

https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

Investigating one school's endeavour to implement productive partnerships as mandated through Ka Hikitia – the Māori Education Strategy

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Education

at

The University of Waikato

by

Stephanie Playfair



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2026

Abstract

This thesis explores the journey of one school in attempting to address the expectations within Ka Hikitia to build productive partnerships with their school whānau. I believe that building relationships with whānau is a crucial part of creating a supportive community around our students. As a staff member responsible for driving some of these initiatives, it was important to me to examine our efforts to develop productive partnerships, whether they were in fact productive partnerships and what actions we could take to improve these.

Research has shown that successful relationships between home and school have a positive impact on students' outcomes (Biddulph et al., 2003; Bull et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2009; Office of the Auditor General, 2016). However, there has been a lack of evaluation of the efficacy of programmes implemented to improve engagement or collaboration between home and school (Bull et al., 2008; Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Office of the Auditor General, 2016; Epstein & Sheldon, 2019).

The research project undertaken within this thesis presents and discusses qualitative evidence from Participatory Action Research undertaken with members of this school's whānau. It examines whānau perspectives on the school's attempts to develop productive partnerships, evaluating whether these efforts align with the community's own definitions of partnership.

From this research it emerged that there is a disparity between whānau and school views of partnership. Productive partnership as defined by Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success should be a "a two-way relationship" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 17). The view of the whānau members involved in this research was that because the school retains ultimate decision-making power, the relationship remains inherently unequal and falls short of a genuine partnership.

It became clear through this research that a key obstacle that contributed to the school's difficulties in establishing productive partnerships was a lack of guidance as to what a productive partnership is. Literature supports this view of Ka Hikitia providing strategy goals with limited support provided to schools on how to action these (Berryman et al., 2015; Hohneck, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2016).

This thesis proposes a continuum designed to classify relationships between schools and their whānau and identify possible actions that support these relationships. The model offers practical pathways for schools to deepen their community engagement. This thesis hopes to contribute to the journey that other schools might take in their commitment to building productive partnerships with whānau and through that contribute to their ongoing commitments to giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the people who have made this thesis possible, giving me time and space to work, encouraging me and believing in me when I was struggling to believe in myself.

Firstly, to the research rōpū who shared their time, their voices and their thoughts with me. Without them this thesis would not have been possible.

To my partner Sam, for always being there, for picking up the slack, for always being an encouraging voice, for being my sanity and my rock.

To Philly, for encouraging me to do this, keeping our class running, making me laugh when things were hard.

To my supervisors Liz and Tanya for guiding me into and through the world of academia and helping me to unlock its puzzles.

To my friends for accepting my extended absences from life, always having faith in me.

To all of the mentors I have had throughout my teaching career and my life, for setting the bar high and giving me something to aspire to.

To all of the students I teach and have taught and their whānau for making me want to do better.

Without all of you this thesis would never have been started, let alone completed. My life is a better place for having you all in it.

Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgements ii
Table of Contents iii
Table of Tables v
Chapter 1: Introduction 1
Introduction 1
Context 1
Whānau Engagement 1
The School 2
Development of a Schoolwide Values-based Curriculum 2
Motivation for this Thesis 3
Research Questions 4
Personal Positioning 5
Chapter 2: Literature Review 6
Introduction 6
History of State Education of Māori in New Zealand 6
Establishment of Formal Schooling 6
Whānau Decision Making Within State Education 8
Whānau Creating Educational Pathways for Māori 9
Impacts of State-run Education on Māori Students 10
Partnerships in Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand 11
Value of Whānau Partnerships in Education 11
State Responses to Calls for Partnership 13
Working with Whānau to Develop Expectations for Students 15
Defining Whānau Relationships with Schools 15
Expanding our View of Achievement 16
Collaborative Development 17
Summary 19
Chapter 3: Methodology 21
Introduction 21
Research Questions 21
Research Paradigm 21
Qualitative Research 21
Culturally Responsive Research Methodology 22
Resistance to Western Research Paradigms 23
Power and Positionality 24

Methods 27
Participatory Action Research 27
Interviews as Conversations 27
Collaborative Storying 28
The Research Process 29
The Participants 31
Analysis 31
Grounded Theory 32
Ethical Considerations 32
Limitations 33
Summary 34
Chapter 4: Findings 35
Introduction 35
Research Partnerships: 35
Engagement and Empowerment: 36
Manaakitanga 37
Whakawhanaungatanga 39
Empowerment 41
Whanonga Pono: 45
Developing Productive Partnerships with Whānau: 47
Engaging and Empowering Whānau: 48
Aligning Our Values: 48
Chapter 5: Discussion 50
Developing Productive Partnerships 50
Defining Partnership in Educational Settings 51
Measuring The Efficacy of Partnership Building: 52
Engagement to Empowerment to Mana Motuhake: 52
Positioning Our Own Mahi: 56
Our Shared Answering of the Questions Posed by This Thesis 57
Summary 58
Chapter 6: Conclusion 60
Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi in Education 60
Implications for Schools 61
Implications for State Education 61
Limitations 62
Glossary of Māori terms: 63
References 64
Appendices 75
Appendix 1 – Introductory letter for participants 75

Appendix 2 – Information Sheet for Participants 76
Appendix 3 – Consent Form for Participants 78
Appendix 4 – Principal Consent 79
Appendix 5 – Interview Discussion Guide 80
Appendix 6 – Analysis Hui Discussion Guide 81

Table of Tables

Table 1: Applying IBRLA to this research 25

Table 2: Participant descriptions 31

Table 3: Engagement and Empowerment – key themes as defined by the research rōpū 37

Table 4: A Continuum: Defining school-whānau interactions from engagement to empowerment to mana motuhake 55

Table 5: Positioning our findings in relation to the continuum of school-whānau interactions 56

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

I believe whānau (Māori language terms are defined in the glossary on page 64) play an essential role in their children's education. Their involvement in school decision-making strengthens the connections between home and school and helps ensure students can succeed in ways that are culturally meaningful and personally relevant to them. I have had a leading role at our school in involving our children's whānau in initiatives aimed at increasing their input into school decision making. Our school have found this process challenging. Therefore, I felt it necessary to investigate the barriers that may be limiting whānau participation, to identify possible pathways forward for our school and others. The goal is to create more meaningful opportunities for whānau to contribute to decisions that impact their children's education.

One key initiative from the Ministry of Education, designed to strengthen home-school partnerships came through the release of Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008a) and introduced the concept of Māori succeeding 'as Māori'. This strategy included the development of productive partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi. Each subsequent iteration of Ka Hikitia; Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) and Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a), has further exhorted those working in schools to build partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi to work towards the goal of Māori achieving success 'as Māori'. Each of these documents has included the instruction to give expression to the (then called) Treaty of Waitangi within their guiding principles.

Despite our good intentions, building partnerships with whānau where we truly sought their input and authentically honoured their contributions as being as important as the school's decisions, proved harder than we anticipated. Our school was not alone in this, the Auditor General found that there were inadequate supports and accountability and ineffective communication to schools, resulting in variable implementation (Office of the Auditor General, 2013). It was a policy document that provided a framework for planning strategic directions while not providing any real guidelines to educators in schools (Hohneck, 2013).

Context

Whānau Engagement

The literature shows that building partnerships with whānau Māori is beneficial for students. Highfield et al. (2023) in their reviews of existing research found that the research supported the idea that strong, reciprocal whānau relationships have a positive impact on students' social and academic outcomes.

A recent report (Alansari et al., 2025) found that schools that enabled high levels of whānau engagement were ones that had a strong commitment to culturally responsive and sustainable practices at a classroom, leadership and governance level. At the other end of the engagement scale, they found that whānau who were

not engaging with schools did not experience the school context as a place where they felt a sense of belonging or an ability to contribute meaningfully.

Working with whānau benefits students' academic and social development. When attempts to engage with whānau are done poorly they run the risk of having the opposite effect (Bonne & Hotere-Barnes, 2015). There is a need for schools to move beyond engaging with whānau in ways that are determined primarily by the school towards reciprocal relationships in which the knowledge that both parties bring to the table has value and power is shared (Berryman & Ford, 2017).

The School

The school is in a lower socio-economic area in West Auckland. At the time of writing, our Māori student population is 31% and Tagata Moana/Pasifika 41%. In 2014, the school was running a highly tracked individual programme for academic assessment. The school also had a well-established PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) programme, but despite this there were high occurrences of behavioural incidents, including violence. When I was hired at the school around this time there was a strong sense of collegiality between staff. Students, however, appeared to lack connection to each other and had a limited sense of self-efficacy when it came to managing their actions and reactions. School behaviour data from this time showed high numbers of serious behaviour incidents, often involving physical violence, resulting in students being removed from the playground for a series of lunchtimes.

Development of a Schoolwide Values-based Curriculum

When the school first embarked on our journey to develop a graduate profile, Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008a) and Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) had both been released including the expectation that educators work to enable Māori students to succeed ‘as Māori’. Working alongside another staff member we looked for research that might give us insight into what research says success looks like for Māori students. We came across Ka Awatea: An iwi case study of Māori students’ success (McFarlane et al., 2014). This project had followed Te Arawa Māori students through school and identified factors that successful students had in common such as cultural connections, academic engagement, involvement in groups such as sports teams, leadership and relationships. Looking at this research alongside *Colouring in the White Spaces* (Milne, 2013) led us to consider developing a graduate profile that encompassed a broad range of expectations, inclusive of cultural values, for our students to work towards.

Our intended goals involved a number of factors including the teaching of values and a desire for our students to be able to participate in school without leaving their personal and cultural identities at the gate. Due to these factors, we felt that gathering the perspectives of school whānau was crucial.

In an evaluative study completed across a selection of schools four years after the inclusion of values into the national curriculum, Notman (2012) identified challenges raised by competing values between home and school. He recommended that school leaders revisit how they develop home-school relationships and explaining that these relationships could be especially important in the teaching of values.

At the time, our staff were predominantly Pākehā in contrast to the cultural backgrounds of our students and their whānau. There was a risk in developing a values-based graduate profile that we could reinforce the values that are already existent throughout our institutions (Rameka, 2016). Paenga (2017) describes the purpose of collaborations with whānau as being able to find out their dreams and aspirations for their children and to give them the opportunity to influence how the school meets these needs. By including and listening to our school whānau we were hoping to develop something that reflected them and their children, not just our views as teachers.

We surveyed whānau about what their aspirations were for their children as they progressed through their schooling. As with the Te Pā Harakeke findings (Highfield et al., 2023) the responses of our whānau went beyond academic achievement, including goals such as; happiness, humility, service and being good people. We took some initial ideas to a whānau hui for discussion, sharing the research that we had read and requesting whānau input. With their input we drafted our first graduate profile setting expectations for where we wanted our students to be when they graduated from Year 6. This included akoranga alongside personal identity, leadership and contributing to the school community.

Through whānau hui over the following two years we continued to look at research, Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013a), the Pasifika Education Plan (Ministry of Education, 2013b) and the key competencies and values in the New Zealand Curriculum to work towards developing something that would reflect the values and aspirations of our whānau, meet Ministry of Education requirements of the school, and encourage and celebrate our students' development as people.

In 2016, we reworked this graduate profile with whānau, responding to whānau desires for levelled progressions to enable our younger students to be scaffolded in and recognised for their development. This became our values-based curriculum. This new curriculum was given the name Te Ara Tupuranga with levels; He Kakano (seed), He Tipu (seedling), He Rākau (tree) and He Puāwai (flower) as a metaphor for our children's growth as they progress through school. In 2017 it was rolled out schoolwide and included into our students' assessment profiles. It has been further reworked since this point with varying levels of whānau input and is now an underpinning aspect of our schoolwide curriculum.

Motivation for this Thesis

Following a decade of consultation and development of Māori education strategies Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008a) was released in 2008 outlining directions for educational institutions to improve educational achievement for Māori students. This was followed by Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) in 2013 giving directions for 2013-2017 and Ka Hikitia: Ka Hapaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) the current 30-year Māori Education Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2025b).

In writing what was a graduate profile we were initially looking at the directions within in Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Achievement (Ministry of Education, 2013a) for our Māori students to succeed as Māori and attempting to figure out what succeeding 'as Māori' meant for us. As a school we were aware that we were initiating and delivering this on our own and undertook to gain the voices of whānau. It became clear that our school whānau had a broader view of what this could be and that by hearing and centring their voices we could begin to

address two of the five key principles within Ka Hikitia of giving "expression to how the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are applied in education" (p. 13) and developing a "productive partnership" (p.17) with our school community.

The 2013 iteration of Ka Hikitia, in its Treaty of Waitangi guiding principle states that "collaboration is about creating ways for whānau, hapu, iwi, Māori organisations and communities to contribute to what and how Māori students learn" (p. 13) and describes productive partnerships as "a two-way relationship leading to and generating shared action, outcomes and solutions" (p.17). There is no further direction within the document to outline to schools how to act in relation to these statements or to define where decision making power sits between whānau and schools in relation to this concept of partnership.

Since its initial implementation, our values-based curriculum has had an impact on our school culture. Our school data shows that major behavioural incidents are down. Conversations between staff and school whānau suggest that students have a stronger sense of agency over their learning and behaviour, and the sense of pride in who they are which has been attributed to the values curriculum.

As a school we have viewed this as a successful result of working in partnership with whānau to improve outcomes for our students. With the Ministry of Education having released Ka Hikitia: Ka Hapaitia in 2020 which outlined a 30 year direction for New Zealand education, it is timely to examine the depth and efficacy of whānau input and whether the view of productive partnership was shared by both partners in this endeavour.

By using the specific context of developing our values-based curriculum, this thesis will examine whether the school's views aligned with whānau members' views of giving expression to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and productive partnership. It will then consider what this alignment could and should look like in practice.

It will investigate whether whānau members felt that they were able to demonstrate rangatiratanga within the context of school decision-making, Through the voices of whānau members it will attempt to identify what school actions enabled whānau voice and what school actions may have created barriers to developing productive partnerships. Based on this research, this thesis proposes actionable steps for this school and others to build productive partnerships with whānau and thereby work towards giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Research Questions

The central question that this research set out to find out was:

How did one school community attempt to develop productive partnerships between school and whānau to meet the directions given in Ka Hikitia?

The following sub-questions were necessary to understand whether the school's perceptions aligned with those of school whānau:

- To what extent did school whānau experience productive partnerships with the school?
- What were the barriers and enablers of productive partnerships between whānau and school?
- Were school whānau able to demonstrate rangatiratanga when working in the school contexts?

- What learning and recommendations could the research participants offer to other school communities working towards developing productive partnerships?

Personal Positioning

I am a Pākehā teacher working within a reorua (bilingual) class in the school that is the subject of this thesis. I have worked as a senior teacher at this school for twelve years. I have taught and continue to teach children of each of the members of the research rōpū who worked with me on the research for this thesis. I have also worked alongside them in whānau hui developing the values programme referred to in this thesis as well as on other schoolwide events and projects. While these pre-existing relationships mean that there are potential power dynamics that must be treated with care, to me, they mean that I have a responsibility to honour their voices and tell their stories truthfully.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

For many years data has shown that Māori students have made up a large part of the 'tail' of our education results (Milne, 2013; Ministry of Education,2026; Wagemaker, 1987; Walker, 2016). This is not a matter of Māori students failing within our education system but of our education system failing Māori students (Bishop, 2000; Ward, 2005). As Leonie Pihama states "the education system in this country has for 200 years been grounded upon visions, dreams and promises that have been imported from elsewhere and have been imposed on the dreams and aspirations of our people" (Pihama, 2019, p. 7).

Research both here and internationally has consistently shown benefits to having students' families involved in their education (Bull et al., 2008). Here in Aotearoa where the majority of Māori students attend mainstream schools (Hawaikirangi-Pere, 2013) while the majority of staff in mainstream schools are from other cultural backgrounds (Education Counts, 2025) it is even more important as whānau are the voice that can create an environment that links the cultures of home and school (Biddulph et al., 2003).

History of State Education of Māori in New Zealand

Establishment of Formal Schooling

Māori had well established systems for education and transmission of knowledge long before the arrival of explorers and colonists in Aotearoa (Berryman, 2008; Eley, 2020; Hawes, 2012). Learning was intergenerational and oriented to the needs of the learner (Nuri, 2023) with student strengths being identified and nurtured from an early age (Berryman, 2008).

During the early days of Pākehā settlement, prior to the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori were eager to trade and to acquire new technologies and skills including literacy (Derby, 2021).

Early schooling for Māori was initiated by Christian churches, the first at Rangihoua by the Anglican Church Missionary Society, opening with 33 students aged from seven to twenty (Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage, n.d.), followed by additions from other denominations, primarily Catholic and Wesleyan missions (Lee & Lee, 2017). Participation within these schools was not compulsory therefore the decision to engage with schooling was one chosen by whānau.

Following early settlement in New Zealand by Europeans, many with their own agendas, a number of Northern Rangatira gathered together with James Busby, the British Resident, in October 1835 to sign He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni, the Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand (Manatū Taonga — Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2026). Within this document the Rangatira declared the country to be an independent nation over which all sovereign power was held collectively by the Rangatira (Delahunty, 2025). Nearly five years later Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed, eventually gaining over 500 signatories. Within this text Māori were guaranteed rangatiratanga over their lands and taonga (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). The view reported by the Waitangi Tribunal is that the Rangatira did not cede their sovereignty or authority over their

lands or people (Williams, 2014). This background provides important context for the following legislative actions by the colonial government.

The Education Ordinance Act of 1847 was the first legislative action to take control of the formal schooling of Māori. It followed the pattern of post-treaty legislation that reflected the Crown's belief that they had the right to make laws to govern Māori (Hetaraka, 2022). The Act provided land endowments and funding to the churches who had already established schools with the provisos that instruction should be in English and that religious and industrial training be provided (Hetaraka, 2022). Hetaraka demonstrates how, from the early implementation of the Act, was a hidden desire by the colonial government to assimilate and de-culturalise Māori while reinforcing a view of British superiority.

The Native Schools Act 1858 reinforced this system with schools' funding dependent on association with an approved religious body and provided boarding for students. Governor Grey (in office from 1845) believed that the removal of children from the 'barbaric' influences of their villages would strengthen the drive for assimilation to colonial ways (Lee & Lee, 2017; Walker, 2016). The implementation of this Act was disrupted by the Land Wars.

The 1867 Native Schools Act was passed with the intention of establishing a system of secular day schools for Māori students administered initially by the Department of Native Affairs. The principles underpinning education for Māori were still assimilation and social control, with the aim of 'civilising' Māori (Hetaraka, 2022; Lee & Lee, 2017; Walker, 2016).

The Native Schools established following the 1867 act were intended to be temporary, with control of the schools being transferred to the Education Board once the students were deemed to be 'civilised' and competent in English (Barrington, 2008). While a small number of transfers did occur, these schools ran until 1969 when they were merged with mainstream schools (Shields et al., 2005). By 1907 there were 97 Native Schools in rural Māori communities (Walker, 2016).

While the curriculum in the Native Schools reflected some aspects of what was expected in public schools, it did not have the aim of academically extending students but of providing them with enough education to effectively participate in labouring class roles within society (Simon, 1992). Some church run boarding schools for Māori students ran contrary to this expectation, preparing students with an academic programme that would enable them to take part in exams to enter university, although attempts were made to restrict this with a Royal Commission of Inquiry in 1906 in which the Inspector of Native Schools at the time argued that the purpose of educating Māori students was for them to be prepared for life among Māori, not to compete with Europeans (Walker, 2016).

The Education Act 1877 established the state primary school system, administered separately from Native Schools with the aim of providing free, secular, compulsory schooling for the children of Pākehā settlers (Hetaraka, 2022). New Zealand was an early adopter of the factory model of education established in the early 19th Century in Prussia. This model shifted responsibility for education from the family to the state and

introduced compulsory attendance, a prescribed curriculum and nationalised testing (Eley, 2020). In the contemporary view of Bakunin (1869) this involvement of the state in education was a means of control and of maintaining existing class divisions. Māori were legally allowed to send their children to these public schools as they were established (Lee & Lee, 2017) but their children were not compulsorily required to be in education until 1894 (Calman, 2015). Compulsory attendance within this model of education removed the choices of whānau over their children's education.

While Native Schools existed up until 1969, by 1927 the number of Māori children attending public schools exceeded the numbers still in Native Schools (Simon, 1992). Both overt racial discrimination and covert attitudes and assumptions within public schools ensured that those with appropriate cultural capital were more likely to succeed and fed the notion of Māori being culturally deficient (Shields et al., 2005; Simon, 1992).

The costs of assimilation through education were high. Schools promoted the idea of European cultural supremacy and disallowed the use of Te Reo Māori. Surveys of Māori students in 1930 found that 96.6% spoke Te Reo Māori at home. By 1960 this had reduced to 26% (Shields et al., 2005) suggesting that the initial goals of whānau Māori to engage with formal education to supplement their existing knowledge and cultural norms (Simon, 1992) had been superseded by the goals of state education. Control over educational participation and curricula had, over time, been shifted entirely from whānau to the state.

Whānau Decision Making Within State Education

Importantly, in contrast to government goals for education of Māori, Māori engagement with education was driven by their own desire for additional knowledge to supplement their traditional way of life (Simon, 1992). whānau Māori decided their early engagement with schooling, choosing when and how to engage for the purpose of supplementing existing systems for transmission of mātauranga Māori by actively embracing Western literacy (Derby, 2021; Walker, 2016).

The Education Ordinance Act and the Native Schools Acts of 1858 and 1867 funded schools and set a colonial curriculum. Crucially, these acts did not compel Māori attendance (Hetaraka, 2022). Instead, whānau actively chose to send their children to Mission and Native schools. This participation was driven by a desire for children to gain the skills needed to navigate a rapidly changing world (Simon, 1992; Walker, 2016)

The requirements laid out in the Education Ordinance Act were for a focus on religious instruction and industrial training for Māori students. This resulted in a lack of hours of actual schooling in favour of students doing manual labour while school rules were heavily reinforced with corporal punishment. These factors contributed to growing dissatisfaction amongst Māori parents over time (Lee & Lee, 2017). The continued focus on these areas in the Native Schools Act 1858 alongside growing distrust of the government due to raupatu (punitive land confiscations), meant that by 1865 only 22 Māori students are recorded as being enrolled in schools compared to the approximately 20 000 attending mission day schools 20 years earlier (Lee & Lee, 2017). Whānau were exercising choice by disengaging from state funded schooling.

The 1867 Native Schools Act required communities that wanted schools to provide land and resources for the establishment and building of schools (Hetaraka, 2022). The requirement for Māori to provide land and resources to establish a school means that those communities that gained schools did so because they wanted their children to have access to education as a means to gaining social and economic parity with Pākehā (Lee & Lee, 2017).

The Education Act 1877 established a statewide system of primary schooling. However, Māori parents still had the autonomy to choose whether to enrol their children into these state schools or existing Native Schools. Until the School Attendance Act 1894 made primary schooling compulsory for Māori (Calman, 2015), whānau retained the power to decide whether to engage with the state education system, or not.

In 1935 the Labour government of the time established a system of free secondary schooling which included the establishment of Native District High Schools. Again, the curriculum differed from English stream schooling, with a larger focus on manual skills until 1945 when Māori parents requested that their children have access to School Certificate programmes (Walker, 2016).

Since the early days of education in New Zealand, Māori whānau have shown a desire for their children to have access to learning and intentionally participated in decision making that facilitated this access. The history presented above shows that Māori whānau are deeply invested in their children's education, however an examination of the literature suggests that opportunities for whānau to actively participate in decision making about how that education happens have been limited.

Whānau Creating Educational Pathways for Māori

In the late 20th century, Māori established kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori in response to the loss of language and cultural practices (Walker, 2016; Ward, 2006). This movement was, once again, driven by Māori whānau making decisions to facilitate their children receiving education that would be beneficial to their futures.

The rise in the 1970s of Māori activist groups mobilising to protest years of assimilationist government policy and action led to Māori asserting their voices in education (Kusabs, 2024). Frustrations over the lack of Māori culture, language and decision-making abilities in education led to the development of kōhanga reo (Māori language preschools) in the early 1980s. While these were initially overseen by the Department of Māori affairs which had a strong precedent of indigenous leadership and community engagement, control was shifted in 1990 to the Ministry of Education (Kusabs, 2024; Walker, 2016). This shift and the associated requirements triggered a decline in the numbers of kōhanga reo from a peak of 800 to 400 (Walker, 2016).

As kōhanga reo students became school age there was no educational pathway available to them through primary and secondary education that centred their culture and language (Tocker, 2015). Again, Māori communities responded by establishing Kura Kaupapa Māori, eventually gaining financial support from the government (Walker, 2016).

Outside of kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori the first acknowledgement of the concept of whānau in a central government curriculum release was in Te Whāriki in 1996 (Ministry of Education, 2024) which included a specific Family and Community/Whānau Tangata strand.

Impacts of State-run Education on Māori Students

While the assimilationist practices of formal education in Aotearoa (Hetaraka, 2022) could be perceived as being based on deficit thinking about Māori students, the deliberate undermining of attempts to provide more academic programmes to Māori students (Walker, 2016) and the history of separate education systems (Hetaraka, 2022) suggest that the statistical differences in Māori achievement and retention rates in English medium schools is not a systemic failure but a result of the system succeeding in its original intentions (Ward, 2005) of creating a working Māori underclass (Hetaraka, 2022).

The mission schools and native schools with their limited curriculum offerings were designed to train Māori students for roles subordinate to those of the children of colonists (Hetaraka 2022; Walker, 2016). The Inspector of Native Schools, Henry Taylor, had "a particularly limited view of Māori academic capacity" (Hetaraka, 2022, p. 329) a view that Hetaraka shows persisted through policy and perceptions affecting the education of Māori students.

As more Māori enrolled into English medium schools through the early 20th Century they encountered cultural expectations and assumptions that excluded them from successful participation, finding that their cultural knowledge was belittled and their names mispronounced (Bishop & Glynn, 2003). The idea of Māori students being culturally deficient and unsuited for academic pursuits was developing into the deficit theorising that has impacted long-term on Māori education in mainstream settings (Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Shields et al., 2005; Simon, 1992).

The Hunn Report on Māori Affairs released in 1960 formally identified, for the first time in Government reporting, the gaps between Māori and Pākehā, including life expectancy, unemployment and an absence of Māori participating in higher education. In response to the disparity in education statistics, the Ministry of Education established the Māori Education Foundation and the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education. These two groups recommended the addition of taha Māori (Māori dimension) into the curriculum and the establishment of bilingual education programmes (Walker, 2016).

A report by the Education Foundation in 1966 showed that over 85% of Māori students left school with no formal qualifications. Follow up data gathered in 1969 saw this figure drop to 79% (Walker, 2016). Data from 1985 showed that over 52% of non-Māori students passed at least four subjects in School Certificate compared to 23.5% of Māori students. Over the previous 20 years school retention rates had been steadily improving but again showed large disparities between Māori and non-Māori students (Wagemaker, 1987).

Government policy through the 1980s and 1990s focussed on socio-economic rather than ethnic causes for underachievement, leading to "educators focusing on social backgrounds, parenting, and other societal influences" (Office of the Auditor-General, 2012, p.15) rather than the actions of the schools themselves.

‘Closing the Gaps’ became a government policy at the tail end of the 1990s aimed at targeting underachieving groups including Māori. While this policy identified groups that were being underserved by our systems it also perpetuated negative stereotypes and identified Pākehā norms as being the societal benchmark to aim for (Mahuika, 2015). Amongst teachers, deficit theorising that further blamed Māori students themselves for being disorganised, disengaged and having low educational aspirations was common (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

The data, gathered over many years, demonstrates that Māori students are overrepresented in negative statistics in education, both academically and behaviourally. The most recent data available on Education Counts (Ministry of Education, 2026c) showed that 60.7% of Māori 18 year olds in 2022 left school with NCEA at level 2 and above compared with 76% of all students leaving with similar level qualifications. At the same time Māori rates of suspension, exclusion and expulsion from school sat around twice that of their Pākehā counterparts (Ministry of Education, 2026c).

While current data shows higher school retention and attainment rates across all groups than in the past, a disparity between non-Māori and Māori students has persisted (Ministry of Education, 2025c). It has been identified, commented, reported and theorised on for many years. As Milne (2013) says “the design of school improvement and reform most often comes from a mindset of getting better at doing the same things” (p. 26). Continuing to address these issues while operating within the same epistemological framework has maintained the original goals of the New Zealand education system, marginalising young Māori (Bishop, 2000). Bishop and Glynn suggest that the power structures and systems that exist within our colonial system impact on classroom practice and perpetuate the non-participation of young Māori within that system (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). These systems are linked to power over others (Berryman & Ford, 2017) leading those who are not of the majority culture to be disempowered within English medium education.

There has been acknowledgement from the New Zealand Ministry of Education of the gaps in outcomes between Māori and other students (Davis, 2018; Else, 1997; Ministry of Education, 2005) resulting in the release of policy to address these gaps including Ka Hikitia (Maharey, 2007) directing schools to act to improve outcomes for Māori students. The first draft, Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success, The Draft Māori Education Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2007), expressed this as a “need for an urgent step up in system performance for Māori to ensure more equitable outcomes” (p. 1). Despite these directions to schools, disparities in experience and outcomes for Māori students persist (Ministry of Education, 2026c). The Ka Hikitia documents held the promise of transforming practice within New Zealand schools by focussing on a Māori potential rather than deficit approach but flaws in its implementation have led to a failure to create the necessary transformations across the education sector (Berryman & Eley, 2017).

Partnerships in Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Value of Whānau Partnerships in Education

In their Best Evidence Synthesis Report, Biddulph et al. (2003) reported on research in schools throughout the 1990s that stated that constructive relationships between school and home and community can improve children’s achievement. They found that research both here and internationally showed that partnerships

between home and school provided benefits beyond traditional academic interventions, benefitting students' well-being while also having positive impacts on the family. This is supported by a further Best Evidence Synthesis Report by Robinson et al. (2009) that reported that family connections can have positive academic and social effects for children. This is particularly true for those who have been under-served or where there is a gap between the culture of home and school. Interventions involving teachers and family members have the largest impact on student outcomes.

Home-school partnerships that are successful are based on respectful, collaborative relationships and are valued by teachers, not seen as an extra job (Berryman et al., 2015; Bull et al., 2008; Education Review Office, 2008). These partnerships are of particular importance when there is a disparity between the social, cultural and ethnic background of students and the dominant culture of the school (Biddulph et al., 2003). More recent research examining the quality of whānau engagement has shown that schools with actively engaged whānau demonstrate a commitment to participation in decision-making with leadership that focuses on de-privatising their spaces and indigenising their curriculum (Alansari et al., 2025). Riwai-Couch (2021) supports these factors along with the inclusion of opportunities for iwi to contribute to school decision making as the holders of local cultural knowledge.

Berryman et al (2015) show that, while there have been directives from the Ministry of Education for schools to partner with whānau, hāpū and iwi, there has been limited guidance on how to implement these directives. Alongside this limited guidance principals and Boards of Trustees lack the knowledge and connections to action these directives effectively (Bonne & Hotere-Barnes, 2015; Marston, 2025). Similar issues have been encountered outside of Aotearoa with policies being implemented requiring implementation and data collection of family partnership programmes with no support for how to implement programmes or how to judge their effectiveness (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

Epstein and Sheldon (2019) note that in education "what gets measured gets done" (p. 1) and that while schools collect extensive achievement data they do not collect data on the efficacy of parent partnership programmes. They argue that the use of the term partnership suggests that all parties should be involved in the planning and evaluation of activities and programmes. Effective home-school partnerships should include opportunities for sharing knowledge and decision-making however, an education system founded in Western hegemony may run counter to the values and beliefs of groups outside of the dominant culture (Fish et al., 2022). Developing partnerships in this context requires teachers and school leaders to address their own preconceptions and assumptions before they can develop participatory relationships with whānau (Berryman & Ford, 2017).

Lawson (2003) describes many instances of parental engagement with schools as being 'schoolcentric' with schools establishing the activities and structures for involvement and parents having limited influence over school decision making. Similarly, in Aotearoa the parameters of whānau involvement in schools have predominantly been defined by the schools themselves and not decided in partnership with their communities (Berryman et al., 2015). There is a need for relationships to go beyond what is often demonstrated, with

relationships being reciprocal with the knowledge that both parties bring to the table having value and power being shared. Both of the terms partnership and collaboration used throughout Ministry of Education documents and related research imply a level of power sharing beyond school-defined expectations of whānau engagement (Berryman et al., 2015).

State Responses to Calls for Partnership

In its 1986 report on the Waitangi Tribunal claim for recognition of Te Reo Māori (Wai 11), the Waitangi Tribunal included testimony from a number of Māori teachers describing the unstated expectations that they and their Māori students were required to assimilate to be successful within the education system (Waitangi Tribunal, 1986). They compared the failings of the education system to the successes of the fledgling Kōhanga Reo which were initiated by whānau and urged the Department of Education to show leadership in the implementation of policies that would improve Māori educational statistics.

In the early 2000s, Ngati Tūwharetoa worked with the Ministry of Education to begin hosting conferences (Hui Taumata) of Māori leadership in education (Berryman, 2008). Conclusions of the first Hui Taumata were the concepts that Māori should be able to live 'as Māori', actively participate as citizens of the world and enjoy good health and a high standard of living (Durie, 2004). This concept of participating and succeeding 'as Māori' was part of the underpinning vision stated in the Ka Hikitia documents.

In 2008 the Ministry of Education released the first iteration of Ka Hikitia; Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success and included the concept of Māori succeeding 'as Māori'. It was based on research and identified the need for a shift in practice and attitudes within our education system (Office of the Auditor-General, 2012). It was developed following extensive consultation with Māori. Part of the strategy for improving outcomes for Māori students included the development of productive partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi. There were issues identified with the implementation of Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Office of the Auditor General, 2013) with lack of support for schools on how to implement these strategies. The recommendations in the report included an expectation of deeper levels of engagement and increased collaboration between schools and iwi and Māori whānau. Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008a) offered some well worded rhetoric but failed to provide any guidelines for educators to implement it (Hohneck, 2013). This is not a problem unique to Aotearoa. Similar attempts at education reform overseas were found to be reliant on teachers and leaders existing knowledge of partnerships and ability to work collaboratively within their communities (Sanders et al., 2005).

The following update Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) included The Treaty of Waitangi and Productive Partnerships as two of its guiding principles and highlighted the education sector's responsibilities, including collaboration with whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations and communities. A collaborative response to the treaty principles was reinforced throughout the document. Again, there were issues identified within the implementation and guidance for schools to better understand what Māori achieving success "as Māori" means (Office of the Auditor General, 2016).

In 2017 updates to the Education Act included the requirement for Boards of Trustees to take all reasonable steps to act in a manner that is consistent with the principles of The Treaty of Waitangi (Marston, 2025).

Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) further exhorted those working in schools to build partnerships with whānau to work towards the goal of Māori achieving success 'as Māori'. While this iteration was the result of extensive community consultation it suffered from being released during the Covid 19 pandemic and so, in my experience, received little attention. Again, one of the principles in this iteration is Productive Partnerships, while the Treaty of Waitangi principle shifted to specify giving practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education. The outcome domains: Te Whānau, Te Tangata, Te Kanorautanga, Te Tuakiritanga, Te Rangatiratanga, include listed actions that detail how the government and education providers will engage with whānau and iwi.

As in Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) the Education and Training Act 2020 also changed from directing School Boards to act in a manner that is consistent with the principles of The Treaty of Waitangi to requiring them to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Marston, 2025). This shift in language is significant as Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the Māori language version of the agreement. It is the version the majority of Rangatira (chiefs) signed (Orange, n.d.) and affirmed Māori sovereignty in alignment with the principles already laid out in the 1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene - Declaration of Independence of New Zealand (Marston, 2025).

With research being very clear on the benefits to students of having more engaged whānau, to address another similarly underserved community, the Ministry of Education released a series of Pasifika Education Plans. Within a similar timeline to the three Ka Hikitia documents, The Pasifika Education Plan 2006 – 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2006), the Pasifika Education Plan 2008 – 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2008b) and the Pasifika Education Plan 2013 – 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2013b) each included directions to create dialogue, engage parents and develop and strengthen partnerships with Pasifika families.

In 2020 the Ministry of Education released The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) (Ministry of Education, 2020b) which included directions to schools to work with Māori and Pasifika whānau, to involve Māori in decision making and to work with Māori to include tikanga, reo Māori, values and mātauranga in meaningful ways.

These policies were all created and implemented in response to research and ongoing calls from whānau and iwi to have an active voice in the educational institutions in which their children were required to participate.

Policies implemented by governments carry the risks associated with changes of government and political ideologies. Decisions about what is included in a curriculum reflect the priorities, knowledge and values of those who are writing it (Mahuika, 2011). Concentrating educational decision-making into fewer hands has impacted negatively on Māori attainment levels, while "monocultural dominance means that knowledges and pedagogic processes continue to serve the aspirations of the dominant discourse" (Bishop, 2000, p. 3).

At the time of writing, the current coalition government are de-prioritising many previously legislated aims. They have stated policies to treat English as the preferential language of communication over Te Reo Māori (House of Representatives, 2023). The recent Education and Training Amendment Act 2025 removed the obligation for School Boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and removed the NELPs (Ministry of Education, 2025a). The previously gazetted Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2022) which contained a strong focus on local and Māori history was deemed to need rebalancing due to too strong a focus on Māori history (Newshub, 2024) and is in the process of being re-drafted (Ministry of Education, 2026a).

While political division is growing in New Zealand/Aotearoa (Salmond, 2026) and education has been the site of many and frequent changes (Muru-Lanning, 2025) there is potential for schools working in partnership with their communities to plan learning that reflects the values and priorities of their whānau and students.

Working with Whānau to Develop Expectations for Students

Defining Whānau Relationships with Schools

Throughout the Ka Hikitia documents are references to productive partnership, engagement and collaboration (Ministry of Education, 2008a, 2013a, 2020a). The Office of the Auditor General's report on relationships between schools and whānau found that there was a disparity between the views of whānau and those of schools on whether their relationships were effective (Office of the Auditor-General, 2015). The implication of this, to me, is that we lack a shared definition of what relationships between schools and whānau are and could be.

Before attempting to develop any form of partnership it is essential that schools develop positive relationships with whānau (Bull et al., 2008; Education Review Office, 2008). This should involve knowing who your school whānau are, developing a range of cultural and physical spaces to draw whānau into school and establishing a range of means of communication (Hotere-Barnes et al., 2012).

In beginning to establish whānau involvement in decision-making processes in schools, staff need to be aware of the practices of the institutions we work in (Fish et al., 2022). By engaging in practices that we position as being neutral we can be reinforcing existing hegemonies and unintentionally disengaging whānau (Glynn, 2013). Throughout these early processes of engagement whānau will be observant of the dynamics and developing awareness of who is speaking and what is open for discussion (Fish et al., 2022). Whānau are highly alert to covert and overt messaging from schools (Alansari et al., 2025) therefore it is on those working in schools and desirous of developing positive working relationships to be alert to the messages that they are sending in all forms of communication and discussion.

Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008a) and Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) use the terms productive partnership and collaboration to describe the directives to work with whānau, hapū and iwi. "Both partnership and collaboration… infer a degree of power-sharing" (p. 19) suggesting that schools need to give serious consideration to what these terms mean when engaging with their communities (Berryman et al., 2015).

In the literature, partnership is described in a number of ways, from a focus on parents supporting their children's learning, building strong reciprocal relationships between student, teacher and whānau, to the active engagement of whānau in school organisation and decision making (Alansari et al., 2025; Biddulph et al., 2003; Bull et al., 2008; Highfield et al., 2023). Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success describes a productive partnership as 'a two-way relationship leading to and generating shared action, outcomes and solutions (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 17) while Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia uses the term active partnership and makes statements across its Outcome Domains about Māori participating in and making decisions for Māori learners.

As Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success states that we will "give expression to how the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are applied in education" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 13) and Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia states that we will "give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the education system" (Ministry of Education, 2020, p.1) I believe that we should be looking to Te Tiriti o Waitangi for our definition of partnership.

The concept of partnership is central to the relationship between Māori and the Crown and should serve as a guide to all of their interactions with public entities (Harris & Kaur, 2012). The Waitangi Tribunal considers that each partner within this relationship should be accorded equal status with an obligation on both parties to act from the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2001). This aligns with Berryman and her colleagues reminder that partnership should not just benefit schools and students, but also be beneficial to whānau and their communities (Berryman et al., 2015). In my view this means that to truly give effect to the directives in Ka Hikitia schools should be aiming to give equal status to the voices of whānau in strategic decision making and organisation.

Article two of Te Tiriti o Waitangi guaranteed Māori tino rangatiratanga over their lands, homes and taonga (Mackintosh, 2024). Within education the use of term rangatiratanga, like partnership, has in my view been impacted by a lack of shared definition and direction. Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia describes it as Māori exercising "their authority and agency in education" (Ministry of Education, 2020a, p. 1). Mackintosh suggests that tino rangatiratanga in schools occurs when "Māori can lead the decision making process" (Mackintosh, 2024, p.154).

While the questions asked in this thesis asked about whānau rangatiratanga in decision making, later discussions with the research group shifted towards the term mana motuhake. Mana motuhake was described by Berryman, Glynn and Woller as "individual and collective expression of autonomy, independence, authority, agency and responsibility" (cited by Berryman et al., 2017, p.18).

Expanding our View of Achievement

While the Ministry of Education states that "Māori students do better when their education reflects and values their language, identity and culture" (Ministry of Education, 2013a) the reality is that the statistical profiles built by the Ministry of Education that determine success and failure are developed from NCEA credit attainment and at primary school level from Reading, Writing and Mathematics data (Aporosa, 2016). While the three Ka Hikitia documents all use the phrase Māori succeeding 'as Māori' the measure of this success in Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008a) and Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of

Education, 2013a) was based solely on narrow academic results, which, while they are important, reflect only part of the broader aspirations that Māori whānau have for their children (Highfield et al., 2023). A report from the Office of the Auditor General on Māori educational achievement stated that educational success as Māori is more than academic achievement and that for the good of our society it is important that our "citizens are confident, socially minded, and grounded in their language, culture, and identity" (Berryman et al., 2016).

Ann Milne (2013) states that "academic achievement alone, as defined by hegemonic white norms, is not enough" (p. 30) and that achieving within what she terms "the lens of self" should be acknowledged as an achievement of its own. She expresses the need for schools to implement curriculum and pedagogies that are inclusive of Māori and Pasifika values and knowledge in order for students to succeed as themselves as well as meeting the standards of the mainstream education system (Milne, 2013). Hotere-Barnes and his colleagues (2012) found that Māori whānau believed that the dominant cultural view of student success is limited and needs to be redefined in a way that is inclusive of cultural, spiritual and social development. The data showing a gap in achievement between Māori and other students has persisted for too long (Milne, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2026; Wagemaker, 1987; Walker, 2016) and clearly the measures taken in English medium schooling have not worked to make consistent and effective change. In my view we need to redefine how we measure success, not to minimise academic achievement as a measure, but to broaden our measures to develop our students as people and community members so that they have steady ground to stand on as they strive for academic success.

The 2007 New Zealand Curriculum required us to include in our teaching the values of excellence, innovation, diversity, equity, community and participation, ecological sustainability and integrity (Ministry of Education, 2023). These are no longer present in the recently released curriculum – Te Mataiaho which contains the overarching label of "a knowledge-rich curriculum" and states a purpose of being "focussed on disciplinary content" (Ministry of Education, 2026c, p.1).

Rameka (2016) alerts us to the need for educators to critically examine their own hegemonic views of the world, to be open to seeing other worldviews so that we are not just perpetuating our own beliefs and values. She further discusses the reinforcement of hegemonic Pākehā cultural beliefs and values throughout our institutions and structures (Rameka, 2018) and the need for educators to respectfully and authentically incorporate detailed Māori concepts of whakapapa and whanaungatanga into their practice to enable their students to feel a genuine sense of belonging. Rameka (2018) explains that within contemporary urban settings "there are definers of Māoriness that can shape, order and constrain an individual's ability to belong as Māori" (p. 9) bringing us back to the need to examine Ka Hikitia's concept of "Māori enjoying and achieving academic success as Māori" (Ministry of Education. 2008a, p.6; Ministry of Education, 2020a, p. 1) and what this actually means for our students.

Collaborative Development

Developing a localised curriculum with whānau can be an opportunity to integrate the identity, language and culture of the community. Holdom and Page (2022) view relationship building as an essential component of

the journey to localise curriculum which allowed them to integrate the mana, knowledge and skills of their learning community. Paenga (2017) describes the purpose of collaborations with whānau as being to find out their dreams and aspirations for their children and to give them the opportunity to influence how the school meets these needs.

The 2020 iteration of Ka Hikitia; Ka Hikitia, Ka Hāpaitia in its Rangatiratanga strand says that education services will support Māori "to exercise agency and authority over the education of Māori learners" (p. 5) and to "make decisions about the education of Māori learners" (p. 5). It also states that "We will grow the ability of education agencies and education services to give practical effect to the Kāwanatanga roles in Te Tiriti o Waitangi." (p. 6). This suggests that in order to be honouring our treaty obligations in schools, we need to be purposefully moving into planned collaboration with our whānau Māori.

Berryman and her colleagues (2015) explain the difference between the concepts of partnerships and collaboration between schools and whānau as partnerships being a situation that involve whānau but are driven by schools while collaboration is reciprocal and interdependent. In their analysis of culturally responsive relationships they refer to the work of Glynn et al. (2001) in which the analogy of a pōwhiri is used to illustrate the process of engaging with whānau in a way that that is genuinely reciprocal, culturally located and places power in the hands of whānau. As with some of the other literature in this review Berryman et al. (2015) warn that by expecting to engage with whānau while operating from our own values and assumptions we risk marginalising the whānau who we are hoping to engage with.

In addition to the expectations laid out in Ka Hikitia; Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a), there has been a drive from the Ministry of Education for schools to localise the national curriculum with guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2019) that include being "responsive to the needs, identity, language, culture, interests, strengths and aspirations of your learners and their families" and integration of "Te Tiriti o Waitangi into classroom learning" (p. 1).

In working with her own iwi, Ngati Rangiwewehi, to begin developing a curriculum that prioritised iwi mātauranga, Mahuika (2011) noted that selection of what is included in a curriculum is someone's view of what knowledge is valued. The process that they went through of interviews and wānanga ensured that the values and concepts that underpinned their work reflected the knowledge that was valued within their iwi. In developing curricula with whānau we need to be conscious that the choices of knowledge presented in schools are organised around selected views of what is normal (Milne, 2013) and ensure that we what we develop reflects the views and values of whānau.

Contrary to many years of deficit theorising by staff in schools (Bishop, 2005) whānau Māori have high aspirations for their children at school and believe that they are able to support these (Highfield et al., 2023). While schools are required to report to parents on academic progress (Ministry of Education, 2026b), research has shown that whānau have a more holistic view that includes social and cultural measures alongside academic achievement (Hotere-Barnes et al., 2012). Highfield and colleagues also found that working with

whānau and communities to ensure that cultural knowledge and identity is valued supports the wellbeing and success of students (Highfield et al., 2023).

To enable Māori to "to exercise agency and authority over the education of Māori learners" (p. 5) (Ministry of Education, 2020a), give life to the aspirations of whānau and determine what student success 'as Māori' looks like we should be working collaboratively with whānau to establish a shared view of the parameters of students success. Effective partnerships are those in which shared visions and goals are co-constructed (Mutch & Collins, 2012).

Summary

History shows us that Māori had strong educational systems before the arrival of Europeans and embraced the new learning that settlers brought with them. However, the establishment of the State schooling system, put into effect across decades of education acts, eroded Māori language, culture and values and disenfranchised parents from the everyday learning of their children. While the establishment and operation of kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa, wharekura and wānanga have been driven by whānau, hapū and iwi since the 1980s (Walker, 2016; Ward 2005) it is only during the current century that a need for whānau voice in English medium schooling has been acknowledged (Berryman et al., 2015).

Collaborative development of school programmes or local curriculum is a means of integrating the values and beliefs of the community into learning (Holdom & Page, 2022) providing schools with an opportunity to give whānau agency over decisions about the education of Māori learners (Ministry of Education, 2020a). In doing this schools need to be conscious of the quality of their interactions and who is driving the decision making, aiming for reciprocity and interdependence (Berryman et al., 2015).

Throughout the history of formal schooling in Aotearoa the desires of whānau Māori for their children to engage in and benefit from education (Simon, 1992) have been at odds with a system purposefully designed to assimilate them into a European way of being while limiting their achievement to levels that would serve colonial interests (Hetaraka, 2022; Lee & Lee, 2017; Simon, 1992; Walker, 2016). This has led to long running disparities in educational achievement, retention and engagement (Milne, 2013; Wagemaker, 1987; Walker, 2016).

Policies and curricula that have been introduced directing schools to engage in partnership with Māori have not provided adequate support or direction for schools on how to do this (Berryman et al., 2015; Office of the Auditor General, 2016). Rather than true partnership and inclusion of whānau voices in decision making engagement is often determined by the needs of the school and operates within parameters that they have established (Berryman, et al., 2015). Shifting away from this would require schools and their staff to examine the systems they work within, their individual preconceptions and assumptions (Berryman & Ford, 2017; Fish et al. 2022) and to endeavour to indigenise their environments (Alansari et al., 2025).

Teaching that authentically incorporates values based on indigenous worldviews helps students to develop a positive sense of belonging and identity (Milne, 2013; Rameka, 2018). Measuring success based solely on

academic achievement does not meet the direction for Māori students to achieve ‘as Māori (Berryman et al., 2016). Again, as educators we need to critically examine our own worldviews and the hegemonic structures in which we work (Rameka, 2016; Rameka, 2018) in order to meet the aspirations whānau have for their children (Highfield et al., 2023).

There has been a history of intentional exclusion of whānau voice from our education system. More recent government policies and directives have set out to amend this situation but with limited direction and instruction to schools on how to achieve this (Hohneck, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2015; Office of the Auditor General, 2016). As noted above there has been a lack of shared understanding of the terms used to describe the inclusion of whānau voice in decision making. With these things it mind an examination of what whānau voice could look like that includes the perspectives of whānau seems a necessary step.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The voices of whānau themselves and their perspectives of their experiences were necessary to this research. Therefore, it was important that the theory underpinning this research and the steps taken to gather and analyse the viewpoints of research whānau honoured their voices, perspectives, ontologies and epistemologies without imposing researcher bias or abusing the goodwill of participants. The methodology and methods outlined below were selected for the purpose of centring these voices.

In this chapter I explain the methodologies, my personal positioning as a Pākehā researcher and methods that I have used to gather participants voices and include them in the decision making and analysis of their stories.

Research Questions

The central question that this research set out to find out was:

How did one school community attempt to develop productive partnerships between school and whānau to meet the directions given in Ka Hikitia?

The following sub-questions were necessary to understand whether the school's perceptions aligned with those of school whānau:

- To what extent did school whānau experience productive partnerships with the school?
- What were the barriers and enablers of productive partnerships between whānau and school?
- Were school whānau able to demonstrate rangatiratanga when working in the school contexts?
- What learning and recommendations could the research participants offer to other school communities working towards developing productive partnerships?

Research Paradigm

Qualitative Research

The questions that this research is seeking to answer are focussed on the memories, experience and feelings of the research rōpū perceptions of partnership with the school as they engaged with the process of developing a values-based curriculum. A qualitative research paradigm was selected to enable us to gather the stories of how they view their experiences through their own epistemological and ontological lenses. This enabled me as the researcher to gather information in a way that acknowledges the humanity, experience, values and perspectives of the research rōpū.

There has been a political drive towards evidence-based, data driven approaches to educational research (Tarozzi, 2022). Quantitative research can give us a macroscopic overview, but it is qualitative research that delves in and uncovers the stories and dynamics behind the numbers (Brinkmann, 2017). In Aotearoa/New Zealand we know that the quantitative data shows that Māori student attainment (Highfield & Webber, 2021)

and retention (Education Counts, 2025) at secondary school is lower than for other ethnic groups and that this has been a long-term issue. Qualitative research projects that allow us to understand the real-life experiences of the people behind the data and, through this, gaining an understanding our own contexts and perspectives, becomes a point from where we can make purposeful change. To identify our possible points of change as a school this research needed to explore beyond a surface-level count of parental involvement to understanding the perspectives of the whānau involved.

Culturally Responsive Research Methodology

Because relationships and the needs and voices of participants are crucial to this research, I chose to ground it within a culturally responsive research methodology.

While "there is no one definition of a culturally responsive methodology" (Berryman et al., 2013a, p. 3),it is an adaptive methodology that aligns with three goals of:

- embracing cultural and epistemological pluralism;
- deconstructing Western traditions of research; and,
- recognising the primacy of relationships.

Each of these goals align with the goals of this research. To delve into participants perceptions of the school's attempts to develop productive partnerships it was important to recognise the multiple cultural and personal identities that they bring to the table. and the knowledge and values that inform their viewpoints. By centring the voices of participants and developing our shared understandings through our interactions we were able to shift from the dynamic of Western research traditions in which the researcher defines the research (Bishop, 1997) to one in which the participants are active agents. Nurturing internal relationships within the research rōpū, including myself allowed us to move past surface-level talk and more deeply explore our research participants' insights.

As a researcher relying on honest whānau voice to answer questions that we could not as a school answer without making assumptions, it was important that any dialogue was not filtered through my own thinking. Choosing a methodology that centres the experience of participants while holding myself accountable to them was one means to safeguard against the risk of using their stories to reflect my own thoughts.

Berryman et al. (2013) describe culturally responsive research as being grounded in critical theory and kaupapa Māori theory. It draws from critical theory in being socially just, resisting the power dynamics of traditional research paradigms and requiring that researchers unlearn traditional hegemonic practices. It draws from Kaupapa Māori research by assuming the validity of Māori knowledge, language and culture (Smith, 2015) while benefitting the community that is involved in the research. Culturally responsive methodologies draw from kaupapa Māori theory in taking a decolonising stance, not imposing researcher agendas, respecting the mana motuhake of participants and being strongly based in relational practices (Berryman et al., 2013).

The questions that this research is addressing are oriented around how we validate and empower the voices of our school whānau within decision making. Using a culturally responsive methodology required that the

participants in this research collaborate in making decisions about the research process. This was a vital aspect of addressing potential power disparities between myself as a staff member in the school and the research participants as parents within the school community.

Culturally responsive methodologies position relationships as being central to the research process. Berryman and her colleagues (2013) suggest that the quality of relationships is more important in establishing valid, reliable and consistent outcomes than the selected research tools and that transparency and communication between researcher and participants reduces the risks of manipulation (Berryman et al., 2013). They describe the responsive dialogic space as one in which the cultural lives of both research participants and researchers are brought to the table with the intent of creating a third space in which co-creation of knowledge can occur. They describe this space as being where the terms of the relationship and rules of engagement are developed. This third space has a strong cultural footing, similar to wānanga, described as a spiralling of discussion as multiple perspectives are explored (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020), or 'va' - a Samoan concept referring to a space between people used to define and redefine relationships and obligations (Clayton, 2007). All stages of culturally responsive research require flexibility, communication and humility on the part of the researcher and has the potential to create in depth data that can develop outcomes that will be beneficial to participants' communities. It is important for the researcher to remain intentional and consistent in their focus on the methodology when issues arise (Seponski & Lewis, 2016).

Setting this research within culturally responsive methodologies focussed me as the researcher on ensuring that the methods that I then selected for gathering participants' voices were conducive to the development of this 'third space' that enabled ongoing discussion and revisiting of ideas while holding me accountable to the research rōpū.

Culturally responsive research encourages the researcher to frame themselves as learners working alongside participants who are the experts on their own worlds, ontologies and epistemologies requiring democratic participation in the co-creation of knowledge (Berryman et al., 2013). While being informed by the knowledge of participants, research must also be accountable and beneficial to the participants. Winfield et al. (2025) describe this as moving "ourselves and our shoes out of the way to allow the participants to speak for themselves, about themselves, and in the ways that make sense to them and our study" (p. 493). To address these aspects of using a culturally responsive methodology meant that as the researcher, beyond the gathering of voice, I needed to give consideration to ensuring that the analysis methods selected allowed for participants to decide how their stories were then going to be told.

Resistance to Western Research Paradigms

Research frameworks in which people are viewed as the subjects of research and analysed through lenses and understandings that do not align with their own has been detrimental to indigenous and other marginalised people (Bishop, 1997; Smith et al., 2016). According to Bishop it has left the power to define the research and its analysis to the researchers rather than participants (Bishop, 1997).

In privileging their own interpretation of events, researchers risk becoming tools of cultural assimilation within which some sources of knowledge are assigned more value than others (Smith et al., 2016). The use of research methodologies and methods that simplify and commodify Māori knowledge can deny the authenticity of Māori voices and misrepresent Māori views and experiences (Bishop, 2008). Where Māori voices are included without sensitivity to researcher bias and preconceptions, they may be distorted and constrained by the need to be adapted into the researcher's frameworks and epistemologies (Glynn, 2013).

The claims of impartiality that underpin some research paradigms can serve to reinforce existing hegemonies and have continued to pathologise indigenous issues and ideas. Culturally responsive research methodology intentionally sets out to deconstruct those assumptions. With its grounding in critical theory and kaupapa Māori research it is committed to decolonisation, socially just practices and centring participants and their world views in research (Berryman, Soohoo, et al., 2013).

Power and Positionality

As a Pākehā researcher and a member of staff in the school from which this research is based I have had to be mindful not just of the implications of being a pākehā researcher working with Māori and Tagata Moana research participants but also be mindful of potential power differentials caused by the role of the system I work in in the assimilation and oppression of Māori (Ngaamo, 2019). Researching with a community in which I have long standing relationships, including with the research rōpū, I have responsibilities and obligations to ensure that their stories are fairly and properly presented in a way that affirms their identities and mana motuhake (Woller, 2016). As a member of the research rōpū and a participant in the project that we were examining, I have my own memories and perceptions of events that each of us were a part of. I was an insider in that I participated in the same activities but an outsider in that I am a staff member rather than a whānau member of our school community. This meant that we had a starting point for dialogue due to our shared experience but that it was necessary that I be mindful to not shape the dialogue based on my own perceptions (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Writings on culturally responsive research methodologies are clear on the importance of positionality. Descriptions of who is taking part in the research should include the researcher, including not just who they are as an individual but also recognition of power and status that come with the institutions that they are involved with (Berryman et al., 2013a). As a researcher working within a culturally responsive framework, it is important to the research and the relationships with participants to bring your authentic self to the table, honestly identifying your subjectivities, positionalities and ideologies (Berryman, Soohoo, et al., 2013). Barnes notes that pākehā choosing to engage in research within others' worlds is an example of pākehā privilege, it is a choice that we have to opt in or out of these spaces (Barnes, 2013). It is therefore necessary for us to be clear with ourselves as well as others on our intentions and not to assume the role of "expert" but to offer the skills we have as contributions. It was made clear in our first hui as a research rōpū that what I was bringing to the table was the time and skills to gather, share and amplify the voices of participants.

Barnes (2013) further notes that we carry multiple identities with us including gender, sexuality and class as well as our ethnic identity while Bishop (2008) warns us against assuming homogeneity of Māori experiences as that ignores the diversity of individual identities. While being approached for this study primarily as parents, the participants carry other roles and histories as ex-educators, union representatives, prior members of School Boards, grandparents and cultural leaders.

Bishop (2008) advocates for the Initiation, Benefits, Representation, Legitimation, Accountability (IBRLA) approach to address issues around power dynamics in research (see table 1, below). This asks us to consider questions around: initiation, benefits, representation, legitimacy and accountability requiring us as researchers to ask throughout whose interests are being served by the research. Similarly, culturally responsive research requires researchers and participants to co-create the questions, research design and analysis (Berryman et al., 2013). Further to this, they explain that research findings are not the sole property of the researcher. They are shared with the participants, with decisions about dissemination being made collaboratively. This collaborative development of research allowed for honest and genuine whānau voice and critique of our school practices and hold myself, in my role as researcher, accountable to my community.

Table 1: Applying IBRLA to this research

IBRLA	Questions to be asked	Application in this research
Initiation	Who initiated the research, and why? What were the goals of the project? Who set the goals?	While the research was initiated by the researcher the questions arose from discussions with staff and school whānau over a number of years. The goals and design of the project were outlined, discussed and adjusted as a research rōpū in our first hui-a-rōpū.
Benefits	What benefits will there be? Who gets the benefits? What assessment and evaluation procedures will be used to establish benefits? How does this study support Māori cultural and language aspirations?	The intentions of this research were to improve the standing of whānau voice in school decision making thereby improving the school's practices in relation to productive partnerships and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to ultimately benefit our students. Research rōpū were an active part of all decisions around evidence gathering, analysis and presentation.
Representation	Whose interests, needs and concerns does the text represent? What agency do individuals or groups have? Whose voice is heard? Who did the work?	The voices of the research rōpū were centred throughout the research, in decision making, interviews and analysis. The role of the researcher was organising resources and recording evidence.
Legitimation	What authority does the text have? Who defines what is accurate, true and complete in a text? Who constructs theories to explain the findings?	The research rōpū consisted of members of our school whānau representing a range of different identities and groups within our wider community. The decisions about themes and ideas to be presented in the findings were theirs.
Accountability	Who is the researcher accountable to? Who is to have accessibility to the research findings? Who has control over the distribution of the knowledge?	As a longstanding member of staff at the school, teacher of their children and associate of the members of the research rōpū I have long-term relationships with the research rōpū members based on trust, honesty and care. I am accountable to the research whānau and presenting this research in any way other than what I was directed to would damage my relationships and standing within our community. While anonymity is established within this text and it is published alongside University of Waikato guidelines,

		research whānau have the choice to present the research along with the researcher to other school stakeholders.

The need for my accountability to my community is underscored by Grey and his colleagues (2017), who state "the researcher–research-participant relationship is nearly always one of unequal power – power of knowledge, the power to act and the power to allocate resources" (p. 26).

Bishop explains that the storyteller has the power to define the story and its meaning (Bishop, 1999). It is vitally important that researchers, like me, who are both the researcher, the writer and a participant, are mindful of the power they hold in deciding who will be included in the research, what will count as evidence and how it will be reported. Researchers from societally privileged positions understand and interpret through their own epistemological lens, which has had a destructive impact on the knowledge bases of Māori and other indigenous groups (Berryman et al., 2017). The role of the researcher is not to speak for others but to co-construct mutual understanding (Bishop, 1995). Similarly, for this research, it was not my place to decide for whānau how to measure whether they have had a genuine voice in their interactions with school. By positioning myself from the beginning as a co-inquirer with participants (Berryman et al., 2013 a) we were able to develop measures that meet the needs of the research rōpū. Our initial research rōpū hui involved discussion of our roles within the research, that my role as a co-inquirer was to facilitate time and space and record their thinking, not to direct the research outcomes.

The dialogic space is described in *Culturally Responsive Methodologies* (Berryman et al., 2013) as a space where respectful relationships that promote participation are negotiated. It is in this space that conversations that address power distribution can occur. Again, this was an essential part of the groundwork within our first hui. These discussions included setting expectations for my behaviour and support systems for research rōpū members if they felt that their voices weren't being valued.

Winfield et al. (2025) assert that viewing and accepting our participants' existence in its entirety is an act of care. Barnes' work with Pākehā researchers found that a commitment to sustaining long term relationships is important to effective research (Barnes, 2013) while Woller (2016) believes that it is crucial for relationships to be mutually empowering and founded on values such as manaakitanga and whanaungatanga in order to uplift the mana of all involved and the research itself. As the relationships between myself and research rōpū already existed prior to the research, they are relationships that I was and am invested in maintaining. Hui were run with a basis in tikanga Māori as this was a familiar cultural context for all research whānau and a regular aspect of our previous school-based interactions. Hui locations were collectively decided on to ensure that all research rōpū were able to operate in a space that they felt comfortable and welcome.

Methods

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an inquiry framework that is utilised in collaboration with those most affected by an issue that is being studied to facilitate changes. It is a cyclic process in which researchers and participants collaborate through democratic decision making (Lawson et al., 2015) Developing a research partnership is followed by research design, data collection, analysis, dissemination and action (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). It prioritises the co-construction of research through partnerships between researchers and those with lived experience (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020).

PAR was selected as the method for this research as it aligned with the goals of culturally responsive research methodologies to be relationally oriented, centre the voices of participants and the positioning of the researcher as a co-learner (Berryman et al., 2013). PAR positions me as both the researcher and a participant in line with the dialogic aspects of culturally responsive methodologies. As a cyclic process, PAR allows us to adapt to the needs of the research and its participants, aligning with the expectations of responsiveness within culturally responsive methodologies. It is a research process that aligns well with Bishop's IBRLA approach as the questions around representation, legitimation and accountability are built into the research process in which research participants are a part of the decision-making process.

PAR uses systematic research methodologies while prioritising the expertise of those with lived experience. Cornish et al. (2023) describe PAR as not having a set design or following a specific methodology but rather as a form of emancipatory scholarship that follows the key principles of: authority of direct experience, knowledge in action, research as a transformative process and collaboration through dialogue. Where traditional research methods have the potential to further marginalise vulnerable groups PAR's focus on prioritising the experience and voice of its participants can mobilise and empower people (Lawson et al., 2015).

PAR is a research method that is well-aligned with culturally responsive research methodologies. Trust, honesty, and integrity are integral to developing the relationships that underpin the research and are qualities that are essential to both culturally responsive research methodologies and to PAR (Berryman et al, 2013; Cornish et al., 2023; Lawson et al., 2015). Furthermore, relational processes and the sharing of leadership within research can facilitate empowerment and growth within marginalised groups (Lawson et al., 2015; Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020) and that it can be an emancipatory tool of resistance (Eruera, 2010; Lawson et al., 2015). Cornish et al. (2023) reinforce the importance of researcher positionality and its interaction with the varied positionalities of research participants. A PAR approach enabled participants to determine the research trajectory, from initial process decisions through to final data analysis and conclusions.

Interviews as Conversations

The primary data collection method within this framework was in the form of interviews as conversations in order to enable myself and the research participants to co-construct meaning and minimise any potential for me to impose my own thinking onto participants responses (Bishop, 1999).

A research interview is designed to get participants to share their view of the world through the lens of their own ontology (Kvale, 1996). It is a structured conversation, a way of telling a story about a subject that both the interviewer and interviewee have an interest. Rather than a structured series of questions and answers, in depth, qualitative interviews are modelled on conversations and aim towards understanding participants' perspectives of their lives and experiences (Taylor et al., 2015).

An advantage of interviewing as a data collection method is that it enables a greater depth of information to be gathered, and participants can become more involved and motivated. The accompanying disadvantage is that it can be affected by interviewer subjectivity (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Bishop (1995) while the interviewer can control the direction of the interview and this can be repressive of the interviewees voice, semi-structured, in-depth interviews as conversations can promote openness and reciprocal discussion that can elicit the thoughts of an interviewee in relation to their own worldview. Listening to others' stories is not always comfortable but is a necessary precondition for encouraging storytelling (Larsen, 2013). Storytelling through interviews in this context is culturally responsive and relevant to indigenous methodologies (Bishop, 1995; Larsen, 2013).

An interview as conversation was held individually with each member of the research rōpū. The purpose of these interviews was to elicit the views of the research rōpū members in relation to the inclusion of their voices and demonstration of whānau rangatiratanga in the development of our values-based curriculum. The selection of interviews as conversations as the method for this was to elicit deeper understanding of participants thoughts and feelings about the process, enabling reciprocal conversation and questioning and prompting to ensure clarity of participants contributions and minimising researcher imposition.

A research interview is both generation and interpretation of text (Kvale, 1996). Bishop (1999) stated that traditionally the researcher has taken the role of narrator making decisions about what and how a story is told. He previously warned that leaving the coding or categorisation of themes from interviews to researchers does not address potential issues of researcher imposition and suggests a collaborative process of co-creation of meaning and stories, statements or narratives (Bishop, 1995).

A second session with each individual took place after they had the time to review their research recording and summary notes. This session was not about further questioning but about shared sense-making. According to Bishop (1995) "the participants' words themselves are flexible, being of less importance than the collaboratively constructed views and meanings of the research participants" (p. 77). This session was an opportunity to work together to collaboratively decide on key themes and develop summaries of participants' main ideas that they felt reflected the thoughts that they wanted to communicate.

Collaborative Storying

To ensure that the evidence gathered in this research was not impacted by my own assumptions, a second individual meeting with each research whānau member was held to develop the stories of their interviews from the recordings, summaries and my notes. Cohen et al. (2007) warn of unwitting evidence being that which may be inferred by the researcher but not intended by the participant.

This second meeting ensured that the message taken was the message intended while also allowing participants time to reflect and clarify points that they had made in line with Bishop's (1995) view that participants should be part of developing their own stories. Kvale (1996) claims that a transcribed interview text gives an incomplete picture of the wealth of meaning within an interview and that interpretation may be negotiated with interview subjects. Through this second meeting with individual participants, we worked together to identify key themes, messages, quotes and statements that the participants felt accurately conveyed the ideas that they wanted to express.

The Research Process

Due to the nature of this research, with participants sharing their thoughts and feeling about a process undertaken in a school with which they are still deeply involved fully informed consent was crucial (see Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3).

As the research was being undertaken within the school community and had the potential to reflect on the school and the potential to impact on the school's future practices approval was also sought from the school principal (see Appendix 4).

There were four main parts to the research process.

1. *Initial Hui*

We began with a group hui involving myself and the research rōpū. The purpose of this hui was whakawhanaungatanga, establishing our relationship as a research rōpū and establishing expectations for the research. Within PAR it is important that participants make choices about the goals, structure and tools used in the research (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020).

We (the research rōpū) discussed our roles as researcher and participants within the research rōpū, potential power dynamics and made decisions about tikanga and support systems. We established guidelines for our hui and established plans for negotiating any disagreements.

We examined the research questions and clarified what we wanted to find out and why. We discussed how we would work together to explore what had happened as our school set up our values curriculum (Te Ara Tupuranga), consider how our various roles had contributed and what had helped or hindered us in fully contributing to the process. We agreed that the process had been very valuable and that we wanted to support others (both whānau and school personnel) and ourselves in considering how partnerships could be developed within their own settings.

We considered the proposed research process, discussed what that looked like in practical terms, and whether it was appropriate to meet our research goals.

All discussion and decisions were recorded in hui minutes that were shared with the rōpū for reflection and reference.

2. *Individual Interview as Conversation*

Each member of the research rōpū first took part in an interview as conversation following our discussion guidelines (Appendix 5) with me taking the role of the interview guide, asking the questions, prompting and clarifying responses. The discussion guides for the interviews were open-ended questions and prompts related to the overarching questions of this thesis covering the inclusion of whānau voice, barriers and enablers of participation and possibilities for improvements. The use of open-ended questions and discussion prompts allowed for flexibility enabling space for clarification, elaboration and addition of detail increasing the depth and comprehensiveness of responses (Cohen et al., 2007).

3. *Collaborative Storying - Co-construction of Summaries*

The second session with each individual was not an interview but a co-construction of meaning, creating stories and narratives from their interviews. After reviewing the recordings and notes from their interviews they were able to make any additions or clarifications of points they had made or remove information that they didn't feel represented their views well, was irrelevant or was not something that they wanted shared. At this point we were able to work together to collaboratively develop summaries of their interviews. All members of the research rōpū had used the time in between sessions for some critical reflection and came to this session with additional points that that wanted to make. While much of the interview content was positive about the process of developing our values-based curriculum, the reflective time with their recordings in between our two sessions had brought up some issues with the development and implementation that had not previously arisen. It had also clarified for the participants which points from their interviews they did want to emphasise. The summaries from these sessions were shared with the participants to again ensure that the key points that they wanted to make were all included and to allow another opportunity to make further inclusions.

4. *Collaborative Analysis Hui*

After each member of the research rōpū had completed their interview and summary sessions we held a second group hui to review our material and collaboratively decide on key themes and messages. Through being interviewed people may develop new insights and reflections on experiences or events that they may not have previously considered (Taylor et al., 2015).

Using some broad key discussion points to initiate our conversations (see Appendix 6) each individual's statements were grouped into sets with similar ideas and headings for each category decided on. As some statements could have fitted into more than one category permission was given to me by the group to move individual statements to a different section if I felt that it fitted better as I worked through our findings.

Through this process members of the research rōpū were able to see each other's views and contributions. This led to further discussion and some additional notes being added as participants commented on other viewpoints or ideas that they had struggled to articulate in their own individual interviews and storying hui. As part of our categorisation process, they were able to note which of each other's statements they were in agreement with, enabling me to see which ideas needed to be given more weight in the upcoming discussion chapter.

5. *Continued Collaborative Reflection and Decision Making*

Due to the cyclic and collaborative nature of PAR (Lawson et al., 2015) and the need for participants to make sense of their own stories (Bishop, 1995) there was a need for further communication after the collaborative analysis hui. This was conducted through email and secure shared documents. Through this we were able as a to ensure that all members of the research rōpū were part of any further decisions about the presentation of research.

The Participants

The participants are a purposive sample of school whānau who were identified as having been involved throughout the development of our values curriculum (Te Ara Tupuranga). Due to the long-term nature of this project the pool of potential participants was limited. While they are a small group, their wide range of familial, cultural, social and work connections throughout our community mean that they can be considered as representatives of a wider group of our school whānau.

Table 2: Participant descriptions

Parent A	Parent A is of Tongan and Pākehā descent. Her partner is Māori (Ngati Porou), Portuguese and Danish. Neither have had close connections to their cultural heritage and practices but are on a learning journey alongside their daughter which has included her enrolment in our reorua class. While her daughter has now moved on to the next stage of her education Parent A is still an active member of our school community.
Parent B	Parent B identifies as Samoan with Tongan whakapapa. The father of her children is of Cook Islands whakapapa. Their three children all attended this school for all of their primary schooling. All three children were part of our reorua class. While the last of her children is now at intermediate she now works at the school as a member of our learning support staff.
Parent C	Parent C is Māori of Tainui and Ngai Tuhoe descent. At the time that she began engaging in whānau hui at school she was a young mother and felt that she needed to become actively engaged in her daughter's mental and academic development while also having something to prove to her own whānau. Her youngest child is a current student at the school.
Parent D	Parent D is Māori, German, Irish and Danish. Her mother was Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Whatua ki Kaipara. Her tāne is also Māori from the Hokianga. She is the mother of seven children, all of whom have attended our school. She has been a parent at the school for over twenty years. She has worked within the education system in several different capacities over the years. Her mother was also a kaiako in kōhanga reo.
Myself	As this research is based on a Participatory Action Research (PAR) model I am also a participating member of our research whānau. I am a Pākehā classroom teacher of over twenty years' experience, holding a number of leading roles over those years. I was one of the founding teachers of our senior reorua class. I have always had a deep passion for whānau engagement and building strong communities around the children that we teach.

Analysis

Evidence analysis methods can carry the beliefs and assumptions of the researcher, they are not neutral (Mayan, 2023). As with the selection of research methodologies and methods that encourage collaboration and

centre the voices of participants for this research, the choices of analysis methods were also made to reduce the risks of researcher imposition in the selection of what was important and how these stories were told.

Decisions about data collection, validity and dissemination should be made collaboratively (Berryman et al., 2013). The parameters for data collection in culturally responsive research differ from traditional quantitative methods. Where traditional methods judge rigour and validity on the consistency and ability to be repeated, culturally responsive methods aim for integrity and depth of understanding of the stories and histories of the people participating in the research (Winfield et al., 2025).

Analysis in this research began during the interview process with analytic memos by the researcher (Saldaña, 2021) during and directly after the interviewing noting times for the recording and statements or ideas that stood out. Analysing throughout the process helps to build understanding from the data and adapt the research design as needed as good qualitative research should be data driven (Richards & Morse, 2013).

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was designed to develop theories from data gathered from real-world situations. Categories are decided and described based on what can be seen in the evidence and from analysis of similarities and differences between cases rather than trying to align evidence to pre-existing hypotheses (Oktay, 2012). More specifically, Constructivist Grounded Theory focuses on building meaning from the experiences of participants (Chun Tie et al., 2019).

The second group hui was for the purpose of developing themes and key ideas. Qualitative data analysis can be impacted by the ontological and epistemological assumptions of researchers (Mayan, 2023). Collaborative analysis through Grounded Theory was another means to ensure that the research findings accurately represented the views of the research whānau not the preconceived views of the researcher. We began by sharing the themes that had come up individually to identify any patterns that had emerged from the seperate interviews. We were then able to work through to identify links and connections and generate shared statements that reflected the group's thinking while still honouring individual contributions from the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Eruera (2010) explains that Participatory Action Research prioritises principles of participation, reflection, empowerment and emancipation. Through this method combined with culturally responsive research methodology which encourages relational, respectful research practices that honour the knowledge of participants (Berryman et al., 2013a) this research was intended to be guided by its participants to attempt to mitigate any power imbalances.

The research rōpū members are all parents at our school. They are all Māori and Pasifika/Tagata Moana. This means that potential power differentials exist not just between researcher and research rōpū, but also culturally and due to my position as a staff member at the school.

For researchers working with people the power over what is reported and how the story is told has traditionally sat with the researcher (Bishop, 1999). As a staff member of the school at the centre of this research, I hold a

professional position that traditionally holds power making decisions that have historically had negative impacts on Māori whānau (Ngaamo, 2019). As a pākehā researcher I must be mindful of the impacts past research has had on indigenous and other marginalised groups (Bishop, 1997; Smith et al., 2016).

I need to be mindful of the role of the system I work in in the assimilation and oppression of Māori (Ngaamo, 2019) and the history of research related to tangata Māori (Bishop, 1999). Woller (2016) suggests that working with tikanga Māori values such as manaakitanga and whanaungatanga are at the core of research relationships that uplift the mana of participants. Through a basis in tikanga Māori and ongoing focus on questions of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability (Bishop, 1995) the locus of power of this research is intended to sit with the research rōpū. Ensuring that these factors are maintained throughout the research involved personal reflection, check-ins and debriefing with participants (Kvale, 1996) and critical discussions with thesis supervisors and cultural advisors where needed. The participants have strong relationships between themselves as well as with the researcher. This provided participants with a strong mutual support network.

This research was conducted in line with culturally responsive methodologies. As such, my personal positions in relation to the research and the participants were made clear from the outset of the research and formed part of our positioning as a group. Tikanga Māori was followed where appropriate. As the participants come from a range of iwi as well as having multiple other identities, we deferred to the kawa/tikanga of mana whenua.

All ethical procedures as outlined by the University of Waikato were followed during this research. Informed consent was required prior to beginning the research with all participants receiving information about the research intentions and process before providing their consent and all participants knowing that they were able to withdraw themselves or their contributions (in full or in part) at any point before final confirmation of materials without any disadvantage.

Limitations

This research required a specific purposive sample of school whānau members who had been present during the development of the school's values-based curriculum and were still a part of the school community. This limited the numbers of potential participants significantly and due to these expectations also limited the group to people who are highly engaged with the school.

Due to the size and nature of the school's community, while presenting anonymity to the wider world on publication of this thesis is achievable, maintaining anonymity for participants within our own school community could not be guaranteed and this concern needed to be openly discussed within our first group hui.

The outcomes of our interviews as conversations and collaborative stories are personal reflections of the experiences of a specific group of people in a specific setting. While there may be some ideas within the findings of this research that may be useful to others, generalisability limitations apply as the participants were a small purposive sample whose experiences and views may not apply in other settings (Linton, 2020).

Summary

The choices of using a qualitative approach with a culturally responsive methodology were made to centre the relationships with participants and to honour their voices. The Participatory Action Research model gave us as a research rōpū the ability to make and revisit decisions about the research process and analysis to ensure that it was meeting the needs of the participants.

Through the Interviews as Conversations research rōpū members engaged in discussion with me about the process of developing our values-based curriculum and their perceptions of how partnership and Rangatiratanga occurred within that context.

After reviewing their transcripts and recordings from their Interviews as Conversations all of the research rōpū attended their Collaborative Storying Hui with their own notes and reflections. Together we summarised their main ideas and selected quotes from their interviews that illustrated what they wanted to say. This process was invaluable to the research and aligning it with Culturally Responsive Methodologies as this was the point at which all participants expressed a feeling of control over how their stories were represented.

Gathering together again for our analysis hui to share the summaries and the thinking behind them before collaboratively developing themes again, enabled all participants to maintain control of the narrative that was being developed.

As additional ideas arose through developing the discussion of these findings further communication was undertaken with the research rōpū to ensure that I was maintaining the integrity of their contributions throughout this thesis.

The following chapters will present the outcomes of this research and a discussion of the lessons to be gained from it.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

> *"It's not us and them. When you put stuff together in your kura your staff has got to be with your whānau and your whānau has got to be with your staff. We (everyone involved) should be whānau."* [1]

Whānau is the core structure of Māori society. Traditionally whānau has been a kinship model, multiple generations of people with shared ancestry (whakapapa) and shared collective responsibilities working together towards the wellbeing of the collective. While the traditional kinship model of whānau is still the core social structure of Māori, due to contemporary needs an additional model of kaupapa-based whānau has arisen (Tinirau, 2020). Kaupapa-based whānau often have similar rules and expectations to traditional whānau, but with the connections being based on a shared purpose rather than a shared whakapapa. Kaupapa-whānau can have a range of timeframes and functions for their members (Tomlins-Jahnke & Gillies, 2012). So, within contemporary settings, particularly with large numbers of people living away from their kinship whānau, kaupapa-based whānau can provide a relationally-based setting for working together towards a shared purpose.

Our wider school community and our research rōpū are both kaupapa-based whānau. Within both of these groups, individuals each have our own roles and strengths. As kaupapa-based whānau, we aim to use those strengths to supplement and complement each other's work to benefit the collective group.

This research investigated whether the school's aims to develop productive partnerships with whānau as directed by Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) were effectively met, whether whānau felt that they were able to demonstrate Rangatiratanga in this context and what improvements could be made towards building a more effective partnership. We used the context of the development with whānau of our school's values-based curriculum (Te Ara Tupuranga). The development of Te Ara Tupuranga was a long-term project in which partnership with whānau was an important aspect. To investigate the effectiveness of our partnership process – were the partnerships that were considered to be "productive partnerships" in the eyes of the school, seen the same way by those we partnered with?

Research Partnerships:

An early finding of my research was a distrust of the research process by the participants. All of the research rōpū participants were initially nervous about the process, signing their names to the required paperwork, not knowing who else would be involved and about what difference what they personally have to say could actually make. They were worried whether the group would be people that they would be comfortable to share their stories with. As one put it, there is a difference between their public self and their authentic self and who gets to see each version.

[1] The voices of participants are woven though this section as their voice is as important as the writer's voice.

The initial whakawhanaungatanga hui allowed them to see who else was involved and also, despite being very different people, to connect as a group and discuss their expectations and questions about the research process. They developed a sense that we were all working together towards a shared outcome. A safe process allowed for the honest sharing of views and demonstrated their voice was important and would be respected and heard. Therefore trust grew.

All became invested in the research, arriving at their interviews and storying hui with their own notes to ensure that they included everything that they wanted to say. Having the storying hui was a vital part of the process for the participants. After reviewing their recordings, transcripts and summmaries, being able to process and consider what they had said and what they had missed gave them control over how their voices were represented. So, we can see that, when the conditions are right, parents will willingly contribute to conversations that will make the education system better for their children and for the children of others.

Being able to work together to develop the themes for these findings further empowered the research rōpū, giving them control over their collective ideas and the messages that were being developed from these. The discussions around these themes and the placements of ideas and quotes gave us further insight into what each others' thinking had been. Seeing their own words quoted in the collective summaries further affirmed to each person the value of their idividual contributions.

> *"What **I** say does matter."*

All seemed surprised at how much they ended up enjoying being involved in the research with it having a deeper effect on their awareness of their own capabilities and further interest in the topic. They felt that the research methods actually reflected the purpose of the research - the active involvement of whānau in making decisions. For a couple of them it has kindled an interest in returning to higher education.

> "*The research process was a process for my **self.**"*

Engagement and Empowerment:

The themes that arose from the analysis hui were developed collaboratively. The research rōpū determined that interactions with the school fitted broadly within two categories:

1. Engagement: Interactions that engaged whānau and made them want to be present at school and;
2. Empowerment: Interactions that empowered whānau and gave them a voice within school decision making.

We found that manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga were crucial to developing positive engagement with the school. Under the umbrella of empowerment, the research rōpū identified the following as important: huihuinga – the process of meeting, kātoitoi – responsiveness and the quality of feedback communicated by the school and the alignment of the values of the kaupapa for the school with their own values, outlined in the table below. Investigating the process for developing Te Ara Tupuranga - our values curriculum – provided a context where there was clear alignment with the priorities and values of the whānau involved (of whom this research rōpū is a subset).

Table 3: Engagement and Empowerment – key themes as defined by the research rōpū

Engagement		Empowerment		
Manaakitanga *(Hospitality and welcoming)*	***Whakawhanaungatanga*** *(Building relationships)*	***Huihuinga*** *(Meeting together)*	***Kātoitoi*** *(Feedback, responsiveness)*	***Whanonga pono*** *(Aligning our values)*
Mindfulness of how we present as staff Whānau need to feel that their presence is welcome and valued Whānau to whānau manaakitanga	Staff should walk their talk Staff see the value in building relationships Staff are members of our community	*Attendance* *Building connections* *Having a voice*	Enablers Barriers	Values connecting home and school Impact on Students Impact on Staff

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga is defined in English as hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others (Moorfield, 2003). On deeper examination it derives from the words mana (influence, prestige, power) and aki (to urge on) (H. W. Williams, 1971) and reflects the mana accorded to others by your treatment of them and the reciprocal reflection of mana accorded to hosts through their treatment of visitors (Martin, 2010).

In our school context manaakitanga is about how we make our whānau feel when they enter the school, whether they feel welcome, respected and valued within our environment.

Consciousness of How Staff Present to Whānau

We identified the need for the school, and its staff need to be intentional in planning how they are going to engage with school whānau and conscious of how they present, act and react in their interactions. Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008) identified parents' perceptions of teachers' attitudes and parents' prior experiences of education as being potential barriers to engagement.

Many of our school whānau carry previous negative experiences of the education system with them. The choices we make about how we engage with those whānau can either break down or reinforce these perceptions.

One of our research rōpū has been a parent at the school for over twenty years. When her older children went through the school, stepping onto the school grounds she felt awkward and uncomfortable, as if she was imposing in somebody else's space. Ultimately the power to determine the levels of whānau engagement with a school resides with the school itself (Berryman et al., 2015) and she felt that the school at the time only wanted to engage with whānau on the school's terms.

She felt that this changed with the arrival of key staff who demonstrated manaakitanga towards whānau. She felt that these staff genuinely wanted to work with school whānau. They put time into creating whānau hui that

considered their work hours and need for childcare while allowing time and space for engagement rather than just presenting to or 'at' whānau.

> *"It took staff to 'warm' the space and show that they were there to hear what was being said by whānau and to be conscious of how they speak and present themselves to whānau. It's about warming up that space with your whānau because then you no longer look at them like just my child's teacher."*

Her kōrero on this topic included the need for school staff to consider how they present themselves physically, how they are dressed, where and how they sit in a hui space, how the hui space is set up.

> *"Sometimes whānau can look at the way a teacher's dressed, and if you're all up there it can make them feel awkward."*

She tells the story of a koroua that she brought along to a whānau hui. He was reluctant to attend due to his own history with the school as a parent when his children were young. On the way home afterwards his conversation with her was about a staff member wearing sneakers and sitting on the floor. To him this was reflective of staff that were not holding themselves above or separate to the whānau that they were working with.

Whānau Need to Feel That Their Presence Is Welcome and Valued

As well as feeling welcome, we found that school whānau need to feel like their presence is genuinely valued in our school spaces, that they have standing – mana ōrite. Our spaces and people need to give the message to whānau that we want and need you here and that the knowledge you carry will be valued (Berryman et al., 2015). Three of the research whānau specifically mentioned having doubts about attending whānau hui at school that were allayed after they attended and realised that they weren't being judged by staff or other whānau.

> *"It was a feeling of nil judgment, like, we were all the same. Sometimes whānau can feel like the teachers are above us and superior."*

> *"There was no opinion that was a stupid opinion, or there was nothing that was a taboo sort of topic, and after that first meeting, that meeting was the one that made me want to keep coming back."*

Part of manaakitanga in its definition as hospitality is the sharing of kai (food). Sharing food is important and universal across many cultures. Sharing a meal as part of whānau hui provided time for conversation that wasn't task related so that people could get to know each other as individuals outside their roles as parent or teacher (Karaka-Clarke, 2019). People shared recipes, had time to process their thinking while also removing the potential obstacle to attendance of having to get home to cook for their own families. Sharing kai relaxed people.

Whānau To Whānau Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga was demonstrated by school staff and by whānau towards other whānau. The research rōpū determined that this was crucial as it demonstrates that some of our school whānau were feeling a strong

enough sense of belonging to the school that they were taking responsibility for encouraging and welcoming others into our space.

> *"As well as staff there were key people driving and encouraging attendance and engagement from amongst our school whānau. People with a strong sense of manaakitanga who ensured that new whānau felt welcomed and included."*

Manaakitanga from whānau to whānau demonstrates to those who are new to the school that school whānau have a place here (Education Review Office, 2008). Our research rōpū concluded that connections between whānau members are an important part of the process. By demonstrating manaakitanga to newcomers in hui, encouraging attendance, talking outside of hui to clarify their own thinking, sharing their understanding, they are building connections and community. Within a diverse community sharing ideas and the reasoning behind them helps everyone to build understanding of each other and establishes common ground.

> *"I tried to manaaki. When you manaaki and you use tikanga around practices on how you treat people, that's when you get people asking questions. After a lot of those whānau hui, other whānau, would come up to me later on in the schoolgrounds, and say, "hey, you know what you were talking about da, da da..." and I'd go, "Oh yeah, because ... " so they might not have wanted to talk right there in hui, but it did open up more conversations later on, which to me is very meaningful and then some of those ones have got more actively involved over time."*

Whakawhanaungatanga

While Whanaungatanga is simply defined as relationship, whakawhanaungatanga is the process of building relationships (Moorfield, 2003). It can be further defined as sense of family connection or a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging (Moorfield, 2003). Traditionally, whanaungatanga is the structural underpinning of te ao Māori, based on kinship ties and whakapapa. Modern realities have extended these relationships to include a range of other connections and relationships. Within the concept of whanaungatanga sit reciprocal rights and obligations in which individuals are supported and the group is strengthened (Ngāpō, 2025).

Walk Your Talk

A key message that came through across all areas of our discussions was that staff should not be asking anything of the school's wider whānau that they are not prepared to do themselves. To build and nurture long term relationships we need to be prepared to walk alongside our whānau even when it takes us outside of our comfort zone (Barnes, 2013). One of the research rōpū called this 'walking the talk', that staff remember to reflect the values that they are trying to instil into others, and to do that with humility and accountability. This is an important part of the reciprocal relationships, that staff, tamariki and their whānau all understand that this is part of the dynamics of how we work as a school whānau and build genuine, respectful relationships and that nobody within that dynamic expects more of others than they are prepared to put forward themselves.

A discussion that arose was that not all members of our school community want to participate in hui. There needs to be space available for them to also be actively involved within the school. There are many who are

more comfortable with giving and offering their expertise on practical activities. Whanaungatanga with those whānau members is developed by working alongside them, with staff who are prepared to do the hard work, get dirty and laugh while doing it. All of the research whānau pointed out that their partners fitted into this group and had only very occasionally attended hui if at all.

Staff See the Value in Building Relationships

Staff need to see and feel that relationships with school whānau are valuable. Our research whānau mentioned interactions in which staff said the 'right' words but as whānau members they felt that they were imposing on the staff members' time or space. It is important that teachers and other school staff see the development of relationships with school whānau as being of value rather than extra work (Bull et al., 2008). School whānau members also exist within a wide range of their own networks that we can both draw from and contribute to (Berryman & Ford, 2017).

> *"If you have those relationships with one another there won't be so much load on teachers. There's a wealth of knowledge in schools with whanau when you really get to know whānau, that's why relationships are important too. Either they've got some skills or knowledge that nobody knows or they've got hella networks that nobody knows about. And it could take a huge load off schools, but you're not going to know that unless you get to know them and don't just get to know them either just for that time when you needed them."*

We Are Members of Our Community

During her collaborative storying hui I shared a quote with one of the research rōpū,

> *School leaders and teachers who want to work with Māori communities need to be prepared to accept that there are no boundaries between professional and personal worlds. When you commit to the project, you commit to the kaupapa, you commit to the people that you are working with. This means that the people need to be able to call on you (have access to you). You cannot conveniently retreat behind the professional image or "working" days and hours. This requires school leaders and teachers to live their lives in a different way and to understand the concept of the "collective" (Berryman et al., 2015. p. 22).*

Her response was to say that you don't draw that professional boundary with Māori, that you have to have time to laugh and to share your lives beyond what you do for work. You need to create time and space to make people feel valued.

A common theme that emerged from the interviews was that their children spend a significant amount of time at school and that building relationships between staff and the children's whānau was important.

> *"If you work like a whānau, you'll get better outcomes because in any kura High School, ECE, our babies are there more times than they are at home Monday to Friday. It's like their second home."*

"Whānau hui created a space where trust and relationships were built so that when there was an issue at school there was always at least one member of staff that could be sought out to have a conversation with."

While within this research we were examining the extent of productive partnership within the context of developing our values curriculum, the research rōpū believe that the ultimate goal of whānau engagement and partnership is not just about achieving specific goals or tasks it is about building a community around our tamariki. One of the research rōpū brought up having watched all of the adults at a recent Kapa Haka wānanga.

"Staff and parents, talking to, encouraging, supporting tamariki that aren't their own, and occasionally growling. For those of us living in the city, this is what we are trying to build, a village around our children."

Empowerment

The research rōpū selected the term empowerment for practices enacted within the school environment that encouraged whānau to have a voice in school decision making.

Huihuinga

Fish, Flavell and Cunningham (2022) noted that when whānau first arrived at hui they would watch how the meetings ran, who spoke and what was open for discussion and that what those whānau observed would impact on their future engagement.

When we organise hui with school whānau we are asking them to potentially give up a substantial amount of time. They need to see that there is a purpose to them attending. Discussion within hui needs to be meaningful. Holding hui in the evenings, sharing kai and providing supervision for children eliminated some of the barriers to attendance so that coming along was less of an inconvenience.

Including tikanga Māori as part of the hui process was important for Māori and non-Māori whānau alike (Karaka-Clarke, 2019). Beginning with karakia and mihi whakatau establishes the tone and intent of the hui and acknowledges everybody present. Karakia before kai, as well as serving a cultural purpose defines the space between work time and social time. Karakia whakamutunga at the end of the hui again acknowledges the people attending, the work that has been done and closes out the time cleanly.

Ensuring that hui included tikanga and that whānau were accorded parity (mana ōrite) with any attending staff made them a space in which whānau felt that they belonged and that their contributions mattered.

"There was no opinion that was a stupid opinion, or there was nothing that was a taboo sort of topic, and after that first meeting, that meeting was the one that made me want to keep coming back."

"I think the best ideas are produced over laughs and kai."

Whānau Attendance at Hui:

Schools regularly invite their community to events at school. However, participants spoke of their reluctance to attend if they could not see a purpose for attending whānau hui. It was important to them that meetings or hui

they attended went beyond the school giving them information and that their presence contributed to improved outcomes or opportunities for their children and for those that would follow. All of the research rōpū spoke about their decisions to start attending being based on needing to know about what was happening within the school for their children. They each began attending because they felt that being involved at school was important, setting an example to their children through their presence.

> *"This is what I have to do, because just turning up to school wasn't going to be enough to get my daughter to where I had a fair idea of where I wanted her to be in life. I knew the importance of these hui was laying a foundation for what was in store. So yes, it was scary, but I got over it.*

Building Connections:

Once school whānau have attended a hui they should want to continue participating. They need to feel connected, valued and invested in what is happening within that space. The research rōpū noted that gathering together at whānau hui was an opportunity to build connections between kaiako and whānau to work together for the benefit of our tamariki while adding that it was also a way to build connections with other parents. Building relationships between people, not between staff and parents is a strong foundation for being able to effectively work together. Relationships happen between people, not between people and an institution (Office of the Auditor General, 2013). They need to be founded in culturally responsive practices and built on mutual respect for each other's contributions (Berryman & Ford, 2017).

> *"Being a young mum, it was daunting and walking into a room for, for me, I felt like these are older people, they're more experienced. They know what they're talking about. But I also understood that is my role as a mum. I got over it, and I made a lot of friends, lifelong friends."*

Having A Voice:

One of our research rōpū spoke about prior attempts at having meetings that families were invited to attend. She felt that the outcomes of those meetings were pre-determined and involved staff talking and whānau listening, not two-way communication. She felt that this disengaged whānau, and that space was not given for them to share their voices. It made her wonder why they were invited in if they were just there to listen, the school could have just sent out a newsletter. While we do have Māori staff, the institution that we are a part of is a Eurocentric one. It is important that we do not reinforce the dominant hegemony by assuming that our institutional knowledge is more valuable than that of our school's whānau (Glynn, 2013).

The research rōpū observed a high level of engagement and enthusiasm at whānau hui. It appeared that staff genuinely wanted to know what whānau thought and whānau wanted to participate in the process. How staff make space for people to be heard, without dominating the conversation or dismissing ideas are all observed and noted by attending whānau (Alansari et al., 2025).

> *"It was everybody, the teachers and the parents, having those discussions and hearing other people's thoughts."*

"I think there was so much involvement along the way and so many opportunities for people to have their say or for people to push pause, or to say, no, I don't agree."

To maintain attendance at whānau hui and make the experience meaningful it is important that whānau be heard and that their voices are valued. Giving a range of opportunities for input is important, but it is just as important to show that those voices are followed up on. Parent C specifically mentions the noise and laughter. She spoke about the room being full with high levels of engagement and those who were confident speaking up but for others there was the opportunity to talk in smaller groups and write their ideas down for staff to gather up.

"The conversations were open…and there were a range of ways of ways that whānau could contribute to the ongoing conversations."

The relationship and engagement needs to be ongoing, not make whānau feel like they are being used. Parent C believes that it is important to build links between home and school because nothing can happen without a foundation of whānau involvement. Schools are reliant on their parents and need to be aware of not taking time and labour from whānau for granted.

"That's not okay, you know, the ones that are just using you to pick your brains and see you later."

Kātoitoi

Kātoitoi is to respond or give feedback. We have chosen to use this to describe how the school responded to and provided communication around whānau input.

We found that this has been variable through different stages and iterations of the development of our school values curriculum. It has not been consistent throughout and features strongly in our future considerations.

Listening to whānau feedback

Overall the development of Te Ara Tupuranga was seen as a positive, something that reflected the values of home because it was done in conjunction with school whānau.

"The fact that you involved us and the school didn't just say "we put this together. This is our new… You know, this is what we're doing now." It was done mindfully. It was done with our involvement at all levels. And we were always checked in on."

During the periods of Te Ara Tupuranga development that the research whānau saw as the most collaborative the work on the school's end was slow and considered. Time was taken at each stage to go back to the school whānau with what we had worked on to check that we were on track and seek further feedback. This was part of a cycle of ongoing development in which nothing was finalised until everyone had seen each stage. All information we gathered from whānau was shared back to whānau.

"You guys gave us opportunities, several, to customise because you know, one size does not fit all. And on a lot of things and instances you don't get to, it's just here - this is what we're gonna do. I just think the fact that it was customized by whānau for whānau. That's worth celebrating."

The research rōpū felt that an important factor was that the input of school whānau into the development of Te Ara Tupuranga was a continual process, changes would be made based on input and then would be checked back.

> *"We're up to this stage, and this is what we've got. What do you think? Whether it be physically at the hui, with the minutes being taken or the handouts that were at the hui, whatever was written down or said was recorded. So, there was no way if you had your say that it wasn't taken into account. We always got the results, summaries of surveys and things like that"*

Gathering their voices is only the first step. Being seen to act on whānau voice is important. Putting their voices into action and having those actions be explicit and visible enables whānau to see that their voices have been heard and resulted in changes to the school. Being able to see the product of our work being visible in classrooms, school reports and around the school created a sense of ownership and achievement.

> *"If you had your say in it, it was taken into account and everybody's was. I've seen the final document, and I do recall the meetings. There's not one specific thing I can pinpoint and go, oh, I remember that so and so said that, but when you read through the explanations under each value it is sort of like, oh, that was something that was brought up at that hui."*

We found that a key component was being able to manage disagreement and take criticism. If whānau members express a viewpoint that you didn't expect or didn't agree with or is inconvenient for the timelines and goals of the school, it is not to be disregarded. Part of reaching consensus if you wish to be truly collaborative is to work through these disagreements.

> *"It is important that if schools are asking for whānau voice that they are prepared to hear things that they don't like. They need to be able to respond to feedback and continue to kōrero, make space to whakatika, not just roll ahead with their own plans when there is a difference in viewpoints."*

Responding To Whānau Feedback

We found that the school was not consistent in meeting the goals of collaborative development of our values curriculum. Some of this was due to circumstances outside of our control such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Some was due to staff getting caught up in timelines and school needs and failing to consciously plan around these. This has been identified as an issue for providers within health, education and social sectors where the desire to provide Kaupapa Māori based services can conflict with government and contract reporting requirements (Tinirau, 2020).

The research rōpū explained that when school whānau are asked to share thinking and ideas in hui, it is important to keep them informed about what is happening with what they have shared, respond to their ideas, not just use hui as an opportunity to collect data and information from parents. This happened with later versions of Te Ara Tupuranga when ideas were put forward from whānau and then no further discussion was had until the finished version was put out. It began to feel as if the development was more about meeting the school's needs and that staff had the final say. We were taking away from hui the ideas that aligned with our

own agenda (Berryman et al., 2015). In the beginning whānau voice was valued within the process, they were heard and their ideas were included into the work. However, later ideas were shared from which the school selected which ones would be used and ignored others that did not align with what the school wanted to put forward.

> *"Our voices were heard, but I think down the line it was, like some things started and then stopped."*

It is important to the research rōpū that when school whānau have contributed their time, thoughts and voice to a kaupapa that it is followed through on and that progress is shared and discussed. If whānau have given their time and energy they need to be kept updated with what is happening. Even if progress on a kaupapa has stalled, share that and the reasons for that honestly. To take the time of whānau without giving care and value to what they have offered could be perceived as parasitic (Winfield et al., 2025).

Whanonga Pono:

Values Connecting Home And School

The development of our values-based curriculum was viewed by all of the research whānau as an important part of building connections between home and school, particularly due to the amount of time their children spend at school. It was a way to establish shared expectations so that their children and themselves were able to continue to be who they are at school. As well as setting aspirational goals for students at school, Parent D explained her view that aligning school values with cultural and whānau values is another way to align home and school practices so that children do not have to shed their sense of self when they walk in through the school gates. Parent B explained that was good about Te Ara Tupuranga was that with whānau involvement in the development, the values that were represented reflected the values that whānau had at home. This aligns with Notman's suggestions that the teaching of values in schools was impeded by misalignment between home and school expectations (Notman, 2012).

> *"That was part of the reason why we pushed for that is that we wanted them to come to school, thinking that they're also at home because school was their second home. What you do at home is what you do at school. I wanted them to be the same person at home and to be the same person at school."*

The framework that the school and school whānau developed together is inclusive. Even though the values are named in te reo Māori and originate from a te ao Māori view all groups within the school were considered and included.

> *"The way that it was worded for some of the values, it was worded in such a way that it didn't matter if you were European, Māori. Pacific Island or whatever, you know it applied to you."*

Input from school whānau was important. If we wanted something that had support from everybody in rethinking how we delivered curriculum, what we wanted from our students, everybody needed to have input.

> *"I don't think that it could have been something that was just dictated straight from the teachers and from the school or, from a book of values or something like that because there are so many different*

walks of life at the school it needed a little bit of input from everybody. Having been included in the process there's more chances of me buying into it."

When most school whānau were initially asked about what they wanted from school the focus was on academics. When we asked what they wanted for their children when they grew up the responses were more holistic.

"With Te Ara Tupuranga it wasn't just the printing, handwriting, reading. It's not just that. That's what I liked about that, or loved and still love. That the main focus is the health and well-being mental, physical of our babies."

A point of interest that arose during our discussions was that going through this process caused some whānau to examine their own values and what they meant to them.

"If you'd asked me what my values were before I probably would have said, honesty, respect, compassion, that sort of thing, a big, long list of words that have become quite mundane and meaningless."

On reflection the parent quoted above felt that as the values were being discussed, she realised that they were things that they already believed in and followed as a whānau, concepts that resonated with them. She hadn't previously considered them to be values, just what they did. She believes that the values have become a part of how we are, both for us collectively as a school, and for them as an individual whānau.

"What do they say? "Be about it!" Be about it, you know?"

Impact On Students:

Since the schoolwide implementation of Te Ara Tupuranga staff and whānau have noticed shifts in the culture and behaviour of students at school. New staff and visitors comment frequently on how friendly and welcoming our students are. Tracking of Te Ara Tupuranga data and observations by staff and whānau have shown that students in the senior school are more engaged in developing and maintaining a schoolwide culture and frequently initiate projects that will benefit others.

Additionally, we have become aware that this impact carries on beyond what happens during their time at school with us. In a conversation with a staff member from one of our local intermediate schools, she mentioned that anytime there is an issue on their grounds and she finds a student helping to de-escalate, fix or provide comfort, it is always one of our ex-students. Research rōpū participants noted that they have seen ongoing changes in their own children, that they still carry themselves in a way that is mindful of Te Ara Tupuranga.

"Te Ara Tupuranga has had a positive influence on my child whether I knew it or not. She was able to excel culturally, physically, academically, sporting, her confidence. She was comfortable at home, but she was comfortable at school because she knew who she was and where she came from, personality wise, identity, and relationship wise as well, being able to establish and maintain healthy relationships.

As a young adult out of school, it has it's carried on with her in the way that she carries herself, what she knows to be correct."

"She still very much lives her day-to-day sort of self with those values in mind."

Impact On Staff:

The research whānau noticed that the implementation of Te Ara Tupuranga positively impacted on staff. For some staff the development and discussion of these values with school whānau shifted something in the way some staff related at school. Parent D explained that Te Ara Tupuranga changed the way some staff thought. Ones who had had a very Pākehā worldview *"tino āhua Pākehā rātou"* shifted their practice, enacted the values and became more relatable.

"Te Ara Tupuranga changed them. I saw the beauty, and when they've left us, I thought, man, it moulded them into something different, like it changed their practice professionally. Before they had those guidelines and that mahi and the tikanga around it they were doing their own practice that they'd come away with after their training or whatever. It changed them."

This experience, however, was not universal for staff and leads to some aspects of our considerations for future action. Many staff either already lived by these values or learnt from discussion with whānau and implementation in class. However, the research whānau noted that some staff did not appear to 'get' it on a deeper level or only perceived it as an additional assessment that needed to be completed as a child progressed through school. They felt that some were literally just ticking boxes without understanding the deeper meaning or purpose behind the values.

"It showed the ones that just turned up on a school day and just rolled it out because "we've got to tick these boxes", but it also showed the ones that were really doing it, living it."

"Some staff still didn't get it. I don't know what that would've looked like, maybe they could have had somebody that could've awhi-ed with that process."

There were also some disparities in how some staff interpreted the values compared to whānau who lived those values.

"A lot of what we'd put down, it's some of our life. We lived that, we live it, you know, and they were trying to direct what that looks like."

Where children were already being brought up with these values at home could have been an opportunity to build connections and eliminate barriers between home and school. It was noted by the research rōpū that some teachers took a while to understand that if the tamariki showed these values at home we could look at how that could contribute or relate to school life.

Developing Productive Partnerships with Whānau:

Zavala (2013) describes whānau as a grassroots structure that works from a 'bottom up' power structure enabling community self-determination while having the potential to be a space of healing, recovery and

nurturing development. Ideally, as schools aiming to meet our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, we should be working to give our school's whānau a voice in decision making in our schools to create a community around our students that is striving to create better outcomes for them.

Engaging and Empowering Whānau:

The process of initiating decision-making projects with school whānau must begin with manaakitanga and whanaungatanga. For our whānau to have a voice they must feel that they are a valued part of the school community. Staff must be conscious of their actions and interactions and how they present to whānau.

These two things should not just be the purview of staff. When staff alone are seen as the arbiters of manaakitanga within a school, it gives the message that this is our space and our role to determine who is welcome. When school whānau are enabled to manaaki and build relationships with other whānau members it breaks down barriers and gives a broader view of who 'belongs' in our space.

Within hui with whānau, whānau must feel that their voices are being listened to. The tone of conversation, who is getting time to speak, who is being listened to and how those thoughts are recorded and acted on is paid attention to (Fish et al., 2022). If school whānau do not see value and productivity in their attendance they will not continue to participate. Be conscious – of your interactions, your presentation, your actions.

The opening quote to this chapter included the statement *"You gotta be like a whānau."* As with any whānau you are not always going to agree on everything. How you negotiate these disagreements is vital, you cannot just disregard a viewpoint because it does not align with your own.

Communication must be reciprocal. When whānau have given you their time and energy, you must act on their ideas and if you are not able to at that time then explain why. Give updates and progress timelines. Do not consider a meeting about a project to be one and done, as you work through go back to the whānau to check in.

Within this research the barrier to our school's attempts at developing productive partnerships was a lack of consistent partnership practices. While each of us will individually work to move these practices forward without a shared view of what this is it is knowing what steps to take remains challenging.

Aligning Our Values:

Te Ara Tupuranga, our school's values-based curriculum has had a significant impact on our school. It has improved outcomes for our students, enabling us to measure their progress in a more holistic way than just measuring their academic achievement (Milne, 2013). It has had an impact on a number of staff throughout its implementation, causing them to re-evaluate what is important and how they model those expectations for children. In making these shifts they have subsequently improved their relationships with whānau.

By working alongside our school's whānau to develop our values curriculum we were better able to align the values based behaviour expected at school with those behaviours expected in our students' homes (Notman, 2012), thereby reducing the need for students to leave aspects of their personal identity at the school gate.

This research set out to evaluate with whānau whether our development of this curriculum was truly a collaborative process. The desire to be collaborative was there and aspects of the development did achieve this aim. When we were considered, deliberate in our choices and continued to return back to whānau as we wrote and adjusted our documents, taking time to resolve disagreements, we were succeeding in this aim.

When we allowed the needs and timelines set by the school, the system within which we sit, to determine our path forward (Berryman & Ford, 2017) we failed to manifest our stated goals of involving school whānau in decision making. Through the development of the more recent iterations of Te Ara Tupuranga our actions devolved towards consultative practice rather than being genuinely collaborative.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) was published as a thirty year strategy for improving Māori educational outcomes. As with the previous iterations it includes the development of productive partnerships as a key principle. The issue still remains however, that there has been a lack of guidance for schools on how to action this principle. In this chapter, I discuss how the stories from the research rōpū answered the questions posed for this thesis about how we engage in productive partnerships with whānau as required by the three iterations of Ka Hikitia. Within this discussion I will consider possibilities for our school's specific setting for the future and wider implications for other educational institutions.

Developing Productive Partnerships

When we initially developed an outline of a graduate profile to share with school whānau, the plan was to gather their input and adjust it accordingly. Hearing our community's vision for a framework more robust than a graduate profile catalysed a shift in our staff's awareness. We recognised an opportunity to advance the goals of *Ka Hikitia* (Ministry of Education, 2008a, 2013a) and the *Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2008b, 2013b) by deepening whānau voice, developing productive partnerships and aligning home-school expectations to support student success 'as Māori', 'as Tongan', and 'as Samoan'.

We moved into a cycle of development in which there was open discussion and extensive opportunities for whānau to contribute to the reworking of ideas that led to the development of an early version of our values curriculum. However, that dynamic shifted during later developments with the needs of the school taking priority and whānau feeling that the school had now positioned themselves as being the ultimate decision makers when previously that role had sat with the whānau.

> *"Our voices were heard, but I think down the line it was, like some things started and then stopped."*

As a school we allowed our earlier intentions for collaborative development to be disrupted by teacher workload concerns, reporting requirements, covid restrictions, our own timelines and other pressures of the educational system that we are a part of.

While we were consistently reading research and referring back to Ka Hikitia and Tātaiako (New Zealand Teachers Council & Ministry of Education, 2011) the terms used within these documents and other literature to describe whānau voice in schools frequently lack definition and are not used consistently. This led to our school attempting to improve our partnership practices through a process of trial and error.

Schools have been the ones to define and direct how engagement with their communities occurs (Berryman et al., 2015). Despite good intentions the process used for development of our values curriculum was inconsistent in its approach to productive partnership or the ability of our whānau to demonstrate rangatiratanga in this context. The power of decision-making shifted through the different iterations and, again, despite the good intentions, it is clear that in our case the school still held the power to decide how much say whānau get to have and that their voice, no matter how heavily it is weighted, is included at the school's invitation (Lawson, 2003). We were still functioning at a level where the school held the ultimate power, rather

than working in a truly collective manner, with both parties interdependent and sharing power for decisions (Berryman & Ford, 2017). Developing genuinely equitable partnerships is challenging when working within systems dominated by Western ideologies (Fish et al., 2022). The challenge for educators is to reflect, interrogate and redevelop our own processes and systems to create more equitable ways of working.

The school was consistently gathering whānau voice but without clear direction in school documentation about how to respond to that voice, or a recognition that the school was, without deliberate thought, still holding the right to making the final decisions. We failed to maintain a consistent path forward towards genuine productive partnerships. It would have been beneficial to us to have guidance provided from the Ministry of Education (the authors and owners of Ka Hikitia) that defined productive partnerships and outlined how those partnerships can be grown within the schooling system. We could have used this guidance to support our journey for the collaborative development of Te Ara Tupuranga, something that was important to both the school and whānau. At the very least, we could have used the shared definitions to reflect on and evaluate the work we were doing.

Defining Partnership in Educational Settings

The first two versions of Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2008a; Ministry of Education, 2013a) tell us to give expression to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and emphasise a need for collaboration and developing 'Productive Partnerships'. Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) retained 'Productive Partnerships' as one of its guiding principles while shifting to giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success stated that "Education professionals must recognise and value the contribution of whānau, hapū and iwi and build connections with them both inside and outside of school" (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 40). The key actions outlined to support this within schools were to "support all stakeholders to; have expectations for all Māori students; develop and use a range of networks to share and grow knowledge and evidence of what works to support excellent education and Māori language outcomes" (p. 41).

Ka Hikitia: Ka Hapaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) utilises stronger language in its expectations for educators stating that "Our education services will support whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori to exercise agency and authority over the education of Māori learners at all levels of the education system" (p. 1) and that the key measure for this is when "Māori whānau, hapū and iwi are active partners with our education services in defining and supporting excellent outcomes for Māori learners" (p.1).

Reviews by the Office of the Auditor General and other authors have noted that the results of these directions to schools and educators have not been consistent as they have failed to give direction as to how to achieve these aims (Office of the Auditor General, 2013; Hohneck, 2013; Berryman et al., 2015; Office of the Auditor General, 2016).

Throughout the literature the term partnership is used to describe a number of relationships between home and school ranging from helping parents to support their children's learning to reciprocal relationships to

whānau having an active role in school decision making (Alansari et al., 2025; Biddulph et al., 2003; Bull et al., 2008; Highfield et al., 2023).

The lack of consistent definition and guidance about what partnership is make it impossible for schools and their whānau and communities to navigate their way towards a shared view of how this could look or what to do to begin enacting it.

Furthermore, there are a number of terms used to talk about how schools and whānau interact, but a lack of clarity on how the terms should be applied or how these interactions could be planned for.

Measuring The Efficacy of Partnership Building:

Within schools we are aware that 'what gets measured gets done'. Education systems have however frequently failed to measure the efficacy of programmes to improve family and community partnerships (Epstein & Sheldon, 2019). In New Zealand we continue to measure student attendance and achievement but, despite Ka Hikitia's repeated calls for building partnerships, the Ministry of Education have not provided ways to measure the effectiveness of that partnership. Of the four required measurements for success in Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success (Ministry of Education, 2013a) three were academic; literacy and numeracy achievement against National Standards, NCEA achievement and University Entrance achievement. The fourth was participation in Māori language education.

Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) lists the tools for measuring success as "participation data, NCEA achievement data, NZQF achievement data and engagement surveys" (p. 1) without detailing whose engagement they are evaluating and how these surveys will be implemented.

Schools reporting to parents is required to cover the English and Mathematics and Statistics learning areas and attendance (Ministry of Education, 2026b) while new Education Review Office reports are focussing on attendance, progress, achievement and assessment (Education Review Office, 2026).

If 'what gets measured gets done' where are the measures for the remaining principles of the Ka Hikitia policy documents? If schools' success is measured by their academic outcomes, is there incentive to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi or develop and improve productive partnerships with their whānau, community and iwi?

Engagement to Empowerment to Mana Motuhake:

In reflecting on the issues of lack of guidelines and the lack of consistent definition of the different forms of whānau engagement I returned to the research rōpū to explore what true whānau rangatiratanga in a school environment would look like to them. Our further discussion was intended to develop a reflective tool to potentially be used to honestly examine our own partnership practice and consider what next steps we could take. To engage in genuine transformation, we need to tell our stories honestly and open ourselves to where new stories could lead us (Jackson, 2020). We needed a means to define where our actions to date sat in relation to the concept of partnership and a way to plan potential future actions to improve our practice.

While Participatory Action Research has a focus on research resulting in action to resolve an issue or problem (Lawson et al., 2015) "the definition of a problem, however, is not always self-evident, and producing a problem definition can be a valid outcome of PAR" (Cornish et al., 2023, p. 5). This research identified the lack of a shared view of productive partnerships as a barrier to enacting them. The following continuum is the response from the research rōpū to addressing this problem. Within this we have defined the different levels of school-whānau interactions and the power dynamics that sit within these.

The research rōpū chose earlier in our research to group interactions between the school and whānau under the groupings of engagement and empowerment. After further consideration and discussion, we decided on the addition of fully empowered or self-determining whānau voice - mana motuhake to our continuum.

The research rōpū determined that whanaungatanga and manaakitanga and tikanga underpin all relationships with whānau. These form the bedrock of all interactions between schools and their communities.

At the beginning of the continuum is establishing relationships. Schools should have effective relationships with their families before attempting to build educationally powerful partnerships (Office of the Auditor-General, 2015). Participation of whānau is the beginning of more active involvement in school activities. Berryman, Ford and Egan (2015) referred to Brooking's statement that partnership is initiated by schools and involves families (Brooking, 2007) and compared it to McNaughton and Glynn's view (McNaughton & Glynn, 1998) that collaboration suggests more interdependence and power-sharing. I support this view of collaboration but have chosen to place partnership further up the continuum.

One of the guiding principles in all three iterations of Ka Hikitia is that we should be giving expression to the application of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in education or giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In my thinking this means that we should be looking to the view of partnership embodied in the treaty principles. The Waitangi Tribunal has emphasised that this means partners of equal status, acting reasonably, honourably, and in good faith following the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2001). This implies that schools working in partnership with whānau should be according voice to whānau that is equal to their own. That all voices should be heard, respected and that disagreements should be worked through to reach a point of mutual understanding.

The table below outlines our view of the continuum of school-whānau interactions. Underpinned by the bedrock of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and tikanga it contains three phases; engagement, empowerment and mana Motuhake.

Within the engagement phase sits establishing relationships and participation. In this phase the power sits firmly with the school. The school initiates and decides actions with the intention of increasing whānau involvement with the school. As participation increases whānau voice is included in some school decision making through consultation. This could be in simple forms such as surveys or presentations by the school on which they want feedback.

The empowerment phase is where whānau have an active role in school decision making. While opportunities for collaboration are initiated by the school, whānau are actively involved in determining the parameters of their input. Whānau are actively involved in determining the outcomes of collaborative projects. Partnership requires the balance of power to be more equitable. Whānau and school have the power to initiate actions. Actions are negotiated and adjusted with whānau throughout the process.

The mana motuhake phase is one in which whānau and mana whenua are fully empowered to initiate and facilitate actions within the school. Their roles as active decision makers are embedded in legal documentation so that their roles are unable to be easily affected by changes of staffing or government policy.

Table 4: A Continuum: Defining school-whānau interactions from engagement to empowerment to mana motuhake



Positioning Our Own Mahi:

Using the continuum developed by the research rōpū above as a reflective tool, I examined the collaborative process followed to develop Te Ara Tupuranga. I was now able to position the findings of the research rōpū to more accurately define our work on our values curriculum in relation to the questions posited in this thesis. Did our whānau experience effective engagement with the school and did whānau feel that their voices were effectively included through this process?

Table 5: Positioning our findings in relation to the continuum of school-whānau interactions

Establishing relationships	Key staff set out with the intention to improve engagement with whānau. Staff having awareness that many whānau had previous negative experiences of the education system, identified barriers and were intentional in their actions, conversations and presentation towards whānau.
Participation	Regular whānau hui were established. Shared meals were important for providing a space for conversations that involved getting to know each other as people while childcare was provided onsite. Gathering whānau feedback on our initial thoughts for a graduate profile at hui was supported by surveys to the wider whānau who had not attended. Later iterations of our values curriculum sat between participation and collaboration with drafting done by the school and feedback being sought from whānau after drafting was completed.
Collaboration	Whānau began encouraging other people to attend hui, offering rides and support. We revisited our graduate profile and responded to whānau requests to create levels within it to support the development of their tamariki throughout their time at school. This resulted in our first draft of a values-based curriculum. A point that the research whānau noted as being crucial at this point was that when there was some disagreement over the wording of aspects of this they felt that it was handled respectfully with a return to hui and further discussion.
Partnership	We (both school and whānau) began to see the potential for redefining how we measure success for our children. Staff stepping back from an assumed role as experts and centring the voices of whānau in selecting and defining the values enabled us to honour cultural and whānau values. In doing this we were able to align home and school expectations for the benefit of our children. The prior work done on developing relationships allowed robust discussions that were not diminishing to the mana of participants. Most important to the research whānau was that this process was an ongoing cycle with no stage being finalised until it had been confirmed by everybody involved.
Mana Motuhake	We have not reached this stage in our work as a school. The research whānau were asked what they felt our next steps would be to move in this direction. All of them have been members of School Boards. While the development of BOTs as part of the Tomorrows Schools reforms enabled some autonomy to schools and a parent voice in decision making (Milne, 2025) they also felt that there were limitations in that role. They suggested development of a whānau committee that includes mana whenua representation sitting seperate from the Board of Trustees to facilitate whānau initiation of decision making and project implementation.

Positioning our work on this specific project in relation to the engagement to Mana Motuhake continuum shows that we have at times touched on genuine partnership. However, it cannot be considered true partnership if it is not ongoing and can be derailed by the actions of the school. By using the continuum as a reflective tool we may in future be able to build a robust and lasting system of collaboration or partnership.

The challenge remains that our school system has been built on principles that have systematically excluded partnerships with whānau (Hetaraka, 2022; Ward, 2005). To achieve mana motuhake for whānau and mana whenua, schools need to be open to change and, system-wide, there must be a recognition of the value added to the system when productive partnerships are operating. Without fundamental changes to government policy, direction and funding restraints (Tinirau, 2020), the vision of productive partnerships as outlined in the Ka Hikitia iterations cannot be achieved.

Our Shared Answering of the Questions Posed by This Thesis

To what extent did school whānau experience productive partnerships with the school?

The development of productive partnerships with whānau, community, hapū and iwi have been impacted by a lack of guidance and direction for how to do that (Berryman et al., 2015; Hohneck, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2016) and a lack of consistent definition of what partnership is and what it entails as detailed earlier in this chapter.

This thesis used the specific context of development of our values curriculum with whānau to examine the school's attempts to develop productive partnerships. As demonstrated above, when our work was positioned against the continuum that eventuated from this research there were points in this process when we did meet the criteria for partnership. However, we did not maintain this consistently and if this practice is not embedded in school processes and consistently applied it can not truly be considered to be partnership.

What were the barriers and enablers of productive partnerships between whānau and school?

Our attempts to develop productive partnerships were aided by:

- Eliminating barriers to attendance at whānau hui (shared kai, provision of childcare, outside of work hours)
- Inclusion of tikanga Māori within hui (Karaka-Clarke, 2019).
- Lack of feeling of judgement and staff not holding themselves separate to whānau (Karaka-Clarke, 2019).
- Key whānau members taking a lead role in welcoming newcomers into the space (Education Review Office, 2008).
- Opportunities to build connections with other people. Staff and whānau were getting to know each other outside of just being parents and teachers.
- A range of opportunities for input (Education Review Office, 2008). While some people are confident to speak out in front of a large group and it is good to hear the different viewpoints for others being able to put your thoughts in writing or work in small groups means that everyone has an opportunity to contribute.
- Staff were able to hear and respond constructively to disagreement (Karaka-Clarke, 2019).
- Giving updates on progress and seeking and responding to feedback at each stage of a project
- Changes that have been enacted in response to whānau voice being explicitly communicated

Aspects of our practice that impacted negatively on developing productive partnerships included:

- Prioritising institutional needs and voices thereby reinforcing existing hegemony (Glynn, 2013).
- Lack of updates and feedback before presenting something as a complete product (Education Review Office, 2008).
- Non-involvement of some staff. All staff need to be engaged to show that whānau contributions are a valued part of the school culture (Bonne & Hotere-Barnes, 2015).
- Non-involvement of some staff meant that some were noted by the research rōpū to not have the same level of understanding of the depth of meaning and parental aspiration that sits within Te Ara Tupuranga.

Were school whānau able to demonstrate rangatiratanga when working in the school contexts?

Whānau rangatiratanga is to my mind an essential part of developing productive partnerships. Therefore, as with our development of productive partnerships, the ability for whānau to demonstrate rangatiratanga within the context we investigated was inconsistent. Whānau felt that they were able to demonstrate rangatiratanga when they felt that staff genuinely wanted to hear what they had to say, disagreements were listened to and followed up on respectfully and they could see the outcomes of their input being actioned in classrooms. The process was cyclic and they were involved throughout all changes.

They felt that they were unable to demonstrate rangatiratanga when they gave input and then did not get to see any changes until the end. At this point they felt that the authority for decision making had reverted to solely being in the hands of the school.

What learning and recommendations could the research participants offer to other school communities working towards developing productive partnerships?

- Collaborative decision making processes should be built into strategic plans and school process documents with regular checkpoints to ensure that it is happening, a view supported by the findings of the Education Review Office (Education Review Office, 2008).
- Professional development for staff on whānau driven projects which could be delivered in collaboration with whānau.
- Explicit and public celebration of shared projects or developments.
- All of the expectations should be written into job descriptions.
  "If they're not interested in meeting those then there are other jobs out there."
- All of the expectations should be included in induction of new staff and whānau.

Summary

The different versions of Ka Hikitia tell us to give expression to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and most recently to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and emphasise a need for collaboration and developing 'Productive Partnerships'. The lack of direction provided on how to develop productive partnerships and the lack of a

common understanding of what these entail make it impossible for schools to develop a consistent, shared practice in this area.

Additionally, the lack of any focus on monitoring and measuring the development of productive partnerships limits opportunities for accountability, evaluation and improvement of partnership practice.

In their investigation into the issues faced by Māori whānau in English-Medium education, Barnes and his colleagues identified four key elements that enhanced whānau views of their children's schools; having a holistic view of success, developing values-based education, increasing numbers of Māori teachers and greater school-whānau engagement (Hotere-Barnes et al., 2012). In our development of our values-based curriculum with our whānau we were able to begin a journey towards meeting three of these elements; developing a more holistic vision of success for our children, incorporating values education that aligned school and home learning and increasing the role of whānau voice in our school. The extent of the inclusion of whānau voice and the shifts in the power dynamics over time indicate a need for ongoing reflection and development of systems and documentation that imbed the best parts of our practice for the future. The continuum we have develop can hopefully provide some guidance for ourselves and others to continue this journey.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The intention of this research was to examine one school's attempts to give expression to the Treaty of Waitangi through developing 'productive partnerships' with whānau as required by ka Hikitia. By using a Participatory Action Research model grounded in Culturally Responsive Methodology, it centres the voices of members of our school whānau reflecting on their experiences in the school's efforts to use a collaborative process to develop a school-wide values curriculum. We explored, from a whānau perspective, the nature of the partnership relationship between the school and whānau, and whether the resulting process could be defined as productive partnerships by which whānau could express their own rangatiratanga. From this exploration we have put forward a continuum of school-whānau interactions as a tool to define and guide for ourselves and others through a journey towards effective development of productive partnerships. This chapter examines the implications of this research for schools and educators and discusses the limitations of this specific study.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi in Education

The signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi itself offered a promise of partnership that was not fulfilled. It offered interdependence while allowing the continued independence of iwi and hapū but was instead followed by a systemic privileging of the Crown and removal of power from Māori (Jackson, 2020).

The three iterations of Ka Hikitia specifically directed schools to develop partnerships with whānau and iwi Māori in order to give expression to the Treaty of Waitangi (Ministry of Education, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2013) and currently to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Ministry of Education, 2020).

The Education and Training Act 2020 ordered School Boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Ministry of Education, 2024), noting that "as a partner to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Crown has a duty to actively promote and protect Tiriti rights." (p. 1). Analysis of the impact of this Act show that there was variability in the interpretation and implementation of this requirement, with School Boards not often having the knowledge, skills or relationships with iwi Māori to create the necessary systemic changes (Marston, 2025). Marston suggests that the Act framed the Crown positively as the ones putting forward this legislation while outsourcing the problems of implementation to Boards of Trustees.

Since the recent removal of any obligation for School Boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi under the Education and Training Amendment Act 2025 (Ministry of Education, 2025a), many schools have reiterated their commitment to continuing their work in this area (Te Huia, 2025). Additionally, within the updated Standards for the Teaching Profession Te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to teachers' individual professional requirements (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025).

Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a worthy aim but without honest acknowledgement of the work that needs to be done as schools and individuals to meet these goals they will remain just an aim and not serve the needs of our children and whānau.

Implications for Schools

We know that what works for Māori students works for all (Education Gazette Editors, 2020) similarly the same applies to whānau, what works for whānau Māori will be beneficial to all of the diverse whānau within our schools. Therefore, it is beneficial to all schools to better understand how to engage in productive partnerships with their whānau.

As the findings from this research show, even when schools attempt to engage in partnership our actions do not always support our good intentions. Students, their whānau and schools all benefit from active partnership (Alansari et al., 2025) but schools need to "work harder to ascertain what drives whānau engagement in schooling so that they can purposefully invite them to partner in their children's learning" (p. 24). When schools attempt to engage in productive partnerships with whānau but do so using their own established patterns of practice whānau members are left to adapt their own practices to align with those of the school (Fish et al., 2022).

The lack of a common understanding of the term partnership across policy and literature along with a lack of direction as to how to engage in productive partnerships (Berryman et al., 2015; Hohneck, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2013; Office of the Auditor General, 2016) has left schools to rely on their own, sometimes limited knowledge and resources to enact government policy (Marston, 2025).

The continuum developed in the preceding chapter is an attempt to define and potentially guide schools towards reimagining strategies for developing partnerships in a way that shifts power and centralises whānau voices. It defines aspects of whānau interactions with schools and provides a pathway for schools to move their practices forward through engagement towards empowering their voices and ultimately the potential for mana motuhake within a system that has been designed to eliminate that.

Implications for State Education

The Ka Hikitia education policies were released with the taglines of enabling Māori students to achieve 'as Māori' and 'realising Māori potential'. However, with the Treaty of Waitangi or Te Tiriti o Waitangi and productive partnerships sitting within their key principles should we not also be enabling whānau Māori to succeed as Māori and realising their potential as key stakeholders within the education system.

The lack of guidance provided to schools on how to engage in and develop productive partnerships has hindered schools' abilities to achieve these directions. The Office of the Auditor General states that there is a correlation between Māori students' achievement and effective partnership with parents and that the Ministry of Education needs to be identifying and facilitating the sharing of good practice across schools (Office of the Auditor General, 2016).

A key issue remains with each of the iterations of Ka Hikitia in that the measures of success are focussed on quantifiable data such as attendance and academic results (Ministry of Education, 2008a; Ministry of Education, 2013a; Ministry of Education, 2020a). There is no measure for schools to report on what they are

achieving in terms of giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi or development of productive partnerships. In my view this limits the incentive for schools to focus on these principles in favour of others against which they will be judged. It also limits the ability for other schools and the Ministry of Education to easily identify and share good partnership practices.

Shifting views of those in political power can impact significantly on policies and government priorities and education is frequently on the receiving end of those shifts. The requirement for School Boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi has been removed (Ministry of Education, 2025a), the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities which directed schools to involve Māori in decision making is no longer being implemented. The current rewriting of the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa has raised numerous concerns amongst educational groups about the sidelining of Māori perspectives and Te Ao Māori (McCallum, 2026). While this is a significant shift from the policies of the past twenty years Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (Ministry of Education, 2020a) is still in effect, as is the requirement within the Standards for the Teaching Profession for teachers to demonstrate commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025). Ultimately, as a Crown entity it is my view that the Ministry of Education has a responsibility to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi within its areas of responsibility.

Limitations

The limitations of this research are due to purposive nature of the sample group limiting the number of potential participants. The sample while diverse individuals are all from one community with this research being a record of their experiences with one school.

Despite the limitations the study provides an insight into the disparities between the views of whānau and the views of a school of their development of productive partnership. The Office of the Auditor General has observed that some schools do not do enough to improve their partnership practices as the perception of how effective home-school relationships are differs between whānau and schools (Office of the Auditor General, 2016).

Also, despite these limitations this research can also provide some insight into what whānau expect of the term partnership.

Further study could look at how whānau could be empowered to activate and maintain productive partnerships with educational institutions.

Glossary of Māori terms:

akoranga	teaching, learning	mana whenua	tribal group with authority over a particular area
ara	path	mātauranga	knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill
awhi	help, assist, embrace	mātāwaka	Māori in an area who are not descended from mana whenua
hapū	kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe	Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
harirū	greeting, handshake, hōngi	Rangatira	chief
hui	gathering, meeting	rangatiratanga	chieftainship, right to exercise authority, sovereignty
iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, nation	raupatu	punitive land confiscations
kai	food	rōpū	group, party of people
karakia	ritual chant or prayer	Tagata Moana/Pasifika	people of the Pacific nations
kaumatua	Elder	tamariki	children
kaupapa	topic, matter for discussion, purpose, issue	tangata	person, people
kāwanatanga	government, governance	taonga	Treasure, possession, something culturally valuable
kōhanga reo	Māori language pre-school	Te Reo Māori	the Māori language
kōrero	speech, narrative, discussion, conversation, discourse	tikanga	customary system of values and practices
koroua	elderly man, grandfather	tupuranga	growth
kura kaupapa	primary school operating under Māori custom and using Māori as the medium of instruction	whakapapa	genealogy, lineage, descent
mahi	work	whakatika	to make right
manaaki	to support, take care of, give hospitality to, protect, look out for	whakawhanaungatanga	process of establishing relationships, relating well to others
manaakitanga	the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.	whānau	extended family, family group
Mana oritē	equality	whanaungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of family connection

References

Alansari, M., Webber, M., & Li, M. (2025). C*OMPASS: Whānau partnerships with school—Patterns and associations with Māori students' learning.* New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Aporosa, S. (2016). Māori academic success: Why the deficit perspectives? *Micronesian Educator*, *23*.

Bakunin, M. (1869). Equal opportunity in education. *L'Égalité*.

Barnes, A. (2013). What can Pākehā learn from engaging in kaupapa Māori educational research? New Zealand Council for Educational Research. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/what-can-pakeha-learn-engaging-kaupapa-maori-educational-research

Barrington, J. (2008). Maori schools and central control: a post-mortem. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies. 43 (2)*

Berryman, M. (2008). Repositioning within indigenous discourses of transformation and self -determination. Doctoral thesis. The University of Waikato.

Berryman, M., & Eley, E. (2017). Succeeding as Māori: Māori students' views on our stepping up to the Ka Hikitia challenge. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *52*(1), 93–107. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-017-0076-1

Berryman, M., Eley, E., Ford, T., & Egan, M. (2015). Leadership: Going beyond personal will and professional skills to give life to Ka Hikitia. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, *30*(2), 56–68.

Berryman, M., & Ford, T. (2017). Culturally responsive relationships promoting partnerships between schools and indigenous Māori families and communities. In R. McNae & B. Cowie (Eds.), *Realising Innovative Partnerships in Educational Research: Theories and Methodologies for Collaboration* (pp. 147–156). SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6351-062-2_16

Berryman, M., Ford, T., & Egan, M. (2015). Developing collaborative connections between schools and Māori communities. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, *3*, 18–25. https://doi.org/10.18296/set.0023

Berryman, M., Glynn, T., & Woller, P. (2017). Supervising research in Māori cultural contexts: A decolonizing, relational response. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *36*(7), 1355–1368. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1325851

Berryman, M., Kerr, L., Macfarlane, A. H., Penetito, W., & Smith, G. H. (2016). *Summary of our education for Māori reports*. Controller and Auditor General.

Berryman, M., Soohoo, S., & Nevin, A. (2013). *Culturally responsive methodologies.* Emerald Publishing Limited.

Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J., & Biddulph, C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis.* Ministry of Education.

Bishop, R. Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture counts: Changing power relations in education.* Dunmore Press Limited. Palmerston North.

Bishop, R. (1995). Collaborative Research Stories: Whakawhanaungatanga. University of Otago.

Bishop, R. (1997). Māori people's concerns about research into their lives. History of Education Review, 26 (1). 25–41.

Bishop, R. (2000). Nau te rourou, naku te rourou...Māori education: setting an agenda. *Waikato Journal of Education*, (6).

Bishop, R. (2005). Pathologizing the lived experiences of the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand. In *Pathologizing Practices The Impact of Deficit Thinking on Education* (pp. 55–84). Peter Lang.

Bonne, L., & Hotere-Barnes, A. (2015). English-medium schools engaging whānau: Building relationships, creating spaces. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, *3*, 26–34.

Brinkmann, S. (2017). *Philosophies of qualitative research.* Oxford University Press.

Brooking, K. (2007). Home–school partnerships. What are they really?. *Set: Research Information for Teachers, 3. (14-17).*

Bull, A., Brooking K, & Campbell, R. (2008). *Successful home-school partnerships report to the Ministry of Education.* Ministry of Education New Zealand, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga.

Calman, R. (2015). Māori education – mātauranga – The native schools system, 1867 to 1969. In *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Manatū Taonga, Ministry for Culture and Heritage. https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-education-matauranga/page-3

Clayton, L. (2007). Patterns and motifs in the va. A Samoan concept of the space between. Master's thesis. Auckland University of Technology

Chun Tie, Y., Birks, M., & Francis, K. (2019). Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers. *SAGE Open Medicine*, *7*.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Routledge. London, New York.

Corbin Dwyer, S., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *8*(1), 54–63. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105

Cornish, F., Breton, N., Moreno-Tabarez, U., Delgado, J., Rua, M., de-Graft Aikins, A., & Hodgetts, D. (2023). Participatory action research. *Nature Reviews Methods Primers*, *3*(1).

Davis, K. (2018). Māori achievement a priority for education. New Zealand Parliament.

Delahunty, C. (2025). Towards He Whakaputanga. *E-Tangata*. https://e-tangata.co.nz/reflections/towards-he-whakaputanga/

Derby, M. (2021). A history of Māori literacy success. *Journal of Indigenous Research*, *9*.

Durie, M. (2004). Māori achievement: anticipating the learning environment. Hui Taumata Mātauranga IV, Turangi/Taupo.

Education Counts. (2025). Teacher numbers [Government]. Education Counts. https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/teacher-numbers

Education Gazette Editors. (2020). Huakina Mai – a whole-school approach to wellbeing and belonging. *Education Gazette Tukutuku Kōrero*, *99(14*).

Education Review Office. (2008). *Partners in learning good practice.* Education Review Office.

Education Review Office. (2026). ERO issuing new school reports from Term 2, focused on providing clarity for parents to understand their school performance. Education Review Office. https://www.ero.govt.nz/news/ero-issuing-new-school-reports-from-term-2-focused-on-providing-clarity-for-parents-to-understand

Eley, E. (2020). Fanning the divine spark: Gaining understandings of micro-interactions in New Zealand classrooms [PhD]. Waikato University.

Else, A. (1997). *Māori participation and performance in education: A summary by Anne Else*. Ministry of Education.

Epstein, J., & Sheldon, S. (2019). The importance of evaluating programs of school, family and community partnerships. *Aula Abierta*, *48*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.17811/rifie.48.1.2019.31-42

Eruera, M. (2010). Ma te whānau te huarahi motuhake: whānau participatory action research groups. *MAI Review, 3*.

Fish, L., Flavell, M., & Cunningham, E. (2022). Reimagining communities of practice: Using relational frameworks to disrupt assumptions and inequity. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, *21*(2). https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/IEJ/article/view/15887

Glynn, T. (2013). Me nohotahi, mahitahi, haeretahi tātou: Collaborative partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers (Māori and Pākehā). In *Culturally Responsive Methodologies*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Glynn, T., Berryman, M., Walker, R., Reweti, M., & O'Brien, K. (2001). Partnerships with indigenous people: Modifying the Cultural Mainstream. Partnerships in Educational Psychology Conference, Brisbane.

Harris, F., & Kaur, B. (2012). Challenging the notions of partnership and collaboration in early education: A critical perspective from a whānau class in New Zealand. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *2*(1), 4–13.

Hawaikirangi-Pere, C. (2013). Māori cultural identity and education. Master's thesis, University of Waikato.

Hawes, L. (2012). Raising Māori achievement. *New Zealand Principal (Online)*, *27*(2), 8–9.

Hetaraka, M. (2022). Myth-making: on-going impacts of historical education policy on beliefs about Māori in education. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *57*(2), 321–333. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-022-00257-0

Highfield, C., Webber, M. (2021). Mana ūkaipō: Māori student connection, belonging and engagement at school. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 56, (145–164)*

Highfield, C., Webber, M., & Woods, R. (2023). *Te pa harakeke: Maori and non-Maori parent (whanau) support of culturally responsive teaching pedagogies.* The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 52 (1). https://hdl.handle.net/2292/65353

Hohneck, D. J. (2013). Building bridges: seeking collaboration with a Māori community. University of Waikato.

Holdom, J., & Page, C. (2022). Building a localised curriculum in partnership with parents, whānau and tamariki through shared interests and identities. *He Kupu The Word*, *7*(2), 3–11.

Hotere-Barnes, A., Hutchings, J., Taupo, K., & Bright, N. (2012). Critical issues for whānau in English-medium schools. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, 12–19. https://doi.org/10.18296/set.0388

House of Representatives. (2023). *Coalition agreement New Zealand National Party & New Zealand First*. House of Representatives, Wellington.

Jackson, M. (2020). Where to next? Decolonisation and the stories in the land. In *Imagining Decolonisation*. Bridget Williams Books.

Karaka-Clarke, T. H. R. (2019). Pōwhiri: a ritual of encounter framework for engaging with whānau. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, *1*, 3–8.

Kusabs, J., R,. (2024). Indigenous self-determination in Māori education and reactionary responses from 1960 to 1992. *Critical Studies in Education*, 1–19.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage Publications.

Larsen, S. (2013). The Micropolitics of Storytelling in Collaborative Research Reflections on a Mapping Project with the Cheslatta- Carrier Nation in British Columbia. In A deeper sense of place : stories and journeys of indigenous-academic collaboration. Oregon State University Press.

Lawson, H. A., Caringi, J., Pyles, L., Jurkowski, J., & Bozlak, C. (2015). *Participatory action research*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/waikato/detail.action?docID=1876221

Lawson, M., A. (2003). School-family relations in context: parent and teacher perceptions of parent involvement. *Urban Education*, *38*(77).

Lee, H., Lee, G. (2017). The politics of Māori education: History, policies, conflicts and compromises. *Waikato Journal of Education, 1 (1)*.

Linton, J. D. (2020). The limits of generalizability: Why good theory can have bad outcomes. *Technovation*, *89*.

Mackintosh, R. (2024). How do schools give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the current political climate? *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, *21*(2), 147–163.

Maharey, S. (2007). *New action plan to boost Mâori achievement*. New Zealand Parliament.

Mahuika, R. (2011). Anō, ko te Riu ō Tāne Mahuta possibilities and challenges in a Ngāti Rangiwewehi curriculum. Master's thesis. University of Waikato.

Mahuika, N., Mahuika, R. (2020). Wānanga as a research methodology. AlterNative, 16 (4), 369-377,

Manatū Taonga — Ministry for Culture and Heritage. (2026). *He Whakaputanga—declaration of independence*. New Zealand History Ngā Kōrero a Ipurangi o Aotearoa. https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/declaration-of-independence-taming-the-frontier

Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage. (n.d.). New Zealand's first mission school opens. In *New Zealand History*. https://nzhistory.govt.nz/page/new-zealands-first-school-opens

Marston, M. (2025). Te Tiriti o Waitangi, school boards, and equitable outcomes: A bacchian analysis of recent education policy. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *60*, 285–301.

Martin, F. K. (2010). Mana-ā-kī(tanga) and tourism in Aotearoa. *Te Kaharoa*, *3*.

Mayan, M. (2023). Essentials of qualitative inquiry. Routledge.

McCallum, H. (2026). Māori shut out of curriculum decisions against ministry's advice, tribunal hears. *Newsroom*. https://newsroom.co.nz/2026/04/24/maori-shut-out-of-curriculum-decisions-against-ministrys-advice-tribunal-hears/

McFarlane, A., Webber, M., Cookson-Cox, C., & McRae, H. (2014). *Ka awatea: An iwi case study of Māori students' success*. University of Canterbury.

McNaughton, S., Glynn, T. (1998). Effective collaboration: What teachers need to know about communities. Annual Conference of the New Zealand Council for Teacher Education. Hamilton.

Milne, B. A. (2013). *Colouring in the white spaces: reclaiming cultural identity in whitestream schools*. [Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy]. Waikato.

Ministry of Education. (2006). *Pasifika education plan 2006 -2010*. Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Ka hikitia: managing for success. The draft Māori education strategy*. Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2008a). *Ka hikitia—managing for success 2008-2012*. Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga.

Ministry of Education. (2008b). *Pasifika education plan 2008—2012*. Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2013a). *Ka hikitia—accelerating success 2013-2017*. Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga.

Ministry of Education. (2013b). *Pasifika education plan 2013—2017*. Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2019). *Local curriculum: designing rich opportunities and coherent pathways for all learners*. [Government]. Tāhūrangi - New Zealand Curriculum. https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/local-curriculum-guide/5637166671.p

Ministry of Education. (2020a). *Ka hikitia—ka hāpaitia*. Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga.

Ministry of Education. (2020b). *The statement of national education and learning priorities (NELP)*. Ministry of Education, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga. https://web-assets.education.govt.nz/s3fs-public/2024-04/FULL-NELP-2020.pdf?VersionId=KI1hgMV3pmnjj.vvkOzujWh.fmZXdTHv

Ministry of Education. (2022). *Aotearoa New Zealand's histories in the New Zealand Curriculum*. New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2024). Giving better effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi at the national level. Education and Training Act 2020. https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/legislation/education-and-training-act-2020/giving-better-effect-te-tiriti-o-waitangi-national-level

Ministry of Education. (2025a). Education and training amendment act 2025 [Government]. https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-information-releases/education-and-training-amendment-bill-no-2

Ministry of Education. (2025b). Ka hikitia whakapapa. https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/strategies-policies-and-programmes/maori-education-and-language/ka-hikitia-ka-hapaitia/ka-hikitia-whakapapa

Ministry of Education. (2025c). School leavers' attainment. Education Counts. https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/school-leavers

Ministry of Education. (2026a). *NZC – social sciences phases 1–4 (Years 0–10)*. https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/nzc---social-sciences-phases-1-4-years-0-10/5637290851.p

Ministry of Education. (2026b). Reporting to parents and whānau. Tāhūrangi - New Zealand Curriculum.

Ministry of Education. (2026c). School leavers' attainment. Education Counts. https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/school-leavers

Ministry of Education. (2026d). *Te mataiaho*. https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/5637303584.p#M%C4%81tairangi

Moorfield, J. (2003). *Te aka Māori dictionary*. Te Aka Māori Dictionary. https://maoridictionary.co.nz/

Muru-Lanning, C. (2025). A crash course in the many changes shaking up education in Aotearoa. *The Spinoff*. https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/19-11-2025/a-crash-course-in-the-many-changes-shaking-up-education-in-aotearoa

Mutch, C., & Collins, S. (2012). Partners in learning: schools' engagement with parents, families, and communities in New Zealand. *The School Community Journal*, *22*(1).

New Zealand Teachers Council, & Ministry of Education. (2011). *Tātaiako—cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners*. Ministry of Education.

Newshub. (2024). Willie Jackson, Erica Stanford clash over importance of Māori history in curriculum. *Newshub*. https://www.stuff.co.nz/politics/350463588/willie-jackson-erica-stanford-clash-over-importance-of-m-ori-history-in-curriculum

Ngaamo, R. (2019). Through the eyes of whānau: Destruction of cultural identity through education. Master's thesis. University of Waikato.

Ngāpō, A. (2025). Whanaungatanga and identity: strengthening wellbeing for taiohi Māori. *Brainwave Review*, *45*, 2–11.

Notman, R. (2012). Implementing values in the New Zealand curriculum: four years on. *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, *3*, 41–49. https://doi.org/10.18296/set.0364

Nuri, N. (2023). *Kaumātuatanga: supporting school leaders to develop cultural values while resisting the dominance of colonialism*. University of Waikato.

Office of the Auditor General. (2013). *Education for Māori: implementing Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*. Office of the Auditor-General.

Office of the Auditor General. (2016). *Education for Māori: using information to improve Māori educational success*. Office of the Auditor General.

Office of the Auditor-General. (2012). *Education for Māori: context for our proposed audit work until 2017*. Office of the Auditor-General.

Office of the Auditor-General. (2015). *Education for Māori. Relationships between schools and whānau.* Office of the Auditor-General.

Oktay, J. S. (2012). *Grounded Theory.* Oxford University Press.

Orange, C. (n.d.). Te Tiriti o Waitangi – the Treaty of Waitangi. In *Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. Ministry for Culture and Heritage. https://teara.govt.nz/en/te-tiriti-o-waitangi-the-treaty-of-waitangi/print

Paenga, R. E. (2017). Whakamana Māori: sociocultural perspectives of Māori education in Aotearoa. University of Canterbury.

Pihama, L. (2019). Colonisation, neoliberalism and Māori education: Herbison invited lecture, NZARE annual conference 2017. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 54*.

Rameka, L. (2016). Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua: 'I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past.' *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *17*(4), 387–398.

Rameka, L. (2018). A Māori perspective of being and belonging. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *19*(4), 367–378. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949118808099

Richards, L., Morse, J.M. (2013). Sage research methods - readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods. SAGE Publications

Saldaña, J. (2021). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Salmond, A. (2026). Anne Salmond: The chasm of division. *Newsroom*. https://newsroom.co.nz/2026/01/28/anne-salmond-the-chasm-of-division/

Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., & Epstein, J. (2005). Improving schools' partnership programs in the national network of partnership schools. *Journal of Educational Research & Policy Studies*, *5*(1), 24–47.

Seponski, D.M., Lewis, D.C. (2016). Challenges of culturally responsive research methodologies: implications and suggestions for international mental health research. SAGE Publications Ltd

Shields, C., Bishop, R., Mazawi, A.E. (2005). Pathologizing the lived experiences of the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand. In *Pathologizing Practices. The Impact of Deficient Thinking on Education*. Lang Publishing.

Simon, J. (1992). European style schooling for Maori: the first century. *Access: Contemporary Issues in Education*, *11*(2), 77–87.

Smith, L. T. (2015). Kaupapa Māori research- some kaupapa Māori principles. In *Kaupapa Rangahau: A Reader* (pp. 46–52). Te Kotahi Research Institute.

Smith, L.T., Maxwell, T.K., Puke, H., Temara, P. (2016). Indigenous knowledge, methodology and mayhem: What is the role of methodology in producing Indigenous insights? A discussion from mātauranga Māori. *Knowledge Cultures, 2 (3). 131-156.*

Tarozzi, M. (2022). *Designing qualitative research for studies in education*. In The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design.

Taylor, S,J,, Bogdan, R., DeVault, M. (2015). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: a guidebook and resource.* Wiley. Hoboken.

Te Huia, A. (2025, November 23). Schools commit to Te Tiriti anyway. *E-Tangata*.

Te Puni Kōkiri. (2001). He tirohanga o kawa ki te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Puni Kōkiri.

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. (2025). *Move to the 2026 standards*. https://teachingcouncil.nz/en/code-and-standards/our-code-our-standards/move-to-the-2026-standards

Tinirau, Dr. R. (2020). *What is whānau research, and how is whānau research being conducted?* Te Atawhai o Te Ao Charitable Trust.

Tocker, K. (2015). The origins of kura kaupapa Māori. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *50*, 23–38.

Tomlins Jahnke, H., & Gillies, A. (2012). Indigenous innovations in qualitative research method: investigating the private world of family life. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *11*(4).

Vaughn, L.M., Jacquez, F. (2020). Participatory research methods – choice points in the research process. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods,* 1 (1).

Wagemaker, H. (1987). Maori and Pakeha school performance: the challenge for educational policy and research. Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, Washington D.C..

Waitangi Tribunal. (1986). *Report of The Waitangi Tribunal on the te reo Maori claim (Wai 11)*. Waitangi Tribunal Department of Justice.

Waitangi Tribunal. (n.d.). *About the treaty*. https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/about/the-treaty/about-the-treaty

Walker, R. (2016). Reclaiming Māori education. In *Decolonisation in Aotearoa: Education, research and practice*. New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Ward, T. (2005). *Hegemony and education in New Zealand: The suppression of Māori leadership.* World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Williams, D. V. (2014). *He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti: The Declaration and the Treaty – sovereignty in February 1840 – comment*. Māori Law Review. https://maorilawreview.co.nz/2014/11/he-whakaputanga-me-te-tiriti-the-declaration-and-the-treaty-sovereignty-in-february-1840-comment/

Williams, H. W. (1971). *Dictionary of the Māori language* (Seventh). Legislation Direct.

Winfield, A. S., Mushtarin, N., & Jordan, J. (2025). Love and tradition of the grand design: exploring culturally responsive qualitative methods with intergenerational and Intercultural teams and participants. *Qualitative Health Research*, *35*(4–5), 491–505. https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323251321710

Woller, P. (2016). Te Mana Motuhake o Ngāi Tamarāwaho and the challenges of education. Whakapūmautia te tangata i tōna ake mana. Doctoral thesis. University of Waikato.

Zavala, M. (2013). What do we mean by decolonizing research strategies? Lessons from decolonizing, indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *2*(1).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Introductory letter for participants

Kia ora,

I am currently working towards a Master of Education thesis through the University of Waikato. My intention is to examine our school's response to Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (2008) which told schools to engage in productive partnerships with whānau. Further, I am looking towards how we implement the expectations of Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (2020) which says that education services need to give life to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by to supporting Māori to exercise agency and authority over the education of Māori learners.

Research has shown for a long time the value of strong home-school relationships (Berryman & Bishop, 2011) and the people with insight into the effectiveness of our relationships with school whānau are our school whānau.

I am planning to work alongside whānau to examine and critique our school's inclusion of whānau voice in development of our values-based curriculum (Te Ara Tupuranga) and develop possible recommendations for future practice.

The aim is to critique and improve the processes for our own school and to provide a possible model for other schools looking to develop collaborative projects with their school whānau.

I am inviting you to become a member of this research whānau as you have been identified as being involved in hui and related activities during the development of Te Ara Tupuranga.

Please read the attached information sheet carefully and I will clarify and answer any questions that you have as you consider your decision.

Ngā mihi mahana,

Steph

Appendix 2 – Information Sheet for Participants

Information Sheet for Participants

Title

Development of a values curriculum with whānau: critiquing and planning for improvement of collaborative practices in a primary school setting.

Purpose

This research is being conducted as partial requirement for a Master of Education.

What is this research project about?

The major aims of this research project are to undertake:

1. A literature review that will explore the history of Māori education in Aotearoa and the impact that that has had on the development of our education system and continues to have on the education of Māori students in kura auraki/mainstream schooling. I will also explore the impacts of increased whānau engagement and involvement in schools on student outcomes.

2. A critique of our engagement of school whānau in school decision making, specifically examining how whānau voice was included into the development of Te Ara Tupuranga (our values curriculum) and explore what enabled or hindered this process.

3. Develop possible recommendations for the school and other schools and education centres to improve shared collaborative practices with school whānau.

You have been approached because you were involved in whānau hui and related activities during the development of Te Ara Tupuranga and are still a part of our school community.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

If you agree to take part in this research project, I would like to discuss with you:

- Your involvement with the school
- Your experiences of the process of developing Te Ara Tupuranga
- Your views of how your voice was included throughout the different iterations of the project

There are four parts planned for this project.

1. The initial conversation will take the form of a hui for all participants. This will begin with whakawhanaungatanga to establish our relationships as a research whānau. As this research intends to use a Participatory Action Research method it is important that participants can make choices about the goals, structure and tools used in the research (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020) so you will be asked to consider the kaupapa and discuss how it should proceed from this point, tikanga and guidelines for how we support each other as a research whānau. This hui will be minuted for our reference but not recorded. (30 minutes)
2. It is anticipated that each individual will then meet with me to have a recorded conversation of approximately 45 minutes guided by our key questions.

You will be provided with your recording, transcript and a summary of our conversation for review. You may withdraw from the research and may choose to have this evidence removed up until two weeks after you have received it. (45 minutes)

3. Each individual will meet with me again to enable you to make any additions, clarifications or removal of information before we collaboratively develop summaries of your contributions. A review and debriefing time will occur at the end of this session. Any changes to the summaries must be agreed on at this point. Following this time no further changes can be made. (30 minutes)

4. Once all participants have completed their individual conversations and review hui a second group hui is anticipated to review and synthesise our material and work together to plan any additional actions. A review and debriefing time will occur at the end of this session. Any changes to the summaries must be agreed on at this point. Following this time no further changes can be made. (30 minutes)

The total time investment if you choose to participate is approximately 3 hours 15 minutes over 2-3 months.

You may withdraw from this research for any reason, at any stage, without any disadvantage to yourself. Should you wish to withdraw any recorded material, prior to the approval of the summaries two weeks after they have been provided to you, or from the research process itself, you are able to do so verbally, or in writing, either to myself or one of my supervisors. Should you choose to withdraw completely from the research I will return or destroy all material pertaining to you that has not already been approved, as you determine.

If at any point in the interviews or hui you experience distress as a result of sharing your information you can access support in line with what we decide in the initial group hui, or I can assist you with accessing other support.

What will happen to the information collected?

All information gathered will be for the purpose of writing my thesis and will remain confidential to participants, myself and my supervisors. Any subsequent publication of this information will adhere to these conditions and will require your consent.

Individual interviews will be recorded and summarised. The summaries, transcripts and recordings of these interviews will be returned to you so that you can verify, clarify or delete the information that you have shared. You are free to make changes or withdraw any material throughout the research process, up until the summaries have been approved.

You will be identified by a pseudonym within the research and every attempt will be made to reduce the chances of identification. However, our school community is relatively small and, as such, some narratives may be recognized as having come from particular people. We will discuss these issues and agreed steps will be taken to minimise the risk of identification.

The principal and Board of Trustees of the school will be informed of the intention of this research and that the participants are members of our school whānau.

All material gathered in the course of this research will be kept in a secure folder on my computer hard drive and backed up on an external drive. Hard copy material will be kept in a locked cupboard. Access to this material will be limited to me, my supervisors and you will have opportunity to view all records and summaries of your contributions. If you would like it, you will also be provided with a final copy of the thesis and a one page summary of findings.

At the end of the project materials that are not required to be retained under the University's research policy will be returned, destroyed or archived as determined by you, in line with the consent form.

Materials which the results of this project depend on will be retained as archive material in secure storage for five years after which it will be destroyed, as outlined by the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations 2008.

A final digital copy of the thesis will be published to the University's digital repository, Research Commons in accordance with University of Waikato requirements.

Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

• Refuse to take part in any conversation, or part conversation, or to withdraw from the study completely up until the summaries have been approved.

• Verify, edit, add to, or remove any written material collected during all conversations.

• Withdraw any recorded material up until the summaries have been approved.

• Ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation.

• Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.

Appendix 3 – Consent Form for Participants

Development of a values curriculum with whānau: critiquing and planning for improvement of collaborative practices in a primary school setting.

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I may withdraw from this research up until the commencement of my participation in the focus group.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from my interview up until the point where my transcript is confirmed. I know that I have two weeks after receiving my transcript to withdraw in person or by email after which the transcript will be accepted into the study and be unable to be withdrawn from that point.

I understand that after debriefing at the end of my individual collaborative hui any summaries and narratives that we have developed cannot be altered or withdrawn.

GROUP HUI

I agree to abide by the tikanga and guidelines agreed to in the initial group hui

I agree to protect the confidentiality of all members of the research whānau

I understand that materials generated in the group synthesis hui can not be amended or

withdrawn once we have reviewed and debriefed at the end of the hui

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Participant's Signature: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Additional Consent as Required

I agree to my interview being recorded.

At the completion of the research I would like any personal information, not required to be archived under the University of Waikato's research policy, to be returned to me / destroyed / archived.

Please state where it is to be archived:

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4 – Principal Consent

Kia ora _____,

As you are aware, I am currently working towards a Master of Education thesis through the University of Waikato. My intention is to examine our school's response to Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success (2008) which told schools to engage in productive partnerships with whānau. Further, I am looking towards how we

implement the expectations of Ka Hikitia: Ka Hāpaitia (2020) which says that education services need to give life to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by to supporting Māori to exercise agency and authority over the education of Māori learners.

Research has shown for a long time the value of strong home-school relationships (Berryman & Bishop, 2011) and the people with insight into the effectiveness of our relationships with school whānau are our school whānau.

I am planning to work alongside some of our school whānau to examine and critique our school's inclusion of whānau voice in development of our values-based curriculum (Te Ara Tupuranga) and develop possible recommendations for future practice.

The aim is to critique and improve the processes for our own school and to provide a possible model for other schools looking to develop collaborative projects with their school whānau.

While all efforts will be made to keep our school anonymous within the thesis, due to the nature of our work it is probable that those who know us will be able to identify us.

I am writing to request your support for this research project and I will clarify and answer any questions that you have as you consider your decision.

Ngā mihi mahana,

Steph

Consent Form for Principal

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that while the school will not be named in the thesis it may be possible for the school

to be identified due to the researchers role as a staff member.

I understand that research participants are being drawn from our existing school whānau.

.

I support the researcher in proceeding with doing this research alongside our school whānau.

Principal's Signature: _____

Principal's Name: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 5 – Interview Discussion Guide

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AS CONVERSATION - Discussion Guide

Background to engagement with school.

Tell me a little bit about yourself and your involvement with our school.

What prompted you to start attending hui at school?

Recall to provide context

Talk to me about your recollections of the development of Te Ara Tupuranga.

Barriers and Enablers

Were there any particular interactions that stand out in your memories (with staff/other whānau, positive or negative)?

Do you feel that your voice was heard and included in the development of Te Ara Tupuranga?

To what extent did you feel able to demonstrate Rangatiratanga within the development of Te Ara Tupuranga?

Were there any aspects of the development of Te Ara Tupuranga that you felt were worth celebrating?

Inclusion of voice

Are there aspects of Te Ara Tupuranga that you feel reflect your values or that you feel you can see your ideas coming through?

Do you feel that the values included in Te Ara Tupuranga reflect the values of your whānau?

Possibilities for future changes

If you could go back to the beginning of this process, is there anything that you think should be done differently?

Appendix 6 – Analysis Hui Discussion Guide

GROUP ANALYSIS HUI DISCUSSION GUIDE

What are the key ideas that came up in your own summary?

Are there any key themes evident?

Are there some ways that we can see that we would group or connect our ideas?

What are the recommendations/messages we would give our school or others going forward?

Do we need any additional data?