Student challenging behaviour and its impact on classroom culture

An investigation into how challenging behaviour can affect the learning culture in New Zealand primary schools.

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ABSTRACT

Managing challenging behaviour in the classroom is a problem faced by all teachers. Challenging behaviour is any form of behaviour that interferes with children's learning or normal development; is harmful to the child, other children or adults; or puts a child in a high risk category for later social problems or school failure. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the link between undesirable behaviours of students and their effect on classroom learning culture, as one of the key factors in behaviour management is in understanding why challenging behaviour occurs.

The qualitative nature of this research allowed for the exploration of both teacher and student narratives by learning from their experiences regarding challenging behaviour and its effect on a classroom learning culture.

The literature review revealed that it is important, that teachers have a personal definition of challenging behaviour and reflect on their own personal beliefs and the beliefs of others regarding the understanding of challenging behaviours. Research, reviewed in Chapter 2 has indicated that challenging behaviour is strongly context dependent as seen particularly in the impact of different cultural contexts on that behaviour, that learning and behaviour are socially and culturally acquired and that academic learning and social learning are interconnected.
It is the teachers' responsibility to initiate a classroom culture that recognises the connections between learning and behaviour, especially when there are a number of cultures represented. This type of classroom culture must be acceptable to, and shared by both students and teachers, must recognise and respond to cultural difference, and must avoid deficit thinking about minoritized cultures. To achieve this, teachers need to be

the ones that change the most as they are the ones who hold the power to do so.

Successful teachers need to place a high value on forming mutually respectful, trusting and positive relationships with their students which will create classrooms and schools that are safe and caring and allow a stronger focus on realising potential and encourage learning. The most effective way of forming such relationships is to learn to listen to and respect student voice.

The outcomes of this study confirm findings in literature by demonstrating, that a close, positive and supportive relationship between teacher and students are essential for developing learning potential and for responding appropriately to challenging behaviour. Recognition of student voice is central to achieving these aims.

Teachers also need to be aware of cultural difference and be prepared to make shifts in their thinking so that their own culture does not totally dominate in the classroom. In this study, the student and teacher participants were representative of both Māori and European ethnicity and the findings suggest that their assertions regarding how challenging behaviours affects learning were noticeably similar. This suggests perhaps that the participants in this study felt they were in a culturally safe environment where the teachers' culture did not always dominate.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Challenging behaviour is any form of behaviour; that interferes with children's learning or normal development, threatens a teacher's comfort and safety in managing classroom learning, is harmful to the child, other children or adults, or puts a child in a high risk category for later social problems or school failure. Managing challenging behaviour in a classroom setting is a problem faced by all teachers. One of the key factors in behaviour management is in understanding why challenging behaviour occurs. This research will attempt to gain some understanding and insights through the collection narratives from 7 – 10 year old students and teachers of these students regarding how challenging behaviours affects the learning culture of classrooms.

My interest in understanding student challenging behaviours stems back to the beginning of my teaching career. I have spent 28 years teaching in Decile 1 to 4 schools in both the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions, New Zealand. A school's decile number reflects the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. Throughout my teaching career, I have been a practising classroom teacher, senior team leader, assistant Principal and deputy Principal. I am at present the Principal (since 2002), of a large Decile 2 urban primary school at Mount Maunganui with a roll of 420 Year 1-6 students of which 76% are of Māori ethnicity.

I was appointed to my present school in 1993 as deputy Principal where I took up the portfolio of pastoral care of students and in particular, those with challenging behaviours. My interest in understanding and responding

to challenging behaviours was further increased through professional development for three years provided by the Special Education Service (now named Group Special Education). The professional development provided a link to the 'Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour' (RTLB) project. One teacher from each of three contributing schools: primary, intermediate and secondary in Mount Maunganui participated in this programme. The programme involved exploring theoretical approaches for understanding challenging behaviours of school age students, which included, personal professional development as well as practical training in skills for identifying, observing, and intervening at both an individual and school level.

Throughout the early years as deputy Principal at this school and as a result of the 'support teacher project' I was influential in developing a culture within the school which supported positive discipline with positive outcomes. This experience revealed a need to ensure that for a positive discipline approach to be successful it required among others a good understanding by all teachers of cultural differences. The school had, in 1992 adopted the assertive approach to discipline in the classroom, designed and promoted by author, educator, Lee Canter. (Canter & Canter, 1990) devised a "take charge approach" for educators and had developed a model of assertive discipline resulting from exposure to the theoretical and practical aspects of "assertion training" (p.10).
Canter believes in teachers having their own rights in the classrooms and that for far too long, teachers have ignored their *own needs* in favour of addressing *their* students' *needs*. He insists that the teachers' rights as teachers are met first and foremost.
Canter further suggests that students have rights also but that their rights are to have teachers who will promote appropriate behaviour and limit inappropriate behaviour. To make this happen, Canter argues teachers must learn to assert themselves. This means that teachers clearly and firmly communicate their wants and needs to students concerning challenging behaviours and are prepared to enforce their actions.

Teachers need to communicate to students that they care about themselves too much to let students take advantage of them. They also need to communicate that they care about the students and therefore will not let inappropriate behaviour go unnoticed. Canter identifies the outcomes of misbehaviour as consequences and promotes “steps” to carrying out consequences.

My first year at the school saw Canter’s model being rigidly enforced and saw the introduction of a detention system (in 1994) as the main consequence for various misbehaviours. This system resulted in 535 detentions involving 30% of the total (570) number of students on the roll. 80% of these detentions were given to boys and 20% were given to girls. It is important to note that 74% of all students who gained detentions in 1994 were Māori. The school in 1994 had 43% Māori students on its roll. Māori students were thus greatly over-represented in the detention statistics of the school. Of all detentions 66% of the incidents awarded in 1994 were for physical or verbal abuse and the remaining 34% of all incidents were for being out of designated area, or for vandalism or theft.

The number of detentions was an unhealthy indication that all teachers were advocates of Canter’s “three strikes and you’re out” approach, which shifted to other personnel (management) the responsibility for dealing with the majority of consequences of discipline incidents. An incident record was kept by the school and on investigation of the classroom behaviours which warranted the detentions, some alarming incident reports emerged. These ranged from, students not completing set tasks, non compliance with teacher requests, and in a few cases, teachers targeting certain student behaviours in the playground, of students who often were unfortunate enough to be in the teacher’s own classroom. Teachers committing to negative / punishment approaches often sought out more and more students engaged in unacceptable behaviour that qualified for detention. Teachers targeting playground behaviours of students in their own classrooms often led to further incidents by the students, usually in

retaliation back in the classroom, which escalated the likelihood of further challenging behaviour from the same student.
Canter's model was regarded by teachers in my school as a "life-line" support and had been misinterpreted as a theoretical foundation on which to develop effective positive discipline with positive outcomes.
However, as suggested above, outcomes were not always positive.

Since 1995, I have spent many years investigating with my staff, other models and approaches, as the rigidity of Canter's model does not appear to give enough flexibility for teachers and students at this school and in particular enough recognition of cultural difference as evidenced in the large number of Māori students (74%) receiving detentions. It is worth noting that some behaviour shown by Māori students may have strong cultural meaning with important implications for the management of behaviour. For example, if one Māori student in a class is belittled, there is a risk that many or all of them may respond aggressively. However these behaviours are often responded to in limited punitive ways by many teachers. This may be why the detention rate for Māori students was much higher than that for non Māori students.

I have strived to create a positive school learning environment, including a more positive approach to learning behaviours, along with building teachers' appreciation of cultural difference in relation to these behaviours.

During 1995 after analyzing the alarming incidents of behaviour and in particular, the continuing reliance of teachers on other people outside the classroom, (usually the management staff) to deal with the challenging behaviours, I introduced the "behaviour recovery" model at this school, (Rogers, 1994)
The behaviour recovery model devised by Rogers relies on a whole school approach, similar to Canter's approach, with the main differences being that, teachers support other colleagues and their challenges, teachers model appropriate behaviour to students, students serve as peer models to others and teachers use positive discipline principles that reinforce

alternative behaviours, instead of inevitably resorting to inflexible, punitive consequences, such as detention.

Rogers (1994) argues that:

> All teachers need to know that whenever a student's behaviour profile is significantly disturbing, that the information is shared and due processes set in place. The due process is based around colleague support and an acknowledgement that this support is *normative*, not a special favour to any one teacher. (p.6).

The common adage in my school at present is that "the student and their behaviour is everyone's responsibility" and a 'no blame' team approach is adopted to intervene where necessary. Where once teachers may have said, "*You* need to go and sort *your* child out", they now are more inclined to say, "*We* need to go and sort *this* child out".

Nevertheless, at the end of 2001 when a review of the current detention system was undertaken, following seven years of implementing the Roger's model and after numerous staff changes during this time, the detention statistics were markedly similar to those collected during the Canter programme. In 2001, 103 detentions were recorded involving 13% of the total number of students on the roll (532). 86% of detentions were awarded to boys and 14% were awarded to girls. It is also worth noting that 86% of all students who gained detentions in 2001 were Māori. The school in 2001 had 51% Māori students on its roll. Māori students were once again greatly over-represented in the detention statistics of the school.
Of all detentions 89% of all incidents were for physical or verbal abuse and the remaining 13% of all incidents were for vandalism.

Although the detention statistics indicated an overall decrease in the number of detentions from 1994, to 2001, the proportion of detentions awarded to Māori students remained disproportionately high. In view of this information, the outgoing and incoming principals decided it was time

to abandon the detention system. As the incoming principal, I introduced a school wide system of responding in other ways to students' challenging behaviour, including; the use of time out, sharing of students with other teachers in other classrooms, greater parental involvement, outside agency support and as a last resort, stand down procedures.

Following this initiative, the behaviour recovery approach and the abandonment of detentions, along with the added responsibilities placed upon me of being appointed the Principal of the school in 2002, I have became more concerned with the whole issue of why students and in particular, Māori students, present challenging behaviours to teachers in either the classroom and/or the playground. I have developed an interest in understanding, why students misbehave in some classroom and school environments and not in others. The question I continually ask myself is, "Does the behaviour result simply from the students' emotional state or does the behaviour also result from students' interaction with teachers and peers in different classroom and school learning environments?"

The AIMHI report to the Ministry of Education (Hill & Hawk, 2000) which reported on effective teaching practice in low Decile, multicultural schools indicates in its executive summary, that relationships between teacher and students is not only important but are essential prerequisites for learning. Subsequent regional and national professional development initiatives have been introduced to promote teachers developing closer and supportive relationships, particularly with Māori students such as, Te Mana Korero, (Gadd, 2003) and more recently the Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003b) and the MOE Māori initiative strategy, Ka hikitia: Managing for success 2008 -2010 (Ministry of Education, 2007). These professional development initiatives have received strong endorsement from the New Zealand Ministry of Education "Best Evidence Synthesis" reports such as "Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling" (Ministry of Education, 2003). These initiatives involve intensive investigative reflection on narratives of student, teacher and student, student relationships in the Year 7 – 13, student age group.

Such initiatives are also needed at primary school level, as well as at the secondary school level. In my opinion, as a principal of a decile 2 primary school, and after discussion with fellow principals and teachers, I believe we are experiencing a worsening of challenging behaviours in our schools, in students even from the age of 5 years. Despite the research undertaken on community and family influences, (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003) which again has a focus on older students, there is a need for understanding how relationships within classroom and school environments may be impacting on the behaviour of 5 -10 year old students.

Through my many and varied experiences with students, who present challenging behaviours, I have developed an ongoing and deepening interest in the area of professional development for primary school principals and teachers. Such professional development should focus on helping teachers understand how effective discipline in the classroom can be maintained when the teachers affirm both their own and their students' cultural backgrounds, and when they provide a culturally safe environment for all students.

This research explores the students' and teachers' narratives regarding what they believe constitute a positive learning environment.
Its focus is on the experiences of teachers who are classroom practitioners, and on the experiences of students, with moderate to severe challenging behaviour, which limit their ability to reach their learning potential. I was interested in gaining an insight into students' experiences as they talk about their behaviour and their learning and how the two are affected by different classroom and school learning environments.

In summary, the broad aim of this research is to gain an understanding of student's challenging behaviours at school through learning from narratives of students' and teachers' experiences. By studying relationship based pedagogy and by appreciating cultural difference, I hope to gain a

deeper understanding of the link between undesirable behaviours of students and the classroom learning culture of the school.

This research will explore, through narratives of the experiences of Māori and European teachers of 7-10 year old students and through the narratives of a small sample of Māori and European students, commonalities in their personal experiences of how student behaviour affects the learning culture within a classroom.

The thesis is organised in five chapters. Chapter One provides information about me as the researcher, discussing my interest and experience and justification for this topic. Chapter Two reviews both national and international literature to provide background to and a context for the research. Chapter Three discusses the research design, methodology, methods and data analysis, and how research ethics have been addressed. Chapter Four presents and discusses the research findings related to the literature presented in Chapter 2. Chapter Five provides my conclusion and details the recommendations that emerged from the study.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review focuses firstly on a definition of challenging behaviours, with a discussion on 'typical' types of behaviours exhibited by students followed by a discussion of literature regarding school and teacher perceptions of student behaviour.

The second part of the literature review examines cultural perceptions and differences, and cultural implications for education in a mainstream classroom. Supporting literature is presented on cultural implications for the behaviour of Māori students in New Zealand classrooms, on the perceived underachievement of Māori students. The research examines possible reasons for the challenging behaviours often displayed by Māori students and students from other marginalised cultures.

The final section of this literature review explores teacher perceptions regarding student and teacher relationships as well as the effect that challenging behaviour has on the learning potential of students.

Challenging Behaviours

Defining challenging behaviours

The term challenging behaviour has generated a number of definitions which allow educators and others to attach labels to individuals who demonstrate unacceptable behaviours. Challenging behaviour as a label for unacceptable conduct is not a diagnosis and not a special education condition, although it may accompany several special education conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Educational literature does not assign a consensual definition for inappropriate deeds or actions on the part of an individual or groups although Emerson (2001) suggests that challenging behaviour is:

> Behaviour of such intensity, frequency and duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or delay access to, and use of ordinary facilities (p.3).

Behavioural difficulties is another label for unacceptable conduct suggested by the New Zealand Government Special Education "2000" policy proposing that behaviour is that which,

> Jeopardises the physical safety of the student or others; threatens to cause or causes significant property damage; and severely limits the student's access to ordinary settings and interferes with social acceptance, sense of personal well- being and their educational performance (Ministry of Education, 2000).

Challenging behaviours or Behavioural difficulties are examples of different labels relating to inappropriate or unacceptable actions by individual students. However there is a great deal of confusion in the contextual meaning that these two labels suggest for defining an individual's reasons for misbehaving. A student identified with challenging behaviours may have been labelled by teacher perception, of what behaviour warrants the label. However, a student's response to the environment or context that they have been placed in could also warrant the label being applied to the situation which allowed the presentation of the behaviour. Furthermore, a student labelled with behavioural difficulties may also trigger a label for a medical 'diagnosis' which could also suggest an emotional, physical or learning disorder associated with the behaviour.

Special Education (2000) is a policy set up by the Ministry of Education, New Zealand to help provide support for students who have special educational needs. The central theme of the policy is to develop a fair system to ensure appropriate students receive support wherever they may be and according to their level of need. Special Education 2000 policy

continues to remain in place at the present time. The label behavioural difficulties as adopted by New Zealand Special Education professionals is a term assigned to those students who have special educational and medical needs and who may exhibit undesirable behaviours as a result of these needs.

However, for the purposes of this research study the label **Challenging behaviour** will be the term referred to, as the research involves investigating both teacher and student voice regarding their perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and its effect on their learning and not the emotional, physical or learning disorders which could be associated with the label "behaviour difficulties".

Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham. (2004) refer to challenging behaviour as 'antisocial behaviour' which may range from hostility or aggression to minor annoying defiance.
They suggest that,

> Antisocial behaviour is perhaps the most destructive behaviour pattern that children and youths can adopt, one that sets them up for a lifetime of sadness, disappointment and failure (p.4).

Walker et al. also indicate that pro social behaviour as opposed to antisocial behaviour is that which refers to cooperative, positive and mutually acceptable forms of social behaviour.

Galloway, Ball, Blomfield, & Seyd, (1982) suggest that challenging behaviour can also incorporate 'disruptive behaviour'.
They state that,

> … a wide range of behaviour may be regarded as disruptive. For the present purposes, disruptive behaviour is defined as any behaviour which appears problematic, inappropriate and disturbing to teachers (p.xv).

Disruptive behaviour is a term used in the 1970s by educationalists and was applied to unacceptable behaviour that was of high intensity such as

physical aggression when compared to behaviour that was low level such as defiance (Walker et al. 2004).

Limitations in defining behaviour

There is clearly a debate around which behaviour is identified as challenging, by whom it is identified, and from whom it is exhibited. Behaviour is relative to a context, be it social, environmental, cultural, or historical, (Emerson, 2001) and to variations in contexts and variations in explanations, (Watkins & Wagner, 2000), suggesting that learning and behaviour is both socially and culturally acquired. Behaviour can be perceived as unacceptable in one setting and be quite acceptable in another setting, (Watkins & Wagner, 2000). The social setting in one environment may allow for acceptable behaviour which may not be acceptable in another, eg. loud shouting (at a rugby match) or physical aggression (in a boxing ring), would not be tolerated at a church service or in a school classroom. There are different expectations regarding behaviour in different settings (Arthur, Gordon, & Butterfield, 2003), and some may overlap. However, people usually behave in accordance with contextual social expectations. I argue that, often teachers in schools do not place sufficient importance on the *context* in which the behaviour occurs.

Failure to adhere to the rules and expectations lends itself to becoming unacceptable by the community that sets the rules and expectations. The perpetrator of the unacceptable behaviour will therefore have difficulties with “fitting in” or “belonging to” the community. Not “fitting in” or “belonging to” could have far reaching serious consequences for the person who exhibits the challenging behaviour.

Emerson (2001) suggests,

> Within the community, challenging behaviours may serve to limit the development of social relationships … reduce opportunities to participate in community based activities …and prevent access to health and social services (p.13).

Participation within a community is seen by some as a consequence of individual choice, and the individual needs to be made aware of the fact, if they choose to participate, that they are accountable to the community for their own actions. However many students with challenging behaviours may not have chosen to participate in some classrooms and school contexts. I argue that consideration needs to be given to, whose responsibility it is to intervene and "curb" the unacceptable behaviours so that the person who exhibited the behaviour continues to have the right to be accepted by the community. Maybe, it is the communities' responsibility to ensure that people maintain their rights to inclusion and belonging within the community. One could also argue that for individuals with medical conditions that prohibit making responsible choices, some accommodation from the community is essential in order to ensure the individual is given a fair chance at belonging. The same can be said of individuals with challenging behaviour.

It is also likely that an individual's own understanding of challenging behaviour will depend largely on when and how it is experienced. Behaviours such as aggression or violence towards others, not completing tasks or activities in teaching sessions, talking constantly, annoying others, are rightfully viewed as examples of challenging behaviours in educational settings. However the severity of the behaviour will depend on the teacher's own understanding or tolerance of what they believe constitutes misbehaviour. Furthermore many descriptions of challenging behaviour given by teachers along with decisions regarding subsequent interventions do not always reflect an understanding of students own reasons for the behaviour. I argue that many teachers do not delve into all of the causes and contexts of the behaviour and prefer to concentrate only on implementing the consequences as an immediate punishment.. Teachers need to look deeper into the causes of the behaviour and not just punish the behaviour. Therefore gaining "student voice" is crucial when attempting to understand the causes of behaviours.

An awareness of when does a behaviour cease to be just irritating and become challenging, and who has the expertise to make this judgment and how, needs to be addressed also. We need to know what criteria are used to make this judgment. It is well recognised in schools that a student who is described as challenging by one teacher can be perceived as a typical youngster by another, (Emerson, 2001; Kauffman et al., 2002 ; (Wheldall & Glynn, 1989). All teachers, like all parents and other adults, have differing thresholds of tolerance for behavioural variations, which present another limitation when defining whether the behaviour is challenging or not.

Antisocial behaviour, challenging or disruptive behaviours are labels applied by other people who are often not part of a student's home and community environment and may reflect the impact student behaviour has on them, rather than saying much about the behaviour itself. This is especially an issue when the student and the person using the label come from different cultures. Home and school contextual differences are more difficult for students from minority cultures to negotiate, especially when the teacher is from the majority culture. The teacher needs to be aware that the most powerful culture in the classroom will usually be their own and that this will influence the classroom culture to an extent that some students from minority cultures will not understand and as a result, not respond positively to teacher expectations.

Teachers therefore must exercise caution before they conclude that a child is exhibiting challenging behaviour (Emerson, 2001; Rogers, 2000). A teacher can often create a classroom environment in an image of their own childhood experiences and cultural influences (Kroeger & Bauer, 2004). This image could mimic how they were taught at school, and instil their own beliefs on how homes and lives are organised, believing that this is the right way and is how will be (Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2006). I suggest that teachers need to consider there are times when the problem is within themselves and not the child.

To summarise this section of the literature, I argue, that the definition of challenging behaviours is complex and confusing. Regardless of the label given it is reasonable to suggest that challenging behaviour is that which affects not only the perpetrator but the behaviours of others within close proximity. Within the classroom this will include the learning environment and all those within it. Teachers' opinion of what constitutes a behaviour problem varies dependant on their perception of what is acceptable and within their own threshold of tolerance and within their own cultural beliefs and understandings.

Challenging behaviours in context

It is argued that challenging behaviours will be challenging according to the antecedent or current contextual conditions which have prompted or are maintaining the behaviour (Wheldall & Glynn, 1989). It could also be argued that behaviour is defined as challenging because of its particular impact on others within the community. If this is so, then one needs to ask, "Do we know *what* the student is challenging?"

For example, is the behaviour a response to another person's behaviour, or to a change in circumstances, such as the arrival of a relief teacher?

I suggest that there is a need for recognising students' interpretation of an incident by listening to their reasons and perceptions regarding behaviour of concern, and the context in which it occurred.

I will now discuss briefly different types of challenging behaviours which are frequently observed in classrooms and schools in order to better the notion "for whom is the behaviour challenging?"

Watkins & Wagner (2000) categorise behaviours according to the context in which the behaviour is displayed, environment and time, the audience, and according to the person who is seen to be harmed. On the other hand, Smith & Laslett (1993) offer four labels for types of challenging behaviour, which may be displayed in any contextual setting.

The labels are

1. The class wit – This student is unsure of their status in the classroom as regards to how they should behave and so treats all interactions as a humorous episode.
2. The promoter – This student usually dislikes the teacher or subject and promotes with peers, ill feeling towards the teacher.
3. The victim – This student is usually unpopular with other students and becomes victim to their teasing, which usually results in the student constantly complaining to the teacher.
4. The saboteur – This student usually encourages others to misbehave and enjoys the confrontations as a result. Often this student will step back and let the others suffer the consequences.

(p. 61-65).

However there are major problems in imposing such labels on observed behaviour. The labels may have profoundly different meanings and understandings for the “labeller” from the meanings understood by the students. Teachers need to be sure that their expectation of how the student behaves does not depend only on the attributed label which could be given to them from past events or past teachers. Similarly, teachers need to also look at how the context within the classroom setting or environment and their own perceptions of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour may be influencing the behaviour, eg. rules that may be unreasonable, unrealistic, or arbitrary. Furthermore, the label given to the behaviour may not always be justified by the events that lead up to the incident or the context that the behaviour occurred in (Watkins & Wagner, 2000), particularly so when students come from different social and cultural backgrounds. Similarly it is important to recognise that some students are often further pressured or inclined to misbehave when they are given a label “to live up to” (Balson, 1992), and thereby given a powerful means to influence the behaviours of others.

Common challenging behaviours exhibited by students in classrooms include:

Attention seeking – attacking or defending behaviour which has similarities to "the actor" as promoted by (Watkins & Wagner, 2000).

Asserting power – threatens the teacher's authority and makes them 'powerful' in the eyes of other students. It is important to note here that Balson (1992) suggests that by sending the student to "time out" or challenging their behaviours in public only strengthens a student's belief that power is important and that those who have power, win.

Struggling to belong - is one of the basic expressions of human nature, and forms a basis for belonging to an ethnic or a social group. Students from a very early age of understanding seek ways of behaving which will give

them recognition and often begin by operating on a trial and error basis, (Kauffman, Mostert, Trent, & Hallahan, 2002). Such students may well respond to being shown "how to" belong to a group, how to wait their turn or how to listen carefully before they speak or act.

Balson (1992) furthermore suggests that,

> It is the sense of inadequacy, of internal discouragement and the fear of rejection which are the major factors behind learning failures and behavioural problems in the schools (p.21).

A fear of *rejection* is worthy of consideration of a cause of challenging behaviour as students feel the need to belong to a group, and try all sorts of inappropriate ways of "gaining entry".

Taking revenge – these students need to "get even" with society that denies them a place in the organisation. (Edwards, 2000) and not only do they seek to dominate but they may seek revenge in the process. They may provoke intended or a disguised hostility in order to be recognised.

Driekurs (1968) cited in (Balson, 1992) writes of the child whose goal is revenge:

> The mutual antagonism may become so strong that each party has only one desire: retaliation, to revenge his own feeling of being hurt. The child no longer hopes merely for attention or power; feeling ostracised and disliked, he can see his place in the group only by his success in making himself hated (p.70).

Balson (1992) concludes that these are students who often steal, damage, assault others especially younger peers, remain sullen, moody and morose. As adults they often vandalise, assault, become arsonists, threaten and are prone to abuse verbally.

Balson further suggests that there is a purpose for revenge.

> Teachers must recognise the purpose of revengeful behaviour, sense the deep discouragement, futility and sense of worthlessness which characterise these individuals and realise that it is always the inability of young people to gain a sense of achievement and self-worth in our schools which is the major contributor to resultant and violent behaviour (p.73).

Escaping – These are students who withdraw into themselves in order not to be shown up for their inadequacies, and make a deliberate attempt to remove them selves from an environment that they feel uncomfortable in and can not cope with. But sometimes there is no attacking behaviour and they are discouraged enough to no longer hope for any success at school. The student often becomes the victim (Smith & Laslett, 1993), and also does not reach their potential academically, as a result.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a repetitive attack of a verbal, physical, social or psychological nature that causes a victim stress, immediately and in the future (Arthur et al., 2003) and creates an imbalance of power between two people. Bullying as suggested by Rigby cited in Wearmouth, Richmond, Glynn,& Berryman (2004)(Wearmouth, Richmond, Glynn, &

Berryman, 2004) may be understood as “an inevitable part of the struggle that is inseparable from existence” (p288). It is part of survival and has been present throughout the existence of mankind. Rigby has identified hereditary factors as well as historical and contemporary contextual factors such as, home life and the community that the person lives in as being responsible for elevating the chances of a person bullying others. Some reasons for bullying include; lack of confidence, showing off to others to get attention, jealousy, not coping with others who are different, joining or copying others who are bullying to be part of a group, they have been bullied themselves or don’t know that it is wrong and/or haven't learnt how to socialise with others (Rigby, 2002).

In regards to who can be a victim,

> Statistically, anyone can be a victim – and it is acknowledged that individuals who experience bullying “are often above average performers, efficient and better at what they do than those who bully them”. In fact bullies can target those who they envy and those who they feel would refuse to be subservient to them (Kazmierow, 2003)

Bullying at school is often the result of a “victim” perceived as being a target by a person who is much stronger either physically or emotionally. There is a vast literature available for schools regarding the causes, effects and suggestions for stopping bullying behaviour (Buckley & Maxwell, 2007; Olweus, 1993; Police, 1992, 1994; Rigby, 2002; Rogers, 2000; Sharp & Smith, 1994).

It is pleasing to note that for many years, New Zealand schools along with support from government agencies have been developing initiatives “to challenge bullies, support victims and try to effect behavioural change to stop bullying reoccurring” (Kazmierow, 2003). Even more pleasing is that many of these initiatives eg. ‘Eliminating Violence’ (Special Education Service, 1989) achieve success without needing to remove the bully from the school.

I have purposely dwelt on the most common challenging behaviours as suggested by Balson (1992) because they appear to encompass most of the challenging behaviours of students who can be either 'labelled' (Smith & Laslett, 1993) or experience 'environmental' or contextual factors (Watkins & Wagner, 2000) influencing the behaviours. It is interesting to note that Balson (1992) also suggests that the "exhibiting of behaviours is seen as coming from within the student's own determination to misbehave" (p.72). However I argue that understanding the students' intention to misbehave without the recognizing the importance of *listening* to the students reasons for the behaviours will limit teachers' effectiveness in changing the behaviour.

Throughout my teaching career, I have witnessed many types of student misbehaviours and they can be all or partly recognised in Balson's work. In my experience, it is easy to recognise the challenging behaviour displayed by a student but it is more difficult to recognise the student's *intention* without listening to and exploring the student's own account of the reasons for the behaviour. This aligns with research undertaken in the Te Kotahitanga project (Bishop et al., 2003b) who report that the major influence on students' educational achievement lies in the minds and actions and interpretations of their teachers. Listening to student voice is crucial to decision making, when attending to challenging behaviours.

Teacher perceptions regarding challenging behaviours

> *Do not confine your children to your own learning. For they have been born in another time (Hebrew Proverb)*

Teachers' explanations of challenging behaviours reflect, in part, real evidence about patterns of difficulty. But they also reflect a range of distortions or incomplete perspectives. (Walker et al., 2004; Poulou and Norwich cited in Wearmouth et al., 2004). Common teacher explanations for misbehaviours often overheard in staffrooms locate the problem entirely with students or their home community, for example, "they're not that sort of person", "they're not very bright", "it's just a few", "it's normal for

their age", "it's the home life" and "their brother was like this also". These deficit judgements have a disempowering effect on other teachers (Rogers, 1994; Watkins & Wagner, 2000) and will generate negative and deficit thinking which can erode student and teacher esteem, class environment, relationships and change the school ethos regarding discipline. It is also common practice for teachers to develop a negative focus on the unacceptable behaviour which leads to a 'punishment that fits the crime' approach, when solving behaviour problems.

> There is much greater agreement among teachers about what behaviour is prohibited than what is demanded. That is, teachers find it easier to specify what they will not tolerate than to specify the appropriate behaviour that they demand. Perhaps this is a result of our culture's focus on punishment as the primary means of behaviour control (Kauffman et al., 2002)

I argue that the method promoted by Canter *et al*. (1990) regarding punishment as the result of consequences has seen a number of schools adopt a negative attitude towards changing behaviours by using power and control. Power and control rely heavily on the importance of the teacher (and schools) to determine how students should behave and what should be done to encourage this. Nevertheless, there are a number of teachers in our schools who still support the Canter model. This is possibly due to its inflexible but perceived "no nonsense" or "zero tolerance" approach. This approach concerns those who prefer to utilise other approaches such as those teachers who see the importance of using student voice supported by a behaviour recovery approach as suggested by Rogers (1998). Zero tolerance, it is feared, may lead to zero care and responsibility on the part of some teachers.

However, in contrast, Canter also argues that students have rights and that their rights are to have teachers who will promote appropriate behaviour and limit inappropriate behaviour. To allow this to happen, teachers must learn to be assertive themselves. This is understood to mean that teachers clearly and firmly communicate their wants and needs

to students and be prepared to enforce consequences for non-compliance of these actions. Rogers (1994) identifies with this position but insists that the teacher needs to be fair, consistent and firm in their enforcement of consequences. A common teacher explanation for an incident is that it is the student's fault, and only their fault, and therefore the student needs to be punished. On the other hand, confronting an angry or distraught student in public who is attempting to deal, however imperfectly, with an incident they created, may "merely serve to further damage their self esteem and self efficacy"(MacFarlane, 2007). I agree with other researchers (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003a; Bishop et al., 2003b; Gadd, 2003; Kozol, 1992; Zeitlin & Refaat, 2000) that teachers cause harm to a persons' (mana) self esteem when they berate or intimidate students in front of others. For Māori students such teacher responses can tread on the mana of particular students, and by close association, tramp on the mana of other students in the class.

Teachers furthermore, create injustices for all students when they concentrate on student behaviour rather than attempting "functional analysis" of student behaviour in its context (Balson, 1992; Rogers, 1998). To concentrate on the exhibited physical behaviour alone is ineffectual in providing a safe working environment for all students. Concentrating on exhibited physical behaviour alone does not take into account those individuals who present withdrawn, depressed, anxious and docile behaviours (Prochnow & Bourke, 2001) who are often over looked by educators as they focus on dealing with the behavioural challenges of louder and more aggressive types.

On the other hand, it is possible that the behaviours that Prochnow & Bourke describe are not perceived as 'challenging' by many teachers, because they do not disrupt classroom activities.
Perhaps the reason for this perception is that teachers appreciate that the physically robust nature in behaviours (more often exhibited by boys) is more easily recognised and more detrimental to the learning needs of other students within the classroom and to the

teachers own power of will. This perception (by teachers) may account for the higher proportion of boys being referred by teachers for specialised interventions for behaviours than girls.

When teachers maintain that disruptive behaviour is “that which disrupts others’ learning”, they do not appear to acknowledge what the student may be trying to communicate and what the student understands about why the behaviours have occurred. I contend again, that teachers need to access, ‘student voice’ as to why they misbehaved which could give an indication of what they understand about that particular behaviour before they decide on how they will respond to it.

Teachers as professionals are in a position to provide an “adult” view of classroom experience and it could be argued that this has been based on an unquestioned assumption that ‘the grown-ups know best’. (Glasser, 1992; Prashnig, 2001b; Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005). Professionals ought to be more able than children to maintain control of their own behaviour in challenging situations, and to model more appropriate behaviour to their students.

For many students who present challenging behaviours, being asked to reflect on their behaviour is a concept that may be foreign to them in respect to expressing their concerns for the behaviour. The response to “Why did you do it?” usually is, “Because he did ...” which may not have been the catalyst for the action and needs to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the student needs to feel comfortable and safe and to be able to speak in confidence with the person who is challenging their behaviour before they will even consider reflecting and responding to the questions asked. Teachers perhaps need more “refined” strategies to help with reflection and responding to student disclosure. The teacher needs to delve further into the reasons that the student gives and listen without prejudice before deciding on what further action should take place. This is the first stage in adopting a restorative approach, (Adams et al., 2003; Buckley & Maxwell, 2007), where both parties can agree on the causes,

effects and consequences of the behaviour. A benefit from a teacher placing importance on listening to student voice is that the impetus for changing the way they behave can come from the students themselves (Hawk, Tumama-Cowley, Hill, & Sutherland, 2002; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Similarly, the practice of the teacher deliberately mirroring the behaviour to the student (Rogers, 1994, 1998, 2000) may also allow the student to view their behaviour externally and initiate the conversation around their reasons for the behaviour.

There has been considerable research undertaken suggesting that how teachers conceptualise the causes of behaviour they see as worrying and disturbing, bears a strong relationship to their own emotional and cognitive response to the behaviour. (Brophy & Good, 1974; Chesebro & McCroskey, 2002; Wearmouth, Glynn, & Berryman, 2005). This implies (for example) that the teacher may be unaware that they are not focussing on the causes of the behaviour but purely on the behaviour itself. Brophy *et al*, (1974) further suggests that teachers' actions toward students may be reactions to the students' behaviour and this often means that the teacher may often respond in a "knee jerk" reaction.

When teachers complain that they do not understand particular children, when they misbehave, what they may be saying is that they are not aware of the purpose or the goal of the child's behaviour (Balson, 1992; Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). Teachers need to ensure that they have personalised their own codes of practice regarding responding to student learning and behaviour (Walker et al., 2004; Whitaker, 2004). A role for school management is to ensure that teachers, are aware of cultural difference, are positive and do not engage in deficit thinking, and are receptive to other teachers' perceptions as to how students learn and behave. Schools also need to be aware of how students respond to different learning environments, different learning contexts and differing teaching styles.

Culture and Behaviour

I will now discuss literature regarding Māori cultural values in context and the implications these values can have on learning achievement for Māori students in today's schools.

A focus has been made on pre European Māori learning and discipline to assist the findings of this research regarding possible reasons for behavioural difficulties experienced by Māori students and students of other cultures.

Defining culture.

A definition of culture is that it is "the learned and shared patterns of thought and behaviours of a group of people that is traditionally transmitted both verbally and physically (through the use of material objects) from generation to generation". However literature indicates that,

> The essence of a culture is not its artifacts, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but how the members of the group interpret, use, and perceive them (Banks & McGee, 1989).

Banks & McGee imply that people within a culture usually interpret the meaning of symbols, artefacts and behaviours in the same or in similar ways. I argue that culture is more than just naming objects and events. It is about sharing a world view that incorporates values and beliefs and preferred ways of thinking.

A positional definition of culture in New Zealand is that culture enables us to establish a common framework of meaning so that we can understand decision making, communication with each other, how we structure our families and decide on the importance of family members. In European families for example parents play a more important role than grandparents whereas in Māori families, grandparents play a more important role in the up bringing of children and the imparting of knowledge regarding tradition and maintaining cultural values.

Culture in New Zealand (Quest, 1992) expresses values towards time and land, work and play, good and evil and reward and punishment. Culture for New Zealand Māori emphasises handing down for future generations, collective memories and the maintaining of cultural heritage '... in art, drama, literature, religion and social events' Quest (1992) cited in (Wearmouth et al., 2005) p.219. The social and cultural contexts in which Māori children are reared, (including the values, beliefs and behaviours they acquire) shape their thinking, and how they understand or 'make sense' of the new situations they find themselves in, and hence how they choose to behave in those situations.

An important word in the definition of culture is that culture is *learned*. Culture is learned not in a classroom or by reading a book, but through experience, imitation, and informal instruction from parents and peers. All three influences begin at the moment of birth suggesting that it is not genetically determined, or reliant on hereditary factors.

Linton (1945) defines culture as learned behaviours,

> "A culture is a configuration of learned behaviours and results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society" (Linton, 1945) (p.31).

Similarly, Goodenough, cited in Kroeger,& Bauer (2004) suggests that culture is concerned with developing patterns of behaviour

> Culture refers to the ways we perceive, believe, evaluate and behave. Culture provides patterns of behaviour that enable a group to live together.

Linton and Goodenough suggest that patterns of behaviour can only be evident if they are learned from others within the group. Learned patterns of culturally accepted behaviour will be influenced by the cultural

environment that a person lives in. However, the home environment, the work environment and social environment that a person associates with may have differing cultural values and expectations and a person will experience and be expected to adapt to these patterns of behaviour in order to participate in that environment. It is also worth noting at this point that ‘culture’ can not be acquired by attending courses in ‘diversity training’. Furthermore any cultural knowledge and ‘expertise’ gained can not be applied to every individual in the one culture (Lynch, 1998) as this encourages the forming and operating of cultural stereotypes, rather than “listening to culture” (MacFarlane, 2004).

To ensure conformity in patterns of behaviour and if a group of people are to exist together, they need a set of rules specific to that culture which helps everyone know what to do in all situations, ensuring that their actions remain ‘culturally appropriate” to that group. This can present dilemmas for some teachers who do not possess the knowledge or understanding of these rules and who find differences between cultural contexts uncomfortable and at times unacceptable. This can have a pervasive negative impact on students’ self esteem, learning and behaviour. Nevertheless, the rules governing cultural expectations of behaviour are provided to help to propagate and maintain a shared meaning within the culture. It is the teachers’ responsibility to become aware of the cultural expectations within their own culture and how their cultural values, beliefs and preferred practices impact on students from other cultures.

However, it is important to note that there is often as much variety between individuals within a culture as there is between cultures (Banks, 1991). The implications for the classroom are that a culturally safe classroom recognises an existence and acceptance of different ways of doing things (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hawk et al., 2002).

Culture and its implications for educators

An understanding of the culture is a challenge for an outsider, as only the person who has grown up immersed in the culture, and has learned the patterns of behaviour attributable to that culture can make first hand interpretations of the culture (Houlton, 1986). Teachers are not in a position to be fully immersed in the wide variety of different cultural influences that students may present in today's classrooms. In saying this however, they should not underestimate the skills that the student has of negotiating between, making selections from, and reworking where needed, the different cultures and languages that comprise their world' (Houlton, 1986). In addition, the culture of school communities such as the community established within a classroom will determine the beliefs, values and approaches that the student will be exposed to and be expected to operate in during their time at school.

Hodgkinson (2001) cited in Kroeger & Bauer (2004) argues that 'teachers need to be aware of educational demographics in order to better teach other peoples' children'. (p.22). I suggest that teachers therefore need to appreciate that intellectual learning and social learning are interconnected within every culture.

Teachers need to ensure that just because some Māori students do not visibly promote their culture and values this is not a reason for teachers to ignore the culture. Schools and teachers have an obligation to help students become immersed in and learn about their cultures.

"Treat them all the same" has been for some years the prevailing philosophy of teachers in many primary schools with students from different backgrounds.

> It stemmed from a belief that by treating them all the same, in other words playing down their differences in culture and skin colour, the teacher would be helping children to live harmoniously together and to appreciate the common experiences which bind them together as human beings rather than the differences which, if emphasised, could divide them

> from each other and set them apart from mainstream society. (Houlton, 1986) p. 24

Houlton argues that a 'mono cultural' approach raises an ethical issue asking "is it morally acceptable to treat every person as equal when there are clear differences in culture, beliefs, traditions and customs" Behind this is the notion of the teacher's culture and teachers need to learn how this culture is powerful, privileged, and pervasive in their classrooms and schools and can so easily result in marginalising and trivialising other cultures. Not recognising difference in other cultures is to allow the teachers' culture to dominate. Teachers need to be aware of the commitment by schools regarding the Treaty of Waitangi position in New Zealand public education which requires that they deliver much more on Māori culture and its maintenance than any other culture represented.

It is interesting to note that the 1970 report of the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education (New Zealand) indicated that more than 'special features' such as additional staffing and finance were needed to bring about change in Māori students' achievement. The report deemed it is essential that the 'self image of Māori students be enhanced by his knowledge that cultural differences are understood, and respected by all with whom he associates' (Smith, 1978).

Smith, (1978) asserted thirty years ago that a mono cultural approach to education exists in New Zealand.

> Education to a large extent, in New Zealand, is structured upon premises, research and values derived from the majority pakeha culture (p.59).

Walker, (1973) cited in Bishop & Glynn (1999) suggested that "teachers are predominately Pakeha and mono cultural education is theorised and delivered from a single cultural frame of reference". It is debateable whether there has been much change from this position in today's mainstream schools. In educational forums, questions need to be asked as to whether the influences of a mono cultural approach still exist in our schools. Perhaps

questions pertaining to cultural diversity need to be asked of those who create the national curriculum or of those who provide resources for learning or those who make the rules for educational instruction in schools.

Young (1991) cited in Bishop & Glynn (1999) provides a challenge suggesting that it is not the teacher's cultural status but the context of delivery that is crucial. He proposes that,

> ... it is the context created in such classrooms by teachers that impacts upon children's learning rather than the mono cultural status of teachers (p.136).

However I argue that the challenge for teachers is to create culturally safe schools and classrooms despite their own mono cultural status and this will assist in providing safe and caring contexts for delivery. Māori students need to feel respected and proud of who and what they are as Māori (Cavanagh, 2005). Teachers and in particular those from the majority culture, which in New Zealand, is European, need to learn about and respect Māori culture and other cultures' ways of learning. Only then will this allow the delivery of curriculum and key concepts to be placed in meaningful context for all students.

In order to create culturally safe schools and classrooms in New Zealand, teachers need to listen to the voice of Māori students and their families and other students and families of minority cultures. Teachers do not have to become as fully informed about all cultures in their schools, as they do for New Zealand's indigenous Māori population as treaty partners, but they do need to draw on the knowledge and expertise in the schools' communities to determine what behaviour is valued and what is 'safe'. The difficulty for some teachers is that their own culture often totally dominates their thinking and attitudes towards other cultures.

> When teachers do not share their students' cultural background, the teaching – learning process may be impeded by misunderstanding and frustration for both the teacher and the students. Mc Laughlin & Mc Leod (1996) referred to in (Kroeger & Bauer, 2004) p.33

A comfortable definition from overseas literature of cultural safety that has emerged from years of reflection, argument and discussion between indigenous and non-indigenous staff and students in Australia, is that it implies:

> … more or less - an environment, which is safe for people;
> where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity,
> of who they are and what they need. It is about shared
> respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience,
> of learning together with dignity, and truly listening.
> (Williams, 2007)

Teachers if they are to create culturally safe schools and classrooms, need to be the ones to change the most in regard to the appreciation of cultural difference, because they are the ones who hold the power that can either promote or resist the change. A 'safe' classroom can develop a newly created culture that is co constructed by both the students and the teacher.

In different environments students will experience many cultural differences and therefore it is more likely that cultural safety and protection may be perceived as being different within each situation. There may be differences between the family culture, the class culture and general society culture. Students may feel safer within one environment which, for younger children, could be the family culture, (Kroeger & Bauer, 2004; Zeitlin & Refaat, 2000). However, ideally for all students, the classroom culture should also enable them to feel safe. In addition it is noted that even in the recent past, the 'culturally different' have been faced with a choice of either the "dominant culture" or their own culture in education, (Corson, 1998). Even though they desire access to the literary world of the dominant culture an awareness and retention of their own cultural values needs to be recognised. Success at school should not come at the cost of leaving their own culture at home. Schools need to ensure that a culturally safe environment can be maintained for all students and teachers by

incorporating the knowledge and experiences of minority cultural groups into classroom teaching pedagogy.

A recommendation for Boards of Trustees and schools regarding better relationships for better learning (Ministry of Education, 2000) is that when attending to a relationship involving a power imbalance the following three sets of goals need to be addressed;

- A demand for equal rights and recognition within the established order or culture from the less powerful culture.
- An assertion of the less powerful culture in opposition to the values of the dominant culture.
- An acceptance and valuing of difference by society at large and a willingness to live co-operatively (p.11).

Educational implications for the Māori culture in New Zealand

The formation of Te Kohanga Reo (language nest) movement initiated in 1982 and subsequently, Kura Kaupapa (Māori immersion primary schools) initiated in 1985, has been in response to a belief among Māori that the European style school system is not appropriate both in its curriculum content and pedagogical strategies to sustain the development of the Māori culture.

Te Kohanga Reo offers students (birth to school age) immersion in the Māori language and Māori tikanga (cultural practices), aspiring to replicate a home environment where only Māori language is spoken and heard (MacFarlane, 2004).

Kohanga Reo students are then better prepared to enter a Kura Kaupapa environment which offers both bilingual and bicultural education from the age of 5 years.

The creation of funding alternative educational opportunities for Māori (and other cultures) has been initiated to offer learning in an appropriate cultural context which has its foundation in traditional (pre European) Māori teaching methods. However this funding does not address the need for mainstream education to change to adapt options for learning in

appropriate and often multicultural contexts by adopting teaching and learning strategies and relationships that are safe and appropriate for Māori students.

Pre European Educational pedagogy

A brief examination of some features of traditional Māori teaching practices and beliefs follows in an attempt to present background literature which may assist in the discussion of the teacher and student narratives contained in this research.

Hemara, (2000) reveals that ancient Māori educational practices exposed students to,

> traditional curricula (which) were closely related to the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical wellbeing of the community and individual (p.40).

He adds that the processes of the learner which included both teacher and student were unique and reciprocal. Both learned from each other and both learned something new from the process.

> Lessons had direct and immediate application. As the student matured, the associated tasks became more complex. The difference being that the teacher and student would learn together (p.42).

This process is resonates with co-operative learning which is a feature of many classroom learning programmes. Co-operative learning is only successful where students and teachers really respect one another and work together to help each other and where students take responsibility for their own learning (Brown & Thomson, 2000; Cazden, 2001; Kohn, 1986). However, even such effective pedagogical approaches like co-operative learning themselves occur in specific cultural contexts.

There were two approaches to instructional learning predominant in ancient Māori pedagogy which supported the absorption of knowledge, by identified individuals for the wellbeing of the entire community.

The first of these, *rote learning* was a feature of the whare wananga (house of learning) which was available for boys and young men only. Kaumata (male elders) took on the important roles of teachers and guardians. Learning was highly ritualised and commanded deep respect between students and teachers (Hemara, 2000). Rote learning was also a feature of important learning for girls and young women, for example in the learning of Kaikaranga (calling) and waiata (song).
The second of these, a more *informal and incidental learning* approach was promoted through whanau members, available to both genders with more than one adult providing hands-on tutoring. The “timetable” was more flexible and teaching roles were shared between both adult (tuakana) and student (teina). Learning was relevant within the contexts of current events such as seasonal change, growing and harvesting crops, social functions, and the harnessing of natural resources to ensure that the individuals’ contribution to the community was valued and retained for the future.

The Kohanga Reo (language nest) movement in New Zealand combines both rote and informal incidental learning approaches to encompass educational delivery for pre school students. The movement also warrants recognition for its operation with very low student teacher ratios because of the high number of adults, usually whanau (family members) present to assist in the learning process.

Lessons in traditional Māori educational practice were made familiar to and by those who were in constant contact with the student who typically had whakapapa (genealogical links) with the student. Teachers may thus have been the student’s parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister and the content and context of the learning paved the way for students (and teachers) to gain deeper meanings and interpretations of the knowledge in its cultural context. This intensity of family presence in the education of the child is in contrast with contemporary western education which frequently employs the services of outsiders to educate

their children. For Māori students, being taught by people they do not know can be a source of problematic behaviour.

Māori educational teaching practices can provide an excellent model for 'life long learning' which is a current visionary phrase heard in today's staffrooms and classrooms.

Behaviour practices in traditional Māori times.

The young were considered to be an iwi (tribes) greatest resource. Māori children were considered as "belonging" to the entire extended whanau (family) who had the principle of collective responsibility for all children. Children also were aware that they "belonged to" this extended family. Disciplined learning was used to instil in children a respect for their culture, such as respect for their traditions (Rokx, 1988), and more importantly, a respect for their elders.

Rokx (1998) indicates that

> Waitata (song) contains examples of the pre European Māori view of children being the vital factor in the overall existence of humankind. Child rearing practices were based on the retention and maintenance of whakapapa (family geneology) links and lines and children were seen as the physical embodiment of tupuna. They were also viewed as bringing together the mana (esteem), wairua (spirituality) mauri, (life) ihi (essential force) wehi (awe) tapu (sacredness) of generations long-gone. This in turn created a preferential position for children ensuring their status and nurturing within whanau and hapu structures (p.3).

A Māori child deserved an elevated position within the whanau and it was important that disciplinary actions were designed not to punish but teach respect and to earn respect for whanau, and iwi. This is the reason that young children were allowed to attend important hui (meetings), and they were sometimes allowed speaking rights, within the framework of social and cultural protocols according to the Māori cultural beliefs and values.

Their questions were taken seriously and answered as fully as possible by their elders (Hemara, 2000).

Teaching culturally appropriate behaviours was deemed by Māori to increase the child's learning and respect for their culture. This was often the responsibility of the grandparents as they had a major role in child rearing.

However upon the arrival of European civilisation, including Christianity, a common comment was "that Māori parents exercise no control over their children. The child has as much right to question as their parents" (Hemara, 2000). This position was an early obstacle to English middle class teaching practice methods in the 1900s which often showed little understanding of Māori family pedagogy and thus instilled middle class values such as 'father knows best' or 'be seen and not heard' and 'one style suits all" or that 'you achieve, succeed or fail on your own as an individual'.

Hemara continues,

> Teachers were often at odds against Māori parents' child rearing practices. Teachers thought they were being undermined by parents who had different tolerances of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (p.52).

When disciplining Māori students at school, the use of physical restraint or the writing of 'lines' was not acceptable as punishment, and the child would often run home where they were generally received with open arms (appendices to the journal of the House of Representatives AJHR. 1884) cited in (Hemara, 2000) p.53

Ritchie, cited in Hemara (2000) adds that,

> Māori parents were often repelled by this 'necessary correction' and often took action to remove their children from danger (p.53).

The effect of colonial and post colonial middle class control in the role of teacher selection and curriculum and colonial values and teaching practices had in essence, a profound effect on the behaviours of

Māori students and could have been seen as a means to changing Māori cultural values and replacing them with their own. Perhaps many of todays' teachers still hold this position.

Māori students challenging behaviour and underachievement in New Zealand Mainstream Education

Māori student achievement in New Zealand has been a topic of debate for many years and numerous attempts have been undertaken by non Māori educators to address the issues including curriculum development, teacher education, and bilingual classes in mainstream schools.

> However, there is growing evidence to suggest that Māori are a group of the population most at risk of under-achieving and that Māori are over represented in the bottom 20% of achievers [known as the "tail-end" of achievers] (Hattie, 2003).

While most of the students in New Zealand are achieving at levels comparable to other countries a larger number of our young adolescents (14-18 year olds) are becoming disengaged from the education system than these countries (Ministry of Education, 2008). While students from all societal groups achieve very well, Māori (and Pasifika) students are over represented among students who underachieve (Ministry of Education, 2004), Māori students still continue to leave school with a lower level of qualification than non-Māori (Te Puni Kokiri, 1997)

Macfarlane (2004) notes that,

> Throughout the last three decades, concern has been frequently expressed about the lower achievement and higher suspension rates of Māori students, compared with their non-Māori counterparts (p.9).

He adds that Māori students are over represented in numbers of increasingly severe and diverse learning and behaviour problems. What becomes important here is the different understanding of the reasons for the "underachievement" between non-Māori and Māori students.

Forty three years ago in August 1965, (Watson, 1967) presented a paper, “Cultural Factors in Educational Change” discussing emerging problems particularly in delivery of education with the influx of Māori students into our schooling systems.

One of the concerns of the time was,

> … although much remains to be done in improving the attendance and the persistence of Māori pupils, relative to pakehas, the fundamental need now is for a qualitative improvement of what is taught and how it is taught, rather than for a quantitative expansion of school places (p.9).

Watson (1967) argues that a lot of the analysis of Māori student achievement has been based on Pakeha understandings and this has increased the likelihood of Māori underachievement and misunderstood behaviour of students being predominant in the school setting. This in turn creates a negative stereotype of Māori scholastic aspirations and achievement because Māori are not expected to do well. This stereotype was already widespread among teachers in 1965. This stereotype might still apply in some schools today and this could be the source or one of the sources of the continuation of Māori under achievement, and of many of the challenging behaviours presented by Māori students.

Smith cited in Bishop & Glynn (1999) some thirty years later suggests that

> What is at issue here is whether the dominant Pakeha education system in general and schooling in particular will ever be able to provide a mode of education which can free itself of its historical colonising baggage and generally meet Māori students’ needs and aspirations (p.131).

Macfarlane (2004) proposes that after 40 years this stereotype is still prevalent (for most minority cultures) in our schools.

> ... coming from a minority or indigenous culture into a mainstream school constitutes a deficit in terms of school expectations, and that there is a deficit association between

> ethnicity, academic performance, and behavioural responses (p.12).

In 1965 there was no reputable assessment or behavioural data available that could be used for Māori students (Watson, 1967) that reflected Māori values and taking into account their learning styles.

The report, Ka Hikitia, *Managing for success: Māori Education strategy 2008-2012* has placed less emphasis on targeting and remedying perceived deficit, and more on realising potential and tailoring education to the Māori learner (Ministry of Education, 2008). It appears that the New Zealand government is finally committing itself to providing the necessary framework to move forward in the education of students, instead of resorting to deficit explanations for the failure of Māori students in society.

Lovegrove (1996) in (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006) and (Shields et al., 2005) state that historically, Māori in general, were seen to come from inferior home backgrounds. This 'deficit' thinking by educationalists in the past, I argue is still the perception held by many teachers in our schools. This has implications for how schools of today and the future operate. The increasing emphasis on key competencies in the New Zealand curriculum is considered as laying the foundation for curriculum delivery such as valuing students' input in the sharing of learning goals creating safe and culturally safe learning environments. Keegan (1996) argues that,

> Interpretations of this includes variance in home support, low (pakeha) teacher expectations, the scaling and non-referenced nature of senior secondary national examinations, parental attitudes formed by their own negative school experiences, the absence of Māori in curriculum content and class lessons, and the difficulty of succeeding in "pakeha" terms without some disassociation from Māori identity (p.11).

In their review of the original 1996 Coleman report, on "Equality of Educational Opportunity", Borman & Gamoran (2006) reach the thought provoking conclusion.

> Even after taking into account students' family background, a large proportion of the variation in student achievement can be explained by school characteristics. (Borman & Gamoran, 2006)

Borman and Gamoran's findings suggest that even though the student's family background may contribute to student achievement or underachievement the nature of the school environment can determine the behaviour and achievement potential of students. However, in an unequal partnership, it is the more powerful partner that dominates and this is where the change needs to be the greatest. I suggest that schools need to change their focus from being in a more dominant position of control to listening to and sharing in the culture of its students and community. Then, and only then, will the educational achievement of students who operate in a safe learning environment, increase.

Student / teacher relationships and the effect on behaviour

Hawk *et al* (2002) carried out a study during 1999-2000 with primary, secondary, tertiary Māori and Pasifika students and concluded that a very high value is placed on the right kinds of relationships between teachers and students to encourage learning. The principles of valuing relationships appear to be important across all cultures regardless of ethnicity. (Gadd, 2003; Pianta, 2000; Zeitlin & Refaat, 2000)

Characteristics of effective relationships.

Literature suggests that teachers do not have to be of any particular ethnicity, age, gender, type of teacher training, subject area or have years of experience to relate positively and successfully to students of different cultures (Hawk et al., 2002).

It is the attitudes, behaviour, values, effort and skills that enable relationships to be formed that would help a student learn (Bishop et al., 2003b; Gadd, 2003; MacFarlane, 2007; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Robertson, 1996; Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2006). Teachers need also need to think about their students and their families in positive, non-deficit ways (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). This thinking indicates that students can make

valuable contributions to the classroom and that they can make a difference for all students.

Empathy

Teachers need to be empathetic towards valuing culture and should incorporate relevant experiences into activities, encourage students to use first language and enjoy learning from students about their culture (Alton-Lee, 2003; MacFarlane, 2004).

Caring for students

Students need to realise and experience that teachers really *care* about each and every one of them. There are many ways that caring can be demonstrated. Some teachers love their students as they love their family members. (Butterworth & Bevan-Brown, 2007; Hawk et al., 2002), suggesting that successful teachers genuinely appreciate the importance that families place on a students' well being and their value in society.
In respect to cultural values, Māori families (for example), recognise their children as being equally respected citizens who "deserve speaking rights in huis" (Hemara, 2000), suggesting that listening to student voice is as important as listening to teacher voice in the classroom.
Student voice can provide strong opportunities for power sharing in the classroom (MacFarlane, 2004) and is a defining feature of co-operative learning environments.

On another point, Hawk *et al* (2002) suggest that teachers who engage in extra-curricular activities with their students and their communities have the opportunity to form better personal relationships. Furthermore, if a teacher has had cultural and family experiences that are the same or similar to those of their students they have an advantage, and they can facilitate establishing appropriate relationships (Gill, 2006).

In my experience, students with challenging behaviours often do not involve themselves in extra curricula activities such as sports and cultural activities. Often their families will not involve themselves in outside of school activities. This can close off an important avenue for forming

personal relationships with the teacher. This situation may however reflect students and communities not knowing how to "belong" in some school activities, not knowing how one is expected to behave, or not trusting and fearing what might happen to them. Schools have a practical challenge to find ways of helping these students and their families to "belong" at school.

In this respect, teachers who care about students regardless of family connectedness will ensure that their students care about them as the teacher, and will generally show enthusiasm for learning (Boyes, 2002; Hawk et al., 2002; MacFarlane, 2004; Pianta, 2000; Russek, 2004).

Respect

An effective relationship is built around mutual *respect* (Wilson-Hill, 2006). However, respect is not necessarily the same as liking (Hawk et al., 2002). The respect that students give their teachers reflects the way teachers treat their students and speak to their students. Showing respect can also be seen in the way that a teacher models appropriate attitudes and behaviour, in the energy and effort they put into their work, in their enthusiasm for learning, in their loyalty to the school and in their genuine love and caring for each student as a person and as a learner.

Robertson (1996) reports a conclusion by Tattum (1982) from a study of disruptive students that their behaviour was determined by whether they liked and respected the teacher and not by what consequences could be bought to bear on their actions (Robertson, 1996) p.134. It is extremely unusual for serious confrontations to arise between students and teachers who share respect for each other and have healthy friendly relationships (Alton-Lee, 2003; Boyes, 2002; Rogers, 1994).

Attending constructively to unacceptable student behaviour, can be viewed as providing learning opportunities (not disruptions) for the students and teacher in order to repair and further build relationships (Rogers, 1994; Wilson-Hill, 2006). Furthermore, mutual respect arising from strong teacher student relationships should be ongoing, not just something that a teacher does at the beginning of the year (Boyes, 2002; Robertson, 1996; Rogers, 1994; Russek, 2003).

While adopting universal principles for building and maintaining that caring and respect is important and valuable, there is a danger that teachers could lose the specifics of a particular culture and decide that they do not need to learn about cultural values and preferences of cultures different from their own. This risks reinforcing a 'one size fits all' mentality. One way to show respect for a student's culture is to find out about that culture, its interest, knowledge base and preferences so these can be acknowledged and affirmed.

Communication

Teachers who model respectful communication are more likely to receive it (Hawk et al., 2002). Respectful communication provides strong opportunities for reciprocal dialogue between the student and teacher. Mc Naughton (2002) discusses "community styles of discourse" which requires the teacher to be familiar with the language patterns of the students in order to assist with understanding and promoting effective communication. .

Mc Naughton suggests that,

> The teacher's use of a known style of community discourse establishes that he or she is authoritative through actions rather than through an ascribed role" (p68).

I argue however that this is not to suggest that teachers abandon their own speech and adopt the interpretive dialect that the students often present in their conversations but to be aware that words, such as "sweet as", "cool" and "choice" all mean that everything is okay. However, if we are concerned with improving literacy, then these words should feature prominently in texts and discussion as a common language base to build upon. Similarly, for effective learning to happen, students must feel safe enough to learn without fear; and not be afraid to take risks (Gill, 2006) This sense of safety comes from genuine interpersonal relationships in the classroom and beyond. Relationships are fundamental to learning. "Teachers cannot be aloof, detached or apolitical." (Gill, 2006) p.17.

For this to happen, communication needs to be mutually respectful. If a teacher expects students to respect them, via respectful communication,

then teachers should respect students' communication without a need for 'put downs.'

Connectedness

Hawk (2002) suggests that there needs to be a sense of connectedness between teacher and student which is equally shared and which develops through mutual respect. Such connectedness allows for the student to develop an understanding of their own responsibility for controlling their own actions. Teachers should only have to remind students of their responsibility to maintain effective discipline in the classroom.

> Many teachers develop signals that direct student behaviour. These are effective because they are quiet, un confrontational and often directed at individual students without others being aware. (Hawk et al., 2002) p.48.

The use of private hand signals to allow students to identify when behaviours need attention can be a good example of a non discriminating and non threatening approach to curbing the action before the behaviour escalates (Rogers, 2000). Also in reciprocation, teachers need to be aware that they can also receive 'signals' from students that they may be overstepping the boundaries (MacFarlane, 1997).

Palmer (1997) expresses the view that, good teachers, "are able to weave a complex web of connections between themselves, their subject matter, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for them selves" cited in Gill (2006) p.17. An effective teacher establishes a learning environment that is "needs-based, positive and inclusive" (Arthur et al., 2003). Teachers who have expertise in and a passion for a particular subject area and who demonstrate to the students this expertise and passion will invariably connect with those students who will also come to share the passion. It is often observed in schools that a teacher who shares a passion for literacy for example, will have students sharing this passion also and may bring culturally relevant ideas, preferences and experiences to the curriculum.

Gill *et al* (2006) add another dimension for ensuring teacher-student connectedness when she suggests that teacher story telling and sharing of stories about their own lives is a powerful way of building connectedness representing a more personal way of continually nurturing a mutually respectful and caring relationship. However not all teachers may be willing to expose any of their personal lives to their students in this manner and it is possible that this may limit the development of an open sharing relationship. In saying this though, teachers will often unknowingly engage in conversations with their students about their own pets, children or holidays and even at this superficial level are allowing students to see 'inside the teacher's own world'.

Praise

There appears to be a growing concern among teachers that they seem to be praising their students for just about everything they do. This may have resulted from teachers following 'expert' advice that students will respond more favourably to praise rather than punishment (Doidge, 2005; Kohn, 1993; Robertson, 1996). The use of rewarding appropriate behaviour with positive outcomes such as certificates, free time and prizes appears to be a regular happening in most schools. Often the response from teachers is that by rewarding the good behaviour allows the bad behaviours to diminish. However the use of praise needs to be more nuanced than this. Praise only makes complete sense in a social context where both giver and receiver understand its meaning and are already in a relationship of mutual respect and trust. Furthermore, "being positive" is not just about praising students, it is also about maintaining a positive outlook during your time with them.

Russek (2004) suggests,

> The discriminating use of praise, and the ability to remain relentlessly positive, will help one a great deal with managing behaviour (p.11).

Discriminating use of praise has implications for New Zealand teachers in that many well meaning teachers are reluctant to praise Māori students because they believe that it is culturally inappropriate to do so or they

have experienced some Māori students being uncomfortable when praised. (Butterworth & Bevan-Brown, 2007). These authors dispute the assumption that it is universally inappropriate to praise Māori students. It is important for teachers to try to understand how a Māori student accepts praise. Praise could affirm a Māori students' sense of belonging to a group, but praise could also threaten a Māori students' status of belonging to a group. For example, praising a Māori student for performing well may unintentionally separate that student from belonging to a group of other Māori students within a class. Teachers therefore need to gain knowledge of how individual Māori students perceive praise and how it is delivered as recognition for effort. This can be achieved by gaining a nuanced understanding and appreciation of their culture and by being and sharing in a culturally supportive environment.

Motivation

Sturgess (2006) suggests that the teacher is not in control of all of the influencing factors that can cause boredom or loss of motivation.

He further suggests that,

> … responsibility for motivation lies somewhere between resting entirely with the student and entirely with the teacher. (Sturgess, 2006)p.15.

Although students at times seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, many need or expect their teachers to inspire, challenge, and stimulate them. These are usually the students for whom school does not always attract their interest. They may not have developed respectful and trusting relationships with the teacher and typically are the students who present challenging behaviours.

Student motivation at school, depends on the teacher's skills and ability to develop relationships and maintain the interest that the students deserve in the first instance.(Ericksen, 1978; Hawk et al., 2002; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2000; Pianta, 2000; Robertson, 1996)

> All students bring a degree of motivation into the classroom and this will be transformed, for better or worse, by what happens in that classroom. (Ericksen, 1978)

Unfortunately, there is no magical formula for motivating students but we do know that relationships are a central factor. Similarly, erosion of motivation can arise from students experiencing learning opportunities, and from interactions with teachers and peers, and school wide policies that convey to students low expectations about their learning capacity (Weinstein, 2002).

It is also worth noting that some Māori students will be motivated by teachers' recognition of their culture and its values and others while be motivated by overcoming challenges which may have little obvious immediate relevance to cultural values such academic success and sporting achievements. Similar cultural values, needs, and aspirations may not be shared by all Māori students. However, recognition and empathy for the presence of these values, needs and aspirations by students and teachers is essential for developing a positive culturally safe working environment. This is why culturally safe schools strive to maintain a co-constructed cultural classroom environment.

Good consistent teaching practices can do more to counter student apathy by providing students with some measure of academic success than additional special efforts to attack motivation directly (Ericksen, 1978). Most students respond positively to a well-organized classroom led by an enthusiastic teacher who has a genuine interest in students and what they learn.

Diversity in Learning Preferences

Prashnig (2000) believes that attitudinal differences in learning preferences between students and teachers can lead to a break down in relationships.

She suggests that boys for example, 'have a more preferred way of doing things (often labelled kinaesthetic) than that of girls who generally favour

visual or auditory learning methods' (Prashnig, 2000c). However, it is also important to note that much research has been undertaken on learning preferences and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983; Kolb, 1984) which affect student achievement. Low achievers are said to be more nonconforming, and less persistent when it comes to challenges and are therefore less responsible than their teachers. The teaching methods of the teacher may not be seen by these students as conducive to their preferred ways of learning and therefore they lack motivation and thus set out to be purposefully non-conforming. On the other hand some students may accept the extremely authoritarian "top down" approach of some teachers and achieve well in their class, because they have somehow established a trusting and respectful relationship with those teachers. The solution here poses an important question: Is it the professional teacher or the beginning learner who needs to change more?

It is interesting to note that high achievers show a greater match in learning preferences to their teachers and this is probably the reason they do better at school. (Prashnig, 2000b)

Nevertheless, it is the teacher's professional role to promote diversity in learning preferences within the classroom, (Edwards, 2000; Mc Naughton, 2002) by perhaps, listening firstly to what students' say regarding how they best learn and secondly learning to become more flexible in their own thinking.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter has placed importance on teachers defining challenging behaviour and reflecting on their own personal beliefs regarding understanding of challenging behaviours. Research has indicated that challenging behaviour is strongly context dependent as seen particularly in the impact of different cultural contexts on that behaviour. Learning and behaviour are socially and culturally acquired and that academic learning and social learning are interconnected.

It is the teachers' responsibility to initiate a classroom culture that connects learning and behaviour, especially when there are a number of cultures represented. This new classroom culture must be acceptable to, and shared by both students and teachers, should recognise and respond to cultural difference, and should avoid deficit thinking about minoritized cultures. To achieve this, teachers need to be the ones that change the most as they are the ones who hold the power to do so.

Successful teachers place a high value on forming mutually respectful, trusting and positive relationships with their students which will allow a stronger focus on realising potential and encourage learning. The most effective way of forming such relationships is to learn to listen to and respect student voice.

The present study is about gathering student and teacher narratives relating to how challenging behaviours affect relationships and the learning culture within a classroom. The research aims to gain an insight into the possible implications that teacher knowledge, understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, maintaining relationships and student voice might have on students with challenging behaviours both socially and academically.

The next chapter outlines the methodology, data gathering, data analysis processes and ethical considerations that I have undertaken to complete the research.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY & METHOD.

Introduction

Educational research is a systematic investigation (Burns, 2000) using a cyclical process of steps that begins with identifying a research problem or issue of study (Creswell, 2002). Research is designed to confirm, enhance and share knowledge. Research helps educators understand problems or issues through the accumulation of knowledge (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003), and once the purpose of the research is established, then this will determine the methodology and design of the research. The way in which research is designed is vital to the eventual analysis, theory and outcomes of research.Data is collected, analysed and interpreted in some way in an effort to "understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts", (Mertens, 2005).

Cohen et al., (2003) however view research methods as more than a just a technical data gathering exercise. They suggest that,

> … research is concerned with understanding the world and that this is informed by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of the understanding (p.3).

I will, within the first part of this chapter discuss obligations relevant to this research and justify my choice of methodology for undertaking this research, that is of obtaining data through narratives using a qualitative approach situated within the interpretive paradigm.
Due to the inductive nature of qualitative research, a grounded theory approach will be used to analyse the data to offer insights and an understanding of challenging behaviours.

The second part of the chapter will outline the methods of data collection, Including, individual interviews with teachers who are classroom practitioners working with students and interviews with students who present moderate to severe behaviour challenges which often affects their learning and the learning of others within the classroom.

I will also discuss the ethical nature of research quality including; validity, reliability and triangulation of data, reflective and reflexive practice and the ethic of respect for the care and the rights of participants.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

Prior to 1960, research in social science areas such as educational theory and practice has generally followed a traditional objective scientific method. In scientific research, a "quantitative" or positivist approach is defined as a process of obtaining data in an attempt to establish general laws and principles. A quantitative approach assumes that "social reality is objective and external to the individual". (Burns, 2000) and does not allow for social interpretation by researchers. Since the 1960's a move towards a more subjective approach to some research defined as "qualitative" or "naturalistic", has been introduced causing researchers to debate the issue of subjectivity in research as opposed to objectivity. (Burns, 2000). Furthermore, traditional quantitative approaches as viewed by educationalists in the 60's "relied too much on the researcher's view of education and less on the research participant's view" (Creswell, 2002).

A qualitative approach on the other hand, focuses on the desire that educational research should consider the participant's point of view within the setting or context that they are in. It explores the ways through which a person and their world are constituted and coordinated through relating personal experiences (Schostak, 2002). Qualitative research attempts to

access peoples' experiences and their perceptions and understanding of events.

In contrast to quantitative methods which rely on testing and establishing generalizable rules and regularities, opponents of such positivist approaches,

> … reject the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterised by underlying regularities. (Cohen et al., 2003).

Cohen et al. (2003) further suggest that the "social world of an individual" can only be understood from the individual's own viewpoint of that world. Ideally, (when undertaking qualitative research) the researcher should be familiar with and share the research context when attempting to understand an individual's viewpoint (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003). This means that interpretation relies on the researchers' immersion in the social setting (Wearmouth, Glynn, Richmond, & Berryman, 2004) p.145. In order to undertake qualitative research it is important that a relationship of "inter subjective understanding" (Wearmouth, Glynn et al., 2004) needs to be developed between the two which will join the researcher and the participant in "ongoing morally subjective dialogue" (Creswell, 2002). Furthermore, and in contrast with quantitative approaches, qualitative research is characterised by a methodological collection of experiential data from a mixture of people, including their ideas or suggestions rather than reliance on testing a singlepre-determined hypothesis through objective measurement and an acceptance of the natural scheme of things (Burns, 2000). The qualitative researcher is likely to be searching for understanding, experiences and values as important forms of knowledge, measurements, or facts". Bishop (1997) suggests that rather than following a strict set of rules, qualitative research aims to "paint a picture, potentially facilitating the voice of the research participant to be heard, for others to reflect on" (p.30).

In qualitative research participants are not seen as subjects but as experts to enable the researcher to gather information (Burns, 2000). Also many qualitative researchers refer to people as research participants.

The intention of this research study was to gain an understanding of student's challenging behaviours at school through learning from narratives of students' and teachers' and therefore I selected a qualitative approach to methodology to enable the appropriate and adequate gathering of data through the exploration of student and teacher "voice".

There are however, some limitations identified in qualitative research that are important to note. There are questions (typically raised by some quantitative researchers) about the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of data due to the fact that it is more subjective in nature (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003; Creswell, 2002). The amount of time required for data collection, analysis and interpretation can also be overwhelming. Qualitative research produces large quantities of rich data and analysis of this data can be interpreted in a number of different ways by the researcher which could lead to misrepresentation, thus broaching on ethical considerations especially relating to participant anonymity. (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003).
Questions are also asked regarding the researcher's influence or impact on the behaviour of participants which could in turn, skew the data. These perceived limitations will be discussed in more depth within the 'methods undertaken' section.

Interpretive paradigm
A paradigm is a broad framework of perception, understanding and belief shared by groups of responses within which theories and practices operate (Cohen et al., 2003; Creswell, 2002). It is a commonly held way of seeing and understanding the world.

Interpretive paradigms provide a basis for understanding "the world of human experience" (Cohen et al., 2003) and suggest that reality is socially

constructed (Mertens, 2005) through “people voice”. Interpreting social reality gives meaning to perceptions, conceptualising and understanding. These are assumptions that how the researcher perceives reality suggests how it can be measured along with the way we construct knowledge and the role that values have in the process (Cohen et al., 2003). The product of the social interaction is perceived from the perspectives of the participants and not only from the perspectives of the researcher (Burns, 2000).

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The interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual (Cohen et al., 2003) and attempts to “understand the subjective world of the individual” (p.22). Interpretivist researchers believe that knowledge is constructed through experience and interaction with others, and it is only through engaging in the contextual world of the participant that a true understanding can be gained. Engagement suggests that the researcher and participant are interdependent and the question of bias is not an appropriate question. The qualitative researcher uses an interpretive approach to observe how the participant perceives and interprets the truth subjectively rather than the truth as others objectively claim to view it (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2002). Burns (2000) provides an example of participant perception. If a student believes the teacher dislikes them, then every act of the teacher towards the student will be interpreted, in terms of that belief.

> Subjective information is necessary to fully understand the behaviour of the student towards the teacher. In an objective sense, only a disruptive student is seen (p.388).

Cohen et al. (2003) discuss an interpretive approach as one that focuses on understanding action. They liken it to “behaviour with a meaning” which has an intentional purpose. They contend that action can only be meaningful in so far as the researcher is able to ascertain the intentions of the participants when they share their experiences.

> Interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them (Cohen et al., 2003) p.23.

An interpretive approach also acknowledges that research is concerned with recognising and understanding of values that the participants have. They recognise that values are a part of life and that no two individuals or groups share precisely the same values. (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003; Creswell, 2002). This is especially important in my research as the nature of my enquiry touches on the need to recognise the different values that the participants have, and to understand whether they be culturally based, or perceived as culturally based.

As interpretive research is characterised by a concern for the individual in an effort to understand the subjective world of human experience, and as this research requires an investigation of "teacher and student voice" regarding understanding of student's challenging behaviours at school, the interpretive paradigm best suits my purpose. Individual semi-structured interviews were the central tool for the collection of data for this inquiry. The design of the data collection was based on principles of narrative research and grounded theory.

Narrative Research Design

Narrative research inscribes an individual's firsthand account in their own words for a researcher. This is usually in the form of interview where the researcher allows the participant to convey an experience or experiences, in their own words.

> In narrative research inquirers describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about peoples' lives and write narratives of individual experiences. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)p.19.

Clandinin *et al* (2000) also suggest that narratives are the best way of representing and understanding experience and they also imply that,

> Experience happens narratively, Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore educational experience should be studied narratively (p.19)

However, experience is temporary, narratives only document an experience in the here and now and the challenge is to place the experience on a life continuum for the participant. Collecting narrative experiences from a number of individuals may or may not generate a theory that will be permanent, as experience and understanding experience changes with maturity.

Clandinin et al. (2000) further suggest,

> When we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at the moment but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future. p.29

In addition, we take for granted that people at a given time, are in the process of personal change and that from an educational point of view, it is important to be able to relate to given data at a given time and place. Obtaining prior knowledge of the students' background, academic progress or previous behaviours is central to narrative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2002). Furthermore, it is important to recognise how an action is understood by the researcher and the participant in narrative research. An action is seen as a narrative sign (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For example, a student's behaviour needs to be understood in the context in which it occurs and to be related to past history or events before a clear meaning or significance can be attached to it.

There needs to be a collaborative relationship between the researcher and participant/s which will promote good working relationships (Creswell, 2002). This relationship will allow data to be gathered in a non threatening manner, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction within the context of the environment (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and where both researcher and participants share a common understanding of the research purpose, and what it means.

There can also be a sense of uncertainty in regards to meaning when interpreting events. Cause and effect can have differing perspectives for different researchers. “Interpretation needs to be treated as tentative” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and therefore looked upon as according to the researcher’s own perceptions. This may raise the question as to the accuracy of the reporting or “faking the data” (Creswell, 2002) and thus have reservations regarding the ownership of the story according to a positivist viewpoint.

An understanding of the context of the narrative is essential when conducting such research. Context is necessary for making sense of any person, event or thing. More importantly,

> … in narrative thinking, the person in context is of prime interest (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)p.32.

When a researcher listens to participants’ narratives through interview, the main advantage is that the participants’ perspectives are provided, using language that is natural to them. This then lessens the effect that the researchers’ preconceptions, biases and beliefs have in directing the line of interviewing (Burns, 2000).

In addition, it is interesting to observe that by conducting narrative research, the information gained can be directly used by teachers to test the effectiveness of interventions they believe could enhance learning outcomes for their students such as listening to what the student has to say regarding their own learning needs. Some of the ideas gleaned from the narratives can be adapted productively in their own settings. (Lankshear & Knobel, 2005).

One of the purposes of this research is to give insights into how students perceive situations in which challenging behaviour occurs, therefore the knowledge gained could be used to promote change within teachers’ understanding of student behaviour.

Grounded Theory

The concept of grounded theory methodology was promoted by Glaser and Straus (1967) who defined it as "theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data". The basic hypothesis is that generating grounded theory is "a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses" (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) and maintains a "set of procedures used to systematically generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process about a substantive topic" (Creswell, 2002).

> If done well, this means that the resulting theory at least fits one data set perfectly. This contrasts with theory derived deductively from grand theory, without the help of data, and which could therefore turn out to fit no data at all. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

A grounded theory approach allows theory to emerge from the narrative accounts of research participants (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003; Creswell, 2002). For the purposes of this research, the narrative accounts will involve interviewing of teachers and students.

Nevertheless, Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that "grounded theory must fit the situation that is being researched" cited in (Cohen et al., 2003) p.150. This implies that the researcher must constantly revisit the aim of the research and be aware that data collected, may contain a large amount of non related information, which will to be critically analysed to ensure that it is fit "for the purpose" of the research (Cohen et al., 2003).

Furthermore, when analyzing qualitative data, researchers often "code" the data, to get some quantifiable information, in order to test some hypotheses. Glaser & Strauss (1967) advocate combining the "coding" with analysis to help locate, develop and build grounded theory.
Coding data will be discussed in the following section on methods of data collection. This analysis tends to result in developing theory, fit for the purpose and which lends itself to further evolution, making it an inductive

rather than a deductive approach. As with any methodology, grounded theory also has its critics and perceived weaknesses.

Silverman cited in Cohen *et al* (2003) argues,

> "… it fails to acknowledge the implicit theories which guide research in its early stages (ie. data are not theory neutral but theory saturated) and that it may be strong on providing categorisation without necessarily having explanatory potential" (p.152).

The desired outcome of this research project is to offer "an insight" into understanding the effects a classroom learning environment has on a student's challenging behaviour. This may lead to further investigation by school leaders and teachers in response to recognising some of the factors causing the challenging behaviours that a student exhibits. The use of grounded theory and its uses as a methodological approach for arriving at theory suited to its supposed use is a justified means to achieve this.

Reflective and Reflexive Practice

Reflective and reflexive practice is seen as an important component of educational research. Reflective and reflexive practices are two concepts that are linked but with one significant difference. Reflection asks the researcher to "think critically about the process of research whereas reflexivity demands that the researcher reflects on themselves as the person who controls the research and its processes" (Wellington, 2000) and who is part of the research.

Reflective practice can be best understood (among other research processes) in the context of 'action research' which "combines diagnosis with reflection", focusing on practical issues that have been identified by participants (Cohen et al., 2003).

Reflexivity in research means that the researcher is "aware of and openly discusses their role" in a study that "respects the rights of participants"

(Creswell, 2002). Researchers need to realise that they may have differing cultural values from the participants within the study (as with my self in this study) and their "interpretation is only one that can be made in the report and does not have authority over those of the participants" (p.494)
This implies that ethical issues should be at the heart of reflexive practice.

Furthermore, reflexive practice authorises the researcher to ask questions of them selves, and to reflect consciously and critically on their practice, their current and future decisions regarding the research, the outcomes and the impact of them. (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2002; Wellington, 2000)

I maintain that by engaging in reflexive and reflective practices throughout the research process, I can more confidently meet the obligations of ethical practice.

METHOD of DATA COLLECTION

Semi structured Interviews

The method chosen for data collection involved undertaking semi structured interviews which explored the narrative stories and experiences of two Māori and two European teachers of 7-10 year old students within the school setting, and a small sample of students, (four Māori and two European) who present challenging behaviours within the school. The research attempted to find commonalities in their personal experiences and their perceptions of the way that the environment influences student learning and socially (challenging) behaviour.

To understand a definition of a semi structured interview it is necessary to understand the contrast between structured and unstructured interviews. A structured interview is one in which the content and questions are organised in advance, and the researcher is *aware* of what they do not know so questions are framed which will supply the knowledge required (Cohen et al., 2003) which means that all power and control over conversation lies with the researcher. In these interviews, the researcher is

left little or no freedom to make changes or modifications. On the other hand an unstructured interview is a very open situation with open-ended questions and is useful when the researcher is *unaware* of what they do not know, and therefore relies on the respondents to provide all information (Cohen et al., 2003). This suggests that power and control is shared by both researcher and respondent.

Unstructured interviews allow the interviewer greater flexibility to steer the conversation along avenues that may be explored although it is possible that not all of the information may necessarily contribute to the research. Semi structured interviews are also conversations which are useful, when some knowledge is known by the researcher and there is a need to clarify or gain alternative points of view. These interviews offer “semi controlled access” to participants ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words (Reinharz, 1992). It is easier for participant respondents to tell their story in their own way.

Unstructured interviews promote free interaction and clarification between research participants and the researcher (Bishop 1997) through the use of open-ended general questions rather than closed questions and permits a more valid response from the participant’s perception of reality (Burns, 2000).

A feature of semi structured interviews is that they allow the researcher to modify the sequence of recording, change the wording, or explain and add to the questioning (Cohen et al., 2003) p.273.

However as Burns (2000) suggests that with semi structured interviewing, the comparability of the information between participants is often “difficult to assess and coding of responses” may be more difficult. (p.424). He continues to add that, care must be taken to not change the focus of the interview questions, as comparative responses to the same issues need to be obtained. This also requires the researcher to keep the research focus constantly in view.

Interviewing has become a very common tool used by researchers in attempts to address researcher imposition(Bishop, 1997), however the interview itself can be a “strategy controlled by the researcher and repressive of the position of the participant” (p.31).

I needed to be conscious of the implications that my control over the questioning during the semi structured interviews undertaken will have on the data collected from the participants. Control over the questioning was more critical within the student interviews, as I assumed that they would need stimulus and guidance to further initiate conversation regarding their learning behaviours. I used prompts such as “tell me more” and “why do you think that?”

In line with the nature and suggested limitations of semi structured interviews open questions were written and provided as a guide to the questioning, (see appendix 5A & 5 B). The individual teacher questions were more specific as the information that I required was to further the knowledge that I already possessed about methods of teaching practice (as a practising teacher myself) and thus clarify or gain alternative points of view.

Method used for analysing data

A concern with analysing interview data is that it is interpretive, and may not be a completely accurate representation of events but more of a reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualised data that are interpretations of a social encounter. (Cohen et al., 2003) p.282.

Due to the large amount of data obtained through interview a method of coding the responses was needed to enable a simplification of the process, avoiding handling overload, (Miles and Huberman, cited in Cohen *et al* 2003), and to ensure that the data remains as accurate as possible

Coding as a means of grouping data for analysis.

Coding is defined as a translation of question responses and respondent information into specific categories for the purpose of analysis Kerlinger (1970) cited in Cresswell (2002) p.283 and is achieved by "classifying material into themes, issues, topics, concepts and propositions" (Burns, 2000) p.432. Coding is used to organise and reduce the amount of data (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002) p. 465 and to come up with a set of categories that provide a reasonable representation and reconstruction of the data that has been collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify three types of coding stages as open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open coding requires the researcher to approach the data with an open mind. At this stage, the researcher is making initial perceptions, comparing and contrasting data (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003) and, eventually developing subcategories of things that are similar in meaning (Creswell, 2002). This assists in the understanding of the information received, and allows the researcher to probe deeper in interviews as required (Burns, 2000) and allows the researcher to "make sense" of the information as he/ she sees it.

The next stage is axial coding which tries to connect the subcategories, identified during open coding, to search for links and relationships, and rearrange into more defined categories (Creswell, 2002). The practical application of this stage is to look "for confirming and disconfirming evidence" (Burns, 2000) about the value and effectiveness of particular categories.

The third stage is selective coding and is where core categories are identified and related to themes (Creswell, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The practical application of this stage means that key themes once identified, can be linked back to the data, validating them against teacher and student voice and then establishing thematic links back to the literature, thus allowing the emergence of 'grounded theory'.

Criteria for recruiting the participants

The criteria for recruiting the participants for interview, was as follows:

a. Four practising teachers, two of Māori descent and two of European descent within my school.
b. Six students of either Māori or European descent (7 – 10 years), all of whom are boys, and who presented challenging behaviours.

The participants

The teachers were selected on the basis of ethnicity and gender and ranged in experience from two to ten years service as a teacher.
All teachers are considered effective practitioners, through the attestation process at the school, and are all located in supportive classroom environments within supportive syndicate teams.

The students were selected on the basis of ethnicity**,** four being of Māori descent and two of European descent representing the ethnic composition of the school (76% Māori). Their ages ranged from 8 years to 10 years and have all been identified as engaging in moderate to severe challenging behaviours which appear to be affecting their learning capabilities. All of the students have within the past 18 months, experienced “stand downs”, (temporary removal from attending school), for either lack of compliance, or aggressive behaviour toward other students.

Procedure for gaining consent.

Teacher participants

Through the attestation process for teacher competency, and in respect to the interviewed students being in their classrooms, I selected four effective teachers as participants, based on the above teacher criteria.
The teacher participants were sent a letter (see appendix 1) inviting them to be a part of my research. All teachers knew that because I was engaged in granted study leave and had stepped down from my role as Principal of the school during this time, there was little threat to their teaching status in the school in regards to any personal comments shared

in the interview. The letter explained the research and detailed information about the informed consent form. The letter stated that their non participation will not harm the research. I then followed up within a week personally to ascertain their willingness to become involved.
All teachers were willing to participate and I negotiated a date for the interview and obtained the consent form. (appendix 1A). If any of the teachers had been unwilling to participate I intended to draw on a further list of similar teachers of students in the 7 – 10 year range.

Student participants
The students were selected on the basis of observation of behaviours and interventions carried out within the past 18 months. These observations and interventions were carried out by classroom teachers, outside support such as resource teachers of learning and behaviour (RTLB) and by teachers within the school's management team. I selected six students as participants based on the above criteria.
Each student received a letter (appendix 2A) inviting them to be part of my research. I discussed the letter with each student individually, outlining my research and detailed information about the informed consent form.

The parents or caregivers were also sent a letter (appendix 2) inviting them to give permission for their child to be a part of my research as they were of "school age and parent consent is essential" (Wellington, 2000). The parent or caregiver was asked to discuss with their child my intentions for this research and the information about the informed consent form.

I followed up a week later with a phone call to ascertain both the parents/caregivers and students willingness to give their permission.

As they were all willing I then negotiated a date and time for the interview in consultation with the student's teacher and with the parent or caregiver as well as explained the procedures for receiving the consent form (appendix 2B).

Procedures in which research participants were involved.
Both teacher and student participants were involved in individual semi-structured interviews each lasting no longer than one hour. (appendix 5A & 5 B). The interviews were audio-taped. Focus questions were given beforehand to teacher participants only to allow them to prepare responses as my intention was to clarify or gain different perspectives to knowledge I already possessed regarding their own teacher effectiveness. The interview was transcribed verbatim by a typist known to me personally. This person signed a confidentiality agreement (appendix 4). Once completed, the teacher transcript was sent to the participants, for comment and amendment.

The student transcripts were discussed with each student (by me) to allow them to make any amendments before being sent to the parents or caregivers for comment and further amendment. (appendix 3A and 3B). There were minor amendments involving their naming of students and I assured them that the actual names would not be used in the research. Participants then had the right to withdraw up to two weeks after receiving a copy of the transcript. This was clearly stated in the informed consent form. (See appendix 1A and 2B). Each participant as well as the student's parent or caregiver signed a transcript release form (appendix 3C) and returned the edited transcripts to me.

Procedures for the handling of information.
It was made clear to the participants that information collected from the participants would be confidential to the researcher. Throughout the research process, participants were referred to as Teacher 1 (T1), Teacher 2 (T2), or Student 1(S1), Student (S2) etc.
Other people referred to either directly or indirectly by the participants had their identities disguised by the use of pseudonyms such as, teacher aide, peer, and colleague. The transcripts have been stored securely by me on pen drive. There will be no storage of information on computers, saving of data was direct to the pen drive.

The final consideration in any research is that it adheres to ethical principles and guidelines. This chapter will now address the researcher's role in ensuring that the research met the ethic of quality and that procedural ethics, ensuring the care of participants is afforded full attention.

Ethical Issues

Ethical Quality

Ethical quality in research can be complex and easily misinterpreted and can place researchers who have been criticised for lack of concern over the welfare of their participants, in moral predicaments (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003).

A vital responsibility of the researcher is to conduct the research ethically and reflectively (Wellington, 2000) and ensure that their personal bias towards the study does not inappropriately influence the research (Walford, 2001).

Walford suggests that researchers must ethically declare their own biases and their potential impact on the research which leads to the issue, particularly in interviews, as "to what extent is it right to allow others to believe that you agree with them" (Walford 2001 p.136). As Principal of the school in which I was conducting my interviews, I found that at times it was deemed necessary to affirm by agreeing with comments made by both the teachers and the students during the interview in order to maintain the flow of the conversation and establish the line of questioning in order to delve deeper into their line of reasoning.

However I attempted to remain as non-directive and impartial as possible and critically analysed and challenged myself to always be aware of the impact that my personal values, biases and assumptions could have had on influencing the conversation.

The researcher needs to be aware of ethical considerations involved in voluntary and non-voluntary participation, the right to be briefed about the

study (Creswell, 2002), falsification of data, deceiving participants as to the nature of the research, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the research (Burns, 2000).
This awareness will help to ensure that results are made available to the public as reliable, valid reports which are reported as honest and plausible findings.
Researchers can draw on various strategies to ensure that the reported results are reliable, valid and honest accounts of the findings.
The use of triangulation methods (discussed later in this section) are an effective way to achieve this particularly with qualitative research involving interviews.

Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which a method or research tool actually measures what it is expected to (Ary et al., 2002; Wellington, 2000) and the extent to which the findings reflect the intent of the research (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003) enabling researchers to "draw meaningful and justifiable inferences" (Creswell, 2002).
However the researcher needs to ensure validity is free of bias and distortion of facts (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003). In qualitative research, all peoples' voices are valid. This is not an issue of researcher judgement and control.
Furthermore, the researcher needs to be comfortable with the fact that during interviews the questions are "representative of all the possible questions that could be asked" about the content of the conversation (Creswell, 2002). In saying this, participants may be more inclined to respond only to questions that they perceive to be relevant and meaningful (Ary et al., 2002) and this may conflict with the researchers perception of relevancy of the conversation.

Cohen et al, (2003) make reference to developing a "satisfactory method of recording responses" (p.126).If information is to be summarised as the interview is being undertaken, bias and misrepresentation by the recorder could occur. In this research I have audio taped all interviews and had

them transcribed verbatim to ensure that validity ensues. The transcripts were given to all participants to cross check and amend, confirming my commitment to representing the voice of the participants in the most accurate way possible.

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability is concerned with ensuring that the recorded data reflects what actually happened in the research setting (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003). Administering procedures in a standardised and consistent way will ensure reliability (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2002)

Le Compte and Preissle (1984) cited in (Wellington, 2000) assert that

> "no researcher studying the social world can achieve total reliability, … describing it as the extent to which studies can be replicated. It assumes that a researcher can obtain the same results as those of a prior study". (p.31).

Replication can be of questions asked, measurements undertaken and the use of findings for further research. Wellington (2000), adds that researchers will interpret data differently according to their own personal perspective and experience and that data may become outdated almost as soon as it was collected.

The data collected in this research has the potential to be interpreted in different ways by the reader and may indeed become quickly outdated. This is to be expected in this type of research as the conversations were regarding the participants' thoughts and feelings at a given point in time. However my intention for this research was to gather insights into possible reasons for students' challenging behaviours. By using grounded theory methodology to form an hypothesis that could satisfactorily account for student narrative statements (on the understanding that this is not systematically representative of all students) other teachers and schools could use the information to further their understanding of student behaviour.

In this research, reliability was achieved by ensuring that the question guides were consistent in content and in the delivery of the interviews. Reliability was further enhanced due to the fact that the relationship between the researcher and participant which was one of Principal and teacher/student was discussed before the interview. The fact that I had stood down as Principal during the period the interviews were undertaken was viewed, through discussion with each participant, as positive and non threatening.

Triangulation of Data

Triangulation is defined as the use of more than one method or one particular means to enhance both reliability and validity in research (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003).

It also provides a means of cross-checking (Schostak, 2002) to ensure rigour in reliability and validity.

Three methods of triangulation were used in this research to ensure reliability and validity.

The first triangulation method used was one of "investigator triangulation" (more than one observer) (Cohen et al., 2003) which was deemed necessary in the case of students of Māori descent being interviewed. Being of European descent, I was aware that I may not have fully understood and appreciated cultural differences and influences likely to be revealed in the Māori student's narratives. Therefore I invited an observer of Māori descent to be present at the interviews involving Māori students to ensure that the student's cultural safety and cultural implications that may have arisen from the narratives of the Māori students and of which I might not have been aware, were protected. The observer is an employee at the school, is a Māori male, and is well known and respected by the students. He sat beside the Māori students and assisted on only a few occasions with rephrasing a question I had asked when he assumed that the student had not understood it. The observer signed a confidentiality agreement (appendix 4A).

The second method is gaining consistency from different data sources using the same method (Burns, 2000). In this research the same questions were given to each of the teacher participants (appendix 5A) and to the student participants (appendix 5 B) and the interviews were audio taped.

The third triangulation method used in this research was one of "cross checking" (Schostak, 2002) which involved transcribing the conversations verbatim and asking the participants to review and amend the transcripts before the data was analysed.

Ethics related to the respect for the care and the rights of participants.

Burns (2000) postulates that codes of ethics relating to respect have been developed by many professions which deal with human participants.
He asserts that these codes should ensure that risks to participants are minimised by procedures that do not expose them to harm and that the rights and welfare of participants are protected.
It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that research is carried out in such a manner that potential harm to participants is managed and minimised.

Access to participants

Access for conducting the interviews of teachers and students occurred at a venue and time, mutually negotiated between the teacher, parent and myself. The interviews were all conducted in a designated office at the school with approval from all involved. The arrangements for and the timing of the interviews were negotiated between the teacher participant, and the student participant (with teacher and parent permission) and myself, with the ultimate aim of minimising impact on the school day.

Informed consent

I made every effort to comply with the rules and regulations pertaining to privacy and confidentiality (Creswell, 2002) and made sure that my participants, including the students' parents and caregivers were kept well

informed throughout the research process. They all received comprehensive information about the research, my involvement and goals as researcher (Burns, 2000; Cohen et al., 2003) and their involvement prior to signing the informed consent form (appendix 1 and 2). I discussed the consent information with the students' parents and caregivers so that any misunderstanding of educational jargon did not "coerce or impede their decision" (Burns, 2000). The students were required to give their consent to their parents, caregivers before their consent form was signed by parents or caregivers.

Confidentiality

The individual data gathered through the project was confidential to the researcher, to individual participants and to the project supervisor (Burns, 2000). As it is "difficult to retain anonymity in qualitative research" (Ary et al., 2002), the participants were informed that personal and school pseudonyms were used in review of the data collected. Before interviews began I asked participants to avoid using peoples' names and if they chose to, the names would be transcribed verbatim but would gain pseudonyms within in the research findings. Participants addressed this issue when cross checking the transcripts.

Potential harm to participants

Punch, cited in Denzin & Lincoln (1998) contends that there is no complete or unanimity on what is public and private, what constitutes harm, and what the benefits of knowledge are. In undertaking qualitative research, interviews are more than likely to breach privacy and allow others to identify where sources of information came from.

Although I protected the identities of the participants as much as possible the fact that this was a small scale research taking place in the context of face to face interviews means that comments made might still become attributable to individual participants. To minimise this risk I endeavoured to keep confidential, the names of the participants and ensured that the interviews will not be observed or overheard by other people. However, some of the participants chose to reveal to others that they participated. I explained that they could identify their own comments in the final report

being attributed to them and advised them not to reveal their identity to others. I also advised them not to share the contents of the interview with others.

A second potential for harm centres on what people might reveal about themselves or others, especially if it is negative about particular people or situations. Should such instances arise I needed to decide whether the inclusion of this material could be detrimental to either individuals or possible future unfair treatment, due to possibly negativity in comments. I would refer such concerns to my supervisor before making any decisions. Arrangements for reading the transcripts would however provide participants with the opportunity to delete sensitive material by amending the text.

A third potential harm is the time taken out of the participants' busy lives to complete the interviews. I made every effort to keep each interview to one hour or less and offered choices as to the timing of the interviews to minimise disruption.

A final potential harm is the fear of participants revealing information regarding themselves that is personal and they may regret sharing. Should a participant wish to withdraw any information from the transcript when they review it, I would honour it. If for any reason during any interview a participant became upset the interview would be suspended and arrangements to continue would be negotiated. (This did not happen in practice).

Participants' right to decline

All participants were made aware in writing of their right to

- Decline to engage in all or part of the research.
- To withdraw up to two weeks after receiving the transcript.

This was explained in the letter of consent and was outlined again prior to the commencement of interviews. (appendix 1 & 2). No participants declined at any stage.

Arrangements for participants to receive information

Participants received information by letter, telephone or face-to-face meetings. Transcripts were delivered by the researcher in person. Telephone conversations and face to face conversations were used to establish times/dates/venues for interviews.

Use of information

Data was only used for the purposes of this thesis but may possibly be used in future subsequent papers and staff meeting presentations. However at all times, participants' confidentiality/ anonymity will be assured through the use of generalised pseudonyms and collated data.

Conflicts of interest

As I am Principal of the school in which I am undertaking the research project, I needed to ensure that I entrusted the participants with confidentiality as to the nature of the research and their contributions and not use the information to challenge their teaching practice (in the case of the teacher participants) or give unfair treatment to their future educational journey at this school (in the case of the student participants).

I needed to be assured that the participants felt comfortable telling their narratives in a recorded interview situation without threat of reprisal which could be evident in my position as their Principal. I undertook an initial informal discussion with each participant about my role as a researcher as opposed to my role as a Principal. I undertook the interviews during the time that I was allocated educational study leave and had stepped down, as Principal of the school during this period.

In my researcher role I tried to remain as objective and impartial as possible, and to report openly and honestly the findings of the study. To achieve this I maintained regular contact with my supervisor and asked him to challenge me to justify my findings.

Procedure for the resolution of dispute.
Should there have been any reason for resolution of disagreement or dispute at any time during the research and in particular with the use of narrative comments made during the interviews then my supervisor was made available for contact in the first instance.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the methodology and methods used in this study for obtaining data through narrative story telling using a qualitative approach situated within the interpretive paradigm. I have discussed how the roles of reflective and reflexive practices have supported me in adhering to the ethical principles of research quality and participant care. I have indicated that although open-ended interviews can create non comparative responses and interpretations to the same issues, a focus on reliability, validity and triangulation enhances the trustworthiness of the research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one describes the process of information gathering in more detail and how three common themes have arisen from the findings.
Section 2, 3 and 4 describes the findings for each theme followed by a discussion relating the findings to the themes identified in the literature review (Chapter 2).

4. 1 Introduction

The interviews required the teacher participants to reflect on their own teaching experiences and relate these to how they ensure they create an environment for effective learning to occur for their students.

The conversations during interviews required the student participants to talk about their experiences of what happens at school, and to describe what their teacher does in order to enhance the learning for themselves and others within the classroom.

Both student and teacher participants' conversations concentrated on challenging behaviours and how these affect a learning culture were at the forefront of each discussion.

The participants.

The adult participants were four teachers of whom two are of Māori descent and two of European descent. At the time of the interviews, three

of the teachers had one or more of the student participants in their classrooms and one teacher did not.

All teachers knew that each other was a participant in the research and all knew the names of the student participants as they all come in contact with each other and the students on a day to day basis within the same syndicate team. This knowledge is not likely to have jeopardised the conversations as the teachers were asked not to discuss the content of the interviews with each other and the students concerned, in an effort to maintain confidentiality regarding the information given.

The student participants in the interviews were six boys (7-10 year old) four of whom are of Māori descent and two of European descent. All students had been identified through school disciplinary records as experiencing difficulty in the past settling into their learning environment and were identified as engaging in moderate to severe challenging behaviours which appear to be affecting their learning capabilities.

The interview questions were intended to address common themes and they were framed in both “adult speak” for the teacher participants and “student speak” for the student participants. This was necessary in order to allow interpreting and understanding of adult and student narratives respectfully. As previously indicated in Chapter 3, ‘Methodology’, the individual teacher questions were more specific as the information that I required was to further the knowledge that I already possessed about methods of teaching practice (as a practising teacher myself) and thus clarify or gain alternative points of view.

The teacher and student participant responses were transcribed verbatim from audiotape and then translated into specific categories for analysis using the methods of *“coding”* described in Chapter 3.
I grouped together the responses of similar context into subcategories after initial reading (open coding), and in relation to the specific questions asked. Contexts included information given by participants regarding

topics such as; learning, motivation, relationships, care, behaviour, home influences.

The next stage was to connect the subcategories by linking similar topics together (axial coding) into more defined categories. These included topics such as, students' perception of school, perceptions of their teacher, and perceptions of other students' behaviour. The teachers' categories included, observed teacher practice, issues facing students, and managing student behaviour. Finally, the more defined categories were linked together and related to three common themes (selective coding), allowing the data to be linked back to the literature.

Common Themes

Three themes emerged from the narratives of participants' responses.

1. Teachers' and students' perceptions of effective teaching practice.

2. Issues raised by teachers and students that impact on student learning and behaviour.

3. How teachers respond to issues in student learning and behaviour.

Before presenting the findings from the interviews, it is important to describe a rationale for the three themes that emerged from the analysis, allowing for an overview of the perceptions that both groups of participants brought to the interviews.

In generating the theme, *teachers' and students' perceptions of effective teaching practice* I was exploring possible commonalities between the teachers' and students' responses to their understanding of what counts as effective teaching practice. In generating the theme *issues raised by teachers and students that impact on student learning and behaviour,* I was searching for further commonalities in issues that arise from both groups concerning impact on student learning and behaviour. Finally I was

interested in how teachers and students *respond to the issues affecting student learning and behaviour*, (the third theme), in an effort to explore whether there were commonalities between the teacher and the student in identifying the issues and in understanding how these are dealt with. Keeping in mind that both student and teacher participant's narratives have a central focus on challenging behaviours and how these affect the learning environment, the information given in the interviews can now be elaborated on under each theme category. There are a number of issues relating to each theme of which I will describe and then draw together, before discussing how they collectively relate to the literature (Chapter 2). Teachers' responses throughout the discussion will be identified as T 1- 4 and students as S 1 - 6.

4. 2 Teachers' and students' perceptions of effective teaching practice

Findings:

Teacher Participants:

The first question asked the teacher participant to describe a past teacher who taught them as a student who has influenced their own teaching effectiveness.

Two commonalities arose here, these being "motivation toward learning" and the "importance of relationships between the teacher and the student". In discussing *motivational techniques* for enhancing learning, two of the teachers recalled that being organised and equipping all students with the necessary "tools for learning" were important.

T2 described a past teacher:

> *I remember she used to have lots of visuals you know, I'm a very big visual learner and not sometimes the greatest listener and so she'd cater for all the children doing those things and she'd often have tasks set out you know that you could go off and do while she was working with groups and things like that.*

I always loved being organised. I'd sit at my desk and do this as a child so yeah, I probably wanted to be a teacher from when I was standard three.

T4 recalls a teacher who,

… gave you all the tools you needed or helped you get all the stuff you needed to make you learn.

Statements offered by all teachers indicated that for them, being organised meant having lots of activities for all students and working in set groups with an emphasis on "hands on" manipulation of equipment. This was especially important for boys who they all believe need more physical engagement than girls within the learning environment.

Teachers regarded consistency in organising the classroom programme as being important in providing motivation for students. This was mostly attributed to the perception that the instructional programmes such as literacy, and numeracy were formalised subjects and needed to be taught in the same time slot each day. What's more, teachers indicated that all students knew which instructional groups they were in, the directions for completing the activities and had an awareness of that when change occurred, for some students, this disrupted their daily routines.

Three teachers spoke about the encouragement previous teachers gave and they perceived this as being an essential motivational skill.

…she made me feel like I was clever and wonderful and she encouraged me to try new things, (T1)., and she was just amazing, she just hooked me into it and I was never interested in it before.

I was a very average to low average student, and she just had a way of inspiring me. (T3).

She had some real tyrants in her classroom but she just had them all, you know when you walk into the classroom and they are all just so calm and just her mannerisms and the way about her. (T2).

According to the teachers, making one feel good about oneself was important, as it encouraged students to become more responsive to engagement in learning.

Another finding that teachers believe motivated students was the necessity to set boundaries. Two of the teachers deemed that having had a strict teacher who set the boundaries for all, “which may never be crossed for fear of punishable consequences”, motivated their willingness to learn. This was not out of “fear of punishment” but instead enabled them to know exactly what the teacher expected of them and their peers. They reported that this provided a safe learning environment for themselves as students. Two teachers however, talked about their own teachers being firm but fair in setting boundaries and saw that the consequences administered for those who stepped over the boundary were justifiable as the students disrupted the learning of the students within the classroom. One teacher went even further to conclude that

> *It made me realise that if you work within the boundaries you get rewarded and not only that you know, you get an education.*

In discussing the importance of *forming relationships*, all teachers commented on the necessity to develop positive relationships with all of their students. They could all recall an influential teacher who had developed a positive learning relationship with them as students. Two of the teachers stated that during their childhood the teachers who had the most influence were the ones who either coached them in sports during weekends or knew them and their parents in a more informal ‘social way’ outside of school. One teacher mentioned that she had been educated in a small country school where her teacher knew the families personally and socially and because of this,

> *… she was very kind, she took and interest in who I was.*
> *I don’t know if it was because she knew my family, but it was a small rural area, everybody knew everybody’s family so I don’t know (T1).*

T3 talked about being kind and taking an interest in her as a child which allowed a positive learning relationship to be formed.

> *She was very kind, she took and interest in who I was, and wasn't just teaching me to read and write and do all those things and she encouraged me to try new things.*

T3 also described a teacher that she observed, whilst training, whose positive actions commanded a great deal of respect from all students.

> *I really liked the way she has a professional relationship with children, but she also has a lot of respect from the children.*
> *Consistency, fairness, listening to, always listening to what they say, and building that positive relationship with them and she's a very calm person.*

This comment was similarly noted in T2's, description of a teacher who was observed and pointed out that other mannerisms such as "expression" and reciprocal respect were important for positive learning relationships to be evident.

> *I don't know whether she gave off a lot of expressions or I don't know how she did it but the relationships she had with the children you know they treated her with utmost respect and they did the same with her.*

<u>The teacher participants were asked to consider how the knowledge of observed past teacher practices had influenced their own teaching practice.</u>

All teachers indicated that within their own teaching practice, the most influential factor that has been carried over from past or observed teachers is the forming of positive learning relationships with their students.

Forming positive learning relationships with students meant, taking an interest in who the student is, being approachable, being kind, firm, but fair, and most importantly of all, being a good listener and listening to what

the student has to say. Mutual respect between the teacher and the student can be maintained by ensuring that a positive relationship exists which in turn promotes positive engagement in learning.

T1 commented that she tries to show caring of all students and that this is difficult at times, especially with some students who present severe challenging behaviours. She freely admitted that,

> *Sometimes you're just so cross you don't actually step back and think and you yell at them and then I go away and I think … ohh I wish I'd actually said something in a different way (T1).*

Another teacher expressed the need to develop relationships by getting to know the students individually and the ways they respond individually to challenges. When discussing the consequences for actions she pointed out that,

> *… the consequences will reflect the severity of the incident/action. However this is where it changes for each child – the way you approach the problem – talking through the issue, and giving the consequence.*

Another influential factor for the participant teachers in their own teaching practice was the need to set boundaries in order to create a safe working environment for all students. For T4. this was a goal that played a predominant role in their beginning years of teaching.

> *Trying to set those hard boundaries and making the children accountable for stepping out of them, probably in my first term of teaching that was pretty new to me and it's quite hard. I thought it was, it wasn't hard it was just new to set up my own boundaries and yeah the consequences for those.*

T3 commented on her own teaching practice regarding past teachers setting boundaries and talked about being equitable in the classroom. She stated,

> *I guess that comes back to equity you know what works for one child, might not necessarily work for another such as, the way you would solve a problem with another child. It's all about knowing your students. I have*

also learnt to discuss/deal with problems at a later time, when the child has calmed down later that day or even possibly the next day.

All teachers agreed that when setting boundaries, consistency needs to be at the forefront of all decisions especially with simple everyday routines. Having a daily timetable displayed, along with shared knowledge of boundaries and the fairness of consequences were reported examples of consistency. One teacher suggested that as a teacher, one needs to be seen to be consistent even though sometimes the student might not see it as being consistent. In this case a different approach may be needed which is fair and justified for that student.

Student Participants:

The interviews involved asking the student participants to talk about what they like about school and also how their teacher helps them to learn.

Two clear topics emerged from this discussion. These are firstly, *"that learning is what school is all about"* and secondly, *"how the teacher relates to the student"*.

What students like about school

Subject areas.

All students indicated that they liked school because they liked "learning" When asked to indicate their favourite subjects, maths (two students) and writing (two students) and sport and art (two students) were forthcoming responses.

S1, who indicated that Art was the favourite subject said,

I just like drawing and stuff. Learning how to make stuff and all that. I enjoy drawing and getting on with my work.

This gives a suggestion that this student prefers to work alone as long as it is practically based and may not need to rely on a lot of teacher support.

S6 who indicated sport was the favourite subject had an interesting though not totally educational reason for liking the subject. He declared that,

I just really like sport, you know to get out of the classroom and maths.

The four students who liked either maths or writing suggested that the reasons for their preferences were because they were good at it, found it easy and it helps you to learn other subjects.
However, Student 5 suggested,

I just liked doing writing cos I get stickers for it and stuff, I get rewards.

Subjects not liked were maths (three students) and writing (three students). Of those who disliked maths, two interesting distinctions were evident. The first was that they perceived themselves as failures because they found difficulty with learning facts such as times tables or how to do division. The second deals with more emotional excuses for failure.
S1 explained his dislike for maths because,

… like I'm nearly always the last one finished I don't know cos I'm probably slow I don't know, my mates talk to me. I try to get on with my work so I don't get in trouble.

S5 expressed his dislike for maths due to the fact that

…when I do maths I feel a bit wild but I just don't say it cos then I know I'll get in trouble for getting the wrong answer. She (teacher) says you might have to move down a level.

These two students appear to identify either their lack of academic ability as their reason for their non participation or identifying that the consequence for their misbehaviour is not worth the effort.

Of those who disliked writing, the perceptions from two students were that

I don't know any interesting words (S2), and because I don't know how to write that good (S4).

Whereas student S6 could not give a reason apart from that he just didn't like it.

I just don't like doing it. I get it done but I just don't like it.

Interestingly, this is the student who has indicated that he would rather be outside playing sports than being in the classroom.

Peer friendship

All students indicated that they enjoyed school because of the friends that they had there and friends that they had made whilst being there.

They all likened friendship to having fun, especially in the playground. It is to be remembered that all six students present challenging behaviours and so their perceptions of what friends are may reflect differing understandings from those of students who do not present challenging behaviours. In response to the question Why are they friends? S5. stated that, "… some of them still like me and they don't be rude to me" indicating that perhaps he now understands his past behaviours have had an effect on forming relationships with other peers.

How their teacher helps them to learn.

All students provided information regarding how they felt about their teacher. Comments such as "My teacher is pretty special" and "She is friendly and helpful and kind to us and helps me with my learning" were commonplace in the conversations. S6. provided an interesting response when asked why teachers in general were special, by stating,

> *They understand me. Teachers get along with each other. Teachers are friendly to each other.*

This student's perception indicates that he not only feels comfortable by having a good relationship with his teacher and others but also feels that it is important that teachers have positive relationships with each other. When asked to discuss how their teacher helps them to learn, a number of positive findings emerged. The first of these is that the teacher models the learning for the students. This was evident in the way the participants explained that their teacher showed them how to spell, give examples of what they had to do, and taught different ways of doing things. Student 4, indicated that,

> *… she helps me by doing the correct things and not making mistakes.*

The second positive finding is in the certainty that the teacher is always available to help them either as one on one or in small group tasks. Comments such as “You call her over and she comes” and “I would be asking the teacher if I didn’t know any words” are indications that these students feel confident that the teacher is there to help with their learning.

A third positive finding is that the students feel that the teacher “enjoys teaching them.”
S1 clarified this assertion by further stating that,

> *Teacher X likes to help me write my ideas? Writing sentences and paragraphs – Teacher X likes helping me do writing and all that. That’s what I like about teacher X.*

A fourth positive finding is that these students enjoy hearing about the teachers’ own life experiences which are related to the topic or subject that they are working on. A comment such as “… tells us stuff like how he grew up and how he learnt to draw…..” enables, according to the students to see the teacher as a learner also.

A fifth positive finding mentioned by three of the students is that their teacher acknowledges their achievements by giving them praise and rewards, especially for good behaviour. Rewards could be in the form of stickers, book awards, or extra access to sporting events and games. Group points also for behaviour and academic effort featured favourably as incentives that the teacher gave for helping them learn.

The only concern students expressed regarding group incentives was that one of the ‘group’ could spoil it for the others by losing points and this was deemed as not being fair to the group. In saying this, the six student participants all agreed that sometimes they were the ones also responsible for the loss of points.

Just as in reporting the findings regarding how the teacher helps them to learn, the students were equally forthcoming in discussing unhelpful things

that their teacher did that affected their learning. These assertions by students will be discussed later relating to the theme “Issues raised by teachers and students that impact on student learning and behaviour”.

In summary, findings indicate that positive relationships are crucial to both teacher and student working in a safe learning environment, and are governed by the mutual respect that the two parties have for each other. Teachers and students reported that consistency in setting boundaries and reinforcing compliance, along with reward and praise are important factors also in providing learning opportunities for students.

Discussion:

The teacher participants identified two core aspects of teaching practice that they believe create an effective environment for student learning.

- Motivation of students
- Relationships between students and teachers

Motivation of Students

Teachers spoke of being organised in classroom seating, planning and having the right equipment. This relates to literature suggesting that being organised creates a framework for “classroom ecology” (Arthur et al., 2003) and suggests that physical settings and appropriate activities in a well organised classroom will enhance student motivation (Ericksen, 1978; Wheldall & Glynn, 1989).

Ericksen (1978) suggests that most students respond positively to a well-organized classroom led by an enthusiastic teacher who behaves consistently. Such a teacher has a genuine interest in students and in what they learn. By being aware of the purpose of the activities, students will find their motivation enhanced. Consistency as described by teacher

participants, related to establishing routines within the classroom day. Teachers reported that a change of routine their students.

However, catering for all students requires an approach that allows for diversification within the organisation. One size fits all is not acceptable in today's classrooms, especially with regards to cultural difference (Houlton, 1986; Smith, 1978). Houlton (1986) suggests that, not recognising cultural difference enables the teachers' culture to dominate.

The challenge for teachers is to ensure that the teachers' culture, if different from that of the students, should not dominate the context of the delivery of the curriculum, (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

Participant teachers interviewed, indicated that if boys were given more "hands on experiences" their incentive to learn would be increased. However, effective teachers create environments which enable all students the access to their preferred ways of learning at all times (Edwards, 2000; Mc Naughton, 2002; Prashnig, 2000b).

Encouraging students to learn by making them feel good about their learning is a source of motivation that the participant teachers have also spoken about. All participating teachers could remember an influential teacher in their past who was encouraging and motivated them to learn. To ensure that students are taught how to learn (Edwards, 2000) and be responsible for their own learning (Glasser, 1984) effective teachers should provide effective conditions for learning.
I maintain that this can only come about through encouraging students to see the worthiness of their learning and to celebrate their own successes. In traditional Māori educational practice, for example, one of the approaches to learning involved whanau as teachers. This ensured that the students felt safe and comfortable in learning about things relevant to their family. They were encouraged to carry their mana (esteem), and their learning throughout life (Hemara, 2000).

Finally, teacher participants believe that by working within "boundaries" a student would be motivated to learn. Two of the teachers deemed that having a strict teacher who set the boundaries for all, enabled them to know exactly what the teacher expected of them and their peers. Kroeger & Bauer (2004) suggest that behaviour is governed by rules and expectations and that by not working within these boundaries of teachers' expectations, students will not "fit in". This could also result in students being denied the "presence of access to learning" (Emerson, 2001). When setting boundaries, teachers also spoke of being firm but fair in their dealings with students who crossed the boundaries. The assertive discipline approach (Canter & Canter, 1990) concerns the setting of non negotiable boundaries for students to adhere to. In contrast, the participant teachers pointed out the need for some degree of flexibility in responding to boundary crossing.

Consistent with the literature presented (Balson, 1992; Kauffman et al., 2002; Rogers, 1998; Watkins & Wagner, 2000) these results show that that when setting boundaries for student learning to occur, teachers need to be clear about their own understandings of acceptable behaviours, in different contexts, and about what they will tolerate around pushing the boundaries.

<u>Relationships between students and teachers</u>

A supportive relationship between the student and the teacher is seen by all participating teachers to be of the utmost importance in ensuring that effective teaching and learning occurs.

Teachers spoke of the need to have knowledge of the family that the student comes from in order to build strong relationships. One effective way is to engage in extra curricula activities such as weekend sports in an effort to meet families in more "social settings" such as on the sports field. Hawk *et al* (2002) suggest that teachers who engage in extra-curricular activities benefit from meeting students in more informal settings and consequently have the opportunity to form better personal relationships. However, I contend that not all students including those with challenging

behaviour, involve themselves in extra curricula such as sports and cultural activities thus making the forming of personal relationships through this medium with the teacher inaccessible.

One teacher claimed that positive collaborative family relationships between home and school made them feel safe and secure. This claim is well supported in literature regarding preferred Māori teaching practices (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Hemara, 2000; Houlton, 1986). This claim is also supported in contemporary classroom teaching in bilingual classroom situations (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Butterworth & Bevan-Brown, 2007; Hawk et al., 2002; MacFarlane, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2007). If a teacher has experienced family events that are the same or similar to those of their students, sharing these experiences will greatly assist in establishing effective relationships (Gill, 2006).

I assert that a teacher needs to genuinely appreciate the importance that families place on a students' well being. However this is not to suggest that teachers visit the families and homes of every student in their class to gather information as this could be seen as prying into family personal lives. Nevertheless, teachers who care about students will find that their students care about them in turn, and will generally show enthusiasm for learning (Boyes, 2002; Hawk et al., 2002; MacFarlane, 2004; Pianta, 2000; Russek, 2004).

The issue of respect between teachers and students was mentioned by all teacher participants. Teacher participants have indicated that they gain respect by being kind, firm and fair and creating a safe environment with boundaries.

I suggest that respect needs to be initiated and experienced by both teachers and students. Literature indicates that students and teachers will develop effective relationships when the respect is mutual (Alton-Lee, 2003; Boyes, 2002; Hawk et al., 2002; Rogers, 1994; Wilson-Hill, 2006) and that the behaviour of students is more positively influenced by whether they liked and respected the teacher rather than by the effect of

consequences forced upon them if they stepped over the boundaries (Robertson, 1996).

I believe that by attending positively and respectfully to unacceptable student behaviour can provide students with a learning opportunity to repair and restore relationships.

The student participants identified that “learning is what school is about” and that the “relationship they have with their teacher helps them to learn”.

All participating students, despite presenting challenging behaviours, indicated that they liked being at this school. This is likely to be due to a combination of teacher support in teaching them what they need to learn and support from good friends who share in the learning journey. Two students indicated that they dislike more formal subjects such as literacy in favour of art and sport. They suggest that they are lacking motivation in the classroom and would rather be engaged in hands on practical applications (Edwards, 2000; Mc Naughton, 2002). However, I believe that this preference by boys who have little interest in literacy and numeracy may reflect their low self-esteem and their belief that they are “no good” at literacy and numeracy. Teachers are not able to control all of the influencing factors causing boredom or students lacking in motivation. Along with Sturgess (2006), I consider that the responsibility for motivation is mutually shared between student and teacher.

Caring

All six students indicated that they like their teacher because they are kind and caring. They identified that their teacher really cares about them as students. Students feel safe and secure in the classroom and feel that they are treated with respect. Literature suggests that the respect that students give their teachers is a result of the way teachers treat their students and speak to their students. (Boyes, 2002; Butterworth & Bevan-Brown, 2007; Hawk et al., 2002; MacFarlane, 2004; Pianta, 2000; Wilson-Hill, 2006)

A sense of failure led two of the student participants to dislike a subject area. This aligns with literature suggesting that a primary cause of students who experience low motivation is not knowing how to succeed (Corson, 1998; Sturgess, 2006). I suggest that it is the teachers' role to teach students how to succeed, not by lowering expectations but by teaching the skills of self inquiry and self discovery. The teacher's responsibility also is to provide the stimulus that promotes success through effort.

Students believed that they are listened to and are not afraid to speak out, ask for help, or offer suggestions. This aligns with the literature indicating that student voice is vital in an effective learning environment (Bishop et al., 2003b; MacFarlane, 2007; Prashnig, 2000a; Shields et al., 2005). Recognising that student voice be heard, will enable the teacher to recognise the students' perceptions of their understanding of their learning, through the eyes of the student, rather than reflected through an adult perspective.

Literature also suggests that in Māori educational pedagogy that teaching is based on the presumption that both the teacher and student learned together and from each other, (Hemara, 2000) and both learned something new from the process. I suggest that one of the benefits from a teacher placing importance on listening to student voice is that students will be motivated to take responsibility for their own learning.

Modelling

The student participants stated that their teachers' modelling "how to do things the correct way" by the teacher helped them with their learning. This was not in order to copy what the teacher did but to provide a starting point and ongoing support for their own efforts. I maintain that teacher modelling of appropriate learning behaviour is an essential ingredient for maintaining an effective learning environment. It also allows for diversity preferred ways of learning, (Gardner, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Prashnig, 2000c)

and diversity in cultural difference (Gadd, 2003; Houlton, 1986; Ministry of Education, 2007, 2008).

Communication

Student participants have stated that effective communication between the teacher and the student is another way their teacher helps them to learn. Comments such as “You call her and she comes over” and “I would be asking if I didn’t know”, indicates that they feel confident that their teacher is available to them and is there to “help them to learn”. Literature also suggests that communication is vital for reciprocal dialogue between teacher and student (Hawk et al., 2002) and that students must feel safe enough that they can communicate without fear of reprisal (Gill, 2006).

Mc Naughton (2002) provides research literature suggesting that teachers should have an understanding of the different dialects that their students are exposed to and bring to the classroom (such as bro, mate, cuzzie for example). I believe that while the teacher does not have to speak the same dialect as their students, they need to recognise that these terms are sometimes more acceptable with the students’ culture. Perhaps teachers could model more grammatically acceptable terms thereby giving the students other alternatives.

Connectedness

Student participants suggested that they feel connected with their teacher especially when they relate to the things that the teacher may talk about in the classroom. Teachers often talk about their own experiences when introducing a topic or idea to students. Gill (2006) suggests that effective teachers are able to make connections between themselves and the subjects that they teach. Effective teachers can also make connections between themselves and their students and one way of doing this is by story telling and sharing stories about their own lives. I suggest that by allowing students to “see inside the teacher’s own world” the students will appreciate that the teacher is “a person” just like themselves and this can promote a trusting and respectful relationship.

Praise and reward

Student participants talked about earning rewards through either praise or stickers and group awards. Students felt that they would rather receive rewards for good efforts than be punished for poor effort. These comments relate to literature which suggests that students respond more favourably to praise rather than punishment (Doidge, 2005; Kohn, 1993; Robertson, 1996) and by achieving such rewards assists in maintaining a student – teacher relationship (Arthur et al., 2003). Russek, (2004) suggests using praise helps build self worth in students and it is important that they "receive messages that they are loved, valued, unique and fundamentally okay" (p 18).

However many teachers assert that for Māori students in New Zealand, teachers may be reluctant to praise Māori students because they believe that it is culturally inappropriate to do so. I believe that Māori students do respond to praise provided it is done in private between the teacher and the student and that their mana is not threatened and there is evidence (as seen by the student) of a reciprocal learning relationship with the teacher as indicated in the literature regarding Māori educational practices (Hemara, 2000).

In summary, Teacher participants spoke of motivation and relationships between themselves and students as being essential ingredients for effective teaching practice. Respect for the students and their cultural background which is reciprocal is important for developing and maintaining relationships.

Students reported that "learning is what school is about" and they also stated that effective teacher - student relationships helps them to learn best. Literature supports the conclusion that an effective teacher is caring, knows how to teach, and is connected to the students through the use of effective communication.

4. 3 Issues raised by teachers and students that impact on student learning and behaviour

Findings:

Teacher participants were asked firstly to describe the issues that affect student learning at school and secondly to describe issues they have when facing students with challenging behaviours. Student participants were asked firstly to describe any general issues they felt impacted on their learning at school and secondly more specifically, how the behaviour of others affects their learning.

Teacher Participants:

What are the issues that affect student learning at school?

All teacher participants maintain that the *home environment* has a major impact on the learning potential of students at school.

Teacher 1 pointed out that if a child has experienced an unsettling incident at home, and before coming to school on a particular day this will affect their learning potential during that day.

> *I'd say home issues, do affect a child and I think that if the child comes to school and there's been a bust up and the cops have come or whatever, that child's still going to come to school feeling insecure and troubled and not really interested in reading, its not high on their list of priorities.*

However this teacher also added that "… it's not an excuse for teachers, I think we need to get past that". On the other hand, Teacher 3 suggested that

> *… there's a lot of children who have really bad times at home, but they come to school and they know that it's a safe environment and they are able to cope.*

Furthermore, one teacher did make reference to remaining positive in spite of the effect that an unsettled home life might have when she suggested that,

> *Regardless of these outside influences, while the children are at school, we have to, to a point forget about what we can't change and teach them in a way that engages them in learning. (T3).*

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that this respondent also spoke of one student in her class "who can not cope, he doesn't have the coping mechanism and I don't know why?" at least this teacher remained open about not simply blaming the student, or his family, for not coping at school.

All teacher participants reported that lack of sleep, getting up far too early and not having a decent breakfast or no breakfast at all contributed to poor student performance.

It is interesting to note that none of the teacher participants blamed lack of support from home in helping the student with homework or other school curriculum related matters. They merely reported frustrations from students not bringing the correct equipment, books etc that they need for everyday classroom use.

When attending to curriculum issues that may affect students' learning potential one teacher spoke at length about the child's learning capabilities and how the teacher needs to be aware that not all students understand what they are learning. She suggested that the children need to understand the purpose of the learning and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that this is made possible.

All teachers made reference to how students responded when they taught curriculum areas that they were passionate about and not so passionate about.

If you're passionate about something, it also means you have really good curriculum knowledge. If you haven't got the curriculum knowledge and the kids pick up on the fact that your waffling your way around something which I would be doing with something like music because I'm not musical, they see that as a weakness and sometimes if they can see a weakness or its not well structured enough for them, they will respond differently and I think that's the difference, the passion (T1).

With the children with more challenging behaviours I try to, you know with writing, I don't often get them to do a lot of writing, but we might do a lot of talking about it, so it's not saying I'm not passionate about literacy I don't try to force that on the children that I know wouldn't be able to cope as well (T3).

T2 suggested that students gauged a teacher by their interest in modelling effective approaches to learning and by teachers creating a sense of belonging for the student.

If I'm tired and not really into what I'm about to teach they are not really into it but you know if you get into it and I find with the modelling with writing using all their ideas helps them as well, and show them work you've done yourself.
They'll be able to take more ownership of their own learning.
I think for children, to stimulate them they have got to see their own work and think that's part of my class, I'm part of this classroom, where as if I just had all teacher posters or nothing up on the wall it's kind of dull and boring and I think it reflects who you are.

T4 referred to the students' emotional well being as one of the issues affecting student learning, indicating that,

Just the self esteem thing, one of the things that I've just noticed is kids don't like to be singled out and they can be, oh if I'm going on a negative tangent like if I'm giving them a growling and they are getting singled out you know they just become withdrawn and then, it depends who the kids are of course but, become withdrawn and then they switch off, whereas some other kids who are more on to it they'll take that on board and then they'll make the change.

Only one teacher mentioned that there was an issue with students who do not seek positive relationships with the teacher despite the teacher's efforts to encourage this. These students are usually loners but they can be the students with the most challenging of behaviours.
However, I have observed that this particular teacher has developed an effective reciprocal working relationship with one of these students and is able to keep the child in her classroom. I appreciate that this does place a lot of extra effort and stress on the teacher. In the teacher's own words, "working with X is like treading on eggshells". However, this teacher is not moving to exclude this student from the classroom.

<u>What are the issues facing teachers of students with challenging behaviours?</u>

All teachers spoke about how these behaviourally challenged students placed considerable stress on their own well being.
Teacher 1 claimed that,

> *I think it's far more stressful, I mean I'm thinking back to other classes that I've had that are similar as well, you know a pretty stressful time, but I don't think its fair on the other kids.*

All teachers were adamant that such students wasted the teachers and the other students' valuable teaching time adding to the stress of the teacher who, while being well organised and well planned can have the whole day "ruined" by a student who decides to engage in undesirable or non compliant behaviour.
T3 described how she was constantly frustrated at the time it takes to deal with a student who frequently refuses to comply.

> *I think the main issue is the time that it takes for me to deal with problems and the interruptions, sometimes its really hard when you've got children chipping in all the time, and I guess that's the hardest thing when you are trying to teach something, in the instruction group you might be, and that child is constantly na , na ,na ,na don't want to do that na, na ,na and*

you're getting this constantly, and you can see the frustration on the other children.

Another teacher spoke about the frustrations regarding the time outside of school hours thinking about and discussing with other teachers, the disruptive behaviours of only a few.

You spend more time thinking about them. You spend more time in meetings talking about them, you spend more time in preparation for them, there is way more money spent on them, and I sometimes go away and think, you want those kids contained so the others can get on with their work, and it's getting that equal balance, and sometimes you know that you haven't got the equal balance (T1).

T4 spoke of the frustration of not getting the time to work with all students because of the disruptiveness of some students.

My time could be spent else where, with the kids that do want to learn, so I'm having to pull these guys up when I could be doing other stuff that's you know someone else misses out when I have to deal with that.

While several teachers emphasised their frustration, one teacher offered suggestions as to how students with challenging behaviours could be better catered for within the classroom. The first of these included, (in particular reference to boys) that they engage in construction type activities for certain periods of the day.

She argued that,

If they are engaged in their learning they won't have time to misbehave (T1).

I would like to see a behaviour class set up, and those kids, take them out of those classrooms you know have 19 kids in a class one teacher, you would need a teacher in there who has empathy for those type of children, and have had some sort of training, you know you see it working in other areas.

The equity issues involved in undertaking a proposal to set up a separate class such as this and the question of needing a teacher who has empathy

for these types of students could create an issue in itself by other teachers. What T3. is suggesting looks a bit like, “exclusion” of a student with difficult behaviour from their classroom. They would certainly contend that all teachers should have empathy for all students regardless of their behaviours.

The findings regarding teachers’ perceptions as to the effect that students with challenging behaviours have on fellow students suggested that all teachers are aware of the possible effects that students with challenging behaviours can have on the remainder of the class. These include, constant interruption, missing out on quality time with the teacher, students becoming resilient to the incidents and getting on with their work regardless of the disruptiveness. All of these place an unfair emphasis on the rights of all students to work in an academically and emotionally safe environment.

> *They waste the other children’s learning time (T1).*
> *They get quite frustrated and you can see it in their expression that they are quite frustrated that, that person is stopping them from doing what we going to do. And you know you’re always giving your attention to that child, that’s hard. (T3).*

Teacher 4 when asked about how resilient the other students were towards “putting up” with these students, responded by saying

> *The good kids know you’re spending more time again, just for those other kids.*
> *There’s probably three or four that will say “oh why do you have to do that”, whereas the others will say “those kids they always do that”.*

All teacher participants were aware that they needed to be pro active in encouraging the students who were affected by the misbehaviours of others, to not become complacent with these behaviours and not make excuses for their peers. Students should instead continue to model appropriate positive behaviour in the hope that their peers will change their own behaviours to becoming more acceptable.

Student Participants

The student participants were asked to describe any issues they felt impacted on their learning at school. A few of the students were very forthcoming in speaking about the things that their teacher does that they *don't like*.

S1 was resentful in the fact that he was often singled out by his teacher for no reason.

> *Sometimes yells at me when I'm just doing nothing and I get angry at T(X) because T(X) always yells at me, and I haven't even been probably doing anything, nothing just working sometimes T(X) wont even talk to me.*

When asked if the teacher treated other students in a similar way he responded,

> *Oh yeah me and another child. T(X) just doesn't like to talk to us, but everyone else. T(X) likes to show them what to do and all that.*

When asked if the teacher was being unfair to him because of his own undesirable behaviour he responded by suggesting that,

> *It was because I'm nearly always the last one finished and my mates talk to me all of the time.*

.

S3 stated that his teacher made him work in groups when in fact he preferred to work by himself and the reason being,

> *… I prefer working by myself, cause in groups people yell at me to slow down for them.*

This assertion suggests that the student either feels that he is far more capable than the other students or that he has yet to develop skills in 'working as a team member'.

Two students indicated that at times they did not like doing what the teacher asked them but they "did it" because they did not wish to be punished.

One student stated that the teacher treated the students inequitably. This teacher, he perceived had issues with some students which included him self. He stated,

> *A couple of kids in the class she doesn't really treat like everybody else. I don't know why, she just doesn't like them.*

An assumption is that this student and the "couple of kids" he referred to were perhaps those who presented the most serious unacceptable behaviours. His perception that the teacher treated them differently may be reason for him to need to understand the nature and intentions of the teacher to ensure that they behave.

Another issue that students talked about which impacted on their learning was the bullying and fighting that they experienced in the school from other students. They were all forthcoming in admitting that sometimes they also were the perpetrators of bullying and fighting in the school.
All students described acts of bullying such as hitting, punching, spitting, name calling, swearing, being rude and impolite, and more commonly annoying them while they were trying to do their work.
The behaviours which they described as annoying included;

S1 *Oh like how they get rulers stick them inside my desk or stick them inside other people's desks with a rubber on top and fling it at me or throw pencils, when I'm trying to work and make me very angry.*

S3 *Keeps on talking to me and calling me names*

S5 *They are poking me you can feel it and it might make you have a mistake and if some ones yelling out it goes into your ear and makes a loud noise.*

S6 *They come over and like talk to me when I'm trying to do my work and like always talk to me.*

These are justifiably annoying behaviours, however, when the students were asked whether they themselves undertook these actions, all agreed that they had. They were also concerned with the inequitable disciplinary actions of the teachers not being fair.

In response to further questioning regarding their thoughts on physical violence, one student was philosophical and showed a growing maturity when he discussed his dislike for fighting

> *When I start fights and I don't end them. Like if you start a fight sometimes you gotta end it but if you don't end it, it'll just turn into a worser fight (S1).*

When questioned further regarding the reasons for fighting all students spoke of the need to hurt others who made them angry by "getting smart" and also often as defence by being hit first, or as revenge for a previous violent incident involving a friend or a younger sibling.

The student participants were asked to describe how the behaviour of others affects their learning. All students provided similar information on how the behaviour of others affects their learning. There were two predominant assertions.
Firstly, they alleged, students who misbehave stop others from learning. When the teacher has to constantly stop working with the class to reprimand the student who is misbehaving they perceive that their own learning stops. They felt that the teacher should be teaching them all of the time and not some of the time.

Secondly they said that students who misbehave make it hard for others to concentrate. They maintain that it is very hard to concentrate when another student is misbehaving, especially if they are calling out or involved in a fight with another student or the teacher. The time it takes for the teacher to deal with the behaviour often means that the class has forgotten what they are supposed to be doing and they are worried that the teacher will growl at them for not carrying on with work while they deal with the incident.

Two of the students were willing to disclose what they did in retaliation to another student or a situation that caused them to get angry.

S1 Make me very angry. Nut off and get angry.

S3 Push him away and then I get into trouble.

Student 3 thought that it was not fair that he get punished when often the student who caused the incident was not even spoken to.

One student (S4) who perceives he is a victim and exercises his rights as a victim stated

I just walk away and do my learning. I just tell the teacher

However, the student said that he felt very angry as a victim and by telling the teacher did not really help him get over his anger unless the teacher punished the perpetrator.

A fourth student (S6) who feels that he is not liked by his teacher and even some of his peers alleges that,

I talk, get caught and them I'm out of class.

This frustrated the student because he assumed that he is being picked on and treated unfairly by his teacher as other students "talk and remain in the class".

In summarising this section both teacher and student participants were asked to talk firstly about issues affecting student learning and secondly how the behaviour of some of the more challenging students affects the other students.

The teacher participants revealed that they believe that home life has a huge influence on the students learning and behaviour. They cited unstable home environments, lack of food and sleep as the main reasons for classroom misdemeanours. However most of the teachers indicated that they also accept responsibility for ensuring that learning takes place in the classroom regardless of home influences. They also maintained that students with challenging behaviours place a huge stress on themselves because of the time and energy needed to continually deal with disruption and all agreed that this was not fair on the other students within the classroom.

Student participants revealed that being singled out and reprimanded in public and the received inequitable treatment given to some students in the class who misbehave were main issues for them as students. They felt that bullying and fighting were examples of misbehaviours and even though they had participated in these misbehaviours it concerned them. They also felt that constant disruptions within their classrooms by other students made it hard to concentrate and stops them from learning.

Discussion:

Literature suggests that for many years, peoples' perceptions of the influences of home life have been understood as the major influencing factor for student performance. The Coleman report (1996) concluded that differences in student achievement were mostly due to differences in the backgrounds of students, particularly in parental income and educational achievement.

Teacher participants in this study identified influences from the home environment as the main issue affecting student learning achievement and behaviour.
They stated that while the influence from home may be one reason for poor performance, it is their job as teachers to ensure that while at school each student gets the best possible opportunities to learn in an educationally safe and supportive environment.

Teacher participants also stated that home influences including unsettling incidents such as physical abuse, lack of sleep, no breakfast often lead students to come to school angry and unable to communicate in appropriate ways with their teacher and peers. Literature suggests that often these students on these occasions, do not have the mechanisms to cope with everyday reasonable demands of a classroom, resort to either aggression or defiance (Walker et al., 2004), and will often exhibit behaviours in order to test the tolerance of the teacher (Watkins &

Wagner, 2000) as to how far they can push the boundaries in place for acceptable behaviours.
I maintain that the teacher needs to understand the frustrating school experience through the eyes of the student, and teachers should not buy into escalating secondary behaviours (Rogers, 1998, 2000) such as disciplining the student for their reaction to the consequence of their actions (eg stomping out of the room when challenged) before deciding on what actions to take for the initial incident.

Borman & Gamoran's (2006) review of the Coleman report concluded that even though family influences pay a part in student performance, the school has *the* major part to play in developing achievement of students. However, it is worth noting that while schools can directly assist, support and influence the behaviours of students, they may have limited success in modifying the home environment (Rogers, 1994).

Prior to European contact, whanau participation was essential in educating the young (Hemara, 2000). The young were taught at home fully immersed by family members and it is interesting to note that on the arrival of the English settlers, (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006) and (Shields et al., 2005) reported that historically, Māori in general, were judged to come from home backgrounds inferior to those of the settlers. This made it difficult for a Māori student to succeed in the "pakeha" (European) world (Keegan, 1996). I argue that educators need to become familiar with parental backgrounds, influences and cultural values so that they can gain an understanding of the students' home values and how these can be underpinned by living and being educated in the pakeha dominated society in which we live.

Writers including Borman & Gamoran, (2006); MacFarlane, (2004); Smith, (1978) and Watson, (1967), indicate that even though home life in general does pay a major role in how the student learns and behaves, it is possible that, with knowledge and through close association with the family, teachers can gain an understanding of why the student may behave in the way that they do and so be in a better position to help the student improve

that behaviour. Further to this and supported by literature (Corson, 1998; Kroeger & Bauer, 2004; Zeitlin & Refaat, 2000), Teachers need to observe cultural relationships within the family, peers and community in general and to be respectful of the differences that they encounter. This can be achieved by involving parents, whanau and community in a more supportive role by sharing ideas and forging relationships regarding students' learning. Teachers will then, better understand cultural difference and challenge their own deficit theorising, (Bishop et al., 2003b) and its impact on students' educational achievement as well as changing their performance in their classrooms.

A second issue affecting student learning that teachers spoke about was the students' understanding of what they were expected to learn. Literature suggests that to be effective, learning must be made meaningful to the student (Ericksen, 1978; Hawk et al., 2002; Pianta, 2000; Robertson, 1996) so that the students might develop an interest in learning, along with a general desire to achieve (Balson, 1992; Wilson-Hill, 2006). I believe that to make learning meaningful for students and encourage motivation to achieve, the teacher needs to ensure that the students are involved in all aspects of planning for learning. I believe that student voice is crucial when dealing with learning and subsequently all forms of behaviour. Although there are some teachers who still advocate that the "teacher knows best" (Glasser, 1992; Prashnig, 2001b; Shields et al., 2005), recognising that student voice should clearly be heard and valued, will help teachers to understand the school experience through the eyes of the student, rather than reflected through their own teacher perspective.

A third issue that teachers have spoken about concerns the emotional well being and low self esteem that some students bring to the classroom. Teachers indicated that some students don't believe that they "fit in" and "belong" in the classroom. Literature informs us that "belonging" is one of the basic expressions of human nature (Emerson, 2001; Watkins & Wagner, 2000) and that students will either seek ways of gaining recognition (Kauffman et al., 2002) in order to establish a position of

“belongingness” or they will purposely withdraw from participating and often become “victims” (Smith & Laslett, 1993).
I suggest that teachers need to show an empathy towards these students by valuing their cultural knowledge and values (Alton-Lee, 2003; MacFarlane, 2004), and ensuring that they experience success both in achievement and in social interactions with others, as well as feeling thay ‘belong’ in their classroom.

The fourth issue that teachers spoke about was the amount of stress that they endured from students with challenging behaviours. Teachers talked about the time and energy that these students take up. They don’t believe that this is fair to them or to other students in the classroom. Literature implies that how teachers perceive the behaviour they see as worrying and disturbing, bears a strong relationship to their own emotional and cognitive response to that behaviour (Greer, 2000 ; Prashnig, 2001a; Russek, 2004; Wearmouth et al., 2005). When teachers perceive that they are placed under stress by student behaviour, they begin to engage in deficit thinking (Watkins & Wagner, 2000) blaming the behaviour entirely on the student and their home life for the behaviour with comments such as, “they are always like that”. This has a disempowering effect on both, the student, other students and other teachers (Balson, 1992; Kauffman et al., 2002; Rogers, 1994).

I argue that it is the teachers’ responsibility to seek help from students’ families, other teachers or agencies in gaining an understanding of the behaviour. However teachers need to look also at their own emotional tolerance of challenging behaviour and also the causes, purposes or reasons behind the behaviour. Problematic student behaviour can also arise out of events that occur in classrooms, and can be triggered or accelerated by teachers’ behaviour.
Literature suggests that understanding “why” the behaviour is present in the first place is as equally important as to dealing with the behaviour (Balson, 1992; Rogers, 1994; Walker et al., 2004).

Student participants have indicated that the main issue for them that affects their learning behaviour is that they do not like being singled out, shouted at and berated in front of their classmates.

Teachers often do irreparable harm to the students' self esteem when they berate or intimidate students in front of others (Bishop et al., 2003b; Gadd, 2003; Kozol, 1992; MacFarlane, 2007; Zeitlin & Refaat, 2000) In the school that this research was undertaken "shouting at students" or "getting right into their face" is recognised as being unacceptable behaviour from teachers towards students in all circumstances. Students are likely to immediately retaliate, as they have done in the past, resulting in angry confrontations escalating the behaviour or incident even further. This school tries to adopt the behaviour pedagogy promoted by Bill Rogers (1994) in ensuring that teachers treat all students with respect and dignity in all dealings with misbehaviour.

Students spoke about the issue of bullying and fighting within the school and how it affects their learning. They also indicated that they are often perpetrators of bullying and fighting themselves. The students interviewed have all been identified themselves as presenting challenging behaviours, such as bullying and fighting and so it is interesting to note that they admit to being "aggressive" at times but despite this continue see this as an issue that affects their own learning. Literature defining the causes, effects and suggestions for stopping bullying behaviour is readily available to schools (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2002; Rogers, 2000; Sharp & Smith, 1994) along with New Zealand publications such as 'Kia Kaha', 'Cool Schools', 'Keeping Ourselves Safe'.

I argue that it is imperative that this school regularly visits it's policies and procedures regarding bullying and prevention and that all teachers are familiar with legal issues (Kazmierow, 2003) regarding bullying.

However in all cases of bullying, non-punitive processes should be adopted such as "restorative practice" (Adams et al., 2003), that will ensure that both victim and bully are allowed to continue to be active members of the school or society in which they engage.

The student participants also spoke about the issue of fair and just punishment that students who misbehave, receive. An issue for some was that the teacher often gave more positive attention to the good students and often gave negative attention to them selves because they were seen as “not being good kids”. The students saw as an issue that the teacher should always treat everybody the same as regards to respect and punishment and should respond to the behaviour not to the perceptions and labels, such as “the good kids”. Literature hints that teachers often create injustices when they concentrate on the behaviour and not the underlying causes of the behaviour (Balson, 1992; Rogers, 1990; Walker et al., 2004; Wearmouth et al., 2005).
I maintain that teachers often hold “grudges” against certain students because of past undesirable events that have affected them personally and will continue to focus in a negative way on any unacceptable behaviour that these students may exhibit.

In pre European contact, discipline was used by Māori, to instil respect for their culture and respect for each other (Hemara, 2000; Rokx, 1988) and was fair just and immediate. This suggests perhaps that misbehaviour was dealt with in the context of showing the child how to behave sensibly. Once the punishment had been administered to the child there was “closure” and the child was not treated any differently from any other in the future. I believe that this practice is evident in many New Zealand schools today. However not all teachers, in my experience, follow this practice. This invariably results in a break down of positive relationships between student and teacher and also places an extra strain on the management staff of the school who usually have to resort to other measures (stand downs, outside agencies) when the student retaliates. These problems waste valuable energy and time on the part of the school and it is usually the student, not the teacher concerned who suffers more from the process.

In summarising this discussion, teacher participants indicated that home life and the influences of physical violence, lack of food and sleep and social and emotional well being all impacted on student achievement and behaviour and were issues of major concerns. However, it is the teachers' responsibility to create a positive and successful learning environment for all students despite these influences.

Teachers also spoke regarding the stress that behaviourally challenged students have on them as a teacher. Students indicated that they did not like being singled out or intimidated in front of their peers. They were also concerned about bullying in the school and how its effect on their learning and they wanted teachers to be equitable and fair with punishment and reward systems.

4. 4 How teachers and students respond to issues in student learning and behaviour.

Findings:

Teacher Participants:

How do teachers manage students with challenging behaviours?

The teachers described management of challenging behaviours as an ongoing concern in their classrooms and throughout the school. They all recognised that the support from the management team in the school and with other teachers in the school was of great importance in the process. The school has a behaviour management plan that reflects the need to treat each incident separately and to allow for the diversity and cultural values of the students. This does not mean however that the consequences are inequitable. The school has a senior management leader who is responsible for the pastoral care of these students and is the person who ensures that equitable procedures are followed for all interventions regarding misbehaviour. The school resorts to "stand down" procedures which are at the discretion of the Principal when all other means are exhausted. Stand downs are usually applied only in cases of extreme behaviours such as intentionally hurting other students, swearing

at adults and continual non compliance of reasonable expectations. Stand downs are issued as a reminder to the offending student, their parents and other students and teachers that these behaviours are unacceptable and if the behaviours are allowed to continue they will affect the physical and emotional safety of every person within the school.

The teacher participant responses to managing behaviour have raised two distinct concerns. The participants spoke of *consequences* for the behaviour and also of the need to ensure that *positive relationships* are kept at the fore front of all interventions.

Consequences

All teachers spoke at length about the need for unequivocal consequences and what these were when responding to students who display undesirable behaviours, both in the classroom and in the playground, and against other persons or property.

T1 spoke of deciding whether the incident could be dealt with immediately, if time allowed, or as soon as possible allowing time to reflect on the situation ensuring that equitable justice can be seen to be done.

> *There's got to be consequences there's got to be follow up on whether or not I follow it up that second or I follow it up the next day and sometimes I'll get so busy that you know, if the behaviour hasn't gone right if something has happened and their behaviours not right at morning tea or whatever and it's been brought to my attention and I have to deal with it, then perhaps I don't get that opportunity within that next hour or even that day but the next day I have to be seen to follow it up because they always need to know that there is a consequence, there is something going to happen.*

Two teachers described how they used "removal from the classroom" as a consequence for misbehaviour and this usually involved the senior management leader with responsibility for pastoral care of these students

or in some cases another teacher from another classroom. The reasons for sending the students to a time out situation varied. *T.1 said*

> *I'd send them out, send them up here, (*the DPs. office*) to give us all some space.*

T1 indicated that by withdrawing the student, will allow the student time to calm down and reflect on what they have done and will give the other students some time to get on with their own work without the constant interruption of the offending student. This action could also be seen as reinforcing poor behaviour as the student also gets to enjoy their own space. This teacher also indicated that she often needed time to reflect on the incident.

However, T4 said

> *If someone just keeps on annoying me, I'd just send them to X*

This gives an indication that the teacher was concerned for personal wellbeing and how the disruption affects them as a person.

Another technique used by one teacher is to place students of concern on contracts. She stated,

> *All of my challenging boys are on contract that we sat down together and wrote (T2).*

It is important to note that the students were party to the formation of the contract and this allowed ownership of the consequences by both the teacher and the student.

Getting the entire class to have input into deciding on whether and what consequences are necessary is another approach a teacher participant spoke of.

> *We've incorporated into our class where the other children, set up a circle time each week and we this dishonesty box. Anything that goes on in the classroom without me seeing it, they write it in there, so every Thursday we pull it out and have a look at it and the kids decide what happens. They (the offending student) know they are in deep trouble then, because they are not sure what's going to happen. They could lose privileges, for sure. (T4).*

One teacher spoke of the challenges of always being "one step ahead" of those students who presented challenging behaviours.

She suggested that,

> *I have to come up with new things all the time because some things will work for a week and then after a week, they are no longer effective.*

This teacher has implied that often consequences do not have the desired effect on some of the students or that the students are adept at using the consequence to either reinforce the behaviour or they simply just don't care about the consequences of their actions.

Two teachers mentioned the reliance of other students to model acceptable behaviour in an effort to curb the unacceptable behaviours of their peers.

T3 indicated that,

> *I use the really good kids to make an example, and then you can see the reaction of the other children, they can look and see that good behaviours are more acceptable.*

This teacher uses praise for good listening, for example and rewards students with such things as extra computer time for consistently acceptable behaviour.

T4 also uses praise and reward, however includes the principle that the "good kids" do not suffer by vengeful acts by the "targeted students as a consequence of being rewarded for acceptable behaviour

> *Kids don't start picking on the other ones but they start noticing behaviours too and say "that's acceptable" or "oh that's very good".*

T4 spoke of "singling out" students

> *... being singled out in a group, everyone hates it, if its positive, that's cool, but if its negative they know there's going to be a consequence, and that's just horrible.*

This teacher has indicated that when other students witness an incident where a peer is reprimanded for misbehaviour it does have an effect on the reprimanded student because fellow peers will acknowledge the fact that they are in trouble. It may also be a deterrent to others from copying the behaviour. However it may also have negative implications for sustaining friendships between peers.

Another teacher justified that singling out students for reprimand in front of others by suggesting that on some occasions, it was necessary for others to see that justice is being done.

> *Sometimes you have to do it so that the other children can see some justice, but you have to pick you moments, and you have to pick which child you are doing it to (T3).*

One teacher pointed out that she was aware of not "buying into" behaviours especially those that occurred after the initial offence.

> *I have learnt to ignore secondary behaviour where possible provided no one is being directly abused, hurt or threatened.*

This teacher is familiar with the approach promoted by Rogers (2000), suggesting that the initial behaviour and not what follows, is the issue to be resolved.

The participants also described 'other' teachers' practice regarding consequences that they may have observed.
All teacher participants responded with observation of practices that were of a negative nature.

> *I've seen people get kids and they just yell at them and then they wonder why the kids turn around tell to them to go and take a flying leap, and I don't think that works. (T1).*

> *Barrelling them into a corner, seen that a few times and you know they just put their hackles up. (T3).*

These two teachers suggest that confrontations such as these will in fact escalate the behaviour into one of a far more serious nature. In the school in which this research was carried out, a large number of the serious consequences, resulting in 'standing down' the student was in the past due to the student's reaction and consequent retaliation towards the teacher for being confronted in such a manner. In these cases the teacher had not realised the implications of their actions until the damage had been done and in a few cases were still adamant that they were justified by their actions. There is a question of professionalism at stake here. It is

not about the teacher having to “win” but the student actually having to learn to behave appropriately.

Two teacher participants offered some rationalisation for the actions of teachers that they had observed as having a negative effect on the students.

> *One teacher used to just yell at the kids, and I’ll tell you what they learn’t, they behaved and I taught along side her for many years but I’ll tell you what the kids new what the line was, she was a fantastic teacher, they stepped over that line she was on top of them, they knew it (T1).*

This teacher asserts that perhaps a teacher who uses control such as described creates a classroom environment where students know the boundaries and not to cross them. This sort of control over students will be dealt with in the discussion.

> *I have seen the yelling/aggression, and standing over a child and you know ripping them to pieces, it achieves nothing not in a positive way, not in the way that you’d want them to, but then there’s a time and a place where it’s warranted, but those times are few and far between (T3).*

This teacher is aware of the consequences on the morale of the student being affected, however, for some students this may be the only way that the teacher knows the student will recognise that they are responsible for their own actions and must suffer the consequences for these actions.

When the teacher participants were asked how they respond to students who display challenging behaviours, all indicated that it is essential positive relationships with the student and all other students must remain at the fore front of whatever consequences for the actions are decided upon. T1 described how she took a composed approach to reprimanding a student.

She stated

> *You know, you speak to them in a calm voice, you talk about their behaviour not them as a person, it’s their behaviour that’s not right.*

It is important to note that she also informs the student that she is not angry at them as a person it's the behaviour that is the concern.
In addition she further stated,

> … I *do try and talk reasonably to the kids to treat them with respect and perhaps just modelling how we want to be treated.*

Another teacher suggested that we need to convey to the student exactly what *they* did regarding an incident. The reason is because,

> *... often children will do things and they don't realise what the impact is on you know other children around them, or on the learning or on the classroom culture or anything like that so, letting the children know exactly what they've done and you know having the consequences to match it (T3).*

In saying this however, Teacher 3 obligingly offered her own concerns relating to a student who she believes knows that his behaviour is an issue that tests the boundaries, however who knows the teacher's level of tolerance and uses this to test the behaviour.

> *He makes choices, he knows how he is supposed to behave at school and when he doesn't want to do something he knows what behaviours trigger me.*

She further suggests that the student has picked up on a possible trigger to test her tolerance level and she has indicated that possibly the "attention span" is his excuse for non compliance.

> *When you're working with him one on one you can, providing he's in a responsive mood can get some learning done, but his attention span is very short and most of the time it's because he just doesn't want to do it, and so because he doesn't want to do it, the behaviour starts up.*

All teachers spoke of their dislike of teachers who "back students into corners" either by shouting at them or humiliating them in front of their peers and all maintained that positive relationships will never be developed with students who are made to feel ashamed in front of their peers.

T2 spoke of how such humiliation would affect her personally

> *I don't like to be barrelled into a corner or told I'm not good at anything and also you know saying that their work is no good, you know put downs, and I'd never do that, or ripping their pages out of their books, I'd never do that.*

T1 explained how a student may react to being backed into a corner

> I try not to back them into corners, if you do that they are going to come back at you, if you start ranting and raving at them they are just going to tell you where to go.

She then suggested that "it's all about getting to know the students" and how they react to confrontation before challenging them in certain ways.

Two teachers suggested that they had seen other teachers use "private hand signals" or facial expressions without the need for verbalisation when attending to students who may be displaying unacceptable behaviours. They described that this was only possible if the student and teacher had an understanding that the teacher would never berate them in front of their peers.

Student Participants:

Student participants were asked to describe how their teachers dealt with the behaviours of those students who misbehaved.

The students were firstly asked why they think students misbehave. Responses included peer pressure, not being able to get their own way and not liking or understanding the expectations of their teacher.

> *Cos they think they are cool like mucking up people that are doing their work and trying to make them angry, I like it when kids are happy.*
> *I don't think It's cool at all, I don't think they should even be doing that. It's not appropriate (S1).*

> *So they don't have to do their work (S3).*

Because they might have not got their way, because M wants to go on the computer but he's too jealous cos we were on the computer me and X and X shut it down cos it was time for maths(S4).

Probably because if they are doing a subject they probably don't like and they get fed up and annoyed. They just misbehave, I don't know. Yeah they can't do it and sometimes they just don't do it (S5).

The students then provided information as to how they perceive that their teacher effectively deals with the students who misbehave.

This information included the use of time out, writing of lines, loss of privileges, and being sent to senior management to deal with the students.

S5 provided a reason for the consequences by stating,

Yeah we get punishments, we like have to sit in the corner have to do lines have to come here, miss out on lunch, pick up rubbish.
To teach us not to do any more bad stuff.

Two students stated that the teacher growls at them in front of their mates and that they felt ashamed when this happened.
In saying this, one student further suggested that he would he prefer to be out of the room in time out rather than being shouted at.

Three students suggested that their teachers often chose to ignore the behaviours and gave them another chance or just helped those students who are getting on with their work.

All students talked about the use of class "group points" systems and how good behaviour rewarded the whole group or class. They felt frustrated and angry when one of the members of the group misbehaved and lost points, meaning that all had to miss out on rewards.

In summary, teachers and students responded to how they dealt with and felt about students who displayed challenging behaviours. Teachers spoke about consequences and how these were important in getting the students to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and keeping in mind that maintaining positive relationships, although difficult at times, was vital. Students provided information about why they thought other students misbehave and then described how their teacher dealt with the behaviours of some students.

Discussion:

Both teacher and student participants identified consequences as being an important factor when responding to undesirable behaviour. They have also maintained that relationships should not suffer as a result of the consequences.

In regards to consequences, teachers have indicated that undesirable behaviours should be challenged immediately and not be ignored or left to expand into bigger issues. Literature relates to urgency in attending to inappropriate conduct as long as rules and expectations governing the behaviour have been previously established, (Emerson, 2001; Kroeger & Bauer, 2004). It is the teachers' responsibility to firstly determine whether the behaviour is challenging (Balson, 1992; Edwards, 2000; Smith & Laslett, 1993; Watkins & Wagner, 2000) according to the established boundaries governing behaviour expectations within the setting or cultural context of the classroom (Emerson, 2001; Kauffman et al., 2002; Rogers, 2000). Consequences that teachers adopt include, withdrawal, extra curricula work in the students own time, and behaviour contracts. It is interesting to note that the student participants accepted these consequences as reasonable punishments for misbehaviour.
These consequences have been part of school "punishment" ideology for many years and are adopted approaches by many teachers and schools.

Canter (1990) promotes an approach that gives the school and the teacher the power to determine how students should behaviour and what the consequences for misappropriate actions should be.

I maintain that Canter's approach places a focus on the behaviour, rather than the causes of behaviour or the contexts in which it occurs and is effectual in only providing an immediate punishment. However the approach is ineffectual in providing an opportunity for the student to learn and manage more appropriate behaviours (Balson, 1992; Edwards, 2000; Rogers, 1998; Walker & Shea, 1980). It is pleasing to note that teachers involved in this study adopt more positive responses to unacceptable behaviour such as the use of peer influence, and justifiable praise and reward for effort in both learning achievement and for exhibiting appropriate behaviour.

I agree with literature suggesting that positive influences from peer role models will have a positive effect on changing behaviours, and suggest that developing patterns of behaviour can be reliant on the cultural values and expectations of the group within the setting (Kroeger & Bauer, 2004; Linton, 1945). However, peer influence of an unacceptable nature can also cause a student to misbehave in order to be accepted as part of the group (Rigby, 1996; Rogers, 2000).

Teachers need to observe and listen to how the students develop and maintain relationships in and attempt to gain knowledge through the "eyes of the child" (Prashnig, 2001a; Shields et al., 2005) and avoid making errors of judgement when deciding upon which students will be more likely to promote positive peer role modelling.

Similarly, when deciding upon praise and reward for consequences regarding appropriate learning and behaviour, teachers need to remain fair and justified in their dealings with all students at all times (Doidge, 2005; Kohn, 1993; Russek, 2004).

Student participants supported the teacher's efforts to introduce a points system to reward 'group behaviour' as part of rewarding and praising both learning and behaviour. Behaviour contracts were also mentioned by students as having a positive influence in curbing inappropriate behaviour. Literature suggests that such contracts are a valuable resource for sustaining effective teaching practice as long as they remain focused on changing the behaviour in a non-intimidating, and positive way with recognition for sustaining success, (Rogers, 1990; Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2006; Walker & Shea, 1980).

I contend that for teachers to use praise rewards and behaviour contracts effectively, they must initially discuss with the students as the reasons for needing recognition of achievement and compliance and in doing so maintain fairness in its distribution.

Intimidation and singling out of students (as a consequence) has been discussed previously and literature has indicated that teachers need to be aware of the damaging effects that this can have on the students' self esteem and the relationship that they have established with the student. Student participants have unequivocally stated that they are very upset when they or others are treated with the disrespect of being shown up in front of their peers.

There is much evidence in recent literary works regarding student achievement and feeling good about them selves to suggest that "backing students into corners" does more to "increase" the undesirable behaviour than "decrease" it. Listening to student narratives in recent New Zealand research publications regarding Māori student achievement such as Te Mana Korero, (Gadd, 2003), Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al., 2003b) and more recently the Ministry of Educations policy document, Ka Hikitia, (Ministry of Education, 2008) clearly indicate that students do not tolerate being humiliated or intimidated in front of their peers. I believe that this is probably the main catalyst for destroying positive relationships and will undermine their faith in the education system.

Student participants discussed why they thought other students misbehaved. Consistent with the literature relating to “types of behaviour” referred to in Chapter two, students have indicated that although others think it is “cool” to misbehave or they don’t need to work or don’t understand the work, the behaviour of other students is viewed as unacceptable and impinges on their rights to learn.

In regards to maintaining relationships, there is an abundance of literature that indicates that prior to challenging behaviours being addressed, teachers need to value the students’ cultural and family background (Corson, 1998; Kroeger & Bauer, 2004; Zeitlin & Refaat, 2000) if they are to understand the causes of the behaviour and respond appropriately without causing offence to the students or their families (Hemara, 2000; Rokx, 1988).

The challenge for teachers is to create culturally safe schools and classrooms and this can only be achieved by sharing an understanding of the students’ cultural background. Failure to do this may result in misunderstanding and frustration for both the teacher and the student (Kroeger & Bauer, 2004).
However, it is not expected that schools insist that teachers fully immerse themselves in the students’ culture. Teachers should instead have a clear awareness of the culture. This can be achieved by maintaining a positive, working relationship with both the students and their families so they understand the cultural beliefs, values and practices of those families.

Teacher participants have also indicated that discussing the incident with the student and being specific as to what actually happened regarding an inappropriate behaviour is an important step in ensuring that the relationship that they have will not be threatened by the consequences for the behaviour. Telling the student what the unacceptable behaviour is will let the student know exactly what has happened that is inappropriate. This aligns with the literature exploring “types of behaviours” (Balson, 1992; Edwards, 2000; Kauffman et al., 2002; Smith & Laslett, 1993; Watkins &

Wagner, 2000), and will give the teacher and student an understanding of the behaviour so that they can better make a judgement as to the consequences.
I believe that students often don't know that they have misbehaved and don't know what the offending behaviour was, however it is imperative that teachers can recognise the "type of behaviour" and understand the possibly reasons associated with the behaviour before they ask the student for their interpretation of the incident.

In summary, both teacher and student participants agreed on the use of consequences for misbehaviour, as long as they were fair and justifiable and that established positive relationships were not destroyed when carrying out "punishments".

Both teacher and student participants indicated that humiliation and intimidation in front of peers and resulting loss of self esteem was not an acceptable consequence. Confronting students in this manner is argued in New Zealand research literature making the suggestion that by respectfully listening to and incorporating student voice will enable a better understanding of the behaviour.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The research set out to gather information from student and teacher narratives regarding their beliefs about student challenging behaviour and how it can affect the culture of classroom and school learning environments.

The outcomes of this study confirm findings in literature by demonstrating, that a close, positive and supportive relationship between teacher and students is essential for developing learning potential and for responding appropriately to challenging behaviour. Recognition of student voice is central to achieving these aims.

Teachers also need to be aware of cultural difference and be prepared to make shifts in their thinking and acting so that their own culture does not dominate in the classroom. However in this study, the student and teacher participants were representative of both Māori and European ethnicity and the findings suggest that their understandings of how challenging behaviours affect learning were noticeably similar in nature. This suggests perhaps that the participants in this study were in a culturally safe environment where the teachers' culture did not always dominate.

The literature review (Chapter two) indicated that learning and behaviour are socially and culturally acquired and that academic learning and social learning are closely interconnected. Chapter two also indicated the importance of appreciating that teachers define challenging behaviour in terms of their own personal beliefs and understanding within their own cultural perspectives. Teachers, if they are to maintain a co-constructed culturally safe classroom need to be the ones who change the most as they are the ones who hold the most power to do so.

Literature also suggests that the most effective way of forming lasting positive relationships and ensuring engagement is to listen to and respect the student voice.
However, I suggest then that even though I advocate that students should have a voice, which is respected by both teacher and student, the impetus for change must remain with the teacher. School management must ensure that while the student is at school, teachers are held both responsible and accountable for pupil progress and learning outcomes.

I will now discuss the limitations of this research study followed by identifying areas for further research and conclude by commenting on implications for teachers and schools who deal with students presenting challenging behaviours.

Limitations of the research

The limitations of this research relate to the size and nature of the sample of the research participants. This study involved a small number of participants, four teachers of students with challenging behaviours and six students with challenging behaviours. A larger number of participants selected from within the research school and possibly from a school of a similar nature and decile would have possibly provided more substantiated evidence for the findings as discussed. However, the nature of this research was not that of a quantitative study, with teacher and student sampling being representative of other schools and other places. This research was essentially a qualitative study that aimed to understand challenging behaviour in my school by examining teacher and student reflections on behaviour in the context of this school.

Narratives from student participants who do not present challenging behaviours may have either confirmed or rejected assertions made by the

research participants regarding the effect that behaviours have on student learning.

However, I argue that the findings are consistent with the large amount of research published both nationally and internationally regarding the challenging behaviours of students and the effect that behaviour has on their learning and the learning of others.

Recommendations for further research

The research highlighted a number of issues in need of further investigation.

1. Research could further investigate the “quality of the relationship” between student and teacher. I have attempted in this study to argue that positive relationships between teacher and student are fundamental for learning to happen. What are the “indicators” for quality relationships and how does a teacher attempt to ensure that all students are treated fairly when developing relationships?

2. Research could further investigate why students who present challenging behaviours prefer firm boundaries. Literature suggests that most students prefer to work within boundaries which are flexible and negotiable, however, findings have suggested that these students with challenging behaviours in my school, prefer fixed boundaries.

3. Further research is needed to investigate challenging behaviours in Year 1- 6 in students. Research relating to behaviours and subsequent initiatives resulting from the research (discussed in Chapter 1) has mainly involved students from the Year 7 – 13, age group. Students in Years 1-6 are learning the basics of literacy and numeracy in preparation for life long learning and I maintain that at

this young age, they are very impressionable socially and emerging challenging behaviours can be identified and changed with careful intervention.

4. It is important to research the links between home and school especially in regards to cultural values and beliefs relating to defining challenging behaviours and the consequences for misbehaviour in the beginning years of a student's schooling. Teacher participants indicated in this research that the students who occasionally come to school emotionally unable to cope with being in a classroom for the day present challenging behaviours which impact negatively on the learning of everybody. Better links between home and school, might enable teachers to anticipate emerging problem behaviour and plan to minimise its impact on other students. Such links might also enable teachers to plan to involve other students in positive ways of reducing extreme behaviour in their classrooms.

5. Research could further investigate how and to what degree the learning of the other students is affected by a student who presents challenging behaviours. All teacher and student participants in this research have said that challenging behaviour interrupts learning.

Implications for schools

Even though this qualitative research has been small-scale and findings understood within the confines of one school, I feel that I can offer a few suggestions that other schools may wish to consider to ensure that students with challenging behaviours remain included in learning contexts at school.

Teachers need to be supportive of each other and take ownership of all students and not just those in their own classrooms. This involves developing a collaborative school approach to managing the behaviour, learning and achievement of all students.

Schools would benefit from adopting a collegial approach to promote a culturally positive and safe environment for all students including those who present challenging behaviours. Teachers need to learn to listen to student voice in a positive and respectful manner in order to understand how to achieve such a classroom environment.

Teachers need to reflect continually on their own cultural beliefs, values and preferred ways of acting to ensure that their culture does not totally dominate within classrooms that include students from different cultures..

Teachers need to discuss with fellow peers their current attitudes and beliefs towards working with those students who present challenges and investigate ways of working positively with these students.

Teachers need to recognise that the students themselves have a great deal to contribute to our understanding of challenging behaviour at school and to finding ways of minimising the occurrence of and the impact of these behaviours.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Individual Letter to Potential Teacher Participants

Date

Dear _____ (Teacher)

You have been identified as someone who may be able to assist me with a research project that I am proposing to undertake. The research is being undertaken towards completion of a Masters thesis supervised by the University of Waikato.

What is the Research Thesis About?

During the next few months I wish to conduct research into gaining an understanding of student's challenging behaviours at school through learning from narratives of students and teachers experiences**.**

The aim of the research is to study the relationship based pedagogy, and undertake an exploration of the relationship links between students and their teachers in an effort to curb the undesirable behaviours of students so that their learning achievement is not impeded.

My research question is specifically,

an investigation into how challenging behaviour can affect the learning culture in New Zealand primary schools

How will it happen?

I would like you to be involved with one individual interview that would take no longer than 1 hour. I wish to conduct the interview over June and July and would negotiate a suitable time and place with you.

What will I get out of it?

You hopefully will enjoy the interview process to reflect on your role as a teacher and how you relate to students, in particular, those with challenging behaviours.

Whilst there may be no direct and immediate benefit for you, you will be contributing to research that could have influence over other teachers within this school and other similar low decile schools.

As my thesis will be available for reading by a wider audience, I hope that the Ministry of Education and others involved in educating students with behavioural challenges will be interested in the findings.

Will people know who I am?

As a participant you will be assured that I will do everything in my power to protect your confidentiality. I have attached a letter of consent that outlines specifically your protection as a participant throughout the research process.

You will only be referred to as a pseudonym of your choice or a non specific role description (e.g. Teacher 1) and there will be pseudonyms negotiated for your school name and other people who may be mentioned in your contributions.

What if I change my mind?

You may withdraw any time prior to the initial interview taking place.

The individual interview will be audio taped and then transcribed. You will have the chance to review and amend the transcription. You will have the right to withdraw from the research for up to two weeks after receiving the transcript. For example if you received your transcript for review on 10/07/2006 you would have until 24/07/2006 to withdraw. The final date for withdrawal will be specified in the “return of transcript form” sent to you with the transcript of the interview.

There is no obligation for you to take part. If you are interested I would appreciate you filling out and returning the enclosed informed consent form. Please feel free to phone me should there be any questions you would like to ask or anything you would like clarified.

Is there anybody else involved?

I have one supervisor from the University of Waikato who is assisting and supporting me throughout the research process.

Should you have any concerns throughout the process you are able to contact Professor Ted Glynn directly, by email using the address. glynn@waikato.ac.nz

What happens now?

I will contact you in a week to ascertain your willingness to be involved in the research and answer any further questions. Should you agree I will negotiate with you a suitable time for the first interview and for obtaining your consent.

If you choose not to be in the research this will not harm the research in any way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Dene Langley

Appendix 1A
Informed Consent (Teacher)

I _____ consent to becoming a participant in the Masters research being conducted by Dene Langley regarding an investigation into how challenging behaviour can affect the learning culture in New Zealand primary schools

I have read the information letter and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification and understanding of the research topic.

I understand that the research undertaken will contribute to a Master's thesis supervised by staff at the University of Waikato and in its final form will be available for reading by a wider audience

I understand that the research will involve one individual interview with me that will be recorded, transcribed, kept securely, and returned to me for comments and amendment. The transcription of the interview will be done by a person who will sign a confidentiality form precluding discussion of the interviews with anyone other than Dene Langley.

I consent to discussing openly my observations and experiences around my experience of teaching students with behavioural concerns. I understand that all published quotes will avoid disclosing my identity, the name of my current school and the names of others referred to within my interview by using generic terms or pseudonyms. However, I also understand that in small scale research such as this it may be inevitable that quotations and rephrasing might be attributable to me if others learn of my involvement. I understand that I will have the opportunity to review the transcript and make amendments and/or deletions, with this in mind.

I consent to my views or direct quotes being part of a Master's thesis and subsequent papers and articles.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from all or part of the research at any time until two weeks after receiving the transcript of the individual interview. Should I have any concerns or complaints, I can contact the research supervisor, Professor Ted Glynn, glynn@waikato.ac.nz

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Appendix 2

Individual Letter to Parents/Caregivers of Potential Student Participants

Dear _____(Parent/Caregiver) of _____(Student)

Your child has been identified as someone who may be able to assist me with a research project that I am proposing to undertake. The research is being undertaken towards completion of a Masters thesis supervised by the University of Waikato.

What is the Research Thesis About?

During the next few months I wish to conduct research on investigating how challenging behaviour can affect the learning culture in New Zealand primary schools

The aim of the research is to undertake an exploration of the relationship links between students and their teachers in an effort to enure that the interactions between student and teacher enhances the learning for all students.

How will it happen?

I would like your child to be involved with one individual interview that would take no longer than 1 hour. I wish to conduct the interview over June and July and would negotiate a suitable time and place for you, your child and his teacher which will have the least intrusion on classroom learning time.

I will have an observer (who is of Māori descent) present if your child is of Māori descent to ensure that cultural values are clearly recognised and understood by me as the researcher. The observer will sign an agreement in order to protect your child's confidentiality.

What will I get out of it?

You child will hopefully enjoy the interview process and be able to reflect on how their teacher helps them to learn better. Whilst there may be no direct and immediate benefit for your child, he will be contributing to

research that could have influence over other teachers within his school and other similar schools.

As my thesis will be available for reading by a wider audience, I hope that the Ministry of Education and others involved in educating students with behavioural challenges will be interested in the findings.

Will people know who I am?

As a participant your child will be assured that I will do everything in my power to protect his confidentiality. I have attached a letter of consent that outlines specifically his protection as a participant throughout the research process.

Your child will only be referred to as either Student 1, or 2, etc. and there will be pseudonyms negotiated for his school name and other people who may be mentioned in his contributions.

What if I change my mind?

You may withdraw your child's participation at any time prior to the initial interview taking place.

The individual interview will be audio taped and then transcribed. You will have the chance to review and amend the transcription. You will have the right to withdraw your child from the research for up to two weeks after receiving the transcript. For example if you received your transcript for review on 10/07/2006 you would have until 24/07/2006 to withdraw. The final date for withdrawal will be specified in the "return of transcript form" sent to you with the transcript of the interview.

There is no obligation for your child to take part. If you are interested I would appreciate you filling out and returning the enclosed informed consent form.

Please feel free to contact me should there be any questions you would like to ask or anything you would like clarified.

Is there anybody else involved?

I have one supervisor from the University of Waikato who is assisting and supporting me throughout the research process.

Should you have any concerns throughout the process you are able to contact Professor Ted Glynn directly, by email using the address. glynn@waikato.ac.nz

What happens now?

I will contact you in a week to ascertain your willingness for your child to be involved in the research and answer any further questions. Should you agree I will negotiate with your child's teacher a suitable time for the first interview and for obtaining consent. If you wish to obtain any more information any discuss any part of my research project please feel free to contact me at any time.

If you choose for your child not to be in the research this will not harm the research in any way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Dene Langley

Appendix 2A

Individual Letter to Potential Student Participants

Date

Dear _____(Student)

I have selected you as someone who may be able to assist me with a research project that I am proposing to undertake. The research is being undertaken towards completion of a Master's thesis supervised by the University of Waikato.

What is the research thesis about

During the next few weeks I wish to talk to you about learning in our school. I would like you to tell me about your own learning and how your teacher deals with your learning and other children's learning in your class. I would also like you to tell me the many things that your teacher does that you find helpful or unhelpful in your learning.

How will it happen?

I would like have an interview with you during the next few weeks that would take no longer than 1 hour. This interview will be taped and only you, me, your parents and two other adults (not your teacher) will hear or read your responses.

I will have another person present so that cultural values are clearly recognised and understood by me as the researcher. This person will sign an agreement in order to protect your confidentiality.

What if I change my mind?

If you decide to change your mind about being interviewed you will need to let me know, after talking to your parents, as soon as possible.

What happens now?

I will contact you and your parents in a week to see if you are willing to be involved in the research and answer any further questions. You and your parents will need to sign the consent letter which your parents will have.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Dene Langley

Appendix 2B

Informed Consent (Student)

We _____ (parent) and _____ (student), consent to *(student name)* becoming a participant in the Masters research being conducted by Dene Langley on investigating how challenging behaviour can affect the learning culture in New Zealand primary schools

We have read the information letter and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification and understanding of the research topic.

We understand that the research undertaken will contribute to a Master's thesis supervised by staff at the University of Waikato and in its final form will be available for reading by a wider audience

I understand that the research will involve one individual interview with *(student name)* that will be recorded, transcribed, kept securely, and returned to me for comments and amendment. The transcription of the interview will be done by a person who will sign a confidentiality form precluding discussion of the interviews with anyone other than Dene Langley. The observer (who is of Māori descent) will also sign a confidentiality form precluding discussion of the interviews with anyone other than Dene Langley.

(student name) and myself as parent/caregiver give consent for him to discuss openly his thoughts and feelings about how his teacher helps him to learn. I understand that all published quotes will avoid disclosing his identity, the name of his current school and the names of others referred to within his interview by using generic terms or pseudonyms. However, I also understand that in small scale research such as this it may be inevitable that quotations and rephrasing might be attributable to him if others learn of his involvement. I understand that I will have the

opportunity to review the transcript and make amendments and/or deletions, with this in mind.
(student name) and myself as parent/caregiver consent to his views or direct quotes being part of a Master's thesis and subsequent conference papers and articles.

We understand that we are free to withdraw his contributions from all or part of the research at any time until two weeks after receiving the transcript of the individual interview. Should I have any concerns or complaints, I can contact the research supervisor, Professor Ted Glynn, glynn@waikato.ac.nz

Signed: _____Parent. Date:

_____

Full name: _____

Signed: _____Student.

Full name:_____

Address:

_____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Appendix 3A

Return of Transcripts (Teacher)

Date

Dear _____

Thank you again for the privilege of interviewing you. Please find enclosed the transcript of the interview conducted on _____. The script was transcribed by _____ but beyond that is confidential to you and me. The text is saved to a pen drive and is accessible only to me. When it is not in use the pen drive is securely locked away. The information is not permanently stored on any computer.

The transcription is verbatim, except for the removal of fillers (umms, ahhs) and unnecessary repetitions. Because it is raw data it does not have the refinements of written language so may seem disjointed in places. The raw data will be used as short excerpts to highlight key ideas and themes, and it may be rewritten slightly so that it is fluent within an academic text. You will not be identified as the author of the quote.

I would appreciate you reading the transcription and adding, deleting or altering any parts you wish so that it accurately reflects your views. Make comments on the transcript itself and return it by mail with the accompanying form releasing the transcript for use.

If you have named particular people, I would ask you to choose a pseudonym to protect their privacy. You can indicate this on the transcription.

You are free to withdraw from the research for two weeks from the date of this letter. The final date for withdrawal will be _____. If you would like to do this please indicate on the release of transcript form.

If you would like to discuss the transcription before returning it, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dene Langley

Appendix 3B

Return of Transcripts (Student)

Date

Dear _____

Thank you again for the privilege of interviewing your child. Please find enclosed the transcript of the interview conducted on _____. The script was transcribed by _____ but beyond that is confidential to you and me. The text is saved to a pen drive and is accessible only to me. When it is not in use the pen drive is securely locked away. The information is not permanently stored on any computer.The transcription is verbatim, except for the removal of fillers (umms, ahhs) and unnecessary repetitions. Because it is raw data it does not have the refinements of written language so may seem disjointed in places. The raw data will be used as short excerpts to highlight key ideas and themes, and it may be rewritten slightly so that it is fluent within an academic text. Your child will not be identified as the author of the quote. Your child has had a chance to read the transcript and discuss with me any changes that he thinks needs to be made and I would appreciate you reading and discussing with your child the transcript and further adding, deleting or altering any parts you wish so that it accurately reflects his views. Make comments on the transcript itself and return it to me with the accompanying form releasing the transcript for use.

If your child has named particular people, I would ask you to choose a pseudonym to protect their privacy. You can indicate this on the transcription.

You are free to withdraw your child from the research for two weeks from the date of this letter. The final date for withdrawal will be _____. If you would like to do this please indicate on the release of transcript form. If you would like to discuss the transcription before returning it, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Dene Langley

Appendix 3C

Release of transcript for use (Teacher and Student)

Name of participant _____

I have received the transcription of the interview and have read it. The following ticked situation applies:

____ The transcript is acceptable as raw data provided that the conditions agreed to on the original consent form are met. I have made no alterations.

____ I have corrected the text of the transcript. Once these alterations are made the text is acceptable as raw data provided that the conditions agreed to on the original consent form are met.

____ I want to withdraw from the project. Please destroy any data you have collected from me *(teacher, parent and student).*

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix 4

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

I agree to transcribe the interviews and discussions for Dene Langley's research project with the University of Waikato. I understand that all material in the interviews and discussions is confidential and I agree to discuss it with nobody except Dene Langley. I will save the transcripts to a pen drive which will be available to Dene only. I will not save the information to my computer. While the pen drive is in my possession it will be kept secure and will only be accessible by me.

Signed _____

Appendix 4 A

Observer Confidentiality Agreement (for Māori Students)

I agree to be an observer during the interviews of Māori students for Dene Langley's research project with the University of Waikato. I understand that all material in the interviews and discussions is confidential and I agree to discuss it with nobody except Dene Langley.

I agree to explain to Dene Langley any cultural issues that influence the student's responses to the interview questions that may or may not be fully understood.

Signed _____

Appendix 5A

Individual Teacher Question guide

1. Describe a teacher in your own schooling who has had the greatest influence on you and the reasons for this teacher having the influence that they did

2. What influences have you carried over into your own teaching practice?

3. When dealing with students what are some of the issues that may affect their learning at school and what do you think is the main issue facing you as a teacher today with students who display challenging behaviours?

4. Describe how you as a teacher attempt to manage these behaviours and encourage students with challenging behaviours to become motivated to learn.

5. How do you manage the “other students” in the classroom when a child is “taking up” their learning time due to their challenging behaviour?

6. Can you give examples of practices by other teachers that you have witnessed (and not used) that may or may not assist in dealing with students who display challenging behaviours?

7. Do you have a favourite curriculum area that you enjoy teaching and that by you being passionate about teaching a particular curriculum area, the behaviour of the student changes for the better?

Appendix 5B

Individual Student Question guide

1. Tell me about what you like, dislike about school.

2. Tell me about how your teacher helps them to learn

3. Tell me about how your teacher deals with behaviour of them as a student and other students in the class.

4. Tell me how you think your behaviour or the behaviour of other students affects your learning.

5. What is your favourite subject, least favourite subject and how does your teacher helps you to learn these subjects.