

Examining the potential of critical and Kaupapa Māori approaches to leading education reform in New Zealand's English-medium secondary schools

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Biographical Notes

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Abstract

This paper discusses expectations, policies and practices that currently underpin education within the New Zealand context. It acknowledges the ongoing failure of this policy framework to positively influence reform for Indigenous Māori students in regular, state-funded schools and highlights the need for extensive change in the positioning and expectations of educators if Māori learners are to realise their true potential. The paper then considers leadership models to reimagine and lead a transformative educational reform that aims to include the aspirations and contributions of all members of the school's communities, especially those who have historically been marginalized. Finally it considers the implications of this model for international application.

The New Zealand context

Achievement disparities, between specific groups of students in New Zealand, continue over time to be well documented within regular, state-funded schooling. Even though these groups of students are clearly identified both nationally and within schools, little has effectively disrupted this trend or promoted significant positive change (Auditor-General, 2012; Berryman, 2008). The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing across the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries continues to show New Zealand's education system as one that delivers high quality but low-equity, in terms of education outcomes (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009). Low-equity systems have students who are being underserved by the education system. Although PISA highlights the marginalization of groups of students specifically in education, in New Zealand this is neither a recent phenomenon nor is it confined to education (Bishop, Berryman & Wearmouth, 2014).

Descriptions of high quality and low-equity education systems, driven by deficit-oriented approaches, are familiar to educators across the world (Sleeter, 2011). The learners disproportionately underserved in New Zealand's secondary-schools continue to be Māori. Māori learners do not remain in schooling for as long as other students, nor are they achieving

as highly (Auditor-General, 2012). Consequently Māori students leave school with lower qualifications and fewer life choices, which not only has implications for their own futures but for the future well-being of our society as a whole.

The 2015 school roll returns show that Māori students made up approximately 24 per cent of the school student population, and for 2014, in comparison to European/Pākehā students, were twice as likely to be suspended and excluded from school. Ministry of Education (MoE) statistics also show that 26 per cent of Māori who left school in 2014 had no formal school qualification compared with 17 per cent of Pasifika and 10 per cent of New Zealand European school leavers. Furthermore, these statistics also identify Māori boys as being three times more likely to be suspended and excluded from school with 28 per cent of Māori boys leaving school with no formal qualifications (Education Counts, 2015). In terms of these disparities, little has changed since the educational gap between Māori and non-Māori was first statistically identified in the 1960 Hunn Report. Examining today's evidence it is clear that the New Zealand education system is failing many Māori students, and in particular, Māori males.

Within this milieu it is interesting to consider the way the term mainstream, once widely used to denote a regular, state-funded primary or secondary-school, has fallen from official use to be replaced by the term English-medium. Possibly this has to do with the way the term mainstreaming was also used to describe the inclusion of students with special learning needs into regular state-schooling at the closure of special schooling. Or perhaps this has to do with the implied power-relations wielded by this stream of education. Whatever the case it is clear that despite the development of policies to promote success for all, in these settings, education has neither promoted nor ensured the potential of Māori learners, nor halted the framing of these students within a deficit paradigm (Shields, Bishop & Mazawi, 2005). Instead we see disproportionately more Māori learners failing to develop the skills required to fully access the curriculum, as evidenced by the disproportionate numbers of Māori students who leave school with little real choice for future employment pathways.

The authors of this paper are part of an initiative currently seeking schooling solutions for Māori students and their home communities. Known as Kia Eke Panuku, this school-wide reform operates at the secondary-school level and is currently entering a third year of operation in approximately one third of New Zealand's secondary-schools. By linking critical theories and kaupapa Māori theory to the settings and contexts in which current policy and practice is designed and implemented, strategic leadership teams in each school are challenged to address

the aspirations of Māori communities by more effectively supporting Māori students to pursue their potential.

Critical theories and Kaupapa Māori theory

Critical theories challenge the inequity and social injustice created and maintained by the location of authority and power in the hands of a privileged few. It is committed to challenging the oppressive and hegemonic impact of the power that privileged individuals and groups exert over the lives of less privileged individuals and groups. Critical theories envision that just as conditions of inequality, inequity and injustice have been socially and politically constructed, so too can these conditions be deconstructed, and their hegemonic impacts overcome, in ways that can transform the oppressor-oppressed relationships between the dominant privileged and the less privileged and marginalized individuals and groups (Apple, 2013; Freire, 1998).

For educators this highlights the importance of our own conscientization and resistance on a pathway of unlearning and relearning (Wink, 2011) towards praxis that is more transformative and socially just (Freire, 1972). This pathway involves co-constructing *new* intellectual spaces where it is possible to create new discourse frames that resist rather than privilege the beliefs, values, practices and worldviews of the powerful and privileged (Apple, 2013). Educators advocating culturally responsive and relational-based methodologies (Berryman, Soohoo & Nevin 2013) encourage leaders to bring their own subjectivities and ideologies to education. In this way leaders can inform the co-creation of new knowledge in a new space (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013; Bhabha, 1994; Soja 1996); that is, in the empty space between the self and the other (Shor 2009). This is the space in which Kia Eke Panuku aims to co-create new discourses in schools with strategic school leaders.

Freire's theorising on cultural synthesis, (1998) contends dialogical action has the capacity to 'confront culture and structures that are oppressive and invasive, where [the more powerful] people impose their will over the people' (p.180). By re-positioning ourselves as visitors and novices (Apple, 2013; Glynn et al., 2001), where we do not seek to dominate or control, these spaces can become more liberatory. In liminal spaces such as these, it has been our experience that strategic school leaders can confront the power their stance may have previously exerted over people (staff, students, parents and families) and begin to learn the power of being with people. We have learned that co-creation and mutual engagement can be achieved through a dialogic framework of relationships where 'there are no spectators' (Freire, 1998, p.180).

Applying Freire's work to the relationship between leaders and learners, reframes the leaders'

stance of expert to one of co-learner, a context that more closely resembles the Māori concept of ako (being simultaneously teacher and learner within contexts of reciprocity). Ako encapsulates a concept of new knowledge as coming from a collective and inter-related process, with all having roles in its creation and responsibilities in its access and dissemination (Apple, 2013; Berryman, 2008). Our experience of undertaking professional development with school leaders working to reform education for Māori students (Alton-Lee, 2015; Bishop, Berryman & Wearmouth, 2014) has shown that achieving this kind of transformative praxis requires us to appreciate that while both dominant and minoritized parties may seek to address inequalities and injustices, it is the less powerful and less privileged who best understand how to transform the relationship. It is likely that this is because the less powerful and less privileged have the more authentic and extended experiences of inequality and injustice. This is consistent with Freire (1972) who has long maintained that solutions to problems encountered by minoritized or oppressed communities will come from voices located within those communities.

Like Critical Theories, Kaupapa Māori theory is well situated within the historical context of challenging and resisting the oppressive colonising power wielded over Māori people by settler governments, from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi¹ with the British Crown in 1840, right up to the present day. Government agencies are still developing policies, collecting data and imposing solutions for Māori. Kaupapa Māori theory promotes not only resistance to imposed policies and practices, but also resilience (Hokowhitu et al., 2010) in changing these practices by locating its political and cultural agenda squarely within a Māori worldview (G. Smith, 2003). It aligns its political agenda with Māori values, aspirations, and preferred ways of thinking and acting. Kaupapa Māori theory challenges prevailing Western/Colonial ideas of what constitutes valid and authentic knowledge. By resisting policies and practices that marginalize and trivialize Māori epistemology and pedagogy, Kaupapa Māori praxis allows Māori communities to exercise ownership and responsibility for the authenticity of the entire agenda. Kaupapa Māori theory incorporates ‘the deconstruction of those hegemonies that have disempowered Māori from controlling and defining their own knowledge within the context of unequal power relations in New Zealand’ (Bishop, 1996, p.13). Kaupapa Māori praxis removes Māori ‘away from waiting for things to be done for them, to doing things for themselves; a shift

¹ This treaty mandated the co-existence of two peoples (Māori and colonial settlers); to live together but to maintain who they were as two distinctly different peoples connected through Crown promises of partnership, participation and protection (Articles 1-3). These promises remain unfulfilled and are still being fought over in the courts today.

away from an emphasis on reactive politics to an emphasis on being more proactive; a shift from negative motivation to positive motivation' (Smith, G. 2003, p.2); a move away from positioning Māori as the problem to recognising Māori potential (Durie, 2015). Kaupapa Māori theory keeps the focus on improving Māori people's own social justice interests and concerns, while at the same time deconstructing hegemonic theorizing about the status and competence of Māori within contemporary, multicultural, but still neo-colonial, New Zealand society.

Kaupapa Māori praxis in education

Education initiatives that have emerged from Kaupapa Māori praxis are initiatives that are driven by Māori to find solutions that are culturally located, responsive, effective and accountable to Māori. Such initiatives prioritize validation on Māori cultural terms before validation in terms of Western/Colonial epistemology. This positions Māori in a space where their rangatiratanga (agency, independence, self determination and, above all, their right to define) does not have to be continually surrendered to a dominant neo-colonial power. This position is consistent with the promise of power-sharing and partnership through Article 1 of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Successful restoration and revitalization of kaupapa Māori praxis over the last 30 years has resulted in ground breaking initiatives in New Zealand Education. Māori whānau (families), hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe) have struggled, and succeeded, within the state education system to develop Māori language-based and culturally located educational institutions at all levels: kōhanga reo (pre-school), kura kaupapa Māori (primary-school), wharekura (secondary-school) and wānanga (tertiary institutions). These schools have been defined as Māori-medium schools and officially described as 'schools that teach in Māori and [in which] education is based on Māori culture and values' (Ministry of Education, 2015). It is important to note that in these schools Māori students are enjoying education success and are not having to compromise their cultural location to do so (Alton-Lee, 2015). Unfortunately, while there is no comparable statement referencing English-medium schools by far the majority of Māori students (90.3% in 2015) are in English-medium schools. Currently in these schools, success for many students continues to be assimilation into the English-medium agenda.

The impact of wider society

In considering how to support Māori learners to realize their potential we must look at the experiences provided through schooling in English-medium settings and not just at the learners themselves (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Wearmouth, Glynn & Berryman, 2005). Schools are

located within wider communities that reflect and reinforce societal attitudes and stereotypes. Worthy of note are how the attitudes of the wider community are played out and reinforced through the media, generally regarding Māori in deficit terms or for their sporting and sometimes their more exotic, cultural prowess (Hokowhitu et al. 2010). Challenging these cultural norms is problematic when the majority non-Māori/Pākehā group, whose ethnicity and culture is largely unacknowledged and unchallenged, tend to perceive ethnic and cultural identity as irrelevant to the way in which society is structured and managed (Robson & Reid, 2001). As members of that same community, the majority of teachers are equally susceptible to adopting these attitudes with a resulting impact on classroom practice and learners experiences of schooling (Sleeter, 2011).

The paper now considers some of the systemic support provided for schools to meet the expectations of their communities, the obligations of schools to become self-managing and some of the policy developed in response to the ongoing disparities within the New Zealand compulsory education system. We show that meeting the policy requirements alone does not bring about the transformative change required to disrupt the prevailing societal norms that have resulted in long-term under-achievement for Māori learners.

The Policy Response

With the Education Act of 1989 the landscape that was New Zealand mainstream education changed dramatically from one of central control and jurisdiction over schools to that of “Tomorrow’s Schools” – self-management, devolution of responsibility and local accountability. While the 1989 Education Act identified the government’s parameters for schools, it also provided national guidelines for requirements in addition to those contained in the Act. These National Education Guidelines consist of five components; the National Education Goals; the foundation curriculum policy statements; the National Curriculum statements, National Standards; and the National Administration Guidelines.

How schools implement the national education guidelines has not been mandated, this remains the responsibility of each self-managing school. However, despite these national guidelines having been in place since 1993 and despite the support available from regional MoE advisors, little has improved in terms of the historical disparities for Māori students. It would seem that these measures alone were not sufficient to support schools to meet the needs of all learners and the aspirations of the entire community populations. The MoE’s policy response to the continuing disparities in educational outcomes between different groups of learners in New

Zealand was to target priority groups in the education system (Māori learners, Pasifika learners, learners with special education needs and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds). Within this policy response, the deficit lies within the students and their circumstances, there is no need for the system to change, and unsurprisingly, the disparities of outcomes continued. The educational landscape changed with the introduction of the Better Public Service Goals. These are long term inter-sectorial targets that inform the delivery of better social services with the broad aim of assisting each young New Zealander to have a fulfilling life and contribute to the country's economic prosperity. In one of these goals the government set an achievement target of 85 per cent of all New Zealand 18 year olds achieving a National Certificate of Educational Achievement at level 2 (one of the three national educational achievement certifications), or an equivalent qualification, within 2017 (State Services Commission, 2012). The MoE has stated that this achievement target explicitly refers to groups of learners, that is 85 per cent of Māori and 85 per cent of Pasifika students should also reach this target, and that the underachievement of priority learners should not be concealed within the achievement of other student groups. Thus the MoE has articulated 'an unrelenting focus on lifting achievement especially for our priority groups' (Ministry of Education, 2012a, p. 2).

Ka Hikitia

Having identified Māori as one of the priority groups, the MoE devised a new Māori Education Strategy - Ka Hikitia—Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008). The term *ka hikitia* is defined in the 2008 version of the policy document as a means to "step up", "lift up", or "lengthen one's stride" (p.10). In light of the achievement disparities between Māori and non-Māori students, the MoE drew on this Māori metaphor and positioned the strategy as a call to action in order to step up the 'performance of the education system to ensure Māori [students] are enjoying education success as Māori' (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 10). Within this strategy was a challenge to schools, education centres, educators, communities and the education system itself to step up so as to more effectively ensure the potential of its Māori learners. In so doing, the MoE recognized the need for an extensive change in positioning, expectations and practices across the entire education sector, '[i]t is about a shift in thinking and behaviour, a change in attitudes and expectations' (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4). The notion of Māori learners enjoying education success as Māori (Durie, 2003) pushes back on the colonial and assimilationist agendas that Māori have been experiencing since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. In education this focus on Māori includes supporting learners to determine

their own connections to language, ways of relating, knowledge, ways of knowing, core values and practices in their learning.

The Ka Hikitia policy goals were set out for four focus areas: foundation years; young people engaged in learning; Māori language education and; organisational success. The intent of this policy was to change the rhetoric and practice of educators across the system – a huge and necessary undertaking. An American scholar on sabbatical with the MoE drew attention to the difficulty of implementation at a MoE level and the danger of reducing the intent to a compliance checklist:

The challenge in an organization like the Ministry is to engage in processes that change attitudes, thinking, and behaviours rather than forcing compliance, while adhering to timelines that meet urgent priorities (Goren, 2009, p.vi).

Publicity material arrived in schools in 2009 but there was silence around the details of how schools would be supported to explore and operationalize the priorities identified in the focus areas. The release of Ka Hikitia certainly did little to prepare schools boards of trustees, principals or teachers to either identify what was required or to implement the policy. While it was important that schools and communities understood why the priorities were established and the importance of engaging with the ideas, there was no real resourcing available or professional development to assist with the implementation. This meant that even though schools might own the priorities for their Māori students (established the “will”), the vital next step, knowing how to act in order to achieve the goal (understanding the “way”) was not forthcoming. One of the authors recalls a school principal telling her “if I knew what to do I would have done it last year!” Not surprisingly, in 2012 the Education Review Office (ERO) reported a gulf between the MoE’s expectations and current practice across our schools. Despite the clear statements of policy, goals and targets around inclusion (Education Review Office, 2012; Auditor-General, 2012), this gulf was detected across schools in the regular school visits undertaken by the ERO.

Positive changes at the systemic level were evident, including a refocusing of professional standards for teachers (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2009) and emerging achievement gains for Māori students along with ‘pockets of success’ (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Implementation of the strategy from 2008 had been slower than anticipated and although there

were some improvements, disparity in achievement between Māori and non-Māori learners persisted at all levels.

To inform and refresh the Ka Hikitia strategy and its effectiveness, the MoE conducted an open consultation process over 2012 entitled Me Kōrero – Let's Talk (Ministry of Education, 2012b). Through Me Kōrero, issues relating to the implementation of Ka Hikitia were raised, indicating the need for: a more co-ordinated and cohesive approach across the education sector; effective professional development and review, with support, at school level and; support and promotion of what works for Māori learners. The current phase of Ka Hikitia, Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013), has a new focus, a wider audience and conveys a greater sense of urgency around the need for Māori to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

Acknowledging that immediate and sustained change is needed across the education sector, Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success calls all stakeholders to participate in raising the performance of our education system in order to accelerate success for Māori learners at all levels of schooling.

Re-imagining policy implementation from a transformative perspective

There are five guiding principles underpinning Ka Hikitia:

- Treaty of Waitangi - ensuring Māori students enjoy and achieve education success as Māori is a shared responsibility
- Māori potential approach – high expectations for Māori students to achieve
- Ako – a reciprocal, two-way teaching and learning approach
- Identity, language and culture count – Māori students benefit from seeing their experiences and knowledge reflected in teaching and learning
- Productive partnerships with key stakeholders – ongoing exchange of knowledge and information and the involvement of parents and whānau.

Accordingly Ka Hikitia: Accelerating success provides the overall vision for a coherent approach to improving policy and practice in education, focussing on our most underserved group – Māori learners.

Māori educators have advocated successfully for educational policy such as Ka Hikitia and they continue to advocate for policies to ensure Māori students will find their own language and culture present within the state-school curriculum. Māori have also had significant input into defining the structure and the content of the New Zealand national curriculum and the redevelopment of the reporting framework used to evaluate schools' provision of education by ERO. Accordingly, to accelerate success for Māori learners by brokering the immediate and

sustained change needed across the education sector, the MoE requested proposals for a school-based professional development programme to raise the performance of our education system across the secondary-school level (13 to 18 year olds).

Kia Eke Panuku: A critical kaupapa Māori response

The MoE called this initiative Building on Success, specifically requesting that the learnings from five previous or existing professional development programmes, Te Kotahitanga (Bishop, Berryman & Wearmouth 2014), He Kākano (He Kākano, 2013), Starpath (Starpath, 2015), and the Secondary Literacy and Numeracy Projects (Team Solutions, 2010; New Zealand Maths, 2010), be built upon and reconstructed into a new programme. A consortium from the University of Waikato, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi and the University of Auckland provided the successful proposal and a new theory-based school reform Kia Eke Panuku: Building on Success was developed alongside the work in 61 secondary-schools throughout 2014. A further 33 schools were brought on at the end of 2014.

Kia Eke Panuku supports schools to address the explicit kaupapa (shared agenda) of giving life to the Ka Hikitia education strategy by more effectively supporting Māori students to pursue their potential. This begins by using the school's own evidence of Māori students achievement to begin to develop more critical understandings of how the fabric of society continues to influence the education of Māori students and in turn is influenced by the education that the school system provides. With a focus on this kaupapa, leaders begin to develop clarity from which to engage in dialogue towards social good and equity. This critical Kaupapa Māori response is required of schools if they are to make links to Ka Hikitia and achieve the aspirations that we, as educators in New Zealand, have all been tasked with.

Leadership Influence

The positioning of school leaders and their influence in leading the step up of their own school community is vital when it comes to disrupting and changing the status quo of disparity to a focus on Māori potential. In working to this end, leaders need to understand that schools have had a long-established role in reproducing societal values, discourses, customary practices – the culture of the mainstream (Apple, 2013). How leadership is undertaken and evolves in schools can accelerate or hinder the social change required to address these disparities. Under the Treaty of Waitangi, school leaders, whether Māori, Pākehā or Tauīwi (more recent immigrants to New Zealand), have the responsibility and the mandated authority under Ka Hikitia to make more of a difference for marginalized learners, especially Māori learners.

In considering different theories of leadership in Kia Eke Panuku, it is important to consider how leadership might be understood from a Māori perspective and how that perspective might be relevant for school leaders seeking to disrupt and change disparities for Māori. For example the Māori term for leader or chief is rangatira, understood as comprising two words ranga (to weave), tira (a party of people). Metaphorically the leader might be understood as some one who can weave a group of people together. A further consideration of Māori perspectives on leadership is encapsulated in two well known Māori proverbs:

Te amorangi ki mua, te hapai o ki muri. (The leader at the front and the workers behind the scenes).

Ka pai ki muri, ka pai ki mua (if it is good at the back, it will be good at the front).

Both make reference to the cultural protocols undertaken during Māori rituals of encounter. Those of the tribe who are most proficient in oratory and traditional waiata (song undertaken at the conclusion of speeches) undertake the speaking and waiata roles at the front of the meeting house. The workers are at the back making sure that everything required to host the group at the conclusion of the welcome speeches is in order so that the guests are well hosted once the speech-making has concluded. In both the roles undertaken (back and front), mentoring of the less proficient (teina) occurs so that leadership is simultaneously being modelled and grown by the tuakana (more proficient). If the rituals of encounter are to bring prestige to the tribe, it is understood that both jobs involve leadership and are of equal importance. Leadership in this context is a collective and dynamic undertaking, grounded in shared and inter-dependent activities rather than being specific to positions or roles. This perspective on leadership is concerned both with process (how leadership occurs and is shared within and across roles) and with capacity building (how leadership is enhanced and grown).

This type of cultural leadership has some similarities with distributed leadership which we understand as emerging from the actions and interactions between individuals engaged with each other in problem solving and/or developmental work. According to Harris (2005), distributed leadership urges us to view leadership as a lateral form of agency. Spillane (2006) contends distributed leadership promotes a relationship that influences the practices of others in ways that bring about major changes. When all share the same agenda, the collective and collaborative construction of meaning and knowledge within and across groups provides opportunities to reveal and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information and assumptions. In collaborative contexts such as these there is increasing evidence to suggest that more widely

distributed patterns of leadership equate with greater potential for organisational change and development (Harris, 2005). Given the relational connections with the Māori model discussed above, distributed leadership is a model that is often held up as one that might be usefully applied, when working in Māori cultural contexts. While we would agree with this position, we have also been in schools where the notion of distributed leadership was nominally adhered to but not all were fully committed to the kaupapa. In these schools we have seen the principal ‘distribute’ the responsibility for Māori student outcomes to other members of their team, often a Māori staff member, who lacks clarity around the mandate and authority for the reform. In some schools this has allowed others who are not similarly invested, to abrogate responsibility to contribute or even undermine the agenda by failing to share resourcing. Almost always this leaves the leader to whom the role has been distributed, weighed under by the insurmountable immensity of the task. We contend that effective distributed leadership must not be uncoupled from the Māori cultural context of shared responsibilities and shared commitments.

While it is important to think of leadership from different perspectives the reality of practice in different contexts is often complex, multifaceted and inter-related. In Kia Eke Panuku we knew we also needed to consider leadership from a critical perspective when seeking to bring about schoolwide reform in order to serve Māori students more equitably. For this we noted the work of Fullan (2003) and Shields (2010) in the literature who had respectively begun to talk about leadership with a moral purpose and transformative leadership.

Transformative Leadership with a moral purpose

This perspective on leadership takes seriously the personal and the public responsibility to use power, privilege, and position in the context to promote social justice and enlightenment for the benefit, not only of individuals and the organization, but of society as a whole (Shields, 2010). Fullan (2003) refers to leadership for sustainability as public service with a moral purpose. Such leadership practice requires attending to the needs and aspirations of the wider community in which one serves. As a result of a deeper understanding of the differing power relations within which we all live, transformative leadership then seeks to engage with change. Shields (2010, 2013) identifies eight key principles of transformative leadership:

- the mandate to effect deep and equitable change
- the need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice
- a focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice

- the need to address the inequitable distribution of power
- an emphasis on both individual and collective good
- an emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness
- the necessity of balancing critique with promise
- the call to exhibit moral courage

The intersection of critical theories, kaupapa Māori theory and transformative leadership

Evidenced by the slow uptake of the Ka Hikitia policy since its emergence into the educational system, it would seem that one of the challenges educational leaders face is engaging with and implementing leadership of Ka Hikitia. We would contend that, in most cases, this is not due to a reluctance to meet the challenges of Ka Hikitia, indeed, we believe most schools would firmly wish to see Māori students enjoying and achieving educational success as Māori. Our problems come when we try to reform long-term, systemic issues with simplistic solutions such as following a transactional ‘steps to success’ type strategy without also working to address underlying ideologies and ways of being that continue to reinforce and replicate the status quo.

In order to meet the policy intent, we suggest that an intersection of the three theoretical perspectives outlined above are required. From critical theories we learn that for school leaders to change the lived reality of Māori learners within their schools, they need to determine the extent to which all relationships and interactions within their schools are underpinned by a tendency to reproduce the power dynamics of the dominant group. Also, to uncover where a lack on success may be attributed to deficit qualities for those who are not in the power group. Effective leaders of reform that enhances Māori student outcomes need to disrupt the power dynamics and the privileging within their schools. Kaupapa Māori theory tells us that, in addition to challenging a Eurocentric power system, te ao Māori must be visible and explicit to Māori students in the contexts for learning. If this doesn't occur, Māori learners will likely remain alienated from the system and unable to relate or respond to efforts aimed at improvements. And, from transformative leadership theory, we see the need for school leaders to display the moral courage needed to challenge the power structures within their schools and wider society. It is only when all three of these perspectives are addressed that the conditions for cultural and systemic change are created.

In Kia Eke Panuku we have deconstructed Ka Hikitia with school leaders and placed it as the central agenda, the kaupapa of the school’s leadership response. We have also challenged the traditional leadership structures in secondary-schools and called for the development of strategic

change leadership teams. In this next section we use the voices of leaders from Kia Eke Panuku to exemplify their experiences. All voices were gathered using semi-structured, group-focused or individual interviews as conversation undertaken in ethical ways using culturally responsive methodologies (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013).

Leadership in Kia Eke Panuku

In Kia Eke Panuku, each school selects a strategic change leadership team to lead the professional learning and development work in their school. The notion of strategic selection is important, as this team needs to represent the range of voices and perspectives from across the staff and leadership structures. The cross-role and cross-curriculum composition of the team means that the team is more likely to be in a position to critically challenge hierarchical leadership structures and thus may be better placed to accelerate spread and ownership of the kaupapa across the school. In this work, the strategic change leadership teams are supported by Kia Eke Panuku team members including kaitoro (facilitators).

Within schools, the strategic change leadership team has to be able to work with school leaders to understand the implications for social change and accept their role in driving the moral imperative for equity within their school. This occurs through a series of professional development wānanga (learning sessions undertaken according to Māori cultural principles and practices) facilitated by members of the Kia Eke Panuku team. Wānanga are held on marae (a Māori cultural place). The first aims to help teams understand and analyze their school's current position with regards to the disparities between Māori and non-Māori students through a number of profiling activities. Next there is a wānanga about using the evidence to plan a coherent pathway forward. The work that follows in schools, involves aligning and focusing actions to disrupt the status quo while simultaneously gathering and interrogating student attendance, retention, achievement and engagement data in an iterative manner to monitor the effectiveness of the reform. These activities include what we have termed the Ako: Critical cycle of learning.

This critical cycle of learning is built upon activities aimed at conscientization and resistance. First mihimihi (cultural process of introductions) is undertaken to come to know their Māori students and their home communities. This is followed by whanaungatanga (cultural processes for establishing or re-establishing relationships of respect) amongst the people who will be working together on the reform. In many schools this process includes members of the Māori community. A process is then undertaken to understand how the school's evidence is defining

the status quo for Māori students and why this situation may need to be disrupted if more equitable contexts for learning are to emerge under the Treaty of Waitangi. Thus begins the transformative praxis that we are calling mahitahi (working together as one). The cycle of learning for teachers then begins with discrete opportunities to target, observe and begin to build more effective practices based on what we know works more effectively for Māori students (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). The observation to shadow coaching activities are followed by deconstructing how classroom evidence of Māori learners can be used to accelerate their progress and planning for this to happen. This re-imagining and embedding more equitable opportunities for Māori to excel, is followed by opportunities to reflect on and review progress then plan for new actions. Schools are aiming to get through three such cycles in a year.

For school leaders, the cycle begins with the profiling activities using the school evidence to develop and implement a potential-focused and strategic action plan across five interdependent dimensions, building on their existing learning, understandings, structures and institutions, and connecting to their individual school context. The five dimensions that are the levers for accelerated school reform in Kia Eke Panuku are: Leadership; Evidence-based inquiry; Culturally responsive and relational pedagogy; Educationally powerful connections with Māori; and Literacy, te reo Māori and numeracy across the curriculum. This action plan provides a frame for the team to specify what they are going to do, how they are going to work as well as with whom they are going to work. This requires school leaders to investigate and develop their school's strategic systems, processes and procedures to reflect and inform the ongoing reform. Activities using evidence to accelerate and reflect, review and act are incorporated in to the leaders cycle of learning as well.

School leaders describe various aspects of their roles in this work.

You can't do something to people. The people have to do things for themselves, but what you can do is ... help to raise their consciousness as to how that might happen.

I think there's a difference between saying it and living it though the opportunities that you make available, not only make them available but make them easy to take up and hard to refuse.

To manage a change like this you actually need the structural element, which is the way the school conceives its goals and its priorities and its leadership and how it does things. You also need to know what happens inside the classrooms, effective teaching and learning is critical.

If this approach to changing teaching practice has got integrity and we apply it sincerely it will speak for itself. Teachers who experience it will see changes themselves, tell others about it and they too will be drawn into this mahi. As time goes by we expect more and more people to get involved in it.

(Kia Eke Panuku school leaders)

Berryman, Nevin, SooHoo and Ford (2015), in their description of culturally responsive leadership suggest that these are school leaders who:

... disrupt traditional discourses of segregation and marginalization also engage in relational and dialogical consciousness and interactions, are willing to understand and attest to both sides of an issue, and understand that praxis that supports marginalization and exclusion must be resisted and replaced with praxis to promote identity of becoming, belonging and inclusion... (p.151)

If we are to relearn more emancipatory discourses of potential and social justice, an essential part of the new learning involves unlearning (Wink, 2011) or disrupting much of what have become the embedded discourses of the status quo (Apple, 2013) about Māori students and their home communities. Teachers and leaders begin to question what it was they are doing and how this might be contributing to or resisting the current hegemony in their schools and then into our nation. This has created contexts where leaders and teachers discourses have begun to exemplify the dynamic interplay between the critical principles of conscientization, resistance and transformative praxis (Freire, 1972; Smith, 2003).

Evidence of outcomes for Māori learners, alongside evidence of current leadership and/or classroom practices, inform new understandings about current theorizing and practice (conscientization). Leaders and teachers then decide: what practices may be most effective and therefore need to be sustained; what practices are ineffective and need to be discontinued; and what practices need to change in order to become more effective for Māori learners (resistance). They reflect on and implement those changes that will lead to accelerating improved outcomes for Māori learners as Māori (transformative praxis).

That unrelenting focus on Māori students, where you see that priority in practice, where you see that's where they're putting funding, where they're putting people, it really tells you a lot about the urgency of change. Key people are driving pieces of work and the resources to do that work - that's the signal of real change coming.

(Kia Eke Panuku kaitoro)

Ownership is seen when there is a shift in the school's culture so that rather than an over-reliance on the transmission of knowledge in hierarchical, linear and streamed models, culturally responsive and relational praxis is central to the school's systems, with structures and institutions being developed to support this new culture (Bishop, O'Sullivan & Berryman, 2010). In this way, the reform seeks to address the culturalist (the need to change the culture of the school) and structuralist (the need to change resource allocations within classrooms and schools) concerns at the school level. However it seeks to use emancipatory or critical approaches to understand how this problem has continued to be understood and address how unequal power relations for Māori have played out in schools and wider society (Berryman, Nevin, SooHoo & Ford, 2015; Sleeter, 2011)

After two years in Kia Eke Panuku our findings continue to be relatively positive across the schools and suggest that education can indeed change society (Apple, 2013). We suggest that both cultural and structural changes through kaupapa Māori and critical approaches are necessary if unfulfilled education potential is to be addressed for Māori students. We contend that education potential is the key contributing factor to poverty amongst Māori in New Zealand and potentially amongst minoritized peoples in other parts of the world. Education reform, to address disparities such as these, can not be done without support from those who work at the system level such as policy makers. However, policy makers can not do this by merely saying that the policies must be. These concerns must be simultaneously addressed at a system-wide level if school reform is to be better supported and implemented.

Conclusion

When considering the impact of our decision-making around resourcing and pedagogical practice, we have learned from history that when we focus on all students in a neo-conservative, we are somehow all the same way (Apple, 2013), disparities for Māori are maintained. However, we have also learned that if we maintain an unrelenting focus on outcomes for Māori learners then Māori learners improve and so do all other students. This is not surprising when power is shared with learners so that how and what to learn is responsive to the learners themselves and their home communities. When this happens the potential of these students as well as the potential inherent in the Treaty partnership can be realised. As Treaty partners we have much to learn from each other going forward. While this may at times be uncomfortable, for the future wellbeing of our country we must increase the creation of respectful bi-cultural spaces where we can both learn from each other and stand tall together. This is about ensuring

that our children, both Māori and non-Māori, can thrive in a context that respects the totality of their cultural identities. There is clear evidence that critical and kaupapa Māori approaches to leading educational reform offer a means by which Māori students might realize their potential and enjoy education success as Māori. The moral imperative and focus of transformative school leaders drives the positive use of individual and collective power and influence to achieve collaborative and participatory school-wide reform leading to social justice and equity – the public good. It is the intersection of all three perspectives that create the conditions where deep and powerful change can occur to address the long-term historical and societal inequities that have led to the disparities of educational outcomes for Māori learners. In New Zealand, Ka Hikitia provides us with the mandate and social imperative to act in this way.

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