

**PRINCIPAL'S SABBATICAL REPORT 2017**

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**Focus Question:**

**What Factors Make Māori Successful?**

## **Acknowledgements:**

Thank you to St Mark's School Board of Trustees for approving this sabbatical. Thank you to Ms Mary Kedzlie, Mrs Jenny McKenzie, Mrs Trish Hodgson and staff at St Mark's for keeping the school moving forward while I was away for 10 weeks.

Thank you to all those whom I interviewed or filled in my questionnaire for sharing their stories and thoughts and feelings around this focus question "What factors contributed to you becoming successful?" and subsequent clarifying question "What are you successful or good at?"

Thank you to the Ministry of Education, NZEI and NZSTA for their support of this Principal's initiative.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to explore and discuss this topic and the further questions that fell out of this and think further about who it relates to; what and how we do things at our school; what next steps will be implemented; while acknowledging the benefit of personal well-being from this sabbatical.

### **Background and Rational:**

My interest lies in identifying the factors that help successful Māori become successful while others are not. My initial hunch was that it was the supportive Mother who had high expectations and was a good role model. This was because I am married to a Māori who was one of nine children who was brought up for many years by his mother after his father died. He is number six of nine children and was five years old when his father died. All of the family feel they are 'good at' or successful in life and they and their families continue to contribute in a positive ways to supporting extended whanau and community.

In turn I hope to be able to inform both teachers and parents/whanau so that we at St Mark's Catholic School can ensure all Māori are successful.

I did not define 'success' or nominate who was successful but sent my questions by email out to schools and businesses and asked that Māori people who were interested in my research could fill it in. Therefore this research did not explore what 'success is', but rather if a person who identified as Māori felt they wanted to share main factors that had contributed to their success, to support my research they agreed to answer the questions. I also offered to personally interview, if they would rather share their experiences, thoughts, their feelings/answers orally.

As educators we are charged with implementing social and educational change and are often criticised for not making the difference needed in children’s’ lives. We work hard to ensure all our children experience success and make value added progress. I wanted to identify what those main factors are that make Māori successful, so I can more confidently inform our staff and our families/whanau and in consultation with our Māori parents, whanau and community, staff, students, BOT further review our practices.

My Research questions where:-

1. What Iwi do you belong to?
2. What age group i.e. 20-35, 36-50, 51+
3. What main factors contributed to you becoming successful?
4. What are you successful at (good at)?

From a variety of Iwi and backgrounds, a total of 43 people were either interviewed or filled out a questionnaire comprising of Māori from many different walks of life; Māori artists, Māori business people, Māori teachers, Māori who are CEOs or managers in their work places, Māori sportspeople, Māori Doctors, and a Māori lawyer. Unfortunately, I only had three questionnaires filled in from the younger age group (20-35years), but was able to either interview or have questionnaires filled out by 20 Māori in the 36-50 year age group and 20 in the 51 plus age group.

Interviewees were asked to identify the main factors that contributed to them becoming successful. All interviewees gave between three and six factors and all have been recorded.

<b>Interviewees answered to - Factors contributing to success</b>	<b>Age group 20 to 35 yrs. (3 interviewees)</b>	<b>Age group 36 to 50 yrs. (20 interviewees)</b>	<b>Age group 51+ yrs. (20 interviewees)</b>
Parents & extended Whanau	2	18	19
Parent/s only	1	1	1
Grandparents	0	1	0
Self-drive/motivation	1	16	14
Resilience/ Attitude	1	10	11
*Role Models (parents/whanua)	3	8	10
Role models		8	7
*High expectations	2	8	7
Work ethic	2	7	7
Supportive Environment	2	9	8

Belief-systems:(Principles, Values, Church)	1	6	7
Education	1	5	8
Being exposed to bigger picture experiences.	0	2	1

All interviewees stated that their parents and/or extended whanau were a contributing factor to them being successful. 38 of 43 interviewees, 88.4 % answered that it was both, parents and their extended whanau, while one interviewee stated extended whanau, including grandparents were was a main factor in her becoming successful rather than her parents. 4 of 43 stated, that it was their parent or parents rather than whanau who were the biggest factor. Two interviewees stated that their Dads were the biggest Factor. One stated “My Dad, who was a solo parent and was the biggest factor in contributing to my success.”

Included in the answers that parents/whanau were a big factor in the interviewees becoming successful; 21/43 interviewees added that their parents and/or whanau were very good role models, while 16/43 added in that their parents and/or parent had a strong work ethic, which they too have and named it as a contributing factor to why they are successful.

An interviewee in stating a strong work ethic as a contributing factor to his success explained; “Developing a strong work ethic at a young age. I was raised going Mutton birding every year through my school years. The thing about this is, that it is a multi-generational whanau endeavour. We had 3 generations all working together so everyone had a role, no matter your age – you each contributed to success for all- if someone doesn’t play their part it doesn’t work. Nearly all Mutton birders I know of my age who shared that experience are successful in their own endeavours across all walks of life, from academia, to fishing, to business.” This prompted a further wondering around the role of team work and collaboration and the part these factors play in achieving success.

19 of 43 stated that high expectations was a factor that contributed to their success. For some it was covert but consistent, while for others it was very overt. An Artist stated, “My mum and dad modelled work ethic, tikanga, kindness and generosity to all those in our life. They were always supportive and proud of every small achievement and encouraged us to do even better.” Others wrote that the expectations were more overt in that the messages

were verbally directed at them personally, i.e. “when you go to university” or “when you start your own business.” (Despite the fact that neither of the parents had got through school let alone has a tertiary education).

Others stated “My mum and Dad modelled good work ethic, Mum had high expectations and believed you had to do something with your life and contribute to society”. One of the three interviewees under 35 years wrote, “First on my list is my mother and father, instilling in me a work ethic second to none, giving me the ability to understand who I am as a person with a purpose to achieve not as an individual but as part of a family unit to provide an inheritance to be passed down to future generations. Second would be whanau, having grandparents, brother, sisters etc. etc. as examples/role models.” This again highlights the notion of belonging and team effort for the good of all members.

Only three spoke of both role models both inside and outside of their family/whanau. “My father was my best role model. A hard worker with a Navy background and had said to me at a very young age that I could do whatever I set my mind to.” In another paragraph, this interviewee also states “At my very first school I had an excellent Principal called Irene Ogden. She mentored me in the area of ‘heart’ and the importance of building relationships with my students and their whanau. My second Principal built my academic side, sending me to a lot of PD related to growing leadership, coaching and mentoring. He believed in my ability to lead other teachers way before I did.”

Resilience and attitude was a contributing factor in that 22/43 nominated it in the three to six factors that made them successful. “My dad provided opportunities for me to experience life e.g. camping, tramping, touring N.Z, meeting people. This gave me a chance to set goals for my life and try, fail, try, fail, try, succeed with his 100% backing.” Two others said they had been bullied at school and this had built resilience skills, which has stood them in good stead to cope with setbacks in the business world. “I had a high level of cultural affinity, however at age 10, I moved schools where I was bullied and I had to work out survival skills- what was fundamental and I because of my strong roots I could bring up a vision of home.”

Another big contributor to being successful was a secure, supportive environment. 17/43 stated this and backed it with examples: “I felt secure and was supported by family, hapu and iwi and I had a strong sense of identity”; “Being happy and secure with life, school, family and work etc.”

31/43, went further to say self-motivation/self-drive, having goals and high self-esteem were very important factors which contributed to them becoming successful. 12/43 of interviewees also gave examples of parents/ whanau having strong principles and values which had shaped them in becoming successful, while 2/43 stated that church beliefs were factors that have made a big difference to their lives.

The top factors that had contributed to these interviewees being successful were supportive, loving parent/s and/or extended whanau who were good role models and had high expectations and /or displayed a strong work ethic. The other factors in order of importance for these interviewees were resilience and attitude, self- drive, motivation and work ethic.

Interviewees were asked to identify “What is it that you are successful at (or good at)?” I added ‘good at’ as many did not want to say outright what they were successful but preferred the question as “What are you good at?”

All interviewees gave between two and four answers.

Interviewees answers to question—hat are you successful or good at?	Age grp 20 to 35 yrs. (3 interviewees)	Age grp (36 to 51 yrs.) (20 interviewees)	Age grp (51 yrs. & above) (20 interviewees)
Relationships and Communication (Personal &/or work related)	3	12	10
Leading, facilitating & collaborating with others	2	10	12
Self-Management (including goal setting )	2	5	5
*Thinking strategically, critically		2	5
* Cultural & Emotional intelligence (Caring or empathetic thinking)		5	2
*Flexible, creative thinking skills	2	3	3
* Problem Solving	2	4	5
Perseverance/ Being resilient	2	3	5
Supporting others in the community		3	6
Successful academic	2	4	3

Business/economic development	1	5	2
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The connection between ‘what’ interviewees were successful at or “good at” could be defined by the key competencies originally identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report 2005; which provided basis of the development of the Key Competencies which became one of the important pillars of our ‘new’ New Zealand Curriculum NZC (2007). These key competencies being: Relating to Others; Thinking; Participating and Contributing; Managing Self and Using Language, Symbols and Texts.

From the above table,

25 of 43 interviewees wrote or spoke about having very good relationship skills and /or good communication skills and this was explained in several ways: “I have very good relationships at home as well as work. I am a good parent and have very strong relationships with my children.” I am good at communicating at different levels.” “I am good at life balance. I am a good mother, wife, daughter, and have a good relationship with all family members.” “Other interviewees, 24/43 statements included their success at leading, facilitating and collaborating with others:-“I am very good at communicating on levels, in my personal life, work life which includes leading and growing others”; “I am good at facilitating and collaborating with others.”

Interviewees stated in different ways that there was a real need to think with empathy or care while being a flexible and creative thinker. I have asterisked the thinking skills as 22/43 of the interviewees shared that they were good at thinking and many gave examples of the types of thinking which included: - flexible, creative, critical and empathetic or caring thinking. In 11/43 cases, they added they had ability to problem solve. “I am good at connecting need with an opportunity” “I am good at governance and developing business strategy.” “I make shift happen. I do this using a combination of cultural, commercial and creative skills a lot of what I do is empathy. Developing empathy for others and their needs and unlocking insights to create breakthrough moments, tackling challenges, weaving through personalities and politics and generating new levels of performance, or a better way of doing things.” Another interviewee stated, “I have a purpose and a direction in that I have an innate sense of responsibility to whanau and community. A sense of selflessness-benefitting others is what the governance on company

boards has given me. Thinking strategically to help lots of people.” If you put thinking and problem solving together as problem solving is a by-product of thinking then 33/43 of the interviewees nominated this area of expertise.

7/20 interviewees that stated they had good “emotional intelligence”, which we know is very important when building good relationship skills. Two stated that they had both “Cultural and Emotional intelligence.” This again connects to the fact to that as educators, we have the responsibility to ensure success for all students and as teachers we need to be willing to teach children in culturally responsive ways to build their self-esteem and emotional capital.

Interviewees spoken to highlighted while they were good at using thinking skills and relationship skills, they contributed and collaborating in teams at work, as well as contributing to whanau and community endeavours. This showed again how important belonging to a group and contributing or participating in whanau or community endeavour is to Māori. Participating and Contributing is a key competency within our NZC.

Self -Management also came through as a competency or what they were good at from 12/43 interviewees, while many of them would have been very competent in this area they did not specifically identify it. This was written in different ways: - “You have to work hard and be flexible and manage your time.” “Being successful in an area takes time and hard work but the results are worth it.” Five people also nominated resilience as an important factor - “Resilience is all important; being faced with challenges or adversity and not giving up.” “You need to be resilient, to be able to come back and look at things differently and be prepared to make the best out of a situation”.

Another stated, “For me resilience is innate, but it has been tested. I went to boarding school where there was expectations from my family/whanau that I would be successful. I was exposed to bullying and had to work through this and being driven I developed skills to survive there and went on to build good relationships in my senior years and became a school leader.”

Teachers as role models and motivators is important, as Dr. Lance O’Sullivan stated (Canvas, NZ Herald, 2018); “I benefited from teachers who said ‘you can be’ this or that as opposed to ‘you are’ this or that. It was thanks to people such as Lang Davis, my principal at that time, that I started taking school seriously. Just seeing strong and proud, confident and positive role models around me was inspiring.” Although many interviewees did not state they had been successful at school, many had been; therefore we need to keep teaching and exposing our children/students to a wide variety of opportunities and



experiences so they learn to “use language, symbols and text”. This will allow them to build skills to use knowledge and information interactively so they come to understand how tools can change the way we interact with the world. i.e. ‘all types of learning tools are active meaning makers, not just passive conveyers of ideas’. (OECD report, 2005 in R Hipkins et al, 2014). This ties in with the competencies and overall shows that we need to ensure key competencies do not get brushed over but remain an important part of our teaching/learning programmes, which may have slipped with the Ministry of Education focus on National Standards.

I had time to reflect on our Mission, Expectation and our Values and how they tie in with supporting our Māori learners:-

### **St. Mark’s Mission Statement and Expectations –**

#### **‘To provide the best education in a Catholic Environment’ – ‘Ka Whakaratoa e te kura ngā tino matau teitei I waenganui I ngā Katoika.’**

This Mission statement is at the basis of what we do and say at St. Mark’s Catholic School. Our values are incorporated into our current way of working and expectations at St. Mark’s Catholic School, through curriculum delivery, from the welcome at the front office, into classroom and extending into the community. St Mark’s Catholic School’s mission statement means that we have high expectations from all stakeholders:-our BOT, our teachers and support staff, our parents and whanau and our students. Students know and can articulate that their job “is to do their best at all times”. Our Mission statement is unpacked at assemblies and in newsletters, on meet the teacher nights, in positive behaviour for learning (PB4L) meetings and other occasions.

Our school values are incorporated well with the statement- “We follow Jesus with our ABCs and 3Rs.” In turn I reflected and could see the interlinking of our values with the cultural competencies unpacked in Tataiako.

When we unpack our ABCs:-A for Attitude; B for Behaviours; C for Care.

A: It is a ‘positive, have a go attitude’ that we encourage and model to our students, reminding students that you learn from mistakes and you often need to persevere, try, practise and try again.

B: is the behaviours we want to see exhibited in our students and teachers- Belief in God and belief in self; self- management; goal setting, thinking, reflecting and problem solving behaviours.

C: is for Care and Compassion – we want students and teachers to develop the ability to walk in others shoes i.e. empathy. This includes seeing issues from others’ perspectives and thinking carefully about interactions.

Our three R’s are: Respect for Self; Respect for Others and Respect for the Environment. These 3Rs also cover the Gospel values adhered by our School and Church.

In reflecting on the Mission Statement and our ABCs and values and putting the expectations in place so that they are adhered to, the next step was to reflect on our 2017 Strategic Plan and Action plan and ensure processes in our 2018 Strategic and Action Plan align to support all Māori to be successful.

**At St .Mark’s School one of our strategic goals is:** Māori students are engaged in their learning and are achieving educational success with pride in their unique identity, language and culture as Māori.

To support Māori students we will need to-

Ensure all students, are happy, safe and learning at school.

Further develop culturally responsive practices.

Further develop home/school partnership with our Māori whanau.

I believe we therefore cater for opportunities to develop these competencies in all of our learners as well as our Māori students.

### **Cultural Diversity and Māori Dimension**

St Mark’s Catholic School will acknowledge the unique position of Māori culture in New Zealand society. We acknowledge Māori as the elder treaty partner. We seek to develop and promote awareness of Te Mana o Aotearoa and foster improved cultural understanding consistent with te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In reflection our Strategic direction forms a solid foundation on which to build our knowledge and understanding of the factors that make Māori successful but we will review to ensure that the practices set out in this section of our plan are embedded.

In our new ‘Our Code, Our Standards’ (2017), which is the Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession written by the Education Council of New Zealand/Matatu Aotearoa are important values. The values that underpin this code will guide us as teachers and are as follows:

**Whakamana** - empowering all learners to reach their highest potential by providing high-quality teaching and leadership.

**Manaakitanga** -Creating a welcoming, caring and creative learning environment that treats everyone with respect and dignity, as well as showing respect for Māori beliefs, language and culture.

**Pono** -Showing integrity by acting in ways that are fair, honest, ethical and just.

**Whanaungatanga** - Engaging in positive and collaborative relationships with our learners, their families and whanau, our colleagues and the wider community.

Our Code, Our Standards ties back to the Tataiako which linked to personal growth/development and set out five cultural competencies needed by teachers to help Māori learners achieve educationally. Tataiako also included **Ako** (demonstrating reciprocal teaching and learning). In reality in that the teacher becomes the learner. In that, in many cases the teacher will be the less experienced and be in the position of a teina (less experienced), learning from a student. A good example of this is when a student has good te reo or kapa haka skills and/or better IT skills. Therefore we see the traditional power dynamics of the classroom can be completely altered and teachers need to respect that and allow and support the student/s in leading the learning.

It also includes Wananga, which requires us to communicate, problem solve, innovate, participate with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners' achievement.

Parata (2012), states that collaboration and co-construction with Māori learners and their whanau is vital to having culturally responsive pedagogy. As the aim is to improve Māori educational outcomes where the tamariki, the Whanau, and the hapu are all integral to determining the educational journey i.e. responding to the child's cultural experiences. She points out that quality relationships and interactions between students and their teachers is an important key to Māori student success. In an effective classroom quality pedagogy is one where power is shared on equal terms, culture counts, learning is interactive and dialogue is far ranging and a common vision of excellence is defined and held by all.

Bishop & Berryman (2009) discuss the key attributes to be an effective teacher of Māori students is having quality relationships and interactions with the student and their whanau. They state that effective teachers build good

relationships, show care while having a positive, non-deficit view of Māori students, having high expectations and seeing themselves as capable of making a difference for their students. Their profile of an effective teacher illustrates that quality interactions rely on: Manaakitanga (caring for students as Māori and acknowledging their mana). Mana motuhake (having high expectations). Ngā whakapirinātanga (managing their classrooms to promote learning). Wananga and ako (using a range of dynamic, interactive teaching styles). Kotahitanga (teachers and students having learning conversations and reflecting together on their achievement in order to move forward collaboratively).

### **Conclusion:**

The main outcome of my sabbatical is that I am now in a more informed position to provide better leadership, support, encouragement and professional development to build capability in my school learning community when implementing policies and practices that promote success for Māori students. I agree with Dr. Hinekura Smith in “that Māori achievement is often viewed uncritically solely in academic terms, with cultural identity typically overlooked.” While Māori themselves often see success as service in that they often contribute to wider whanau and community and participate in discussions or meetings to reach an agreed outcome. Therefore, we need to honour those families and whanau who bring in different life experiences and really listen to their hopes and expectations for their tamariki. This could mean that we change the way we conduct Meet the Teacher and/or our New Entrant Meetings.

I have reread and familiarised myself further with our Ministry of Education document, ‘Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success’, and ‘Tataiako’ and intend to continue to use these documents in guiding my future thinking, planning and action for my Māori learners and teachers. The information gathered from the sabbatical professional learning will enable me to better support my teachers in developing their competencies to implement effective pedagogical practices for Māori.

This sabbatical learning has provided information that has further highlighted the need to focus back on the teaching key competencies across all classes and levels. I also realised there is a need to raise awareness and develop more culturally responsive teaching/learning practices across our school. Alongside this we will further develop home/school partnerships. This will guide our BOT,

staff, families/whanau and wide community writing our Strategic Plan for the next three year and when writing our Kahui Ako achievement objectives.

Our teachers will further target and teach our Māori students in small groups to ensure close monitoring of their learning and their well-being of each of Māori student to ensure they all feel successful and confident in their own abilities, while fostering and nurturing self-belief, student voice and student agency.

We will ensure that we continue to provide resourcing for professional development opportunities and time for staff to share culturally responsive practices so they have more understanding of the value of this for our Māori students. We will seek to further develop school/home relationships and take time to really listen to the prior knowledge or experiences and expectations that parents and whanau bring into our school. Through consultation with parents/whanau, develop ways to support parents to become more involved in their child's education and thus increase our knowledge of factors that make Māori successful.

Also ensure there are more professional development opportunities so that teachers further understand the need to use culturally, responsive teaching practices and that they become confident and knowledgeable to ensure all Māori are successful.

### **Next Steps:**

Share my sabbatical findings and recommendations with my Māori parents/whanau and discuss how we can improve what we are doing without taking away the good work we are already doing with our Māori students and whanau.

Discuss with our parents/whanau, students and staff about different ways to offer Meet the Teacher, New Entrant and information meetings.

Share my sabbatical findings and recommendations with my BOT and staff, HPPA and ACPPA.

Tap into professional development internally or externally to lift awareness of the need to be more culturally responsive.

Use HAUTŪ review tool with our BOT and reflect on results and look on interpret further steps to be integrated in to school policies and processes to

ensure all Māori reach their full potential and have the skills in place to be successful.

Use MASAM or other review tools with our staff and reflect on results and look to interpret further steps to be integrated into school culture and practices to ensure all Māori reach their full potential and have the skills in place to be successful.

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