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An Auto-ethnography:
Decolonising Educational Leadership in Aotearoa /New Zealand

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of
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at
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

by
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Abstract

This auto-ethnography examines how I, as the principal in an English-medium state secondary school in Aotearoa/New Zealand, hence forth referred to as Aotearoa, collaborated to transform the school culture, leading to improved outcomes for indigenous Māori students. By examining the transcripts of interviews between myself and external researchers, the key strategies and behaviours of decolonising and transformative leadership that led the transformation of a school culture and system, begin to be revealed.

Imperative in addressing the long-term underachievement of Māori students as a result of colonisation is a framework for educational leaders to both challenge and transform a system, created through colonisation, that continues to underserve Māori students and whānau¹.

The findings provide examples and tested guidelines for leaders to work within transformative spaces, created through a decolonising leadership framework. It provides a model of effective leadership utilising deliberate acts of decolonisation alongside partnerships of mana ōrite² to transform negative systems and behaviours perpetuated by colonisation.

¹ A translation of words other than English will appear as footnotes the first time they appear in this thesis.
whānau – Māori word for family.

² mana ōrite – partnership of interdependence, where each partner is upholding the status and ability of each other to be self-determining.

Acknowledgements

Researching my own narratives over my time as principal of a wonderful school and community has been both challenging and rewarding. It has been challenging re-connecting with the struggles so many of our Māori students and whānau³ have to endure on a regular basis both in schools and the wider society. It has been rewarding in the hope that this research will add to the works of others who are endeavouring to transform our education system to fully realise the potential of Māori students for themselves, their whānau, iwi⁴, and the whole of Aotearoa.

I want to acknowledge the students, staff, and whānau of the school for giving me the wealth of experiences and knowledge to undertake this research. I also want to acknowledge the school board of trustees and in particular my board chairperson for supporting me to undertake this research, and in particular for being a source of inspiration.

Special acknowledgement needs to go to the four researchers who provided me with the transcripts of their interviews with me. Without their previous work I would not have had the content to undertake this research. Their own works have also been an inspiration for me throughout the research process.

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Thank you to my family for allowing me the time to complete this work. I am aware of the frustrations you have felt when I should have been spending time with you. I also believe you understand the importance of this work, and as a result this work is also yours.

³ Whānau – family

⁴ Iwi - tribe

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He Mihi

Ko Puketoi te maunga

Ko Makuri te awa

Ko Strathallan te waka

Ko Ngāti Pākehā te iwi

Ko te whenua o Ngāti Kahunungu e noho ana

Ko Daniel Murfitt ahau

The Murfitt side of my family arrived on the Strathallan in 1858 into Lyttelton

I feel I belong to the Puketoi ranges and the Makuri river in the Tararua District

I am Pākehā

I was born and have spent the majority of my life living on the land of Ngāti Kahunungu

My name is Daniel Murfitt

Tēnā koe

Tables and Figures

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Introduction

“Whaia e koe te iti kahurangi, ki te tūohu koe, he maunga teitei”

(Pursue precious treasures, and should you have to humble yourself, let it be to a lofty mountain)

The message is to pursue and face up to life’s challenges and only withdraw from a situation that is insurmountable (Pere, 1982).

Māori metaphor and whakataukī⁵ provide deeper meaning to the messages which I provide throughout this thesis. This whakatauākī⁶ strengthens my resolve to pursue transformative change in the way our education caters for Māori students and whānau. It is a reminder that education is a treasure, one that I have found is able to unleash the potential of everybody when undertaken from within a culturally responsive framework. It requires humbleness in what you do to enable you to see the realities of the world around you, whether it be the opportunities or the disparities. It is change that goes beyond your own organisation. Seeking social transformation reinforces that transformative change is not easy, but that it is achievable because of the work of others, both now and in the past. It also reminds me that the transformative change I seek is far greater than any individual, as it traverses the wrongs of history which are ingrained into the fabric of society. The pursuit of equitable societal change in Aotearoa is critical in that it challenges the dominant colonial discourses and systems that have continued to marginalise Māori students within the education system and society. It therefore requires the decolonising of not only the education system but the thinking and the systems that make up the fabric of society. For many the task of achieving transformative change through decolonisation may seem too great, for the task requires persistence, courage and a moral purpose to remain steadfast.

In this chapter I critically reflect on my own past experiences to understand how they have shaped my thinking as a Pākehā⁷, middle class, male school leader, working towards transformative change for and with Māori within the state education system of Aotearoa.

This thesis is a narrative account of my learning, which has resulted from:

⁵ Whakataukī is a proverb or metaphor which cannot necessarily be attributed to a specific person or tribe.

⁶ Whakatauākī is a proverb or metaphor which can be attributed to a specific person or tribe.

⁷ Pākehā – New Zealander of European descent.

- i. an analysis of interview transcripts of my own praxis, undertaken by external researchers between 2009 – 2017;
- ii. an extraction of reflexive meaning from my own experiences, through a combination of my personal narratives linked to the literature and to relevant evidence.
- iii. the use of whakataukī and whakatauākī to centre my research within a Māori worldview and to take my theorising back prior to colonisation in Aotearoa, to help make deeper sense of my learnings.

A deep understanding of my own privilege, positional status and culture is important to ensure I represent the story of others in a culturally responsive and appropriate way. Placing myself at the centre of the research will require an awareness of my own positionality to ensure I am not representing Māori students and whānau experiences within colonising discourses. I know that my experiences and the surroundings in which I live, and work are often defined by these discourses. For example, the language of this thesis and the thesis model itself is a western colonial construct. Therefore, it is important to ensure culturally responsive and decolonising methodologies are also at the heart of the process (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013).

I was motivated to take up this challenge as I found little research that has explored the experiences of Aotearoa principals working with Māori, for transformative change in our state English-medium educational settings.

My research may be of interest to the following roles and organisations:

- Current principals investigating leadership strategies which promote equity, social justice, and decolonisation;
- Potential principals considering taking on leadership roles in schools in Aotearoa and other countries where indigenous populations have been colonised;
- Researchers investigating principal leadership.

My research questions are:

What does an in-depth and critical analysis of my own interview transcripts alongside student participation and achievement information help me to understand about my own principal leadership praxis from 2009 to 2017?

What have been the various types of leadership that I have incorporated into my principal leadership that have influenced education reform and Māori student outcomes?

What are the implications of what I have learned for other leaders?

Who am I? Ko wai au?

It is important to understand who I am, and my background as I seek to work for and with Māori to address the disparities in education achievement. I am a school leader in the state secondary school sector of Aotearoa. The bulk of my experience has been working in schools that draw the majority of their students from lower socio-economic communities, and due to our systemic failure to address education disparities for Māori, many of these communities are now synonymous with low decile⁸ schools and Māori. These experiences have informed my belief that not enough has been done to address the disparity that exists between Māori and non-Māori students within the education sector.

As a secondary school principal I understand the importance of my role in transforming the status quo of disparity and inequity within my own school and the wider education system, and within Aotearoa society as a whole. I also understand the importance of placing myself as a male and Pākehā school leader, in an honourable way within the context of the partnership outlined within the Treaty of Waitangi, which as the founding document of Aotearoa, defines my relationship as Pākehā with Māori. Yet, despite the promises of the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori continue to suffer from the impact of an oppressive power dynamic which perpetuates the oppression of indigenous knowledge, language, and culture (Berryman & Lawrence, 2017).

Four characteristics define me as a person of privilege (Consedine & Consedine, 2012): I am a Pākehā, middle class, male, who was brought up on a farm in the North Island of Aotearoa. These four characteristics also belong to the dominant group (British and male) who have colonised a range of indigenous peoples physically, culturally, emotionally and economically. It has been important for me to develop an understanding of my own privileged position and to be aware of the hidden deficit dialogue about Māori that I have experienced. This discourse is still prevalent in Aotearoa society and needs to be at the forefront of my consciousness when working in education. Being conscious of who I am within the historical context of the

⁸ Decile refers to the government calculation to decide how much funding a school needs. It reflects the percentage of the school's students that live in low socio-economic or poorer communities.

colonisation of Aotearoa has challenged me to reflect upon and explore the potential I have in supporting transformative change in society. Although it can lead to feelings of historical guilt, I prefer to see it as a means to resist the historical and current inequalities faced by others in our society, and as a reason to own my position in the act of decolonisation. This awareness doesn't take away the pride I have in my own background. I feel an affinity with the words of Robert Consedine (Consedine & Consedine, 2012): "whilst I have a love of and pride in my Irish Catholic Pākehā culture and history, it stands alongside my awareness of the privileges I have inherited as a result of the dispossession of Māori"(p. 200).

White Privilege

White privilege is often invisible to those who reap the benefits gained by the result of colonisation, where structures were put in place to advantage the white settlers, whilst at the same time marginalise Māori. These structures form the basis of many of society's formal and informal modus-operandi⁹. Whilst this privilege benefited the white colonisers it is built on the notion of white supremacy, by that I mean colonisation was built on a reification that white people are superior to other races of colour. This belief perpetuated the racist behaviours and systems which have continued to exist beyond the historical colonial period bringing into question whether the colonial period has actually finished. Colonisation has resulted in economic, educational and health inequalities becoming the norm for Māori and their being treated as 'the other', reinforcing the discourse about Māori being inferior.

White privilege forms the basis of the neo-liberalist environment we live in, which is based on competition in a market driven economy. When society is based on competition it results in winners and losers, where the winners feel the need to have losers. This in turn perpetuates an environment of blame and disadvantage.

It is my contention, that having an in-depth awareness of the impact of colonisation in Aotearoa and the social injustices that have ensued, provides the moral imperative required by school leaders to take action. Such action requires us to become more than managers of the status quo, rather we must engage with decolonisation. Decolonising leadership requires leaders to address the racism and inequities experienced by Māori, as these affect the ability of schools to perform and succeed for our Māori students.

⁹ modus-operandi – your usual way of operating.

Social-Political Context

Māori are over represented in the justice system, and in nearly every published negative statistic involving health, employment, education, incarceration and income. These inequalities for Māori are costing the Aotearoa Economy \$2.6 billion a year (Parahi, 2018). When considering these negative statistics, Dr Ganesh Nana (chief economist of Business and Economic Research Limited) stated “continuing to do what we’ve always done is going to lead us into a very deep dark hole” (Parahi, 2018, p.2). This statement reflects the urgency with which the status quo surrounding Māori participation in society needs to be transformed.

The status quo of poor statistics will not change until there is a radical rethink in the dominate discourses, which shape policies and resource allocation. These dominant discourses often take the form of victim blaming as the reason behind the disparity effecting Māori. This stems from the racism¹⁰ evident in society through the deliberate and often conscious development of systems and behaviours that are set-up to advantage one racial group (whites, Pākehā) at the expense of another (coloured, Māori). This is perpetuated through the media and the general deficit rhetoric about how Māori are represented in society. This discourse is not new, and has been prevalent since the beginning of colonisation, where evidence shows that racism has contributed to the disempowerment of Māori (Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2010).

The Colonial Educational context

The historical context for Māori participation and achievement within the education system has been one of disenfranchisement through colonisation. This has resulted in disparity in educational outcomes for Māori students. Many educationalists and researchers committed to achieving educational reform have highlighted the inequities and disparities for Māori learners (Alton-Lee, 2015; Berryman & Lawrence, 2017; Berryman & Tait, 2016; Bishop, 2011; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop, Berryman & Wearmouth, 2014; Bishop, O’Sullivan & Berryman, 2010).

Colonisation brought with it a pattern of dominance and subordination, which set up the education system to marginalise Māori epistemologies (ways of knowing), culture and

¹⁰ Racism - prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

pedagogies. Bishop and Glynn (1999) describe this as epistemological racism, as racism became embedded in the fundamental principles of the dominant culture that formal education was built from. As a result, successive policies of assimilation and integration have been implemented within the education system, resulting in the suppression of Māori language, knowledge and culture from within the education system.

Leadership

It is important for leadership models, both outside and within Aotearoa, to have a positive impact on reducing disparity and improving inequity within the education system, and in particular for Māori and other indigenous peoples. The Best Evidence Synthesis on 'School Leadership and Student Outcomes' found leadership to be one of the most frequently identified indicators of school effectiveness and student achievement (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009).

Researching my own journey and placing my own beliefs and actions alongside other leadership theories, may enable educational leaders to experience an insight into practice converging with leadership theory, which supports social transformation. Shields (2010) provides a framework for transformative leadership which helps move to a point distinct from both transactional and transformational leadership. This framework will support the development of an insight into my own practice from a transformative perspective. By drawing from distinctly Kaupapa¹¹ Māori leadership theories encompassing Ako¹², Rangatira¹³, and Tuakana¹⁴/Teina¹⁵ models of leadership I hope to also be able to provide an insight into leadership theories and practices which pre-dated colonisation (Barrett, 2017; Hawkins, 2017; Pere, 1983). This leads to the development of an understanding of decolonising leadership by reframing leadership practices and behaviours from pre-colonial perspectives (Khalifa, Khalil, Marsh, & Halloran, 2018).

¹¹ Kaupapa – Māori collective vision, philosophy.

¹² Ako – reciprocal learning, culturally preferred pedagogy.

¹³ Rangatira is the traditional name for the chief of an iwi/hapū

¹⁴ Tuakana commonly referred to as the older brother of a male or older sister of a female, but in this case it refers to the senior.

¹⁵ Teina is commonly referred to as the younger brother of a boy or younger sister of a girl, but in this case it refers to junior.

Conclusion

This thesis is organised into five chapters. The introduction provides an insight into my motivation for carrying out this thesis, and how I place myself within this work. It also explains the context in which many Māori students find themselves within the education system of Aotearoa, and the historical context in which current education reform is attempting to unravel the disparities which are systemic across education and many other areas within society. These elements have given rise to my desire to explore my own transformative and decolonising leadership journey. Chapter One provides the literature to support the research. Chapter Two outlines the methodology used to guide the research, along with the method, processes used for data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter Three presents the findings for the research and answers the first two research questions. The discussion in Chapter three answers the third research question by providing the implications of what I have learned for other leaders. Chapter Five summarises the key conclusions and outlines the limitations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review

Introduction

Equity means fairness, in contrast to equality which means sameness
(Shulze & Green, 2017, p.6)

This research explores my role as a principal, leading school reform by disrupting the ongoing educational disparity between Māori and non-Māori and replacing this disparity with a more equitable and effective response. This chapter focuses on what the literature tells us about the context in which school leaders operate in Aotearoa. It begins with the promise of the Treaty of Waitangi that has not been met, which leads into the current context for the educational experiences of Māori students and whānau. I explore Kaupapa Māori theory (Smith, 1997) alongside critical theory (Freire, 1970; Smith, 1997) in order to contextualise the power relations promised but not yet received. Māori leadership models are explored, which lead into culturally responsive leadership, transformative leadership (Shields, 2011, 2013), and decolonising leadership (Khalifa et al., 2018) models and theories.

The context of school leadership is explored through the School Leadership and Student Outcomes Best Evidence Synthesis (Leadership BES) (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009), alongside the Ministry of Education's policy for raising Māori achievement, Ka Hikitia¹⁶ (Ministry of Education, 2009, 2013). The review then looks at Te Kotahitanga¹⁷ (Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2014) as a research based professional development reform for implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations, as a strategy for raising Māori student achievement in Aotearoa secondary schools. Kia Eke Panuku,¹⁸ as the next step in the Ministry of Education's response to the educational challenge of spreading the reform to further schools across Aotearoa Zealand, is then explored.

Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi became the founding document of partnership between Māori and the Crown in 1840. Māori saw the Treaty as a charter for power-sharing in the decision-

¹⁶ Ka Hikitia, (to step up) is the Ministry of Education's Māori education strategy

¹⁷ Te Kotahitanga was a Ministry of Education funded research and teacher professional development reform developed in 2001.

¹⁸ Kia Eke Panuku was a Ministry of Education professional development school reform initiative to support Ka Hikitia.

making process in Aotearoa (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The Treaty was produced and signed in both te reo Māori¹⁹ and English which led to differences in interpretation. Despite the differences in interpretation by each of these groups, there is still more than enough agreement for the interpretation of power-sharing founded on the basic principles of both versions. Despite this, actions throughout history by the dominant Pākehā have continued to let Māori down through a biased application, or no application at all, of the Treaty principles. These actions have seen the dispossession of Māori lands, biased legislation, economic and political domination by Pākehā.

The Hui Taumata²⁰ were a series of meetings held between tribal leaders in Taupō to discuss how they might address perceived disparities faced by Māori. The first meeting was held in at Pukawa in 1856, to establish the Kingitanga²¹. During the Hui Taumata Mātauranga²² of 2006, Durie (2006) highlighted that the heart of the Treaty of Waitangi promised a mutually beneficial relationship – partnership, but that the actual reality has not always been beneficial for Māori. One of the primary goals of the Hui Taumata was to enable Māori to live as Māori, which was inherent in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

It is important to understand the intent of partnership within the Treaty, if we are to stop the continued misinterpretation that has been evident throughout history. Berryman, Lawrence and Lamont (2017) challenge the interpretation of the English meaning of the term partnership, as it does not define the need for mutual benefit to occur, thus resulting in one partner defining the terms of engagement and benefiting more than the other. They have claimed that many iwi understood the relational partnership as mana ōrite²³. This is a partnership of interdependence, where each partner is upholding the status and ability to be self-determining of the other. In this interpretation, the intent of partnership cannot sit with the dominant partner receiving greater benefit or ignoring the other partner, as has happened through educational policies of assimilation and integration. These policies have resulted in the government requiring Māori to assimilate and then integrate into the dominant culture.

¹⁹ te reo Māori – Māori language.

²⁰ Hui Taumata – symposium, conference.

²¹ Kingitanga – The Māori King Movement that arose among some Māori tribes of Aotearoa in the Central North Island to halt the alienation of Māori land.

²² Hui Taumata Mātauranga of 2006 was a meeting focused on Whānau education and Māori potential.

²³ mana ōrite – partnership of interdependence, where each partner is upholding the status and ability of each other to be self-determining.

Kaupapa Māori

Kaupapa Māori theory and praxis are represented in the Treaty of Waitangi through the principle of tino rangatiratanga²⁴. Where article two of the Treaty guaranteed Māori tino rangatiratanga, which has been recognised as sovereignty, autonomy, mana motuhake²⁵, self-determination, and independence (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002). Tino rangatiratanga as a transformative term challenges the dominant discourse, and in turn challenges school leaders to work in genuine partnership of shared power with Māori students and whānau.

Kaupapa Māori is a term that has its origins in history that reaches back one thousand years (Pihama, Cram & Walker, 2002). G. Smith (1997), provides a working definition which encompasses both a pre-colonial and post-colonial version from which many Māori people themselves describe Kaupapa Māori as a Māori way of thinking and doing things which feels culturally appropriate and which takes Māori aspirations seriously. It also reclaims the value of Māori ways of knowing and doing by re-framing theories and actions with a pre-colonisation lens.

As Māori have struggled for self-determination throughout the course of colonisation, Kaupapa Māori has taken on definitions that reflect the resistance required to maintain Māori aspirations. Pihama, Cram and Walker (2002) define Kaupapa Māori as the struggle by Māori for control over how Māori children and young people are educated. G. Smith (1997) sees Kaupapa Māori theory and practice as primarily an educational strategy, which has evolved out of Māori communities as a deliberate means to comprehend, resist and transform the Māori educational crises. Bishop and Glynn (1999) see Kaupapa Māori as supporting sense making and the knowledge-generating process of those cultures the system seeks to marginalise, and as such is a Māori response to the dominance of the majority culture. The impact of colonisation and the loss of language is not isolated to Aotearoa and can be seen in other indigenous groups who have been victims of colonisation. The Kenyan scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1981) referred to this movement of redefining knowledge by the coloniser as an imperialistic weapon or “cultural bomb” the effect of which is:

²⁴ Tino rangatiratanga – self-determination.

²⁵ Mana motuhake – autonomy, self-government, self-determination, independence, sovereignty, authority over ones identity.

... to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces, which would stop their own springs of life (p. 3).

Pākehā dominated education practices that have continued to produce underachievement and disconnection for Māori, have also failed to recognise and encompass Māori epistemologies or provide for the promise inherent with the Treaty of Waitangi of self-determination (tino rangatiratanga). As a result, Māori shifted from being passive victims of institutions to being activists involved in a counter hegemonic struggle (Smith L., 2005). The kaupapa Māori movement has led to the development of Te Kōhanga Reo (Māori language pre-school), Kura Kaupapa (Māori language primary and Wharekura, secondary schooling), and Whare Wānanga (Māori language tertiary) movements that were established by Māori, for Māori, and firstly arose outside the state education system. These transformative initiatives were built on previous kaupapa Māori work in resistance to colonisation. Examples include the work of Te Kooti Rikirangi, Apirana Ngata, and Te Puea Herangi (Smith G., 1997). Pere (1982) provides Māori metaphor as critical component of kaupapa Māori theory. These metaphors provide guidance and direction for researchers into te ao Māori ²⁶, by providing new meaning and ways of thinking for pedagogical practice. This is particularly relevant for non-Māori working to transform systems, structures and relationships to achieve equitable and excellence outcomes for Māori within the education system. Embracing Māori metaphors can provide a lens to examine the interface in which leadership works with others and in particular with Māori. There are six crucial change elements which are firmly based within kaupapa Māori practice. These are; tino rangatiratanga, taonga tuku iko ²⁷, ako Māori ²⁸, kia

²⁶ Te ao Māori – perspectives on the Māori world view.

²⁷ Taonga tuku iho – cultural aspirations.

²⁸ Ako Māori - culturally preferred pedagogy, reciprocal learning

piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga ²⁹, whānau, and kaupapa (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith G, 1997).

Kaupapa Māori solutions look at a Māori-centred approach to the crises of Māori student underachievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) and find answers in the aspirations, preferences and practices that involve Māori voice and self-determination. This is opposed to research that blames the victim, thus removing any sense of responsibility or agency on the system or on those with the power over the relationships. When the system blames Māori, it results in Māori culture, language and heritage being removed from the equation when it comes to seeking solutions.

Critical Theory

Kaupapa Māori as a theory of change is supported by critical theory, as it seeks to critically examine the many contexts of struggle for Māori self-determination (tino rangatiratanga). G. Smith (1997) describes how Kaupapa Māori theory can take on Freire's (1970) critical theoretical framework through conscientisation, resistance, and transformative praxis, describing conscientisation as revealing reality through critical analysis and deconstruction of hegemonic practices which entrench dominant privilege. Freire (1985) goes further by saying there can be no conscientisation without actively denouncing unjust structures. This leads onto resistance, described by G. Smith (1997) as oppositional actions of reactive and proactive activities. Resistance then leads into transformative praxis by taking on transformative action to evolve change (Smith G., 1997). Freire (1985) sees praxis as the union of action and reflection. G. Smith (1997) suggests individuals can enter at any point and describes how parents who take their child to Kōhanga Reo are entering at the transformative praxis stage, given that Kōhanga Reo has emerged from Māori conscientisation to the marginalisation of te reo Māori. As such this would lead them into resistance because they would be joining the struggle to revitalise te reo Māori.

The journey to resistance comes through conscientisation, a process by which people come to know their own reality and become aware of the constraints and privileges within their own lives. This is critical as when their personal state is understood it allows the individual to see more clearly the state of constraints faced by other people in society. It also provides the

²⁹ kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga - mediation of socio-economic and home school difficulties.

freedom to be self-reflective without the human desire to be defensive and/or blame others for their own state of being in society.

Resistance creates the motivation to transform the circumstances of your own existence or those whose existence has been subordinated by others (Freire, 1985). In Aotearoa it is Māori being subordinated by Pākehā systems and structures.

Baum (2015) provides decolonising critical theory as way of theorising how racism as a system, alongside the process of capitalism, has been used in the process of colonisation. Whereby the people are divided into race and class to ensure the resources and the privilege, which comes with resources, remains with the colonisers (predominantly European, white and male). The colonisers dominate the control of resources leading to wealth creation and control whilst the colonised (indigenous) are restricted from gaining wealth. This creates the perception that “you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich” (Baum, 2015. P.426). Therefore, race defines the status of socio, educational, economic and political opportunities. Khalifa et al. (2018) highlight how the process of colonisation “normalised” Western epistemologies and structures whilst Indigenous ways became “othered” (p.17). This has resulted in the Aotearoa schooling system privileging Pākehā students, knowledge and ways of being at the expense of Māori. Baum (2015) goes on to highlight that to overturn systemic racism requires decolonisation.

[Māori models of leadership \(from a Māori perspective\)](#)

Tū Rangatira

Tū Rangatira is a framework for kura³⁰ leaders, boards of trustees, whānau and communities in Māori medium schools, to be visionary and inspirational in ensuring Māori are able to enjoy education success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2010). Rangatira is the traditional name for the chief of an iwi/hapū³¹. The term when broken into two component sub-words describes the process of weaving people together, therefore rangatira type leadership refers to the ability to weave and bring people together. Tū Rangatira is built on Kaupapa Māori theory as it focuses on promoting cultural regeneration, Kaupapa Māori philosophies, aspirations and valued learner outcomes. It uses the work of Pere (1982), using Māori metaphor as a lens for describing effective leadership practice through a Māori world view.

³⁰ Kura – Māori word for school.

³¹ Hapū – Māori word for extended family group.

Enabling leadership to be seen in both formal and informal ways, through Māori epistemologies. This description of leadership from a Māori perspective takes us back before colonisation, therefore providing an example of how leadership could be understood through a decolonised lens.

Marae Leadership

Marae³² leadership refers to the leadership that operates within the multiple cultural roles and responsibilities of the traditional marae context. Marae leadership is obvious during the process of pōwhiri³³ as manuhiri³⁴ are welcomed onto the Marae. The pōwhiri process is a multi-faceted event requiring tangata whenua³⁵ to take on various roles, with differing levels of expertise and knowledge. The roles of kaikaranga³⁶ and whaikōrero³⁷ are important roles in bringing the guests onto the marae. There are also other formal roles during the welcoming stage of the pōwhiri such as the singing of waiata³⁸ after the whaikōrero. Once the formal stage of the welcome is over, guests are provided with kai³⁹, and within the preparation and presentation of kai there are important leadership roles which ensure the integrity of the marae is upheld. Berryman, Egan, and Ford (2014) talk about whānau groups working together on the marae as an example of distributed leadership. The definition of marae leadership has greater meaning when the cultural context of the marae is taken into account, where connections are formed, where there are a range of both formal and informal roles which bring people together and bind them through hospitality and whakapapa⁴⁰. The roles of each individual on the marae are interrelated and work towards a common purpose. It is a form of collaborative action that is guided by the purpose and traditional values.

Barrett (2017) talks about marae leadership in her thesis 'School leadership and Māori succeeding as Māori: A Ngāti Awa⁴¹ perspective'. The context of her discussion is based on

³² Marae is commonly referred to as traditional complex buildings which form the central point for hapū (extended family) and whānau (family). It is formally the open area in front of the *wharenuī* (meeting house), where formal greetings and discussions take place. Marae can also mean, to be generous and hospitable.

³³ Pōwhiri – traditional Māori welcoming ceremony.

³⁴ Manuhiri – Māori term for guests / visitors.

³⁵ Tangata whenua – Māori term for the local people connected to the marae.

³⁶ Kaikaranga – formal call of welcome onto the marae. This is undertaken by a female from both the manuhiri and tangata whenua.

³⁷ Whaikōrero – formal/ceremonial speech during the pōwhiri.

³⁸ Waiata – song.

³⁹ Kai – food.

⁴⁰ Whakapapa in this context refers to genealogy, cultural identity, and connections.

⁴¹ Ngāti Awa is a Māori iwi (tribe) centred in the Eastern Bay of Plenty region of Aotearoa New Zealand.

the interviews with school principals in Aotearoa, and in particular for marae leadership her interview with me. Professor Wharehuia Milroy (in Barrett, 2017), uses the following metaphor “He Tangata Marae”, to describe the ability of one person to epitomise all the qualities one would expect of a marae. These qualities are represented by: manaakitanga⁴²; mōhio⁴³; whānaungatanga⁴⁴; mana motuhake⁴⁵, wānanga⁴⁶, ako⁴⁷; kotahitanga⁴⁸ (Milroy, 2011, in Barrett, 2017). Marae leadership is also an example of decolonising leadership as it demonstrates leadership from a pre-colonisation position where Māori were self-determining and unaffected by the process of colonisation.

Socio-cultural educational context

A major challenge facing Aotearoa is the social, economic, and political disparities primarily between Māori and Pākehā. As stated earlier, these disparities are evident in Māori continuing to have low-paying employment, higher levels of unemployment, incarceration, health needs, and poverty. These disparities are also represented within education and are highlighted in both the Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis (Timperely, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007) and the School Leadership BES (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). Disparities in student achievement are amongst the greatest in the OECD. Of particular concern is the large ‘tail’ of underachievement (Timperely et al., 2007, p.18).

The Hood report of 2008 found that despite attempts at reform, disparities across the education system remained (Bishop, O’Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010). Examples of educational disparity for Māori identified in the Hood report include;

- more leave school without formal qualifications than non-Maori
- retention rate to age 17 is far less than for non-Māori
- rate of suspension from school is three to five times higher
- over representation in special education programmes for behavioural issues
- enrolment in pre-school programmes in lower proportions

⁴² Manaakitanga – interpreted in Barrett (2017) as caring for students as culturally located people.

⁴³ mōhio – knowledgeable.

⁴⁴ whanaungatanga – interpreted in Barrett (2017) as the practice and process of relationships.

⁴⁵ mana motuhake – interpreted in Barrett (2017) as the development of identity and independence.

⁴⁶ wānanga – interpreted in Barrett (2017) as both the place and process of knowledge exchange.

⁴⁷ ako - interpreted in Barrett (2017) as where teaching and learning are intrinsically linked.

⁴⁸ kotahitanga – interpreted in Barrett (2017) as having unity of purpose.

- over represented in low-stream classes
- enrolment in tertiary education in lower proportions

(Hood, 2008: Ministry of Education, 2005b, as cited in Bishop et al, 2010, p.13).

Fast forward ten years to 2018 and these same disparities remain, with Aotearoa being ranked in the bottom third for inequality across pre-school, primary and secondary education, out of forty-one high and middle income countries in the OECD and European Union (UNICEF, 2018). The inequality is primarily the difference between education outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students compared to European and Asian students.

There is a deficit discourse conspiring against low decile schools with predominately Māori students. According to Naden (1998 in Pihama et al. 2002) this discourse has been perpetuated by the Education Review Office (ERO) that has failed to contextualise the social, political and cultural factors underpinning compliance failures within these schools. There have been few, appropriate audit processes to recognise Māori epistemologies or culturally responsive pedagogies within state schooling. Although this has begun to change since the development of ERO's effective school evaluation framework, as it attempts to reflect cultural responsiveness (Education Review Office, 2015). In my experience, as a school principal being reviewed, there is still a gap between the intent of the framework and the implementation of the framework by ERO reviewers. Despite the new framework representing Kaupapa Māori values and culturally responsive pedagogies, my experience of ERO reviewers is that they do not understand the values therefore their lens is still based on the traditional colonial views of how education should be delivered and measured.

Today privilege generated by colonisation is seen as a reality rather than an imposition, and is rarely, if ever acknowledged in discussions about racism which are often about individual acts rather than systems (Jackson, 2018). Thus, talking about 'racism' is often a taboo subject, due to the word's highly emotive and polarising power. This limits the ability of our society to address the inherent disadvantage it creates for Māori students and whānau. Jackson (2018) highlights this challenge in bringing to the fore the true nature and impact of racism on Māori within the education system:

One unfortunate consequence of that emphasis [the idea that the term racism is a taboo subject] is that the very idea of racism has become an abstraction described in various ways as unconscious bias, casual racism, or

unintended prejudice. Such terms can have some value, but they can also too often excuse the perpetrator and fail to address the usually unarticulated distress that racism causes. (Jackson, 2018)

Education Secretary Iona Holsted highlighted the systemic nature of racism when she appeared before a select committee in February 2018 for its annual review of the Ministry of Education. Holsted highlighted a major problem of teachers not responding to the identity, culture and language of Māori in their classes. She said “...In the schooling and education system, and beyond, we have an issue of unconscious bias... Māori student under-achievement is chronic, intractable and systemic” (Holsted, 2018). Her comments came just weeks after a study involving nearly 1,700 children showed that many young Māori feel treated unequally at school because of their culture (Commissioner for the children, 2018).

Following her appearance at the select committee she was interviewed on Radio New Zealand which I believe highlighted two major issues impacting on the ability of the system to make transformative change. The first is that Māori student under-achievement continues to be the single biggest issue for our education system despite years of discussion and tinkering with ideas and strategies. The second is that the head of our education system (Holsted) was unable to be direct in her comments about the underlying issue of systemic racism within the structures, systems and in-school relationships. This situation maintains the status quo of under-achievement or disregards that those students who are underachieving could be doing better; therefore, low teacher/educator expectations of Māori students are perpetuating underachievement. This situation was also highlighted in a 2017 research paper for UNESCO by Alton-Lee (2017) that found evidence of teachers in Aotearoa displaying negative bias towards Māori and Pasifika students in relation to their identity, language and culture. Although the Education Secretary does touch on a significant factor of unconscious bias, she places the blame for this unconscious bias firmly on teachers, rather than providing the alternative discourse which exposes the system as being developed within a colonial construct underpinned by racialised beliefs of one race (coloniser) understood as inherently deserved of greater privilege than the other (Māori). A system which consciously discriminated against Māori to gain power and resource advantages through a belief in the superiority of the culture of whiteness. A colonial system that is racist.

The reluctance of the Education Secretary along with most New Zealanders to call the problem racism exposes the fragile nature of white people to engage in the discourse of racism. DiAngelo (2011) describes this as white fragility, “which is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (p.54). These defensive moves include “anger, withdrawal, emotional incapacitation, guilt, argumentation, and cognitive dissonance” (DiAngelo, 2011, p.101).

To understand racism as a system in the educational context of Aotearoa it is important to have knowledge of the actions taken through the process of colonisation which marginalised Māori knowledge (epistemologies), ways of knowing and learning. The differential schooling provision provided through the Native school system on the basis of race (as legislated in the Native Schools Act of 1867) is an example of how Māori knowledge was discriminated against, as it was legislated that Māori children would be taught in English and punished for speaking te reo Māori (Matthews, 2018). Legislation alongside representation of Māori as inferior and in need of saving through assimilation and civilising has developed beliefs about race which reject Māori potential based on race. Whilst colonisation marginalised Māori, it is also a process that privileged Pākehā (white people).

Context of school reform

As a nation, we pride ourselves on the global stage as innovators, and as a nation which sees itself as a world leader in education. This pride is well placed in some quarters, though falls short when we look at the historical outcome of school reform for Māori learners. The inequities and disparities for Māori learners have been highlighted for a number of decades (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The Leadership BES highlights the critical role school leadership has in reducing disparity. It highlights the fundamental challenge for educational leaders across the system is to raise achievement and reduce disparity, and to markedly improve educational provision if the potential of Māori students is to be realised (Robinson et al., 2009). It also widely acknowledges that school leadership has a significant influence on student achievement and educational reform (Fullan, 2003; Robinson, et al., 2009; Shields, 2013).

It is important to incorporate transformative educational development strategies and programmes into this research due to their potentially significant impact on Māori learners. Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2008, 2013) is the guiding policy framework for addressing

disparity for Māori within our education system. The Aotearoa Ministry of Education has provided funding for school-based reform projects and professional development interventions in mainstream schools. Projects such as Te Kauhua⁴⁹, Te Kotahitanga, He Kākano, and Kia Eke Panuku have all endeavoured to address the quality and practice within English-medium schools to improve outcomes for Māori learners. Throughout my journey told through this thesis, Ka Hikitia, Te Kotahitanga and Kia Eke Panuku run parallel to my leadership story.

Ka Hikitia

Literally translated, Ka Hikitia means to step up, lift up or to raise one's stride. In 2009, the MOE also released Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success – Māori education strategy 2008-2012 (MOE, 2009). The intent of the strategy was to see 'Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori and built upon the Māori potential approach which emphasised the importance of working together and power sharing. Realising Māori potential also acknowledged the notion of 'ako – reciprocal learning' where the student's language, identity and culture are acknowledged and built upon and where Māori students, whānau, iwi and educators work together to produce better outcomes (MOE, 2009). In 2013, the MOE released the new Ka Hikitia strategy – Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017 (MOE, 2013). A central focus for the up-dated strategy acknowledged that Māori students do better when education reflects and values their identity, language and culture (MOE, 2013). Both strategies have the Treaty of Waitangi as one of their guiding principles, as it is the foundation of the partnership relationship between the Crown (government) and Māori, and acknowledges the responsibility held by both in ensuring this happens. Although this provides the mandate for system leaders and school leaders to undertake the change required within their own context to ensure Māori student success is a priority, results have been far less obvious.

⁴⁹ Te Kauhua was a Ministry of Education project that ran from 2001 – 2009, that supported school-based action research projects to help schools and whānau to work together in ways that improve outcomes for Māori learners.

Leadership theories

De-colonising Leadership

Khalifa et al (2018) introduce indigenous decolonising school leadership (IDSL) as a theory for addressing the negative impact on indigenous students as a result of the colonial origins of schooling in countries afflicted by colonisation. The colonising school system was set-up to remove the indigeneity from indigenous people through processes such as Europeanising, civilising, Christianising, and capitalising. This system of assimilation is still evident today where the schooling system and leadership within schools continue to marginalise students through colonial beliefs, behaviours and systems. To create a new paradigm which undoes these same systems and behaviours requires a process of decolonisation. This can begin by understanding leadership practices from pre-colonial times, thus legitimising the power of indigenous epistemologies to generate knowledge, experiences, and outcomes for school leaders.

Khalifa et al (2018) provide five strands from their literature review for an indigenous decolonising school leadership framework that can support and develop school leaders to decolonise their practice:

- What is known? Prioritising self-knowledge and self-reflection,
- Why resist? Enacting self-determination for community empowerment,
- Centring for whom? Committing to community voices and values,
- When are we whole? Serving through altruism and spirituality,
- How to connect? Prioritising collectivism in communication. (pp. 18 - 27)

These questions ensure a critical review of leadership actions and behaviours. The characteristics are described as common strands that school leaders of Indigenous and minoritised students possess. There are similarities within the characteristics of IDSL and the following leadership theories, but what sets them apart is the deliberate focus on indigenous characteristics and the process of decolonisation. Fitzgerald (in Khalifa et al, 2018) emphasises caution when looking at other leadership theories, as in line with colonial beliefs they are predominately heteronormative, nonspiritual, middle-class, white, masculine and often miss indigenous voice, culture and heritage.

Transformative Leadership

Shields (2013) provides transformative leadership as a model which has its emphasis on the need for academic excellence and on social transformation. It seeks to change the context of the system to better suit the needs of students and the community, by transforming wider social and economic structures and practices. Shields (2013) states that the goals of transformative leadership are both to critique underlying social, cultural, and economic norms, but also to offer promise to find ways to equalise opportunities and to ensure high quality education and civil participation for all (Shields, 2013). For clarity it is important to understand the difference between transformational and transformative leadership. Whilst transformational leadership is focused on leading change to transform the organisation from within, transformative leadership is focused on wider social transformation.

Shields (2013) highlights that transformative leadership is even more important in the world today as educational leaders are faced with rapidly changing contexts. Caron (as cited in Shields, 2013) describes this change from a world of problems that need solving to a world of dilemmas, which are more confusing, messy, and complex. These dilemmas have no straightforward, right, or easy solutions as they are wicked problems which are often incomplete, contradictory, and often difficult to recognise. Transformative leadership provides an avenue to lead within this complexity as it seeks to address issues of power and privilege utilising a critical lens. This requires leaders to develop the skills of: “vision, understanding, clarity, and agility” (Shields, 2013. p.4).

Transformative leadership requires leaders to be more interactive to enable deep understanding of the iterative nature of working with people. This requires the development of reciprocal relationships where both partners in the relationship are learning from each other, whilst working towards a shared and equitable purpose. It also has a strong teaching focus, which arises out of dialogue about purpose and minimising any leader-follower hierarchy (Burns, as cited in Shields, 2013, p.23).

Shields (2011) outlines seven tenets as the basis for transformative leadership. In 2013, she modified these and added another tenet to the theory, thus demonstrating the iterative nature of transformative theory. The following tenets of transformative theory are a combination of the two developed by Shields (2011, 2013), which provide a clear framework for leaders to position themselves in the transformative leadership space. Leaders must:

- acknowledge and address the inequitable distribution of power and privilege;
- articulate both individual and collective purpose, with an emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness;
- deconstruct socio-cultural knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice, and reconstructing them;
- work towards transformation: Liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, justice, and excellence;
- mandate the need to effect deep and equitable change;
- balance both critique and promise;
- demonstrate moral courage and activism.

Transformative leadership provides a way to take into account the material realities and disparities in which many Māori whānau and students live and work. It provides a framework for doing things differently, in order to address these disparities. It builds on Freire's (1970) notion of conscientisation, which leads to critical action against the injustices that we have become aware of. It therefore requires leadership to have a deep awareness of the systems and behaviours that underpin how society operates, and how the operation of society perpetuates the status quo of power and privilege creating injustice and inequity.

Transformative leadership requires the deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequalities of the status quo (Shields, 2011). It requires careful deconstruction and reconstruction of our own, and teachers' world views. These world views may have deep seated deficit views about Māori and their participation in society as a result of colonisation, therefore, it requires careful challenging and exposing of these views for what they are through the process of decolonisation. Once this has occurred then reconstruction of a new reality can occur, which views Māori from a more agentic position, creating a position which breaks down the deficit discourse surrounding many Māori students and their whānau.

[Te Kotahitanga](#)

Te Kotahitanga is an example of Kaupapa Māori research and professional development reform, which stems from the educational crisis facing Māori students within English-medium schools. Te Kotahitanga began in 2001 as a theoretical examination of Māori peoples'

resistance to the dominant discourse in English-medium education, with its central point being the improvement of educational outcomes for Māori students.

Its aim is to improve the educational achievement of indigenous Māori students in public mainstream secondary school classrooms in New Zealand. The project provides teachers with professional learning opportunities to support their implementation of a culturally responsive pedagogy of relations (Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2014, p1).

Kaupapa Māori researchers have used critical theory to reclaim the power for Māori to define their own knowledge and its use. Bishop and Berryman (2006) through the Te Kotahitanga research, were able to change the dominant educational discourse surrounding Māori achievement through the narratives of Māori students. They enabled Māori student voices and experiences to come to the forefront of pedagogical practice. In 'Culture Speaks', Bishop and Berryman (2006) make a clear case for the power of student voice in determining the response suggesting that: "Paying serious attention to what students have to say about their own education helps those in the powerful positions of teachers and principals to understand the world of the 'others' they teach" (p.4).

The voices clearly identified the main influences on achievement and education experiences, thus enabling this new knowledge to be used in developing professional development aimed at modifying teacher practices to support Māori student achievement more effectively. The development of the Effective Teaching Profile provided a framework for identifying the teaching relationships and interactions that made more positive differences for Māori students.

A critical component of Te Kotahitanga was teachers' discursive repositioning, from a deficit view of Māori students and whānau to agentic positioning. This component has been highlighted as a key component in enabling teachers to feel empowered to effect positive change within their own sphere of influence. Where necessary, teachers are able to discursively reposition themselves from limiting discourses to those in which they have agency (Bishop in Timperley et al, 2007).

Te Kotahitanga then promoted an education in which:

- power is shared between self-determining individuals (rangatiratanga) within non-dominating relations of independence
- culture counts (taonga tuku iho)
- learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals (ako)
- participants are connected and committed to one another (whanaungatanga) through the establishment of a common vision (kaupapa) of what constitutes educational excellence (kotahitanga)

(Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2014. P.3)

Professional development was promoted through the development of the 'Effective Teaching Profile' (ETP), which created metaphors and guidelines for the development and observation of culturally appropriate and culturally responsive contexts for learning.

Despite early concerns raised by the Post Primary Teachers Association (Openshaw, 2006) in their report on Te Kotahitanga, it has now become accepted and supported by many teachers and school principals. This stems from teachers and principals genuinely wanting to effect positive change within their practice, but not having the knowledge, dispositions or skills available to achieve this. The challenge facing teachers was highlighted in the Teacher Professional Develop BES (PLD BES), where most teachers spoke of the pressures of being angry, isolated, and professionally bereft of solutions, yet expected by society to provide them with the solution (Timperley et al. 2007).

The opportunity provided by Te Kotahitanga to support teacher development has shown to have had an overwhelmingly positive impact on Māori student achievement. The PLD BES, highlighted that Te Kotahitanga Phase 3 had an effect size on student achievement in numeracy of 0.76, which equates to a 1 – 2 stanine shift (Timperley et al. 2007). This is comparable to the research undertaken by Hattie (2009) in which he found teacher-student relationships had an effect size of 0.72 based on classes with person-centred teachers. A 2006 New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) report provided an analysis showing the increase in Māori and Pasifika students gaining NCEA Level One from Te Kotahitanga schools, was greater than the increase for students from non Te Kotahitanga schools (Timperley et al, 2007, p.263). The 'Ka Hikitia Demonstration Report - effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5' (Alton-Lee, 2014) found that by 2012 the level Two pass rate for students in Phase 5 schools had improved at three times the rate of students in comparison schools.

Although the original context for the school reform was based on the relationships and interactions primarily within the classroom, Te Kotahitanga was an iterative research project and developed into a comprehensive school wide systems reform project. Bishop, O'Sullivan and Berryman (2010) provided the GPILSEO model for developing the changes necessary for the reform initiative to be sustainable across the classroom, school and system. The GPILSEO model provides the framework for school leaders to review practices and develop strategies to embed the reform. The GPILSEO acronym represents each of the changes needed for sustainable reform: Goal, Pedagogy, Institutions, Leadership, Spread, Evidence and Ownership. Alton-Lee (2014) concluded that the key dimensions which make a difference to students in the Leadership BES (Robinson et al. 2009) aligned with the GPILSEO model for educational reform. Alton-Lee also reported that indigenous leadership was essential to reform.

Culturally Responsive Leadership

Culturally responsive leadership stems from culturally responsive pedagogy, that was a critical component within Te Kotahitanga. At its heart is the contribution of school leadership towards supporting teachers' pedagogical practices that raise achievement and reduce disparities as central to the model of sustainable educational reform (Bishop, 2011). The GPILSEO model enacts leadership by providing the following framework for sustainability (Bishop, O'Sullivan & Berryman, 2010):

- establish and develop measurable *goals*
- support and develop new *pedagogical* relationships and interactions in the classroom
- change *institutions* to support the reform
- *spread* the reform
- develop and use *evidence* of student progress to inform change
- promote and ensure *ownership* of the reform

Freire's (1970) notions of conscientisation, resistance, and transformative praxis, alongside transformative leadership (Shields, 2010, 2013), are critical components of culturally responsive leadership. As part of the process of conscientisation, culturally responsive leaders understand the need to engage in deep reflection where they become critically aware of their own discursive positioning, as this has a major impact on their agency as school leaders (Bishop, 2011).

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a common form of leadership theory that is used to break down the more traditional notions of hierarchical leadership in schools. Hatcher (2007) refers to distributed leadership as a means to activate the participation and empowerment of teachers to create democratic schools (p.253). This is similar to Harris' (in Hatcher, 2007) notion of leadership being a shared and collective endeavour that engages all members of the organisation. Both of these views start moving beyond the traditional view of distributed leadership in schools being limited to leadership resting in traditional structures of teams, departments and committees. Harris (2003) further challenges the traditional view by referring to teacher leadership as a form of distributed leadership, as it breaks down traditional hierarchical leadership positions in schools, by challenging the demarcation of roles and responsibilities that create barriers. This view is shared by Hatcher (2007) who advocates for the separation of leadership and power by creating a non-hierarchical network of collaborative leadership. This notion is further developed by Berryman, Egan and Ford (2014) who refer to leadership as a collective and dynamic undertaking, grounded in shared activity rather than positions or roles.

These views of distributed leadership build on the premise that leadership is about sense making and the creation of meaning, through collaboration. It requires members of the wider school organisation taking on varying leadership roles in response to what is happening for them and the organisation at the time. This requires the traditional leaders to take on both the roles of tuakana and teina, where, at differing times, they will need to take on the roles of the leader and the learner alongside teachers, students or whānau. This provides a framework for others within the organisation to take over aspects of the school where they may need to challenge others in relation to deficit views of Māori students or other aspects of teaching and structure that challenge the status quo.

Moral Imperative

The moral purpose of school leadership is a critical factor in order to implement transformative reform that challenges the status quo. School leaders need to understand the moral imperatives that go with the responsibility of their leadership role within society. Fullan (2003) captures the meaning of moral purpose as about being both an ends and a means. In education, an important end is to make a difference in the lives of students. The Teacher Professional Learning and Development BES refers to the moral purpose required to address

the needs of Māori education by stating that teachers need to be more than transmitters of predetermined knowledge, and that they must actively promote social justice (Timperley et al. 2007). Berryman et al. (2014) state that the moral imperative and focus of transformative school leaders drives the positive use of individual and collective power and influence to achieve collaborative and participatory school-wide reform leading to social justice and equity – public good.

Fullan (2003, p.41) connects moral purpose with effective leadership by providing four hierarchical levels of moral purpose linked to leadership development:

Level 1 - making a difference in individuals.

Level 2 - making a difference within the school.

Level 3 - making a difference regionally.

Level 4 - making a difference societal.

Transformative leadership requires principals to operate at Level 3 and 4 of the model. By moving beyond the individuals and the school, through to influencing change which transforms the status quo of inequity in society. This also reflects the need to work within the Kaupapa Māori paradigm of whānau, which encapsulates working for the collective good of the community.

School Leadership in Aotearoa

In 2009, the MOE commissioned the Leadership BES (Robinson et al. 2009) which concentrates on improving leadership for better student outcomes. Out of this arose the following eight dimensions:

1. Establishing goals and expectations;
2. Resourcing strategically;
3. Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum;
4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development;
5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment;
6. Create educationally powerful connections;
7. Engaging in constructive problem talk; and
8. Selecting, developing and using smart tools.

Restorative Practice – Relational Leadership Practice

A strength of effective leadership is their ability to resolve conflict and restore effective relationships. Restorative practice is a relational approach to conflict resolution as it comes from the basis of putting attention into building and restoring quality relationships that have been broken due to an incident or series of incidents. The Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) (2006) describe it as an approach to seeking solutions directly linked to the consequences of the behaviour and that set the matter right for the victim.

Restorative Practice has been developed for schools as an alternative to punitive punishment and as a means to repair the harm experienced by the victim, and in many cases the harm that has previously occurred for the perpetrator. The repairing of harm, forces participants to learn from the experience that has led to the conflict, leading to the examination of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that contributed to the action creating the harm (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Restorative practice has challenged the status quo and philosophy of assertive discipline type behaviour management in Aotearoa schools (Canter & Canter, 2001, in Cavannagh, 2011).

Carroll-Lind (2005) states that restorative practice originated out of the criminal justice system, though there is evidence that restorative practice has its links deeply rooted in indigenous methods used to address harm created by members of the tribal or family group well before the advent of colonisation. Bateman and Berryman (2007) describe the restorative process from a Kaupapa Māori perspective as the Hui Whakatika⁵⁰. Olsen, Maxwell and Morris (1994, cited in Berryman, Macfarlane, & Cavanagh, 2009) identify four features crucial to pre-European Māori discipline. First, there was an emphasis on the whole community reaching consensus. Second, the outcome needed to be acceptable to all parties rather than merely isolate or punish the offenders. Third, and upon an implicit assumption that there may have been problems in more than one context, it was important to examine the wider contexts for the misdemeanour. Finally, there was more concern with the restoration of harmony than with punishing the wrongdoer. By viewing restorative practice from a pre-colonial perspective provides the opportunity to decolonise the way behaviour management is viewed and designed in schools.

⁵⁰ Hui whakatika - a meeting that seeks to resolve issues and make amends (Bateman & Berryman, 2007)

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore my own leadership journey and unpack how my practices, have changed behaviours and the school system to represent a decolonised space to improve outcomes for Māori students. The role of leadership in creating the context for educational reform to address the negative impact of colonisation on the educational outcomes for Māori students and whānau is critical. This literature review has provided evidence of how critical leadership has the potential to change school culture and systems, which disrupts the status quo and supports the necessary change needed to address racism within the fabric of our society.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents and explains the research methodology that guided this research. The reasons for selecting this methodology and the research methods that were employed throughout are also presented.

This research is primarily an auto-ethnography, based on the principles found within Kaupapa Māori and culturally responsive methodologies. A mixed methods approach incorporating quantitative and qualitative data is utilised. Methods of data collection included an analysis of previous researcher's transcripts of my own narratives, student achievement data, as well as both school and external document analysis.

The context of this research is based on my own leadership, and the relationships and interactions I have had to improve belonging, equity and excellence for Māori students and whānau at our school. This places my role firmly as a partner under the Treaty of Waitangi. As a Pākehā I have an obligation as a Treaty partner to support Māori in ways that are working 'for and with' Māori, and not 'on and about' Māori (Macfarlane, 2013). I therefore have an obligation to uphold the mana of Māori as Treaty partners. As a result, I have drawn from Kaupapa Māori theory to guide the research process.

Research questions

In formulating the research questions I needed to consider my own leadership journey, to enable the narratives to come through in a way which would provide insight into my decision making, and the impact of these decisions on others. The questions needed to provide reflexive insight, rather than be a mere recount of my actions over time. I also needed to consider others who are represented within the narratives, and in particular Māori students and whānau, who by the nature of the context of my work are the primary group impacted by my work and narratives.

Although I always had in my mind the goal of better understanding my own key transformations and how my decisions impacted on others, my initial questions had limitations as they were primarily a recount of events. These were guided by attempting to identify change points throughout my time as principal: what they were? what happened? what were the key actions? what were the outcomes? After further discussion with my supervisor I was able to develop questions which promoted more in-depth analysis.

Research setting

I finally decided to begin my research at the beginning of 2018, after nine years as a principal of a state co-educational secondary school in a regional centre in Aotearoa. Within these nine years the school had gone through many changes which had seen transformative change across all aspects of the school's leadership, teaching and learning, culture, and positioning within the wider community. These changes had culminated in the school winning the Prime Ministers Education Excellence Prize for Leading (Atakura) in 2017, and the Focus Prize for Inclusive Education (Takatū) in 2018.

Throughout this time the school and my own leadership had attracted attention from education researchers whilst undertaking their own studies or development of teacher professional development resources. I therefore decided to undertake an auto-ethnographic approach to my research by critically reflecting on the interview transcripts of my own praxis, undertaken by four external researchers Te Arani Barrett (2010), Fiona Craven (2015), Zac Anderson (2016), and David Copeland (2017). Dialogue from my interviews by these researchers are identified in my narrative using the following time-points: 2010, 2015, 2016, 2017, that mark when the interviews were undertaken.

I use their interview transcripts to reflect more deeply on the events that I had previously theorised about, with them. The dates, and important events in this school have set the parameters within which I theorise my leadership journey.

Methodology

Kaupapa Māori Research

Kaupapa Māori research is informed by Kaupapa Māori theory and operates from a base that acknowledges Māori epistemologies and values, which ensures research is carried out in culturally appropriate and responsive ways. Māori researchers have identified values and principles which underpin and guide Kaupapa Māori research, these include: tino rangatiratanga, whānau, whakawhanaungtanga⁵¹, kaumatua⁵², Manaakitanga, whakapapa⁵³, and social-justice (Bishop in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). These principles address the cultural

⁵¹ Whakawhānaungatanga - process for establishing relationships.

⁵² Kaumatua - elders in Māori society.

⁵³ Whakapapa – identity, genealogy.

ground rules for working with Māori people and communities and may also be described as a set of metaphors which define the way Māori society has operated throughout history.

Kaupapa Māori research has been developed primarily by Māori scholars in their attempt to re-claim the power of research to align with Māori principles. It also stems from a paradigm of colonised peoples taking control of their own knowledge and information, as traditional and historical research has been seen as a tool used by the oppressor to build and maintain control. Bishop (in Denzin et al, 2008) highlights that traditional research has misrepresented Māori experiences, thereby denying Māori authenticity and voice (P.147). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p.185) states that:

... it has been developed firstly to provide space to convince Māori people of the value of research for Māori, secondly, to convince the powerful research communities of the need for greater Māori involvement in research, and thirdly, to develop approaches to research which take into account previous research without being limited by it (p.185).

A central point to Kaupapa Māori research is the understanding that the research must benefit the participants, in particular Māori. This point is consistently highlighted across a wide range of research reports into Kaupapa Māori research. Te Arani Barrett (in Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013) states Kaupapa Māori research is collectivistic and is oriented towards benefiting all the research participants and their collectively determined agendas. Bishop (in Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013) explains Kaupapa Māori research as:

... keeping the focus on Māori whilst at the same time repositioning Māori away from a position of deficit theorising, about their status within colonisation, to a position of agency, where Māori can take responsibility for transforming their own condition (p.10).

Kana and Tamatea (2006) emphasise that Kaupapa Māori research is a collaborative approach to power sharing, which demands that ownership and benefits of research belong to the participants. An example of this type of research which benefitted Māori was Te Kotahitanga, which stemmed from the educational crisis facing Māori students within state schools. From the outset Te Kotahitanga was developed as a theoretical examination of Māori peoples' resistance to the dominant discourse in mainstream education, with its central point being the improvement of educational outcomes for Māori students.

Much of the writing about Kaupapa Māori research states that it is only for Māori researchers. Graham Smith (in Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) states that being Māori is a critical element of Kaupapa Māori research. Therefore as a non-Māori researcher it is important to understand my own position in relation to the context of the research, and how Kaupapa Māori research can influence and guide me in more respectful ways, my own behaviours and actions within the research process.

By viewing guidelines of Kaupapa Māori research alongside decolonising methodologies I am able to continually challenge the research process to ensure I do not continue to colonise Māori authenticity and voice. Thus by acting in honourable ways in terms of the Treaty, I must constantly decolonise the ways in which I undertake my research. L. Smith (2012) highlights how early research about Māori provided ideological laden data about Māori society, which has distorted notions of what it means to be Māori. Where the process of colonisation stripped away Māori mana and self-determination as knowledge of Māori was defined by others. Decolonising methodologies provides a framework for researchers to deconstruct the previous deficit discourse, and to construct a discourse which frames knowledge according to an indigenous world view (L. Smith, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Methodology

Culturally responsive methodologies primarily discusses the contexts within which the researched community defines their own ways for ongoing relating and interacting in the co-creation of knowledge (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013).

In this research I am the primary research participant whereby I am analysing my own historical narratives as the primary data, alongside published articles and publicly available school data and documentation. It is important that I base this research on culturally responsive methodologies as my own narratives refer to the stories of others, and importantly the work referred to in the narratives is primarily work associated with Māori students, whānau, and communities. It is therefore important that I do not define or impose my own perspectives on others within the narratives. Thus by adhering to the principles of culturally responsive methodologies I am more likely not to define the world view of others. Berryman, SooHoo and Nevin (2013) provide a caution to ensure this does not happen by stating that, “from a place of privilege, the researcher may describe and interpret social phenomenon from her (his) own lens with little regard for the source of knowledge” (p.4).

Within culturally responsive methodologies it is important to have deeply reflected upon and understood your own journey of self-discovery in order to prepare yourself to be a socially responsive researcher (Morris, & Valenzuela, in Berryman et al, 2013). It is important to be able to understand yourself and your own position within the dominant discourse which pervades society. Glynn (in Berryman et al, 2013) provides advice for non-indigenous researchers, to actively resist positioning themselves, or allowing themselves to be positioned as the most powerful to ensure they are not the controlling partner in the research relationship.

Auto-ethnographers are obligated to share their accounts with others who are involved in their texts and to open the space for others to talk/speak back (Denshire, 2014).

Critical Theory

Culturally responsive methodologies fit within critical theory as championed by Freire (1972) in the process of conscientisation (p.394). This provides a connection for auto-ethnography work to sit within the same framework, as it challenges the researcher to examine their own power and privilege in order to address issues of inequity and social justice.

Transformative and Social Justice Theory

A combined paradigm of transformative and social justice framework has helped me in my search to provide meaning and bring critical analysis to my experiences of leading to reduce inequalities within our education system and ultimately in society. Transformative theory looks at how events change and are affected by time, thus providing a framework to transform (change) the future. This has enabled my perceptions to be informed by the past, to inform the present and reshape the future. Social justice theory looks at events from a perspective which engages with human rights, equality, equity and the ever present focus on people being human. It looks at promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity, where the researcher attends to the construction of inequalities and how people act towards them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It delves into the context, constraints, power, and inequality within both overt and covert processes and structure which occur in society and history.

By utilising transformative and social justice theory required me to uncover the various versions of reality and to interrogate them based on the principles of social justice. In doing this I needed to consider all the implications of power associated with these various versions.

Mertens (2009) talks about there being one reality in which there are many differing opinions, and that differential access to power influences which version of reality is given privilege. I aimed to uncover the differing versions of reality which have been evident within my own experiences, and how these versions have either been overlooked or uncovered in my journey towards seeking social transformation. When considering these versions from a transformative and social justice perspective I needed to interrogate these versions against the socio-cultural backdrop of what was also happening in society at the time and the underlying assumptions I held.

From an epistemological point of view to work in a transformative and social justice paradigm, the researcher needs to have a reasonable level of understanding of the culture of the communities in which they are undertaking their research, and an understanding of their own limitations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As a principal of a school I have a responsibility to be sensitive and responsive to the concerns and aspirations of the individuals and groups linked to the school – to students and their whānau, staff, volunteers, the Board of Trustees, and other groups within our community. I therefore sought support from the whānau representative on the board of trustees who is Māori, to act as an adviser to keep both the school, the students, and in particular our Māori students and whānau safe. I also needed to be aware of the differing groups who I referenced in my experiences to ensure I did not attempt to speak for them.

Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is a critical methodology resulting in a narrative or story of the researcher's engagement with others in a particular socio-cultural context (Tami, 2011; Custer, 2014). Auto-ethnographic writing can be highly personal accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher (Denshire, 2014). It revolves around self-reflection and writing which explores the researcher's personal experience within wider cultural, political and social meanings and understandings (Whitinui, 2014).

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that auto ethnographers create text to change the world. Auto ethnography becomes a transformative research method because it changes time, requires vulnerability, fosters empathy, embodies creativity and innovation, eliminates boundaries, honours subjectivity, and provides therapeutic benefits (Cluster, 2014). Whitinui (2014) contends it is grounded with a resistance based discourse with an aim to address social

justice and to develop social change. This provides a powerful link to the transformative and social justice paradigm used in my research. As I look into the mirror of my past to help define my identity, and how my experiences, as a principal in a secondary school in Aotearoa, have influenced my interactions with differing cultures (in particular Māori).

I use auto ethnography to investigate my own experiences throughout my principal leadership journey from 2009 – 2017. I analyse the theories and practices, which have had an impact on Māori students and whānau. The key narratives of experience throughout my life provide the story to stimulate dialogue about the social and cultural issues which have led and continue to perpetuate inequalities between Māori and Pākehā in schools in Aotearoa. I hope the dialogue will provide an insight for myself and others, as to how everyone has the agency to transform the deficit status quo which surrounds us.

I placed myself at the centre of the research by extracting meaning from my own experiences, and by combining the personal and the socio-cultural (Denzin et al, 2008). Thus a deep understanding of my own privilege, positional status and culture was important to ensure I represented the stories of others in the most respectful and appropriate ways. By placing myself at the centre of the research required an awareness of my own position to ensure I was not representing others experiences within a colonising discourse. The others in this case are the individuals and groups who are represented in the written experiences or data referred to in the research. Our stories are not our own, and in the process of writing about ourselves, we also write about others (Denshire, 2014).

As a non-Māori researching within a context primarily concerned with Māori education issues it is important to place my auto-ethnography within a kaupapa Māori framework. The Māori world view is primarily based around the collective, which is a reflection of relationships and interactions between whānau, hapū, iwi. Auto ethnography can be perceived as exclusive to the collective as it is about your own, individual view of the world. By putting myself in the research agenda required me to have an understanding of myself to ensure I represent the collective (Whitinui, 2014). This required me to have a high level of ‘critical consciousness’. Auto ethnography also required me to place my personal self within the research. I therefore needed to answer the questions, “who am I?”, “how am I power sharing?”, and “how am I benefiting the collective of the others represented in my narratives?”

Reflexivity

Auto-ethnography requires the researcher to have a greater awareness of how their own thinking appears in the research. Archer, in Sayer (2009) provides an insight into how people feed into the idea that people are active agents, rather than passive products of social forces. This work is known as reflexivity and is exercised by people holding internal conversations (Archer, 2010). These internal conversations primarily refer to our relationship and interactions with the social world, which determine our priorities and define our personal identities in terms of what we care about. The internal conversations are shaped by our experiences and social engagement, which in turn influences our dispositions. Reflexivity is the thinking about our agency that we do internally, within the structures and culture we are working within.

As I have a sound knowledge of the information within the transcripts and of the theories which have informed the narratives, it was important to be flexible with the research process to allow for a critical lens to enable unexplored ideas and themes to come through. By understanding the nature of reflexivity I was able to analyse my own transcripts on two levels. The first level being more surface feature focused, whilst the second level required me to understand what determines what I care about, and how this shaped my own thinking. This provided a greater insight into the meanings within the transcripts.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods research seeks to combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches which enable the researcher to use both narrative (qualitative) and numeric (quantitative) data when collecting and analysing data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It also allows for the use of differing tools to address the variation in research context and research questions (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Mixed methods design is needed when neither qualitative nor quantitative methods are sufficient by themselves, to capture the trends and details of the situation (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Although the majority of data within this research is qualitative, an analysis of quantitative data relating to student achievement provides the triangulation needed to verify statements made in the narratives. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) refer to triangulation as the combinations and comparisons of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, investigators, and inferences that occur at the end of a study.

Triangulation is defined by Denzin (1978) as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a broad term covering a wide range of humanistic based research theories. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) describe qualitative research as being a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, as it consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. Snape and Spencer (2003) highlight qualitative research, being used to address research questions that require explanation or understanding of social phenomena and contexts. Tolich and Davidson (2003) describe the aim of qualitative research as getting at 'qualities' that can be used to interpret and explain behaviour. These definitions contrast with quantitative research which deals with quantities that provide a statistical measure.

Qualitative research encompasses a range of differing paradigms. These include; interpretivism, naturalistic, feminism, constructivism, Marxism and a range of ethnic studies. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) like Snape and Spencer (2003), place qualitative research within the interpretive and naturalist paradigms. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), place it within the pragmatism, transformative perspective paradigm. Where researchers place themselves within a natural setting and attempt to interpret the meaning people bring to them, or the meanings which people attach to phenomena in their social worlds. Snape and Spencer (2003) link the development of qualitative research and interpretivism to the writing of Immanuel Kant (1781), where value is placed on the human, interpretative aspects of knowing about the world and the significance of the researchers own interpretations and understanding. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) describe qualitative research as being naturalistic, because the data comes from events which occur naturally and where the data is being sourced from the setting of the people being studied. By researching my own journey and placing my own beliefs and actions alongside other leadership theories, will enable education leaders to experience an insight into practice converging with leadership theory, which supports social transformation.

Hara (1995) describes the qualitative research approach as recognising the researcher's viewpoint as central in the investigation of human behaviour. This is integral to an understanding of qualitative research, as the researcher's personal knowledge and

experience can be utilised to build richer and wider ranging descriptions. Utilising qualitative research methods enables me to be an active part of the knowledge building process. As qualitative data is the most common form of data in this research, it challenges me to tell my story and expose my feelings in relation to the current socio-cultural context.

Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (in Kenny & Fourie, 2014) define grounded theory as an exclusive endeavour to discover an underlying theory arising from the systematic analysis of data. Charmaz (2016) states grounded theory as providing systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct themes grounded in the data themselves. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) state grounded theory as being grounded in narrative data that are systematically gathered and indicatively analysed. This requires the researcher to have minimal pre-conceived notions of where the research will lead to or what the concluding hypothesis will find out, as the direction may change throughout the research process as further questions are raised.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) link social justice theory to grounded theory, as it provides guidelines to focus data collection and theory building throughout the process in the field. It is an iterative theory where the researcher goes back and forth. This is similar to culturally responsive methodologies which require a responsive approach as the ground changes as knowledge and meaning is uncovered throughout the research process. This can be described as spiralling as the researcher works in a collaborative relationship with the participants and may need to go backwards to move forwards. It also requires the researcher to become active and engaged in the socio-cultural setting they are working within.

A key component of grounded theory is the ability to conduct the literature review after the analysis of the transcripts. This enabled me to avoid seeing the world through the lens of the existing ideas within the literature. As themes became evident throughout the analysis of the transcripts it provoked the need to find further literature to further understand my own thinking and actions evident in the transcripts. Thus grounded theory provides an advantage for qualitative research as you are able to follow leads as they emerge (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory provided the flexibility to explore different pathways as themes emerged rather than being locked into my original ideas.

Quantitative research

Hara (1995) describes the difference between quantitative and qualitative research as being that a quantitative research approach endlessly pursues facts while qualitative research approaches recognise that the researcher's viewpoint is important and central. The view of qualitative research is drawn from the research of natural science, where the purpose is to investigate and to define facts without judgement. Snape and Spencer (2003) places quantitative research within the positivism paradigm, which distinguishes between facts and values ensuring research is undertaken in a value free manner. It is commonly accepted that quantitative research is concerned with testing and validating theories through statistical analysis of numeric data.

Hara (1995) states that limitations within quantitative research methods restrict research in education as it doesn't enable the researcher to interrogate their own viewpoints, and that numerical data is not able to unpack the complex nature of human beings who are at the heart of education. This is also reflected in the weaknesses of quantitative research as described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), in particular that the researcher may miss out on phenomena occurring because of their focus on hypothesis testing rather than generation.

Quantitative methods have allowed me to examine the relationship between Māori student achievement data and specific actions and interventions which have occurred throughout the period of this research. It also provides a check against ambiguities and potential contradictions within the narratives and other documents. The quantitative data and evidence were taken from NZQA achievement data, ERO reports, and school board of trustees reports.

Methods of data collection

Transcripts

The primary set of data used in this research are the raw transcripts collected from three PhD and Masters studies researchers, and the Te Kotahitanga leadership e-books.

School achievement data

This research has been focused on the actions and activities which have had an impact on Māori students within my own secondary school. It was therefore important to collect and

examine the performance of the schools NCEA student achievement data to gauge the impact of the changes on Māori students' achievement.

School documents

Document collection and analysis can be useful in supporting the triangulation of data sources in research (Bell, 2005). It can support in the corroboration and critical analysis of the narratives within the transcripts. The key documents sourced for this research are publicly available documents, such as the school's strategic plan and ERO reports.

Media and other external documents

The collection and analysis of external documentation supplements other forms of data gathered within the research (Bell, 2005). While it is important to take care when utilising analysis from media reports, as they might not always be researched based but rather re-statements of events or author's opinions, I have referenced key events and my own quotes from media publications to strengthen the links between the transcripts and actual events.

Data analysis

Transcript analysis

During the first reading of the transcripts it was important to read with an open mind to ensure preconceived themes did not hinder my ability to see emerging themes appearing in the transcripts. The second reading of the transcripts allowed for the development and expansion of themes, which led to further investigation of new literature. I utilised the grounded theory method of coding to sort and segment data (Charmaz, 2016). Codes used in this research follow major themes which became evident in the transcripts. Initially the codes were notes categorising the temporal patterns evident in a chronological order. These were then re-categorised into major themes which allowed the substance of the findings to become evident. As these themes appeared, further gathering of data outside of the transcripts to back up, verify, or challenge the transcript narratives became necessary.

This research aims to build a picture of what was happening under my leadership and why. Through the collection and reading of my narratives I have continually developed my own theories about why certain decisions were made and what they led to. This enabled the research to be iterative and enabled new theories to build on existing theories. This fits within the framework of auto-ethnography as it can radically alter an individual's perception of the

past, inform their present, and reshape their future if they are aware and open to the transformative effects (Custer, 2014).

Ethical considerations

My first step in the research process was to seek ethical approval from the University of Waikato, Ethics Committee. I then sought permission from the school Board of Trustees to undertake the research from both an employee and ethics perspectives. This was important as this research also follows a mixed methods approach by utilising student achievement data, school documents, and my own reflections involving people and events occurring at the school. I then sought permission from the external researchers to utilise their transcripts of my own narratives, although within their own research ethics it is stated that the transcripts of my narratives belong to me as the case study of their research. This being the case, I believe it was important to formalise the process of permission as the recorded narratives came from their work, were held by them, and therefore available for my use.

It has been my absolute intent to maintain the mana of researchers and publishers of articles I have used in my research. As the transcripts are of their interviews with me, the main potential harm would be to me as the primary focus of the transcripts. As the author of this new research I am fully aware of the potential harm I could face. However as this focuses on my personal story there may be people connected to me and my work who may feel the findings have a negative impact on them. To mitigate this impact I have worked closely with my supervisor and shared my ongoing findings with the school's, Board of Trustees Chairperson.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology and theoretical framework which has guided this research. Kaupapa Māori and culturally responsive methodologies provide the guiding principles to ensure this research is not misrepresenting others who are evident in the research and is not continuing harm towards Māori students and whānau through the adherence of decolonising methodologies. A mixed method approach primarily utilising transcripts of my own narratives, alongside data and documents associated to the time of the transcripts enables a triangulated examination of the narratives and events which defined my role as a principal.

Chapter 3 – Findings

E kimi ana I ngā kāwai I toro ki tawhiti

Seeking the shoots that stretch far out

Introduction

This whakataukī refers to someone who is looking to find their connections and identity that may have been disconnected overtime. It encourages us to look beyond the immediate connections and knowledge we have, and develop these further (Ake & Moorhouse, 2016). By seeking meaning from my own narratives, I have been able to critically reflect on my own key points of transformation. The narratives based on critical events are the shoots which show the development of my leadership over time.

This chapter presents the research findings and are framed to answer my first two research questions. Alongside each personal narrative I define how that version of my experience came about, how it links to present and/or historical perspectives, and how it has defined my present and future interactions. These events are not told as discrete series of one-off events but rather as spiralling, inter-related reflections and discourses.

Answer to Research question 1

In this section I answer my first research question: What does an in-depth and critical analysis of my own interview transcripts alongside student participation and achievement information help me to understand about my own principal leadership praxis from 2009 to 2017? To do so I theorise on excerpt from my transcribed interviews to outline how my experiences and events throughout my life have shaped my own principal leadership praxis.

My Early Years

My narrative starts back in the early eighties when the political landscape was changing as Māori were reasserting their claim to dispossessed land through the Treaty of Waitangi. A common journey for me was the drive over the Rimutaka Ranges from the Wairarapa to Wellington, where I went to school. The common deficit discourses at the time revolved around Māori reclaiming their land and allowing it to regress into unproductive land; “this is what happens to good productive land when it gets given to Māori”, referring to the gorse

that was colouring the landscape yellow. At the time, this deficit discourse about Māori was held by the media, politicians and the majority of the Pākehā population in Aotearoa.

My early experiences as a student in a rural country school with a Māori principal had a significant influence on my role as firstly a teacher, then as a principal in Aotearoa. In the following quote from the transcripts I describe the impact that the teaching of te reo Māori and kapa haka⁵⁴ in my primary school had on my own journey towards developing an understanding and empathy of Māori:

..We were small country kids and there were some Māori kids there, and generally they were poor. But we didn't know that.....Bill [teacher] bought in te reo Māori and kapa haka. I remember it, it's ingrained into you at that young age, and I remember enjoying it. (2010)

This quote highlights the importance of providing te reo Māori and tikanga⁵⁵ throughout the primary system within New Zealand. It provides students with a window into te ao Māori⁵⁶ which is not driven by the media or from the limited experiences of many within our own communities who know no better.

Teachers and the positive learning relationships they form with students have always been a critical factor in how students engage with learning. I expressed the impact certain teachers had on my own development as a teacher and principal, when I said the following about a previous teacher of mine:

*.. because I knew him, and he knew me, and the lessons were engaging.
(2010)*

The importance of relationships within my own education have been reinforced and strengthened throughout my time as a principal, and through my role in transforming pedagogy towards a more relational and culturally responsive pedagogy within the school in which I am now the principal.

Like many New Zealanders, I undertook an overseas experience. After travelling the length of Europe and through Turkey and Syria, I ended up spending time in the spectacular desert

⁵⁴ Kapa haka is the term for Māori performing arts

⁵⁵ The customary system of values and practices that have developed overtime and are deeply embedded in the social context.

⁵⁶ Māori customs and world view.

between Saudi Arabia and Jordan, in a place called Wahdi Sabah. Unlike many travellers I ended up here as a result of a chance meeting with an Australian Arabic speaking woman who had been living in this area for a number of years and was visiting her Bedouin friends in this part of the world. I was welcomed into their extended family without question as a guest, where I spent three months living their lifestyle. I was treated as an insider, but clearly had very little comprehension of their language or complex culture. The following is a limited extract from my diary about this time:

Even though I was a stranger to these people I was treated as if this was my home, and we were welcome to come and go as we pleased. They seemed genuinely happy to feed us and let us stay, as their custom stated they should welcome any stranger without asking any questions, and that they should let the stranger tell them their name and so forth when they desired. Although these people had very little compared to our standards they were happy to share everything, and never expected anything in return (1992).

This experience opened up many differing issues in relation to my understanding of myself as it challenged my own behaviour and interactions with others. The situation initially placed me in a very uncomfortable place. I was an outsider who knew very little of the customs and practices of the Bedouin people, and knew even less of their Arabic language. I was also in no position to provide anything in return (in a material sense), as due to other circumstances I was penniless. Yet I was treated in a very non-judgmental way, was welcomed and provided for by people who from a material point of view also had very little.

These experiences helped me to become more consciously aware of the impact of my own leadership practices, and how this might impact on marginalised students. The experiences were humbling, not only in how I was treated but also from the perspective of being placed in situations where respectful and non-judgmental relationships were formed despite significant cultural and language barriers. The relationships were based on a non-materialistic code of providing charity and respect first and foremost. My experiences as an outsider provided me with lessons about how many young people from differing backgrounds may feel when they attend school. Especially where students come into a schooling environment which is culturally foreign to them, or, where they may not understand the language. This is

not only for new immigrants or refugees, but also for many Māori and Pacific Island students who come into schools in which they have to leave their culture at the door to succeed.

Early Teaching Years

During my early teaching experiences my thinking about Māori student participation in the formal education system was built on a fairly superficial response to the challenge of Māori participation and achievement. It was based around adapting content to make it more culturally appropriate. Despite the best of intentions, this adaptation was without any student, whānau or wider community input into deciding what was appropriate and what wasn't. It was also based around content that was written about Māori, by non-Māori and delivered by non-Māori teachers.

The following statement is a self-reflection on my own understanding as myself as a learner and my own development:

...I realised that the big deficit in my own learning was my understanding of things Māori (2010).

This occurred when applying for a job as a deputy principal as I was challenged about my own knowledge of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. I came to realise that this was an area of my own understanding, which was seriously lacking, especially if I was assuming leadership positions in schools and if I was to be seen as genuinely working with Māori students and whānau. As a result, I enrolled into a 'Te Ara Reo Māori' programme at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. My initial expectation of the course was that I would develop knowledge which would help me speak te reo Māori and further my career. This self-centred and narrow expectation was soon to be challenged, resulting in a new reality being formed. The following reflects my learning journey:

The tutors were fantastic and I learnt differing ways of learning, a lot about tikanga and a lot about the people I was with. So I gained a better appreciation of Māori people and the powerful connections I made (2010).

The class was made up of a majority of Māori adult students who mainly because of the assimilatory colonial education system were reconnecting with their language. The culture of the classroom was rich in Māori values of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and ako. Represented by my thoughts of this time I recalled:

...that I was valued for who I was and felt safe in the fact that it didn't matter that I didn't know something or that I would make mistakes (2010).

My own lack of knowledge and understanding was not seen as ignorance, rather I was seen as in need of support and nurturing and my learning was catered for, using a wide range of strategies which involved dialogue, role modelling and utilisation of experiences.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa provided me with privileged access into the Māori world view and experiences. It also demonstrated to me that there were two parallel worlds within Aotearoa, and through colonisation, society had actively placed Māori language and te ao Māori as outsiders with little status or value in mainstream society. The irony is that like many New Zealanders, I travelled around the world to experience rich and diverse cultures, whereas I had not realised that within Aotearoa the richness of Māori history, language and culture was always there.

These experiences helped shape the way I now view the world, which includes both the barriers faced by Māori, and the richness within Māori society. They also highlight the need to view my leadership position as a responsibility to challenge the status quo of Māori under-achievement within a system dominated by structures which are designed to privilege the dominant Pākehā population.

Challenge from society – racism, socio-economic, perception

There are many challenges associated with drawing students from lower socio-economic, high Māori communities. Many of these challenges are associated with negative community perceptions, which manifest themselves in falling rolls (often openly referred to as white flight) and negative perceptions about students identified from that school. A significant challenge for leaders working within lower-socio economic and predominantly Māori and Pacific Island communities is to break down these deficit perceptions that the wider society have about these schools.

As the principal since 2009, I have seen this deficit perception affect the school's roll, predominantly with a decline in the Pākehā roll. The following statistics highlight the pattern of roll decline for Pākehā as primarily NZ European/Pākehā students left the school or failed to enrol as other schools in the region were deemed to be of higher quality because of the dominant white student population.

Table 1. Number and percent of the school's roll being Māori and NZ European/Pākehā (2008 – 2016)

Ethnicity	2008	2012	2016
Total	549	453	355
Māori	219 (40%)	235 (52%)	227 (64%)
NZ European/Pākehā	269 (49%)	135 (30%)	67 (19%)

The negative community perception and subsequent decline in Pākehā student enrolments can be understood in the wider context of racism pervading society. The following quote highlights that I was able to identify this in 2010:

What I found very challenging was the level of racism that still pervaded our society, and the impact it had/s on students, staff, and whānau. This was evident when I said ... Napier is a very traditional, conservative society. And there is actually racism which is overt. (2010)

My understanding at the time of the level of racism evident in the local region was primarily based on my own observation of peoples' behaviours and reactions towards Māori participation in society. Overtime my initial response has been reinforced through further personal observation, discussions, and a broader knowledge of the historical relationships and interactions between Māori and Pākehā within the region and the implications for both groups.

My understanding of the impact on Māori students' participation and achievement, and the challenge I was faced with in addressing the racism was clear:

It's not a quick fix. What's going on here is that we are trying to change society. Attitudinal change is what we're trying to do. (2010)

Although we were making significant changes in the school to address the disparity for Māori students, I was making a conscious decision not to publicise this to a wider audience. This was due to my concern that Pākehā society would further entrench their negative views in relation to the school.

The following quote demonstrates how my own experiences had conditioned me to see Māori being treated differently to Pākehā:

A student had been kicked out of a local school and I had an enrolment meeting with the family. I was taken aback when I went out for the meeting as the mother was a blond Pākehā woman. I was taken aback as I expected to see a Māori student and family waiting for the interview. (2015)

My reflection from this comment is that I started to see how the dominant discourse had conditioned my own responses based on the way I believed society and schools treat Māori students and whānau.

The key difference between 2010 and 2015, was that I was more aware of how racism was affecting the students. In 2010 my comments were more about racism affecting the school, whereas in 2015 my thinking is more related to the experiences of the students:

A student went out into the workplace and was just another Māori kid in the automotive garage, so they called him Rangī (which was not his name). He felt disrespected. So that is racism basically. (2015)

When I was able to see racism directly effecting students' well-being and participation in society, I became more emotionally affected by it, and less concerned with public perception. This resulted in my actions becoming more transformative in their nature as I sought to challenge the issue of racism outside of the school environs, by bringing the issue into both private and public consciousness.

I believe racism has been sanitised by the use of the term 'unconscious bias'. This is in contrast to what Māori students have continued to say, which is that 'racism' is alive and kicking in our schools (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; The Commissioner for Children, 2018). I demonstrate my view of unconscious bias in relation to the wider community's view of the school in 2015, thus reflecting that bias exists and that it is not unconscious:

...it's the unconscious glazing over when people may see something to do with the school. They unconsciously glaze over and don't see the positives and then consciously see the negative, but I see it as unconscious consciousness. (2015)

This bias has a significant impact on the students' self-esteem and sense of belonging and worth. An example of this occurred after a group of students were caught shoplifting at a local shop. When they were asked what impact this would have on peoples' perception of them

and the school their response was; “*Oh people don’t give a stuff*”. When I had further conversation with these students about what they meant, I was deeply affected by their response:

The students told me they constantly get negative comments about being in a green uniform, about them going to ‘that’ school. ... It’s worse for them because they are living it, whereas we can go home and sometimes leave it behind. (2015).

The negative perception created by racism has a significant impact not only on the children and families who are the target of the prejudice, but on the wider school organisation and structure. I found that these negative perceptions (racism) have the greatest impact on enrolments:

It’s not the quality of teaching, it’s not the quality of relationships, it’s not the achievement, it’s the false perceptions that are continually reinforced by [other] false perceptions, which become reality in people’s heads. (2015)

Critical transformative leaders transcend what is happening solely in their own organisation to what is impacting on equity and equality in society. My awareness of the wider racial issues facing lower socio-economic schools has become more apparent over my time as principal. It was also more evident in the later transcripts. My thinking about the impact of racism on lower decile schools ties in with the evidence in Table 1 above.

... there were 40% [Māori students] when I first started, which is now 75%. This reflects white flight. It’s a nationwide phenomenon, where decile 1 and 2 schools have got smaller and browner. It is a sad indictment of New Zealand society. (2016)

Development of a focus on Māori participation and achievement

The Board of Trustees have a critical role in providing the direction and support in which school leadership can enact change. I found that when the Board of Trustees prioritised Māori student achievement within the Charter it provided a clear statement of intent which supported the change in practice and outcomes for Māori students. It was also a clear statement about disrupting the acceptance of lower Māori student achievement:

...when the board put it [Māori achievement goals] into the charter, it became a priority and then started to filter down through the system, and once it is in the system there is more accountability around it as well. (2015)

In response to the lack of staff and whānau voice in any decision-making processes involving Māori students, a Māori Focus Group was set-up in 2009. This was a voluntary group set-up to discuss and support any initiatives involving Māori students, it therefore had a wide brief as Māori students were involved in every aspect of school life. The initiation of this group provided a forum for staff, and in particular Māori staff who were working within English-medium classrooms, to participate in the decision-making process. As the principal, my role was to chair the forum, as this provided the group with a sense of shared power and access to resources and high level decision-making processes.

I found that this forum empowered a large group of Māori staff who had been waiting for the opportunity to contribute as Māori and for Māori. My reflections at the time show my understanding of the level of emotion and power associated with the founding of the Māori Focus Group:

The staff had just been waiting. It had been a pretty unhappy situation. I remember at the start of the year it was a pretty crucifying time, a rough time for everybody. ... so the Māori Focus Group has been a powerful forum. (2010)

The development of the Māori Focus Group was acknowledged in the 2014, ERO report:

Teachers meet regularly and formally to discuss practices to assist them to develop culturally responsive strategies to engage Māori students in learning. (ERO, 2014, p.3)

The following quote from the 'Ka Hikitia Demonstration Report – Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5' (Alton-Lee, 2014, p.47) demonstrates my understanding of how responsive leadership is needed to ensure institutions change to support leadership development, which is particularly important in the context of the Māori Focus Group:

Leadership: like institutions we have to adapt our own approach to leadership as the culture of the school has changed. The change in culture has been led from many different angles (not just through the traditional

leadership in the school) and is often being driven from the pedagogy in the classroom and from the staff and students.

The first significant action taken by the Maori Focus Group was to change the structure of school prizegiving. In previous years the prizegiving was run following a very traditional euro-centric structure. This was evident by the use of traditions from the English schooling system including; staff sitting on the stage, English songs, no karakia⁵⁷. There had been little change to the structure, nor challenge to the status quo on how school prizegiving could be more inclusive. My acknowledgement of new structures initiated by the Māori Focus Group represented a Kaupapa Māori response to the changes in the prizegiving:

...previously it was marching into the hall with an English song. Now a large section of the stage is for our kaumātua, students who run the show, a few board members who were handing out the prizes, and performances and awards. Also at the start we had a haka pōwhiri⁵⁸. (2010)

These structural changes have now become integral to the make-up of school events which incorporate tikanga, are student led, and are more responsive and inclusive towards all students and their whānau.

In response to the crisis facing Māori students belonging and achievement, there was a need to create a school curriculum in which Māori students could both see themselves within the context of what they may choose to study, and also be part of the process in deciding what they wanted to be able to contribute to the design of curriculum.

By 2015, I could see in my transcribed responses that responsive curriculum-design, based on Māori knowledge and culture, was more evident:

..it's about being responsive, so looking at our programmes constantly to see how they can be responsive to the needs of our students. Looking at things like marae catering, Māori Tourism, whakairo, taking learning to the marae, which are all within the context of tikanga and culture. (2015)

The school's participation in Te Kotahitanga from the end of 2009 was a critical change point in enabling the transparent review of the bilingual unit to go ahead.

⁵⁷ Karakia – Māori word for prayer.

⁵⁸ Haka Powhiri – traditional Māori process for welcoming visitors.

Review of the Bilingual unit

Bilingual units can be a highly effective strategy to promote and encourage te reo Māori me ōna tikanga⁵⁹, and have historically been highly effective in promoting and encouraging this development in schools throughout Aotearoa. They were a response by Māori to the increasing move towards multiculturalism in the 1980s (Smith G, 1997), and the demise of te reo Māori within mainstream education. As part of a wider bicultural movement they were designed for real structural change rather than the continued dominance of Pākehā educational structures. Although this may have been the case at inception, the situation I was faced with three decades later was vastly different.

Students in the bilingual unit were kept separate from other students in the school, whilst anyone from outside of the bilingual or te reo Māori classes were restricted from participating in kapa haka, pōwhiri, or any role in tikanga or te ao Māori within the school. This, despite ninety percent of Māori students not being within the bilingual unit or te reo Māori classes. This was also the same for staff who were Māori or who wanted to support and participate in te ao Māori practices. The deliberate segregation of Māori students in the bilingual unit from other students created a barrier for school wide development to improve Māori student attendance, engagement, and achievement. This resulted in Māori students from within the bilingual unit experiencing statistically significant negative academic results and behaviour interventions compared to Māori students outside of the bilingual unit.

One of the major factors perpetuating the negative outcomes for Māori students in the bilingual unit was the leadership and teaching practices within the unit. All practices relating to Māori language, tikanga, and culture excluded other staff members and many whānau from the opportunity to contribute. These practices represented hegemony, whereby a person exerts power and control over others, in the same vein as the process of colonisation exerted power and control over Māori. Freire (1970) warns of this behaviour whereby: "the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain humanity, become oppressors.... As the oppressed find in the oppressor their model of manhood" (p.44). In 2010 I found these behaviours and practices were evident in the school as 'being Māori' was restricted by an individual. I reflected how challenging it was:

⁵⁹ te reo Māori me ōna tikanga – The importance of linking of te reo Māori language and tikanga where language is embedded in social and cultural context.

...having to manage the Head of Māori who was resisting, or not allowing other Māori teachers and leaders within the school to stand up and be Māori. (2010)

By 2015 my own understanding of the theory that exposes hegemony was a lot stronger. I was able to clearly identify the theory that sat behind the behaviours I had identified in 2010. I was also able to identify the key change moments which allowed others to take ownership and responsibility for Māori achievement:

... so when the hegemonic practices were identified and broken down, it enabled others to start taking ownership or actually putting their hand up and saying 'actually I am Māori and I care about this too'. This resulted in the creation of a culture, or a place where people could actually take part in the Māori achievement drive. (2015)

The depth of feeling associated with the bilingual unit's impact on Māori students across the school, was still strong in 2016. The following quote represents my ongoing feelings about the bilingual unit which had operated in the school, though my understanding of why it was like this represented a much greater understanding of the influences which led to its mode of operation:

... when people heard the word bilingual at our school, it was like a swear word. There were hegemonic practices by the leader of the bilingual unit. This was obvious in that if you weren't in the bilingual unit you weren't allowed to participate as a Māori in the school. If you were a Māori teacher, and not in the bilingual unit you weren't considered Māori. (2016)

In 2010, I had found that by looking at the evidence of student outcomes from within the bilingual unit, I was able to present a case which others would listen to:

...so when we did that review and looked at the data, 11 out of 18 hadn't gained a qualification, of the 30 students who started in Year 9 only 3 were left by Year 13, 17 out of 30 students were at the hard end of the discipline system for behaviours outside of class. (2010)

When faced with a crisis evident in the data and stories associated with Māori student underachievement, and with the bilingual unit at the heart of the underachievement it was

critical to build a new context for change, which would allow Māori students and staff to genuinely participate and achieve as Māori within the mainstream school environment:

We were creating a culture around the rest of the school to enable 250 Māori students to belong, ... with only 30 in the bilingual unit. (2010)

In 2015, I was able to clearly express the fundamental issues as a result of the practices within the bilingual unit, and why something needed to be done at the time:

I think that was critical in the change in the school, critical in that changes would not have happened otherwise. The culture of the bilingual was around exclusiveness, to be Māori at the school you had to be in that unit. To be involved in pōwhiri you had to be in the unit, to be living and showing those values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga you had to be in the unit, despite 90% of Māori students not being in the bilingual unit. That had also transferred to teachers as well, they didn't acknowledge or even recognise that they were teaching Māori students who were not in the bilingual unit because it wasn't part of their responsibility. (2015)

As a result of the issues of low achievement and high behaviour statistics experienced by the students in the bilingual unit we reviewed the unit. The review involved extensive conversation and consultation with significant whānau and community members. It culminated in a whānau hui where current whānau members of students in the bilingual unit, ex-students, and community members were invited by the schools Māori liaison person to attend.

A critical part of the review involved working alongside the community, to provide transparent evidence, and student voice to create reform that was socially just. The power of student voice resulted in a key community member who had been very vocal in her criticism of the review, changing her view:

A key turning point was when a senior Māori staff member presented interviews from students, and from staff who had been involved in Te Kotahitanga.....when she started to see some of the kids she knew, saying how they felt about being Māori at the school, and who weren't in the bilingual unit, she started to see a different perspective. (2010)

The review of the bilingual unit led to the closure of the bilingual unit and the development of te reo Māori and te ao Māori across the school, which in turn required the whole school to own and address the aspirations of Māori students and whānau. Culturally responsive and culturally appropriate systems, structures, and behaviours were developed across the school to support Māori participation and achievement. This included the opening up of kapa haka to all students, a deliberate focus on Mātauranga Māori⁶⁰ curriculum, and the development of compulsory te reo Māori language classes for all students in Years 7 – 9.

Te Kotahitanga – change leadership

My journey had a range of starting points, though the most significant impact on my own leadership practice was the decision to enter the school into Te Kotahitanga. This decision was based on my knowledge of the need for a transformative approach to the challenge of Māori underachievement. It was a decision underpinned by transformative praxis, as it was taking transformative action to evolve change (Smith G, 1997), although at the beginning I lacked the theorising which was needed for true praxis. Te Kotahitanga provided the components for meaningful change and an intervention to make a difference, leading to conscientisation, resistance, and transformative praxis.

In 2009 when I first took on this position, I saw a school with a high Māori population who were underachieving in an institution which undervalued Māori student and whānau participation. It was a school in which teachers thought they were doing the best they could for Māori students. Teachers had a focus on positive relationships, but these positive relationships had not transferred into lower suspension rates or higher achievement. It had merely transferred into a sense of powerlessness for both students and teachers. This was evident in the recommendations in the school's 2008 ERO report, which said:

Senior managers need to exercise strong leadership and work with urgency to empower Māori staff, students and whānau to work together to develop an holistic school-wide strategy for Māori students. These include the bilingual unit, Māori department and the mainstream section. (Education Review Office report, November, 2008. p.4).

⁶⁰ Mātauranga Māori - Māori knowledge, way of being and engaging in the world

The opportunity to be involved in the Te Kotahitanga teacher professional development programme in 2010 revolutionised the relationships, leadership, pedagogy, and the culture of the school. It provided support to the teachers to develop their praxis (Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2014). It provided a theoretical understanding of the issues and solutions, and the right amount of challenge and support to change our practices. As a school leader I was supported and challenged to put Māori student achievement and participation at the core of the school's strategic plan and teaching and learning practices.

At the beginning of the schools' participation in Te Kotahitanga I was acutely aware of the perception of staff in relation to participating in a new professional development programme, focused on raising Māori student participation and achievement. Through the use of NZCER's 'Staff Workplace' survey and through ongoing dialogue with staff I knew that they were cynical of any new initiatives. This was the result of a large number of professional development initiatives being delivered over the previous five years, the result of stresses associated with the school merger in 2004, and the lack of any evidential change in student engagement or achievement from the school's participation in Te Kauhua.

The following highlights my concern in 2010:

The school was in Te Kauhua and it was a failure. Because there was a sense among staff that the school had gone into it because of the money. The person running it wasn't the right person. (2010)

The decision to apply to have the school involved in Te Kotahitanga was based on both my previous knowledge of the project and the need to change the under achievement of Māori learners at the school. As a result, leadership and teachers transformed their beliefs and practices to support Māori student participation and achievement. It also required me to continuously review my own position and practice, and to strengthen my beliefs about the need for transformative change. Te Kotahitanga also provided a different language to enable leadership to address the inherent racism that was/is perpetuated within the structures and relationships within our education system. An example of new language was 'deficit theorising' used as a term to bring true issues of inequity and racism into the teacher professional development space. The following statement about Te Kotahitanga reflects my understanding of the critical nature of Te Kotahitanga in supporting the transformation taking place amongst staff at the school:

... with Te Kotahitanga coming on board, really we're changing the teaching staff, changing the culture of the values of the staff around what is happening with the kids. (2010).

As a result of this focus, ownership for this change has spread across the whole school community and has led to significant shifts in achievement and culture. This is evident in the following quotes from a group of students speaking to a Ministry of Education researcher in 2014:

We can only tell you about good teachers here...if you need us to talk about bad teachers we would need to talk about other schools.

It's like the opposite to racism in this school.

They care about us and it's the same after school if we need help. Teachers care for me ... we try harder.

Ka Hikitia Demonstration Report: Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase (Alton-Lee, 2014)

Te Kotahitanga was a significant factor in the transformation of the school culture and Māori student achievement. The opportunity to be involved in Te Kotahitanga came along at the right time for leadership to change what they were seeing in the evidence:

...so within Te Kotahitanga we were able to really get the support and tools to make a huge difference, and so that started the journey. It took about three years, 2009, 2010, 2011 before I got a sense of some real change happening. (2016)

Participating in Te Kotahitanga supported me to connect my leadership practice with theory (praxis) and develop leadership confidence to enact change:

...in the first three years [as principal] I felt academically inadequate. I needed to back up what I was saying with evidence as I was often being challenged. It's really important for leaders to be well read. That's where Te Kotahitanga was good. We would be given readings, break them down and then could go back confident at a staff meeting to utilise them. (2016)

In reflecting on the changed focus toward Māori achievement which had taken place, I recall:

... because we are past that, Māori being invisible. We're past that, and I think that's what Te Kotahitanga taught us. (2016)

The involvement of the school in Te Kotahitanga provided the support and a vehicle to engage in the deconstruction of existing knowledge and reconstruction of new knowledge frameworks. This required all staff to critically reflect on who the system was working for and for whom it was failing, and to place ourselves within the system to reflect on our own contribution. This involved rejecting deficit thinking, engaging in democratic discourses and difficult conversations, and the opening of curricular spaces that were more responsive to students' prior knowledge and experiences.

Many teachers and leadership in the school knew that improved teaching and learning at the school required the development of teacher agency within their classrooms and across the school system. Te Kotahitanga provided the theory and the resources to implement the change based on a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Leading with Moral Purpose

I found that moral purpose is a critical component of effective leadership when leading for transformative change. When asked why I decided to engage the school in Te Kotahitanga my response was:

... because, really the school was failing Māori kids. (2010)

In 2016, I was able to demonstrate the depth of feeling associated with making a difference for Māori learners and the use of evidence to drive leadership practice:

... there were some obvious issues, Māori achievement was poor. The gap was massive. You could have walked into the school and felt like you were in Gore High School, whereas our Māori student population at the time was 45%. (2016)

In 2016, I was able to demonstrate how leading with moral purpose required leadership to be aspirational in their beliefs about creating equitable change. This required mechanisms to challenge the status quo of underachievement and low expectations for Māori students. The mechanism I refer to was the setting of achievement targets for Māori students in the school. The targets set were significantly above historical data for the school, though at the same time only at the level of achievement for everyone nationally:

These targets facilitate discussion, which opens people up to, 'so why do you set such unrealistic targets? why is it unrealistic?' And then it moves onto, 'what can we do about it?' (2016)

Change process

When faced with the crisis of Māori underachievement at the school I knew that structural changes could make an immediate impact, whereas behavioural change and effective relational strategies would take a lot more time:

I knew that structural changes could make rapid growth. It was clear as there were no overt signs of valuing anything Māori in the school. (2010)

However, I also understood there was a need to get support to make the big changes needed in the classroom through a relational and culturally responsive pedagogical approach:

The easy changes we made were outside the classroom, but we didn't have the tools to make change inside the classroom, other than making it up ourselves. (2010)

At the beginning of my principalship I believed that some teachers couldn't change. The following quote from 2016 shows a change in thinking in relation to my belief in the ability of teachers to change:

...when the stress comes on, often practice regresses really fast which results in their relationships regressing really fast as well. I am a believer in that everybody has the potential to change. (2016)

Understanding and believing people can change, promotes the belief in your own and other's agency to change. If leaders don't have that belief about their staff, how can they expect the teachers in their schools to have this belief about their own students? What becomes critical in the change process is ensuring the right person to support and lead transformative change is identified and supported into the position of influence:

We had to get the right people first, that was the key. The most important decision was getting the right person as the lead facilitator we had to make sure we had key staff in the cohort, and she was the right person. She had credibility with our middle and senior school staff, who are two diverse groups. (2010)

I have learned that this was a critical decision in the long-term success or failure of implementing initiatives such as Te Kotahitanga with integrity and to ensure the kaupapa delivered on its promise. My decisions in relation to staff leadership and continuing our focus on Māori student engagement are still critical in keeping this focus and continuing to make gains. Since 2010 I have used the metaphor of getting the right people on the bus first, and then co-constructing with the passengers the best pathway to reach your destination, as the method for supporting critical change.

It is important to create the space to allow people to challenge the direction and the actions you and other change leaders are taking. This enables people to feel they are part of the change process and are responding with a culturally responsive leadership lens:

...some of the people who are challenged by it are questioning. If they are not having these conversations or don't feel they can have these conversations they're not going to change. (2010)

Evidence

The focus on evidence is a common theme running through the transcripts. In 2010, I understood the need to gather and understand a range of evidence when making decisions about the change in the bilingual unit. This was also important for our entry into and ongoing engagement with Te Kotahitanga. Evidence can be seen as both helping to critically reflect upon, and also validating my own thinking in relation to a number of school interventions:

... I need to see it in the evidence more than I would have in the past. In the past I would have been happy to feel it or think it. Even though that was valid, it is much more effective to see both qualitative and quantitative evidence validating what I was thinking anyway. (2010)

The practice of being driven by evidence continues to be evident throughout the 2016 transcripts:

People say to me that I am driven by the evidence. It is something that makes people say, 'oh I better be able to back this up if I'm going to have this theory or this idea, or strategy, or opinion.' It's got to be evidence driven, which led to Māori achievement being placed into the forefront of the strategic plan back in 2010. (2016)

The evidence in Figure 1 shows that Māori students' NCEA Level 2 results began to improve from the time the school entered into Te Kotahitanga in 2010 and continued to improve after Te Kotahitanga was withdrawn by the government in 2015. The 2015 and 2016 evidence shows Māori students achievement continued to rise above the national results for Māori student and that they were achieving at the same level as all students, nationally. Importantly, this shows that on our own, we were continuing to maintain and build on, what we had learned in the time that we were supported by Te Kotahitanga professional development and support.

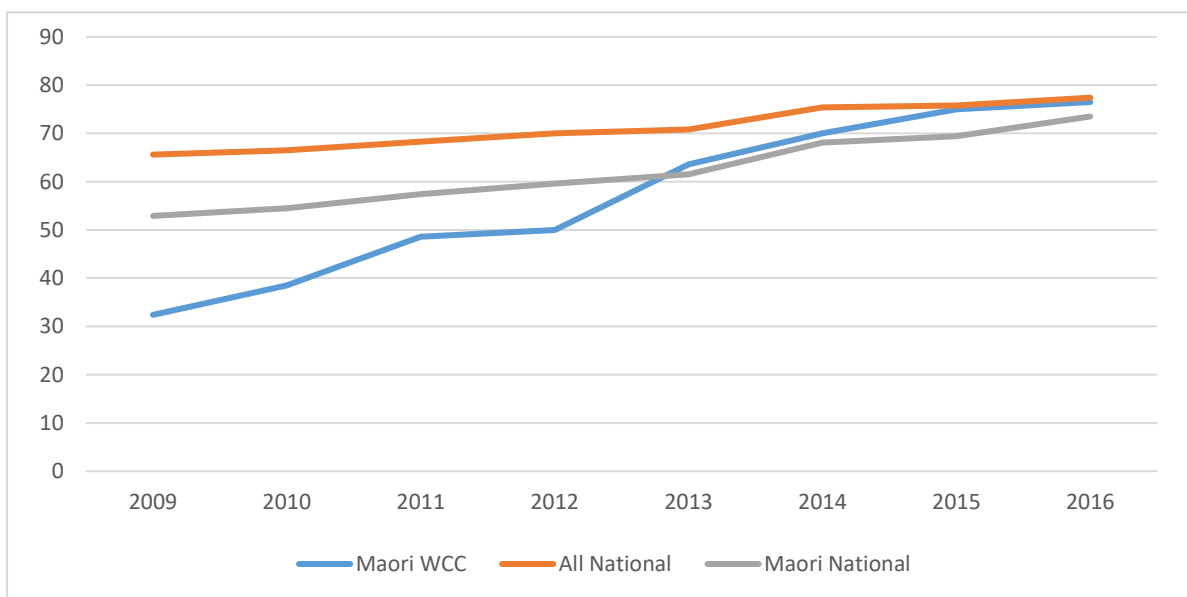


Figure 1. Schools NCEA Level 2 Results (represented by the percent of Year 12 Students achieving Level 2 NCEA)

ERO reiterated the positive changes which have occurred in relation to Māori student participation, engagement and achievement since their initial judgements in 2008:

Ongoing review and development of the school's curriculum and teaching practice help the school to promote education success for Māori as Māori (ERO, 2014. p.3)

Culturally responsive and relationship-based teaching practice is emphasised and effectively promotes learning. ... The curriculum strongly reflects te ao Māori and cultural knowledge (ERO, 2017. P.2)

Answer to Research question 2

In this section I answer my second research question: What have been the various types of leadership that I have incorporated into my principal leadership that have influenced education reform and student outcomes?

I now understand leadership as a mechanism for societal change by placing the leader in the space which transforms their own thinking and behaviour beyond the realms of the school setting:

...you can't leave it at work either, it's bigger than that. When you live in society that really doesn't see the issues. So that is leadership. (2016)

In this section, the transcripts identify differing contexts which require differing leadership styles and decisions, which collectively led to changes in the culture of the school and improved outcomes for Māori students belonging and achievement.

Leadership styles

Throughout the transcripts compiled by the PhD student (2010) there was discussion about a range of differing leadership theories and models. At the beginning of the discussion, distributed leadership was the default thinking in my repertoire of leadership reflection. In 2010 I found I was still developing my own understanding of what my leadership style was:

I'd like to think it was a distributive leadership style, but it's not. Its more ... (2010)

I was exploring ways to more effectively encourage and recognise Māori student leadership:

I have seen so many young Māori who demonstrate leadership, miss out on roles in the school because of the Eurocentric structures which have been set-up to appoint leadership. I haven't yet seen a good system for developing Māori leadership in mainstream schooling, which is based on Kaupapa Māori context. For our young Māori students, they are not putting up their hand saying 'I want to be a leader', as leadership is bestowed on them over time by others, which I think is the true form of leadership. (2010)

The influence on my leadership from a Kaupapa Māori perspective has come from my experiences at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, through involvement in Te Kotahitanga, and by

working alongside others in wānanga at local marae. This demonstrates the attribute of ako and importance of being open to learning:

*being reflective and being hard on yourself, but also being open to learn.
(2010)*

The 2015 transcripts indicate a clearer understanding of leadership and how a mix of leadership theories combine to create a culture of leadership across the school:

...so when people own the challenge then they all have a leadership role to play and if they don't take on that leadership role, then the whole system is weaker. People have to feel they own it, and to feel they own it, they have to understand the theory and see evidence. (2015)

The idea of culturally responsive leadership comes from the pedagogy which resides within the Kaupapa Māori practices in Te Kotahitanga:

.. you have to be delivering the 'Effective Teaching Profile' [Te Kotahitanga]. You have to have care for your staff, high expectations of behaviours and attitudes, and performance. You have to be well organised, and then you also have to be culturally responsive to enable people to have their opinions heard and valued. (2015)

Kaupapa Māori leadership theories are further developed in the 2015 transcripts, with the idea of tuakana/teina developing into the idea of Marae leadership, with pōwhiri as a metaphor for the enactment of leadership:

... traditionally you would think it is the kaumātua, but they have to draw from others around them. In the pōwhiri there are multiple areas of leadership, if one doesn't work well, then it reflects on everyone. (2015)

When thinking about marae or pōwhiri leadership, I have learnt that process is more important than outcome, whereby if you get the process right the desired outcomes will follow:

... so creating a system or culture where those people sitting at the front, or those not sitting at the front actually feel they are getting some acknowledgement or some sense of feeling of worth in that they are contributing to the process. (2015)

My thinking about leadership further developed into seeing culturally responsive leadership as a model which encapsulates my actions within my leadership context:

...from tuakana/teina, it leads into being culturally responsive leadership. This is acknowledging other people are coming to the table with skills, knowledge, and experiences which support the team in going where you (we) want it to go. (2016)

I highlight the traits necessary for culturally responsive leadership to occur:

It is about the kaupapa, not about you as an individual. (2016)

Where there is trust, and collective decision making, but you have to be strong enough to make decisions as well, this will mean a healthier organisation. (2016)

The transcripts highlight my own understanding of transformative leadership not being fully appreciated until seven years into my principalship. I talk about the time needed to fully lead in a transformative way:

...initially I said five years before principals need to leave, and then I thought it was seven years, but actually they don't necessarily need to leave. This is the time needed for transformative change, as any less is not sustainable. (2016)

This also highlights my growing awareness of leadership as a mechanism for truly transformative change. Whereas previously my leadership practices were primarily based around transactional and transformational leadership, in dealing with the mechanisms of internal change. My thinking had moved beyond the school to challenging the fabric of society, which was having a major impact on Māori student engagement and achievement:

...it's got to the point, where cultures changed, systems changed, achievement has really improved, where we have a lot of agency around what goes on within our own school community. The challenge is now external to the school community. You start really seeing the inequities and deficit views people hold. And you start reflecting on your own experiences and go, 'gee, that's terrible'. Your eyes open up to the inequities in society and the challenge to change these. That is when you start thinking about

transformative leadership, because you are transforming the fabric of society. (2016)

The influence of Paulo Freire in moving my practice into a transformative space comes through in reflecting on the change in my actions outside of the school setting:

... you can't sit on the side lines, do nothing about it. I used to do this with my friends, now they think before they engage with me about these things, because they know I'll question them about it. (2016)

My understanding of Kaupapa Māori based leadership practices and models have developed as I have developed as a principal. This is evident in a quote I made after we won the Prime Minister's Education Excellence Award in 2017:

We learned that when there is relational trust in the school between the leaders and the whole school community then there is a true model of tuakana/teina, where roles can easily change depending on the context, experience, and knowledge of those involved. This creates leadership in others which is mana enhancing. (School News, June 4, 2017).

Leadership working alongside whānau and the community

I found that developing trusting and responsive relationships with key whānau members is critical in creating the context for transformative change. When I said the following in reference to a board member, I found that the key whānau members who advocate for the students are the key people in supporting this change:

...it's about the kids and she is uncompromising about that, and that is so important, so it's not about her. It's not about the money, the power comes from getting her kids into a better position. (2015)

Through Kia Eke Panuku (Berryman & Eley, 2017) a critical context for change is the creation of educationally powerful connections with whānau. This involves the bringing together of learning from both within and out of school. When the culture of the home and school align, the influence on Māori student learning and achievement can be accelerated. This involves power sharing between both groups through the principle of ako.

Earlier, I had made little reference to engaging whānau in educationally powerful conversations or strategies. From 2016, I identify the shift towards working with whānau to

empower them to expect more from the school and their child. The background to this quote comes from a conversation about teachers challenging each other when one teacher expresses that Māori students only work well for the other teacher because they are kinaesthetic and love playing sport and playing guitar:

... and that's the narrative that they've been led to believe. When whānau say 'my son can do trades', and we will say that's good but he doesn't have to, because he can ...Maybe that's the first time for some of these whānau that they have heard a Māori potential approach from a school, or possibly from anyone for that matter. (2016)

In the following I highlight the focus on whānau engagement, and how my thinking has moved to a more in-depth view of effective engagement:

...We know that if we can bring strong, powerful whānau engagement we are going to accelerate it [learning] further...I think schools in the past tried to do things that worked for everyone because of efficiency. But if you come back to it, it's about individual relationships. If it's about personalised learning for the students, then it's about personalised engagement for their whānau. (2016)

We give our students an environment where it is comfortable to be Māori. They do not need to change when they walk through the school gates. (School News, June 4, 2017)

Relational leadership through restorative practice

My decisions in relation to supporting staff and students to build more effective relationships and therefore classroom environments which are conducive to learning, have changed over time. In 2010 I was supporting staff with the right intention, but with the wrong approach and outcome:

I would have people go into the class to support the teacher. The support was by withdrawing kids from the class. (2010)

This is a practice I do not support now without the wrap around support provided to the student who has been withdrawn from class, or a method to restore the diminishing relationship that led to the withdrawal:

When you start, you need to build relationships. So it wasn't about the subject, it's about you and your relationships and the strategies you use around these. (2010)

In discussions with Alton-Lee (2014) I share how Te Kotahitanga became a catalyst for reforming the schools restorative practice policies and procedures:

Before Te Kotahitanga we understood the importance of restorative practice and attempted to implement it across the school. When all our staff (and leadership) started to experience a different way of teaching (and being) through their experiences in the change process brought on by Te Kotahitanga, we started to question the way we were managing student behaviour and even the language we used in relation to this.... As a result we have significantly changed the way we manage relationships in the school using restorative practice. (p.47)

In 2015 I was more aware of the implications of implementing a school wide restorative approach when I highlighted my understanding of what was needed from a systems' perspective to embed restorative practice across the school:

... going into Te Kotahitanga gave us a stronger need to actually make restorative practices work. You can't have a punitive approach with a relationship based pedagogy. This meant a lot more training for staff and resulted in employing as the restorative facilitator. Funding a facilitator was probably the biggest single action along that pathway. (2015)

The deliberate focus on relationship building allowed for the cultural change that needed to happen in the school. Te Kotahitanga supported this change in culture, but the implementation and development of restorative practices also had a major impact. Restorative practices were used in the school previously but only for high-end incidents whereas they are now fully imbedded into the culture and across all school systems:

You can't have a punitive approach with a relationship based pedagogy so a defining moment was probably our decision to go down that pathway at an accelerated rate, says Mr Murfitt. (School News, June 4, 2017)

Community leadership within the Kāhui Ako

Kāhui Ako⁶¹ is a government initiative to bring about a system change to encourage schools to work together to ensure pathways and transitions within communities are more effective and directed at supporting the student. The Matariki Kāhui Ako is a group of schools and early childhood centres working together within Napier to help students gain a sense of belonging and improve achievement. I became the lead principal of the Matariki Kāhui Ako in May 2016, although the principals (including myself) were actively engaged in developing a Kāhui Ako from late 2014.

The following extracts from the transcripts collected in January 2017, by the external interviewer, demonstrate my thinking around leadership in a Kāhui Ako. My confidence in the importance of developing trusting, mutually beneficial relationships is a strong theme coming through the transcripts:

...so the first step when we started was to build trust, through sharing positive stories and challenges. So we decided to spend the first term going into each other's schools. It was about saying, look come in, let's have a bit of food, let's share our stories, let's start building this shared story. (2017)

Building community leadership across principals and boards of trustees to strengthen communities is also evident:

...principals don't necessarily live in the community. And we don't necessarily stay in the community. Whereas board members are the heart of the community, and are the representation of the families and students who are part of our schools. So it is really important that boards continue dialogue and continue owning the challenge, and own the goal of improvement. (2017)

I believed that the development of community leadership through whānau and boards leads to an understanding of wider challenges which requires a transformative leadership approach:

⁶¹ Government policy with its English name being - Community of Learning

...we are starting to look at the inequity that our families and whānau are experiencing. One of these is around the lack of wi-fi and internet.so it's not about individual connection, it's a community connection. (2017)

Leadership for transformative change within the wider community

One of the greatest challenges in leading a low decile school with a high proportion of Māori learners is to avoid taking on the deficit discourses, which are so prevalent in our wider society. These deficit discourses come in many forms from passively believing in and maintaining a negative perception of the school and students, to active maintenance of the deficit discourse around Māori and low decile communities.

The following quote within the 'Ka Hikitia Demonstration Report – Effectiveness of Te Kotahitanga Phase 5' (Alton-Lee, 2014) demonstrates my awareness of the challenge in spreading reform associated with Te Kotahitanga beyond my own direct sphere of influence:

Spread: This is the greatest challenge as we try and spread the reform wider than our own school (direct sphere of influence). (Alton-Lee, 2014, p.47)

As a result of the school receiving the Prime Minister's Education Excellence Award for Leadership in 2017, I have been able to extend the reach of my influence as more people are prepared to listen to the messages which I am trying to portray to a wider audience:

We know that we have to be responsive to the changing needs and requirements of our modern learners. We often have to be prepared to disrupt the status quo to allow for a more equitable and innovative school. This means it is sometimes uncomfortable, but if we can support each other and collaborate through this change then the benefits to the outcomes for Māori (and all) will be accelerated – as is evident in our achievement data and student well-being voice. (School News, June 4, 2017)

The opportunity to spread the kaupapa associated with inclusive education, and to break down negative perceptions associated with low decile schools with high percent of Māori learners increases as the school has gained further national recognition. The following quote was in the local newspaper after the school won the 2018 Education Focus Prize (Takatu Prize) which celebrated outstanding inclusive practices:

For the wider community it is for people to be proud of the education community in Hawke's Bay and what we can offer as a wider community, but also for the wider community to have a look and acknowledge what does happen in our own backyard. (Hastings Leader, July 11, 2018)

The school has moved from developing an internal culture that is focused on closing the achievement gap between Māori and non-Māori learners, to a position where the gap has gone. This has enabled me to shift some of my focus to challenging barriers and perceptions within the wider community that have a negative impact on the ability of Māori students and whānau to take advantage of opportunities in society. These barriers include: the ability to access work experience, part time work and apprenticeships; negative comments made about the school and community which undermine personal and community confidence; lack of financial resources; and lack of business connections.

In my speech at the 2018, Prime Ministers Education Excellence Awards I suggested that my leadership has been able to move beyond the normal realms of the school, into seeking answers for solutions within the community:

We do what we do to ensure equity by providing the necessary support for those who need it the most. We also need to challenge the status quo, which is often focused on competition, which often excludes those who also need it the most. (This is a) call for all schools and everybody in this room and in New Zealand to influence the power to provide student-centred wraparound support for all students. Because we can't do it on our own. (Tukutuku Kōrero - Education Gazette, 16 July, 2018, p.11)

These experiences and reflections have highlighted the need for me to take on leadership practices which change the status quo for these students. Jorunn Moller (in Shields, M. S. 2011) lays down the challenge to principals by asking the following question: How many school principals contribute to making schools more inclusive, socially just, and, at the same time, academically successful? Especially when the Ministry of Education and wider society put so much focus on the academic results.

Summary

The findings provide a detailed overview of my narratives and theorising as change was implemented within the school. Alongside these changes and actions was the development

of my own praxis where at times my understanding of theory came first, whilst at other times my practice came first which in turn led to further exploration of the theories which defined my iterative learning, thinking and behaviour.

This chapter answers the first two research questions by bringing together a critical analysis of my own transcripts, alongside other forms of evidence leading to the identification and explanation of the how the various types of leadership have influenced education reform and student outcomes in my time as a principal.

Chapter 4 – Discussion

Korihi ake ngā manu, takiri mai te ata, ka ao, ka ao, ka awatea, tihei mauri ora!

The birds call, a fresh day unfurls, a new dawn, the promise of a new day!

Introduction

This whakataukī encourages us to be optimistic, as each day is a new day and brings a new start. It brings possibilities and encourages us to be positive and realistic. It reminds us that we all make mistakes, but that we are encouraged to start each day anew (Ake & Moorhouse, 2016). This message reflects the possibilities for moving beyond the status quo, through transformative change as it highlights our own agency in affecting the changes required to achieve the new state which we set out to achieve. It provides guidance in understanding the implications of this research for other leaders. In this section I bring my findings together in a discussion of my final research question: What are the implications of what I have learned for other leaders?

Discussion of Research question 3

This study set out to investigate my own leadership praxis, and the impact that various types of leadership have on education reform and student outcomes, in particular for Māori students and their whānau. In this chapter, I highlight the implications for other leaders. In response to this investigation, I highlight in Table 2 below, the critical consciousness and Kaupapa Māori decisions that were essential to transforming this school (see column 1). This is followed by a discussion about the decolonising actions for transformative change that enabled Māori learners to succeed as Māori (see column 2). I conclude with a discussion of how the spread of ownership from the individual to the critical role of whānau in providing authoritative and collaborative partnerships with schools, enabling power and control to be distributed and spread across the system to support cultural change and alignment (see column 3).

Table 2. Decolonising Leadership from a Critical Consciousness, Kaupapa Māori and Decolonising Lens

Decolonising Leadership: Understanding, Actions, Owning and Spreading		
Critical Consciousness for Kaupapa Māori Decisions	Decolonising Actions	Spreading Ownership
<p>Experiences which create discomfort, develop empathy and humbleness.</p> <p>Experiencing being an outsider when living with the Bedouin in Jordan.</p> <p>Decision to learn te reo Māori.</p>	<p>Teaching in low decile/high Māori population schools.</p> <p>Te Ara Reo Māori language course.</p>	<p>Individual - Development of personalised cultural and critical consciousness.</p>
<p>First time principal position.</p> <p>Seeing Māori underserved.</p> <p>Development of moral purpose.</p> <p>Setting up the Māori Focus Group.</p> <p>Seeing value in Mātauranga Māori.</p> <p>Seeing the need to change the status quo of the way leadership was currently influencing the school.</p>	<p>Critiquing traditional leadership models and actions.</p> <p>Māori student's become the collective responsibility and priority.</p> <p>Te reo Māori compulsory.</p> <p>Kapa haka for all.</p> <p>Giving student voice legitimacy.</p> <p>Providing opportunities for others to lead (tuakana / teina)</p>	<p>Group - Resisting hegemony across the school system.</p> <p>Success does not compromise cultural identity for students, whānau or teachers.</p>
<p>Participating in Te Kotahitanga</p> <p>Prioritising new roles and responsibilities - restorative facilitator.</p>	<p>Alignment of systems and processes within and across the school to support cultural relationships and responsive pedagogies.</p> <p>Restorative Practice supporting responsive relationships.</p>	<p>School – Spread of critical consciousness leading to demonstrated agency to effect change.</p> <p>Gap closes between Māori and non-Māori achievement.</p> <p>Māori students and staff take on greater leadership roles.</p>
<p>Deconstructing spaces in the school for Māori students and whānau to be Māori.</p> <p>Working with the Kāhui Ako.</p> <p>Working with mana whenua through local marae.</p>	<p>Creating contexts for whānau to be physically present in school locations.</p> <p>Spreading messages of inclusion beyond the school gates.</p>	<p>Whānau as Community - Relationships of mana ōrite, where whānau/staff/students are supported and engaged with whānau and iwi/mana whenua/ community through authoritative and collaborative partnerships.</p>

Critical consciousness: Understanding decolonisation

The development of empathy and understanding of others requires you to place yourself as a learner within the cultural context of others. This is a step in the development of a personal disposition towards critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is about being aware of the role I/we play in the power relations as leaders in schools and wider society. It begins with knowing yourself through deep reflection of your own position within the dominant discourses framing society's behaviours towards marginalised peoples. It is about being able to critically place yourself within the power structures which continue to maintain the status quo of inequality evident through disenfranchisement and privilege, whilst taking responsibility for changing these circumstances. In Aotearoa it relies on a critical awareness of the history of colonisation and the impact it has had on Māori participation in post-colonial society.

The context in which I led the school throughout the research timeframes had a bearing on the type of leadership necessary for transformative reform. I led in a school where many people didn't send their children due to the negative perceptions about low decile schools with high percentage of Māori and Pasifika learners. Racism was alive and well in my leadership context, where the negative stories portrayed in the publication 'Culture Speaks' by Bishop and Berryman (2006) were still being heard. Low achievement for Māori students was also the norm.

An important stage in the development of my personal critical consciousness came about as I began seeing and feeling the inequities faced by Māori students. These being students who I felt a deep responsibility towards as if they were my own children. I had moved through the stages described by Freire (1972) of conscientisation through to resistance and transformative praxis. It is evident in the transcripts that this led to the need to extend my influence beyond the school gate, by challenging the status quo of inequity within the wider society.

What are the implications for school leaders?

The development of personal critical consciousness is imperative if leaders are genuinely committed to challenging the status quo for Māori learners and whānau in Aotearoa. Mason Durie (2006) provides the challenge by saying: "the challenge for those who provide whānau support is to shift from a paradigm of deficit and risk to one of potential and discovery" (p.16).

Critical consciousness requires members of the organisation to continually reflect on their consciousness through challenging of the status quo, which defines how relationships, systems and structures within the school impede Māori student belonging and achievement. This can be achieved through deliberate beliefs and actions which begin with the development of a critical understanding of our colonial past and the impact it still has on Māori outcomes. It also requires an in-depth examination of the dominant discourses which have shaped leader's and other's own world view in relation to Māori participation in education and the wider socio, historical, cultural and economic environments. Narratives of Māori students, whānau and community can be utilised as a powerful element in understanding the discourses which shape the perception of the world we live in and beginning to reposition. Once a state of critical consciousness and ongoing reflection has been achieved it enables leaders to see through a critical lens what is happening around them which often requires further challenge and transformation.

The development of critical consciousness requires school leaders to understand the context in which they are leading and begin to ask critical questions such as; What else do I need to learn? What part am I playing in maintaining the status quo of marginalisation and inequity of Māori students and whānau? How do I respond to the racism which I see perpetuated on Māori students and communities?

[Kaupapa Māori: Understanding decolonisation](#)

Kei roto i tō tātou hitori he oranga mo tātou

(Within our history is our future well-being)

This whakataukī provides the key to well-being by telling us to look to pre-colonisation to find the solutions to the problems caused by colonisation.

My leadership was guided by Kaupapa Māori theory, praxis and epistemologies by being focused on the revitalisation of Māori student and whānau agency, engagement, participation, and achievement within Aotearoa's state education system. This is in response to the system created by colonisation which has traditionally sought to take away the power and privilege of the Māori world view. It also places into context my own position as a white male school principal, therefore I have explored how Māori have a different world view influenced by differing up-bringing, traditions and cultural heritage.

A Kaupapa Māori lens, incorporating Māori metaphor, can provide guidance and direction for the behaviours of members of the organisation (Pere, 1982; Smith G, 1997). This was evident in relation to the decisions taken to: deconstruct and reconstruct spaces in the school for Māori students and whānau; set up the Māori Focus Group; review the bilingual unit; participate in Te Kotahitanga; develop differing leadership practices, and; work with mana whenua at the local Marae. Whakataukī have helped me get beneath the appropriation of the words to understand the deeper meaning and logic of the metaphors that can come from theorising in ways that I did not do or understand before.

[What are the implications for school leaders?](#)

Change needs to happen through a Kaupapa Māori lens, to ensure change is taking place for the right reasons and is co-constructed with the people who are affected most by the change. When working with Māori students and community it is imperative that whānau, hapū, and iwi leaders are actively involved in the creation of a shared vision and act as change agents within the process.

Co-constructing the use of Māori values, metaphor and whakataukī to change the language of the organisation provides an opportunity to change the discourse from predominantly Eurocentric / Pākehā to those also from a Māori world view. This enables the Māori world view to begin to be incorporated into all systems and structures within the school, thus enabling Kāupapa Māori to claim space for Māori students and whānau, whilst at the same time continuing to build on the strengths evident within the organisation.

Following the principles of Kāupapa Māori is critical when operating as a non-Māori leader when working with Māori. As was evident throughout the process of the review of the bilingual unit, it was clear that when you have a challenge to do with Māori, Māori are the ones who will help you through it. By allowing whānau and students to have ownership and control over the process of 'what is being done and how it is being done', provides motivation and support for the process which leads to more effective outcomes for Māori students and whānau. This is supported by the development of relational trust in the school between the leaders and the whole school community that reflects the tuakana/teina model, where roles can easily change depending on the context, experience, and knowledge of those involved. This creates leadership in others which is mana enhancing. This is in direct contrast to the missionary zeal of leading through a patronising belief in doing good by making decisions for

Māori in tokenistic ways. It requires accepting indigenous leadership is about accepting their tino rangatiratanga.

To operate within a kaupapa Māori framework, it is essential for leaders to provide the context for Māori student self-determination to flourish. This requires leaders to know their Māori students and to engage with them through mana ōrite relationships.

Decolonising actions

Having a deep understanding of the complex and iterative nature of leadership, combined with an understanding of the context in which you as the leader are working is critical in the development of an ability to own and lead the change necessary for social transformation for indigenous students.

Change in leadership practices leading to deliberate acts of decolonisation

The decision to learn te reo Māori and to teach in low decile/high Māori population schools moved me into spaces which were less personally familiar and into spaces which required me to critically challenge the role of traditional leadership in schools and society. The change in understanding came about as my own understanding of critical consciousness and Kaupapa Māori deepened, thus allowing the building on from traditional Eurocentric models of leadership to the incorporation of culturally responsive, decolonising and Māori models of leadership to emerge as important influencers on my decision making.

It is evident from the early findings that my view of effective leadership had been dominated by distributed leadership theory. This theory was built on the premise that leadership is a shared endeavour and is required to get commitment from teachers to feel a sense of ownership for the organisation. Though this leadership practice is an effective tool, it lacks the responsiveness required to engage with Māori students' and whānau leadership in authentic and honourable ways.

The schools' move into Te Kotahitanga was key moment which began to change my view of effective leadership, as the influence of Kaupapa Māori leadership theories and metaphor began to influence my thinking and practice. This influence stems from my own conscientisation, as I began to understand the importance of the Māori world view and how it is incorporated into the way Māori relate to and interact with the world around them. This is also reflected in strand one of IDSL (Indigenous Decolonising School Leadership) which through prioritising of self-knowledge and self-reflection I was able to recognise and integrate

Māori knowledge systems by creating a culturally responsive approach to systems, pedagogy and leadership within the school. Te Kotahitanga began to influence the way teachers shifted from traditional, transmission-type pedagogy to a more relational and dialogic pedagogy that actively involved students in dialogue and co-constructing their own learning. This in turn led to the introduction of the concept of culturally responsive leadership into my thinking and practice. Culturally responsive leadership incorporates both the democratic qualities of distributed leadership and the understanding that people are coming from multiple backgrounds with cultural strengths which need to be valued and responded to on an individual and collective basis and used as the basis for new actions.

The next stage in the development of my leadership praxis required balancing critique and promise, which is referred to by Shields (2013) as doing more than simply critique and complain but offering hope and promise for the future. Transformative leaders do this by demonstrating moral courage and activism. This was evident in the process of reviewing the bilingual unit where it would have been the easy and normal practice to critique the outcomes of the bilingual unit, whilst also laying blame on the system and people within the system. As this would end up perpetuating the status quo of underachievement and continue to lay blame on Māori. But the promise was driven by the alternative course of action which was co-constructed amongst staff, whānau, students, community and the Board of Trustees. As a result, decisions were made to place greater value on mātauranga Māori; we made te reo Māori compulsory in Years 7 to 9, and kapa haka available to all students within the timetable. This also reflects the characteristics of strand two of IDSL, which supports the enactment of self-determination for community empowerment, through the engagement of tasks to support the community whilst also resisting the dominant hegemonic narrative.

Kaupapa Māori theory supported the development of my own understanding of leadership from a Māori perspective, which has contributed to the disruption of my western way of thinking about leadership, power, and control. The concept of Marae leadership which utilises Māori metaphor and values as a framework for both leadership behaviour and action is reflected in my own growing use of Māori metaphor and words within my own thinking, communication and leadership practice. This was supported by my personal development of learning te reo Māori. The use of Māori metaphor and values supported the change in practices within the school to reflect how decision making and relationships operated before

colonisation. The influence of Kaupapa Māori terms and metaphor of ako, wananga, tuakana/teina became apparent as key influences within my leadership. I began to see tuakana/teina as a structural relationship, which depended on the context, the purpose and other conditions, allowing differing people to lead depending on the circumstances. This requires leadership to be willing and open to that inter-changeability. Barrett (2017) shared the following whakataukī to describe tuakana/teina leadership from a Kaupapa Māori world view – ‘nau te rourou, naku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi’ – where the relationship allows everyone to feed into and allows everyone to develop. Thus, the development of leadership needs to be able to allow space for leaders to be learners whilst others lead. This reflects the characteristics of strand three of IDSL which requires a commitment to community voices and values by valuing relationships and forming partnerships.

[What are the implications for school leaders?](#)

School leaders need to be able to move from one type of leadership to another on an iterative basis depending on the context and circumstances. Though it is important for the leader to always work within the transformative and decolonising space to fully realise the desired change in behaviours and practices that will challenge and transform the status quo of inequity for Māori learners.

In order to do this, leaders need to understand the process of conscientisation through to resistance and transformative praxis. This can be done by the asking of critical questions such as: What is my position in maintaining the status quo of inequity? Have my actions made a difference? What are Māori telling/asking me? What can I do differently? Once leaders engage in practices which disrupt the status quo to reduce inequities they are then engaging in transformative practice.

Transformative leadership requires principals to move beyond the individual and school to operate in Levels 3 and 4 of Fullan’s (2003) hierarchical model of moral imperative. It requires creating influence which transforms the status quo within a region or nationally. This is evident in the findings where I was challenged by the need to address the racist attitudes in society which were impacting on Māori students from my school. Articulating purpose in relation to equity, excellence and social justice is important in providing the base for creating social transformation. It is also important to ensure leaders engage with others in ways that ensure a sense of purpose is shared.

Māori students require transformative leaders who have their culture and achievement at the centre of all that happens in the school. They need leaders who advocate for them and challenge deficit thinking; leaders who work collaboratively with learners, other staff and the community; leaders who use evidence to inform their practice and are constantly reviewing processes and structures in the school; leaders who engage with Māori students on a daily basis through the development of trusting relationships built on the sharing of self and knowing the students. This provides legitimacy for students to feel a sense of belonging and empowerment to engage in decision making processes and critical conversations about aspects of schooling that affect them. All these actions provide a culture of responsiveness requiring leaders to develop strategies to address the need for social justice and equity for learners within a decolonising framework.

Alignment of systems and structures to support the required change in behaviours towards a more culturally responsive and decolonised schooling culture is required. This involves critiquing accepted norms, traditions, and structures to ensure deliberate acts of decolonising take place across the school. Structures, such as behaviour management systems need to align with cultural relationships and responsive pedagogy to achieve a genuine shift towards a school wide culture focused on relational pedagogy. This approach also aligns with the Kaupapa Māori concept of hui whakatika, thus allowing the sharing of power between students and teachers through the deliberate promotion of systems such as restorative practice which supports the legitimacy of student, whānau and teacher voice. Legitimising and valuing mātauranga Māori, alongside ongoing development of teacher consciousness about the need to incorporate culturally appropriate and responsive curriculum content for Māori students, are acts of decolonising curriculum practices across the school.

Within an organisational culture of co-construction, leaders need to develop relational trust where they are genuinely caring for members of the organisation and lead with moral purpose. It requires the deliberate and genuine sharing of power across members of the school (students, whānau, teachers, senior leaders, boards of trustees). This requires creating space for whānau to be able to be actively present and contributing on their own terms in the school.

Māori students and whānau need more than the transformative leadership practices as described above, as their needs require leadership to decolonise the systems and behaviours

which negatively impact on their experiences and outcomes in schools. They require school leaders to understand and follow Kaupapa Māori practices, which become acts of decolonisation. By reviewing the five strands of IDSL (Khalifa et al, 2018) alongside their own leadership practices, school leaders can work towards placing themselves within a decolonising leadership paradigm.

Spreading Ownership to Others

The spread and ownership of transformative change for improved Māori students begins with the individual and spreads through groups within the school, the wider school, whānau and through to whānau as community. Whānau as community represents a wider view of whānau than the European view of the immediate family and incorporates everyone who is connected and has influence over Māori student outcomes. The creation of educationally powerful connections between whānau and the school can facilitate strengthened student identity, belonging, and achievement (Berryman, & Eley, 2017; Robinson et al, 2009). The fifth Hui Taumata Mātauranga which centred on the role of whānau in education highlighted the importance for whānau to be involved in co-constructing pathways for their children and the direction for the school to enable Māori potential to be realised (Durie, 2006).

What were effective strategies which engaged whānau in powerful education connections?

A strong theme which comes through in the findings, is the necessity of building trusting and mutually beneficial relationships. One key decision was to set up the Māori Focus Group, which was made up of board members, staff and whānau who were primarily Māori (but not solely) who wanted a voice in defining and supporting the direction the school was heading for Māori students. The basis of the group was set up to work in power sharing relationships with members (there was also no restriction on membership of the group), relationships which promoted their ownership of this work.

The Māori Focus Group was a key driver in initiating ownership of the schools' strategic plan towards prioritising Māori student belonging and achievement. This was evident with the inclusion of Māori metaphors representing the values and direction of the school. The group also made significant changes to systems and structures to incorporate tikanga and te ao Māori practices across the school and to support inclusion for Māori students and whānau.

With the empowerment of Māori staff, students, board members, and whānau came the opportunity to reconstruct practices which were perpetuating the status quo of under

achievement of Māori students. The review of the bilingual unit was a critical point in which a key Māori staff member, Māori community members, and a Māori board member were involved throughout the whole process. Their guidance and influence ensured the process followed Kaupapa Māori principles, thus keeping people culturally safe and focused on the priority of ensuring Māori student success. It also kept the kaupapa of te reo Māori in the school safe and in a stronger position to make a difference for all students (Māori and non-Māori) so that te reo, one of our official languages, could begin to be normalised within the school.

The involvement of the key Māori individuals was also critical as the process involved challenging hegemonic practices that were maintaining the system whereby Māori students were marginalised within the school, both culturally and academically. The findings highlighted my responsibility to disrupt the hegemony and allow new practices to transform the ability of Māori students, staff and whānau to actively contribute to te ao Māori within all aspects of the school.

[What are the implications for school leaders?](#)

It is important to develop authoritative and collaborative partnerships with whānau and whānau as community based on relationships which reflect mana ōrite, where each partner upholds and develops the mana of the other. This requires the opening of spaces both physically and dialogically which have traditionally been closed to students, whānau, and the community. To open these spaces requires challenging the status quo of how things have traditionally been done with the organisation. Examples of the opening up of spaces include:

- Redefining spaces such as staff rooms to ensure whānau and non-staff members feel they have a place in which they can be part of the informal dialogue of the school.
- Empowerment of students and whānau to define what and how learning occurs. This requires the acknowledgement that students and whānau have skills and knowledge which can contribute to not only their own development, but also the development of leaders and others within the power structures of the organisation.
- Moving engagement with whānau from a crisis approach to a pro-active restorative approach based on mutual benefit.

- Creating forums which are based on critical and Kaupapa Māori principles of relational interdependence and ako, where there is genuine purpose and dialogue which encourages voice and participation.
- Building mana ōrite relationships with kaumatua, kuia, local marae and mana whenua in which all parties are providing reciprocal benefit to each other through their actions, as opposed to a common approach whereby the school seeks benefit through using the marae and kaumatua with little provided in return.

It is critical to develop a culture where Māori student achievement is everyone's responsibility, and that to leave it in the hands of one person or a small group of people can have unintended negative consequences.

Summary

The discussion focusses on how the development and understanding of critical consciousness and kaupapa Māori have led to deliberate acts of decolonisation, resulting in transformative change in school culture and improved outcomes for Māori. It also demonstrates how spread and ownership of transformative change begins with the individual and is spread to groups, the wider school, whānau and whānau as community. This chapter provides a framework for other school leaders to reflect and consider the implications for their own practice.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify key actions within my principalship journey which I believe led to my better support of Māori students' engagement and achievement, alongside more effective collaborations with whānau. These key actions have been critically analysed alongside appropriate literature to provide insight into my leadership.

I now understand how decolonising leadership praxis helped in defining possible solutions to the status quo of underachievement of Māori students created by colonisation and how decolonisation may better position us as leaders to answer the following questions:

- What would Aotearoa look like if we were able to transform the education system to support the greater engagement and achievement of Māori students?
- What could happen to the \$2.6 billion annual costs (Parahi, 2018) to the country due to the current inequalities in Māori education, employment and income?

This chapter begins with the tying together of the whakataukī or whakatauākī used through this thesis and is followed by a summary of the key conclusions gleaned from the research. The conclusions are represented in a diagram demonstrating the spread and ownership of cultural and critical consciousness leading to determined acts of decolonisation.

Insight into te ao Māori

I have used whakataukī or whakatauākī throughout this thesis to help decolonise my thinking and guide my writing through a Kaupapa Māori lens. They have challenged me to pursue the transformation of the education system by promoting social justice and equity for Māori students and whānau. They have urged me to seek meanings from my transcripts which go beyond the dialogue by creating links to both historical and future perspectives. One whakataukī required me to go beyond the initial shoots of the plant and follow the path as they stretch out requiring the exploration of new learnings and connections. Whakataukī provided guidance in the discussion to go beyond the findings and to provide recommendations for other school leaders. This is represented by the metaphor of the dawning of a new day and the promise for a brighter future.

School context

There have been transformative changes within the school which have transformed Māori student achievement and belonging alongside whānau engagement. These changes have been externally validated through the sustained increase in Māori student achievement and the school being recognised and awarded the Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards for school leadership (2017) and inclusive practice (2018). I have also observed a transformation in the school's culture which has been reflected in the implementation of cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy within teacher's practice, responsive leadership practices, and stronger educational connections with whānau and the wider community.

Understanding racism as a system created by the process of colonisation

I now see that colonisation is a process which deliberately sets out to remove and marginalise indigenous ontology, epistemology, spirituality, knowledge, language and resources which impacts on indigenous populations ability to influence and benefit from the education system. Racial stereotyping through education has created a belief in white superiority and Māori inferiority. As a result, we have developed a racist schooling system which needs decolonising.

If we are to overcome systemic racism, created by the process of colonisation within the education system, we need to reach for understandings from pre-colonial times, to decolonise the systems, structures and behaviours which continue to perpetuate the marginalisation of Māori students. We therefore need to transform leadership theory and practice to incorporate deep understandings from a Māori world view (te ao Māori). Rather than appropriation or reinterpretation, leaders need to utilise a critical lens in respectfully understanding and operating as partners with mana ōrite. This works more effectively whilst working alongside Māori within the Treaty and Kaupapa Māori framework. Reclamation and utilisation of Māori solutions for problems created by the colonial system, that continues to be perpetuated on Māori, will ensure behaviours will be honourable and decolonising rather than colonial and impositional.

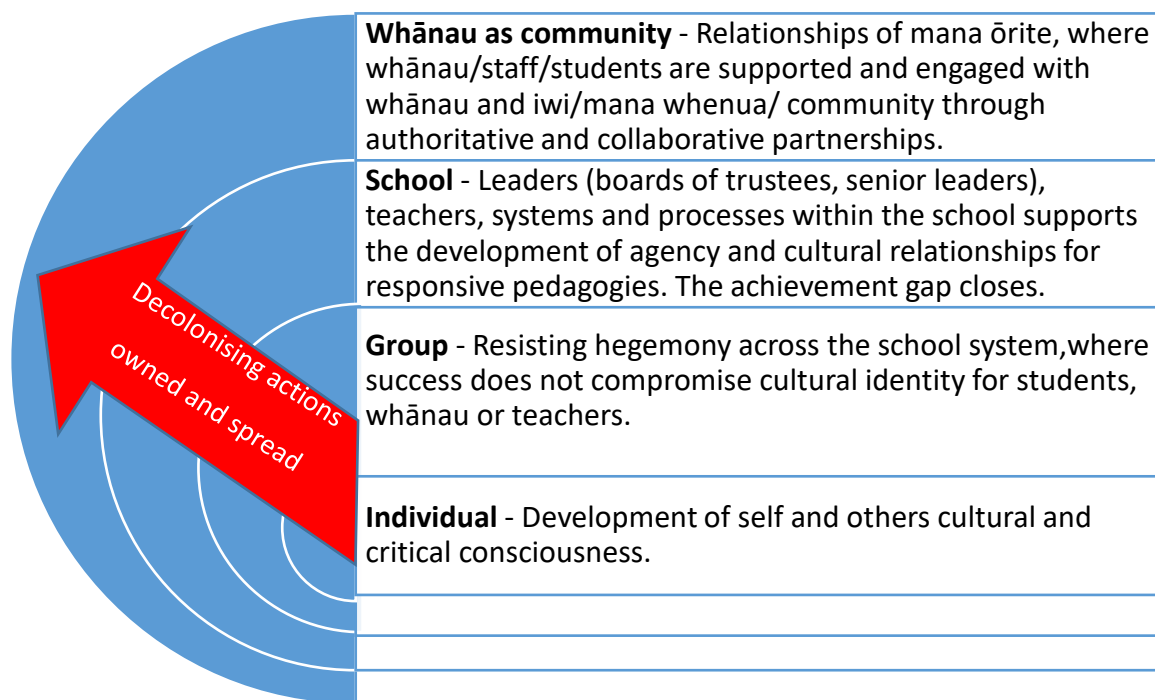
Leadership for transformative change within a decolonising leadership framework

Leadership for transformative change requires a multi-dimensional understanding of leadership theory and an overarching belief in the process of conscientisation and resistance

leading to transformative praxis, with an in-depth understanding of the context in which leaders lead. Whilst Shields (2011) provides a positional framework for leaders to work within a transformative space, it is based on creating social justice. While this cuts across all social systems, it doesn't provide the necessary differentiation to address the specific needs of Māori and other indigenous people who have been harmed by the process of colonisation. Therefore, leaders within Aotearoa also need to understand the Treaty of Waitangi and operate within a decolonising leadership framework when working with Māori. This requires changing the lens of leadership to a decolonising lens by understanding and acting within a Māori world view.

Key conclusions

Figure 2. Cultural and critical consciousness leading to the ownership and spread of acts of decolonisation



Through the analysis of the transcripts and other key documentation, this research has highlighted how the development of cultural and critical consciousness can lead to determined acts of decolonisation. This proved to be the critical feature of school leadership focused on transformative system change and it led to improvement in equitable outcomes for Māori students and whānau. This diagram represents my journey showing how my understandings of cultural and critical consciousness led to decolonising actions spreading from me, as the individual, across the school and community. While these actions have been

driven by my journey, they also represent how others have made changes at differing points thus also influencing the effective changes.

Individual

The centre of the diagram begins with individual consciousness, leading to the development of cultural and critical consciousness, which in it-self can promote acts of decolonisation. For me, my own learning of te reo Māori helped me to realise that there was a lot I did not know about te ao Māori therefore I had to continue learning and doing things differently. Critical consciousness can assist leaders to understand their own position within the colonising discourses of schooling. It can also help in the development of their personal agency to lead in ways which create a culture of empowerment for those around them, especially for marginalised students and whānau.

Group

Once cultural and critical consciousness develops, leaders are able to create and support groups to effect change within the system. This empowers some people to move to their own individual cultural and critical consciousness, whilst for others they may have been waiting for the leadership shift to provide them with the agency to take action. For me, the spread of cultural and critical consciousness through groups such as the Māori Focus Group, created agency to challenge the hegemony that had been holding back Māori student achievement. They supported greater ownership of the need for transformative change across classrooms within the school.

School

The move to decolonising actions at the school level follows individual and group consciousness. This leads to school wide reform focused on developing the capacity and agency of the board of trustees, senior and middle leadership and teachers; all contribute in delivering cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy. In the school I was leading, Te Kotahitanga provided the tools for decolonising pedagogy leading to the spread and ownership of school wide transformative reform.

Whānau as community

The outside circle of the diagram shows how authoritative and collaborative partnerships with whānau as community occur when relationships of power are shared and when there is an understanding that partners can learn from each other. When these types of partnerships

occur, it allows for the deconstruction and reconstruction of systems and structures to support approaches which focus on realising Māori potential through relationships of mana ōrite.

Ownership and Spread

The spread of critical consciousness from the individual through to groups, the wider school, to whānau as community develops ownership for the transformative change to occur and be sustained. When these differing individuals and groups interact and their purposes are aligned and coherent the whole organisation shifts onto another level where the culture of the school becomes responsive and able to change aspects of the system that perpetuates the marginalisation of Māori students. This system change can occur when cultural and critical consciousness combined with decolonising actions is owned and spreads from across all four areas.

A critical factor in achieving these types of partnerships is the ability to work in power sharing relationships of mana ōrite with Māori to ensure the harm of colonisation is no longer being perpetuated. This requires working within the Treaty framework which requires genuine partnerships of mana ōrite, where both partners are not only upholding but strengthening the mana of each other through relationships of interdependence. It requires everybody within the system working together to support each other whilst being focused on supporting the needs, potential and aspirations of Māori students and whānau.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

The limitations of this research are that the primary voice represented in the findings are my own narratives from the transcripts. This in turn represents only one principal from a lower decile school in Aotearoa. Another limitation is the analysis of my transcripts through an auto-ethnographic lens which may have resulted in areas of further critical analysis being missed due to my direct involvement in all aspects of the research. To reduce the likelihood of this I included reflexivity as part of my methodology to ensure I was challenging my own reflections throughout the research process.

Although the personal narratives provide rich data across a nine year period of principalship in a secondary school in Aotearoa, there is an opportunity for further research across a broader range of principals across deciles and education type. Another area of further study could be the expanding of the knowledge of how non-indigenous principals work in

transformative ways with predominately indigenous students and families. This may provide greater scope to undertake investigation into education systems in other countries which also have a history of colonisation. It might also expose a range of findings which can further support the transformation of education for indigenous populations. This would also require the gathering of authentic voice of members within these indigenous communities.

Summary

This research provides an in-depth study of a principal's journey in a school which has transformed learning contexts so they can become ones where Māori students achieve and feel that they can belong. The recommendations provide examples and tested guidelines for leaders to work within the transformative space, through a decolonising leadership framework. It explores the importance of critical theory and kaupapa Māori as a means for reclaiming Māori solutions for decolonising schooling problems created through systemic racism. I believe these examples can transcend the Aotearoa context to be meaningful in other colonised education systems which have a history of perpetuating underachievement of indigenous students. It also gives guidelines for non-indigenous leaders on how to work more effectively with and for indigenous students, families and communities. It provides a model of effective leadership utilising deliberate acts of decolonisation alongside relationships of mana ōrite to transform racist systems and behaviours introduced and perpetuated by colonisation. The model provides a framework to spread the ownership of change required to make necessary change for Māori students and whānau.

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