, culturally responsive teaching positions the student in the centre of learning and seeks to align the cultural practices of the home with the classroom practice (Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995) .

Irvine (2010) contends that culturally responsive teaching moves beyond practices that could be interpreted as 'tokenistic' such as celebrating an 'ethnic' holiday or studying an 'ethnic' culture. The fear which prevents many classrooms teachers from acquiring a form of practice that is inclusive of students' cultural capital is underpinned from what Irvine (2010) terms as 'myths.' For example,

- Only teachers of colour can be culturally relevant;
- Culturally relevant pedagogy is not appropriate for white students;
- Caring teachers of diverse students have no classroom management skills;
- The purpose of culturally relevant pedagogy is to help diverse students 'feel good' about themselves;
- Culturally relevant teachers attend to learning styles.

(Irvine, 2010, p. 58)

To debunk these myths, teaching through a cultural lens achieves more than just making students 'feel good.' Irvine's (2010) studies have demonstrated that culturally relevant teaching requires high teacher content knowledge and a capacity to co-construct learning concepts from within the students' own cultural constructs, in contrast with what is expected by 'traditional gate-keepers.'

Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1995) locates culturally responsive teaching within a critical paradigm and proposes three main teacher and student outcomes. They are to "...produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence and develop students who can both understand and critique the existing social order" (p.474). Achieving such important and critical outcomes requires culturally responsive teachers who recognise and understand the existence of the inequalities minority students experience, they believe in

social justice to redress inequalities and are unafraid to challenge the 'status quo' in their quest to access appropriate resources and support equitable learning outcomes for minority students normally reserved and protected by 'mainstream' policies and pedagogies (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Inman & Turner, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

### **An Example of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in NZ**

'Te Kotahitanga<sup>4</sup> Research Project' is an example of a culturally responsive programme initiated by researchers seeking insights from Year 9 and 10 mainstreamed high school Māori students, parents, teachers and school leaders as to why Māori feature disproportionately among school leavers with low achievement levels. (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop et al., 2010).

Careful collection and responding to student voice revealed a variety of reasons for high or low engagement with learning. Common themes included negative relationships with teachers, low teacher expectations, covert racism and negative stereotyping practised by teachers (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). Teacher voices indicated the extent of their own deficit theorising of Māori students as learners (Bishop et al., 2003).

To address this deficit theorising and negative perceptions by teachers, Te Kotahitanga project researchers developed an 'Effective Teaching Profile' (ETP) with the projects' students, school principals and some teachers (Bishop et al., 2003) .

The ETP served as a basis for an extensive programme of professional development, including guidance for classroom teachers to develop observable Māori values which promoted a "...culturally appropriate and

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<sup>4</sup> Te Kotahitanga (united, togetherness) is used as a figurative sense to mean 'a collaborative response towards a commonly held vision' (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 1).

responsive context for learning” (Bishop et al., 2010, p. 19). The ETP promotes the following values for teachers to incorporate in their practice:

- *Manaakitanga: They care for the students as culturally located human beings;*
- *Mana motuhake: They care for the performance of their students;*
- *Whakapiringatanga: They are able to create a secure, well managed learning environment by incorporating routine pedagogical knowledge with pedagogical imagination;*
- *Wānanga: They are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori;*
- *Ako: They can use a range of strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners;*
- *Kotahitanga: They promote, monitor, and reflect on outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in educational achievement for Māori students.*

(Bishop et al., 2010, p. 19)

Ongoing professional development facilitation with classroom teachers ensured a collaborative approach to shifting pedagogical views from ‘traditional’ models of teaching towards a ‘pedagogy of relations’. (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007).

Māori students’ feedback collected at the end of the project’s third phase demonstrated an improved attitude towards learning, increased learning engagement and higher academic performance. The students attributed a change in attitude to the improved relationships they developed with their subject teachers. Teachers who strove to reject deficit theorising and to reframe their social, cultural and academic perceptions of Māori students, fostered a classroom environment where Māori students felt positively affirmed *as Māori* and facilitated a raised commitment to learning in these students (Bishop et al., 2007).

The Te Kotahitanga project outcomes demonstrated some positive gains for marginalised students when they experienced pedagogies that were culturally responsive.

## **Bi-culturalism: Consideration for Mainstream Classrooms**

Socio-cultural research perspectives demonstrate how education is organised according to the cultural values of the dominant majority (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Educational researchers have argued that current education systems continue to serve the intended purpose as constructed under the colonialist frameworks from the past both in New Zealand and in the United States of America (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). This colonising intent resulted in the marginalisation of minority cultural groups.

Bishop *et al* (2010) contend that New Zealand's current policies and practices at a systems level serve to maintain the 'status quo'. They argue that mainstream teachers need to engage with professional development to acquire culturally responsive pedagogical knowledge and practices that can reverse the educational disparities Māori students experience in mainstream schools (Bishop *et al.*, 2010). Similar sentiments have been identified within the Education Review Office's (ERO) 2010 report to New Zealand's Ministry of Education (MoE) (Education Review Office, June 2010). ERO is the MoE's agency responsible for assessing the quality of New Zealand's mainstream schools.

If educational contexts are understood as social and cultural constructs, then it needs to be acknowledged that learning, teaching pedagogy and 'knowledge constructs' in New Zealand's mainstream schools are determined by a Pākehā worldview because of the dominant positioning accorded to Pākehā in New Zealand.

The difference for New Zealanders however, lies in existence and power of the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840. The principles of partnership, protection and participation are as significant to contemporary New Zealand as they were to New Zealand's colonial past (Berryman & Bateman, 2008). However, New Zealand society is not yet post-colonial. An example of how little mainstream schools and classrooms are

committed to the Treaty principles of partnership, protection and participation is reflected within the report's overview:

“It is of concern that this 2010 ERO national evaluation indicates that not all educators have yet recognised their professional responsibility to provide a learning environment that promotes success for Māori students.”

(Education Review Office, June 2010, p. 2)

### **Promoting Māori Success in a Mainstream Classroom**

Despite references to the Treaty of Waitangi principles legislated in documents published by the MoE for mainstream schools, research data demonstrates that most Māori students continue to remain positioned in the 'margins' of mainstream schools in their own country.

The New Zealand Curriculum's (Ministry of Education, 2007) reference to the Treaty of Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document guides the expectation the MoE places upon schools. How 'partnership' is demonstrated in mainstream schools and modelled in classrooms is dependent on the level of understanding teachers have about the principles underpinning the Treaty of Waitangi.

### **Treaty of Waitangi: Principles**

Bishop and Glynn (1999) contend that the Treaty of Waitangi can be viewed as a metaphor to represent how teacher/student power relationships can be aligned with the principles of 'Partnership', 'Participation' and 'Protection' in mainstream classrooms. The principles are also embedded within Bevan-Brown's (2003) 'Cultural Self-Review' proposed for mainstream schools and classrooms to develop culturally responsive learning contexts.

The principle of partnership reflects the relationship developed between teacher and students and the co-construction of mutually negotiated learning and behavioural goals. Whakawhānaungatanga in action demonstrates the construction of positive relationships within the classroom 'community'.

By relinquishing traditional views of teacher 'authority' and sharing the 'power' *with* their classroom students, teachers can share the decision making with their students so that learning becomes a collective responsibility. The notion of 'ako' is inherent in reciprocal relationships between teacher and students, students and students (A. H. Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008).

'Ako' can be literally translated as 'to learn and to teach' (Metge, 1984). Bishop and Glynn (1999) describe the word 'ako' as a metaphor to describe reciprocal learning whereby the role of both teacher and student interact and exchange as knowledge is shared and co-constructed. Pere (1982) describes this process of exchanging roles as an essential principle of learning. This process respects prior-knowledge of all learners and allows learners to make sense of their realities either individually or as a group member. Tangaere (1997, as cited in Bishop & Glynn, 1999) believes that through practising 'ako', the 'interactions and power relationships within classrooms and schools' (pg. 80) can be restructured from underpinning traditional discursive learning environments to creating learning environments that engage all learners effectively. The reciprocity of 'ako' nurtures relationships and can be demonstrated with practices such as 'tuakana-teina' (more experienced – less experienced) where learning is supported by those who may be more competent than their partner/s (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

The principle of 'participation' reflects the collaborative relationship between school management, staff, parents and students (Bevan-Brown, 2003). An inclusive classroom encourages student participation as collaborators of learning and challenges the traditional models of teaching which positions students as 'passive' recipients of 'knowledge'. According to Macfarlane et al (2008) participation is about 'belonging' and 'connectedness' within a community. The reciprocity within learning and social interactions fosters involvement and engagement.

The principle of 'Protection' describes the need for Māori to retain their rights to 'define and protect knowledge and language' (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, pg. 199). Classroom teachers are capable of ensuring Māori students are able to access relevant knowledge and language programmes. Māori voices have a right to be acknowledged and valued in classroom environments yet practicing the principle of 'protection' continues to be a challenge for some mainstream teachers.

A bi-cultural positioning proposes a way in which partnership between Pākehā, non-Māori and Māori can be restored and honoured in mainstream schools (Berryman & Bateman, 2008). Consideration of how a Māori worldview is inclusive of Māori students in mainstream classrooms provides an opportunity for all mainstream teachers to enrich their own teaching pedagogies. Durie (2003) however, cautions that 'add-ons' to existing policies are at risk of "diminishing Māori initiatives by settling for a policy that accommodates Māori, instead of a policy that *advances* Māori" (p. 217). To move beyond tokenised forms of Māori representation as the indigenous culture in New Zealand, a genuine commitment to understand and honour the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi is paramount for success to be achieved for Māori students *as Māori* within mainstream settings in their own country (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

## Summary

Transformative praxis is both reflective and active. Teaching philosophies are influenced by an individual's socio-cultural 'norms' and shape how social interactions are both demonstrated and interpreted within educational contexts. Raising an awareness of how cultural 'norms' connect to form the 'self', improves a classroom teacher's capacity to understand other cultural and pedagogical perspectives. Students who experience forms of marginalisation in accessing learning can achieve success in mainstream schools when teaching pedagogies are both inclusive and culturally responsive.

Co-constructed learning between students and teachers is dependent on those practices which involve students themselves as inquirers and problem solvers. Teachers are more likely to achieve mutual respect and raised student achievement when the distribution of 'power' is shared between the teacher and students, particularly those students who would otherwise be marginalised from classroom interactions.

In a New Zealand context, the Treaty of Waitangi principles of 'partnership', 'participation' and 'protection', need to be actioned in mainstream classrooms through learning activities that encourage student voice and foster reciprocal teaching and learning relationships.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY & METHOD

### Introduction

'Quantitative' and 'Qualitative' methodologies are two key approaches applied to educational research studies. It is in reference to the quantitative research methodology that qualitative research is best understood.

Quantitative research is typically reflected within a scientific paradigm whereby the research questions and research processes are pre-determined by the researcher, outcomes are measurable numerically and the process is recognised as 'objective' that is being, as free as possible from human bias (Best & Kahn, 2006; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Located within a positivism paradigm, quantitative research is thought to provide "the clearest possible ideal of knowledge" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 9).

In contrast, qualitative research as a methodology is considered an alternative 'approach towards gaining insight of phenomenon that is influenced by human interaction and understandings' (Best & Kahn, 2006).

My thesis study is located within a qualitative research methodology. The first part of this chapter discusses the features of Qualitative research, followed by an understanding of Critical Theory as a paradigm and finally a consideration of Kaupapa Māori research principles.

The second part of this chapter has described the research methods I have applied to this research study. Firstly I introduce Māori research principles that I have endeavoured to embed within the research process. Secondly, I have described how this research study is positioned as a case study and I have addressed the insider researcher positioning. Finally, I have discussed the ethical considerations of the research study and outlined the methods I used for participant selection, data gathering and data analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Narrative Research: Qualitative Methodology**

According to Cohen et al (2000), qualitative research describes a research approach which seeks to understand human behaviours and experience from within the same frame of reference which it is demonstrated.

A key feature of qualitative research includes the belief that "...people construct their social world" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 22) as opposed to being passive recipients and respondents within a social world as posited by traditional positivist science based paradigms. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer a similar opinion that "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p.3) and as such relays events from within the natural settings and perspectives from which they occur.

Further features inherent in qualitative research are the understanding that context influences human responses to situations and that there can be different experiences relayed from single events. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is a methodology that involves the application of different methodological practices and therefore cannot be defined by one approach alone. They state that "Qualitative research is many things at the same time" (p.7).

While qualitative in design, the characteristics of the narrative inquiry research methodology involve the collaborative sharing between the researcher and participant/s. The story, participants' experiences, can be reported as a biography, autobiography, life history or experience within a single moment of time or over multiple series of events. The chronological sequencing provides a beginning, middle and end that includes a past, the present and the hopes for the future as viewed from the participant 'storyteller's eyes' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Many traditional positivist researchers' however, challenge the reliability and validity of the outcomes generated through qualitative research

approaches because it is contended that such research into human interactions compromises the values of consistency and replicability across participants and over time (Cohen et al., 2000). However, narrative research generates themes which emerge from participants' experiences and can be interpreted and discussed as new understandings of human behaviours through the processes of re-storying or 'spiral discourse' (Bishop, 2005).

Narrative research and narratives of experience in particular, can serve to target issues and concerns of marginalised or minoritised cultural or sub-cultural groups. This kind of research can effectively challenge the status quo and advocate for the rights of people who would normally be ignored, marginalised and/or rendered invisible within educational settings (Cotazzi, 1993; Lather, 1992).

### **Critical Theory as a Paradigm**

A paradigm can be described as a worldview or perspective that will influence the way a researcher sees, understands and responds to research questions (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). As Crix (2004, p. 66) claims, a researcher's positioning, both ontological (what is out there to know) and epistemological (what can we know about it) will highly influence a personal gravitation towards a paradigm within which a whole research inquiry will be based and subsequently designed. For example, critical theory evolved as a methodology within qualitative research through questioning the purpose of research *beyond* understanding the immediate human behaviours being observed.

Critical theory challenges those research paradigms which understand knowledge produced as evidential 'truths' and which could arguably be used to support the maintenance of power imbalances against those who are disempowered within society (e.g. some of the deficit-theorised 'reasons' found for Māori students failing at school). Critical theory as a research ideology requires of the researcher a high level of reflexivity, a

strong theoretical base and a research methodology that can identify and inform action (Cohen et al., 2000)

Indigenous research is one example of critical theory as a research methodology. Indigenous research has developed, strengthened and contributed to educational change for those who have been marginalised within their own societies. In a New Zealand research context, 'Kaupapa Māori' is an indigenous research methodology that represents Māori voices and Māori concerns from within a Māori frame of reference (Bishop, 2005; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 2005). An example of the influence kaupapa Māori research has achieved within New Zealand's education system is the Ministry of Education's inclusion of the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles into the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007).

### **Kaupapa Māori Research**

In contrast to Westernised forms of qualitative research whereby research typically gathers information and interprets data from a dominant discursive point of reference, Kaupapa Māori research seeks to retain Māori ownership and control of the complete research process including interpreting the meaning of the results or findings thereby constructing and acquiring new knowledge collectively (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop et al., 2010; Smith, 1999).

Specifically within Kaupapa Māori research the role, responsibility and accountability of the researcher to the research participants is fluid and shifts depending on the context and the process. Contrary to Westernised perceptions of indigenous research practices, Kaupapa Māori research involves negotiating methods that are 'taken for granted' ways of learning and behaving within a Māori worldview. Smith (1999) discusses several issues that arise within the cultural politics inherent to indigenous research such as age, gender of researcher and participants, subsequent researcher/cultural specific roles and alternative pathways forged within a

research context. What differentiates Kaupapa Māori from other research paradigms and methodologies is that it is guided by tikanga Māori principles and protocols.

### **Kaupapa Māori Research Protocols**

Kaupapa Māori principles weave throughout my research study and ensured that the process of whakawhānaungatanga amongst the participants and their parents remained at the centre of my research study. I have transferred tikanga Māori values from my own teaching pedagogy into my researcher role. In this respect, in my researcher role, I endeavoured to follow appropriate tikanga practices throughout my engagement with the student participants and their whānau.

Smith (1999) identifies some of the research principles which underpin both Kaupapa Māori research ethical protocols *and also* set the standards for culturally responsive ways of behaving and conducting research. They are:

1. Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people);
2. Kanohi kitea (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face to face);
3. Titiro, whakarongo...kōrero (look, listen...speak);
4. Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous);
5. Kia tūpato (be cautious);
6. Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people);
7. Kaua e māhaki (don't flaunt your knowledge).

(Smith, 1999, p. 120)

These methods are embedded throughout the research methods and will be identified and discussed within my own reflections of the decisions I made while actively engaging with the research participants.

## METHOD

### Case Study

I position this research study as an 'intrinsic' case study (Stake, 2005) because my research focus of establishing a culturally responsive pedagogy within a classroom environment and the subsequent impact this had on a group of Māori students is situated within a bounded system.

According to Cohen et al (2000), a case study is contextually influenced by natural events and interactions that occur in a particular situation. Case studies seek to understand that which is beyond the obvious and requires a researcher to identify and explore systems which actively contribute to a situation or event (Stake, 2005). Cohen et al (2000) suggest;

“Significance rather than frequency is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people” (p.185)

Significance in qualitative research refers to exploring the 'quality and intensity' of a single event, comment or behaviour rather than the 'quantity' or frequency of many 'insignificant' events, comments or behaviours.

Limitations of case studies have been noted as researcher bias and subjectivity. These concerns can be minimised by attending to issues relating to researcher positioning and how a researcher makes sense of his or her own influence to the research process itself.

### Insider Researcher & Reflexivity

Insider researcher positioning generates questions as to the authenticity of a research process when viewed through traditional research paradigms that highly value researcher objectivity and neutrality. According to Le Gallais (2008), it is the "...personal involvement in and proximity to the setting which might challenge the validity of the research" (p.146) because of the access an insider researcher has to a group's past histories. However, the *strength* that underpins the insider researcher positioning is

the ability to be privy to and an active participant within the research setting and with the participants themselves.

Specifically within indigenous research, the role of the insider and outsider researcher can be defined in many ways and subsequent researcher responsibility and accountability are culturally and contextually influenced (Smith, 1999). Merriam et al (2001, as cited in Bishop, 2005) make reference to the assumption that insider researcher positioning ensures “easy access, the ability to ask more meaningful questions and read non-verbal cues,” (p.111).

Conversely, concerns are raised about insider’s bias because as an insider, cultural norms are ‘taken for granted’ and may inadvertently hinder a researcher’s ability to reflect critically on participant contributions and /or behaviours which may be significant to the research context. As Smith (1999) contends, the intricacies inherent to the insider research approach can be mitigated by building specific types of research support networks within the research community and needs to be “...as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research” (p.139).

Wellington (2000) suggests strongly that the key to a well designed research study begins with the researcher. Reflexivity refers to how the researcher explores and critiques his or her own positioning. This requires identifying the inner beliefs and attitudes underpinning the ownership, motivation and purpose for research. Furthermore, reflexivity develops an understanding of how these personal beliefs may affect the outcome of the research study and how they might clarify the intent of the research outcomes for the researcher. Positioning relates to the researcher’s own perspective or paradigm (Cohen et al., 2000).

Because this present study is a *retrospective* analysis of teacher/student experiences and relationships that were established during 2009, I have had to apply my own researcher reflexivity to ensure that my role as an insider researcher remained critically reflective. I have critically analysed

and reflected on my 2009 teaching documents and I have made entries into a research journal to document and critique my own contribution and participation throughout this research study. This has been important because the insider's position is one that retains relationships beyond a research project's conclusion, especially when research projects are formed from pre-existing relationships (Smith, 1999).

## **Ethical Issues**

### **Ethical Quality**

Educational research ethics need to be embedded within a research study because findings are expected to be credible, reliable and uphold a research's internal and external validity. Most importantly, the researcher needs to demonstrate clearly that the findings have not resulted in harm to the participants or to anyone else. Accountability in a research study includes ensuring that from the outset, researcher and participants understand the research questions, the methodological design and their responsibilities towards each other.

The knowledge generated through the process of participant and researcher interview/s is a result of a socially interactive process and as such, the integrity of the interactions need to be respected in order to retain the meaning of the findings as they have been generated.

Qualitative research approaches which demonstrate "honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 105) will ensure a research study has embraced a high degree of validity and reliability.

The following paragraphs addressing validity and reliability are descriptions of my response as a Māori researcher to westernised constructs upheld through western research discourses. I will first attend to these research notions in themselves and then I will locate these issues of validity and reliability within a kaupapa Māori research framework

because there are important cultural difference between what these terms mean within the two different worldviews. I am not suggesting that a western research paradigm is irrelevant to this specific study, but rather that my intent is to clarify my positioning and perspective as a Māori researcher and to demonstrate how the concepts of validity and reliability are understood differently within qualitative research approaches and between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the ‘authenticity’ and ‘fidelity’ of a qualitative research study (Cohen et al., 2000) and requires the researcher to remain “as honest as possible to the self-reporting of the researched” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 107). Accuracy of the research findings is considered by Creswell & Miller (2000, as cited in Creswell, 2003) as being collaboratively determined by the researcher and the participants. Issues of generalizability i.e. how can the findings from a qualitative study be compared with those from other studies or transferred into other settings, is considered by Lincoln & Guba (1985, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000) as the responsibility of the reader rather as much as that of the qualitative researcher. However, it is the researcher’s responsibility to provide “sufficiently rich data” (p.109) that is authentic and accurate so that readers can assess a study’s generalizability for themselves.

Bishop & Glynn (1999) refer to this very point by stating that:

“In qualitative inquiry, the researcher does not follow a set of how-to rules, but rather creates opportunities for the voice of the research participant to be heard for others to reflect on.”

(Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 104)

To ensure the authenticity and validity of this research study I have purposely provided interview transcripts to each participant so they have had the opportunity to ensure the transcripts accurately reflected their perspectives. Other strategies I have applied to address this issue have

been to triangulate current data with retrospective data, to convey my findings using descriptive language, to describe contexts as accurately as possible and to address the issue of my position as an insider/researcher (see Method of data collection).

### **Reliability**

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the dependability of the methods administered to generate research data (Cohen et al., 2000). Some examples of strategies used to increase a qualitative research study's reliability are data triangulation, reflexive researcher and/or participant journals and "prolonged engagement in the field" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985 as cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 120).

Specific to this study and because I have collected data derived from a focus group interview, I wish to discuss the issue of reliability and the researcher's 'power' positioning as identified by Cohen et al (2000) and Bishop & Glynn (1999).

#### *Issues of the researcher positioning*

Power and control issues in research can easily be overlooked in qualitative studies because it is sometimes assumed that only in quantitative research studies, can a researcher's positioning and agenda 'bias' the data gathered. The major power resides with the researcher who in pursuit of reliable and valid information, endeavours to frame knowledge, design the study's questions to elicit participant responses as an 'objective,' 'neutral' and 'distant' observer. Uneven power dynamics however, can influence participants' conversations, interactions and constrain what 'understandings' they choose to share with the researcher, thereby threatening the reliability of the research study's findings (Cohen et al., 2000).

However, qualitative research within a critical theory paradigm addresses the inequality of participant involvement by advocating the establishment

of reciprocal relationships between the researcher and participant/s themselves. The issue of power and control through this perspective is addressed by according the participant/s equal rights as co-constructors of knowledge. This includes participant/s rights to:

“...withhold information, to choose the location of the interview, to choose how to seriously attend to the interview, how long it will last, when it will take place, what will be discussed – and in what and whose terms – what knowledge is important, even how the data will be analysed and used.”  
(Limerick, Burgess-Limerick & Grace, 1996, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 123)

Specifically when researching with Māori participants in a New Zealand context, Bishop & Glynn (1999) contend that it is the researcher’s ethical responsibility to address the power and control throughout the entire research process by openly addressing key questions such as ‘initiation’ (who initiates the project and the research questions?), ‘benefits’ (what benefits will there be and who will receive these benefits?), ‘representation’ (whose interests, needs and concerns does the text represent?), ‘legitimation’ (what authority does the text have within a Māori worldview) and ‘accountability’ (who is the researcher accountable to within a Māori worldview?) (p.103).

Addressing these questions strengthens a study’s reliability. New knowledge can be both generated and understood within the same cultural framework from which a study is conducted by addressing power and control issues, and employing practices responsive to Māori,.

The participants and I initiated this research study with our working relationships already consolidated during 2009. I was aware of the experiences the participants, as classroom students, had experienced in 2009 in co-constructing their learning concepts and leading their own weekly class hui. This prior knowledge and shared learning history meant that the issues of power and control were minimised by the time of the

focus group interview and, we were meeting in a setting that was culturally appropriate.

### **Criteria for recruiting the participants**

There were two criteria required for identifying potential research participants:

- a) the participant must self-identify as Māori;
- b) the participant must have been a student in my classroom during 2009.

### **The Participants**

I initially identified six potential participants who had been students in my classroom during 2009. Four of these were class members from the beginning to the end of the school year. One moved into the classroom at the beginning of Term 2 and one entered the classroom in the middle of Term 3.

These six participants continued to maintain their relationships beyond 2009. I believed it was appropriate as Māori to extend an invitation to all six to participate in this research study.

While there were three further Māori students from our class of 2009, I was unable to locate two of them at the initial stage of the research while the third student had moved to another area and chose not to participate with the research study.

### **Procedure for obtaining informed consent**

My first responsibility was to seek consent from the Principal of the school I had taught in during 2009 to access the documents, records, diary and other personal notes that I had collected over the course of the 2009 teaching year. An information and consent form (see Appendix 2) was delivered to the Principal to explain the intent of my research project. While I did not seek his participation with the research itself, it was

important the Principal was informed and his consent requested before the research study commenced.

Parental consent and support were also sought as the six students were below 16 years of age and, as is ethically appropriate, the parents were to be included in all decision making concerning their children.

Initially, the information and consent forms were to be posted out to the students and their parents. However, instead I chose to visit each whānau so I could *talk to* the parents in their own homes.

The home visits embodied the culturally appropriate kaupapa Māori preferred research principles of 'kanohi kitea' (the importance of seeing a living person), 'aroha ki te tangata' (care for the wellbeing of everyone) and provided the opportunity to 'titiro, whakarongo...kōrero' (look, listen and speak) with each participant and parent. These principles ensured:

- a) The parents were visited in their own homes and so retained in control of their own environments;
- b) Kanohi kitea supported whakawhānaungatanga (building and maintaining relationships) between myself, the parents and participants by re-establishing the relationships we had developed during 2009;
- c) I was in a position to leave the home at any time if I were to feel unsafe or feel that the time was inappropriate.

The home visits were successfully and appropriately completed over two days. They provided the parents and participants the opportunity to clarify any further queries they had regarding the purpose of my study. For example, what questions were to be asked at the focus group interview, why I believed the research study was important for Māori students in mainstream schools and why I sought their child's participation with the research study?

I requested that the parents return the consent forms in the attached stamped self-addressed envelopes within the following two weeks if their child chose to participate with the research study. I received one consent form by post within the requested time-frame and so I re-visited each home to identify which students consented to participate after the two weeks request time had passed. All six participants approached consented to participate with this research study. This illustrates the importance of the principle of *kanohi kitea* in ensuring the well-being of all research participants (Bishop, 2005).

### **Interview Setting and Participant Involvement**

I asked the participants and their parents about their thoughts regarding a suitable venue for the focus group interview. Initially we thought of meeting at a local take-away restaurant, however, with further consideration it seemed more appropriate to find an environment that best supported the *kaupapa* (purpose) of the interview without unnecessary distractions.

I telephoned a local marae administrator and was able to make a tentative booking for the first week of the school holidays. The date was negotiated between the parents and me to specifically enable them to attend the interview without the restrictions of school or sports commitments. I re-contacted each participant and parent/s to confirm the date and tentative venue and was then able to confirm the booking with the marae administration team.

Initiating this research study by conducting the focus group interview within a marae setting included:

- Asking my uncle to help guide, support and represent our group as *Kaumatua* (elder) through the marae *pōwhiri* process (formal welcome);
- Preparing and buying food for our group to conclude our *mahi* with *kai* (food);

- Seeking extra support in the kitchen to help prepare and serve the food while the focus group met;
- Eliciting help from my daughter to drive an extra car to pick up and drop off participants to and from their own homes.

However, due to work and/or study commitments, four of the six parents were unable to attend the pōwhiri arranged by the marae kaumatua. Our rōpū therefore consisted of two participants' mothers, six participants, my daughter, my uncle and me.

## **Methods Used for Collecting Data**

### **Marae Pōwhiri to Initiate the Research Study**

The research study began formally with a pōwhiri. The pōwhiri is underpinned by tikanga (custom) principles of tapu-noa (Mead, 2003). Tapu refers to “state of being set apart” (Mead, 2003, p. 367) or as Durie (2003) defines “a state associated with risk and warranting a cautious approach” (p. 339). Pōwhiri seek to affirm human relationships through communicative processes between the hau kāinga (home people) and manuwhiri (visitors). Throughout the pōwhiri rituals, the tapu decreases as connections are made between the hau kāinga and manuwhiri. By the end of the pōwhiri process, particularly with the sharing of food, the tapu is lifted so that a state of noa (free from restrictions) prevails (Mead, 2003). Kai (food) normally follows a pōwhiri as an extension of the manaakitanga (care) the tangata whenua show to their visitors.

The pōwhiri was initiated by a karanga (a formal call from a senior woman for the visitors to enter the marae complex) for our rōpū (group of students and parents) to enter the marae ātea (sacred area situated in front of the main building).

Once we entered and sat inside the wharenuī (main building), our kaumatua (senior male elder, who is my uncle) talked for and on behalf of our rōpū. His whaikōrero conveyed the purpose of our visit. The hau

kāinga formally welcomed our rōpū through the process of whaikōrero and offered their support for our research kaupapa (purpose).

Once the formalities were concluded, the marae kaumatua explained the whakapapa (genealogy) of the marae complex and the significance of each carving placed along the whare walls. We were then served hot drinks and biscuits in the adjoining wharekai (kitchen/dining room) to conclude the pōwhiri process and allow both the hau kāinga and manuwiri to get to know each other informally and to build relationships i.e. whakawhānaungatanga. The participants and I then returned to the wharenuī to begin the focus group interview.

### **Focus Group Interview – Time One**

All participants were initially involved in a 50 minute focus group hui (meeting) to reflect and discuss the cultural relevance of the teaching/learning experiences from their personal and collective positions as Māori students in our classroom environment during 2009 (see Appendix 1 – Interview Schedule).

According to Cohen et al (2000), focus groups are a form of group interviews whereby participants “interact with each other rather than with the interviewer” (p.288). The purpose of a focus-group is to discuss a particular theme or topic and the strength of the data generated from participant interactions are the insights captured from the group that may otherwise be absent from more traditional group interviews that are dominated by an interviewer.

Issues of researcher power are significant in interview settings, particularly those involving children and are mediated through the research approach or agenda of the interviewer. An insider researcher whereby the participant and researcher relationships were already established, I approached the focus group interview in much the same way as I had interacted with the participants as a class committee throughout 2009. I viewed the focus group interview as a forum for the participants to

contribute their opinions and reflections as they felt comfortable rather than for me to dominate the interview process. The follow up individual interviews were conducted to clarify some of the participants' responses shared during the focus group.

### **Individual follow up interviews – Time Two**

Individual follow-up interviews with four participants and one follow-up interview with two participants together were held over the following two weeks to seek further clarification and explanations of their respective individual contributions within the focus group interview. With parental consent and participant input, these further interviews were conducted at a small take-away restaurant a short distance from the usual community's centre to allow individual privacy and researcher and participants to share a meal.

## **Method Used for Analysing Data**

### **Transcribing**

Both the focus group hui (Time One) and individual follow-up interviews (Time Two) were audio recorded. I used a word processor to transcribe all participant contributions to the focus group hui and then delivered the completed transcripts to each participant, ensuring only their own respective names and contributions were bolded while all other participant names were hidden with black highlights to ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity was maintained. The purpose of providing the total transcript was to maintain a sense of logical 'flow' of each participant's contributions within the total discussion.

I transcribed the interview involving two participants in the same way as I had for the focus group transcript. The remaining individual follow-up interviews were also transcribed. I delivered all transcripts to each participant when completed. A 'Return of transcript' (see Appendix 4) was attached to inform the participants of their rights to view and/or change

their own contributions and stated a final date for withdrawal should they wish to pull out of the research study.

Cohen et al (2000) caution that audio transcriptions do not necessarily reflect the interview in its entirety due to the missing tonal or body language cues participants engage when discussing or responding to other participants or the researcher. Therefore, it is important within this stage of a research study to incorporate field notes which reflect participants' non-verbal communication cues to retain a sense of their social and contextual interactions. Consequently, I was able to identify each participant's voice while transcribing and to note the different voice inflections and general discourse tones because I was familiar with each participant as a result of the teacher/student relationships we had established during 2009.

### **Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is described by Cohen et al (2000) as an interaction that occurs between the researcher and "decontextualised data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (p. 282).

To prepare the data for analysis, I have used categories, grouping, coding and cross-referencing methods (Cohen et al., 2000; Drever, 1995). For example, I first read through the final transcription of the focus group interview and classified participant contributions into several categories as similar themes emerged.

Then, the transcriptions of the individual follow up interviews were cross referenced with the respective participant's contributions from the focus group interview to identify whether any new themes emerged or served to strengthen the themes already identified.

I cross-referenced the transcript data with the class committee minutes from 2009 to identify any connecting categories and themes. Finally I grouped the categories according to similar themes and aligned the corresponding thematic clusters alongside the Māori principles and values

I had endeavoured to include within my teaching practice and experiences during 2009.

## **Research Ethics**

Ethical considerations should be integral to each part of the design process (Cresswell, 2003). This is achieved by anticipating potential ethical issues that may arise throughout the research study for all participants. The role of the researcher is to eliminate any potential harm to the participants that may occur as a result of the research design. Wilkinson (2001) suggests that 'ethics' refers to how we should treat each other.

By recognizing and effectively 'planning' for the safety of all participants, the researcher is demonstrating respect, integrity and 'beneficence' to her/himself, the research study and most importantly to the participants (Alton-Lee, 2001; Cohen et al., 2000; Smith, 1999).

Guillemin & Gillam (2004) describe this process as "ethics in practice" (pg. 262). They advocate the necessity to understand ethical moments so appropriate responses are implemented according to participant needs. Consequently, researchers who are consciously aware of their own position and of potential ethical issues in retaining participant safety, will design a research study which has a high level of integrity and transparency.

When effective ethical practice pervades the design of the research study, participant rights remain foremost. Therefore, with sound preparation, negotiating accessibility to an environment and eliciting participant support can most readily be achieved when the research proposal is transparent and maintains the respect for participant rights (Cohen et al., 2000; Smith, 1999).

## **Ethics Application**

An Ethics application was approved by the University of Waikato, Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee on 08/03/2010 prior to making any formal approaches to my participants. I was required to provide information letters, consent forms and an interview schedule that I intended to present to my participants within the scope of the research process. It was imperative that I demonstrate to the ethics committee that as a retrospective analysis, relationships between the students and I were already well established and that I intended to seek the students' reflections of our teaching/ learning experiences from 2009 while ensuring their safety and anonymity.

## **Ethics related to the respect for the care and the rights of participants**

Smith (1999) states that research ethics are inherently demonstrated as cultural 'norms' within indigenous communities. Māori principles and values are consistent with ethical research protocols in that they ensure the rights and care of all research participants remain in the forefront by nurturing and maintaining respectful relationships between the researcher/s and participants.

## **Access to participants**

I visited each participant and their parent/s in their own homes to discuss the purpose of this research study and I have made myself available to all participants through internet and/or telephone contact.

## **Informed consent**

I have personally delivered information letters to the school's principal and to each participant and parent/s and explained the intent of this research study including their rights of not participating and withdrawing from the study. The information letters have served to ensure that all consent has

been clearly and transparently explained and therefore any collusion has been avoided.

### **Confidentiality**

To eliminate as many risks as possible and to ensure participant confidentiality, I have kept audio recordings and transcriptions securely on my personal computer and a memory stick to avoid any unauthorised access. This data will be kept secured as required by the University of Waikato for a period of five years after which time, it will be destroyed. Furthermore, I have allocated numbers to each participant to protect their personal identity and have adapted any statements to avoid identifying their location and school.

### **Potential harm to participants**

Any harm to the participants has been minimised by maintaining open communication and initiating the research study's purpose through the principle of *kanohi kitea* evident in my visits to each home, in the *pōwhiri* process and interviews in the *marae* environment. The research processes and interactions have been guided by Māori cultural values and *tikanga* 'norms.'

### **Participants' right to decline to participate and right to withdraw**

The information letter to each parent included a paragraph to inform the participants and parents of their rights to withdraw and clearly outlined how the information gathered from the students' participation would be applied to the study. The transcript release form identifies the last date which participants can withdraw from the study.

### **Arrangements for participants to receive information**

I delivered each transcript to each home within two weeks of the focus group and follow up individual interviews with each participant and

parent/s. This provided an opportunity for each participant to clarify or amend their respective input to the discussions.

### **Use of information**

Any further use of the information generated as a result of this study was stipulated in the letters provided to each participant and parent/s at the onset of this study. It was imperative that all participants were aware of the potential implications in regards to their contributions that may shift beyond the scope of this thesis study. Therefore, I explained to each participant and their parent/s that this thesis will be lodged with the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database and may also be included in further presentations, reports or articles (see appendices 2, 3 and 3A).

### **Conflicts of interest**

Because this is a retrospective analysis study there was no *prospective* student assessment to be completed or any additional staff responsibilities to be undertaken. Professional relationships with the parents and participants had been developed during 2009 while I was their children's classroom teacher in this school. I am no longer teaching or holding any responsibility within the school and subsequently any conflicts of interest have been significantly reduced.

I have included reflexive commentaries in an effort to reduce researcher subjectivity and bias due to the pre-existing relationships between the participants and myself.

### **Procedure for the resolution of dispute**

I was available to all participants and parent/s by internet or telephone contact to ensure any disputes can be resolved should they arise. However, parents also had the choice to contact my thesis supervisor should they need to seek further support to resolve any issues. This procedure is also explained in the information letter I have provided (see appendix 3).

## **Summary**

This chapter provides an explanation and justification of the qualitative methodology as located within a critical theory paradigm that I have applied in conducting this case study. Tikanga Māori principles and protocols underpinned the methods I employed in gathering data. These principles provided a framework through which ethical considerations were culturally understood while simultaneously providing a framework for me to reflect on my role as a Māori insider researcher who is seeking to understand the significance of a culturally responsive pedagogy for the wellbeing and success of Māori students.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

Chapter Four is divided into two sections and presents findings from the focus group and follow up individual interviews conducted for this research study. The interview schedule (see Appendix 1) included 'open' questions and statements which served as prompts to encourage the participants to reflect on their experiences as Māori students in our classroom context during 2009.

The first section describes the themes that have emerged from the participants' responses. I have included my rationale for each theme. The research questions I sought to understand and explore have provided a framework for the presentation of the study's findings and discussions (see Table 6).

Section two explores the research findings within each theme through the participants and the teacher discourses. The findings are followed by a series of discussions connecting relevant literature and reflexive researcher comments with participant reflections. As Lincoln and Guba point out (cited in Creswell, 2003, p.194), the discussion presents the lessons learnt as a result of the research process.

### **Themes: An Emergence**

The focus group interview was conducted four months after the 2009 school year concluded. The interview schedule therefore consisted of prompts to encourage participant reflections of their experiences as Māori students in a mainstream class during 2009. The prompts did not purposely focus on the weekly committee meeting but instead, I was interested in finding out if the participants would *refer* to the weekly hui as a component of 'teaching / learning programmes' they felt were relevant to them as Māori students in a mainstream class.

Despite describing the weekly hui as a transformational learning and behavioural process, the participants' responses revealed that only teaching /learning programmes which were inclusive of te reo Māori were perceived as relevant for them as Māori students. The difference between mine and the participants' perceptions, however, was that even though the weekly committee meetings were conducted in English, I had viewed the forum as a culturally responsive construct which encompassed tikanga Māori principles such as whanāngatanga, manaakitanga, ako and aroha.

The issue with viewing te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in isolation from each other has implications for my teaching pedagogy and has exposed cultural assumptions I had made as the classroom teacher during 2009.

Further participant discussions identified various negative experiences they had encountered as ethnic minorities in the school-wide context. They explained that teaching / learning programmes inclusive of te reo Māori restored their honour as Māori students in relation to the majority culture of the school.

To identify the similarities and connections amongst the participant responses, I organised them into several categories and cross-referenced the interview responses with the 'committee' minutes and PMI data from 2009.

This process of 'constant comparison' enabled me to classify the participants' reflections into two main themes. Table 6 aligns the research themes with the corresponding research questions (see Chapter One).

**Table 6:** Themes and Research Questions

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Relevant Research Questions</b>
<b>1. Influences of the weekly classroom committee meeting</b>	<i>How could I move this group of students through some kind of process to re-learn new ways of communicating positively with each other and with me?</i>
<b>2. Issues of Marginalisation</b>	<i>How did a group of students become so resistant to being involved with a level of communication which purposely sought to include them into the classroom decision making?</i>
	<i>Why were my Māori students the majority involved with the classroom distraction and disruptions?</i>

### **1. Theme One: Influence of the weekly classroom committee meeting**

The first theme reflects the learning and behavioural changes that the participants attributed to the weekly classroom committee meeting. They felt that the quality of student relationships in the classroom improved and that their motivation to engage with learning had increased.

The participants' voices reflected a strong coherence with the behavioural and engagement changes I observed during 2009. The weekly hui was identified by the participants as a positive process for transforming student attitudes towards learning and strengthening classroom relationships. Findings demonstrate that the weekly hui nurtured a classroom environment where Māori students felt included and supported.

### **2. Theme Two: Issues of marginalisation**

The second theme 'Issues of marginalisation' explores the last two research questions I sought to understand (see Chapter One). This theme emerged as the participants responded to the interview schedule's statement that sought their reflections on 'whether or not there were times when they felt being Māori was or was not honoured' (Appendix 1).

The participants' perspectives revealed the extent of the ethnic stereotyping that was occurring in the playground, something I was unaware of during 2009 in my teaching role. Participant reflections included feelings of being 'put down because of 'who' you are' and how

they addressed those feelings by denying their own identity as Māori to fit with the majority culture.

## **Findings and Discussions: Theme One**

### **Setting a Context: Participants and a Teacher reflect**

All participant reflections of the weekly classroom committee meeting were positive. They felt that the weekly meetings influenced a shift in student attitudes towards learning and behaviour within the classroom and in the wider school.

Two participants described their respective attitudes and the way that their prior schooling experiences had influenced some of the disruptive behaviours I had witnessed at the beginning of the 2009 school year.

Participant insights included:

“How we were treating people in Terms 1 and 2 in 2009 was more or less because of what we had experienced in 2008. We were still on that buzz ‘ok, who cares what they say, let’s do what we want’ because that’s how we felt in 2008. At the end of 2008, we had no self control over ourselves, we were just in that stuck mode. We didn’t try and help ourselves and actually feel motivated. It didn’t really help because even if we were motivated then we would still have that crap attitude. I used to like going to school just because I knew I’d turn up to start shit. I’d start trouble, walk around. I think that at Term 1 that crap attitude was in my head and I thought ‘yeah ok, I’m Year 8 and I can be like the Year 8’s from last year’ and I’m going to be loud because I didn’t get that chance then” (P1).

“In my other schools I used to punch out at people or kids when someone would mock your family or mock you instead of talking” (P3).

The participants’ reflections described some of the ways they had managed their own behaviours or responded to others such as ‘punch out’ and ‘start trouble.’ One participant talked about having ‘no self-control.’ Further participant descriptions of the classroom context

and student behaviours early in the school year and before the weekly hui commenced included:

“Before we started our class hui it was worse, I was talking back and got stood down or I was sent up to the principal and them. No one got to say what was happening” (P2).

“There were a lot of problems and people knew about them but just didn’t really care because they had nothing to do with them...usually mine was actually my temper and I didn’t know how to control it” (P1).

“In the beginning, everyone didn’t really care about anything, they did stuff on the field and they hurt people. They didn’t listen that much and played around... you didn’t know how to really do stuff” (P6).

“Everyone’s behaviour changed...at the beginning everyone didn’t know everyone” (P4).

“Everyone was just not listening” (P5).

The frequency and level of disruptive behaviours at that time had acted as a catalyst for me to find a way to develop whānaungatanga and increase the level of positive interactions amongst the classroom students. I drew from my own prior teaching practice and theoretical models of understanding and addressing student behaviours. I recognised that primarily, all behaviours serve a purpose for an individual or group (A. Macfarlane, 2007; Wearmouth et al., 2005). My first challenge was to identify the function of the disruptive student behaviours.

Having spent the first week interacting and observing my classroom students, I identified some students whose behaviours sought to avoid learning engagement and other students who sought to develop a hierarchical positioning amongst their classroom peers through bullying behaviours. I reluctantly attended to the bullying by referring offenders to the school managers using the school’s Assertive Discipline programme. However, I also viewed the verbal and physical bullying as a negative manifestation of potential positive leadership. As Porter (2000) explains:

“The bullies themselves, contrary to myth, are usually outgoing and confident, showing little anxiety or remorse owing to a lack of empathy for others; they are impulsive and they believe in dominance and in being violent to gain status” (p.224).

By the second week of school I had developed a learning and behavioural action plan where I focused on the individual strengths I noted in four of my most challenging students. The intervention / action plan was not ‘for’ the student, rather, it served as a guide for me to focus on my role as the ‘adult’ in the classroom responsible for establishing a safe learning and social classroom climate. For example, my immediate focus for one student stated:

“Ongoing support with classroom learning programmes. Seated near the front of the classroom with a group of peers who demonstrate positive behaviours and engage with learning readily. Potential leader and has been given the responsibility as line leader for the boys. Can be highly supportive but is yet to develop consistency with positive and appropriate behaviour in class and playground.”

(Personal Intervention / Teacher Action Plan, 24/02/2009)

I had a choice to either remain as the dominant ‘authority’ in the classroom with the potential of having ‘more of the same’ student disruptions for the remainder of the school year, or to share the ‘authority’ with the students and try to develop an inclusive classroom culture based on caring relationships.

I chose to share my ‘teacher authority’ with the students. I understood the benefits of discursive pedagogies from a theoretical perspective as well as through my own teaching and RTLB experiences.

I was aware of the ‘traditional’ teaching practices my students were more likely to be accustomed to through my role as an itinerant RTLB. I was told by my classroom students to ‘harden up’ and they explained the ‘discipline’ style former teachers had engaged in which elicited their respect (Chapter One). My rejection of traditional teaching pedagogy and deficit theorising

meant I re-located the behavioural challenges I faced within my realm of responsibility as the classroom teacher. In contrast, I knew I wanted to increase the level of positive communication within the classroom discourse in order to improve student participation in classroom interactions. I also wanted to include my classroom students as partners in developing a sustainable intervention which would 'ideally' serve as a preventative strategy and reduce the level of disruptive behaviours demonstrated in the classroom. I needed to organise how I could include and motivate my Māori students to participate with a whole class intervention process.

'Hui' is a cultural metaphor for an inclusive communication process often used formally and informally in Māori cultural settings such as pōwhiri, marae and/or poukai (King movement gathering on iwi marae who support the kingitanga). According to Macfarlane (2007), 'hui whakatika' can also represent a facilitative process whereby 'harmony' is restored in a culturally responsive process and focuses on "...building, nurturing, and repairing relationships" (p.152).

I felt that the notion of 'hui' addressed a cultural need for my Māori students and within a social justice framework, also served as a forum to facilitate a safe learning environment that was inclusive of all my classroom students.

I first introduced the idea of organising a weekly classroom committee meeting during Term 1, 2009. Two participants remembered:

"When you actually brought up the idea of having a committee meeting, everyone at that time wanted to be the chairperson and one of those writers. They were really keen to do it, participate in a committee meeting. Every time we had a meeting then everyone had a problem to say" (P1).

"Everyone wanted to speak up" (P3).

The novelty of being given an opportunity to organise, facilitate and lead a classroom hui was a new pedagogical process for the students. The

participatory action of working 'with' as opposed to 'for' others led to my classroom students sharing the responsibility for creating a safe learning environment on co-constructed terms. Student voice in this pedagogical model moved beyond the perfunctory 'yes' or 'no' tokenised choices more commonly referred to in education as 'student voice' (Fielding, 2004; Robinson & Taylor, 2007).

### **Outcomes of Hui: Participants and a Teacher Reflect**

The participants found the weekly hui useful primarily as a collective problem solving process. For example:

"We actually got problems solved that had been problems. It actually brought us together knowing each others' problems, how we could solve them together" (P1).

"Solve our problems, like when someone did something to someone else and then a person in our class saw it, when the person who did something said they hadn't, you just went over and said 'yes you have done it and we've got proof and everyone saw it" (P3).

"It was useful for the swearing jar and hardly any people were smoking anymore. Yeah it was different, because people were listening more and hardly anybody was being naughty, sort of." (P5)

"We achieved solving all the problems. Yeah it was cool because we got to share our feelings and tell all the consequences" (P4).

"But when we had our class hui then everybody started speaking up, open up" (P2).

"Like you didn't need to hide, just told the truth and people helped you to solve any problem and helped you find a better way for to do stuff" (P6).

As a problem solving process, the weekly hui encouraged my Māori students to share in collective decision making. Whānaungatanga improved as trust developed amongst all hui 'beneficiaries'. Manaakitanga was demonstrated as participants sought to help each other 'find a better way to do stuff'. A raised level of consciousness occurred amongst the participants because of the increased responsibility they shared as co-

constructors in classroom 'matters'. For example, one participant reflected on an effect of the shared responsibility towards behavioural expectations and consequences:

"When people did something naughty then they had to do the consequences. We didn't do like, just easy things that you can do straight away and it's already finished, we did things that are real consequences, like scraping bubble gum off the ground. When we mentioned that as a consequence, then no-one made an issue, they just were being good. When I came to the school I swore and then I had to pay 20 cents. The bubble gum jar, that was cool" (P4).

Participants attributed the following changes in relationships and attitudes towards each other and towards the weekly hui:

"If you were to recap on the beginning of the term you would have been like 'I can't believe I was like that', but by the end of the term it's like now you know how to be disciplined and know that there are actually solutions out there for your problems and stuff...I think it's just knowing that I'd been talking to people that knew what I was going through and I think it's just encouragement" (P1).

"Helped them to stop fighting and do bad things and told them to stop lying. It changed our class from being like, mad and liars and all the other stuff. They just changed after our hui, they learned to stop. When we started the hui we had to tell everyone what we had done and what to do to stop. Then when you kept doing it and doing it you got to know better and you got good at it. Everyone started being different, helping people and making friends. Yeah it was better than when we started school" (P6).

"In Term One I had done no work and by the end of the year I started to do my work and stuff. I got higher grades and that. I wasn't like showing respect like when I was at the back of the line I was just mucking around then. When you put me as a leader I had a goal to stop mucking around in line and talking" (P2.)

"By the end of the year everyone knew everyone and they all became friends. When our whole class would play one game and then we'd stop playing it, on the next day we'd go back and everyone in the school was playing it. They must have liked our class eh? Yeah" (P4.)

“When I first started I was getting hustled but I was too scared to tell everyone so I just kept it in and I didn’t want to share it. Once I got to know everyone then I started coming out of my shell” (P3)

Inherent to whānaungatanga is a sense of belonging within a shared community of practice (Davies, 2004). The classroom culture shifted from being fraught with disruptive forms of communicating to more respectful dialogue and friendships. Participant examples of belonging were:

“We didn’t really want to put our class down. They knew how far we’d come to ‘kill our buzz’ and go around tagging and stuff like that. So we just made up a game for the whole class...[like] the times when we played handball out of the class with each other, then other teachers looked at us like it was a nice settled class. If you were to look back at our reputation you wouldn’t believe that was actually our class...I remember we’d all run out of our class just to play our games with each other” (P1).

“At least it gave us something to do instead of just walking around” (P4).

“Kept us away from the trouble” (P3).

“And getting stood down” (P2).

Further reflections on their improved attitudes towards school attendance were also shared:

“Actually coming to school was one. Knowing that you were there to help us actually function to what we were doing and focus on what we were trying to achieve” (P1).

“Came to school for something not just to eat or play” (P3).

“And to learn...instead of just mucking around you can just catch up on your work and that” (P2).

As the participants’ relationships with each other and with me improved, their motivation to engage with learning increased. I was constantly finding opportunities for them to practise the skills of being positive role-models and leaders within classroom learning programmes such as mau rakau, kapa haka, P.E., and topic studies. Some participant reflections on these experiences included:

“We set goals and achieved...getting chosen to be head girl [for the kapa haka group], it was, ‘I am going to have to set high expectations for me and them so that will actually set some goals to learn’” (P1).

“As a leader I would tell the class what to do, tell them to be quiet and that. I was a PE monitor and line leader. I was a line leader because they’d listen to me” (P2).

“During terms 1 and 2, no one really liked maths but seeing people want to learn maths encouraged me to try my hardest” (P1).

I found that my role as the classroom ‘teacher’ shifted and became more of a ‘learning facilitator’ during Terms 2, 3 and 4. This did not, however, mean that the students were expected to ‘teach’ themselves, rather, that I was able to observe and informally adjust the learning/inquiry approach to meet individual/group learning needs.

For example, I organised and prepared the normal ‘weekly’ teaching ‘overview and plans’ however, the inquiry learning plans were exclusively based on the students’ learning interests. Authentic student voice shifted from being focused initially on a behavioural intervention to one that focused on learning as well. In support of increased student participation in planning, I bought and/or accessed appropriate and current resources for topic studies, literacy and numeracy programmes and developed assessment rubrics to guide differentiated learning goals for each term. I had reflected that I had:

Marked / assessed / commented on the students’ work daily. Some while learning was occurring during sessions, but mostly by staying after school and going through each student’s book. This ensured that the students’ learning was monitored and they developed an expectation that I would view their work daily. I believe that this assured the students that their work had a purpose and if *I role-modelled a commitment to their learning, they would too*. Feedback was a regular and important component of our learning process. It also enabled me to either move on or re-visit different concepts the following day.

(Personal Research Journal, 02/04/2010)

The students' confidence to contribute to their collective learning interests and achievement goals demonstrated an improved level of self-control compared to the beginning of the school year. I found that as the students' relationships strengthened, so did their willingness to support and learn alongside each other in either pairs or small groups.

Examples of participants as co-constructors of inquiry learning and engaging with mixed ability or social groupings included:

"Because then you could actually see what other people's opinions were and how they felt towards what you were doing at the same time" (P1).

"That got us into our work too because we were creating things while we were learning" (P2).

"We learnt while we were having fun...we would learn and then we would end up saying stuff and laughing over it and then learning again, instead of going off work altogether" (P3).

Group dynamics promote positive social relationships especially when groups with mixed proficiencies are aimed towards scaffolding tasks for achieving success as a 'learner' and 'teacher' (Metge, 1984). This practice develops academic success, cultural competence and promotes a classroom community focused on learning (A. Macfarlane, 2007). 'Experts' are matched with 'novices' and the shared responsibility for scaffolding and achieving success with learning concepts and/or tasks empowers a sense of group achievement. Ladson-Billings' (1995) research studies demonstrate how cultural preferences and practices, such as 'learning in groups', reflect the reciprocity demonstrated within the Māori principle of 'ako' as operating between teachers and students.

On the contrary to many 'myths' perpetuated in school contexts that "...caring teachers of diverse students have no classroom management skills" (Irvine, 2010, p. 58), I argue that classroom management in our classroom was fair, consistent and yet strict. Strategic planning required a huge investment of teacher energy and time to structure effective learning and behavioural routines. For example, the classroom noise level was

louder than the more traditional 'silence' as group learning 'skills' were developed. Learning groups were also fluid i.e. membership could shift according to student needs. I believed that it was important for the students to develop the understanding that not all teachers encouraged group-talking or learning conversations (as they were aware from previous experiences) and therefore, opportunities to practise behaviours appropriate to 'time and place' behaviours were part of the classroom routines.

I was concerned that none of the participants had experienced a process similar to 'hui' before in their previous classrooms and/or schools. The extent of disruptive and bullying behaviours I observed at the beginning of the year provided me with some evidence of the poor quality of their previous schooling experiences. Three participants confirmed:

"No. At times then, no one cared about what problems you had...for instance, if you went to a teacher and said that 'blah blah blah' was bullying you then they'd take it upon their shoulders, but if you didn't really say anything and the teachers knew you had problems, they wouldn't care unless you went up to them and said you had problems" (P1).

"Only last year, that's the only time I saw it" (P4).

"No we've never done that before" (P3).

Participants' descriptions of their schooling experience prior to 2009, as well as the attitudes and behaviours I witnessed at the beginning of the year were indicative of having experienced teacher practices where students were positioned as 'passive recipients'. Hattie (2009) explains that it is what learners 'do' that is the "...strongest component of the accomplished teachers' repertoire" (p. 35).

### **Cultural Learning: An Ongoing Process**

Despite their claim that the weekly classroom hui was not relevant to them as Maori because it was conducted in English, all the participants' had nonetheless contributed to and demonstrated whānaungatanga,

manaakitanga, ako and aroha as hui participants, classroom leaders and supportive friends and learners.

The research participants' voices and reflections as Māori students in a mainstream class have helped me identify my own cultural assumptions and implications for my teaching practice. Even as a Māori mainstream teacher, I have had to continue to interrogate my own personal and professional positioning in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi and with transparently connecting pedagogy with tikanga Māori principles.

I have located 'hui' as a culturally responsive pedagogy of 'classroom communication' because it has demonstrated 'how' whānaungatanga was collectively developed, facilitated and monitored within a mainstream classroom.

'Hui' as a successful communication process is dependent on how classroom teachers understand their own cultural influences and the impact culture has on the way students are positioned as learners. Transforming teacher attitudes requires a paradigm shift from 'traditional' to 'discursive' models of teaching and learning. Only then can teachers reframe and relinquish the style of 'authority and control' that is so prevalent within New Zealand's schools and classrooms (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop et al., 2010; Carpenter, McMurchy-Pilkington, & Sutherland, 2002; Hirsh, 1990; Steele, 1996).

The evolving benefits of nurturing 'student voice' are such that students can become authentic co-constructors of a transformative practice (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Fielding, 2004; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

## **Findings and Discussions: Theme Two**

### **Setting a Context: A Teacher Reflects**

#### *Mau Rakau*

I was asked by the school's social worker to identify any Māori students from my classroom who I felt would benefit from participating in a mau rakau programme. The programme was funded through social work services for one term with professional tutors. Instead, I requested that my whole class participate. My request was approved by the social worker and the school's 'Special Needs Co-ordinator' (SENCO) based on the high percentage of Māori students in my classroom.

I viewed a weekly mau rakau session as an added opportunity to enrich the 'hui' process and strengthen the classroom students' sense of whānaungatanga. I had no knowledge of mau rakau myself and looked forward to learning specific moves and instructions with my students.

I talked about the whole class participation with mau rakau at a class hui. Three of the research participants revealed that they had previously participated in the programme and were familiar with some of the mau rakau 'moves'. So the class committee designed the Term Two P.E. plan to include two extra mau rakau sessions per week, led by the experienced mau rakau students as a way to consolidate the movements learned from the sessions with the funded tutors.

Following the programmes completion of the programme at the end of Term Two, the students then voted to independently continue with mau rakau every Tuesday afternoon during Term Three as part of the regular P.E. programme (Committee Meeting Minutes, 22/07/2010).

#### *Kapa Haka: Additional Expectations Facing Māori Teachers in Mainstream Schools*

I was asked to organise a pōwhiri to welcome the school's new deputy principal who was due to start work in the middle of Term 2. As I was the

only Māori mainstream teacher, it seemed that I was expected to assume the responsibility for pōwhiri. I had observed in my previous role as an RTLB how this school's former Māori enrichment class conducted the pōwhiri while the remaining school students watched. I chose instead to include the whole school staff and students in the process. Experienced Māori students from across the whole school volunteered to perform karanga and whaikōrerō. They were supported by the school's students singing simple yet appropriate waiata to conclude the welcoming speeches.

A similar expectation occurred at a later date when a small group of teachers wanted a kapa haka group to represent the school at a community event during Māori Language Week. Despite having a limited repertoire and experience with waiata, poi and haka, I initially agreed to upskill, teach and practise a performance 'set' with students who had volunteered to participate. However, I quickly withdrew my support when I recognised the tokenistic view associated with the request.

Firstly there was no ongoing proposal for kapa haka beyond 'Māori Language Week' at that time. Secondly, while one afternoon per week had been set aside for the school's 'choir' to meet and practise throughout the school year, a kapa haka performance 'set' was expected to be developed and practised during lunch breaks over a period of only three weeks. My withdrawal of the kapa haka group was primarily determined by the time restriction imposed. I recognised that the students would need more than 10-12 lunchtimes (with 30 minutes 'practice time') to present a 'polished' performance. Underpinning my reluctance to overload myself with the extra pressure, the urgency involved in perfecting a performance set failed to justify what I viewed as a 'one week celebration of Māori language' versus '51 weeks of invisibility'. Instead, the school's choir successfully performed two waiata for the event.

Shortly after Māori Language Week, the school's management 'decided' that the whole school would present an end of year 'cultural performance'

for the school's community. The students chose which cultural group they preferred to participate in. Each staff member was required to teach (or find tutors from within the community who could teach) a cultural dance and prepare students for the performance. Furthermore, one learning block per week was booked so that the whole school could practise their respective cultural dances and songs at the same time.

Again, I was designated to lead the kapa haka group. I was better prepared this time to support the cultural groups because it was a school-wide initiative and the practise time was embedded within the school's timetable. A teaching colleague's husband of Tūhoe descent volunteered to help teach the haka to the boys and to provide extra support during our practices.

Mitchell and Mitchell (1993) have demonstrated that the expectations of Māori teachers in New Zealand's state schools serve several purposes at community, school and classroom level. Māori teachers are often expected to assume responsibility for organising pōwhiri, liaising with the school's Māori community, attending to Māori students challenging behaviours and/or acting as cultural negotiators between school policy and the community. This type of expectation, however, allows non-Māori and/or Pākehā teachers and leaders to evade responsibility for developing their own understanding of Māori cultural values and practices. Moreover, when Maori teachers assume these responsibilities, they become vulnerable to being blamed for any Māori 'failure' at a community, school or classroom level.

Meanwhile, by the time the cultural performance practices began, our class hui was already well into its third term. My classroom students were by now demonstrating some of the positive outcomes from the hui process. They were also leading and practising mau rakau independently. The now established school-wide cultural practices created another opportunity for my classroom students to engage within a Māori context of performing arts with an authentic purpose.

Twelve of my 24 classroom students chose to participate in kapa haka. These comprised of seven Māori, three Tongan and two Cook Island students. Six of my Māori students were experienced kapa haka participants. Three of these students demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and performance skills. As their confidence in sharing their knowledge and skills with students from other classrooms increased, I was then able to move into an administrative and facilitating role for the majority of the practices.

### **Caution to Mainstream Teachers: Exploring Beyond the Obvious**

Whilst the weekly 'hui' process developed more pro-active communication skills and strategies between the classroom students and me, the students' subsequent insights shared during the focus group interview revealed their experiences of having been 'mocked' or 'put down' because they were Māori.

Participants' responses to the question: 'were there any times you felt being Māori was honoured?' (Appendix 1) revealed that both kapa haka and mau rakau were contexts where they did feel honoured. There were two reasons for this: firstly, both contexts incorporated te reo Māori; and secondly, participants felt that they could show the 'Islanders' (Pacific Islanders) "*what Māori are*" (P3) and "*what Māori are made of*" (P4) because "*there's not that many Māori in the school*" (P3).

Participants were also asked what they felt when 'being Māori was not honoured' (Appendix 1). The participants' reflected:

"Being called 'hori' and that. See, like the Islanders used to call us that at the beginning of the year in Term 1 and Term 2. In the classroom we knew that they [Pacific Islanders] were playing around but out in the playground the other students were taking it serious" (P2).

"When other groups, when you don't know how to do things in other groups, like Islander groups and you don't know how to sing or talk their way" (P6).

“Like getting mocked because of who we are. Sometimes there were put downs involved, like who we are as tangata whenua. Usually they put me down when people discussed how Māori dislike people, as in that is who we are” (P1).

“They [Pacific Islanders] would say we’re ruthless and stuff” (P3).

When I asked the participants how they responded to the ‘put downs’, two participants said:

“You just lied about your culture. Let your culture down” (P3).

“And say your ethnic, or you’re like, ‘I’m this’ or ‘I’m that’ when you know you’re not just to be cool like them” (P1).

“In a way that actually can lead to wanting to cause trouble so you can get out of the environment that you’re in or knowing that if you’re going to go to school and you get mocked...you wouldn’t really want to go to school at all because of who you are” (P1).

The participants’ responses such as ‘let your culture down’ to be in with the ‘cool kids’ reflected defensive behaviour like ‘lying about your culture’ to ‘fit’ into the cultural ‘norms’ of the majority.

The stereotyped ‘jibes’ directed towards the participants were reflective of cultural racism, that is, when one culture enforces its superiority over another (Hirsh, 1990). The marginalised positioning for this one group of Māori participants as a minority within a Pacific Island majority context during 2009 reflects what can happen when the Treaty of Waitangi is disrespected or ignored in schools and classrooms. For example, Māori identity was considered irrelevant by other students belonging to the school’s majority culture despite the indigenous status accorded to Māori as tangata whenua.

Participation within kapa haka and mau rakau groups therefore served to re-affirm and validate the participants’ cultural identity as Māori and allowed them to resist the effect of negative comments directed at them.

## Restoring Honour: Participants Reflect

Participating in the class hui process and participating in performance based arts such as 'kapa haka' and 'mau rakau' provided a way for them to feel proud of being Māori and also served as a cultural response to the 'mocking' they experienced.

"Kapa haka showed the other students in the school what Māori are made of" (P4)

"Kapa haka was more about cultural groups and I understood the values of being Māori. It had honour to it when I was the leading Māori female for kapa haka" (P1).

"When we had mau rakau we were learning Māori and English. Some of the kids in the other classrooms liked it too because when we were doing mau rakau on the courts they were looking out their classroom window watching us" (P2).

The whole class participation in the weekly mau rakau sessions during Term 2 had positive benefits for the relationships between the Māori and Pacific Island students within the classroom. An example of how the participants related to the students in the classroom who were Pacific Islanders contrasted with the student relationships in the playground and was commented on by one participant in the following way:

"Because we had done mau rakau as a class, the other classroom students wanted to learn more about our languages. Like one time we said something and they said 'oh this sounds the same in our own language'. They actually buzzed out because their language was similar to ours with just different letters but the pronunciation still sounded the same, like it linked" (P1).

According to participants, the mocking they experienced decreased during the school year. They attributed an improvement in playground relationships to their role as mau rakau 'teachers'. For example, during Term 3, the participants took the opportunity to teach the mau rakau actions to the other three classes in our syndicate:

“I think we were so positive towards mau rakau taking it wider. The other students wanted to experience what we had already experienced and when they actually saw us as students standing in front of them teaching what we knew, they were like ‘oh so they do know what they’re talking about” (P1).

“Yeah and usually at lunchtimes we could see them trying to do the hand game and stuff” (P1).

“It made me feel like a leader” (P4).

The participants were acknowledged as Māori, retained their identity as Māori and could share a performance based activity involving te reo Māori with their team-wide peers. I contend that the improved relationships between the classroom students was influenced by the class hui and reinforced by the participants’ increased feelings of being ‘honoured’ as Māori. Their responses to ‘put downs’ shifted from lying about their own culture to positive forms of interacting such as making friends and ignoring any mocking as the school year progressed. For example:

“You just needed to know that if they were getting cheeky then just totally ignore them and then they’d get out of your sight and not really care” (P1).

“We made friends with them” (P2).

This finding suggests that the participants have identified kapa haka and mau rakau as teaching / learning programmes relevant to them as Māori because of the te reo Māori component. Both learning programmes were viewed as representations of ‘being real Māori’. For example:

“It was like Māori was at specific times. The only time we learned Māori was in mau rakau or kapa haka” (P3).

“Kapa haka felt as if you’re being like a real Māori and having fun while being disciplined at the same time. Māori songs, prayers and kapa haka represented me as Māori” (P6).

“Yeah I think we had done a little lesson about how the languages link because you went around and said ‘how do you say this in Samoan’, ‘how do you say this in Tongan’, ‘how do you say this in Māori’, you did it on the

board. Yeah I think that was a type of Māori lesson I took up because it involved Māori” (P1).

“I enjoyed kapa haka. I was learning new stuff like new songs and the haka. I felt kind of shy and there were heaps of people there watching but I thought it was cool. I learned more te reo Māori in mau rakau and the cultural groups” (P5).

The participants discussed how they collectively valued te reo Māori as a language representation of the cultural values and belief systems relevant to them. Language is central to how cultural ‘norms’ are conveyed and acquired (Bruner, 1996; Vialle, Lysaght, & Verenikina, 2005). According to Whitinui’s (2010) research on the role of kapa haka as a culturally responsive pedagogy, Māori students who participated in kapa haka showed improved attendance, interest and engagement with school.

Kapa haka and mau rakau skills were acquired as a group using both rote-learning and memorisation. These methods support the acquisition of knowledge through constant repetition (Metge, 1984). Group learning such as waiata (melodies and verses), haka (chants) or the reciting of whakapapa (genealogical paths) is achieved with precision by memorising by rote the names, words and/or ancestral links. Sometimes this may delay understanding the concepts or underlying messages of waiata, haka or whakapapa while at other times the messages will be discussed and shared in conjunction with the rote learning.

Metge (1984) highlights the importance of knowing when or where the appropriate waiata, haka or genealogy is required and cautions that without this knowledge, rote learning has little value as an approach to acquiring knowledge. Such cautions serve to strengthen the argument that mainstream schools and classrooms must improve their relationships with the school’s local Māori community and be aware of the ways that the added guidance and support of Māori whānau and kaumatua must be sought, so that they can contribute to cultural knowledge and understanding (Education Review Office, June 2010).

## Explicitly Forging Links: A Teacher Reflects

I only started to forge deeper links between te reo and tikanga Māori when I returned to New Zealand in 1995 through my own engagement with whānau as well as my engagement with tertiary studies. A reflection that I have documented during this research process explains:

I continue to develop my level of understanding of 'Māori 'ways'. What I consider to have been a surface level understanding continues to shift deeper as I become older and engage with ongoing learning. This is pivotal to my personal identity journey. My commitment and service to our 'kinship' or 'whakapapa' whānau Marae over the past few years has become my main source of learning. My aunties and uncles are supportive, patient and encourage me and my cousin to 'have a go' as we return to our papakainga (home of our ancestors). There are frequent lessons learned from 'hands-on' experience which text books can only theorise or describe. Indeed, I fear an over-intellectualisation of things Māori has made tikanga Māori more complex than the reality.

(Personal Research Journal, 08/04/2010).

A key question that I ask myself as a result of these findings is 'have the socio-cultural constructs of the 1970's influenced my understanding of 'being Māori' more than I have understood until now? For example, some of my early school experiences focused on activities with a strong emphasis on learning te reo Māori (karanga and waiata) rather than on exploring and making connections to tikanga Māori (understanding meanings embedded within karanga and waiata).

I have now come to understand that I may have unconsciously supported the same interpretation of 'being Māori' in my mainstream classroom as I was now supporting as a Māori teacher. Was I behaving in the same way that I was socialised into accepting as a mainstream Māori student during the 1970s and 1980s? Had I failed to make tikanga Māori transparent to my Māori students? Or, had I simply taken whānaugnatanga, manaakitanga, ako and aroha for granted as a shared cultural 'norms?' How have I demonstrated my commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi? Why

has it taken this research study for me to understand the treaty's significance to my classroom practice?

Contemporary education policies expect the Treaty of Waitangi to be embedded into school curriculum and pedagogy in contrast to the societal and educational context that were prevalent when I attended mainstream school (at a time when the Treaty of Waitangi was viewed as irrelevant through all levels of New Zealand's society). Further educational policies provide guidelines for schools' trustees, management and teachers to meet their respective obligations to Māori learners in mainstream schools without a loss of language and cultural identity (Education Review Office, June 2010; Ministry of Education, 2007, 2008a, 2010b, 2010c).

The implications of the participants' insights have exposed a deeper level of understanding of how 'culture counts' (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Mitchell & Mitchell (1993) succinctly concluded in their study on Māori teachers who leave the profession that "...attitudes to Māori language and Māori cultural values in a school have a personal impact on Māori children" (p.127).

In this research context, the relationship I have experienced between whānau and kaumatua strengthened the impact of te reo me ona tikanga Māori. For example:

"Initially, I entered this process as the 'school teacher from last year'. Following the pōwhiri, I moved to a position as a 'researcher... we [myself and parents] are shifting to a different level as we respectively share our whakapapa and concerns for the children – something that we hadn't done while I was the 'teacher'. I am sharing with the parents and together, we are strengthening ourselves with their children at the core of our korero" (Diary Entry, 14/04/2010).

I strongly believe that the students' reflections and my reflections, collated for this research study have led me to understand that kaumatua and whānau need to be included in mainstream school and classroom learning programmes. The Treaty of Waitangi principles of 'partnership' ensure

'protection' and 'participation' are duly honoured in a way that is beneficial and culturally responsive for *all* mainstream students and teachers.

## **Summary**

This study's findings demonstrate that the participants found that the weekly hui (classroom committee meeting) was a forum which increased their ability to communicate and problem solve positively. Subsequent benefits they attributed to the weekly hui included improved relationships with each other, increased engagement with learning and improved school attendance. I observed a strengthening of whānaungatanga and, subsequently an increased engagement with co-constructed learning and an increased willingness to assume leadership responsibilities.

The key tenet which underpinned the process of 'hui' was my willingness to share my 'teacher authority' with my classroom students. Student voice served to transform participants' attitudes towards learning and behaviours as well as towards my own teaching practice. The hui process shifted from being initially a solely restorative approach to foster positive relationships to become a collective learning influence.

Issues of race-based verbal bullying emerged as a result of the students participating in this research. The participants viewed kapa haka and mau rakau as activities which served to restore honour to their identity as Māori within the school environment. There was a strong connection between 'te reo Māori' and feelings of 'being a real Māori.' However, the students did not immediately connect 'hui' as relevant to them 'as Māori' despite their engaging with and demonstrating whānaungatanga, manaakitanga, ako and aroha.

As a result of being part of the research focus and being positioned as an insider in this study, I have a stronger understanding of the impact my cultural assumptions had on my own teaching practice. Furthermore, I gained a clearer understanding of the tension that existed between my

cultural and my professional responsibilities as a Māori teacher in a mainstream classroom and school.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION & REFLECTIONS

### Overview

This qualitative research study is a 'snapshot' of *one* Māori mainstream teacher and *one* group of Māori students' teaching and learning experiences during *one* year of mainstream schooling. The research findings and outcomes have endeavoured to contribute to national and international research literature. The research focus has sought to understand and explore contributing factors which had underpinned the disruptive behaviours and then the transformation experienced by these students throughout 2009. Participant and researcher voices have been core to this research process.

The study's findings confirm educational literature which locates transformative praxis as a reflective and active process. Teacher reflection is imperative firstly to understand the influence socio-cultural constructs has on a teacher's own cultural capital to then effectively support Māori students to achieve success as Māori in mainstream classrooms. Inclusive teaching requires a high level of teacher commitment to change from 'traditional' teaching practices to those practices that are culturally responsive and motivate marginalised learners to engage with all classroom interactions. Inclusive pedagogies are as relevant for teachers who have a shared cultural background with their classroom students as well as for those teachers who do not. While similar cultural ethnicity and identity between students and teachers may be an advantage, these two factors do not however, automatically result in pedagogical effectiveness (Gay, 2000).

The research process has required of me to retrospectively critique and analyse my own cultural assumptions, teaching pedagogy and educational theories. All of these influenced my teaching practice and pedagogy as a Māori teacher in a mainstream classroom during 2009. The pedagogical decisions I made initially sought to transform the resistant and oppositional

behaviours demonstrated by a group of Māori students in an inclusive and culturally responsive way. However, my own learning and practice also shifted and changed *with* the students because I chose to share the learning 'power' with them by engaging their perspectives and ideas to improve the classroom relationships.

Student voice contributed to an increased willingness for this group of Māori students to participate and contribute to the classroom discourse as problem solvers, learning inquirers and group leaders. The students' involvement through being included as shared problem solvers continued into this research study. Their reflections and insights have been major contributors to my own understanding of the transformation I have experienced firstly as their classroom teacher and then as insider researchers together.

Tikanga Māori research protocols have ensured that the participant and researcher relationships have remained respectful and connected. Indeed, the level of respect we have accorded to each other throughout this research process is an extension of the classroom relationships we had fostered through co-constructed terms during 2009. In this respect, the benefits of inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy have shown to have safely moved beyond the classroom and school contexts.

As a research outcome, I have also come to understand more fully the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership, participation and protection for classroom and school contexts. Although the treaty principles were embedded within our teaching and learning experiences, the level of awareness of the principles within the classroom context was not strong. They were mostly taken for granted and lacked transparency.

I have come to believe that I have been the product of past 'mono-cultural' educational reforms prior to 1990 when learning about the Treaty of Waitangi was absent from state school and classroom 'syllabuses.' Hence,

it is not so much a lack of legislated guidance and support that maintains the Treaty of Waitangi's low level of visibility in mainstream schools', rather its invisibility is maintained through the lack of school leaders and teachers understanding of the significance of which the Treaty of Waitangi represents for contemporary Māori and non-Māori relationship.

Māori students' experiences of being marginalised by non-Māori students because they were Māori, has identified a need for mainstream schools to raise the profile of the Treaty of Waitangi in both policy and practice.

### **Implications**

*The Treaty of Waitangi: Understanding its Urgency for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, Classroom Teachers and Learners*

The implication for schools that I recognise as a result of this research study's findings is the need to raise the awareness and visibility of the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles in mainstream schools and classrooms.

I merely echo the sentiments of former and current educational researchers when I advocate that the Treaty of Waitangi is central to raising the collective responsibility of all New Zealanders to engage inclusively with Māori as treaty partners (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop et al., 2010; Steele, 1996). Stronger connections based on a genuine 'partnership' between schools and a school's Māori community will offer an inclusive platform for improving Māori achievement levels in mainstream classrooms while also supporting Māori students to retain their cultural identity *as Māori*.

I contend that schools should re-define the '21<sup>st</sup> Century learner' in New Zealand's state schools by acknowledging that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 'New Zealander' has become increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse . I argue that the Treaty of Waitangi is as important as an education priority in 21<sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand as are the technological advances that

students and teachers engage with daily. Therefore, a 'disruption' to contemporary discourses that maintain the 'status quo' relating to reasons for Māori under-achievement, requires all school managers and teachers to address their own cultural capacity as New Zealanders and as Treaty partners. I also contend that increased professional development and engagement with the treaty principles of 'partnership', 'protection' and 'participation' will provide mainstream teachers a valid purpose for seeking professional support to responsively acknowledge and affirm Māori identity in mainstream classrooms and schools.

Furthermore, central to the indigenous status of Māori to New Zealand is a bi-cultural understanding of Māori as *tangata whenua*, and with Pākeha, and all other migrant New Zealanders as their Treaty partners. I argue that adopting a bi-cultural (Treaty-honouring) positioning will help to reduce the cultural racism that exists in state schools. Rather, I contend that a shared responsibility amongst managers, teachers and the school's Māori community will strengthen and support equitable opportunities for Māori learners to be acknowledged and responded to as *Māori* in mainstream classrooms.

A reframing of how bi-cultural partnerships are viewed will ensure all cultural heritages are represented in mainstream schools and classrooms. Working 'with' rather than 'for' Māori in education serves to reject former colonial practices of assimilation and instead restores honour to the 'power-sharing' positioning represented within the Treaty of Waitangi at a school and classroom level (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; O'Sullivan, 2007; Walker, 1973). This can be achieved when a genuine partnership between a school and its Māori community and kaumatua is developed. Māori community support is crucial for Māori students to achieve success as *Māori* in mainstream contexts by making transparent 'te reo me ona tikanga Māori'.

Local and national research studies have demonstrated that not all teachers are effective, experts or have powerful effects on students (Alton-

Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2009). Further research evidence has also demonstrated that Māori teachers are not necessarily effective teachers for Māori students in mainstream schools (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gay, 2000; Hattie, 2009; Hirsh, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995; A. Macfarlane, 2004). The argument for more Māori teachers in mainstream schools is relevant to the disproportionate number of Māori with the teaching profession as a whole however I contend that educational assumptions that by simply providing more Māori teachers will reverse the underachievement Māori over-represent in mainstream education are irresponsible. Rather, redressing the educational disparity between Māori and Pākehā achievement in mainstream schools is an issue that *all* mainstream teachers must address as committed New Zealanders and Treaty partners.

#### *The Benefits of Inclusive Teaching*

The second implication for mainstream classroom teachers as an outcome of this research study's findings highlights the teacher and student benefits of inclusive teaching strategies.

The participants' reflections of how they viewed the effects that the weekly hui had on their attitude towards learning and behaviour, demonstrated how student voice had positively fostered whānaungatanga and improved their sense of belonging to a 'learning community' (Davies, 2004).

Inclusion as a philosophy had grounded my teaching pedagogy and had successfully encouraged the participants' to become active problem-solvers and learning inquirers within a safe classroom environment.

Culturally responsive pedagogy ensured that the participants' identities as Māori were acknowledged and affirmed firstly within the classroom and then, school-wide. The participants had assumed leadership roles across different teaching and learning programmes. This required of me to 'stand back' so they could 'have a go' as group leaders and decision makers. Core to supporting the participants as leaders was my willingness to re-

position myself from being the 'dominant authority' in the classroom to a position where the 'power' was shared between the students and me.

I have observed from my own teaching experiences that for some teachers, no amount of professional development or 'coercive' tactics will result in pedagogical change if an individual teacher sees no purpose for change (Hattie, 2009). Yet, transforming teacher attitudes to effectively support Māori students as indigenous minorities in mainstream classrooms is ultimately the responsibility of the individual teacher.

Gay (2000) explains why she believes teachers of minority students may resist change from ineffective teaching practices to culturally responsive pedagogy. She states:

"Probably because these changes require transforming prevailing paradigms of power, privilege, and normality within the educational enterprise. However discomfoting this challenge may be to the guardians of pedagogical traditions, the change must occur if the performance of underachieving students is to be reversed."

(Gay, 2000, pp. 208-209)

### **Possible Further Research Investigations**

The following questions may serve as further research investigations as a result of this research study's findings. They may include:

- How are Māori students positioned in schools where the majority of students (and/or teachers) are also ethnic minority New Zealanders?
- How are the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi transferred from the New Zealand Curriculum into a mainstream school's curriculum *and* classroom practice?
- How are experienced immigrant teachers supported to learn about the Treaty of Waitangi as New Zealanders and the associated significance for culturally responsive teaching in New Zealand state schools?

- How is the Treaty of Waitangi addressed in pre-service teacher education training programmes?

This research study was driven by my need to explore and understand the attitude and behavioural changes my Māori students underwent during 2009 from their own perspectives. I have come to understand that the greatest transformation occurred within my own cultural and professional pedagogical knowledge and practice as a Māori mainstream teacher.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

**Kaupapa:** Reflect together on our classroom practices during 2009 and share your thoughts and opinions about:

1. How you feel you were supported as a learner?
2. Whether or not you feel that the teaching / learning programmes were relevant for you as a Maori student and included Tikanga Maori and Te Reo Maori.
3. How you were involved with different teaching / learning programmes?
4. How you feel you were motivated to participate with learning programmes? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Whether or not you feel that you made any changes in learning, thinking and/ or feeling over the year.
6. Were there any times you felt being Maori was honoured?
7. Were there any times you felt being Maori was not honoured?

**Appendix 2:  
Information Letter (Principal)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

I am currently undertaking a research project towards the completion of a 4 paper Masters thesis supervised by the University of Waikato.

My thesis will involve a retrospective analysis of my teaching practice from a traditional understanding of teaching and learning towards a culturally responsive understanding of teaching and learning. The thesis will describe and critique the changes which I undertook to respect and affirm the cultural identities, and facilitate the success of Maori children in a mainstream classroom.

I intend to analyse documents, records, diary and other personal notes collected during the course of my teaching over 2009 and explore these records and identify what evidence there might be of my introduction of transformative teaching practices, such as co-construction, co-operative learning, use of te reo and tikanga Maori, and drawing on the knowledge and experiences of my Maori students.

During the next few months, I wish to conduct one group-focus interview with 4-5 of the nine Maori students who were in my class as Year 7 and Year 8 during 2009. The group-focus interview will be audio taped and transcribed for analysis.

The aim of the group-focus interview is for the students to reflect and discuss the cultural relevance of the teaching / learning practise that we engaged with throughout 2009. There will be no personal information either sought or required for the purpose of this research. I will avoid making / recording any personal reflections that may cause anxiety or harm to another student or teacher.

I will ensure that student and school confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms. All records, audio tape and transcripts will be held securely in my home and kept for a period of five years.

I request your consideration to consent for me to access and explore the records that were gathered during my teaching year over 2009. The records are specific to the programmes that included tikanga Maori and those programmes that were evaluated collectively with the students.

The information generated through the group-focus interview and/or direct quotes will be part of the Master's thesis and included in subsequent papers, articles and/or conferences thereafter. The completed Master's thesis will also be lodged in the Australian Digital Thesis (ADT) database and accessible to a wider audience.

Should you have any concerns or complaints, you can contact my research supervisor, Professor Ted Glynn, [glynn@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:glynn@waikato.ac.nz)

Kind regards  
Renee Gilgen  
021 348601  
[roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz)

**Appendix 2A:  
Informed consent (Principal)**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (*Principal*) consent for Renee Gilgen to access the data which was gathered during the course of her normal teaching practice during 2009 for the purpose of searching for evidence of her use of the teaching practices, such as co-construction, co-operative learning, use of te reo and tikanga Maori, and drawing on the knowledge and experiences of her Maori students.

I have read the information letter and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification and understanding of the research topic.

I understand that the research undertaken will contribute to a 4 paper Master's thesis supervised by Professor Ted Glynn at the University of Waikato and will be available for reading by a wider audience when completed.

I consent that the data analysed by Renee Gilgen may be included in subsequent papers, articles and/or conferences thereafter and that the completed Masters thesis will be lodged in the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database.

I understand that confidentiality for the school and students will be ensured by the use of pseudonyms and all records, audio tape and transcripts will be held securely in Renee Gilgen's home and kept for a period of five years.

Should I have any concerns or complaints, I can contact the research supervisor, Professor Ted Glynn, [glynn@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:glynn@waikato.ac.nz)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

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---

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please contact me or return in the prepaid envelope enclosed*

**Appendix 3:  
Information: (Parent / Caregiver)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent / Caregiver) of \_\_\_\_\_ (Student)

I wish to invite your child \_\_\_\_\_ (name) to assist me with a research project that I am undertaking for my Masters thesis at the University of Waikato.

During my research, I intend to explore the data which was gathered during the course of my normal teaching practice during 2009. I will be searching for examples of where I have used co-operative learning, te reo and tikanga Maori, and where I have drawn on the knowledge and experiences of my Maori students.

During the next few months, I wish to conduct one group interview with 4-5 of the nine Maori students who were in my class as Year 7 and Year 8 during 2009.

The group interview will be audio taped and transcribed for analysis. All student names will be replaced with a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

The aim of the interview is for the students to reflect back and discuss the teaching / learning practice that we engaged with throughout 2009. I will not ask for any personal information about the students or their families. I will not record any personal reflections that might cause anxiety or harm to another student or teacher.

As a member of our class during 2009, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) is familiar with me and the other students who may attend our group interview. I will facilitate students' recall and discussion of events and experiences but will not try to direct the discussion.

The information generated through the group-focus interview and/or direct quotes will be part of the Master's thesis and included in subsequent papers, articles and/or conferences thereafter. The completed Master's thesis will also be lodged in the Australian Digital Thesis (ADT) database and accessible to a wider audience.

You may withdraw your child's participation at any time prior to the group interview. You will have the chance to review and amend your child's contributions to the transcription. You will have the right to withdraw your child for up to two weeks after receiving the transcript. The final date for withdrawal will be specified in the 'return of transcript form' sent to you with the transcript of the group interview.

Please feel free to contact me to ask about anything you would like clarified. After two weeks, then I will contact you again to see if you are willing for your child to take part in the group interview. If you are willing then we will negotiate a suitable time and venue for the group-focus interview to occur.

My supervisor from the University of Waikato is assisting and supporting me throughout this research process. Should you have any concerns or complaints, you can contact my research supervisor, Professor Ted Glynn, by emailing [glynn@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:glynn@waikato.ac.nz)

Arohanui  
Renee Gilgen  
021 348601  
[roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz)

**Appendix 3A:  
Information: (Student)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Student)

I am inviting you to assist me with a research project that I am doing for my Masters thesis at the University of Waikato.

I would like you to think about participating in a group interview with 2-4 other students from our classroom during 2009.

The aim of the group interview is to reflect back and discuss our classroom teaching / learning practices throughout 2009. I will not ask for any personal information about you or your family and I will not record any personal reflections that might cause harm to another student or teacher.

I will audio-tape the group-focus interview and then transcribe the discussion replacing your name and any reference to the school with a pseudonym. I will send you and your parent / caregiver the transcript for you to review and / or amend your contribution. I will keep all the data and information securely in a safe place in my home to ensure your confidentiality.

The information generated through the group-focus interview and/or direct quotes will be part of the Master's thesis and included in subsequent papers, articles and/or conferences thereafter. The completed Master's thesis will also be lodged in the Australian Digital Thesis (ADT) database and accessible to a wider audience.

I will contact your parent / caregiver within the next two weeks to confirm your participation and if so, then we will negotiate a suitable time and place for the group interview. You and your parent / caregiver will need to sign the consent letter which they will have.

Arohanui  
Whaea Renee  
021 348601 [roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz)

**Appendix 3B:  
Informed Consent (Parent / Caregiver & Student)**

We \_\_\_\_\_ (parent) and \_\_\_\_\_ (student), consent to *(student name)* participating in the group interview being facilitated by Renee Gilgen for her Masters thesis at the University of Waikato.

We have read the information letter and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification of the purpose of the group interview.

We understand that the research will involve one group interview with *(student name)* and that the group interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed, kept securely, and returned to us for comments and amendments. We understand that confidentiality will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms for the school, *(student name)* and any direct quotes used within the completed Master's thesis.

We consent for the information generated through the group-focus interview and/or direct quotes being part of the Master's thesis, to be included in subsequent papers, articles and/or conferences thereafter and to be lodged with the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database.

We understand that we are free to withdraw *(student name)*'s contributions from the group interview until two weeks after receiving the transcript. Should I have any concerns or complaints, I can contact the research supervisor, Professor Ted Glynn, [glynn@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:glynn@waikato.ac.nz)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (*Parent / Caregiver*)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (*Student*)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please contact me or return in the prepaid envelope enclosed*

## **Appendix 4 Return of transcript (Student)**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Student)

Thank you for participating with our group interview. Please find enclosed the transcript of the interview conducted on \_\_\_\_\_. The transcript is confidential to the group that participated with the interview and to me. The text is saved to a pen drive and securely locked away when not in use. The information is not permanently stored on any computer.

The transcription is word for word except where I have removed any unnecessary repetitions. I have highlighted in bold, your contribution however have used pseudonyms for the other students from our group interview.

I would like you to read the transcription and review or amend any of your own contributions so that it accurately reflects your views. Make comments on the transcript itself and either contact me to collect the transcript or you can mail the transcript with the accompanying transcript permission. Please choose a pseudonym for any specific people you may name in your amendment to protect their privacy.

The final date for withdrawal will be \_\_\_\_\_. If you would like to do this then please indicate on the transcription release form before returning it to me.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require any further clarification.

Arohanui  
Whaea Renee  
021 348601  
[roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:roth-gilgen@xtra.co.nz)

**Appendix 4A**  
**Release of transcript for use (Student)**

Name of participant \_\_\_\_\_

I have received the transcription of the interview and have read it. The following ticked situation applies:

\_\_\_\_\_ The transcript is acceptable as raw data. I have made no changes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have amended my contributions in the text of the transcript. My views are acceptable as raw data.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to withdraw from the project. Please withdraw my contributions to the transcript.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please contact me or return in the prepaid envelope enclosed*