

ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING URBANISED MĀORI.



*To enable Māori, especially Urbanised
Māori, and their whānau to achieve
successfully within mainstream
schools in New Zealand.*

Sabbatical Report
July- September, 2017
Gaylene Hill
Principal Linden School



Linden School Vision:

Drive, Strive, Thrive

Kokiritia, Tohetia, Wikitoriatia

*We build a community of learners who **drive** their learning, **strive** hard during their learning, and then **thrive** on their successes.*



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Executive Summary

To enhance educational outcomes for urbanised Māori, both academically and identity wise, depends on schools challenging the status quo (Pearson, 2015, Milne, 2009, Milne, 2016), effective relationships being established and maintained between school staff, students, and whānau, and highly effective culturally responsive practices occurring in all classrooms. High expectations, respect, trust and collaboration underpin all effective pedagogical practices to support urbanised Māori students to achieve their potential in all areas.

Effective relationships, culturally responsive pedagogy, and learning programmes that promote and develop student agency to have a voice in their learning, contribute to successful outcomes. Establishing links to local tikanga and environment contribute to developing a sense of connection, which then can be extended (often through the use of technology) to own iwi and extended whānau. Then, urban Māori students who experience and celebrate their successes at school will share this positively with their whānau, encouraging wider reconnection with their whakapapa and a deepening sense of identity and pride.

Background and Rationale

Linden School is a small school at the northern end of Tawa (Wellington district). It is a U2, decile 4 contributing school.

Ahakoā he iti he pounamu

Although it is small, it is greenstone/ precious

In Tawa the other 5 primary schools range in decile rating from 7-10. All other local schools are also larger, some of which are impacted by transience as much as Linden School.

Linden School mirrors New Zealand society with a range of ethnicities (currently 14 different ethnic groups) and with households across the

socio-economic spectrum from families reliant on benefit income to more affluent families.

Over many years, our Māori students have achieved lower than non-Māori. It has also been noticed that many Māori students, and their whānau, are dissociated with their whakapapa, iwi, hapu, and this has an impact on students in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence, and cultural locatedness, further impacting on engagement and achievement.

Linden School, committed to improving outcomes for Māori students, has seen many initiatives implemented and the school curriculum rewritten to focus on local contexts and aspirations for our Māori students. These initiatives are in their early stages, so their effectiveness is not yet evident, but the urgency exists to improve outcomes for our students to create opportunities to enable these students to be active and positive contributors to their local and national society.

To empower our Māori whānau, many of whom are urbanised and disconnected, was the impetus for this research project during my sabbatical.

Methodology

To gain a wide perspective on this topic, five different approaches were utilised. Face to face interviews were conducted with Māori leaders highly regarded both in Educational and in Community standings (locally and nationally). These discussions were supported with a variety of research readings, as well as through on-line discussions with educationalists.

Findings from these discussions and readings then promoted reflection on two different levels- schoolwide and personal. Both levels of reflection were important to ascertain current levels of cultural responsiveness, and areas to focus on for improvement. These reflections promote inquiry into teacher practice, school practice, and school policy and systems, providing both challenges to overcome and guiding principles

to consider to enable Māori students to achieve within a school setting both academically and culturally as Māori.

Challenges

For many years Māori have been over represented in the tail of achievement results in New Zealand. This has been especially evident in the National Standards data collected. As a result of these statistics, the New Zealand Government have categorised Māori learners as “Priority Learners” and have issued a challenge, through the former Minister of Education, to raise this achievement. While this is admirable, the sad fact is that no emphasis has been placed on other aspects of Māori achievement- only the narrow view that National Standards assess and address. This is not an holistic view of achievement, and, as such, is flawed. However, the challenge has been issued and New Zealand schools need to answer this stated concern and empower Māori to be successful learners.

To enable Māori to be successful learners, and culturally located, Māori Achieving Success As Māori (MASAM) has become an aim for schools in New Zealand. MASAM was defined by Professor Mason Durie (2003) as:

"As Māori [means] being able to have access to te ao Māori, the Māori world – access to language, culture, marae... tikanga... and resources... If after twelve or so years of formal education, a Māori youth were totally unprepared to interact within te ao Māori, then, no matter what else had been learned, education would have been incomplete." (P. 199).

To achieve this challenge, all levels of school need to play their part in this process.

Urbanisation of Māori has also impacted greatly on many whānau who are living great distances apart, some by choice and some by necessity. This urbanisation has had a flow on effect of dissociation and dislocation of many Māori whānau- from their land, their extended whānau, their ancestors, their language, and their tikanga. This loss weighs heavily on self-esteem and self-confidence of Māori, both young and old. To be uprooted for any person is difficult, but added to this the marginalisation of Māori within education and society, the toll is even greater. This

needs to be reversed so the mana of our Māori students and their whānau is restored and strengthened, whereby New Zealand will be viewed as a country where being Māori is celebrated, respected, honoured and valued. This is one of the aims of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) where partnership, participation and protection are the core principles.

Urbanisation of indigenous people affects their life on many levels, and impacts on their wellbeing. Feelings of isolation perpetuate this dissociation from cultural norms, and impacts on the learning of students attending New Zealand schools (especially city schools). To enable these students to achieve their potential requires schools to openly address this issue alongside supportive networks for the benefit of both students and their whānau.

These challenges have been researched during this sabbatical, and their impacts, individually and collectively, are discussed in the following section alongside possible courses of action to meet identified challenges.

Being proud to be Māori, maintaining links with whakapapa, creating new links with urban areas, and to be confident in Te Reo and tikanga are goals to be achieved by all schools in our country.

Discussions and Findings

Urbanisation of Māori has occurred over several decades. Reasons for this drift to urban areas included financial/ employment opportunities, and educational opportunities. Along with this move came isolation, individual life style (where the emphasis changed from whānau supporting each other to people doing their own thing), culture shock, and a faster pace of life (Hoskins, 2007). Coupled with this, was pressure to conform to the dominant culture and ways of life, which diminished their kaupapa, tikanga and language.

While many Māori succeeded in their aspirations after moving to urban areas, many did not and it is this group that is racially reported against in

many statistics- crime, housing, unemployment and education. This stereotyping reinforces deficit thinking of an ethnic group in its entirety (Pearson, 2007), against which those who speak out are crushed by members of the dominant culture perpetuating this myth in order for them to feel superior. This is not only an outdated stance, but is morally wrong to cast a net over one group of people to categorise and devalue them. Unfortunately, this still dominates in areas of society, and in some areas of education, where schools still do not value Tangatawhenua, tikanga, te Reo despite the guiding principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi, and the supporting documents such as Tataiako (2011) and Ka Hikitia (2008).

The loss of the Māori language, especially in schools, where punishment for using Te Reo was corporal and severe, and then in places of work exacerbated this disconnect from traditions in a very short space of time, historically speaking. This disconnection has happened over one generation, but the impact has long lasting repercussions unless it is reversed, reinstated and valued.

“Disconnection from ones origins in culture and physical location leads to a fragmentation of identity.” (Hoskins, 2007). Displacement, and urbanisation contribute to this feeling of disconnect, which in turn diminishes the likelihood of succeeding as Māori in today’s world.

Borell (2016) researched this disconnect phenomena amongst urban Māori residing in Auckland. These young people were disconnected physically from their iwi, but had developed connections with the area within which they were living. Connections with their new local environment and the new local community facilitated a strengthened awareness and connection with their identity, in turn enhancing their self-image. Providing opportunities for our urban Māori to connect with their local environment, and local kawa supports urban Māori to become proud of their identity and culture, and opens up the possibilities for reconnection with their own iwi when the time is right for them (and their whānau).

In the technological world that we live in, many different forms of communication have opened up access to different worlds, communities and experiences. While displacement from iwi is now more common

than at any other time in New Zealand history, this gap can be minimised through the use of digital technologies. Reconnecting with extended whānau through social media enables and encourages links to be re-established and current information to be shared quickly. It also enables links to both urban and marae situations to be strengthened through communication about events, celebrations, and challenges. This sharing enhances feelings of belonging, which impacts on wairua (spirit) and the holistic wellbeing of the person. With a positive self-image and sense of purpose, many obstacles (impacting on achievement in schools) can be overcome.

Schools play a vital role in connecting urban Māori students with their whakapapa, to enable these students to be successful students, successful Māori students, and proud of all their achievements. Pride in oneself promotes positive attitudes, resilience, respect for self, others, and environment, along with maximising potential.

The major component of a culturally safe classroom/school where students feel safe to be who and what they are is Whānau (relationships). (MacFarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, Bateman, 2007). Relationships between students and all adults within a school, and relationships with whānau, are paramount for educational success and are key motivators for students (MacFarlane et al, 2007). These relationships must be based on trust, mutual respect, open, honest, and timely communication, and a willingness to teach and learn from each other (Pearson, 2015). Focussing on effective relationships to engage and motivate students mirrors the constructivist teaching philosophy of shared ownership and responsibility, collaboration, and co-construction under an holistic umbrella where “finding out and honouring what students can do, valuing their work, honouring the whole person, having high expectations, and bringing a lot of heart to the classroom” (MacFarlane et al, 2007) is the norm. Positive classroom climates rely on students having a voice in their learning, utilisation of appropriate teaching and learning strategies (such as peer tutoring and cooperative learning), and a collective sense of belonging.

To maximise the potential of our urban Māori students, and acknowledging the added value their ethnicity brings to the school setting, challenges schools (and all who work in them) to make changes to their systems, pedagogy, relationships with whānau and students,

teaching and learning programmes and the school curriculum to engage, motivate and promote success for Māori and all students. This challenge requires an in-depth analysis of all aspects relating to teaching and learning within each school setting. Facing the difficult questions regarding achievement of Māori students should be the starting point. Have we made any/ enough difference? How do we know? Why/ why not? If the answer is no, then changes are necessary and urgent. Evidence of over-representation of Māori in the achievement tail would suggest that changes are indeed urgent. Leadership, stewardship, teachers, and support staff all need to be united to make these changes within the school setting, and with whānau/community to enhance engagement with, and success in, the school.

Success breeds success. When students are successful and motivated at school, and their achievement is recognised both academically and culturally, they are empowered to share this with their whānau, who in turn derive immense pride in these achievements (Whitmore, 2016, Worboys, 2012). Successful students are the best advocates for schools through developing and strengthening a more effective partnership between schools, themselves, and their whānau. When this partnership is open, positive, respectful and balanced between partners, engagement of the extended whānau occurs (Pearson, 2015). This interaction and engagement with the school then supports the educational pathway of the student from both angles, engendering greater success for the students. It also enables whānau to reconnect, should they wish to, with extended whānau and iwi through the links forged by the students at school. These new reconnections can also be enhanced and strengthened through the *Taura Here* groups located within their local or wider community with links back to their own iwi. In turn, Māori students can interact with their whakapapa through these as well, increasing connections and affirming their identity. This new knowledge can then be brought back into the school setting, so all benefit from this win-win situation.

Considerations for own school to effectively implement MASAM, with particular focus on Urbanised Māori students and whānau

As mentioned previously in this report, all areas of the school have roles to play in effecting change to enable our students to be successful holistically- knowing and having pride in who they are, what they are, where they are, how they operate and behave, and in all areas of achievement (spiritually, physically, academically, and emotionally).

Areas for Leadership within our school to develop are:

- Enrolment process (gather more information about whānau and their aspirations for their tamariki)
- Using experts within the community to support the school
- Stronger ties with local iwi and with respected community members within the wider school community
- Utilising different organisations with expertise in areas supporting Māori whānau
- Reviewing and applying for relevant Professional Learning Development (PLD) for staff to become more effective in teaching Māori students
- Stronger ties with Māori whānau
- Develop a whānau advisory group from our school whānau

Areas for Teachers within our school are:

- PLD (both as a staff and to meet individual needs)
 - Te Reo
 - Culturally Responsive pedagogy (MASAM, Tataiako, Digital Storying etc)
- Knowing students better- who they are, life experiences they bring into the room, etc
- Increased knowledge, and implementation, of effective pedagogy for Māori students
- Increased engagement with students and their whānau- sharing the learning

Areas for support staff are:

- Increased engagement with students' whānau
- Increased knowledge and use of Te Reo

Areas for the BOT are:

- Strategic planning to strengthen ties with local community, and implementation of this
- Budgeting for identified needs (within classrooms, outside environment, local experts, hui, more interaction with local marae etc)
- Second BoT members with expertise in Māori/ identify as Māori

To support the school in continuing to develop a supportive climate where all students are valued, all whānau are valued and therefore engaged with the school and their tamariki's education, relationships with local expertise and agencies must be strengthened. Whānau Ora have been approached and are willing to support the school with their ethos of a kawa of care which is empowering, not based on a "fix-it" model (Tawhiwhirangi, 2011) enabling relationships with, and the potential of, both nuclear and extended whānau to flourish. This is based on Te Kohanga Reo kaupapa which enabled Māori whānau to take responsibility, manage, and make decisions which enabled and empowered (Tawhiwhirangi, 2011). In turn, this process will impact on teaching and learning, through better relationships and knowledge of Te Reo and tikanga, empowering students and teachers, utilising local experts, connecting positively with whānau, and raising the educational achievement of all students (Tawhiwhirangi, 2012, Tawhiwhirangi, 2013).

Conclusion

Recognising that many Māori whānau are now urbanised, and many of these whānau (nuclear and extended) are disconnected with their whakapapa, requires schools to address this disconnection through their school curriculum and programmes. Providing regular opportunities at school for students to interact with Te Ao, with the local tikanga, Te Reo, the local environment, and with local iwi demonstrates commitment to building up a sense of identity and values. To facilitate Māori students being successful as Māori when links with their own whakapapa are tenuous, all opportunities must be afforded to them at school in a culturally safe space which recognises and values all that students are and all they bring into the school environment. Utilising digital technologies to connect people separated by distance will also be effective in engaging students with their own, and sometimes lost,

whakapapa leading to a strengthened self-identity and sense of belonging.

When these students experience this success and pride in who they are, they will be more positive about sharing this with their whānau. This pride extends to the whole whānau and creates positive attitudes towards learning, school, and cultural identity. Through the students' cultural identity developing and becoming more secure, whānau will then be more motivated to connect culturally with their whakapapa but also develop positive, balanced and valued relationships with the school. To create opportunities for this, the school must first play its part in enabling success as Māori for all Māori students which demonstrates to whānau the commitment the school makes to setting students up for success in a range of experiences that are meaningful. To do this, staff must be committed to continuing their professional development around developing and maintaining effective relationships with all students, incorporating relevant opportunities to interact with local tikanga, cultural competence and pedagogical practices that enhance learning for Māori students, and Te Reo. These will be seen in teachers own inquiries into their practice as well as in performance management and teacher appraisal processes.

Resulting from this will be relationships, based on relational trust, which is a determinant as to whether this relationship will be maintained or not. This relationship is developed with the whole school- teachers, leadership, support staff, and often with BoT where their voice about the direction of the school can be heard and can shape the future of the school.

To achieve success as Māori for our students, the five guiding principles of *Ka Hikitia* must be implemented and embedded in everyday practice in each and every school in New Zealand (Pearson, 2015). The five principles are:

- Treaty of Waitangi- honouring the bi-cultural agreement
- Māori potential approach- high expectations for achievement
- Ako- 2-way teaching and learning process
- Identity, language and culture count
- Productive partnerships- whānau have a voice in the education of their tamariki

Supported by the five competencies for teachers of Māori learners of Wānanga, Whānaungatanga, Manaakitanga, Tangata Whenuatanga, and Ako, as outlined in Tātaiako (MOE 2011), academic and cultural success for Māori will occur and reduce both the tail of underachievement and the disparity between Māori learners and other students present in New Zealand schools. Māori students, their whānau, and Aotearoa, New Zealand, deserve this outcome.

Whaia e koe kit e iti kahurangi; ki te tuohu koe, me maunga teitei.

Seek the treasure you value most dearly; if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.

Printed Resources

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Digital Resources

<http://edtalks.org/#/video/giving-mana-to-tiriti-o-waitangi-in-our-schools>

<http://edtalks.org/#/video/mc481ori-achieving-success-mc481ori-framework>

<http://edtalks.org/#/video/recognising-Māori-potential>

<http://edtalks.org/#/video/seeing-your-school-through-the-eyes-of-Māori-parents>

<http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Beyond-the-classroom/Engaging-with-the-community/Home-school-partnerships/MASAM-framework>

<http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Leadership/Māori-achieving-success-as-Māori>

<http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Inclusive-classrooms/Supporting-Māori-students/A-teaching-approach-to-enable-Māori-achieving-success-as-Māori>

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Spotlights/MASAM>

<http://www.waitangi.tki.org.nz/assets/Uploads/NZC-Update-Issue-16.pdf>

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FfupyMbXlb_OW5UiJhR1RAY4w2JavuS38wejQEy3A/edit#slide=id.p

<https://education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-Māori-education-strategy-ka-hikitia-accelerating-success-20132017/strategy-overview/the-guiding-principles/>