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'Hospitality', boundary crossing and thresholds applied in education: Embodying *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*

ABSTRACT

In everyday understanding, 'hospitality' refers to paid work contexts; commodities and transactional tasks. Hospitality can, however, have much broader significance. It can be understood in cultural and social terms within and beyond transactional contexts. In Māori cultural knowledge and practices for example, hospitality has reciprocal, relational nuances. Perhaps both views imply that 'hospitality' is an act of 'crossing boundaries […] or thresholds' as Still (2013: 4) suggested. Relational, reciprocal, boundary-crossing practices may also infer ritual understandings of respect, kindness, generosity and harmony. Crossing thresholds is a central concept in Māori knowledge and practices and is central to this article exploring concepts and practices of hospitality in a new primary school focused on building

KEYWORDS

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education
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its practices on relational and reciprocal values. In Aotearoa New Zealand educational contexts, hospitality is a cultural, social reciprocal and relational practice. Thus, through examining 'hospitality', 'borders' and 'thresholds' across the boundaries of education and commerce, we hope to illuminate both connections and differences. We do so through reviewing both literature about 'hospitality', 'borders' and 'thresholds' and interview data from a new school intentionally valuing whanaungatanga.

INTRODUCTION

Literature that views hospitality as a transactional process, appears to position both workers and customers as strangers – as 'others', implying specific work ethic practices, which might be expressed as 'how we do it around here'. This view might also reference stakeholders – owners, investors, customers, workers, hosts. It is thus possible to suggest that these stakeholder relationships are poised on a threshold: the border across which people, needs, resources and ideas must travel to undertake a transaction. In a cafe, for example, there may be two borders: the doorway and counter (an *encounter* space), which may serve to separate workers from customers. An apron or uniform might also distinguish customers from workers. In an office, similar borders might exist: a doorway, opening to a foyer and reception desk, behind which initial hospitable exchanges occur between workers and customers. The front entrance acts as a threshold and border.

In schools however, thresholds and borders may be more ambiguous, for there are often multiple entry points, regularly transgressed by teachers, parents, students and visitors. Reception areas may be bypassed completely by some visitors. Perhaps the permeability of school spaces contributes to different perspectives on what constitutes both thresholds and hospitality.

Any threshold may signify the point at which the unknown or unfamiliar is the encounter space. Just as a school might be either a threatening or safe space for people entering it, a cafe might be experienced as either inviting or off-putting. A customer's prior experiences in similar spaces may have an effect on their appreciation of the space's ambience and their desire to re-enter the space. Encounter spaces, beginning with thresholds, may be perceived as potentially receptive or hostile.

This binary of possibility holds true for cultural thresholds of hospitality. For example, *manaakitanga* assumes that giving and accepting kindness and hospitality bestows *mana* (great respect) on both the host and the guest. Therefore, encounters are expected to honour both parties through relational practices, often steeped in the cultural practices of the spaces and the people (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). When these expectations are not/misunderstood, encounters might initiate offense. Conceptions of hospitality are therefore culturally and socially slippery.

In Aotearoa New Zealand educational contexts, hospitality is a cultural, social reciprocal and relational practice. To strengthen our view of hospitality, we draw on evidence from both Te Ao Māori and a new urban primary school that bases its values and practices on *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*. We explore hospitality as a historical and cultural concept through the literature, including notions of thresholds. We next consider such views beside a new primary school's vision and practices of hospitality.

Borders, thresholds and hospitality

Thresholds or borders become opportunities for both relationship-building and mutual learning when people meet. The conditions and nature of these encounters can affect the quality of the experience and may feel relational or transactional. An encounter's temporality (whether momentary or prolonged) may or may not be a significant factor in the quality of the encounter and its degree of hospitality. The encounter's quality may depend on what participants bring to this boundary crossing/threshold point, as well as their readiness to engage with the others. Aspects of trust, openness and a desire to connect, may be intentionally present. Or not.

Crocket et al., in exploring ideas about how counsellors might address bicultural partnerships in Aotearoa New Zealand, defined thresholds as 'places of separation' (2013: 73); the point at which 'engagement […] offering and asking […] understanding […] learning, of the possibilities and limits of knowledge-making […] require us to put aside certainties, to experience the tensions and anxieties of being in the middle of things, beyond the known and familiar' (2013: 73). In other words, a threshold is the point at which something new might happen (Crocket et al. 2013).

Lashley (2000) argued that hospitality, in its broadest sense, should be seen as a set of behaviours that link directly to how societies are founded. He described hospitality as essentially being about sharing, exchange, mutuality and reciprocity, built up over time into collective cultural practices/customs. Beliefs and customs about what it meant to *be* hospitable are replicated throughout a particular society. Activities important to the concept of hospitality can be traced through a disparate variety of different kinds of cultures in time and place, from Greek to Roman, Māori and Mediterranean societies (Heal 1990). While some societies' practices feature contexts in which one offers hospitality to others, tribal societies may express it differently. In educational contexts however, ideas about what hospitality looks like is overlooked. Heal's focus is on a global view of societal and cultural practices, without acknowledging that societies comprise different groupings and communities, each with their own mores.

Education is both a set of communities and a crucial element of bigger communities. Broadly, hospitality literature has not looked at sociocultural dimensions of hospitality within educational contexts, even when socialization processes that often begin in schools affect ideas about hospitality across generations.

In Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) thinking, while education often reproduces social practices and cultural capital, it can also disrupt them. Some schools celebrate their traditional practices and views about what matters, while other schools – often new ones – act as disruptive forces of change, offering different perspectives about what matters educationally, and therefore what practices will achieve those goals. This article highlights, through a case study, some of these possibilities around what is valued in educational spaces.

Lashley's (2000) advocacy of *social, private and commercial domains* to hospitality is a case in point, for a school may fit all three domains. Lashley suggests that the *commercial domain* grew from the *social* and *private domains*, where shelter and food were offered to guests. Rituals of hospitality often meant that strangers were 'safe' once invited in and made welcome. Telfer (1996) for example, observed that food has a central place in any hospitable act, and food and drink are part of hospitable acts.

Offering and receiving food becomes symbolic, implying trust, and, perhaps, a degree of friendliness or willingness to communicate. This practice resonates across cultures and societies. Eating and drinking activities connect people with each other just as social structures and rules provide the boundaries and thresholds of those connections. Repeated symbolic actions over time, come to be cultural practices or customs and are often expressed as 'what we do around here', and food and drink are an expression of this. Over time, there is an accretion of knowledge, behaviour and cultural capital, acquired through immersion in a world-view, which is displayed differently in different social groups (Bourdieu 1984). Understanding the rules that apply across these contexts and groupings is where hospitality becomes important, for practices associated with hospitality are contextually specific.

In commercial domains, hospitality is not necessarily aligned with social value systems that develop over time to help stabilize communities in surviving and reproducing. Lashley argues that in commercial contexts, there is no expectation that a business has any beneficent or charitable goal. Transactions and exchanges are thus devoid of *private* and *social domains*' hospitality customs and conventions. That is not to say that some businesses do not 'do good'. Some deliberately foster socially beneficent practices. The intention however, may be more about making customers feel better about using their goods or services.

Selwyn (2000) perceived that in the commercial domain, hospitality practices may 'unhook' individuals from customs usually associated with restraint and good manners. It can lead to indulging in 'excess, variety and pleasure' (Selwyn 2000: 24) when in hotels, pubs or restaurants, or travelling to foreign places. Anonymity and distance from the cultural practices of one's community can be enticing, resulting in disastrous consequences. The thresholds such people cross often transgress others' hospitality customs and practices, leading to festering resentment. Boundaries or thresholds that do not immediately suggest the nature of the customs occurring once past the threshold, may also blur distinctions between Lashley's domains of the social, private and commercial.

Broadly, if 'hospitality' is seen as an act of 'crossing boundaries […] or thresholds' (Still 2013: 4), boundaries or thresholds might be expressed, perhaps, as a set of binary pairs, both visible and abstract, such as:

- Self and other
- Private and public
- Inside and out
- Individual and collective
- Personal and political
- Emotional and rational
- Generous and economic.

As Bourdieu elegantly puts it, 'social space is the practical space of everyday life' (1984: 169), and thresholds mark the borders of those spaces, however intangible they first appear to be.

In a cafe, for example, there may be two borders, or encounter spaces: the doorway and counter, which may act to visibly demarcate workers and customers, the same way that aprons or uniforms signify the worker. Such markers identify cafe workers when serving customers rather than serving behind a counter. In an office, similar borders might exist: a doorway and

foyer with reception desk, behind which the first hospitable exchange occurs between worker and customer. In such commercial spaces, customers can usually quickly tell where the front entrance and threshold is.

Al-Sabbahy et al. (2004) position the relationship between commercial entities and customers as about a value proposition – that a customer will base current and repeat business on value for money. Lugosi (2008), on the other hand, argues that consumer encounters are much more blurred: that management-oriented conceptions based on transactional understandings are too narrow. He also argues that the emotional domain of hospitality has not been given the space it warrants. He suggests that hospitality can also include elements of entertainment and social intercourse, and therefore distinguishes between 'hospitality' (broadly: food, shelter, entertainment in a commercial sense of transaction) and 'hospitableness' (broadly: food, shelter, entertainment to develop social relations or a political agenda).

Lugosi's interpretation appears to align more readily with Te Ao Māori conceptions of hospitality, for it implies 'emotional and sincere forms of engagement' (2008:142). Hospitableness, he argues,

> is an acknowledgement of the *other* […] Food, drink, the offer of shelter and entertaining social intercourse form a crucial part of this transaction; they facilitate the relationship and give it an ontological reality, but emotional experience is at the heart of the encounter.
>
> (Lugosi 2008: 141, original emphasis)

It is this deeper, more social connection that resonates with ideas of *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*. The acknowledgment of the 'other' is central to such a focus, where workers and customers are positioned as strangers – as 'others' (Jordhus-Lier and Underthun 2014). In Te Ao Māori,[1] *manuhiri* (visitors) are 'other' and begin an encounter with this separation, but once the threshold is crossed, there is a common sense of belonging.

In recent research examining ways in which restaurants might engage with customers and develop a sense of belonging, Gruss et al. (2020) found that when restaurants focused on developing a sense of belonging in customers via social media, customers' engagement with the company became more positive. This action connects with efforts a company might undertake to be seen to 'do good'. Perhaps similar efforts lean into the realm of hospitableness and social interaction compared with efforts restricted to a transactional focus. Even when relational acts are motivated by commercial interests as noted by Gruss et al. (2020), such transactional appeals connect with behaviours and expectations associated with hospitality in a social, educational and, possibly, Te Ao Māori sense.

Hospitality, schools and Te Ao Māori

In schools, entrances and thresholds can be more ambiguous, for there are often multiple entry points to the school. Within the school complex, there are also entrances to individual classrooms. School borders signified by gates or boundary fences and classroom threshold spaces are regularly transgressed by teachers, whānau,[2] parents, students and visitors to the education spaces. Reception areas may be bypassed completely by some visitors, particularly if whānau/parents are supporting their children – such as on sports days or for

1. A Māori world-view.
2. Immediate and extended family.

cultural events. Perhaps the permeability of school spaces makes for different perspectives about thresholds and hospitality.

Crossing thresholds is a central concept in Māori knowledge and cultural practices. We contend that while hospitality is conceived of as a transactional process in commerce, this is not always so in either Māori or educational contexts. Māori and educational contexts appear to focus more on relational practices, reciprocity, kindness, generosity and harmony, as core.

We will use evidence from Te Ao Māori and a new urban primary school to develop a conception of hospitality through the lens of *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*. In order to develop this argument, it is timely to explore these concepts.

Manaakitanga and whanaungatanga

For teachers, the He Kākano[3] programme conceptualizes aspects of leadership. The programme, centred on school leaders, positions 'au' at the centre. This refers to relationships within schools: between leaders and leaders/staff, as well as staff/staff and staff/students. The development programme then extends to the wider community, embracing all those likely to connect with a school, such as community groups, parents, wider whānau and local authorities. He Kākano argues that all are part of a sociocultural whole: an organic and nurturing wholeness, as a womb nurtures and grows new people. For individuals to maintain their integrity as individuals (au), connections and relationships with others are fundamental to sustaining *whanaungatanga*. If this conceptual approach is applied to a school, it might be reflected in celebrating the uniqueness of individuals, while embracing them within a school community.

In commercial contexts, hospitality might be reflected in the values, processes and customs of the organization, as well as its treatment of *manuhiri* ('visitors') and staff. Making guests, clients, customers welcome, is in the commercial interests of a successful business. Building strong relationships – the more affective domain – is also key. *Whanaungatanga*, an embracing concept, implies aspects of kinship and/or whānau/family connection, and 'embraces whakapapa and focuses on relationships' (Mead 2003: 28). This conception, nonetheless, can be applied to commercial contexts in which hospitableness (Lugosi 2008) is embraced.

Mana, invoking authority, prestige, respect and care, is important to Māori understandings of hospitality. Mead (2003) discusses ways of understanding transactions (takoha) in relation to mana, suggesting that a transactional moment connects with both 'mana a ki atu' ('to give') and 'mana a ki mai' ('to receive'). Together these phrases imply acts of both reciprocity and transaction. Ritchie observed that 'there is simply faith that one day that which one has contributed, will be returned' (1992:75). Reciprocity, when understood this way, links to mana and respect in a relational manner; think of it as 'paying it forward'. Mead (2003) also suggests that a transactional moment could also be a commercial/monetary exchange.

Individuals' mana requires nurture and support, to enhance feelings of belonging and relationship. In a commercial sphere, mana might be demonstrated in the welcome extended to guests and customers; for example by cafe staff or receptionists, as the face of the host. The verb *manaaki* suggests deliberate action, indicating that mana is precipitated in the moment of welcome as people cross thresholds into others' spaces; a school, a business or cafe. An

3. See: https://hekakano.tki.org.nz/The-programme/Outside-school-wananga. Accessed 15 June 2020.

act of welcome implies respect, and is critical to the ethic of care signalling *manaaki*, and connects with a sociocultural conception of hospitality.

Through service to others, mana can accrue, pointing to wider conceptions of reciprocity evoked by *manaakitanga* (noun), and expressed through 'the exercise of hospitality' (Whitinui 2011: 55). Such hospitable actions do not preclude more commercial types of exchange or reciprocity. *Manaakitanga* is a highly valued Māori concept, playing a significant role in many lives. Its essence pertains to the genuine *care* of guests where tangata whenua provide and display their best, as marks of respect and a desire to make guests comfortable. Such acts appear to resonate with Lugosi's focus on 'emotional and sincere forms of engagement' (2008: 142).

Even while *manaakitanga* centres on showing respect or kindness, it might also relate to entertainment. This might extend, in a commercial sense, to the hospitality of a place in which a concert is held. Barlow argues that because the role of hosts is 'to provide an abundance of food, a place to rest and speak nicely to visitors' (1991: 63), *manaakitanga*'s characteristics connect with broader notions of hospitality. Whether in a commercial or cultural sense, the core nature of hospitality is to attain a state of harmony and safety within any gathering. What do hospitality, *manaakitanga* or *whanaungatanga* as expressions of hospitality look like in an educational context? The next section offers findings from a research project in an Aotearoa New Zealand primary school that has established its values on *whanaungatanga*.

Examining hospitality concepts in an Aotearoa New Zealand primary school

Research design

The project arose through the school's willingness to have an outsider interpret how it was developing its sense of self, during its first year of operation. While the overarching research question sought to investigate how a new primary school created itself as a school, the sub-question relevant to this article is *How does the new primary school forge relationships and partnerships with stakeholder groups?* This question investigates the school's focus on *whanaungatanga* as an underpinning school value.

The study centred on understanding how the values and relational focus was being established and sustained. The interpretive phenomenological project gained ethical approval through the School of Education's Research Ethics Committee (approval February 2019). The principal and deputy principals (a group of three) together formed the core research participants. Three members of the Establishment Board of Trustees (EBOT), a group of three teachers and a group of six parents provided other perspectives. All volunteer parent participants (six) responded to a newsletter notice seeking those willing to share their perspectives with the researcher, while individual staff members and EBOT members were invited to participate via the principal.

Phenomenology was appropriate because the study centred on a specific time frame in the development of the school. It constituted a snapshot of experiences from a self-selected group of participants about interpretations of *whanaungatanga* – how the school was developing its relational values and practices across all facets.

Data were generated through semi-structured, largely conversational interviews (some individual, but mostly group) during the middle of the first year of the school's inception. Analysis was thematic and grouped according to cohort (school leaders, EBOT members, teachers, parents) before cross-case analysis was undertaken. For the purposes of this article, findings represent evidence relating to interpretations of *whanaungatanga* from the perspectives of the leadership team and parent groups.

Background to the school

As a result of urban population growth, a new Aotearoa New Zealand primary school opened its doors at the start of 2019. Aotearoa New Zealand has a small population, and so it is important that I do not disclose identifying features of the school to contravene the basis of the ethics approval. The school occupies a site important to local iwi.[4] During the school's inception, iwi and local appointees consulted with the community to suggest a school name, vision and mission to guide the formation of the school. The research evidence was collected during the first six months that the school was open to students, although staff had been active for a considerable number of months in advance of this opening date. The staff spent that time before students arrived, to devise how they would enact its vision of hospitality through *whanaungatanga*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section converges findings and discussion. Findings focus on the relationship between values and practices in relation to the exercise of hospitality through the school's conception of *whanaungatanga*. The discussion provides an alternative perspective to more common contexts of hospitality, offering a context where Te Ao Māori values underpin the entity's expression of hospitality.

An initial task for the newly appointed principal and deputy principals, was to develop a set of values to underpin the vision and mission established by the EBOT. The values they devised connected with aspects of *whanaungatanga* and relational practice – both considered important in Aotearoa New Zealand education. Royal for example, explains that 'whanaungatanga is the interconnectedness of all things in the world' (1998: 5). This view resonates with the school's desire to honour its connection with local iwi, and, more broadly, developing methods to foster reciprocity in connecting the school to its local community. Unlike most schools, it had no existing reputation to leverage in its favour, since it had just been created. Word of mouth and reputation are as important in education as they are in commercial hospitality contexts, and the school deliberately spent time developing its community presence to initiate its practices of hospitality and establish the values it wished the community to understand as important to the school.

Achieving a goal of developing interconnectedness and strong relational practices has meant considerable active deliberation, focus and effort. The principal, for example, said that he 'never wants to lose sight of being able to have great conversations with teachers and students and what goes on in classrooms', which implies a desire to not only build relationships, but also develop local intelligence to discern needs, perspectives and issues. Through constant checking of the community's perceptions of the school and engagement with

4. iwi = tribe.

it, he could judge the extent to which the school was developing harmony and establishing a sense of positive equilibrium. One mechanism was a community survey to check perspectives within six months of the school opening. Perhaps such actions are about paying attention to the 'interconnectedness of all things' (Royal 1998: 5). In hospitality terms, it translates to looking after everyone in the 'house'; that 'guests' are safe and served well with the systems of the establishment working seamlessly to achieve good service.

While a commercial enterprise might use customer satisfaction surveys, checking the school community's perceptions can be achieved through events involving food as expressions of hospitality. For instance, during the research interview with whānau/parents, the school receptionist provided refreshments to the group. For staff, the Friday lunchtime barbeques are intentionally relational, professional and social. They are low-key occasions for talk and 'checking in'. As the principal argued, checking the perceptions of the members of the community (including staff) means being alert to potential issues or emotional strain.

Byrne argues that '[f]ood is commonly associated with ordinary routines of everyday life. Food and eating practices help to create routines, rhythms and rituals' (2016: 274). Routines, rhythms and rituals are practices important for a school to establish when it's new. Acts of hospitality may aid that goal. Aligned with such a goal, the school, through its focus on *whānaungtanga*, appears to be acting on this: that 'genuine hospitable behaviour requires a motive, and these motives include a concern for the welfare and pleasure of the guest' (Kelly et al. 2016: 115).

Byrne (2016) explored the significance of food and eating practices in and around the table in children's residential care centres in Ireland. She argued that such mealtime togetherness is important in both reinforcing social norms and creating opportunities for healing rifts, trauma and building relationships. Eating together demonstrates care, and operates as a symbol of security; food customs tend to be predictable and provides a sense of safety. Predictability offers sanctuary and comfort, perhaps even a sense of calm. For people living in residential care centres, the need for calm may be critical to good care. In Byrne's view, while food routines and customs may engender a sense of safety, predictability and homeliness, they can also operate as opportunities for surveillance. This resonates with the principal's purpose for the Friday barbeque.

The principal deliberately created opportunities for 'purposeful time together' (principal interview) in both social and formal contexts. One of these more social contexts was expressed through the Friday lunchtime staff barbeques. To facilitate the barbeques, staff take on different roles, swapping between host and guest, thus sharing responsibilities and embodying relational practices with peers. As one deputy principal said, a key goal is to 'weave people together'. In Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) terms, the school is developing its rituals: its own cultural practices around staff relationships and an ethic of care, establishing 'how we do things around here'. As the principal pointed out,

> my most important role is around culture. It's about having a continual focus on learner centredness because staff are also learners. My job is to build the people to build the school.
>
> (Principal interview)

Such a deliberate focus on relational and cultural practices possibly contrasts with cultural practices of commercial hospitality, where connections with others (other than its workers) are often relatively fleeting. Investing in building relationships with customers beyond the time they have transgressed the threshold, may not be a goal. On the other hand, Gruss et al.'s (2020) study pointed out how social media connectedness might mitigate fleeting connections between guest and host, possibly developing relational belongingness and sense of identity with the business. The study school understood the value of social media to connect with its community. It skilfully used social media channels to facilitate positive responses and relational connectedness with its community. Just as Kelly et al. (2016) argued that interpersonal relationships between hospital staff and their patients for patient well-being were important, so too are interpersonal relationships in schools.

Kelly et al. (2016) discuss 'public hospitality' in terms of brief personal exchanges involving little more than politeness. 'Personal hospitality' they argue, is an emotional investment – involving some sharing (Lashley's private versus social domains perhaps). 'Therapeutic hospitality', they argue, invokes moral and ethical dimensions. While Kelly et al. (2016) focus on hospitals as their context, their ideas have resonance in educational spheres. The ethic of care is important in both contexts, and ways in which guests, staff and others experience this, can affect the well-being of all involved.

One parent's experience as part of the focus group interview, is pertinent in relation to understanding ideas of well-being and connecting people as a community and the ethic of care. She spoke of differences between education in her home country, and her children's experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand. During one point in the discussion, and as other parents added their thoughts, the school's values were mentioned.

The parent admitted that she had not 'understood what [the school's] values meant', until the mosque shootings in Christchurch in March 2019. The response to this event both within the school community and across the country, created a light bulb moment for her in understanding why a school's values mattered to its community. She said she realized that through the school's focus on developing and sustaining strong relationships and an environment of inclusion, 'respect, safety and welcome' was fostered. She felt 'comfortable' belonging to the school community. Her comments suggest that the qualities intentionally being fostered in the school express *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*. Together, such qualities and values enrich conceptions of hospitality beyond the transactional and commercial, instead placing them in a sociocultural domain.

To assert the school's key values, the strategic plan goals are deliberately designed to strengthen *whanaungatanga* and *ako* 'rather than only academic goals of reading or writing' (principal interview). The major emphasis in the strategic plan links to the underpinning desire to embed values associated with *whanaungatanga* into the fabric of the school. The school leadership team believes this concept is central to developing their cultural practices of being inclusive, welcoming and relational.

As mentioned earlier, the school leaders actively communicate with whānau/parents and the wider community through social media and the school website. The website evolves constantly, as videos and photos, fact sheets of school data or interesting information from staff professional reading, are regularly added. Through these channels, the community connects with the school and regular assembly times celebrate achievements, however

small. Whānau time at the start and end of each school day, where parents are welcome in classrooms, highlights the school's desire to be open with the community.

Stepping over the threshold into this school is an experience that parents describe as 'welcoming'. In the parent focus group interview, participants characterized this saying:

> 'the teachers are friendly and welcoming'; 'in the whanau sessions [at the start and end of every day, where parents are welcome to join in], it's amazing how even in six months, the strong relationships have made such a difference'; 'we feel a part of the school, like our kids – we feel like we belong. We get listened to and taken seriously. Our kids are happy'; 'in the whānau sessions, we get asked how our day has been […] teachers have conversations with you and remember previous conversations'.

As a group, these comments suggest that hospitality is enacted intentionally and authentically. Once over the threshold, interview participants felt included, respected and looked after.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi ('Treaty o Waitangi')[5] partnership expectations

An important consideration for all schools that may not apply to commercial entities, relates to *Tiriti* ('Treaty') partnerships. A parent focus group participant, in observing that 'the vision of the school is clear', went on to remark that even while the school had few Māori students, the school nevertheless celebrated Māori values. She noticed that 'every child does kapa haka[6] and all students participate in daily karakia [blessings]'. To her, such practices indicate the centrality of a bicultural partnership demonstrating inclusion, which is modelled daily in small but significant ways.

Espoused and enacted values link closely to concepts central to *manaakitanga*. The school's practices, as interview data indicate, demonstrate kindness, respect and reciprocity. And if we accept Royal's view that *whanaungatanga* is about the interconnectedness of all things, then students, staff, parents and school leaders benefit from this approach, as do visitors to the school. From the perspectives of those who cross the threshold of the school, they appear to experience what Lashley described as the nature of hospitality: a 'set of behaviours which originate with the very foundations of society' and which, 'together with mutuality and reciprocity, associated originally with hunting and gathering food, are at the heart of collective organization and communality' (2000: 4).

In essence, this school's practices demonstrate and involve 'mutuality and exchange […] [as well as] feelings of altruism and beneficence' (Lashley 2000: 4). Heal's (1990) view, that the duty of hosts to both neighbours and strangers is moral, also suggests that ideas of hospitality and its nature are located within societies' views of culture, custom and ritual as well as the natural order of things. In the context of this school and others in Aotearoa New Zealand, which deliberately foster relational practices, and honour Tiriti (Treaty) partnership expectations, Lashley's and Heal's views appear to connect with Māori conceptions, customs and practices of hospitality, while also suggesting expressions of Bourdieu's (1984) habitus. The school celebrates the bicultural nature of the country in visible and intentional ways using *whanaungatanga* as a core value. This is expressed through its acts of hospitality. The more

5. Te Tiriti o Waitangi: a founding document signed in 1840, between the British Crown and iwi. This Treaty is pivotal in New Zealand law, cultural partnerships and politics, and is an essential expectation to address in schools. There is an English version, which differs from the Māori one.

6. Māori dancing and chanting in groups as an expression of cultural identity.

inviting and hospitable a school is in welcoming guests, the more likely it is to sustain a positive reputation in the community and focus on positive relational practices.

Threshold spaces matter, marking points of transgression, arrival and departure. When considering participants' views about the school's practices, we infer that the school's focus on deliberately nurturing and relational practices resonates more closely with *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*, rather than transactional forms more common in commercial hospitality contexts.

CONCLUSION

Gordon and Whitty (1997) reviewed the influence of business thinking in education as it affected the educational reform zeal of the 1980s. Business thinking was predicated on a neo-liberal view of education, seeing it as a private, rather than public good, and argued that schools would do better if they operated as small businesses, for competition would lead to improvements and efficiencies. This business influence was not only occurring in New Zealand, but elsewhere (Howard and Preisman 2007). As Gordon and Whitty suggested, a common view about schools through a neo-liberal lens was that the 'combination of school autonomy and market forces provided the best recipe for school improvement' (1997: 456). However, business models had unintended consequences when applied to schools.

One consequence of this influence was that schools became more insular and less collaborative (because they had to compete, not collaborate with other schools). Instead, they looked to efficiencies that made sense in a business context, but did not necessarily benefit educational outcomes and goals. Structurally, the insularity of schools created larger inefficiencies with many processes being replicated across schools rather than streamlined.

In the decades since these structural and political changes were initiated, there are clear signs that schools are rediscovering the relational and cooperative practices that support inclusivity and diversity, resonating with culturally responsive pedagogies (Bishop and Berryman 2006). Relational practices had been dismissed in the earlier drive to apply market forces thinking to educational contexts.

Te Kotahitanga research and professional development project work in secondary schools (Bishop and Berryman's 2006) provided clear evidence that relationships in schools mattered, and more so for traditionally marginalized school learners. Participant students' views led Bishop and Berryman to conclude that all students

> identified the relationships they had with their teachers as the most influential factor in their ability to achieve in the classrooms […] [This related to] teachers caring for them, having high expectations of them [and] knowing what students needed to learn. [It also related to teachers] knowing how to lead students to this knowledge, and being able to manage classrooms in ways that support their learning.
>
> (2006: 254)

Threshold spaces matter. As students cross spaces from outside classrooms into them, they may experience feelings somewhere on the continuum from alienated to included. The practices of the 'host' – teachers – matter, for the 'host' is the one who can provide access to others about 'how things get done

around here' when boundaries are crossed for the first few times. Schools focusing on building community succeed better in creating hospitable environments for everyone crossing their threshold spaces. They take their role of host seriously, working hard to initiate and sustain positive relationships.

There may be tensions between Heal's (1990) view about the duty of hosts to act in moral ways (to both neighbours and strangers) and Jordhus-Lier and Underthun's (2014) suggestion that hospitality businesses position both workers and customers as strangers. If hosts (the businesses) are to treat both workers and customers morally, it implies both an ethic of care and a relational frame of reference. In casting both workers and customers as strangers, there is a sense of keeping people at arm's length. In the latter case, how then might workers or customers learn the cultural practices of the business?

Perhaps the arm's length perspective in some businesses echoes the neoliberal drivers in the 1980s in schools, as it unnecessarily dismantled some core educational behaviours. Many schools, as well as Te Ao Māori, have developed strong *habitus* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). This habitus includes the local cultural practices that operate within their moral compasses, which expect that hosts will always treat visitors and workers well. Overall, this is likely to develop positive relationships for the good of all. In an educational sense, students, teachers, whānau/parents and staff can practise kindness and respect that spills over to *manuhiri* (visitors). If similar practices also go hand in hand with developing academic success, then schools are more likely to build good citizens who can contribute positively to their society as adults and take their place as caring hosts in commercial contexts. This is an educational social capital contribution to explorations of hospitality. The contribution connects with the journal's aims and scope, where 'hospitality' is a 'metaphor to analyse social behaviours and to understand hospitality as a business and cultural phenomenon'.

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