Listening to the Voices of Year 13 Māori Students

A case study in a New Zealand Co-educational Mainstream Secondary School

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Abstract

This research focuses on listening to the voices of Year 13 academically successful Māori students in a large, urban, mainstream, co-educational, decile 4, New Zealand secondary school. Traditionally, researchers have tended to emphasise the poor academic performance of Māori students in New Zealand. In contrast, this qualitative case study, however, seeks to understand what influences and motivates the academically successful Year 13 Māori students who have gained the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 and who returned to school to study for NCEA Level 3.

Semi structured interviews as conversations with all thirteen Māori students who had achieved NCEA Level 2 formed the basis of this research. Five of their parents, seven of their teachers and the principal were also interviewed.

The findings show that these students all stress the importance of their family, in particular, one family member or significant adult in their lives who valued education and supported the student, influencing and encouraging their motivation and self-efficacy. Building positive relationships with their teachers was the next strongest influence on their academic success followed closely by the positive influence of their friends. Self-motivation was mainly extrinsic. The students perceived that the principal had little effect on their individual achievement.

The teachers also acknowledge the importance of building positive relationships with their students and acknowledge the benefits of the reflective practice provided by the Te Kotahitanga project in highlighting this factor.

The findings suggest the excellent initiatives currently taking place in the school need to be continued or strengthened and that further interventions which target particular Māori students, rather than are global across the school, should be introduced.

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To the research participants – students, parents, teachers and the principal - who so willingly gave of their time, I extend my sincere gratitude. Without the enthusiasm of the students, the dedication of the parents and the commitment of the principal and teachers to furthering learning and the achievement of Māori students, this thesis would not have been possible.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Setting the scene

One of the greatest challenges for schools today is the huge scale of the problems that schools are expected to address. Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) suggest that:

> Schools are expected to save children from poverty and destitution; to rebuild nationhood in the aftermath of war; to develop universal literacy as a platform for economic survival; to create skilled workers even when little employment beckons them; to develop tolerance among children in nations where adults are divided by religious and ethnic conflict; to cultivate democratic sentiments in societies that bear the scars of totalitarianism; to keep developing nations economically competitive and help developing nations to become so – essentially, to make restitution for all the sins of the present generation by how educators prepare the generations of the future (pp. 17-18).

While some sections of the community hold schools accountable for a wide range of issues and expect schools to be almost miracle workers, there are obvious limits to the challenges that schools and, in particular, teachers must realistically face. The primary focus for schools must always be on learning.

One existing challenge that cannot be ignored, and must be seriously considered, is that of raising the achievement levels of Māori students in New Zealand secondary schools. While improvements have been made, the statistics illustrating the educational gap between Māori and non-Māori students are still a major cause for concern. Ladson-Billings (2006) prefers to refer to this disparity in achievement between races as the "education debt" which has accumulated over time and includes historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components. Providing equitable educational opportunities which enable all students to reach their full potential is an issue of social justice and schools have an ethical responsibility to do all in their power to achieve this goal. In particular, Māori students are under

represented in Year 13 of New Zealand secondary schools. In 2007, for example, 43.9% of Maori students gained the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 or above, as compared to 65.5% of the total number of students (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.5).

Considerable research, much of it referred to as deficit theorizing, has focused on reasons for the underachievement of Māori students (Bishop, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Research for this thesis, however, sought to understand the positive reasons for the academic success of the Year 13 Maori students who have achieved rather than the negative reasons for the failure of many Māori students who have not achieved. Gaining a deeper understanding of these reasons is necessary if greater academic success for Māori students is to be achieved. Going to the source, that is, the students themselves, and listening to their voices, along with the voices of their teachers, parents, and the principal, was deemed to be the most effective means of gaining this deeper understanding.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this thesis was to do an ethnographic case study in a large, urban, co-educational, mainstream, decile 4, New Zealand secondary school. The focus of the case study was to examine the reasons for the achievement of Year 13 Māori students who completed the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 in 2007 and who returned to school to study NCEA Level 3 in three of more subjects in 2008. I was interested to learn what influenced and motivated these students enabling them to overcome any barriers to learning in the junior levels of secondary school and at NCEA Level 1. I was also interested to understand what an effective leader is for these students.

Most research about Māori student achievement has been conducted in primary and intermediate schools with some research in the junior level of secondary school. The focus of much of this research has been on the underachievement of Māori students. This thesis has focused on reasons for the academic achievement of Year 13 Māori students based on listening to their voices.

The principal of the case study school had acknowledged the need for the school to make a greater effort to improve the results of its Māori students. The case study school became involved in the Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003) in 2007. This exciting programme, aimed at Year levels 9 and 10, focuses on teachers forming positive working relationships with students in a culturally appropriate and responsive context for learning in the classroom. Deficit theorizing is rejected and an impressive, comprehensive professional development programme focuses on gaining professional commitment and responsibility for bringing about change. I was interested to learn whether the focus on teachers' building positive relationships with their Year 9 and 10 students (which is emphasised by the researchers in Te Kotahitanga project) was as important for influencing and motivating the Year 13 students who had achieved NCEA Level 2 in 2007. Had the professional development of teachers involved in the Te Kotahitanga project affected their teaching of their Year 12 classes? I was interested to learn whether or not there was commonality among the students regarding the most important influence on their success. I intuitively felt that these successful Year 13 students may have also had a family member or significant adult in their lives who had played a central role in their achievement and motivation.

Structure of the thesis

The fields of literature that needed to be surveyed are covered in chapter two of this thesis. It includes literature on the historical background of Māori education in New Zealand to help set the scene and on the reasons researchers have given for the underachievement of Māori in mainstream New Zealand secondary schools. Motivational theory in education was included along with literature on effective leadership for the improvement of students' learning outcomes. The relevant importance of teacher/student relationships is widely covered in the literature along with the influence of family and friends.

Research methodology is explained in chapter three of this thesis and includes a discussion on qualitative case study research largely because of the bounded nature of the specific school context. Semi-structured interviews were used with students,

parents, teachers and the principal. Pseudonyms have been used throughout this case study to protect the identity of the participants. The two key open-ended questions asked of the students' (and parents) were as follows:

- What influenced and motivated you (your son/daughter) to achieve NCEA Level 2 and return to school to study for NCEA Level 3?
- What sort of leader do you think can make a difference to students' academic achievement?

Methodological triangulation was achieved through comparing the student voices with the voices of the teachers, parents and the principal. In particular, the key questions asked of the teachers were as follows:

- What strategies did you use to help your Year 12 Māori students to achieve in your Year 12 class last year?
- What impact, if any, did the Te Kotahitanga project have on the teaching and/or achievement of your Year 12 students?
- What sort of leader do you think can make a difference to students' academic achievement?

Chapter three also provides some discussion of the strategies used to address any power imbalance and on issues related to research about Māori by non-Māori.

Chapter four presents the findings from the analysis of the data and relies heavily on direct quotation of the open, thoughtful and honest student voices.

Chapter five provides a summary and discussion of the findings, recommendations for future action, an acknowledgement of the limitations of the case study, and concluding statements.

Researcher orientation

As a deputy principal and teacher of Year 13 students in the case study school, I have developed a keen interest in attempting to nurture the achievement of

academic success at this year level and ensuring that the students genuinely benefit from their final year at secondary school. It is particularly important for Māori students in the junior school to have high achieving senior Māori student role models who demonstrate the value of educational achievement.

As a non-Māori, I was conscious of the need to step outside my own cultural framework to ensure that I was in a position to conduct culturally sensitive research. I was both an insider, as a deputy principal on leave from the school, and an outsider, as a non-Māori researching about Māori issues. The kaumātua of the school strongly supported my proposal and believed this research needed to be done. The facilitator of the Te Kotahitanga project saw this research as supporting the work being done in the junior school with Māori students.

The opportunity to step back out of my deputy principal role, change my image, reinvent myself as a student/researcher and listen to the voices of these delightful Year 13 students, has been a refreshing, invigorating, learning experience as a senior leader in a secondary school.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review focuses on support for, and barriers to, academic success for Year 13 Māori students in New Zealand mainstream secondary schools. Current research into the academic achievement of mainstream secondary Māori students emphasizes the need to eliminate deficit thinking with its damaging consequences for Māori student achievement and emphasizes the over riding importance of quality student/teacher relationships in producing successful educational outcomes for Māori students, and indeed for all students.

The good news is there have been improvements in the numbers of New Zealand students, in total, and across all ethnic groups, achieving at Level 2 or above in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) (Ministry of Education, Education Report, 2007, p.5; see Figure 1.)
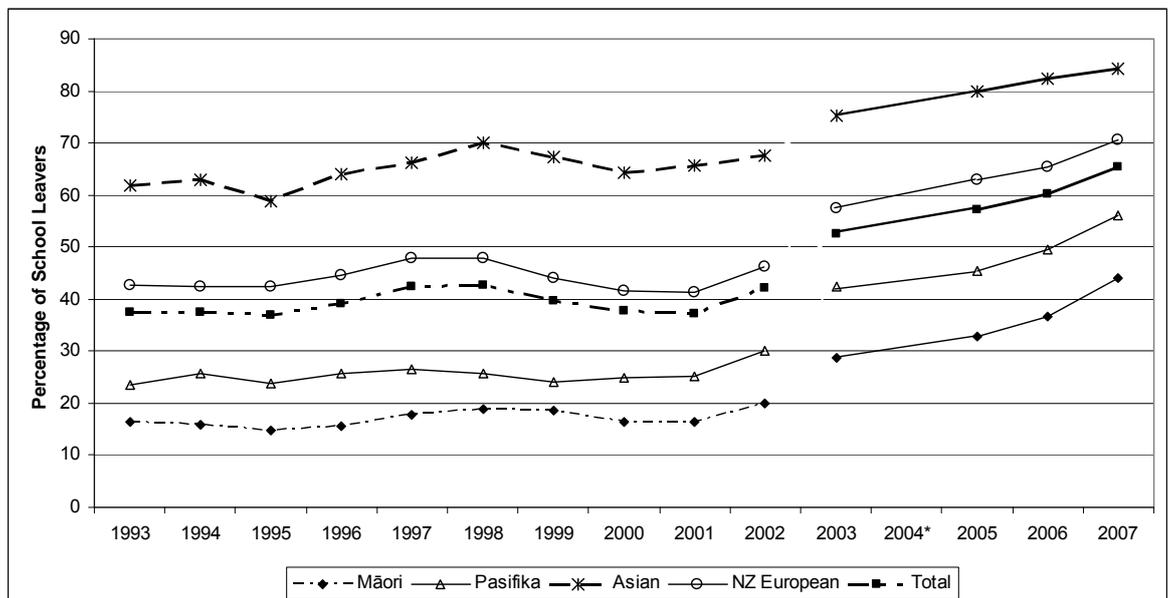
Figure1. *Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above, by ethnic group (1993-2007).*

From 1993 to 2007 the percentage of Māori students achieving with NCEA Level 2 or above increased from 16.3% to 43.9%, an impressive increase of 27.6%.

However, the percentage of the total number of students achieving with NCEA Level 2 or above, also increased - from 37.5% to 65.5% - a similar increase of 28%. While many Māori students are achieving highly at secondary school in Years 12 and 13, the fact remains that the percentage of those Māori mainstream secondary students achieving is still below the national average of achievement for all students. The gap has not closed.

In 2007 the secondary school in this case study had 55 Year 12 Māori students on the roll and 12 of them had achieved NCEA Level 2 by the end of the academic year. This is 21.8% of the year level and therefore below the national average for Maori students.

In seeking to understand how some Year13 Māori mainstream secondary students in this case study, have become academically successful at this level, a literature review was carried out. While there is considerable research in relation to primary, intermediate and some junior secondary school students, little has been said about the reasons for success of Māori mainstream students in the senior school, in particular at the Year 12 and 13 year levels. In acknowledging my own limited research experience, I sought to condense the research, absorb some of the knowledge and insight of others in the field and identify common themes, contradictions and silences in the literature pertinent to this research.

This literature review will therefore outline some of the most important recent literature that identifies barriers to learning for Māori students, including examining the background to the issues surrounding Māori student underachievement, deficit theorizing, power imbalance and its effects, the role of teacher student relationships in creating effective learning and the role of the family. This literature review will also identify some of the recognized theories about student motivation for learning, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the development of self-efficacy. It also briefly discusses the part instructional leadership plays in student achievement.

Part One – An overview

Background

The academic achievement of Māori students has been a concern in New Zealand educational circles since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Simon and Smith (2001) describe The Native School system from 1867 to 1969 as a system which emphasized the development of practical skills and aimed to educate Māori for employment in unskilled or semi skilled jobs. The quality of education, while extremely varied from school to school and teacher to teacher, never-the-less contributed hugely to Māori education. She argues that often this was because individual teachers chose to ignore the government policies of the day, particularly in restrictions on the use of the Māori language in the classroom. Ironically, the positive aspects of the Native School system, such as, the strong whānau (family) involvement, its emphasis on supporting the needs of Māori pupils and being an integral part of the Māori community, the teaching of the Māori language in school (despite government policy to the contrary), the practical approach to the curriculum, were largely eliminated but now seem to have been resurrected in kōhanga reo (Māori language pre school facility), kura kaupapa (Māori language immersion primary schools) and wānanga (traditional Māori place of learning) at the tertiary level where the revival of the Māori language has been strongly advocated and promoted.

However, the purpose of the Native Schools could be seen to be contradictory. "On the one hand, they may be seen merely as instruments of colonization set up to aid cultural assimilation and economic exploitation. On the other hand, they may be viewed as sites of opportunity for the educational aspirations of Māori" (Simon & Smith, 2001, p. 2). Simon and Smith maintain that while Māori wanted "to *extend* their existing body of knowledge, the state, through its assimilation policy, intended to *replace* Māori culture with that of the European" (p. 9). This policy of domination and subjugation of the Māori race is at the heart of the analysis of, and research into, the crisis within Māori education in New Zealand secondary schools today (Simon and Smith, 2001, p.8).

Since the Hunn Report (1961)) for the Department of Māori Affairs, there has been a considerable amount of research into the reasons for the low levels of Māori achievement. Walsh (1973) describes the Hunn report as a significant document because "it was the first comprehensive statement by a government department which recognized and sought solutions to the increasingly numerous and complex problems confronting the Māori in an urban and industrialized New Zealand" and because it provided a "definite base line against which subsequent changes could be measured" (p. 18). However, he also said it was "not a very profound document." because it "over simplified issues and was confused, to say the least, on the nature of acculturation" (p. 18).

Walsh (1973) acknowledges that Hunn (1961) did highlight the fact that education would pave the way for improvements for Māori in housing, health, employment and acculturation but points out that despite many years of apparently equal educational opportunity, Māori were still underachieving significantly. He argues that educationalists and administrators had been focusing on individual inadequacies such as in reading or in pre school education or in socio-economic causes such as large families and low incomes among Māori families but that they overlooked a most important aspect that of cultural identity and the relevance of the cultural heritage Māori students bring into the classroom. Twenty six years later this view is supported by Bishop and Glynn (1999).The Hunn Report also promoted the idea that Māori poverty and disadvantage were caused by their own choices to live a primitive life with outdated and inappropriate cultural traditions rather than by "socioeconomic or structural difficulties that involved power balances" (pp. 9-10).

In 1966, third form Māori pupils were described by Ranginui Walker (1973) as being three to four years behind in reading, having no occupational goals, being hostile to school, seeing no relevance in school learning and 85.5 percent of Māori pupils left school without any recognized educational qualifications (Maori Education Foundation, 1966, cited in Walker, 1973, p. 110). Walker goes on to identify four propositions explaining Maori educational underachievement from the point of view of the minority culture. He argues that, because teachers are predominantly Pākehā (a non Māori of European descent) and monocultural, they

are not tuned to the minority-group needs. Education is delivered from within a single cultural frame of reference, that is, one of Western European origin and middle class orientation. Consequently, he argues, Māori children see little relevance to them in the education system and therefore Māori have an "ambivalent" attitude to education. "The Māori desires education as a means to improve life chances, yet at the same time he fears education for its alienating effect on the individual" (p.112).

Walker (1973) describes the identity conflict of the Māori child which he says is "deepened in the classroom by the teacher who is insensitive to biculturalism" (p.114) and believes that the school will be called upon increasingly to "play its part in socialising ethnic minorities in their social identities" (p. 121). This idea of teachers' insensitivity to biculturalism and monocultural practices is developed much further and more fully by Bishop and Glynn (1999) when they argue that "If teachers do not appreciate the cultural differences that exist between themselves and their students, then any relationship formed will be limited and imbalanced" (p. 73).

Ten years after Walker's article was published, Metge (1984) confirms not only the importance of education to Māori but also the different world view. From her research during 1981-1983, she describes the learning strategies of Māori. She says:

> in Māori thinking knowledge is precious: it is a taonga or more correctly a collection of taonga (treasures) to be cherished. It has mana (spiritual power) and confers mana. It should be coveted and aspired to but not too easily attained. Therefore, it should be protected with barriers tough enough to test the commitment and perseverance of its seekers (p. 12).

Metge (1984) goes on to describe the importance of knowledge as a group possession which is to be used for the service of the group, the importance of each individual being an acceptable group member because for Māori "learning the skills of interpersonal relations and co-operation is more important than individual achievement" (p. 14). While studying on one's own is not seen to be important, learning is never-the-less seen as a very personal process in which "affection,

respect, awe, maybe even a love-hate relationship between learner and 'teacher' play a key part" (p.14). The importance of the relationship between teacher and learner is, therefore, highlighted, a view which is now dominating much of the literature on Māori academic achievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hattie, 2003; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman, 2007; Metge, 1984).

Metge's (1984) conclusions contrast the Māori view of education, which she says aims at the education of the whole human being, with the compartmentalization of the Pākehā way of education. Māori children, raised with a different set of premises, she saw as being disadvantaged in the school system. Pressure from the social and economic changes of the previous 50 years, Metge (1984) argues, adversely affected the effectiveness of the Māori way. Her penultimate comment is very telling and disturbing for us today - "We can respond to these problems by insisting that Māoris make all the accommodations, or we can change the dominant system to accommodate and hopefully learn from the Māori way" (p. 15). Twenty five years later, educationalists are still trying to resolve the problem of Māori academic underachievement. Is it because teachers have persistently, throughout the twentieth century, expected that 'Māori make all the accommodations'?

Deficit Theorising

Various researchers have accounted for the education gap between Māori and European/Pakeha students with a variety of causes placing the blame on Māori themselves. Lovegrove's (1966) explanation for this difference in achievement is "more probably attributable to the generally deprived nature of the Māori home conditions than to inherent intellectual inferiority" (p. 31). Chapple, Jeffries and Walker (1997) continued with this theme thirty years later, arguing that this education gap is mainly due to Māori parents having less money and education than non Māori parents and therefore the gap begins at birth. They concluded that "barriers like racism and teacher expectations are comparatively unimportant in influencing Māori educational participation and performance" (Chapple et al., 1997, p. 123). These authors rely heavily on research by Roy Nash (1993) to

support their views who, they said, found "family resources, both material and cultural, to be the key transmission mechanism of educational disadvantage, rather than the structures of the education system" (Chapple et al, 1997, p, 124). Other reasons included, unemployment, large family size, one parent families, poor reading resources, family resources, lack of pre school education and adverse peer pressure. They did, however, attempt to divorce themselves from some deficit theorists because they maintain fewer material and literate resources are the result of economic forces rather than choices made by Māori and they do concede that solutions to the educational disparity between Māori and European/Pākehā could be found within the education system.

Simon and Smith (2001) sum this situation up effectively and concisely for us describing the cumulative effect of all the educational research on Māori educational achievement from the 1960's through to the early 1980's as "the widespread perception by Māori that educational research was victim-blaming research, which simply regarded Māori culture, Māori people, Māori parents and Māori children as being culturally deprived" and laying blame on all aspects of Māori life. They go on to suggest that there is no acknowledgment of any "profound historical and political reasons that accounted for the socio-economic circumstances of Māori" or that "power relations might be a significant variable in any explanations of Māori society or that the 'disorganised' society in which Māori lived might have within it the resources to resist and recover" (p. 307).

The devastating effect of years of deficit theorizing by teachers, researchers and policy makers, highlighting blame and cultural deficiency, is illustrated for us through the three examples with strikingly similar consequences - Navajo, Māori and Bedouin education (Shields, Bishop & Mazawi, 2005). In the Māori view of "pathologising the lived experiences of Māori children", the minoritized group is seen as abnormal in some way as a product of power relationships describing pathologising as a "mode of colonization used to govern, regulate, manage, marginalize or minoritize, primarily through hegemonic discourses" (p. x).

Bishop (2005) argues that the majority of teachers in New Zealand have positioned themselves within this discourse but that they must stop blaming others, with the

resulting low expectations of Māori students, adopt an agentic position, adopt new discourses with language that can help "the development of new principles and practices, that in turn would create power-sharing relationships and classroom interaction patterns with in which young Māori people could successfully participate, perform, and achieve excellence" (Shields et al., 2005, p. 84). Shields, Bishop and Mazawi (2001) argue that improved academic achievement for all minoritized children will occur when teachers reject deficit theorizing, reposition themselves and make their teaching practice more socially just, listen to their students, get to know them, redress power imbalances and ensure that "education is just and caring, democratic and optimistic" (p.155).

Increasingly, educational researchers (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007; Macfarlane, 2004, 2007) and secondary school principals (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006; Peachey, 2005) are looking for solutions rather than looking to blame Māori themselves for the disparity in academic achievement of Māori and non-Māori students. Controversial principals, Caccioppoli and Cullen, and Peachy, writing from personal experience and from schools at opposite ends of the decile ranking system reflect this urgency to see our students achieve. Allan Peachy is a former principal of a large high decile New Zealand mainstream secondary school. He urges schools to "forget the tired old excuses that come out to justify under-performance by too many schools, forget the myths of decile rankings and all that politically correct stuff: academic achievement comes down to having high expectations, outstanding teaching and no excuses" (p. 24).

Caccioppoli and Cullen (2006), coming from a low decile school, argue that "'deficit theorizing' is simply a convenient cloak that covers both racism and incompetence" (p. 9) and absolves teachers from responsibility. While these principals have very different approaches – Peachy stressing the need for academic and subject expertise of teachers and Caccioppoli and Cullen arguing for a change to the current state school system with more designated character schools to cater for Māori needs – what is encouraging, as reflected in these two vastly different approaches, is the demise of deficit theorizing and the focus for solutions being placed back in the classroom where most influence can be had.

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It is interesting to note that as far back as 1973, a principal argued that "The quality of accommodation, equipment, and resource materials certainly affects education, but it is the teacher who has the greatest impact on the progress and achievement of any child" (Smith, p.137). He went on to say "More than any other single factor it is the relationship of the individual classroom teacher with the child, his understanding of his social and cultural background, that is most important. Willingness of the staff and school to recognise and meet the special needs of Māori children characterizes, and will continue to mark out, those schools most effective in catering for these children's education" (p. 140).

Macfarlane (2007) states the bottom line when he reasons that, "Although many challenges originate in the home, schools are duty bound to devise teaching and learning strategies that will help those students to achieve better outcomes at school" (p.37). It therefore can be argued that it is the building of relationships between teacher and student that is a key to improved Māori educational achievement in New Zealand.

Power Imbalance

Power imbalance as reflected in the interactions and relationships between teacher and Māori student has been identified by researchers as cause for Māori underachievement in education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006; Shields et al., 2005). Bishop and Glynn (1999), see the patterns of dominance and subordination resulting from the continuing colonization of Aotearoa/New Zealand, that exist in the wider society as being perpetuated within classroom relationships and within classroom pedagogy. They go on to say that these patterns "perpetuate the non-participation of many young Māori people in the benefits that the education system has to offer" (p. 131). Bishop and Glynn identify power imbalances that exist in traditional classroom relationships and promote culturally relevant pedagogies within a context of cultural diversity. They argue for the development of discursive classrooms over traditional classrooms. In traditional classrooms, they argue that, "the teachers remain dominant by retaining power over the issues of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability mainly by creating a teaching context of their own design" (p. 136).

Positive relationships between student and teacher, developed through power sharing, need to be formed for the benefit of the academic achievement of Māori students and indeed all students (Bishop et al., 2007; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2004; Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman, 2006).

Relationships - Student / Teacher

In order to improve Māori student achievement, Hill and Hawk (2000) not only identify the importance of the need for teachers to form positive relationships with their students, they go so far as to say that in low decile schools it is a "pre-requisite for learning" and "critical for motivation" (p. 18). While their AIMHI project was aimed at improving the performance of Decile 1 schools and had a focus on Pacific Island students, because of the high proportions of Māori students in the eight schools researched, the findings are very relevant for helping us to find ways of improving the academic achievement of Māori students.

A very full picture of the ideal teacher who has the ability to form positive effective relationships with his/her Māori students is provided by Hill and Hawk (2000). The rather daunting list of qualities they deduce that are needed in a teacher include: the abilty to smile, laugh, listen; work hard; have energy; enjoy the job; be optimistic; be life long learners themselves; be reflective practitioners; allow the students a "locus of control"; be conscientious; welcome student feedback; care about their students while still enforcing the school rules; be involved in the life of the school and have a desire to improve the lives of the students; understand the world of the student and have respect (Hill & Hawk, 2000, p. 17). Hill and Hawk found that one of the most important dimensions to the relationship between student and teacher is the respect teachers have for students and that this respect is reciprocal. They argue that to effect change in the classroom there must be teacher self-efficacy, accurate identification of development needs, the provision of a comprehensive professional development programme along with the translation of this into practice through careful observations, feedback and monitoring.

Hattie (2003) concurs that the relationships between teachers and Māori students is the major issue. He further argues that it is not socio-economic differences between Māori and Pākehā students that cause the achievement gap. He refers to evidence from the asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning) reading results which, he says, show there are still differences between Māori and Pākehā students within schools of the same decile ranking, that is, when the socio economic background is constant. Hattie argues that it is due to lack of engagement and that teachers need to determine how they can better relate to students from different cultures, "esteem culturally rich schools" and assist parents to appreciate that their children can learn to high standards" (p. 8).

While agreeing that the focus must be on relationships Cavanagh (2007) further argues that when the student teacher relationship is based on care, and when a variety of restorative practices are used, healthy relationships will develop and form the basis of the cultivation of a culture of safety so that successful learning can occur. Students also express the importance of having "a caring and approachable teacher who provides written feedback, one-on-one assistance and who is interested in the students' lives outside of school" leading to the student liking the teacher and experiencing motivational and achievement benefits (Montaivo, Mansfield, & Miller, 2007, p. 144).

Research by Fenzel and O'Brennan (2007) found that African American adolescents respond positively to a caring and supportive school environment and that a supportive and caring relationship with their teachers develops this climate. They also found that this student teacher relationship is more important for engagement and academic success than positive peer relationships.

A case study in an Australian secondary low socio economic school also concluded that placing relationships between students, teachers and also parents, at the centre of everything the school did, was the way forward to improving student engagement and learning (Smyth & Fasoli, 2007). Witmer (2005) adds a fourth "R" to reading 'riting, 'rithmetic in education, that of relationships, arguing that relationships are the building blocks of effective teaching and student success and that teachers, administrators, parents and students need to work collaboratively.

She advocates for educational psychology to be incorporated into their training so that they understand the importance of the fourth "R" and the importance of nurturing effective student relationships (Witmer, 2005).

Focusing on positive relationships, higher quality, excellent teaching, high teacher expectations about the challenges teachers set for students, supports the approach of the Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop et al., 2007; Bishop et al., 2003).

Te Kotahitanga Research Project

Several of the findings of Hill and Hawk (2000) and Hattie (2003) about building relationships in the classroom are mirrored in the Te Kotahitanga research project (Bishop et al., 2003). Commonality exists among four of the twelve points listed as essential for demonstrating that teachers care for their students: teachers understand the world of the students as Māori teenagers; they can be trusted – they keep confidences; are giving of themselves; participate with students in a variety of ways.

What is strongly emphasized in the Te Kotahitanga project, however, is the importance of teachers accepting power-sharing. "When power is shared by those [teachers] who currently maintain control and dominance over others (students), then those in powerful positions will better understand the world of the 'others'; those 'othered' by power differentials will be able to more successfully participate in educational systems" (Bishop et al., 2003, p. 25). "Cultural domination and preconceptions by teachers means that teachers expect students to continually adjust their understanding to that of the teacher" (p. 22). This is reminiscent of Metge's (1984) comment with regard to teachers' insistence that Māori students will 'make all the accommodations'. What Bishop et al., (2003) see as "problematic" (p. 92) for improving the academic achievement of Māori students is that, from their research, they believe it is clear that it is mainly teachers who identify Māori students themselves, their homes and/or the structure of the school as the main influence on Māori achievement and that therefore the repositioning of teachers through professional development is urgently needed.

The Te Kotahitanga project is focused unflinchingly on improving Maori student participation, engagement and achievement in the classroom (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop et al., 2007; Bishop et al., 2003). Accepting the need for improved teacher student relationships and interactions for all students, it provides a means of implementing a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy of Relations through the Effective Teaching Profile developed from the research (Bishop et al., 2003). The professional development that accompanies this project provides understandings of anti-deficit theorizing and agentic positionings of teachers so that they see themselves as change agents who can make a difference to students' learning. The Te Kotahitanga project has proven successful results in literacy and particularly in numeracy performance during phase three of the project (Bishop et al., 2007). By eliminating deficit thinking, demonstrating that they care for their Māori students in their class as Māori people, having high expectations of Māori students' learning and being well-prepared and curriculum competent, the Te Kotahitanga researchers believe that teachers will go a long way to closing the educational gap or addressing the "educational debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006) owed to Māori children.

The Te Kotahitanga approach requires first of all a commitment by teachers to build caring and learning relationships and interactions with Māori students. Secondly, teachers must have high expectations of Māori students and really believe that they can improve their achievement. Thirdly, students are able to take responsibility for their learning and performance (Bishop et al., 2007). The researchers in this project utilized a triangulation mixed methods design which allowed for one type of data to inform another "resulting in the picture of the process of implementing Te Kotahitanga into the classrooms of project teachers in the 12 participating schools" (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 5).

While the data gathered is impressive, concern has been expressed that consideration has not been given to other initiatives operating within schools at the same time, for example, the Literacy and Numeracy Projects which may account for some improvement in results, and also to the question of whether or not there is sufficient baseline data on teachers in the project to confirm that participation in the Te Kotahitanga project has changed their attitudes (Openshaw, 2008).

Teachers' Responsibility for Student Achievement

A major focus of the Te Kotahitanga project is on the teacher accepting the responsibility for Maori student achievement because that is the area that teachers have control over (Bishop et al., 2007). Teachers can not change the home, financial, social and emotional contexts from which their students come. This premise is realistic but also has some inherent dangers for the teaching profession as a whole and could lead to a new deficit theorizing of blaming the teacher for lack of student achievement. Martin Thrupp (2008) argues that the Government and some researchers want teachers to accept responsibility, and therefore the blame, for student underachievement. He refers to this as the "politics of blame" (p. 2) and is concerned that teachers may be made the scapegoat for wider problems of social justice such as poverty, as researchers move from focusing on school effectiveness to teacher effectiveness.

Thrupp and Lupton (2006) describes the contextualization agenda for educational research, policy and practice which requires an analysis of the local, social and political contexts of schools including the differences in student intake (not merely acknowledging that diverse backgrounds exist) which would allow for "design interventions" or "contextualized policy responses that might better meet the needs of specific schools and teachers (p. 13-14). Further, Thrupp argues that overemphasis on the power of quality teaching can lead to counterproductive policies of target-setting for experienced teachers around student achievement and performance pay and a failure to acknowledge that it is easier to demonstrate achievement in some contexts than others. This caution must be acknowledged to ensure our teachers are not burdened with the full responsibility for Māori student achievement, to the detriment of recruitment and retention of teachers in New Zealand. While teachers should take the agreed upon leadership role, student motivation must also be considered.

Part Two - Motivation and Learning

Qualifications

There is a general assumption among many educators that once students reach the senior school the qualification they are enrolled in is a sufficient motivator for students to achieve e.g. (Bishop et al., 2003, p. 10). This is not, necessarily, the reality. In the Ministry of Education Report (Meyer, McClure, Walkey, McKenzie, & Weir, 2006 June), students report that it is hard to be motivated to do more than the 80 credits required for the NCEA, that there is little motivation to achieve with Merit or Excellence as there are no extra credits allocated for that, and that they could leave out parts of a course or could choose not to sit external exams if they had enough credits. While these comments can be seen as partly a qualification design issue, they do highlight the complexity of the issue when attempting to analyse what motivates senior students to achieve. There are many other aspects to consider, over and above the role of the teacher/student teacher relationships and the need for qualifications.

Intrinsic motivation

Theories of educational motivation have long been based on the controversy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined as "the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" where the person is motivated to act, for example, for fun or a challenge rather than because of "external prods, pressures or rewards" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56).

In Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), a distinction is made between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action. Ryan and Deci promote the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) which they say allows satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence. This need for competence must be accompanied by a sense of autonomy, where there is a sense of choice rather than compliance. Home and classroom environments can support rather than thwart the need for autonomy and competence.

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What is also critical is that intrinsic motivation will only occur for activities that hold intrinsic interest for an individual, for example, that have the appeal of novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value for that individual (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, schools are educational settings with prescribed curriculum and teachers often require students to engage in activities that they may not all find intrinsically interesting and which require assessments and grades (Good & Brophy, 2000).

Despite this, Good and Brophy (2000) argue that students' intrinsic motivation to learn can be encouraged through activities that are interesting and relevant, for example, adapting activities to students' interests, having interactive lessons, providing immediate feedback, including game-like features into activities, providing opportunities to interact with peers. This scenario reinforces the need for effective student/teacher relationships as described above.

Good and Brophy (2000) also stress that it is people who generate intrinsic motivation not merely interesting tasks which students see as valuable, and teachers must provide guidance as to how to go about learning it. They argue that teachers should, for example, model an interest in learning, communicate desirable outcomes, project intensity, enthusiasm, curiosity. From a goal theory perspective, teachers should encourage students to adopt learning goals rather than performance goals. Intrinsic motivation appears to become weaker and extrinsic motivation more obvious as students move further into secondary school.

Secondary students need autonomy and control, which is not always encouraged, but giving them the opportunity to make choices and have an influence on their own learning and school participation is supported in research theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is "external to the student or the task at hand" (Strong, Harvey, & Robinson, 1995, p. 9) and is "a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 60).

Kohn (1993) maintains that reliance on factors external to the task and to the individual undermines students' intrinsic interest in the material and consistently fails to produce any deep and long lasting commitment to learning. Good and Brophy (2000), however, disagree and argue that the undermining of intrinsic motivation is not likely except when students are rewarded merely for participating in activities or increasing performance rather than for increasing effort when all students in the class have an equal or reasonable chance at success.

The argument that extrinsic rewards undermine people's intrinsic motivation is challenges by Cameron and Pierce (2002). These researchers claim that there are no inherent negative consequences of rewards and that "external social rewards build initial interest and accomplished performance until natural consequences take over" (p. 61). They argue that rewards can have a positive, negative or neutral effect on motivation depending on how they are administered. They provide a set of conditions under which negative effects may arise and argue that when rewards are given for success or meeting a performance standard, negative effects do not occur.

The tradition of separating extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is flawed according to Strong et al., (1995). Ryan and Deci (2000) support this argument further and challenge the view that extrinsic motivation undermines intrinsic motivation. In their "taxonomy of human motivation" (p. 61), Ryan and Deci describe a continuum from amotivation through extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, although they consider this is not necessarily a natural progression. They argue that "the social contextual conditions that support one's feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness are the basis for maintaining intrinsic motivation and becoming more self-determined with respect to intrinsic motivation" (p. 65). They point out that in schools "the facilitation of more self-determined learning requires classroom conditions that allow satisfaction of these three basic human needs – that is that support the innate needs to feel connected, effective and agentic as one is exposed to new ideas and exercises new skills" (p. 65). This view of motivational theory supports Bishop et al's (2003) work in the Te Kotahitanga project described above.

Attribution Theory of Motivation

The literature about motivation has been strongly influenced by Weiner's (1985) attributional theory of motivation. Weiner proposes that attributions are the causes perceived by the individual and may not be the actual causes. The perceived attribution produces a psychological consequence and behaviour consequence regardless of the actual cause. The causal dimensions are categorized as:

- stability – how stable the cause is over time

- locus – whether the cause is internal or external to the person

- control – whether the cause is controllable or uncontrollable

When people attribute their failures to stable causes such as lack of ability, they are more likely to lose motivation; whereas if they attribute failures to unstable causes such as effort they are more likely to persist or try harder (Weiner, 1985). Pintrich & Schunk (1996) confirm that research findings from the use of the classification into these dimensions – stability, locus and control - have been consistent in determining how students perceive the reasons for their success or failure (attributions) and that these attributions can influence their expectancy for success, their self efficacy and their actual achievement behaviour.

Attribution theory has implications for teachers in helping them understand not only student behaviour but also their own behaviour. Pintrich & Schunk (1996) argue that the teacher must become a "scientist" of student behaviour collecting data, asking other teachers how the student behaves, keeping a portfolio of student work and analysing when they do their best work. They further argue that teachers should avoid attributional biases and not rely on initial perceptions of the student based only on a few interactions. Teachers should maintain positive beliefs about student capabilities and attribute any student failure to controllable and unstable causes such as lack of effort (on teachers' or student's part) rather than to the student's stupidity.

Teachers can support students to link their successes and failures to their own efforts. Alderman (1990) takes attributional theory a step further by proposing four links to success:

- Link one- setting proximal goals rather than long term goals;
- Link two – identify learning strategies;
- Link three – successful experience of achieving a learning goal rather than a performance goal;
- Link four – attribution for success, linking success to personal effort or ability.

This Links-to-Success model aims to provide a framework for fostering students' motivation for success and self worth and to help students take responsibility for their learning. Closely related to these ideas are views of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy

Self-perception of ability and ideas of self-efficacy are major components of motivational theory (Alderman, 1999). Self efficacy is a judgment that students make about their capability to accomplish a specific future task, is context specific and is not just about their ability but the beliefs they hold about that ability. Referring to Bandura (1986), Alderman describes four sources of information from which self-efficacy arises: prior task accomplishment (one of the most influential sources), vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states. Teachers can use goals and feedback, rewards, self instruction for verbalization of strategies, participant modeling and various combinations of these. Students learn strategies that enable them to develop skills resulting in increased self-efficacy (Alderman, 1999).

Strategies can be taught, for example, the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) model (Alderman 1999) in social studies which includes coaching, modeling and scaffolding, and allows students the chance to practice strategies. "Mastery models demonstrate a task competently and confidently, while coping models make explicit the difficulties students experience in doing a task and the strategies they use to overcome these" (Alderman, 1999, p. 67). Alderman argues that such strategies can be used across curriculum areas to support and enhance self-efficacy. If students think they can do something – even if it requires hard work -

they are more likely to persist in learning activities, and their own self esteem will be enhanced even further when they do succeed (Meyer et al., 2006 June).

Eisenberger, Conti-D'Antonio and Bertrando (2005) agree that "a strong sense of efficacy maintains the intrinsic interest and high levels of motivation students need for academic success" (p. 12) but caution that self esteem and self-efficacy should not be confused. Students may retain high self esteem, even if they fail to achieve highly, because they have not placed a high value on achieving the task. However, if a student completes a challenging task that they did not think they were able to achieve, then the student becomes more self-efficacious. Poor performance, therefore, may be the result of lack of self-efficacy, rather than lack of self esteem. Teachers, they argue, must build self-efficacy in their students, teaching them how to overcome obstacles with sustained effort and "provide the student with the rules and strategies needed to exercise control and to reinforce their students in applying the strategies for achieving their learning goals consistently and persistently" (p. 8).

Self-efficacy is not the same as "feeling good about yourself" according to Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) who consider that it is more important to teach students strategies for "coping with difficulties and rebounding from setbacks" (p. 143). To support this process, teachers must have high instructional efficacy; believe all students are teachable; expect learning to require sustained effort; teach appropriate strategies; provide feedback and praise; use persuasion, rigor, and intrinsic interests; focus on student development and emphasize mastery experiences (Eisenberger et al., 2005) and they must be trustworthy in their advice (Schunk et al., 2008). Through these means, students will experience success, an integral part of the process of building a strong sense of efficacy. Success generally builds personal efficacy and failure undermines or lowers it (Eisenberger et al., 2005; Schunk et al., 2008).

Practical solutions have been suggested by Margolis and McCabe (2006) based on self-efficacy theory to improve the motivation of struggling students: enactive mastery (students' task performance particularly on moderately challenging tasks); vicarious experience (observing friends, providing direct guidance); and verbal

persuasion (which is credible and includes task specific feedback). These researchers present strategies for teachers which focus on building students' self-efficacy, which, they argue, in turn helps improve motivation to succeed academically and improve academic performance.

Strachan (2008) argues that momentum in a school setting is the strength of a student's engagement with learning activities, and that this comes from the integration of "skill" and "will". He presents two connected ways of thinking which create skill and will, that is, self-efficacy (students believe they can perform the task) and self-regulation (students believe they can control the factors necessary to perform the task) (p. 5). Strachan stresses the importance of teachers establishing supporting, caring relationships and a climate of trust in the classroom to reengage disengaged learners.

Teachers need to believe that they can make a difference. Hill and Hawk (2000) argue that it is essential for both students and teachers to have self-efficacy for change to occur because motivation comes from the belief that success is possible.

Parents must also support this process of building self-efficacy in their children because their role is vital.

Family/School involvement

Considerable research confirms that student achievement is positively related to parental involvement in education (Bishop et al., 2003; Eisenberger et al., 2005; Macfarlane, 2007; Reay & Mirza, 2005; Schunk et al., 2008; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Successful students usually have parent advocates who are involved in their children's education (Eisenberger et al., 2005). Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) link parental involvement to student motivation because it raises students' perceived competence or self-efficacy, conveys that the students are very important to their parents and instills within students the belief that education is valued. For adolescents, they argue, this parental involvement is particularly important for maintaining academic achievement because students may have friends who are disengaged or drop out of school.

Internationally, there are concerns that in a rapidly diversifying child population, there is a teaching profession which is largely white middle class and female but that teachers, regardless of their background, have a responsibility to increase their awareness of the beliefs and values of the families they serve (Barbour, Barbour, & Scurry, 2008; Bishop et al., 2003).

Challenging the view that parents of underachieving students do not care about their about children's education, Crozier and Reay (2005) stress the importance of dialogue between teachers and parents and. They argue that parents of black students in the United Kingdom have deep concerns about underachievement, which they believe in part stems from racism in schools, supporting similar findings in New Zealand (Bishop et al., 2003). They describe a context of "high parental anxiety" where parental involvement is based on white middle class practices, where there is miscommunication, where there are parents who have different values, attitudes and behaviours, who have neither the confidence, educational knowledge nor time to participate more fully in their children's school or education generally. They go on to advocate challenging the inequalities identified and promoting a more democratic and inclusive relationship between schools and parents for the benefit of the students.

A vast, sound research base attesting to the many benefits parental involvement can offer in education is referred to by Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems and Holbein (2005). The focus of their research is on student motivation as an academic outcome of parental involvement. They conclude that when parents are involved in students' education, students report more effort, concentration and attention, are more inherently interested in learning, and they experience higher perceived competence. Monitoring of school work, and the offer of rewards is linked to extrinsic motivation. Providing encouragement and praise is linked to intrinsic motivation. Students of these involved parents are more likely to take responsibility for their learning, "seek challenging tasks, persist through academic challenges and experience satisfaction from their school work" (p. 118). They suggest that parental involvement: boosts students' perceived control and competence, offers a sense of security and connectedness and helps students to

internalize educational values. In return, student motivation encourages parental involvement.

In an American high school case study, DePlanty, Coulter-Kern and Duchane (2007), found further, and more specifically, that parent involvement at school was considered less important to a child's academic achievement than parent involvement in academics at home. They also found that perceptions of that involvement were different because parents rated their participation greater than did their children or junior high school teachers. This suggests that the parents may have given socially acceptable responses in the surveys. If that is the case, it still reinforces the belief that their involvement is valuable.

A case study of African-Canadian academically successful students, involving listening to the student voices, found also that parental encouragement and support, high expectations and belief in the value of education was the main reason for their academic success (Codjoe, 2007). This support helped build self-efficacy, self-confidence, self reliance and the ability to counter any negative forces encountered. They conceded that the parents of these students had sufficient financial resources to enable their students to spend time engaged in their school work.

Mikaere and Loane's (2001) survey of 182 parents of Māori students who do well at school found that they came from a stable home environment, were strongly supported by parents (or caregivers) who take an active interest in their child's education and who themselves value education. These students have also had some form of early childhood education, are taught by teachers who are passionate about the vocation of teaching and the subject/s they teach, and are firm and consistent in their approach to discipline. They concluded that "the best results in raising Māori educational performance would come from an emphasis on improving the 'home' environment and thereby improving the 'home' ability to better contribute in the transaction [between school and home] area" (Mikaere & Loane, 2001 p. 43).

The influences of families/whanau were identified as most important for high quality, social and academic outcomes for diverse children by Biddulph, Biddulph

and Biddulph (2003). These researchers findings provide a complex picture of the family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand. They determined that SES (socio economic status) is highly influential with respect to achievement, but lower level of achievement is not inevitable. Human and material resources are important for achievement, especially where children live in families "(a) with high levels of (especially maternal) education, knowledge of appropriate pedagogy, and knowledge and ability to access other resources, and (b) which provide study facilities, computers and resources for wider educational experiences" (p.2).

The Biddulph et al., study (2003) does point out, however, that some of these resources can be provided by alternative means. Families with high levels of educational expectations have the most positive effects on their children's achievement at senior school. The quality of family ties, positive contact and interaction with extended family/whanau, rich home learning environments, social networks, the development of cultural identity and sense of belonging all contribute strongly to student achievement. Other family factors, such as emotional climate, family interactions, activities and literacy practices, can also be highly influential. School, family and community partnerships including: integrated or comprehensive programmes addressing real needs of students and parents; incorporating school-like activities in to family activities; genuine home school collaboration; and the provision of additional educational resources, also contribute to a students' academic success. Families being treated with dignity and respect are essential for successful outcomes of any programmes offered.

Bishop et al (2003) acknowledge the importance of parents, whānau and community in supporting achievement but that relations between mainstream secondary schools and Māori parents are at a "standoff, exacerbated by discourses of blame and guilt" (p. 204). They argue that classroom relationships and interactions must be addressed first, changing failure to success, before home school relations can be addressed.

Conversely, Howard (2002) concluded from his study of 52 Australian indigenous students returning to school, that family support and positive expectations are the

most powerful motivators for indigenous students, followed by the influence of friends, which can be positive or negative, and finally teachers' interest, support and handling of disputes helped determine whether or not they attended school. In another Australian study of 432 parents, Jacobs and Harvey (2005) also found that parental expectations of their children's educational level made the strongest unique prediction of high achievement followed by the length of time they had maintained their expectations.

Māori parents acknowledged that they had to take "some responsibility" for ensuring their child did well at school and that "the relationship they had with their children contributed to their success at school", but these parents considered that "the major influence on Māori student achievement was "the quality of their children's relationship with their teachers" (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 19).

Part three – Leadership

Principal's Impact on Student Achievement

Decades of research into educational leadership and effective schools have consistently found that positive relationships exist between the behaviour of effective principals' and the high academic achievement of students (Cotton, 2003). Most current research, however, describes the principals' impact as indirect rather than direct (Cotton, 2003). While it may be indirect, it is never-the-less measurable and statistically significant (Hallinger & Heck, 1998) and complex being mediated through principal-teacher interaction (Leitner, 1994).

The leadership style that characterizes a principal's drive to improve the learning culture of the school is also a well researched body of literature. A transformational and instructional style of leadership is strongly supported in current literature. Stoll and Fink (1996) consider, and Southworth (2002) concurs, that effective leadership is the key to positive change within a school and transformational and instructional leadership is seen to be the best choice because it is an approach which transforms people's beliefs, feelings and attitudes and builds relationships focused on achieving goals rather than on tasks and

performance. Leithwood and Poplin's (1992) research suggests that "transformational school leaders are in more or less continuous pursuit of three fundamental goals: 1) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; 2) fostering teacher development; and 3) helping them solve problems together more effectively" (pp. 9-10).

Indirect effects of transformational leadership on both student achievement and engagement in school emerge through Leithwood and Jantzi's (2005) review of research between 1996-2005 indicating that positive effects on student outcomes are mediated mainly by school culture and teachers' commitment and job satisfaction. Hallinger and Heck (1998) concur that the principal's impact on student achievement is mainly gained through the actions of others who have more regular contact with students.

A further body of literature focuses on the principal's role in developing a collaborative school culture conducive to learning (e.g. Barth, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 1999; DuFour & Burnette, 2002; Fullan, 1992; Stoll, 1998). A school's culture, commonly referred to as "the way we do things around here", can work for or against academic improvement and reform, and is one of the most complex concepts in education (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Stoll, 1998). Stoll argues that it is complex because of the underlying mix that exists of different values and beliefs, norms, emotions and power relationships within a school culture. Fullan argues that principals have been encouraged to build collaborative cultures to help staff deal with a range of innovations and to concentrate on vision building which respects teachers' individuality and encourages continuous improvement and lifelong teacher development which is reflective and collaborative.

The process of shaping a culture is described by DuFour and Burnette (2002) as not so much building but rather as cultivating a garden as it is non-linear and requires vigilant responses to unanticipated problems as they arise. This garden metaphor indicates the complex work needed to establish a culture in a school which allows a learning community to develop. Barth (2002) succinctly describes a school culture as:

a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organisation. It is the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act (p. 2).

Barth (2002) further explains that each context is unique and therefore each culture is unique but also very important in allowing learning-centred leadership to develop and to achieve the goal of life long learning for students. "To change the culture requires the instructional leader to become aware of the culture, the way things are done around here" (Barth, 2002, p. 7).

Much recent literature commonly describes a number of interconnected cultural norms which need to be nurtured by leaders: shared goals; involvement in decision making; honest and open communication; collegiality; high expectations; life long learning; trust; acceptance of risk taking; tangible support; mutual respect; celebration and humour, (Barth, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2001; Silins, 2000; Stoll, Fink, & Earl, 2003).

The challenge for today's school leaders is to ensure that all students and their learning are placed at the heart of the learning process and recent literature emphasizes this, (Barth, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2001; Stoll et al., 2003). School leaders regularly are heard to complain that they get swamped by "administrivia" and that all their time is taken up in the management of the school.

Southworth (2002) suggests that over the previous decade, too great a distance had developed between educators' interest in leadership and management on the one hand and teaching and learning on the other. He argues for "an integrated approach to the study of leadership" (p. 10). Southworth says that we need "classroom focused and learning-centred leadership and these are leaders not only skilled in the art of leadership and management, but also knowledgeable in learning and teaching" (p.8). He goes on to say, "I want to advocate that nothing (or very little) should be decided in schools unless it can be justified in terms of children's /

students' learning" (p. 10) thereby strongly advocating learning organizations. This style of leadership is referred to as instructional and learning-centred leadership which is transformational to ensure continuous school improvement. This approach supports the view that principals' have an indirect but vital effect on student achievement because it is mediated through others, in particular, teachers.

The key focus of successful instructional leadership, therefore, is working with teachers to promote classroom learning (Blase & Blase, 2004; Southworth, 2002; Stoll & Fink, 1996). The American National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 2001) characterises effective instructional leaders as those who:

- Lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the centre.
- Set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults.
- Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards.
- Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.
- Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.
- Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

There is much at stake in a principal's style of leadership for developing an effective school which focuses on the key goal of achieving successful learning and teaching. Stoll and Fink (1996) refer to their own research from 1988 to 1996 suggesting that in attempting to bring about change "effective leadership is a key determinate in deciding whether anything positive happens in a school or a school system" (p.101). Learning-centred leadership is therefore vitally important in achieving the goal of developing successful learning for our students. It also means that the style of leadership must be not only instructional in which the principal is the lead learner but also transformational, distributive and shared

because to ensure successful learning and teaching take place in a sustained way, change is inevitable (Harris, 2003; Silins, 2000; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

There has been a much greater emphasis recently on schools being places of learning rather than places of teaching and the role of the principal has been seen to adapt to this change through a leadership approach which is distributive, as well as instructional and learning-centred. Distributed leadership would seem to be essential in a collaborative school culture as it is in contrast to traditional ideas of leadership which were based upon an individual managing hierarchical systems and structures. Harris (2003) argues that distributive leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership, in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively and "instructional leadership is everyone's work" (Lambert, 2002, p. 39).

In fact, distributive and learning-centred leadership are closely intertwined. Distributed leadership:

> is a shared and collective endeavour that engages all members of the organisation. It means the context in which people work together and learn together, where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals. This model of leadership implies a redistribution of power and a realignment of authority within the organisation.
>
> (Harris, 2003, p. 75).

In order to develop shared leadership the irony is that a strong leader, who may have had significant levels of power and influence in the organisation, will need to give up the monopoly on this power to empower others and involve them in the decision making processes. The concept of empowerment, therefore, is an important aspect of learning-centred leadership. Blase and Blase's (2004) research involving 800 principals showed that successful principals are first and foremost successful instructional leaders who "empowered teachers, fostered collaboration and collegiality, supported risk-taking and innovation, helped teachers become inquiry orientated and provided resources and time for professional growth" (p.181). This, in fact, begins to describe the key elements of a school culture which are essential for learning-centred leadership.

Stoll (2005) provides a precise summary of her key points for building capacity in a learning-centred community:

- Growing a learning culture
- Being inclusive and empowering
- Nurturing trust and collaboration
- Designing deep learning experiences
- Promoting inquiry mindedness and innovativeness
- Connecting people and ideas
- Ensuring supportive structures

Sergiovanni (2001) argues for leadership density. Deal and Patterson (1999) argue for deep shared leadership and collaboration. Blase and Blasé (2004) argue for shared vision, motivation, learning about cognition and learning from each other. Levin and Riffel (2000) consider educational leaders must value and model the symbols of a learning-centred community. While shared and distributed leadership is valuable, without the principals' modeling the symbolic actions and attitudes suggested, the ongoing task of cultivating a professional learning community which contributes to individual student achievement, will not occur.

Harris (2004) argues that the key to successful distributed leadership resides in the involvement of teachers in collectively guiding and shaping instructional and institutional development, however, she concedes that more research is needed to determine the relationship between distributive leadership and improved student outcomes.

This research reinforces the view that the principal's impact on student academic achievement is indirect rather than direct. However, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) stress that successful leadership can play a highly significant and frequently underestimated role in improving learning. They argue that the available evidence about the size and nature of the effects of successful leadership on student learning justifies two important claims: that "leadership is second only to classroom teaching among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" and that "leadership effects are usually largest

where and when they are needed most" suggesting the importance of building leadership capacities (p.3).

Gurr and Drysdale (2008) present a complex Australian model of educational (rather than instructional) leadership in which principals exert an influence on student outcomes (broadly conceived) through a "focus on teaching and learning which is driven by their own values and vision, an agreed school vision, elements of transactional leadership, and increasing school capacity, across four dimensions (personal, professional, organizational, and community)" (p. 14). They also take into account and work within the school context, using evidence based monitoring, and critical reflection to lead to change and transformation. This most recent model highlights the incredibly complex nature of educational leadership and the difficulty in clarifying any direct impact a principal may have on student achievement.

Little has been said of the students themselves in the literature referred to about school culture and the principal's impact on student achievement although Mikaere and Loane (2001) found that successful Māori students attend schools with strong leadership and where teachers share common goals and/or values. However, the focus of research on effective leadership for student achievement has generally been on what the principal does and how collaboratively he or she introduces and brings about change and improvement among the staff and the culture within the school.

Conclusion

The literature in this review provided a lens through which I was able to look when collecting and analyzing data for this case study on the academic achievement of Year 13 Māori students in a large, New Zealand, mainstream, decile 4, urban, secondary school. The understanding gained from this literature review of the historical background to educational research on the underachievement of Māori students, has assisted in the formation of guidelines and questions for semi-structured interviews with the Year 13 Māori students who have achieved NCEA Level 2. It has also given me an appreciation of the barriers and deficit theorising

that many of these students may have overcome. This literature, sourced from national and international research, has helped provide a focus for determining the relative importance of factors such as teacher/student relationships, the role of the family, individual students' motivation and self efficacy and the role of the principal and school culture in the academic success of individual students.

Chapter Three
Research Methodology

Introduction

The focus of this research is to understand what influences and motivates academically successful Year 13 Māori students, who have achieved NCEA Level 2 and are studying towards NCEA Level 3. To accomplish this, direct communication with students, their parents, their teachers and principal was considered the most effective way of finding out how they have overcome any barriers to learning in the junior school. I was also interested in finding out what constitutes an effective leader for these students.

In particular, I was interested in finding out about the influences and motivation of Year 13 Māori students in a specific, large, urban, co-educational, decile 4, mainstream New Zealand secondary school.

This research project therefore adopts the qualitative research methodology as the most suitable methodology to gain a depth of understanding for what influences and motivates Year 13 Māori students who are studying for NCEA Level 3, to achieve academic success. The interpretive paradigm in qualitative research, as compared to the normative, scientific approach, "is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 22) and interpretive researchers "begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them" (p. 23). Listening to the voices of year 13 Māori students who have gained academic achievement is a vital and essential ingredient in this research project.

Therefore, a brief discussion of qualitative research commences the discourse on methodology. Because the focus is on students in one particular secondary school, a case study was determined to be the best approach. The methodologies and methods discussed in this chapter include case study research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Cohen et al., 2000; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000, 2005), triangulation (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin, 1970; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Reinharz, 1992),

reflexivity (Delamont, 1992; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Kleinsasser, 2000; Schwandt, 1997), and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000).

Interviewing participants was the principal technique for data gathering along with collecting some documents, such as student attendance records, from the school's KAMAR data base, (the computer soft ware programme for school administration). It is therefore appropriate to include some discussion of interview techniques (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Cohen et al., 2000; Delamont, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Finch, 1993; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Kirsch, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Mutch, 2005; Oakley, 1981; Stake, 2000, 2005) and some discussion of the issue of power imbalance in research (Bishop, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999, 2000) and culturally sensitive research (Durie, 2002; Heshusius, 1994 ; Mies, 1993; Powick, 2003; Smith, 1998). Acknowledgment of kaupapa Māori research methods and the place of a non Māori researcher researching about Māori students is also addressed (Bishop, 1996a, 1996b, 2005; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1998).

This reflective process leads on to an explanation of ethical considerations, (Delamont, 1992; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Munford & Sanders, 2001; Tolich, 2001) such as anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and in particular the issue of respect in research, (Tilley, 1998), undertaken in the preparation for, and the execution of, the research process. I am particularly conscious of the fact that as a researcher I am both an "insider", in that I am a staff member and deputy principal on study leave from the school, and an "outsider", as a Pākeha researching about Māori. I am aware of the issue of a power imbalance in past research about Māori that has been taken from a Western monocultural world view, which has been raised by researchers (Bishop, 1996a; Bishop & Glynn, 1999, 2000; Smith, 1998) along with the development of kaupapa Māori research, and I will attempt to address these issues through methods such as the open-ended, semi-structured "interview as conversation" (Kvale, 1996, p. 19), and through the issue of respect and reflexivity in ethical and culturally sensitive research.

Part One – Research issues

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an "umbrella" concept (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam, 1998) covering several research strategies "that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). Qualitative research emphasizes "description, induction, grounded theory, and the study of people's understandings" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. ix). The researcher is the "primary instrument for data collections and analysis" and data are "mediated through this human instrument, the researcher, rather than through some inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or computer" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). The data collected is rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. A specific hypothesis is not being tested but rather the concern is with understanding behaviour from people's own frame of reference.

The qualitative researcher builds towards theory from interviewing, observations and intuitive understanding gained in the field (Merriam, 1998). Techniques of participant observation and in-depth interviewing are most commonly employed. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define five features of qualitative research:

- it is naturalistic as it has the actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument;
- it is descriptive with the data collected being in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers, including interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents, memos and other official records, and data are analyzed with all the richness of the original form;
- it is concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products and how people negotiate meaning;
- it is inductive and the theory is grounded in the data and abstractions are built up as a picture is constructed as the parts are examined;
- it is concerned essentially with meaning, how different people make sense of their lives and capturing participants' perspectives accurately.

In the field of education, qualitative research is an effective methodology. "Qualitative researchers believe that approaching people with a goal of trying to understand their point of view, while not perfect, distorts the informants' experience the least" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 24). A basic philosophical assumption is that "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6).

Qualitative research therefore strives to produce an interpretation of reality and a depth of understanding of the human condition, from the participants' perspectives. Leading qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) consider that the "new participatory, feminist, and democratic values of interpretive qualitative research mandate a stance that is democratic, reciprocal, and reciprocating rather than objective and objectifying" (p. 1118).

Consequently, the nature of this research suggested the need for a qualitative research approach.

Redressing Power Imbalance

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed by Lieutenant-Governor Hobson, on behalf of the British Crown, and 512 chiefs of the Māori people. While it was intended to establish a partnership of two peoples, Māori and Pākeha, and seen by Māori as a charter for power sharing in the decision-making processes of New Zealand and self-determination, in fact a pattern of dominance and subordination within a frame work of colonization has been developed (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1998). This situation has impacted upon much of the research conducted about Māori. Most research with Māori had been done by Pakeha researchers who did not step outside their own cultural framework or try to view the situation from the point of view of those being researched.

Following the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1985 which broadened the scope of the Waitangi Tribunal (which had limited powers to hear land claims from Māori) there was an even greater need for iwi/tribes to seriously develop their own research programmes. Māori were aware that "distortions of Māori

social reality [were made] by ethnocentric researchers overly given to generalizations" (Smith, 1998, p. 170). Māori researchers began seeking more appropriate ways of researching their own people and redress the power imbalance that existed. A kaupapa Māori research method was developed (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1998) which provided a greater understanding of the issues of the power imbalance that existed and lead to the strategies adopted in my quest for culturally sensitive research.

Kaupapa Māori Research

Māori began to resist, then challenge social science research and the drive to have Māori research Māori came to the fore in the 1990's. The most significant approach to emerge from this shift which occurred between Māori people being viewed as research objects and Māori people becoming their own researchers is that of kaupapa Māori research. This approach "challenges the locus of power and control over the research issues of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation, and accountability being located in another [non-Pākeha] cultural frame of reference/world view" (Bishop, 2005, p. 114). Tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) by Māori people is considered most important (Bishop, 1996b; Smith, 1998). This view challenges the traditional, individualistic research that has, in the past, mainly benefited the researchers and their agenda. Essentially,"Kaupapa Māori analysis must benefit Māori people in principle and in practice in such a way that the current realities of marginalization and the heritage of colonialism and neocolonialism are addressed" (Bishop, 2005, p. 115).

Kaupapa Māori research is participant driven, requires whanau (extended family) support, kaumātua (respected elder) guidance, aroha (love, warmth, respect) between the participants "evidenced by an overriding feeling of tolerance, hospitality, and respect for others, their aspirations, and their preferences and practices" (Bishop, 2005, p. 120).

Citing Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) and Esposito and Murphy (2000), Bishop (2005) finds common ground between kaupapa Māori research and participatory and collaborative action research in which information is "co-created". The

research participants establish and maintain relationships becoming members of a "whānau of interest" (a metaphoric whānau) who determine the research questions and methods of research. They use Māori cultural processes for "addressing and acknowledging the construction and validation/legitimization of knowledge" (p. 121). The use of "spiral discourse", with its seemingly circuitous pattern and in which opinions are aired, but may vary and waver, leads to a collaboratively constructed story, a consensus, with a jointly constructed meaning and a constructed "voice" (Bishop, 2005, p. 122). Researchers become involved somatically, that is, physically, ethically, morally, and spiritually and, rather than concern themselves with issues of objectivity or subjectivity, become aware of the lived reality of the participants (Heshusius, 1994; Heshusius & Ballard, 1996).

In this way the researcher has moved from merely gathering data towards "mutual, symmetrical, dialogic construction of meaning within appropriately culturally constituted contexts" (Bishop, 2005, p. 124). Through these means Bishop and Glynn (1999) argue that the power and control issues fundamental to research can be addressed. Bishop sums up the kaupapa Māori research approach by saying "it is Māori research by Māori, for Māori with the help of invited others" (p. 113).

Strategies to address the power imbalance

In order to redress the power imbalance in this study, I attempted to understand and absorb the concepts of kaupapa Māori research. I was conscious of the need to step outside my own cultural framework, to ensure that I could view the situation from the point of view of those being researched, and that I was in a position to conduct culturally sensitive research.

Mindful as I am of these arguments for a kaupapa Māori research approach when research involves Māori, as a non-Māori researcher I approached the kaumātua (elder) of the school where I conducted this research, and discussed the idea of investigating the reasons for the success of the Year 13 Māori students at the school. He was very positive and supportive of the idea and felt that it was research that needed to be done.

I also approached the facilitator of the Te Kotahitanga team who also considered that this research would be beneficial to Māori students in the school and would support the work the Te Kotahitanga team was doing for junior Māori students in the school.

While I concede Māori did not initiate this research, and in the strict sense of the meaning of the word, I was not actually an "invited other", the fact that I am an "insider" within the school as a staff member, that the support of the kaumātua was strong, and that I am aware of the need for culturally sensitive research to be done in an atmosphere of respect (Powick, 2003), I believe justified my research in this area. Linda Smith (1998) highlights the complexities of insider/outsider research describing a situation in her own research where she was very much an insider in a community of Māori mothers and children and yet became aware of being seen as an outsider at the time of interviewing because of her educational and socio-economic situation.

Further to this, Māori researchers, such as Russell Bishop (1996b), accept that "there is a cohort of highly skilled, professionally trained non-Māori who are becoming bi-cultural and are willing to work within Māori controlled contexts" and who also consider that "for pākehā researchers to leave it all to Māori people is to abrogate their responsibilities as Treaty [of Waitangi] partners" (pp. 17-18).

Several methods and strategies were used to ensure that this research was not carried out from a monocultural, dominant Western world view, that it was addressing the issue of power imbalance, that it was indeed respectful and that it genuinely set out to listen to the voices of the Year 13 Māori students with aroha, with an open, caring manner and in a spirit of "participatory consciousness" (Heshusius, 1994 p. 16)

Several helpful strategies for more culturally sensitive research for non-indigenous researchers such as myself have been suggested by Māori researchers. One strategy is that of personal development, including learning the Māori language, attending hui and becoming more knowledgeable about Māori concerns (Smith, 1998). This personal development has been a part of my ongoing

professional development as a teacher in New Zealand, particularly during the last 10 years.

A second strategy - consultation with Māori to seek support and consent (Smith, 1998) - was adopted with the consultation with our kaumātua and the facilitator of the Te Kotahitanga team in the school. Citing Graham Smith's first model, by which culturally appropriate research can be undertaken by non-indigenous researchers, Powick (2003) endorses the need for "an authoritative Māori person to guide and support the research, providing assistance to the pākehā researcher" and Graham Smith's fourth model "that of the 'empowering outcomes model' (p. 8) provides a third strategy, justifying research which aims to address the questions and concerns of Māori people and which has beneficial outcomes for Māori. This is a shift from previous approaches which, rather than aiming to benefit Māori, aimed to explain Māori behaviours for a non-Māori audience (Durie, 2002). The benefit to Māori, from the findings in this case study, will assist the school management team to understand what motivates and influences the successful Māori students, and provide appropriate strategies to both support them and improve those less successful.

A fourth strategy, stemming from Mies's (1993) discussion of feminist research methodology is to create the general feeling of "being on the same side" to help "overcome the usual barriers between people from different classes and cultures" (p. 81). As a teacher in the school, my commitment to the well being of the students has always been to the fore and the Māori students interviewed felt empowered and that they were benefiting the younger Māori students by being involved in this research and we were therefore "on the same side".

I also was sensitive to the fact that, as I am a deputy principal on leave from the school being studied, the students may have perceive me as an authority figure thus creating a further suggestion of power imbalance. To address this issue, I deliberately changed my image, for example, wearing jeans, to meet and interview the students, and to impress on them my change of status from deputy principal to student/researcher. During conversations and interviews, the informal environment, food offered, non judgmental approach, and jokes made about not

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having to worry about school rules, suggested this was a successful approach to a large extent.

Qualitative Case Studies

A case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied, the single most defining characteristic being "delimiting the object of study, the case" which is "a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries". It is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. It provides intensive "thick descriptions" and analysis of a "single unit" or "bounded system" which is "purposive" in its sampling (Merriam, 1998, p. 27).

Three types of case studies have been identified by Stake (2000):
- "Intrinsic Case Study" which is undertaken because the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case;
- "Instrumental Case Study" in which a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization, a typicality;
- "Collective Case Study" in which a number of cases are studied to investigate a phenomenon.

Stake (2000) considers that researchers of case studies usually have little interest in the advance of science and have intrinsic interest in the case. He argues that the aim is "to understand what is important about the case within its own world, which is seldom the same as the world of research and theorists" and that the case is described in sufficient descriptive narrative so that the readers can "vicariously experience these happenings and draw conclusions (which may differ from those of the researchers)" (p. 439).

This distinction between intrinsic, instrumental and collective appears to me to be too clear cut and that a more useful idea is to view these three types of case studies as a continuum from intrinsic through to collective. Stake (2005) later does acknowledge that intrinsic case study researchers do not avoid generalization as they encapsulate complex meanings into the final report.

The case study in this research is an intrinsic case study, with a focus on a specific group of students, the thirteen Year 13 Māori students who gained NCEA Level 2 in 2007 and returned to study NCEA Level 3, in a particular school, and includes some of their parents and teachers and their principal. This is the "bounded case" which has a specific limit to the number of participants involved and provides a "purposeful sampling". However, it is also possible to draw some conclusions that may be relevant to other cases of co-educational New Zealand mainstream secondary schools even though this was not the original purpose of the research.

Stake's (2005) list of conceptual responsibilities of the qualitative case researcher provides an appropriate guideline:

- Bounding the case, conceptualizing the object of study
- Selecting phenomena, themes or issues (i.e. the research questions to emphasize);
- Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues;
- Triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation;
- Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue; and
- Developing assertions or generalizations about the case

The last five items are equally relevant for qualitative research in general and apply to this research. Concerns expressed about qualitative case study research include issues of what quantitative researchers refer to as reliability and also include problems around researcher bias. Triangulation, the issue of respect in research and reflexivity are important aspects to consider in this regard as is the issue of power imbalance between researcher and participant.

Triangulation

Triangulation has been defined as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 112) and can help establish consistency between what people say they do and what they actually do. Denzin (1970) described six categories of triangulation. Four of these categories are frequently used in education (Cohen et al., 2000).

These are:

- time triangulation with its longitudinal and cross-sectional studies;

- space triangulation as on occasions when a number of schools in an area or across a country are investigated in some way;

- investigator triangulation as when two observers independently rate the same classroom phenomena and;

- methodological triangulation, using the same method on different occasions or different methods in the same object of study.

Methodological triangulation is most appropriate for this research study which involves interviewing students, parents, teachers and the principal, along with examining documents from the KAMAR data base at the school. Triangulation enables information to be cross-validated therefore giving greater confidence in the research results. The multiple sources of data serve as sources of confirmation or corroboration for each other. The use of documents further assists cross-validation as they possess a naturalistic quality because they are not produced for the purposes of research, nor are they affected by the process of being studied (Reinharz, 1992).

LeCompte and Schensul (1999) refer to triangulation as "the process of creating redundancy" (p. 131) as it involves confirming or cross-checking the accuracy of data obtained from multiple sources (the students, the parents, teachers, the principal) and the use of multiple methods (interviews and KAMAR documents). The use of the term "redundancy" implies that this process is superfluous or unnecessary but, while it may cast doubt on the accuracy of information and lead to the need for further data gathering, it usually permits the researcher to modify, elaborate, confirm or adapt the interpretation of data thus ensuring high quality research particularly when semi-structured interviews are the dominant source of data.

Research Ethics

"Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble" (Smith, 1998, p. 139). Four core

principles – autonomy, justice, beneficence and the avoidance of maleficence – underpin procedural ethics, requiring researchers to consider potential risks/benefits to participants and resolve issues of informed consent and confidentiality.

Due consideration was given to these issues after and pursuant to approval for this research by the Ethics Committee in the School of Education at the University of Waikato. Because the research participants were chosen for very positive reasons, that is, they had all been successful in gaining NCEA Level 2 in 2007, they were all, as 17 and 18 year olds, past the age requiring compulsory school attendance, any potential risks or harm seemed unlikely. Concerns raised about interviewing children (Munford & Sanders, 2001), therefore, are not relevant in this case.

My main concern was that, because I was a deputy principal on study leave from the school, their autonomy may be compromised and the students may not want to be involved or may have felt obliged to be involved. I deliberately chose to change my image and approach, as explained above, in order to show them that I was a student/ researcher not a deputy principal. The participants in this research met with me as a group so that I could explain the purpose of the research to them. They were then given an Information Letter giving full disclosure of relevant information about the research project and what their involvement would be if they chose to be involved.

Informed consent was obtained on the basis that participants have the right to decline to answer particular questions during the interview, to rescind any information provided, and to withdraw from the study, without prejudice, at any stage prior to two weeks after the receipt of the transcript. All agreed immediately that they would be happy to be involved. A smaller group, who had been unable to attend the first meeting, later met with me and also agreed to be involved. This response was significant to help counter the concern I had that the students might see me as an authoritative figure and feel obliged to take part. The second group had spoken with those who had attended the first meeting and found out all about the research and could have chosen to simply not turn up to the second meeting.

They arrived, however, full of enthusiasm for the project and also agreed to be involved.

Face to face or telephone contact was made, along with providing the Information Letters, for the parents and teachers involved. The Informed Consent was signed before the interviews took place. All teachers agreed unhesitatingly to be involved as well as five parents and the principal. Some parents did not respond to my letter or phone messages and therefore it was assumed they did not want to be involved or could not afford the time to be involved. Participants were sent a copy of the transcript of their interview for correction or comment. Although time did not allow "negotiated" or "co-constructed texts" in this research project, the students were shown the raw data findings in the form of coded charts and given the opportunity to add or amend any data attributed to them personally.

Anonymity was assured with the use of pseudonyms (despite many students saying they did not mind if their name was mentioned). Anonymity is particularly difficult to ensure in a qualitative case study such as in this research. Tolich (2001) raises the difficulty of ensuring anonymity, given New Zealand's small size, therefore, neither the name of the school nor the geographic location of the school will be mentioned. It is necessary in this research project, however, to acknowledge the state co-educational nature of the urban, mainstream, decile 4 school studied, to distinguish it from the quite different contexts of rural, low and high decile, total immersion or Kura Kaupapa schools.

While codes of ethics exist for most professions and organizations, Guillemin and Gillam (2004), however, question the relevance of these codes of ethics for actual practice and see them largely as offering only general guidelines for ethical practice in the design stage of a research project. The individual researcher must be aware that "any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, and ethnicity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19) and, consequently, be aware of any bias. Merriam (1998) reminds us that the "burden of producing a study that has been conducted and disseminated in an ethical manner lies with the individual investigator" (p. 219) who must remember that: "Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be

good and their code of ethics strict" (Stake, 2000, p. 447). Through the practice of reflexivity, the researcher is assisted in the quest for ethical, respectful research.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an on-going process of critical reflection permeating all aspects of the research process from the design stage of the research, through the data gathering, interviewing, participant observations and the construction of texts to the publication and dissemination of the findings (Delamont, 1992; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Schwandt (1997) further defines reflexivity as: a) critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical dispositions, preferences; b) an acknowledgement of the inquirer's place in the setting, context and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand and c) a means for a critical examination of the entire research process. Kleinsasser (2000), in considering the practical application of reflexivity, suggests the use of strategies such as written memos, member checks, an affirmation of continued participation and negotiation to ensure genuine reflexivity takes place. Reflexivity, therefore, helps ensure that respect is maintained in the research process.

Respectful research has been astutely defined by Tilley (1998) as "research sensitive to individual participants and research contexts, with both researcher and participants benefiting – research that included but pushed beyond concerns for ethical behaviour by the researcher" (p. 2).

The practical application of reflexivity in this research included:
- informal conversation to explain the research to the participants and give them an opportunity to ask questions before even receiving their information letter,
- clarification of the researcher's status and conscious adoption of student/researcher image,
- open ended questions in semi-structured interviews with no hypothesis to prove,
- field notes and diary memos recorded after interviews or meetings and regularly throughout the research process,

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- transcripts of interviews prepared and sent to each participant for checking and if necessary amending.

- informal meeting of students to provide feedback in chart form and for individuals to confirm researcher's interpretation of their own data.

- parent, teacher and principal interviews were used to support or challenge students' views.

Part Two - Data collection and data analysis

Semi-structured interviews

An interview is a "purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 93). It is used "to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 94). Kvale (1996) describes it as an "inter view", (p. 2) an interchange of views to obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to interpretations of the meaning of the described phenomena.

The semi-structured interview involves the use of a set of open-ended, guiding questions and therefore the interview is open to changes as the interview progresses (Mutch, 2005) and the order of questions is not predetermined (Merriam, 1998). This process allows the researcher to elicit respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviour and probe more deeply into topics and issues initiated by the respondent. It has been called "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose" (Kvale, 1996, p. 6), and a "guided conversation" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In a semi-structured interview as conversation, as opposed to a structured interview with a predetermined set of questions, clarification can be sought and the participants have the opportunity to reflect and explain, in their own words, subtleties and complexities that emerge in the conversation providing "rich data filled with words that reveal the respondents perspectives" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 95).

Interviewing appears to be a relatively simple way of understanding how people view their world. However, limitations have been identified. Qualitative researchers generally have begun to accept that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering. Kvale (1996) identifies an "asymmetry of power" as the interviewer introduces topics into the conversation and through further questioning "steers the course of the interview" (p. 126). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that in interviews "power, gender, race and class intersect" (p. 633) and the interviewer must take cognizance of the manner in which these aspects influence the respondent.

Bishop (1996b) addresses this issue by reference to collaborative storying as part of the kaupapa Maori approach to research. Kvale (1996) stresses the interdependence of human interaction and knowledge production. Feminist researchers (Delamont, 1992; Finch, 1993; Kirsch, 1999; Oakley, 1981) argue that open-ended interviews facilitate the establishment of rapport and democratize the research relationship. Fontana and Frey (2000) argue that interviews are "active interactions" between the participants leading to "negotiated texts" and with a desire to understand rather than explain (p. 646).

Semi-structured interviews go some way towards addressing these concerns and sit comfortably with Maori concepts of kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face to face) and hui (meeting) and can help "position the researcher with-in co-joint reflections on shared experiences and co-joint constructions of meanings about these experiences, a position where the stories of the research participants merge with that of the researcher in order to create new stories" (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 125). The over riding concern remains one of respect in research.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) identify two potential weaknesses during the interview process. While the guided outline increases comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic, the flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses and the omission of salient questions. The relatively unstructured nature of the data produced can make data analysis not only time consuming and costly but also more difficult and create challenges for interpreting data and forming

generalizations. These concerns can be managed with time and effort and again within a spirit of respect.

As this research is a case study, all participants were part of the particular school community under study. The principal's approval was gained to contact the participants with the assistance of the school office staff. Letters of information were provided for all participants prior to the interviews which introduced the researcher, outlined the nature and purpose of the research, and provided procedural and ethical guidelines. Each interview was held in a confidential setting and lasted no more than 45 minutes. An Informed Consent Form was given to each participant to read and sign and a greeting statement was read out to them. Each interview was taped on a digital recorder.

Fourteen Year 13 students – 6 males and 8 females identified through the KAMAR data base – met the criteria of having completed NCEA Level 2 in 2007. Thirteen students were interviewed. One female student was not interviewed, even though she agreed to be interviewed, as she was away from school when the two appointment times were made for her. The students met me at school so that I could explain the research to them as a group and their letter of information was hand delivered to take away and read. All students agreed to be involved in the research and appointment times were made for them. Interviews were conducted at the school in the confidential Interview Room which is a small relaxed sitting room with couches and a coffee table.

The parents of all the students interviewed were sent letters of information by post. This was followed up two or three days latter by a phone call to them from me to their home. Five parents were interviewed – two mothers, one father and one mother and father together. The parents all chose to be interviewed in a confidential setting at their place of work.

Seven teachers, who had taught two or more of the interviewed students in 2007 and who were still teaching at the school in 2008 were interviewed. All the teachers approached agreed to be interviewed. Six teachers chose to be interviewed at school in either the Interview Room or a nearby office. One teacher

chose to be interviewed at her home. The principal was interviewed in his office on the first day of the school holidays.

As a staff member (on leave), I already knew all the teachers and the principal so "breaking the ice" with them in an interview situation was not difficult and there was little or no issue regarding any power imbalance as a friendly relationship had already been established.

Establishing a friendly relationship with the parents was made easier because the reason for their being chosen was a positive one – that is, their children had achieved well academically.

Some of the students were very quick to respond openly to questions in the interviews and others took more time to relax as I was able to show them that this was a very non-threatening and friendly interview as conversation. I began by offering them food and drink and congratulating them on their past success. I encouraged them to tell their stories with examples and details. I asked questions such as:

- What experiences helped you to achieve NCEA Level 2 in 2007 and return to school to study for NCEA Level 3?
- What was school like for you in Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11?
- What made it harder/easier for you to achieve at school?
- Lots of students drop out of school in Year 11. Why do you think you have stayed at school through to Year 13 and NCEA Level 3?
- What motivated you to do well at school?
- What sort of leader/principal do you think can make a difference to your achievement at school?

I followed up where necessary with more probing questions or comments such as "Tell me more about that". I was always aware of the need to be respectful, non judgmental and non threatening throughout all the interviews.

Perhaps because the students were being recognized for their achievements, rather than underachievement, and perhaps because I had not taught any of these students or had any involvement with them regarding discipline matters in previous years, they appeared to speak confidently and freely, despite the potential for a power imbalance. The parents appeared to speak freely perhaps also because this study was investigating reasons for success rather than failure. It could also be because they had some control over the interview as I was on "their patch" – that is, in their place of work – and therefore they began by making the decisions about where to be interviewed and when they were ready to start. The initial question was:

- What factors do you think helped your son/daughter to achieve NCEA Level 2 last year and return to school this year to study for NCEA Level 3?

The three main questions asked of teachers were:

- What strategies did you use to assist Maori students to achieve in your Year 12 class last year?
- What impact, if any, did the Te Kotahitanga project have on the teaching and/or achievement of your Year 12 students?
- What role does the principal play in the achievement of individual students?

The questions asked of the parents and teachers, generally lead to very long answers and stories. In fact, I had little need to ask many questions of most of the parents and teachers as they provided rich data and thick descriptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) with little prompting.

All the students in this research were enthusiastic about being able to contribute to this case study, by telling their own stories, and about contributing to the

improved learning and achievement of those junior students who were coming through the school behind them. Parents who agreed to be interviewed also considered that it was important for senior leaders in the school to have a greater understanding of the influences and motivations of the academically successful senior Māori students in the school. The teachers, with varying levels of confidence being displayed, were reflective about their teaching practice and desirous of making a difference to the achievement of Māori students. The principal was also very reflective about Māori student underachievement and prepared to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses in this area of school life.

Therefore, I considered that listening to the voices of these students, parents, teachers and the principal, in this specific context, that is, in this specific secondary school, in this "case", was not only justified but also essential for the benefit of the younger students following these wonderful role models.

Documents

Documents retrieved from the KAMAR data base were used to cross check students' comments about subjects and teachers.

- The data base identified Māori students who had achieved NCEA Level 2 in 2007.
- Student Reports 2007 identified the subjects the students had taken and their teachers.
- The Student Attendance Summary document provided the students' attendance record for the year as a percentage.
- The Summary of NZQA Level 2 Students' Results document provided detail of the number of credits in each subject that these students had achieved in 2007.

The above information was collated and presented on a 'Students' Results' chart.

Data Analysis Procedures

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) define analysis of qualitative data as "a reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualised

data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (p. 282). The challenge is to manage the tension:

> between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to atomise and fragment the data – to separate them into constituent elements, thereby losing the synergy of the whole, and in interviews often the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (p. 282).

Researchers such as, Merriam (1998), Bogdan and Bilken (1998), and Kvale (1996) concur that data analysis is an interactive process and argue that data analysis should occur simultaneously with data collection. The rigour is derived from the nature of the interaction of the participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretations of perceptions and rich thick data. Merriam (1998) more simply describes data analysis as "making sense out of the data" (p. 178). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) caution novice researchers to save the formal analysis until the data is gathered.

Grounded theorists identify "categories and concepts that emerge from the texts and link these concepts into substantive and formal theories" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 782). Charmaz's (2000) version of grounded theory advocates viewing the data again and again as new ideas are developed, coding and recoding data as new analytic points are made then checking new categories with the respondents. Fontana and Frey (2005) describe this as a "painstaking emphasis on coding data" (p. 701).

The constant comparative method of data analysis was developed from grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Incidents from the data are constantly compared leading to tentative categories that are then compared to each other across a range of situations, times, groups of people, and through a range of methods. These categories are abstractions or conceptual elements that emerge from the data and in effect are the answers to the research question. Developing a coding system can be a complex and challenging process. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) provide helpful guidelines for developing coding categories.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide some criteria for theoretical reasons for deciding when enough data have been analysed: exhaustion of resources, saturation of categories, emergence of regularities and over-extension in which no further relevant contribution is being made to the categories. Practically, time, money and energy may also be depleted.

The interviews in this study were transcribed from the digital recorder and included spacefillers like "um", "you know" and indications of other non verbal aspects such as laughter that conveyed the atmosphere and tone of the response. Some interviews were transcribed by me and some were transcribed by a professional transcription service. As soon as the typing of each interview was completed, I listened a second time to each interview while carefully checking each transcript line by line, correcting where necessary, to ensure they had all been typed up accurately. This helped me to become even more familiar with the content of the interviews and assisted with the initial analysis of the data.

The transcripts were printed leaving a wide margin for comments. As each transcript was read through, key words and phrases were written in the margin beside each sentence, paragraph or unit of meaning identifying what the students were saying were the most important influences on their academic success. After this process had been followed for two or three transcripts, and the transcripts had been read through again, the main influences emerged quite clearly and the major general themes were identified.

Each of these general themes was then broken into categories and sub categories, using the students' language as much as possible. These sub categories accommodated all the comments made by students about the influences on their academic achievement.

The transcripts were gone through again to refine the coding used and identify relevant supporting quotations. A chart for each theme was produced listing all these categories and sub categories with a column for each student along side. Each transcript was gone through again and a tick placed beside the categories that applied to each student. This process was repeated for each of the general

themes for students, teachers, parents and the principal (Appendices A-E). Summarising the data in this chart form was a particularly helpful method of data management which provided a clear overview.

During the interviews the students were asked to rank in order of importance, the influences they had identified as important to their academic success. I suggested that it was a difficult task but asked them if they thought they could do it if they took their time. The result of this ranking from their perspective helped provide a cross check that the categories were appropriate and helped ensure that I had interpreted their responses without misunderstanding or bias. It also gave them the opportunity to more carefully consider the importance of their self motivation within the group of influences that they had identified.

A further check occurred when students were given the opportunity to view the charts summarizing the data and check that what was recorded for them on the chart was a fair reflection of their views.

The KAMAR data base provided attendance information which was put on a Students' Results Chart and listed the attendance percentage of each student for the year. It was a simple task to identify the range of attendance by selecting the lowest percentage (e.g. 81%) figure to the highest percentage figure (e.g. 96%). This chart also listed the credits gained by each student for each subject so once again it was an easy task to identify in which subjects students had achieved well. This process enabled me to cross check if a student said they had achieved well for a particular teacher or in a particular subject, by comparing this with the number of credits that they had achieved.

Conclusion

The qualitative approach to research, "seeks to describe and analyse complex experiences" and as part of the data gathering process, "one must listen well, question closely, and observe details". With the emphasis on understanding how many people in a situation make sense out of what is happening to them, qualitative research encourages "an empathetic understanding of different

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people's points of view" and "bring them out into the open" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, pp. 237-238). By listening to the voices of Year 13 academically successful students, this research will bring their views "out into the open".

<h1>Chapter 4</h1>
<h1>Research findings</h1>

Introduction

Interviews as conversations with the Year 13 Māori student participants in this case study, about what influenced and motivated them to achieve NCEA Level 2 and return to school to study for NCEA Level 3, revealed a richness and strong commonality of themes as they shared their views. The interviews as conversations attempted to understand the world from the students' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world and to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena. The interviews as conversations provided opportunities for the participants to describe complex ideas and to elaborate, add to, explain and give a richness and depth to their responses as they told their stories. Pseudonyms have been used for all students, parents and teachers referred to throughout this thesis to ensure confidentiality.

Analysis of the interview data revealed several themes. These themes were then broken down into categories and sub categories. The themes included: the family, teachers, leadership, friends, and self motivation. Categories, such as for the family theme, included: parents value education, with sub categories such as - showed interest in the student's school work and provided encouragement and emotional support.

Charts were produced for each theme. The category headings and sub categories were listed, using the students' language as much as possible, with a column for each student to record the relevant, analysed interview data. Charts showing the themes -influence of family, teachers, leadership, friends and self motivation, along with the categories and sub categories - are included as Appendices A – E.

The students identified the theme of family as the strongest influence, in particular, identifying a significant family member who valued education. Teachers and friends were also influential, although they struggled to identify the role the principal played in student academic achievement. Their own self

motivation, self-efficacy and desire for a good future was interwoven to create a tapestry of influences leading to success.

The Participants

Thirteen Year 13 students, seven females and six males, were interviewed for this research. They had all achieved NCEA Level 2 and were studying for NCEA Level 3 doing three or more Level 3 subjects which would enable them to gain University Entrance in 2008. Nine of the students had attended the case study school from Year 9, two enrolled in Year 12, and a further two enrolled in Year 13.

The students had diverse backgrounds and educational experiences. A wide range of subjects were being studied by the students. Most students had learned some Te Reo usually in primary or intermediate, but only two students were studying Te Reo at NCEA Level 3. With one exception, the students' attendance at school averaged between 81% and 96%. Eight of the students lived with both parents. Two students were the first in their extended family to achieve past Year 11. Four students specifically mentioned their parents' tertiary education. Others said their parents had left school early or in Year 12.

Five parents were interviewed – two mothers (one Pakeha), one father and one couple (mother and Samoan father) representing four students. They spoke strongly as advocates for their children and espoused their belief in the value of education.

Seven teachers were interviewed - three male teachers and four female teachers. These teachers had taught two or more of the students interviewed and were still teaching at the case study school in 2008. This was also a group with diverse backgrounds and teaching experience. Two were primary trained teachers. The number of years of teaching experience ranged from a first year teacher to a teacher with 30 years experience. A wide range of subjects was taught by these teachers including: English, Sports Science, Physical Education, Childcare, Media Studies, Te Reo, Mathematics, Geography and Social Studies. Six of these

teachers were included in the Te Kotahitanga project in 2007 and one joined the project in 2008. The principal was also interviewed.

The key open ended question asked of each student was:
What influenced and motivated you to achieve NCEA Level 2 and return to
 school to study for NCEA Level 3?

Part One - Family Influence

Key findings

The theme of the Family Influence included the following category and sub categories as shown on the Family Influence Chart (Appendix A). The category entitled "Parents value education" was illustrated by the following sub categories: parent interest was shown in their education/homework (e.g. asking about school, classes, homework, checking on attendance); the student was told they must stay at school; emotional support was given (e.g. encouragement "you can do it" type comments when assignments are difficult); rewards were offered; family expectations were high or the student wanted to make their family proud or prove can achieve; family role models existed (including positive role models and also negative role models who made students resolve to be better/different).

Parents value education

The family has the greatest positive influence on all the students who were interviewed. In particular, one significant family member has a most important influence. All students stated that their parents valued education as shown by taking an interest in their schooling and/or homework and for ten of the students their parents insisted their child stay at school. Eleven of the thirteen students wanted to live up to their family's expectations and /or make their family proud / or prove that they could achieve.

Tracey said her Mum:

>   just really wanted me to do well at school. Like, you know, not fail.
>   She's my Mum so I've gotta listen to her…my Mum like you know

she still motivates me and she's looking out for my future, like if I want a future I have to do well at school.

Tracey also acknowledged that school punishments inflicted on her for misdemeanors at school did not work for her. She said "I was actually more scared of what my mum would say to me, like getting grounded than getting detentions and stuff like that, I didn't really care I would say 'oh I don't want my Mum to know'."

Tracey's mother confirmed the importance of education to the family and the need to support their children's education. She said "it did take a bit of energy to monitor her" and she knew Tracey was concerned about her:

being on her case…She's had Mum and Dad there the whole time, I'm probably the motivator, organiser and all that…but [her Dad] knows education is important so while he's not in their face like me he does say…it's important to get a good education…I think it's about a parent's role as always saying 'well keep going but this is the way it is'.

Ngarui commented that, "In junior school - I had just a bad group and smoking and um I didn't want to be like them so I just kept going to my classes." She said her friends were "really into fighting and gangs and stuff. Yeah I didn't really like it that much but they were my friends." She said she coped because "Oh it was my Dad. My Dad told me to go back to school and you know do good"

Rob had experienced four different types of secondary education – a large urban co-educational secondary school, Home Schooling while with his mother who was working in Samoa, a small town Christian school in Year 11 and the case study school in Years 12 and 13. When asked if there were any things that are in common that make a school able to help individual students, Rob said "I guess just like the family support really, having that motivation from home…. because to me school is just school. Wake me up early in the morning, going to class but yeah my family made it different for me, just always being there for me." He also said "education comes first in our family… my parents push for me, well I know if I didn't have them I wouldn't be where I am right now."

Kerry also changed schools, moving back to New Zealand from Australia with his parents and brothers at the beginning of Year 12. He said what made it easier to achieve at school was:

> My parents, family…If it's good at home, it's good at school pretty much. Um... I'm not too sure how to explain it really, it's just, as long as you have parents that care and support you, you should be alright. In life it's your own decision to not want to [learn] which is fine if that's what you want, but yeah, I think it's just if home is good then I think that's the basis of everything that should be, if it starts at home…just being supportive…I believe that um what they're trying to do is what's best for us for our whole lives which has helped, and we kinda go off the rails every now and then, disagreements but teenagers as they do and um it's just parents...they want us to try harder, they keep a check on schooling.

Kerry's mother and father confirmed the importance of education in the family and believe that a combination of "nature and nurture" has helped Kerry achieve. Kerry's mother stated: "we've always had an interest in the kids learning" and a "stable home life" and the children know their parents "are there for the kids and they have always been our priority." Kerry's father considered that they are "consistent" and "we try as much as we can to monitor our kids schooling, and ask them are things up to date." Leaving school early, he said, is "not an option, it is not a choice. Their task is to complete their high school, at least."

Jo believed problems at home can reflect on school work and also considers the fact that her parents have stayed together has had a positive "huge effect" on her.

> Most of the kids I see around school these days that are really naughty, in Year 9, it's because their parents don't really know how to kind of, I don't know, I have seen a few of their parents and that, and they've broken up with their partners and they've got new boyfriends and they don't, you know, they don't pay attention to their kids, like my parents did…(my parents) are nosey, they like to know everything I do…Mum and Dad always used to make sure I did my homework at home and if I hadn't listened to them I probably would have failed, yeah um but it's the student

as well, you have to want to do it… I wanted to make them proud is the main reason.

Miriama found when she lives with her father, who she says is "scary smart" there are positive benefits. She said:

> Well, my Dad, he knows a lot and sometimes we just have conversations and stuff and I will just learn all this new stuff that's really generalised knowledge to him and what a lot of people don't really know…. we would ask questions and we would talk for hours and we would learn from that which was a good thing really…with my Dad he's always like telling me to do my homework, and stuff like that so it's putting pressure on me and that's actually a good thing cause I'm not lazy any more……That really is the main thing my parents care about is making sure their kids get a better education, like my sister is at University, my brother's doing a cadetship in horticulture and yeah.

Tony's father passed away when Tony was in Year 9 and he couldn't remember much about Year 10. He believed:

> it kinda tumbled me over…it was pretty hard for me and my Mum, but I still managed to stick at school because that is what he wanted me to do, that probably is the main thing why I still stayed here. He told me to keep going on whatever I wanted to do cause like he would tell me [about] careers and stuff…he helped me believe, because he knew I was pretty good in primary as well, like I just had natural ability. He showed me, kind of made me think I could do anything, kinda think like I can do it. I can do it. It's not hard, it's not too far for me not like I can't do it.

Kelly appreciated her mother's encouragement and support. "My Mum's really good, I live with her, and like if I have heaps of homework and stuff, and I am stressing out she is really good and she is like 'oh just do your best I know you are doing what you can do at school' she is really good about it."

Chris also identified one significant family member, his father, as being the most important influence. He commented:

Definitely my Dad helps me the most yeah. He always helps me with homework. He's quite a bright man for someone who left school when he was quite young, but yeah he always helps me, and motivated me. I think he is the main reason I do my homework, assignments and stuff, and go to school every day, yeah, get the grades…And if I don't do good I seem to disappoint him the most like I know he still loves me and stuff but it seems that I um it seems very painful to him if I don't do well at school…I don't like to disappoint him like that.

Family Expectations

Wanting to live up to their family' expectations and/or make their family proud and/or prove that they could achieve was the second sub category revealed by data analysis. These expectations were a strong influence for eleven of the students. Miriama described her family's expectations that she would go to university as a "driving influence, it keeps me going, cause yeah, it does get a bit hard but…just because it's hard doesn't mean it's bad." Chris said "ever since I was young my parents told me that I needed to go to Uni and I've always been taught that."

Expectations of a University education are not dependant on the parent having experienced a University education themselves as Chris went on to explain.

> Well my Mum dropped out of school at fifth form and my Dad dropped [out] at sixth form and they've been working ever since and I guess yeah they just wanted me to do that, wanted me to stay at least until Year 13 then. I guess one reason is I don't want to disappoint them that I am staying, I want to make them proud as most kids want to make their parents proud I suppose.

Tracey's mother highlighted the effect of her expectations for her daughter when she said: "She could have easily gone off the rails and done nothing but she knows that's just not how it is."

Family Role Model

Further analysis of the data revealed that a positive family role model was an important influence for nine of the students. Sam said he was tempted to "drop out" when some of his "good mates" left school in Year 11.

> I kinda wanted to leave school and become an electrician, start an apprenticeship but my parents, my Mum mainly, advised me to stay in school and I'd pretty much seen what my sister was, you know, she was going to University, and yeah I just seen what she wanted to do and I wanted to try and be like her…Well my Mum influences me but for me my sister's kind of like my role model, yeah. I mean she finished a Degree this year. She got a Degree in Psychology. She's the first Māori in my family to go to University and pass… Yeah I'll be the second.

Sam's mother, when asked what helped Sam to achieve, confirmed Sam's own view when she said "Probably me! (laughter) Not that I want to gloat or anything, but I have always believed in education and I have wanted my children to have the best education that they could get."

Miriama, in contrast to Sam, said:

> like my whole family are achievers, my uncle has just become a judge, like my cousins most of them are at university, or if not at university they have apprenticeships and stuff like that. My aunty she is a lawyer, she's got a degree in Māori language and my Grandmother was a teacher so was my Koro, and they have all kinds of degrees and stuff and it's just really a learning environment because everyone's just…but as long as I remember or care about my future, I will try and hopefully succeed.

Miriama's father confirmed the strong value placed on education by the family over generations. He said:

> our tribe of Ngāti Manawa, which is one of the off shoot tribes of Tuhoi, and Tuhoi being perhaps less colonized than most of the other tribes but having invested a lot of effort into educating their children, means that she

[Miriama] was aware of no reason to think that there should be barriers to Māori people succeeding in education.

He described many people around her, including himself and her mother and step mother, her own grandfather, her cousins, who have been very successful in tertiary education so "there's no sense that that was something that wasn't necessarily attainable for her" and "she sees those as things to aim for."

Tony said his cousins all work. "No one really went all the way through school, they're all in to like jobs, making money, oh one of my cousins she's a teacher, she's really cool, she helped me, she's really happy for me, so that motivated me to do it, yeah, she teaches Māori."

Negative role models, as discussed by four of the students, can positively influence students who wanted to be different to others in the family. Ngarui stated:

> But I just wanted to do it to prove to myself that I could do it. Yeah because both my families have never passed anything yeah pretty much that. I didn't want to be like them. Yeah I don't want to be another person who says I wish I was in school…yeah… most of my family are all…like… on the benefit. I don't want to be like that. I want to have skills so that I can apply myself to get a good job.

The negative stereotyping of Māori in society and on the news concerned Alex who said:

> They always want to say all Māoris smoke, all Māoris are poor and stuff like that so you don't really want to be classed as that all the time, so I want to prove a point that they are not all like that, yeah…Mum really focused on school for me because Mum didn't go too far in school and so Mum really pushed me to stay in school …so um my Mum trying really hard to give me everything that I wanted and she just wanted me to go far, and so having my Mum was another reason [I stayed at school], to do it for her, to pass for her and make her happy, yeah.

When asked to rank in order of importance, the influences discussed – family, teachers, friends, self-motivation – ten of the students had family clearly at the top. One student placed her family alongside her own motivation as equally important and the other two students put their own motivation as most important with family third after teachers or a job. Interestingly, these last two students left school before the end of the year leading to the suggestion that they may have stayed to complete university entrance had their families been the most important influence in their success.

Part Two - Teachers' Influence

Key findings

To more fully understand the students' views about the nature of the influence that teachers had, the key open-ended follow up question was:
Can you describe some of the teachers who really made a difference for you and helped you to achieve?

The next theme revealed by data analysis was the Teachers' Influence theme. This theme included the following categories and sub categories as shown in the Teachers' Influence Chart (Appendix B). The category of building positive relationships (teacher qualities and personality most influential for success) included the following subcategories: teachers communicate effectively/get to know students; teachers are open to questions / helpful / friendly / "nice"; teachers are encouraging / believed in the students / care; teachers are relaxed – "fun" "cool" calm, patient; respect each other.

The category of the teaching style most influential for success included the following subcategories: teachers are able to explain clearly and/or at the right pace; teachers offer one-on-one help regularly; teachers are consistent and/or strict with classroom discipline / monitoring / "pushing" students to succeed.

Teachers were a very important influence for all thirteen students with six students ranking teachers as second in importance after family and six students

ranking teachers as third in importance after various combinations of the family, their own self motivation and the influence of friends. The qualities and personality of the teacher were discussed more fully by the students than the teaching style of the teacher.

Building positive relationships

Data analysis revealed that all thirteen students saw the ability of the teacher to communicate effectively with them and get to know them in a "nice," "friendly," "helpful," "fun," "relaxed" way, was most important for helping them achieve academically. In effect, the students were talking about the existence of positive relationships between teachers and students as the most important way teachers can influence individual student achievement. Tony said "cool" teachers "really like help, they don't just throw it at you, they like tell you little bits like and explain it in a way that you can understand." Ngarui defined "cool" teachers as those who "get to know you and they can joke around with you and stuff (laughter) yeah…and like strict at times… but they can be fun at the same time…yeah….they can command respect."

Miriama's father considered that his "very bright" daughter also needed teachers who made learning fun. He said:

> before now…things have been relatively easy for her to learn, she doesn't have ah a very good ability to focus for any intense period of time where there isn't a payoff, so if it's not fun, she doesn't focus for a long period of time. That kind of hits every kid who's reasonably bright cause they cruise through school up to a point then they hit the wall because suddenly you know, what God gave them only got them so far and now they have to apply some effort to move beyond that point.

 Jo thought that "having lovely teachers" who ask you "how's your day been" made it easier to achieve.

> Having a teacher that talks to you about what's going on in your home, what you are doing now….not just teaching you kinda thing, being nice and being there for you. Teachers really helped. Miss C wanted you to get it, she

wanted you to learn, and she didn't just race through it, and teachers that take their time, I find it's much better because you can't learn if teachers are racing through it trying to get it done.

Establishing a classroom environment which is open to questions freely being asked, and establishing a relationship which is friendly, encouraging and in which teachers showed they believed in the students and cared for them made it easier for students to achieve. Using her Mathematics teacher as an example, Alex said:

he was really really good, when I did it [Mathematics] in fifth form, and um he gave me lots of encouragement and always told me that I could do it, you know when you start to think, 'oh I can't do it' but he always gave me lots of help…and my English teacher last year, she was really nice, and um yeah I think she just made it nicer to go to class, she wasn't really grumpy all the time or wasn't yelling and she was just really calm which made it a lot easier for me to, you know, work with her…I think if you don't get along with your teacher then you don't really want to learn in their class yeah.

Most of the students said respect which is reciprocal is an important quality which leads to positive student teacher relationships. Sam said: "I think you gotta give respect to get respect. You can't expect to go in there and ask for respect when you can't really give some. It helps to have a good relationship with the teacher, but being nice does help."

Sam's mother confirmed Sam's view of respect. She had noticed a change within teachers at the school. She said:

I know that his Media Studies teacher, he really respected her, like she was a good influence on him, and it sounded like from what he was telling me…that he felt he was treated differently. I don't know whether that was being a senior, or whether that's because he had got mature in the sixth form, now I don't know if passing NCEA level 1 did it for him, but he was treated [with] respect from the teachers.

Chris stated:

> I think respect is a big thing to me yeah. And I think that's a big thing in the school as well. I think that's where a lot of teachers go wrong, and a lot of students go wrong, they just don't respect one another or they don't even respect themselves. I have always been taught to respect myself and others, yeah, that is a really big thing in my family – respect.

Kerry's parents also said that respect was "something that we teach in our home…we definitely expect our kids to respect their teachers."

Teaching style

Further data analysis revealed that while the students were clear in their descriptions of the qualities and personality of the teachers who most influenced their achievement, they were less specific about what teaching style helped their achievement, suggesting that they were quite flexible and able to adapt to different teaching styles. What was strongly agreed was the need for teachers to explain clearly, to be open to questions, to provide a lot of one-on-one assistance to students and to have consistent/strict discipline and monitoring of work completion.

Chris said his Mathematics teacher explains things "very simply" and

> he's always welcoming you to ask questions, cause …I found I've had a few teachers over the years that I didn't really want to ask questions because they kinda made you feel inferior ….in his class you can ask questions all the time so it's a really good environment to learn, he just really simply explains things and he uses metaphors and analogies all the time so you understand it a lot better and he's always adding interesting facts and you think 'wow, that's pretty cool and I never knew that.

Alex considered:

> mostly when I can get along with the teacher [it] really helps me too, having sometimes like a one-on-one with the teacher will really help when it's not just with the whole class, like staring at you when you ask a question and

stuff and they are all looking. I don't usually do that I usually wait for the teacher…like my English teacher now, she will explain to me a lot about my writing because she will know how I write and think, the way I do things and so she will explain to me 'don't do this, or do that, and you will be on the right track'.

Chris reinforced Alex's appreciation of one-on-one teacher support.

The teaching style where you get one-on-one attention with the teacher is good, and they come around the class and make sure you're doing the task and yeah, that's good when they are not just at the front of the class talking to you. Face to face is good. It helps you and it's more personal. I like that teaching style a lot better as well.

Rob provided a clear example of the one-on-one support that he appreciated from his English teacher:

I was always behind on [my reading responses] cause I didn't really like them, cause I'm not a big reader, but she was always there to help me find the literature I actually liked and going through what the book was about if I needed help, and also finding articles that were based around what I had experienced…Which surprised me as well just to see a teacher actually go through all that effort just to help me do my work.

Kelly always wanted to do well in her English class because she appreciated the firm discipline and monitoring of work by her "nice" English teacher who was "friendly and easy to talk to" and "really encouraging." The class was "relaxed," the teacher "jokes a lot but she can be real straight up, like tell you off if you're not doing what you're meant to be doing… but you were told what to do at the same time so it wasn't really stressful or anything." She said teachers who "push you really hard, that's really helpful."

Kerry described a "great teacher" who he respected a lot because "he is very firm and knowledgeable and …he has a student teacher relationship...but he is also like a father figure… he relates to his own life the stuff that he teaches sometimes."

Effect of the Te Kotahitanga project on teaching style and relationship building

The case study school embraced the Te Kotahitanga project in 2007, seeing it as a way of improving and supporting the teaching and learning of the Māori students in the school. In order to find out what effect the project had on improving the achievement of the Year 12 Māori students interviewed the key open ended questions asked of each of the teachers who were interviewed were:

What impact, if any, did the Te Kotahitanga project have on the teaching and/or achievement of your Year 12 class last year?
What strategies did you use to assist Māori students to achieve in your Year 12 class last year?

The following findings emerged from analysis of the data (refer to Appendix C 'Effects of the Te Kotahitanga Project' on teachers chart for details). While some senior classes in the case study school were included in the Te Kotahitanga project in 2007, by chance none of the interviewed students were observed in their Year 12 classes because their teachers were all observed with their junior classes. However, all seven of the teachers interviewed acknowledged the benefit, to all of their classes, of the reflective practice encouraged through the class observations and feedback that the Te Kotahitanga project requires.

Melanie, the teacher to most recently join the Te Kotahitanga project (and interestingly also the least enthusiastic about the project) said: "I think …one of the good things is that it makes you really think about what you're doing, and from a slightly different slant…. you do start thinking about different teaching styles which I think is a good thing…It makes you broaden your repertoire."

Kerrin agreed: "I like the TK programme. I think it is really good. It has made [teachers] more accountable, I think it has made teachers talk a lot more…about what works and what doesn't work and a lot more honesty [is] happening in our own teaching."

Susanah said her facilitator has been extremely supportive and provided excellent feedback.

Mick is in an interesting situation in that he was in the project in 2007 as a classroom teacher and this year has become a facilitator. He considered:

> The observations were probably a lot more beneficial than any co-construction meeting…the observation tool is good because it allows you to see what you did and when, so because it's broken down into segments you can see how you have started or introduced the lesson and how it progressed and how you concluded.

Lee said: "having that term of observation keeps you on your toes, and it encourages me to try different things……what I like is having my observer -and it's been the same one which is great - along side me, helping me, suggesting things, which I tried with varying degrees of success…"

Lou agreed:

> I think it's always good to reflect on your practice because you might be thinking 'oh gee I'm doing really well' and in reality you're actually not…I quite look forward to the observation itself…the one to one feedback sessions I found really informative and helpful…… often there was affirmation of what you were doing well and 'this is what you could do to make it even better' rather than 'this is what you do poorly and you need to change it'…..it's been quite good as a first year teacher to be reflecting on your practice, and be made to think about what you are doing, sometimes it's all too easy just to sort of slip into auto pilot mode.

Melanie provided the only criticism of the class observations. While she thinks 'the concept is good" she says:

> I get frustrated in the observation lessons. I feel like I teach differently because you are so aware of someone watching you that you…don't sit at your desk even though you would do that normally…It kinda felt like I was faking it and I don't want to fake it. And then I get frustrated with the

feedback, especially with the cognitive level of the lesson and I think having someone who doesn't teach English coming in and making a judgment on the text that you're doing and on the tasks that you're doing and…just not understanding.

Three of the seven teachers believed that they had not changed their teaching style in order to assist Māori students to achieve in their Year 12 class but strategies already used were reaffirmed or improved. Five of the teachers confirmed that strategies learned from the Te Kotahitanga professional development programme with their junior classes were incorporated into their senior classes. Three of the teachers had made a conscious decision to make resources more relevant to their Māori students and to use Te Reo in the classroom such as for greetings.

Timoti believed:

> Te Kotahitanga hasn't really changed a lot of what I do [but] it has perhaps made me more aware of the good things that I do and it has perhaps made me more aware of areas that I was aware of but I wasn't very good at instigating in the classroom, but I knew I should have - things like making sure everybody was aware of the learning intention, and having a plan of what we were to cover throughout the lesson…things I've chosen to incorporate more into the senior school…and apart from that all the interactions between myself and the students have remained the same.

Susanah said:

> To be honest, personally I don't think it has had any impact on me because the style of things that they are wanting, the kind of approach from teachers….underpins our teaching…which we did at our very first marae (traditional meeting place) visit…the need to aim for excellence is always something that I have held in high regard.

However, she did go on to describe the resources she had produced which were aimed at being more relevant to her Māori students and her determination to learn Te Reo starting with "learning all the Māori names for things like the hypotenuse, acute."

Lee considered that because "we had gone through the initial whole staff training [for the Te Kotahitanga project] at the beginning of the year, it made me look at some of the resources that I had used…with the idea of being more inclusive." Lee went on to describe the booklets she produced for the students to use in her Childcare Year 12 class, including a Māori lullaby which the students sang, Māori proverbs, and using the Kowhaiwhai panel on the Plunket book which represented "the parents, the grandparents and the mokopuna [grandchildren]…I guess I am trying to establish…an ethos for my room which is 'we are all here to nurture you, you know, we are here to support you, school, parent, you."

The class observations were considered worthwhile and the feedback valuable by all seven teachers - although Melanie believed the facilitator should be from the same teaching subject to help resolve her concerns about the difficulty in establishing the cognitive level of the tasks students worked on. The other six teachers did not agree with her about that, arguing that the facilitators were looking at the interactions between students and teacher rather than the content of the lesson. The co-construction meetings were seen to have limited value by most of the teachers perhaps largely because the teachers who attended the co-construction meeting found they rarely had students in common so discussion was general rather than based around specific students.

Timoti said:

> I enjoy the class observations more [than the co-construction meetings]. I get most out of a class observation more than anything else. I myself have personal goals. And I am disappointed with myself when I only get 70% engagement. I think twice I have had two observations where [there was] 100% engagement throughout across all students so that is always my goal.

Kerrin would like more class observations. She said: "I like the feedback. I like the fact that she [the facilitator] picks up things I don't see…when you think something's not working she will find a positive in something…I think the feedback is really useful for planning for next lessons."

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All the teachers interviewed considered it was important to show interest in the students' personal lives outside the classroom and/or to show care for the students. Building positive student/teacher relationships was seen as very important by six of the teachers with two of the teachers specifically crediting the Te Kotahitanga project with making them more aware of the importance of relationships in student achievement. Acknowledging culture was also considered an important bridge in building positive relationships.

Lee said:

> One thing the Te Kotahitanga programme has made me aware of is relationships…and made me more comfortable talking about Māori culture and protocol, so there've been times when I have …talked to them about their marae…the Coronation and the year before it was the burial…so that's helped me in terms of relationships.

Kerrin's basic strategy to build a positive relationship with her students is having conversations that show "caring concern" and:

> interest in them…for a start I show that when they arrive at the door I like them, I like my job, and that I expect them to succeed…pastoral care…talking to them outside the classroom, like at interval…out in the playground always say 'hello', ask them how their weekend was, remember details and if they played sport or [had] family events …having expectations that they will be successful and not only that but will complete Year 13.

Timoti believes he teaches with "that tātou tātou whānau whānau feeling…I always shared a lot of myself with the class anyway, and I always show interest in them – their sports, their whānau, throughout the senior school I always have small classes for Te Reo so get to know all the whānau quite well…"

Mick initially develops a positive relationship with the whole class, "as opposed to identifying them as Māori students and treating them in a different way", outlining guidelines and expectations.

> What I have found is very quickly they develop a rapport for you and respect you and they almost don't want to let you down, so they work

harder, they want to achieve I'm sure because they're afraid of failing and they want to gain credits, but they also don't want to let you down because they can see what you are offering them or doing to help them.

Mick considers "the co-curricular stuff…plays a massive part in the achievement within the classroom" and in showing a personal interest in the student's activities outside the classroom "and our Māori students are huge on that, if they see you at their sports game the first thing they do on Monday morning is come and thank you or tell you 'we won by 10 points'…so the next contact you have with them is a positive one."

This research would suggest that the Te Kotahitanga project has encouraged reflective practice but this does not necessarily mean a change of attitude by the teachers who by their very involvement in the project in 2007 have already shown they have an openness and willingness to change and improve their teaching and the learning of their students.

Parent school contact

Further data analysis revealed that while the students did not discuss the importance of parent/ teacher contact, the parents themselves saw this as important for their child's academic success at school. All the parents were confident about contacting the school and provided examples where they had discussed issues that might interfere with their child's education.

Sam's mother described an incident in which Sam was sent home because of incorrect uniform. They interpreted this as being "kicked out of school" and this incident at the beginning of Year 11 made Sam very reluctant to go back to school. Sam's mother, however, said "…but then with me going down to the principal, and me being me, I think it might've made him think somebody does care about him. I have always cared about him, but you know I didn't want to jeopardise his school."

Kerry's parents were very appreciative of "what school teachers go through" and encouraged their children to respect their teachers. Kerry's mother had been most involved in maintaining contact with the school about progress, with school events, and in the PTA [Parent Teachers' Association]. They had not experienced problems with their children at secondary school but she said if there was a situation where a teacher was "not able to communicate with the students to the level that they need….I think we'd get involved and find out what is going on."

Tracey's mother strongly supported parent/school contact and wished more Māori parents would contact the school if they had concerns about their child. She said:

> I've always gone to parent interviews, always and I've always made it quite clear to the teachers that if there's any issues please ring me. So I have had that. I've had people phoning me….and she [Tracey] knows that I have no qualms [about] coming down to school ……if your kid is going off the rails I think you have to make that effort, you know, to get on board with the teachers to say 'I care'…as a parent I'm in there and I'm talking to the teachers and my kids have moved forward because of that but I know a lot of kids who have not moved forward because for whatever reason their parents didn't feel confident enough about going down to school.

Parents supporting the school, and the school supporting students' needs, was also seen as very important by the parents. Miriama's father chose the case study school for Miriama because of "the experience of our eldest daughter and our son who felt that it was a school that was more inclined to embrace kids regardless of their background…and accommodate our kids needs, whereas our experience with some of the other high schools have been um less helpful." He goes on to say that if his daughter is critical of a teacher "we often have to remind her that the teacher is teaching to the whole class not just to her, um and the teacher is also teaching to a syllabus which may limit what they can and can't do with them."

Five out of seven teachers interviewed acknowledged the importance of parent support and four found home contact to be very positive. Timoti, who taught a small Te Reo senior class, said:

It was important for me to contact whanau, the parents, caregivers, meet with them at the parent interviews, have …the outline for each term, the assessment dates, so that they could see for themselves, because guaranteed the students weren't passing that information on to them…by the end of the first term I had made contact with every parent, even if it was via e-mail or a telephone call just to …update them on their son or daughter's progress in class…just one parent who is a bit reserved and stand offish at the moment…so we have got a group of parents who I feel want their children to succeed at school.

Kerrin taught Sam and said his mother was always at parent teacher interviews and they had talked on the phone a few times. Kerrin wanted more parent contact each term and more pastoral opportunities, like House days, to encourage parents to come in to the school because "I think there is a lot of fear from a lot of parents, we are kinda 'them' and 'us'.

Susanah said:

one of the things from Te Kotahitanga [that] has been extremely successful was the evening they had for parents. I went along to that evening and made myself known to the parents of the students that I have, and I had really great conversations with the parents and the outcome of that is that they are wanting me to actually make personal connection with them more often and to have an e-mail from a couple of them has been great because every time a child does something good I can tell them so I'm getting back messages 'thank you for caring for my daughter, thank you for caring for my son'.

Mick also had begun to make a conscious effort to make home contact with parents of his students and found when he phoned home there was a positive response. He said: "Favourable. Yeah. They are more than happy that we have rung. They wish that other teachers had done it."

Principal's Influence

The key open ended question asked of the students, teachers and parents was:

What sort of leader do you think can make a difference to students' academic achievement?

Analysis of the data showed that all thirteen students struggled to identify the role the principal played in motivating individual student achievement. Ten of the students said the principal had no influence on individual student achievement and eleven of the students said they did not know the principal or had not spoken to him. Three of the students thought the principal can influence individual student's achievement only if he/she gets to know the student, perhaps in a small school, although five of the students thought the principal can influence the culture of the school.

Miriama said: "I think the principal is like a figurehead something to represent the staff but other than that never really has any impact on me because I don't deal with them, I deal with the teachers and the students." Miriama's father confirmed her view:

> I don't think it is directly. Um she never talks about it. He doesn't enter her sphere of influence or interest, um, he's the teachers' boss not hers……I think that might have a much more profound influence on parents…I know that what he has done for this school is clearly being positive because the reason we didn't send our first child to this school earlier was because the school had a very negative reputation around really personal safety for the kids – it would be ten years ago now. So um yet now I would say out of the state school system it is one of the best schools in the region.

Tracey said: "Oh well I have never actually talked to [the principal] before so I don't even know him so, he hasn't really affected anything with my schooling."

Kerry's mother said: "I've only heard good things from our kids [about the principal]. I guess it all filters down…his role is to make sure that things are flowing right with the teachers…maybe indirectly as far as Kerry goes…"
The principal saw his role as the educational leader and the professional leader of the school who works with the wider staff to improve the academic achievement of students across the school. In order to address the issue of underachievement of

Māori students in the school, the principal suggested several steps in a long term plan. He believed it was important to acknowledge with "professional honesty" that the school is not doing well with regard to improving the academic achievement of Māori students and that we must never underestimate the value of parents in supporting children's education. He also considered that it was important to break down the "barrier that exists between our Māori community and our school and overcome the effects of negative educational experiences of many parents" through several approaches:

> a) Continue with the Te Kotahitanga project with its focus on increasing all teachers' empathy for Māori families and improving teacher/student relationships and learning in the classroom.
>
> b) Further promote involvement of Māori families in extracurricular activities in the school in a non threatening environment.
>
> c) Increase the number of meetings for Māori families eg the Māori student academic and sporting achievement evening; provide role models for others to emulate; and the Te Kotahitanga parent evening.
>
> d) Target Year 9 Māori parents first in a five year plan to increase parent involvement and commitment to ensure their child attends school and follows the school rules.

This approach by the principal, and the views of the Year 13 students and the parents, mirrors the view that the principal's role in supporting the academic achievement of students is through indirect means. This view is supported in the literature referred to in chapter two of this thesis (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) which indicates that positive effects on student outcomes are mediated mainly by school cultures and teachers' commitment and job satisfaction.

Part Three - Friends' Influence

Key findings

Open ended questions which lead to students acknowledging friends among the influences on their achievement included:

What was school like for you in Year 9 and Year 10?
Lots of students drop out of school in Year 11. Why do you think you have stayed at school through to Year 13 and NCEA Level 3?
What made it easier or harder for you to achieve?

Data analysis revealed the theme of the friends' influence and included the following categories and sub categories as illustrated in the Friends' Influence chart (Appendix D). The positive influence category included the subcategories: positive support which was academic/competition/emotional support/fun; the desire to be better or different from their friends; having fewer senior close friends; having some parental control on their friends influence. The negative influence category included the subcategories: friends encouraged wagging or smoking in junior school; friends dropping out provided a temptation to leave; friends provided distractions through socializing.

Positive support

All thirteen students credited their friends with providing a positive academic influence on them and most relied on them for fun and/or emotional support. Eleven students said they could be different or better than their friends or could choose the opposite of friends. No one had friends as the most important influence. Nine students ranked friends in third or fourth place on the list of influences. Half the students commented on the negative influence of friends in the junior school and had fewer close friends in the senior school.

Kerry said "one of my friends is in all of my classes so we try to keep each other on our toes all the time". He considered that they "challenge" each other explaining assignments and encouraging each other so they don't "slacken off."

Alex described how a friend "who goes really hard in school" can "be there for you." She commented:

> Um, just sometimes when we'd slip up and you are not good, 'oh I don't want to go to school,' she just says "oh come to school' and things like that. We both needed to go to the library so we both go in…just having your friend do their work, so I say "OK I'll do mine too".

Emotional support was provided by friends. Kerry said friends made it easier for him to achieve:

> because you know you feel good about yourself when you're with your friends…so they make you happy...if you're happy about something if you're positive …You can talk to them about stuff that you can't with your parents, and you have good times with your friends and trust with your friends.

Kelly said her friends were "high achieving as well …and are really important, I need them, they keep me sane." Sam believed "You've got friends that want to do the same too. Friends keep in there. My friends don't want to drop out."

Eleven of the students maintained they could make decisions that were the opposite of some of their friends because they wanted to be better or different to their friends. Sam said some of his friends in Year 11 said "it wasn't cool [to hand in assignments] but that's in their opinion."

Some of the students had friends in the junior school who could have been a negative influence but they left school after Year 10 or in Year 11. Most of the students made new friends in the senior school through the subjects they took and who have been positive influences on their achievement. All Ngarui's friends were in her Geography class in which she achieved highly. Miriama said her friend J:

> helped me in sixth form with my Chemistry and Physics and stuff like helping me with the bits I didn't understand, and she was a really good friend…In the senior school I got into a really good crowd…all my friends

were really smart, they wanted to learn…if they didn't understand something I would help them, if I didn't understand something they would help me, its like giving and taking and teaching each other, so that if one person learns, they will help the other person in it as well….sort of have study groups which are actually a lot of fun.

Many of the students referred to friends who had left school at the end of Year 10 or during Year 11, friends who had become pregnant, involved with drugs or tempted by jobs that provided spending money. Alex said when her friends left school and some became pregnant "it made me see that, you know, that's not how I want to be." Alex's teacher, Lee, confirmed that the students had discussed their concerns with her about a friend getting pregnant and stated clearly that they were not going to get pregnant and that they had a goal of moving to another city to study and go flatting together.

Jo agreed with Alex's approach to friends who "dropped out".

> I stayed away from them if I could because I knew that wasn't any way to go…they don't really care about the consequences of what they do, so they're not very good friends…I have got a good group of friends now and I think without them it would be hard for me to focus on school cause I wouldn't have them to talk to about school work and, you know, it's really easy to have a good time at school with your friends if they concentrate on school as well.

Tracey said one of her friends 'kept wagging, she was really brainy but she just kept wagging and like she wouldn't go to classes, like I would go to classes and they wouldn't. That's what lunchtime and interval's for, that's when you socialize. Yeah." She went on to say:

> Well my friends haven't done that well…I think to see my friends waste it [education], is another thing…I don't want to be like them and waste it and then to hear them go 'oh I am so gutted that I just left it' and that just motivated me even more…I know I'm good at this. Cause just seeing them waste it, I am gutted for them, and I know I don't want to be like that, don't want to waste it.

Chris identified two groups of friends – one group who provided a distraction from learning and another group that supported his learning. He liked to have fun with his friends but "I just thought better of it to stay with the ones that supported me as well [as having fun] that made sure I did work and helped me when I needed it…yeah".

Chris was one of four students who was also a bit competitive with his friends. He realized he had not achieved as many credits part way through the year as they had. "I saw all my friends and that's what motivated me, how they were like 'yeah, I have got 20 credits' and I only had five of them. I felt really bad about it, it made me kinda feel stupid, so I was like well I'll show you, yeah, and somehow I managed to barely pass."

Seven of the students indicated their parents had some control on their friends' potentially negative influence. Rob said a negative influence could be friends encouraging wagging but he said he would "just think of what my mother would say, if she actually caught me wagging" (laughter). When asked "What would she say?" Rob said, "She would just give me that look" (laughter) which was all she needed to do.

Sam was reluctant to return to school after his friends dropped out of school in Year 11 but was encouraged by his mother to return to school. She said: "I said to him, 'well you had better go looking for new mates because if your mates are dropping out you've got to be looking for new friends, because of the fact you are going to have nobody if you're gonna stay at school." Sam admitted his mother was right and he made new friends in the senior school who are a positive influence on his achievement.

Miriama described some friends she had in Year 10 who ran away from home and did not do any school work, "who are not very good people, she sort of dragged me down a bit in fourth form…" What stopped her being "dragged down" was:

> My family. Cause I was living with my mother and my step father, he is like a second Dad to me and he loves me like a daughter…My step Dad just sat

me down and told me how disappointed him and Mum were in me and that was a real like… and that got me back on track.

Tracey's mother thought that the friends' influence "is huge and um, I think if kids can get away with it they will, and a lot of Tracey's friends were wagging…and I said to her 'Dad'll just ring the school and get an [attendance] print out' I had no problems with that…she was always worried I would find out." This acted as a control on the temptation to wag with friends.

The parents supported the students' view that friends were either a positive academic or emotional support or a neutral influence. Kerry's mother said the friends of Kerry that she had met:

> were all lovely boys…quite responsible and mature…I think the friends that he has are on the same page, so I think that's part of it, um, keeping on the same level with his friends, kind of like mind, his friends have goals that they want to achieve, and so he's drawn into that which is good.

His father pointed out that for Kerry this was not a competitive relationship.

Teachers also supported the view that friends could be a positive academic influence and four teachers actively encouraged this in the classroom. Kerrin said: "I encourage them to support each other's learning… [I give the] expectation that your friends are going to achieve, you are gonna achieve and you can help them achieve and all achieve together." Susanah gave an example of this support in practice: "Yesterday I threw up several examples of the kinds of things they were going to get on the test and they could chatter away quietly while they were doing a mini test, but be absolutely on task helping each other working together in a purposeful manner."

Melanie, who taught two of the interviewed students in her Year 12 class last year, did not see evidence of friends influencing them: "Influence in motivation overall I don't think that [friends] really affected either of them" although she went on to quote examples of students who she thought were influenced either positively or negatively by friends.

A common trend seemed to be that students believed they had "heaps" of friends in the junior school but a few close friends in the senior school. This would suggest that students came to a more mature and thoughtful realisation of the qualities needed in a genuine friend as they reached the senior school.

Part Four - Self Motivation

Key findings

Data analysis revealed the theme of self motivation and included the following categories and sub categories as illustrated in the Self Motivation Chart (Appendix E). The category of extrinsic motivation included the following subcategories: concern for the future/ wanting to "go far"/have a good job and money; gain qualifications but achievement with Merit / Excellence was not an important factor; goals were stated but vague. The category of intrinsic motivation included the following subcategories: self efficacy; self efficacy after achieving success; personal satisfaction/ challenge; be the opposite to Māori stereotyping; interested in the subject; motivation came half from self/half from family

Extrinsic Motivation

Analysis of the data revealed that extrinsic motivation, which is "external to the student or task at hand" (Strong et al 1995, p.9), appears to play a much more important role in the motivation of all thirteen students than intrinsic motivation. They are all motivated by a need for qualifications which will assist them to gain a satisfying job, money and a good future.

Jo stated: "I don't see the point of dropping out of school to be quite honest before Year 13. You're too young to do anything else anyway, you know. You can't get a job without qualifications so why would you want to."

Nine of the students acknowledged that gaining average results - that is gaining Achieved credits rather than Achieved with Merit or Achieved with Excellence – was acceptable to them. Kelly said in Year 11 "it was OK to just pass, even

though you were supposed to try your best in your effort." She did go on to say "I hate failing, I want to achieve and feel good that I did my best and, yeah, get the credits."

Alex considered there was no real incentive for her to aim for excellence. "Oh my Nana always says I should go for the best but um I don't know I think I'm just one of those people who would rather just pass it. I don't really strive to get …an excellence or anything. I would rather pass then that's done, you know. Yeah."

Tracey said her goal was to pass NCEA Level 2 last year but getting Merit or Excellence was not a motivator for her. "Um not that I wouldn't want an Excellence but you know Achieved is alright with me. Anything except 'Not Achieved'."

The students are also motivated by their families, in particular, by a significant family member who values education, has high expectations for their son or daughter and, along with teachers, who all provide the "push" and encouragement which motivates the students to achieve. Eight of the students indicated that half their motivation comes from their family and half from themselves. Three students were offered rewards for academic success by their family.

Jo recalled: "My Poppa, up to about fifth form, whenever…I got an achievement certificate, whenever I got something like that, he gave me five dollars, and that was a real incentive, so I remember that. That was really cool." While Jo returned to Year 13 to gain her university entrance, she (among others) was also motivated to return by the rather superficial rewards given to Year 13 students – flexible uniform code, use of the Year 13 Common Room, study periods, going to the Leavers Dinner, gaining a Leavers' jacket and "to experience the fun year of Year 13."

Alex said: "She [my mum] said that if I did pass I would get a car, so which was you know motivation for me to pass fifth form. And then sixth form I got a trip to Raro [Rarotonga] so it was kinda those things that would make me want to go to school and make me go hard." Alex was also more precise about her goals for the

future. "I definitely know that I don't want to be poor. I don't want to rely on the benefit or anything like that…I would like to do something in the medical field - ultra sounds – and then help Māori youth."

Miriama admitted:
> She [the teacher] helped you put in the hard yards so that you learnt not just got through, you learnt…actually a pretty good incentive was if you didn't do well then you have to spend lunchtime with her looking over your shoulder as you did it again and again . Everybody tried their best so that they didn't have to do that.

Ten of the students had goals but they were very vague and ill defined. Rob, who saw himself "maybe" still at university in five years time, said: "Well I don't want to be one of those lay about Māori how they just grow… living on the dole, I actually want to do something with my life. Making sure that my family, in the future, have something to rely on."

Chris concurred: "My goal is basically to do well in life and make sure that if and when I have a family I am able to provide for them…to get a good job, hear that so much…yeah that would be a motivator."

Kelly said: "I want to go to Uni next year, but it's just I haven't really decided what career path I want to take yet so if I've decided by the end of the year then I will, cause I want to get qualifications and everything to get a good job."

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is defined as "the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" where the person is motivated to act, for example, for fun or a challenge rather than because of external prods, pressures or rewards" (Ryal & Deci, 2000, p. 56). Further data analysis revealed that when ranking what influenced or motivated them to achieve, the students often had to be prompted to discuss what part their self

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motivation played in their academic success which suggested that intrinsic motivation was not a strong influence.

> Interviewer: And where do you fit into that [ranked list] in terms of motivation and what influences you?
> Jo: Oh. Doing it for me, you mean? Um, probably I do it for myself more than I do it for anyone else. Because if I don't really care where I was going then I'd have just given up, you know, in Year 11…"

> Interviewer: What about yourself – some of your motivation may have come from in you?
> Tony: Makes me feel better that I am not wasting my time, and like I kinda enjoy Maths, Physics and stuff, like I enjoy knowing how things work, that's probably another thing that pushes me too."

> Interviewer: And how do you fit into the motivation side of it?
> Rob: What do you mean?
> Interviewer: Are you an influence yourself?
> Rob: Oh yeah, oh I'm up there with family because if I don't influence myself I don't think I would be at school anymore."

Self-efficacy

Success generally builds personal efficacy and failure undermines or lowers it (Eisenberger et al., 2005; Schunk et al., 2008). Data analysis revealed that self-efficacy – self belief, a judgment students make about their capability to accomplish a specific future task – is evident in five of the students and a further three students indicated that self-efficacy developed after experiencing success particularly in NCEA Level 1. Only four of the students made any reference to personal satisfaction or challenge as motivating factors.

Alex acquired self efficacy through her mother's encouragement which gave her "the extra boost you know that you can do it" and made her believe in herself.

Rob gained an insight into the value of education when he was able to compare the educational opportunities available in New Zealand with the educational opportunities available to students in Samoa.

> Oh well my mother is an educational consultant… so I got to see what her students were going through, how privileged we are in New Zealand to have all the resources we have…In Samoa I saw how basic their education was. It really motivated me to push myself a bit more.

Rob considers teachers can also help build self-efficacy. Students have to:

> motivate themselves…but there's always motivation from teachers as well, like positive feedback…to actually help them, make them feel good about themselves. No student wants to hear that they're dumb. They want to have a sense where they can actually achieve if they put their mind to it. Cause if pupils think 'oh I'm not going to pass this, I'm not going to do this' and the teacher reinforces that they will [achieve] if they try, it gives them that sense they can push themselves even more to pass.

Chris ranks the most important influences to motivation as family, teachers, friends, then places himself fourth on the list. He goes on to say:

> Sometimes I have to motivate myself and keep on track or do what I have to do, I don't know why but I …...think of the consequences of what's going to happen if I don't do something, or if I don't go to school or something like that and that seems to generally get me back on track……whether I can live with what happens…….half way through last year I realized that um if I don't start motivating myself and buckling down I probably won't pass…so I decided to start sitting at the front of the class or listening more or doing a bit more work. I think that's the main reason why I passed NCEA Level 2. Yeah.

What at first appears to be intrinsic motivation is in fact extrinsic motivation stemming from the desire to gain credits towards a qualification.

Conclusion

These findings present a challenging and complex tapestry of influences for these students. It is fitting that the student voice articulates this complexity. Miriama explained how difficult and complex it was determining how her self motivation was interwoven with the tapestry of influences of family, teachers, friends, qualifications, jobs and the future.

> Well it's sort of hard to explain, but you have got the list right, with a box around it. Cause I have sort of got my own opinion about things but um, and then all around that there's all the advice that people give me and how they help me, so it is kind of like not a real list but a circle with me in the middle and everyone else around me. Cause I don't know what I want, I know that. I have a rough idea but, and I look to my family and people I trust to help guide me, but they are not the final word on that, they can guide me but they can't just lead me.

Guiding these Māori students is one of the greatest challenges for educators today.

Chapter 5
Discussion of Findings

Introduction

This case study acknowledges the need to reject the deficit theorizing about low levels of achievement among Māori students. Deficit theorizing has been a recurring phenomenon in the literature over a wide soan of years. Deficit theorizing has been about laying the blame on Māori themselves: that it was their own choice to live a primitive life with outdated traditions (Hunn, 1961), the deprived nature of home conditions (Lovegrove 1966), poor family resources (Nash (1993), less money and education, unemployment, large families, one parent families, lack of pre school education (Chapple et al, 1997). Years of deficit theorizing has produced devastating effects on Māori student achievement, highlighting blame and cultural defects and ignoring the effects of colonial dominance and resulting power imbalance (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Shields et al., 2005; Simon & Smith, 2001; Smith, 1998).

This chapter provides a summary of the findings outlined in chapter four followed by discussion of these findings. This chapter also offers recommendations for the case study school, acknowledges some limitations to this research and offers some concluding statements.

Summary of the findings

The findings outlined in chapter four of this case study confirm the important influence of parental support, or the support of a significant adult, on the academic achievement of Year 13 Māori students. The next most important influences for these students are that of teachers and friends. Self motivation is intricately woven into this tapestry of influences.

This case study was based on listening to the voices of academically successful Year 13 Māori students who had achieved NCEA Level 2 and were studying for

NCEA Level 3. Gaining an understanding of what influenced and motivated these Year 13 Māori students to succeed academically, when many others had not succeeded, was the focus for this research. The role of the principal or leader in their academic success was also of interest.

The findings revealed the answers to these questions as follows:
What influenced and motivated you to achieve NCEA Level 2 and return to school to study for NCEA Level 3?

The participants clearly identified the family as the strongest and most vital influence on their academic success because their family valued education. In particular, a mother, father or significant adult was identified as showing interest in the participants' education, strongly encouraging them to stay at school, having high expectations of them which the students wanted to meet. They also identified positive role models among family members that the participants emulated. The parent participants supported this finding.

Teachers were the next most essential influence on their academic success as the participants described the importance of building positive relationships with their teachers, having teachers communicate with them and get to know them as individuals in a friendly, fun and relaxed way. Having a teaching style which allowed openly for questions, offered clear explanations, one-on-one support but also included strict, consistent discipline was also important. Building positive student/teacher relationships, which had been highlighted in the Te Kotahitanga project professional development, was also strongly acknowledged as essential by the teacher participants.

Friends were identified as an important positive and supportive influence on academic achievement after family and teachers. The participants considered they could choose different behaviour to their friends if necessary, although some acknowledged this was more difficult in the junior school. Most acknowledged there was some parental control on their friends' influence.
Extrinsic motivation, grounded in the need for qualifications to attain a career, money and future success, and prompted by the encouragement of the

parent/significant adult, was more important than intrinsic motivation as an influence for academic success. Students were generally satisfied with attaining Achieved results rather than Merit or Excellence results and had only vague goals beyond attaining a qualification. Gaining personal satisfaction from achieving, having a strong interest in the subject, having the desire to be opposite to the stereotypical view of Māori and prove a point, provided intrinsic motivation for a few participants.

Self motivation was strongly influenced by the family who appeared to play a significant role in the development of self-efficacy within the student participants. Some students acknowledged that the success at NCEA Level 1 added to their self-efficacy.

The students were also asked the following question:
What sort of leader do you think can make a difference to students' academic achievement?

The student participants considered the principal had no influence on their academic achievement because they did not know the principal. There was some acknowledgement from a few student participants that they benefited indirectly from the principal's influence on the culture and the management of the school. These student participants were struggling to evaluate the principal's role in their academic success and therefore these findings confirm what is supported in the literature (Cotton, 2003; K. Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) that the principal's influence is indirect and mediated through the actions of others, mainly the teachers.

Encouragement and high expectations from parent/significant adult - valuable and vital

The findings in this case study about the academic success of Māori students which stress the importance of family support and encouragement for education, are supported in the literature (Biddulph et al., 2003; Bishop et al., 2007; Bishop et al., 2003; Codjoe, 2007; Crozier & Reay, 2005; DePlanty et al., 2007;

Eisenberger et al., 2005; Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005; Howard, 2002; Jacobs & Harvey, 2005; Macfarlane, 2007; Mikaere & Loane, 2001 ; Schunk et al., 2008). While the literature suggests that the level of aspiration for education does not differ between Māori parents and non Māori parents (Macfarlane, 2004; Martin, 1994; Mikaere & Loane, 2001), the considerable under achievement of Māori students would suggest that fewer Māori parents realize the importance that encouragement, high expectations and emotional support – separate from, and, it is suggested, more significant than other family factors such as resources, money, educational qualifications of parents - has for their children to actually succeed academically.

The thirteen students in this case study have all acknowledged a significant family member, usually their mother or their father, who most encouraged them and had high expectations of them. It appears that this relationship builds self-efficacy within the students leading to the self-motivation that the students acknowledge is interwoven with the influences of family, teachers and friends.

Building positive teacher/student relationships - essential

The existence of positive relationships between the teacher - who the students in this case study described as friendly, caring, fun but also consistent in discipline - and the student, is also an important ingredient in the Year 13 Māori students' reasons for success. This factor is supported in the literature (Bishop et al., 2007; Bishop et al., 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Cavanagh, 2007; Fenzel & O'Brennan, 2007; Hattie, 2003; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Macfarlane, 2004; Macfarlane et al., 2007; Montaivo et al., 2007; Smyth & Fasoli, 2007; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007; Witmer, 2005). These researchers, among others, emphasise the teachers' role in students' success more than the students themselves do in this case study. This could suggest that having the strong support of a parent/significant adult empowers students to adapt more flexibly to different teacher/student relationships even though they prefer the positive, friendly, relationship they describe. The challenge for teachers today is to balance the students need to form friendly relationships in a fun environment with the students' other need of having consistent and strict discipline in the classroom.

The positive responses of the teachers who were interviewed about the benefits of the Te Kotahitanga Project (Bishop et al., 2007; Bishop et al., 2003) suggest the case study school should continue with this project. While the Year 13 students themselves were largely unaware of the project, the involvement of the teachers in reflective practice and the valuable professional development gained from the classroom observations and feedback of the Te Kotahitanga project cannot be underestimated. There was a strong acknowledgement of beneficial spin offs for senior classes as well as for the junior classes on which the Te Kotahitanga project focuses. These teachers in the case study school were not clinging to the deficit theorizing that concerns researchers (Bishop et al., 2003) and most felt the discursive teaching style advocated by the Te Kotahitanga project for about 60% of lessons was already their natural style. These teachers were well advanced in achieving the goal of balancing the friendly relationships with a strict but fun classroom environment.

The teachers' acknowledgement of the importance of relationship building, particularly with their Māori students both senior and junior, is very encouraging and supports the positive comments students make about their teachers. Creating culturally responsive classrooms, with the support of the Te Kotahitanga facilitators, builds a strong base for positive relationships to develop.

However, this case study suggests that, while teachers need to acknowledge the importance of forming positive relationships particularly with Māori students in the classroom, without the two pronged approach of also developing greater support and high educational expectations of Māori students from their family member or significant adult, improving the educational achievement of Māori students would seem to be an up hill battle.

Bishop et al (2003) suggest that the deficit theorizing that has existed in society and among teachers has created a huge barrier between home and school. These researchers suggest that schools cannot change the home conditions under which students live and that therefore action needs to be taken by teachers in the classroom because that is the only area over which they have any control. They argue that gaining success for students in the classroom must happen first and that

this will improve school/home relations as more positive contact is made. Senior Management Teams and teachers must also take note of the caution extended by Thrupp (2008) that teachers must not accept all the responsibility for student achievement, and therefore all the blame for underachievement.

This case study and the literature (Eisenberger et al., 2005; Schunk et al., 2008) also suggests that success generally builds self-efficacy and failure undermines it. Students are encouraged by success in NCEA Level 1 and believe themselves capable of further success. However, while these findings tend to support Bishop et al's (2003) view that success will hopefully lead to improved parent/teacher contact, the Senior Management Team of the case study school needs to be more proactive than this and include further interventions to establish more positive contact with a student's family member/significant adult. The value of encouraging their children and building self belief and self efficacy should be promoted at every opportunity during home/school contact.

Building Self-efficacy for motivation - indispensable

Self-efficacy, a major component of motivational theory, (Alderman, 1999), is a judgment students make about their ability to accomplish a specific future task. It is not just about their ability but is also about the beliefs they hold about that ability. The essence of self-efficacy is that students are motivated to engage in tasks and to achieve when they believe they can accomplish the task (Alderman, 1999; Margolis & McCabe, 2006). The students in this case study lay most credit for developing this self-efficacy on their family member/significant adult and on their teachers with some credit given to their friends.

The commonality among students' responses suggests that students who have a parent/significant adult who values education, has high expectations and provides a role model clearly have a distinct advantage over other students who do not have this support. The principal and Senior Management Team need to help develop this self-efficacy for students through a programme of interventions involving both parents/significant adult and teachers.

What needs to be done?

So what do these findings mean for the case study school, for the principal, Senior Management Team and for the teachers? What can senior leaders in the case study school, do to ensure there is a significant adult who is encouraging each Māori student to succeed to Year 13? The findings suggest that further interventions are necessary to ensure all Māori students have the opportunity to succeed. Many of the excellent interventions currently taking place in the case study school, it is suggested, need to be continued and/or strengthened and some new interventions which target particular Māori students, rather than are global across the school, should be introduced.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) must devise interventions for those students who do not have this significant adult in their lives and find an alternative to fill this gap to ensure success for all students.

The importance of a significant adult in encouraging students' academic success needs to be reflected in the management structure of the school. In order to reflect this, it is suggested that a School/Family Contact portfolio be created for one of the deputy principals in the flattened management structure of the case study school. The broad responsibilities in this portfolio would be focused on improving the contact between the school and parents, further engaging parent/significant adult involvement and interest in their child's academic work, and in particular providing the parent/significant adult with an understanding of the importance of encouragement and high expectations for their child. Those who work with teenagers know they are unlikely to tell their parents/significant adult how much they appreciate their support for their education.

The particular focus of this School/Family Contact portfolio, it is suggested, would be on engaging and supporting targeted Year 12 and Year 13 Māori students by providing a link between school and the parent/significant adult in the students' lives with the aim of improving their academic achievement e.g. increasing the success rate of Year 12 Māori students in NCEA Level 2 in the case study school from 12 out of 55 students to perhaps 20 in the first year and so on.

The school is already focusing on the needs of Year 9 and 10 Māori students through the Te Kotahitanga project and for the needs of Year 11 Māori students with a mentoring programme. Currently, there is no targeted support for the Year 12 and 13 Māori students. These students are the role models for the younger Māori students coming through the school and who the Year 13 students interviewed were interested in supporting. It would seem to be logical to follow through to Year 13 with a programme of support for these students.

The cost to the school, it is suggested, would be one line of the timetable set aside for this role, along with careers guidance for all Year 13 students, and could be covered by the case study school's Careers Grant. This can be justified by the need to provide guidance for their future careers – one of the influences students identified as a motivating factor for success.

A further responsibility would be to make available professional development for Deans, Group Tutors, in particular, but also to all teachers about how to sensitively gain information from students about who they consider is the most significant adult who supports and encourages their education. This would enable contact to be made with the most appropriate person where necessary. Further professional development about building self efficacy could also be provided. The Guidance Department in the school is ideally placed to provide this support.

The deputy principal responsible for the School/Family Contact portfolio, it is suggested, would devise a Five Year Plan and an Annual Family Contact Calendar. The rationale for this is the need to co-ordinate the variety of excellent initiatives already operating within the school and the introduction of some new interventions. The following steps provide a suggested approach the deputy principal responsible for this portfolio could oversee.

1) Support Group for Targeted Years 12/13 NCEA Level 2 & 3 Māori students:

- Hold a hui to form a group of Year 12 and 13 Māori students perhaps called a 'Kia Kaha' group who meet with the deputy principal and an

interested staff member to introduce the concept of the group which is to provide targeted support for these students.

- Conduct an individual interview as conversation with each targeted student to offer them the opportunity to opt into the group.

- Hold a parent/significant adult hui to outline the purpose of the group and gain parent/significant adult support. E-mail and/or cell phone text contact would be encouraged along with phone contact.

- Hold voluntary individual interviews as conversations on a regular basis preferably in the Careers Department in Gateway so that goal setting can also be included in the conversations.

- Produce an Individual Education Plan in conversation with the students. This plan could include a staff mentor chosen by the students particularly if they have had a mentor in Year 11 and wish to keep that contact in Year 12.

- Help create friendship groups among the targeted students with the potential for success. Encourage them to support each other. Meet with them as a group to help them acquire further strategies to achieve success.

- Hold the interviews as conversations and informal group meetings during the timetabled group time/form class. The deputy principal responsible would liaise with Group Tutors/Form Teachers.

- Keep separate any discipline issues which would still be dealt with by the students' House Deans.

2) Building Self-efficacy:

- Hold professional development for teachers on self-efficacy and motivation theory in collaboration with the Te Kotahitanga facilitators.

- Introduce the students to the concept of self-efficacy in the interviews as conversations or group meetings.

3) Administrative additions to the enrolment process to improve parent/significant adult engagement in their child's education:

- Broaden the range of details required on the Enrolment Form at the time of the enrolment of a student including not merely an Emergency Contact Number but rather a "Parent/significant adult number for Emergency Contact", that is, the name and contact details of a family member or other adult who is prepared to take some responsibility for the student if the enrolling parent is unavailable (or unwilling to be available or unco-operative).
- Add to the Enrolment Form names of cousins attending the school as well as siblings.
- Gain approval to cell phone text parents if it is their preference for contact.
- Be more proactive in gaining e-mail addresses, especially work e-mail addresses where appropriate.
- Add to conditions of enrolment a guarantee to inform the school of any changes of residential address, phone number (including cell phone) or e-mail address.

4) Reintroduce a Year 9 family hui at the beginning of the year for family/significant adult and students to meet their Group Tutor.

5) Retain and revitalize the Achievement Voucher system already operating in the school and anchor this system more strongly in motivational theory.

6) Reinstate the Study Seminars/NCEA Information meetings for parents during parent interview evening.

7) Reinstate the Study Seminars for all Year 13 students.

8) Retain the successful Te Kotahitanga hui for parents, teachers and students.

9) Encourage informal meeting of teachers and parents at school performances through more widespread marketing of school events.

10) Newsletters sent to parents by e-mail where possible. (Preferably to work e-mail addresses or addresses that their children do not have access to in order to overcome the 'Students as gatekeepers' phenomena with regard to school information being received at home.)

The findings of this case study suggest that these recommendations if, introduced, could have valuable outcomes for the academic achievement of Māori students in the case study school.

Limitations

While every effort was made to address any power imbalance between the participants and the researcher, it is not possible to confirm that this was totally achieved. This was a case study involving a small group of participants in a large, New Zealand, urban, mainstream co-educational, decile 4 secondary school, and while the findings for this school may be relevant to similar schools, no generalisation was intended to be made.

Five parents, representing four students, were interviewed. These may have been particularly proactive parents who were confident about having contact with the school. Parents who did not respond to my letter and phone calls may have not wanted to be involved or may have been too busy to be involved. They were not asked to give a reason for their non involvement.

While other issues surrounding the achievement of Year 13 Māori students, such as socio-economic issues, may also be an important influence these were not discussed by the participants. This could be because at least one of the parents of each of these students was employed although there appeared to be a wide range in the socio-economic background of the students as indicated by the occupations of the parents which ranged from a cleaner to an Information Technology analyst and therefore implied significant wage/salary differences.

Further research

While a huge amount of research has been carried out about underachievement of Māori students, most has centred on primary and intermediate year levels. Little research has focused on reasons for the success of senior Māori students in particular. This case study offers a contribution to that research. The scope of this case study did not allow time to interview the 43 Year 12 Māori students who did not achieve NCEA Level 2 in 2007. Further research could be carried out in order to draw a comparison between these two groups of students about what influences and motivates them. Further research would need to be undertaken to evaluate the initiatives suggested in this case study should they be adopted in the case study school in 2009.

Conclusion

The principal of the case study school acknowledged the need for the school to improve the academic achievement of its Māori students. Current initiatives at Year 9 and Year 10 with the Te Kotahitanga project and the mentoring programme at Year 11 suggest significant progress is being made, although evaluation of these initiatives is the not the focus of this thesis. Creating a School/Family Contact portfolio, which includes the particular initiative targeting Year 12 and Year 13 students, and highlights the importance of the parent/significant adult role, is suggested as the most appropriate way forward for supporting and improving the academic achievement of these Year 13 Māori students.

In listening to the voices of the teachers interviewed for this case study, it is clear the school is making significant progress, particularly through the work of the Te Kotahitanga project, with regards to the development of positive teacher/student relationships in the classroom as a basis for successful student achievement.

In listening to the voices of the students themselves, it is clear they value the role their parent/significant adult has in their academic success. They value the role their teachers have on their academic success and they also have a developing

maturity with regard to choosing friends who have a positive influence on their academic success. Because of the strong commonality among the voices of the Year 13 students with regards to the importance of the influence of their family member/significant adult, the case study school needs to be proactive in targeting the Year 12 and 13 students, tapping into this support where it is well established and supporting students to identify the parent/significant adult who is most influential in their education.

The importance of the task of improving the academic achievement of Māori students at all levels should not be underestimated:

> the story of Māori education continues to unfold like a flower whose petals are yet to extend fully to catch the sunshine and reach the world of light. (Mead, as cited in Simon (Ed.), 1998).

The principal, senior managers and teachers in the case study school are highly motivated to continue to strive towards the goal of achieving equitable educational outcomes for all Māori students. Education can be the key which opens the door to a successful, fulfilling life and life-long learning.

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APPENDICES														
APPENDIX A - *FAMILY INFLUENCE*														
Pseudonyms of students	Alex	Rob	Tracey	Miriama	Jo	Kyle	Kerry	Chris	Sam	Kelly	Ally	Tony	Ngarui	Total
Parents Value Education:	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
Interest shown in students' education/homework	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
Must stay at school	/	/	/	/	/		/	/			/	/	/	10
Emotional support	/	/		/			/		/	/	/			7
Offer rewards	/				/								/	3
Family expectations:														11
Student wants to make family proud/prove can do it	/	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/			9
Family have high expectations		/	/	/	/		/	/	/			/		8
Family role models:														11
Negative family role models lead to desire to be different/better/opp	/				/				/				/	4
Positive family role models		/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/	/		9
First in family to achieve	/												/	2
Rank family @ 1	/	/	/	/	/		/	/	/		/	/		10
@ 2												/		1
@ 3					/					/				2
@ 4														0
@ 5														0

APPENDIX B - *TEACHERS' INFLUENCE*														
Pseudonyms of students	Alex	Rob	Tracey	Miri	Jo	Kyle	Kerry	Chris	Sam	Kelly	Ally	Tony	Nga	Total
Building positive relationships – qualities/personality														
Communicate/get to know students	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
Open to questions/"nice"/helpful/ friendly	/	/	/		/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	11
Encouraging/believed in students/ care	/	/		/	/	/	/		/					7
"Fun"/joke/relaxed/enjoy/ "cool"/ calm/patient	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
Respectful/two way relationship	/			/	/		/	/	/				/	7
Teaching style														
Explain clearly/pace not fast / slow	/	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/		10
One-on-one	/	/			/		/				/	/		6
Consistent discipline/strict / monitoring/"pushing"	/	/	/	/			/	/		/			/	8
Practical lessons	/	/		/		/		/						5
Rewards	/				/						/	/		4
Not lecture/talk too much								/		/		/		3
Rank teachers @ 1														0
@ 2	/	/					/			/	/	/		6
@ 3			/	/	/		/	/					/	6
@ 4					/									1
@ 5														0

APPENDIX C - *Effect of Te Kotahitanga project – Teachers' responses*								
Pseudonyms of teachers	Kerrin	Timoti	Mick	Susanah	Lee	Melanie	Lou	Total
Classroom Observations/Teaching profile/Co-construction meetings:								
Positives:								
Observations worthwhile	/	/	/	/	/	1/2	/	6
Facilitator feedback valuable	/	/	/	/	/		/	6
Facilitator does not need subject knowledge	/		/			X	/	3
Provide data to judge achievement goals		/	/					2
Discursive/traditional terms can be misleading/artificial			/			/		2
PD Teachers communicate/share/support in co-construction meetings			/					1
Negatives:								
Facilitator not observing whole lesson/changing facilitators							/	1
Establishing cognitive level a challenge						/	/	2
No chance to observe facilitators teaching /good teaching		/			/			2
Co-construction meetings limited value/students in common rare	/	/	/	/			/	5
Professional Development Positives:								
Reflective practice	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
Strategies incorporated into senior classes		/		/	/	/	/	5
More aware of importance of relationships				/	/			2
Acknowledge culture		/			/	/	/	4
No change or reaffirms teaching style/improves existing strategies		/	/	/		/	/	5
Accountability	/				/		/	3

Pseudonyms of teachers	Kerrin	Timoti	Mick	Susanah	Lee	Melanie	Lou	Total
Professional Development Negatives:								
Short time with students to build relationships				/				1
Relationships:								
Building positive student/teacher relationships very important	/	/	/	/	/		/	6
Show personal interest in students' lives outside classroom/care	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
Respect - reciprocal			/	/			/	3
Other Teaching Strategies to assist achievement:								
No different teaching strategies for Maori students		/	/				/	3
Resources relevant to Maori				/	/	/		3
Using Te Reo in classroom		/		/	/	/		3
Success leads to motivation		/	/	/				3
Formative assessment/ reassessment opportunities	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7
Positive feedback/ one-on-one	/	/	/	/			/	5
Co-operative Learning	/		/			/	/	4
Assist students' organization – variety of strategies	/	/	/	/	/	/		6
Assist students' organization – variety of strategies	/	/	/	/	/	/		6
Being subject/lesson prepared			/	/			/	3
High Teacher Expectations								
Students will stay to year 13	/							1
Complete all assessments/work		/	/	/				3
Student buy in to expectations			/	/				2
Learning intentions on board	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7

APPENDIX C (cont'd)								
Pseudonyms of teachers	Kerrin	Timoti	Mick	Susanah	Lee	Melanie	Lou	Total
Students' influence								
Students' self motivation/independent learning/work ethic	/	/	/	/		/	/	6
Teacher not take all responsibility for achievement	/	/						2
Friends' influence								
Encourage peer support- academic	/		/	/		/		4
Students can be opposite to friends					/			1
Family/parent influence								
Family/parent very important influence		/	/	/	/		/	5
Can be important negative/neutral influence	/					/		2
Teacher contact with parents positive	/	/	/	/				4

APPENDIX D - *FRIENDS' INFLUENCE*														
Pseudonyms of students	Alex	Rob	Tracey	Miriama	Jo	Kyle	Kerry	Chris	Sam	Kelly	Ally	Tony	Ngarui	Total
Positive Influence														
Positive support - academic	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
(competition)						/	/			/		/		4
- emotional/fun		/			/		/	/	/	/	/	/		8
Want to be better/different (Can choose opposite of friends)	/	/	/	/	/		/	/	/		/	/	/	11
Have fewer close senior friends (than in juniors)	/		/	/	/				/				/	6
Parental control on friends' influence	/	/	/	/	/				/			/		7
Acknowledge difference Maori/pakeha friends					/				/		/			3
Negative influence														
Encourage wagging or smoking - juniors ("not cool" to go to class)	/	/	/	/	/							/		6
Friends dropping out – temptation to leave									/			/		2
Bullying					/									1
Distractions - Socialising						/			/			/		3
- girlfriend								/				/		2
- gang friend												/	/	2
Rank friends @ 1														0
@ 2				/						/		/		3
@ 3					/		/	/						3
@ 4	/		/		/					/	/		/	6
@ 5		/												1

APPENDIX E - *SELF MOTIVATION*														
Pseudonyms of students	Alex	Rob	Tracey	Miriam	Jo	Kyle	Kerry	Chris	Sam	Kelly	Ally	Tony	Ngarui	Total
Extrinsic motivation														
Qualifications	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	13
Future - want to "go far" (job/money)	/	/	/	/	/	(/)	/	/	(/)	(/)	/	/	/	13
Average achievement is OK / Merit or Excellence not an important factor	/		/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/		9
Goals stated but vague	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/		10
Goals clearly defined		/									/		/	3
(Total)														13
Motivation half from self / half family	/	/	/	/	/		/	/			/			8
Refer to Appendices A - E														
Intrinsic motivation														
Self efficacy		/		/		/				/		/		5
Self efficacy after achieving success	/				/							/		3
Personal satisfaction/challenge							/			/	/	/		4
Be opposite to Maori stereotyping, not a "no hoper"/on benefit. Prove a point.	/	/	/						/			/		5
Subject interest							/		/	/	/	/	/	5
Rank self @ 1					/					/				2
@ 1 = with family	/	/			/						/	/	/	6
@ 2			/			/								2
@ 3														0
@ 4								/	/					2
@ in middle others around				/										1