

Sabbatical Report Term 3 2020

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Purpose

The professional learning that was undertaken was based around culturally responsive pedagogies and learning approaches that are creating positive learning outcomes for priority learners. I gathered information about how cultural relationships are reflected in the pedagogy and curriculum of schools . I visited schools in Hawkes Bay, Wellington and Bay of Plenty to gather responses to putting this kaupapa into action.

The scope of this sabbatical report was initially intended to include an international perspective from Hawaii. However the Covid 19 pandemic restricted travel movements to a degree which meant only a New Zealand perspective was included.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Marewa School Board of Trustees for their encouragement and support to apply for this leave. This was a wonderful opportunity to investigate how schools are implementing culturally responsive practice around the North Island. It was a privilege to have this opportunity to further my knowledge in this field. I would like to acknowledge my Deputy Principal Sarah McLaughlin and wider senior management for stepping up and taking on increased workloads.

I would also like to thank the Principals of the schools I visited, who freely shared their successes and challenges with me and gave up their valuable time to do this.

I am also very grateful to the Ministry of Education for making sabbaticals available to New Zealand Principals.

Executive Summary

This report summarises the approach of 13 diverse New Zealand schools to implementing culturally responsive pedagogy in their school. It will summarise the key shifts and actions that schools have identified as they seek to create conditions where Maori can achieve success as Maori in English medium schools.

Background

The New Zealand Education system does not currently create equitable and excellent outcomes for all students. The Tomorrow's School Review (2018) has identified this as a challenge that must be addressed going forward. The data is undeniable in that Maori and Pacifica students do not perform as well as their Pakeha peers in mainstream education. At its very base level this is a monumental failure of the crown to honour its responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi of partnership, participation and protection. Partnership results in equal power and voice, protection in Māori knowledge, interests, values, and other tāonga having equal value and participation ensures Māori involvement at all levels of education, as expressed in NEG 9. The large gap between Maori students and non maori in achievement data suggests that these responsibilities are not being met.

As a country we have been slow to acknowledge and even slower to act on this challenge.

'We need a clear acknowledgement that our education system has fallen short for Māori students over many generations' (Berryman & Eley, 2018).

The dominant group in education for the last 100 years has been Pakeha and this has created an imbalance in power. Māori are both unconsciously and consciously stereotyped in New Zealand in all fields, including education. There is a wide body of research in this area and the evidence of disparity and bias are very easy to locate. Currently education is well placed with the Tomorrow's School review(2018) to potentially make changes to education in curriculum, pedagogy and outcomes. Moving awareness of this issue to critical action, is the challenge laid for leaders in education.

Policy response in recent times from the government so far has largely focussed on two strategies. Ka Hikitia(2008)was written with the aim of 'Māori achieving success as Māori'. This mandated policy was intended to be in place across all educational settings as a bedrock set of beliefs that enabled Māori to flourish as Māori. While this was the intent, in the experience of many educators, what the phrase 'Māori achieving success as Māori' meant was unclear, as was what they were actually supposed to do about it (Berryman, Copeland, & Woller, 2016). The intent was there, but the document was rolled out largely unsupported and it didn't get the momentum it should have. This was reiterated by the damning Auditor-General's report which found

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) introduced Ka Hikitia slowly and unsteadily. Confused communication about who was intended to deliver Ka Hikitia, unclear roles and responsibilities in the Ministry, poor planning, poor programme and project management, and ineffective communication with schools have meant that action to put Ka Hikitia into effect was not given the intended priority. (Auditor-General, 2013)

Even the refresh document of Ka Hikitia(2020) which has recently been relaunched has largely been un-supported and unheralded. This is in direct contrast to the roll out of the digital curriculum which was incredibly well supported. What does this say about the value we are placing on this area?

The Te Kotahitanga project was initiated in 2001/2002 This PLD resulted in teachers and leadership making significant shifts in the manner in which they approached the teaching of students. This programme was in place in 49 secondary schools and the results were clear that the changed approach worked. The second iteration of this programme developed into Kia Eke Panuku which again proved to be highly successful when it was supported by high quality PD. However successive government changes removed funding from this project and it was not developed further into the primary sector.

Research has shown that while there are many factors to Maori achieving Success as Maori, two in particular had a significant effect size. Quality of teaching is the biggest factor in achievement outcomes. Collective teacher efficacy has a 1.57 positive effect size on student achievement. (Hattie, 2009). This suggests that if teachers believe that what they do has an impact, and act using effective practice, it can be transformational. New Zealand has a large amount of within school variance, higher than the rate of between schools (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009). This shows that the teacher is one of the greatest determinants of achievement. There are many excellent teachers and leaders who are working tirelessly to lift student achievement and there is a sense of real change and commitment to create a different set of outcomes. However the application of this appears to be uneven and not system wide.

Russell Bishop in *Teaching to the North East(2019)* maintains teachers need to have excellent relationships and pedagogy in equal measure. Sadly his research suggested that the majority of teaching in the primary sector takes place where relationships are strong, but the pedagogy is weak. This is a direct challenge to leaders in schools, as pedagogical leaders we have the ability to influence this to a high degree.

Relationships were also identified as being central to achievement. Berryman et al(2018) found via comprehensive interviews with maori students that unconscious bias and deficit theorising have negatively impacted on relationships with Maori students.

It is clear from what the students told us ... that the quality of the relationships that are established in classrooms affects their attendance, learning, and achievement. This finding means that, while we cannot ignore the impact of structural impediments, such as socially constructed impoverishment, we cannot allow this analysis to disempower teachers from action. Teacher action is central to educational reform.(Bishop, 2009)

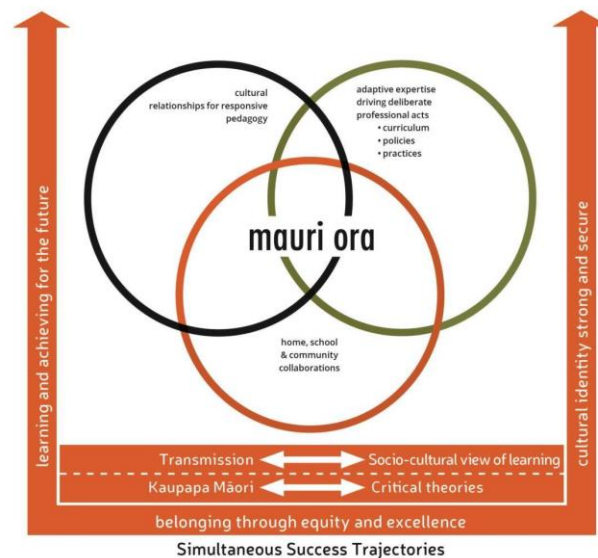
The work of Te Kotahitanga created the Effective Teaching Profile (Bishop & Berryman 2009). This described the attributes needed to redefine educational relationships. These attributes were organised under 6 headings;

1. **Manaakitanga:** Caring for students and creating learning contexts where Māori students can be themselves.
2. **Mana motuhake:** Caring for the performance of Māori students. Teachers who held high expectations of their Māori students, allowing them flexibility in ways of working, whether that be independently or interdependently with others,
3. **Ngā whakapiringatanga:** Creating a secure, well-managed learning environment These teachers were also pedagogically creative and could adapt the curriculum in response to evolving learning conversations among Māori students to sustain engagement and achievement.
4. **Wānanga:** Teachers who facilitate active learning by allowing students to discuss concepts with their peers and work with the teacher in small-group workshops. They provided feedback to their students and feed-forward.
5. **Ako:** Teachers who used a range of teaching strategies were those who were willing to act as a learner, and who were equally comfortable with learning from their Māori students as they were with the students learning from them.
6. **Kotahitanga:** Using student progress to inform future teaching practices. Effective teachers were those who shared learning intentions and success criteria so students could self-assess and monitor their own learning.

Re-defining relationships is not straight forward. In the words of the Tomorrows Schools Independent Taskforce(2008) it requires, *'tackling our existing assumptions – 'unlearning' in*

order for new learning to take hold – and building strong and trusting relationships’. Support needs to be given to teachers and leaders to carry out this learning.

Recently the Poutama Pounamu programme has been developed by the University of Waikato as a response to these challenges and opportunities. The model they developed was titled ‘Ako-Critical Contexts for Change’. Poutama Pounamu began in 2017 in an effort to invigorate school principals and senior leadership to challenge the status quo and take action.



This model seems simple with a particular focus on Home/School partnership, Relationships and Pedagogy. In practice the model calls for some significant shifts in the way that teaching is approached, the content of teaching, and a shift in power in the educational setting. It requires awareness of your own positioning in terms of culture and an openness to learning that creates real challenges. There are also further iterations of PLD in this field such as the work of Anne Milne, titled *Colouring in the White Spaces* (2013)

Cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy was defined by Berryman et al (2018) as relationships where;

- Power is shared
- Culture counts
- learning is interactive and dialogic
- connectedness is fundamental to relations
- there is a common vision of excellence for Māori in education

In the *'Education Matters to Me'* (2018) report, two of the key findings were 'understand me in my whole world' and 'teach me the way I learn best'. Both of these elements reinforce the need to know students well, honour who they are and develop curriculum that is relevant to them. Today the phrase 'know me, before you teach me' has often been used to summarise this approach. Seeing your culture and experiences reflected in curricula impacts on student achievement.

Report

The following report summarises school experiences and strategies that have provided positive outcomes in developing increased cultural competence.

Methodology

Information was gathered via face to face interview with school leadership. Schools were selected on recommendation of professionals who work in the field of cultural pedagogy. Participation was voluntary. Schools were selected to be representative of a range of sizes, socio economic and geographic locations.

	Region	School size	Decile	% Maori students
School 1	HB	340	3	40%
School 2	HB	210	1	98%
School 3	HB	115	3	60%
School 9	HB	137	1	100%
School 10	HB	150	1	52%
School 4	BOP	409	5	34%
School 5	BOP	669	7	34%

School 6	BOP	119	1	92%
School 7	BOP	119	1	98%
School 8	BOP	622	9	20%
School 11	Wellington	388	5	18%
School 12	Wellington	426	4	39%
School 13	Wellington	300	1	65%

The schools selected had highly varied ethnic profiles. The focus of this study was Maori students and this ranged from 100% maori through to 18% Maori. A range of deciles/socio economic profiles were selected ranging from a decile 9 to several decile 1 schools. All schools were selected on the basis that they had been identified as placing culture centrally within their strategic direction.

Schools had taken incredibly diverse paths in this space and it is not possible to record all of these in detail. For the purposes of providing structure to this report the actions they have taken are grouped in the following way;

- Strategic planning
- Staff development
- Language acquisition
- Partnerships
- Curriculum and Pedagogy

Strategic Planning

All schools had identified Cultural Practice as a key strategic focus. This was largely a determinant of selection for this report. What was most noticeable was that senior leadership were articulate about why it had been selected and quite deliberate about how this shaped their school direction, culture and actions. Board of Trustee commitment and support was a prerequisite of successful planning. Schools that felt the most comfortable with their strategic direction had selected a small number of goals and were aiming to do less but in more depth

rather than stretching staff too thinly. Often this was broken up into short, medium, and long term goals. In the majority of cases the measurement tool was not solely student achievement but one more focused on well-being from a holistic perspective. All schools recognised that some of the actions would take longer to achieve than others. Commonly this was linked to both staff and principal appraisal. This created clarity about what was being worked on and measured and why. Staff provided evidence of their work towards meeting their goals that linked directly to the strategic plan.

Key Point Summary

- Clear strategic direction and commitment to valuing culturally responsive practice
- Link to staff and principal appraisal
- Simplicity and clarity around planned actions

Staff development

Professional Development in Culturally Responsive Practice has been widespread and diverse in its approach. Research has shown that even those projects that were well supported have had variable results in sustaining gains. Professional development in this field is not new, what is largely untested is how this has been transformed into practice.

A commonality of practice was that all schools had engaged in development in some form. Several schools had completed the Poutama Pounamu programme and this had created some shift in teachers being open to confronting personal bias and understanding equity. Other positive outcomes that were noted were that schools reported that teachers were more relationship focussed, and had a greater commitment to equity and confronting bias. However schools also acknowledged that the shift in pedagogy was varied and personal to the teacher and the heavy theoretical load and reading while valuable, was also time consuming. Three schools had staff completing Anne Milne's online papers based around "*Colouring in the White Spaces*" currently . There were a small number of schools who also had found a disconnect between theory models and a focus on Te Ao Maori. They felt that professional development was better focussed on growing staff capacity in Te Reo Maori and Matarauka of the local area. Several schools had found a valuable approach in developing more understanding of the value of culture, was linking with local hapu and marae. A number of the schools had engaged at this level to understand more about the local area and the narratives that help understand it from a Maori perspective. Schools indicated that the intention of this was to give their students and

staff a feeling of belonging and place. A number of schools were recognising the unique nature of the whenua in Te Ao Maori and were making deliberate efforts to develop this for their students.

A barrier to this approach is an unconscious institutional devaluing of this knowledge, of not acknowledging the expertise of iwi in local protocol and Purakau. Kaumatua and other holders of this knowledge should be valued to the same extent as other PLD providers and should be able to source nationally funded resourcing for this. Many of these people have diverse roles in their employment and are not able to engage with education to the extent they would like simply because of time and economics. If flexible funding was sourced for this purpose at a regional level through MOE the burden of this would not fall so squarely on a small number of iwi representatives.

Language Acquisition

Language development was a common shared development as many schools had worked with the premise that increasing your knowledge of Te Reo Maori, also increases staff knowledge of Te Ao Maori. What was common across all schools was the commitment of leadership to this kaupapa of increasing language proficiency. All leaders also felt that working with **all** staff in this space was more effective than a number of staff completing and then passing this on further to in school akonga.

The actual implementation was approached in a range of ways. Several schools had encouraged and invested in staff professional development in partnership with local wananga to increase staff confidence. A number of schools had actively recruited fluent speakers of Te Reo Maori as part of their person specifications for teaching applications. One school had employed 4 Kaiarahi Maori who only spoke Maori to the students in the junior area of the school. They found that student understanding increased using this strategy.

In the Rotorua/ BOP area & Wellington it was common to have a Rumaki class or classes as an integral part of the school. Establishment of these had been driven by a demand of both language and alternative approach to 'mainstream'. Staffing of these was a common difficulty as the effectiveness of the classes was heavily influenced by staff and their own personal level of Reo. This was a constant theme discussed by leaders as being a challenge. Staff changes often made it really difficult to sustain a Rumaki approach due the lack of teaching staff with these skills. When they were staffed well the programmes were very successful. Increased

whanau voice and direction was often experienced in bilingual and Rumaki spaces. This was often an educational choice that whanau had opted into and thus were more connected to. Educators could and should be asking why this is and what can be replicated in English medium. Experiences of past schooling carry a significant amount of weight in the expectation that whanau have of schools as well. The main challenge to this approach is that the vast majority of maori students are in English medium and in the immediate future this is still likely to be the case due to the systems and staffing that would need to be in place for large scale expansion to occur.

Another approach was to provide bilingual classrooms. The definition of this was very wide ranging from 30-50% of instruction in Te Reo Maori. One school in the sample size had developed their own radio station in Te Reo Maori and accompanying daily lessons which all students participated in. Further there were students who left their own class and spent 50% of their time in an immersion setting to increase their proficiency. Most schools had shifted away from the roving Te Reo Maori teacher who comes in once a week due to finding that there was little gain in students language acquisition. Many schools acknowledged the immense effort that staff had committed to increase their own proficiency.

The content of the Te Reo Maori language programme was really varied with each school developing their own programmes and expectations. There was a widely held concern that even with greater staff capacity to deliver Te Reo Maori programmes the flow into student skill level was variable. What is clear is that there is a clear connect to students being able to see themselves in teaching and curriculum. Placing teachers in a learner space also gave them a greater opportunity to learn together.

Key summary 2

- Focused professional support about local narratives
- Total Commitment to growth in Te Reo maori

Partnership

Engaging with iwi and hapu was a focus for all schools. What this actually means needs further unpacking. Engagement is a reciprocal process and in order to create trusting relationships schools need to be aware that the relationship is reciprocal and comes with expectations of both parties. What seemed to be vital was that schools didn't predetermine the manner, form and

outcome of the engagement. Relationships take time and effort to develop and maintain and the schools that had the most productive relationships were ones that had taken time. Iwi and hapu are differently positioned in terms of being able to offer support. In this study Rotorua/BOP iwi have been active for some time in the education space due to long standing charitable trust relationships. Several schools reside on iwi land and had marae that were geographically close with a clear link to the school.

In several schools MOE had also partnered with iwi to provide funding for Kaumatua to work directly with schools. This had produced some really productive partnerships with an equal power balance. Funding for this successful initiative is no longer available through MOE with no clear rationale for its termination. Several iwi had clear education strategies and had created resources that schools could access to support the teaching of local narratives. Schools that had been the most successful in this space had gone to hapu to learn and listened on marae and in local places of significance so that knowledge was imparted directly from the source. What was also clear was that schools had approached this as learners and supported hapu in return through visiting marae, attending Tangi and showing a genuine inclination to learn through Wananga.

There had been a shift in the way that schools had been engaging with whanau. Many had trialled and then adapted whanau focus groups to gather Maori voice. The experience of some schools was that a focus solely on achievement and reporting and asking 'what school should look like' tended to lead to quite eurocentric thinking and resulted in low whanau turnout. A focus on building relationships and genuinely connecting with people in focussed events was a much more productive way of gathering voice. Whanau reported feeling more comfortable when talking about their child and in a social setting.

Schools had used a range of techniques to seek voice. Hui, digital sharing of learning, events, conferences. The purpose and power arrangement in student conferences was challenged in a number of schools. These schools felt that whanau experienced a reluctance to engage in these due to how schools viewed them and the emphasis on how they can help at home. A focus on standards and where they were not meeting them, often drove people away. Strength base reporting and what school was doing to help their child and celebrating what they could do had been more successful.

Key Summary 3

- Changing the power relationship with whanau through genuine rather than contrived engagement
- Student/whanau focused student reporting

Curriculum & Pedagogy

Localised curriculum development had been a focus for most schools over the last 2-3 years. Schools had managed to develop curriculum to varying levels of completion. Often the curriculum was linked to a school set of values that whanau had contributed to. Some of the time these were PB4L values, for others it was based around graduate profiles. In several schools Tipuna were linked to the values so that students could identify with a personal representation. In other schools an Atua approach has been taken. In practice this has all learning viewed through a context of how it links to Maori atua and the attributes and knowledge that they bring. This is a significant shift in thinking about learning. One school had invested significantly in Mana Potential as an approach to indigenising the curriculum. Originally designed as a model to understand behaviour this had developed to have a wider impact. This was reported to have followed through into having an impact for whanau at home.

Other key features of curriculum observed were the close link to place and social action. Schools had actively made links to local places and stories so that the learning was context driven, something that students could see and experience every day. This link to the notion of place was deliberate and planned. All schools emphasised the importance of schools taking the role of the learner in this space when trying to access local stories. This in practice meant schools going to marae and places of learning and listening to those that know the stories.

All schools that were visited had a strong emphasis on developing student learner agency by growing visible learning across the school. Increasing transparency of the learning process took a range of forms but was generally focussed on students knowing what they were learning, why and what success looks like. PACT was used in several schools as a progress tool for students. This was accompanied by a move away from formal written reporting.

Several schools had supported the pedagogy of teachers to shift the power in the classroom using technology. In two schools this was clearly evident in their curriculum. Students took responsibility for recording their learning journey with evidence using ipads as a tool. This information was shared with whanau digitally and was more regular than formal reporting. This was based around a personal learning plan approach. An additional shift had been towards a

more dialogic, cooperative based approach to teaching and learning. Schools that experienced success in this area had taken quite deliberate steps to increase both student and teacher skill level in this field. A common barrier had been making assumptions that both teachers and students had the existing skill set to operate in this way. Only a small number of schools had actively participated in development for teachers in designing learning with a more cooperative approach. One school had undertaken development in Kagan cooperative learning to equip students with increased co-operative skill.

All schools acknowledged that they were working towards a more child centred model which allowed student voice, choice, student discourse and diverse pathways to be successful. This was often shown through a commitment to the schools arts, sports, cultural programme. This broader model of success is one that also changes the purpose of schooling to an 'academic success, as well as', approach to measuring success .

Key Summary 4

- Reducing transmission teaching to a more dialogic, student focussed approach that illustrates the Effective Teaching profile
- Local, place based contextualised curriculum which integrates local iwi knowledge
- Clear system and expectations around visibility of learning and progress
- Provide diverse opportunities for success

Normalising Visible Culture

In all schools there had been a move to normalising basic aspects of culture across the school. When these become integrated into the culture of the school to the point they become normalised this can contribute to a student sense of identity. This included all children knowing karakia, waiata and tikanga such as powhiri and a growth in kapa haka. This has been accused of tokenism but genuinely using these as part of everyday school life is more than this and undervalues the motivation for using them. Visually aspects of culture were often present in art work, iwi maps and representations of aspects such as values in house groups. Signage was frequently bilingual as were instructions and announcements.

Conclusion

It was a genuine pleasure to meet with the 13 schools in this report. What I found was a leadership structure that was committed to improvement, growth and learning. Across the board there was a commitment to creating equitable outcomes for Maori students and a passion for Te Ao Maori. This is a great lever for change and one that may not have been present 15 years ago. Professional development in this field has helped to develop this desire for change but has had mixed impact on the implementation of new practices. The research and current school practices are aligned in **what** will create system level and wide spread change. There are many other examples of wonderful work being done that were not included in this report and I encourage you to explore them. This study found there is no immediate 'silver bullet for change' but a set of short to medium to practices that have the potential to create new outcomes. These practices include the following 'top ten' from my limited research in this field ;

- Reducing transmission teaching to a more dialogic, co-operative student focussed approach
- Local, place based contextualised curriculum which integrates local iwi knowledge
- Clear system and expectations around visibility of learning and progress
- Provide diverse opportunities for success for Maori students
- Changing the power relationship with whanau through genuine rather than contrived engagement
- Focused professional support about local narratives
- Total commitment to growth in Te Reo maori as a responsibility under the Treaty of Waitangi
- Clear strategic direction and commitment to valuing culturally responsive practice
- Linking cultural practice to staff and principal appraisal
- Simplicity and clarity around planned actions at a strategic level

There are achievable actions for education that can be implemented now that have the potential to create new outcomes. It will take a shift in thinking, courage and commitment but the rewards could be remarkable

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