

# CREATING CULTURALLY-SAFE SCHOOLS for MĀORI STUDENTS

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## ■ Abstract

In order to better understand the present trends in New Zealand's schooling contexts, there is a clarion call for educators to develop sensitivity and sensibility towards the cultural backgrounds and experiences of Māori students. This paper reports on the work of four scholars who share research that has been undertaken in educational settings with high numbers of Māori students, and discusses the importance of creating culturally-safe schools – places that allow and enable students to be who and what they are. The theoretical frameworks drawn on are based on both a life partnership analogy as well as on a socio-cultural perspective on human development and learning. The Māori worldview presented in this paper is connected to the Treaty of Waitangi, The Educultural Wheel and the Hikairo Rationale. Data were collected from two ethnographic case studies and analysed through these frameworks. Practical suggestions are then made for using restorative practices and creating reciprocal relationships in classrooms within an environment of care. The paper reports on an evidence-based approach to creating culturally-safe schools for Māori students.

## ■ Introduction

All students benefit from being in a culturally-inclusive classroom. However, many students from non-dominant cultures are not free to be whom and what they are when they go to school. This paper presents ideas for creating culturally-safe schools; that is, schools that are inclusive environments for Māori students – indeed all students. Māori are the *tangata whenua* (Indigenous people) of Aotearoa (New Zealand). This paper draws on the work of four scholars in the field of multicultural education and attempts to address the question of how to create culturally-safe schools for Māori students. Much of the background for this paper emanates from the work of the Ministry of Education Poutama Pounamu Research Centre, in Tauranga, in the Bay of Plenty region in the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. This centre was formed in the early 1990s by a group of Māori *kaumātua* (men and women elders) from several tribes in the region, (Ngāi te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāi Tūhoe, and Ngāti Awa), who were all concerned to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in local schools. Ted Glynn, a Pākehā (person of European ancestry) educational researcher, was invited to join the group, which operates along the lines of a *whānau* (extended family), and was given the name Poutama Pounamu by the elders involved. Angus Macfarlane adds a perspective to that framework from a Māori worldview. Based on his international ethnographic research on schools as safe communities, Tom Cavanagh offers some practical ideas for creating culturally-safe schools. Sonja Bateman explains how these concepts and practices inform the professional development initiatives of the Ministry of Education (Group Special Education) staff.

## ■ Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this paper stems from a life partnership analogy (Glynn et al., 2001) based on the notion that what we know and understand about conducting personal partnerships in life can guide us in establishing effective working partnerships with others. The analogy draws on the destructive outcomes that can occur within life partnerships, where one partner holds a far more powerful and dominant position within the partnership than the other. Such partners can claim to speak for and on behalf of the weaker partner; to know what the weaker partner

thinks, feels and needs; to know what the appropriate remedies are to solve problems. Such partners often abuse the power they have by imposing their perceived remedies on the less powerful partner, with little or no consultation. Sometimes they resort to undue force in doing this. Such partners may decide unilaterally that the partnership has ended. This partnership analogy both highlights problems and suggests solutions. Two possible solutions emerge: to end the relationship or to restore the relationship.

Fundamental to this framework is the idea that often educators who are members of the dominant and more powerful culture may hold impositional attitudes towards students who belong to non-dominant less powerful cultures, and towards their ethnic and cultural communities. This mode of thinking is a key factor in the subsequent performance of those students as it causes educators to focus on less positive indices in terms of Māori achievement. Such modes of thinking are illustrated in these statements:

- “They’re that sort of person”
- “They’re not very bright”
- “It’s just a peculiar minority”
- “It’s their age”
- “This is a difficult neighbourhood”

(Watkins & Wagner, 2000, p. 3, cited in Wearmouth et al., 2005).

Taking such positions locates the entire problem with the students and their communities. There is no space for considering that problematic student behaviour might have resulted from interactions within the classroom, and that perhaps it is the ecological environment that needs to change.

Socio-cultural theory of human learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bruner, 1996; Glynn et al., 2005; McNaughton, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978) is grounded in a number of important understandings. One of these is that interpersonal and intellectual learning are interdependent from birth and continue to remain so throughout life. Cognitive and intellectual development result not from acquiring generic literacy skills, for example, but from engagement in particular literacy practices through interaction with others in social situations (Scribner & Cole, 1998, cited in Wearmouth et al., 2005). This view contrasts with many traditional Western views of human learning and development in which learning and cognition were seen as largely *independent* of the different influences of particular social contexts and environments. Another important feature of socio-cultural approaches to learning and development is that

children are seen as assuming autonomy over their own learning, and as entering into learning interactions, activities and routines, and developing social relationships with more skilled

members within their cultural communities (Wearmouth et al., 2005, p. 2).

Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman (2005) note that students may not succeed in their learning at school if certain literacy practices are privileged over others, for example when students’ literacy achievements in family, home and community contexts are neither acknowledged nor affirmed in the literacy practices of the classroom and school. When this happens, teachers are challenged to find ways of including students from different social and cultural backgrounds into the community of practice in their classrooms. Further, in many schools teachers may have so little authentic knowledge and experience of the family and community contexts in which their students live that they are unable to participate in those literacy contexts and practices in which their students are already successful. They are unable to give sufficient agency to these students in co-constructing classroom routines and learning opportunities. From a socio-cultural point of view, therefore, how teachers and schools understand as well as how they respond to students with challenging behaviour and learning difficulties is critical. This will require them to examine and modify the way they engage and interact with their students and the pedagogical practices they employ (Macfarlane & Bateman, 2005).

## ■ Connections to a Māori worldview

### *Treaty of Waitangi*

In 1840, Lieutenant-Governor Hobson and Māori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi on behalf of the British Crown and the Māori people, and their descendants. Under Article 1 of this Treaty, Māori ceded *kawanatanga* (governorship or administrative control) to the Crown. Under Article 2, the Crown ceded to Māori *rangatiratanga* (chiefly control or self-determination) over their lands, forests and fisheries and other *taonga* (treasures or resources). Māori also retained their sovereign rights to define, promote and control those treasures and resources, which include the creating, retaining and transmitting of language and cultural knowledge. Under Article 3 of the Treaty, Māori were guaranteed the full rights of British citizenship. Māori have long regarded the Treaty of Waitangi as a charter for partnership and power-sharing in the decision-making processes of government, for self-determination as Indigenous people, and as a guide to intercultural relations within Aotearoa New Zealand.

However, the relationship between Māori and Pākehā (people of European ancestry) in Aotearoa New Zealand has not been characterised by partnership and power-sharing, but rather by political and social domination by the Pākehā majority. This domination

progressed through armed struggle, unjust confiscations of land, biased legislation and successive educational policies and initiatives that have imposed Pākehā language and knowledge to the detriment of Māori language and knowledge. Government educational policies have ranged through assimilation, integration, multiculturalism and biculturalism. The cumulative effects of these successive policies has been to require Māori to sacrifice more and more of their language, culture and their own Indigenous educational aspirations to the needs and goals of the nation, as determined largely by the Pākehā majority. Participation in mainstream education in Aotearoa New Zealand has come for Māori at a cost of their own language and culture.

When educational policies in Aotearoa New Zealand succeed in addressing the principle of protection embedded in Article 2 of the Treaty, and allow Māori to exercise their rights to define and develop curriculum and pedagogy that will protect their knowledge, language, values, beliefs and practices, the scene will be set for schools that will be culturally-safe for Māori students and their families.

#### ■ “The Educultural Wheel”

Macfarlane’s (1997, 2004) work offers a framework for creating a Māori perspective in schools. Bishop and Glynn (1999) are consistent with Macfarlane in identifying *whakawhanaungatanga* (the process of building relationships) as a key *tikanga* (culturally-responsive approach) for improving behaviour and learning outcomes for Māori students. The five concepts that form “The Educultural Wheel” (Macfarlane, 2004) which support this notion are outlined below:

##### 1. *Whanaungatanga* (relationships)

This concept proposes establishing relationships in a Māori context based on kinship, common locality, and common interests. Teachers can engage in this *whanaungatanga* by getting to know each student as an individual, and by generating opportunities to build mutual trust and respect. It is also important for the students to learn something about the teacher’s interest and concerns. This process should begin in the first week of school. Teachers are encouraged to use cooperative learning strategies, to involve parents and families in the classroom, and to engage the support of community people as resources.

##### 2. *Rangatiratanga* (self-determination)

*Rangatiratanga* refers to becoming an effective and competent teacher. Developing skills, gaining knowledge, and working diligently, are significant expressions of *rangatiratanga*. Teachers with *mana* (integrity and dignity) possess a demeanour of dignity

and respect, and recognise and develop the *mana* of the child, particularly in the way they interact with them. Teachers are encouraged to scan the classroom, to use antecedent behaviour management strategies such as effective body language, making eye contact, using physical proximity, displaying confident demeanour and assertiveness. This approach is more effective than relying on aversive control to reduce or eliminate unacceptable classroom behaviour.

##### 3. *Manaakitanga* (ethos of care)

*Manaakitanga* is a concept that embodies a type of caring that is reciprocal and unqualified, based on respect and kindness, a “duty of care”. Teachers are encouraged to adopt an ethic of care in their classroom in order to establish cultural connectedness.

##### 4. *Kotahitanga* (unity and bonding)

*Kotahitanga* is a concept that advocates becoming one out of many, where a sense of unity and inclusiveness is created within the classroom and school by recognising everyone’s *mana*. Teachers are encouraged to establish relationships with students person-to-person, to give awards to the class as a community, to engage in rituals or routines such as a morning *mibi* (culturally appropriate greetings) and after school activities, including support with homework. Teachers are also encouraged to explore and operate by the underlying principles of partnership, protection and participation as represented within the Treaty of Waitangi. These principles may then serve as a basis for a class treaty of power sharing through exercising reciprocal rights and responsibilities.

The school, too, is encouraged to engage in school-wide activities that will help build school communities that are culturally-safe for students from minority cultural groups. Examples of these activities include Te wiki o te reo Māori (Māori language week), and the use of Te hui whakatika (meeting to make amends and restore calm). Te hui whakatika is a process of putting things right after wrong-doing has occurred, and has similarities to contemporary restorative justice group conferencing (Hooper et al., 1999). This is an effective alternative to the deficit thinking that focuses on punishment, such as the suspension or exclusion of individuals.

##### 5. *Pumanawatanga* (a beating heart)

This concept involves pumping life into the other four concepts and sustaining their presence. Teachers are encouraged to adopt a position within their classrooms that is consistent with these concepts, and evidenced in their values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. The school, too, is encouraged to develop an infrastructure of care and support for

students and teachers that are consistent with these concepts.

## ■ The Hikairo Rationale

The Hikairo Rationale is a bicultural approach to working with students who present with challenging behaviour and was developed by Macfarlane (1997) out of a concern that Western theorising tended to dominate the field. This approach focuses on wholeness of *taba tinana* (body), *taba hinengaro* (mind), and *taba wairua* (spirit), within the *taba whānau* (family), and draws on Durie's (1994) Whare Tapa Whā model of holistic well-being. The Hikairo Rationale incorporates Māori and Western concepts and values. The core concept within the Hikairo Rationale is *aroha* or love in all its different aspects such as compassion, empathy, responsiveness and concern). The Hikairo Rationale encompasses seven domains:

### 1. *Huakina mai* (opening doorways)

Establishing meaningful relationships with students by creating positive expectations for student behaviour through modelling, shared experiences, and making connections in a proactive way.

### 2. *Ihi* (assertiveness)

Setting clear boundaries that are fair and consistent, expressing respect for personal dignity, and making constructive use of learning opportunities, as they occur.

### 3. *Kotahitanga* (unity)

Relying on decision-making by consensus through discussion, encouraging cultural identity through the curriculum, and transferring *tikanga* values, such as *haere tabi* (progressing together), *mabi tabi* (working together), *nobo tabi* (staying together), into the classroom. Bateman (2003) offers an example of a resource, *Te Kupenga o te Manaaki* (support network), that demonstrates how the concept of *kotahitanga* can be manifested in a classroom context by infusing the above cultural values in the assessment of Māori students.

### 4. *Awhinatia* (helping process – interventions)

Creating a collaborative classroom climate where individual dignity is highly valued, where teachers believe in students' abilities to learn, and where classroom norms and routines are clearly explained. Teachers reach out with genuine caring and respect for their students, even for those who have been engaged in wrongdoing, while students realise that the realities of their lives and beliefs may be different from that of their teachers.

### 5. *I runga i te manaaki* (pastoral care)

Creating a school culture of support, caring, and understanding, based on the concepts of *tika* (fairness), *pono* (integrity), and *aroha* (compassion). Cavanagh (2004) has observed that it is not supportive teachers that we lack, but rather supportive schools that nurture and support those teachers.

### 6. *Raranga* (weaving process)

Together the student, teacher, and *whānau* see themselves as being collectively responsible for understanding and overcoming challenging behaviours in the classroom, school and community. An example of such a collaborative approach to behaviour management is found in the Hei Awhina Mātua (helping parents) programme involving students, teachers and community (Glynn, Berryman & Atvars et al., 1997; Glynn, Berryman & Bidois et al., 1997).

### 7. *Oranga* (a vision of wellbeing)

Drawing on the work of Glasser (1975) this domain considers the notion of progressing in four ways: (1) giving and receiving love; (2) achieving self-worth in own eyes and eyes of others; (3) having fun; and (4) becoming self-disciplined.

While the seven domains of the Hikairo Rationale overlap and interweave, each is characterised by concepts and principles that can be applied, firmly and democratically, through culturally-responsive teaching. The Hikairo Rationale unabashedly promotes the role that culture plays in the lives of people, and the implications of that role for those working with Māori students and their *whānau*.

## ■ Data sources and methodology

As part of a research project for his Fulbright fellowship in Aotearoa New Zealand, Cavanagh (2004) was inspired to employ the frameworks of socio-cultural theory and a Māori worldview to collect and interpret the data. His ethnographic case study was in a small public rural area school (primary and secondary) in Aotearoa New Zealand, and was a replication of his dissertation study conducted in a private elementary school in the United States. fifty percent of the students in the Aotearoa New Zealand school identified as being Māori. Both studies involved the researcher in spending an extended period of time (over 400 hours) in each school interacting with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members.

Developing a methodological framework for the research undertaken in this case study helped provide a lens for deciding what data to collect from whom and making sense of and understanding the data collected

in the field. Methodologically this is consistent with *kaupapa* Māori educational research (Bishop, 2005; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This culturally-responsive *kaupapa* Māori approach provided guidance for who made decisions, how they were made, and when. This approach allowed for researchers and research participants to critically reflect on their positioning relative to five critical issues (Bishop, 1996) – initiation, benefits, representation, legitimisation, and accountability – and evaluate power relations before and during the research study. These relationships were considered crucial to the underlying purpose of the research.

Constructing ethical relationships was the key to how Cavanagh (2005) actualised this methodological framework in the field. Using a constructivist methodology, he was motivated to develop a relationship with participants that helped to represent their multiple voices in a way that was authentic and genuine. Acting as a “passionate participant,” the aim of Cavanagh’s study was to seek understanding and attempt to reconstruct the multiple voices that were part of the enquiry. After each set of data was collected and analysed, participants were asked for their comments. This approach required that the researcher listen to staff and students and to reflect on the different perspectives people held. This choice encouraged the participants to talk openly about tensions at the school and raised awareness of the school community about those tensions. As a result, the Māori concept *whakawhanaungatanga*, which refers to building collaborative relationships in the research setting in order to accurately represent the voices of the people, took on a deeper and more purposeful meaning (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

The Aotearoa New Zealand study involved collecting data in the form of field notes, formal and informal conversations, focus group interviews with students, staff, and parents, documents, and journal entries. Data were analysed using constructivist grounded theory and vignette writing, and reflective memos were shared with the participants seeking their comment. This approach was chosen to add credibility and trustworthiness to the project.

## ■ Findings

Cavanagh’s project, carried out in Raglan Area School (Cavanagh, 2005), emphasises the need to realise that schools are complex and dynamic organisations. They reflect and are a microcosm of our society. Nowhere else in society do the different dimensions of culture come together in such a small space. We can expect differences and should support, encourage, and celebrate those differences, never allowing one perspective to dominate over another. The tensions resulting from these differences are not altogether unusual and can provide the motivation for improving the intercultural

understandings and communications within the school.

The primary findings from this study show relationships to be the core element for a culturally-safe ethos within the school. The key groups involved in relationships are students, parents, families, teachers, administrators, and community members. The central activities of relationships are explained in terms of three constructs: restorative practices, relationships-based classroom pedagogy, and a culture of care. The glue that holds a school together is an ambience or atmosphere of care, which combines rituals, relationships, and community. The Māori concepts of *manaakitanga*, *kotahitanga*, and *rangatiratanga*, as described by Macfarlane (2004) in the Educultural Wheel provide the connecting links between the three areas described (see Figure 1).

## ■ Culturally-safe schools

In answer to my question about what it is like to be a Māori student in senior school, the student replies, “Most of the time the lights are turned off. The light comes on Tuesday afternoon at kapahaka (Māori performing arts group)” (Fieldnotes, 28 October, 2004).

A new definition of “safety” emerged from this study. From a Māori cultural viewpoint, safety is taken to mean freedom to be who (individually) and what (collectively) we are. From the field experience Cavanagh (2005) learned that Māori students need to feel respected and proud of who and what they are as Māori. Teachers and all school personnel need to respect the Māori preferred ways of learning, *whānau* wisdom, and *karakia* (prayer). Māori preferred ways of learning include acknowledgement, celebration, mentoring, and honouring an individual’s Māoritanga (Māoriness). Senior Māori students’ culture can be validated by allowing them to express themselves in different ways, utilising whole-brain learning strategies, celebrating differences, and developing a deep respect for these students. The key to this process is knowing who to ask and what to ask about *tikanga* Māori (values, beliefs and practices held by Māori people).

## ■ Relationships (*Whanaungatanga*)

Community is a safe and friendly environment where people live in healthy relationships based on caring and support in a family atmosphere; a place where everyone knows and looks out for each other and their surroundings in an atmosphere of bonding of everything and everyone (Fieldnotes, 8 October, 2004).

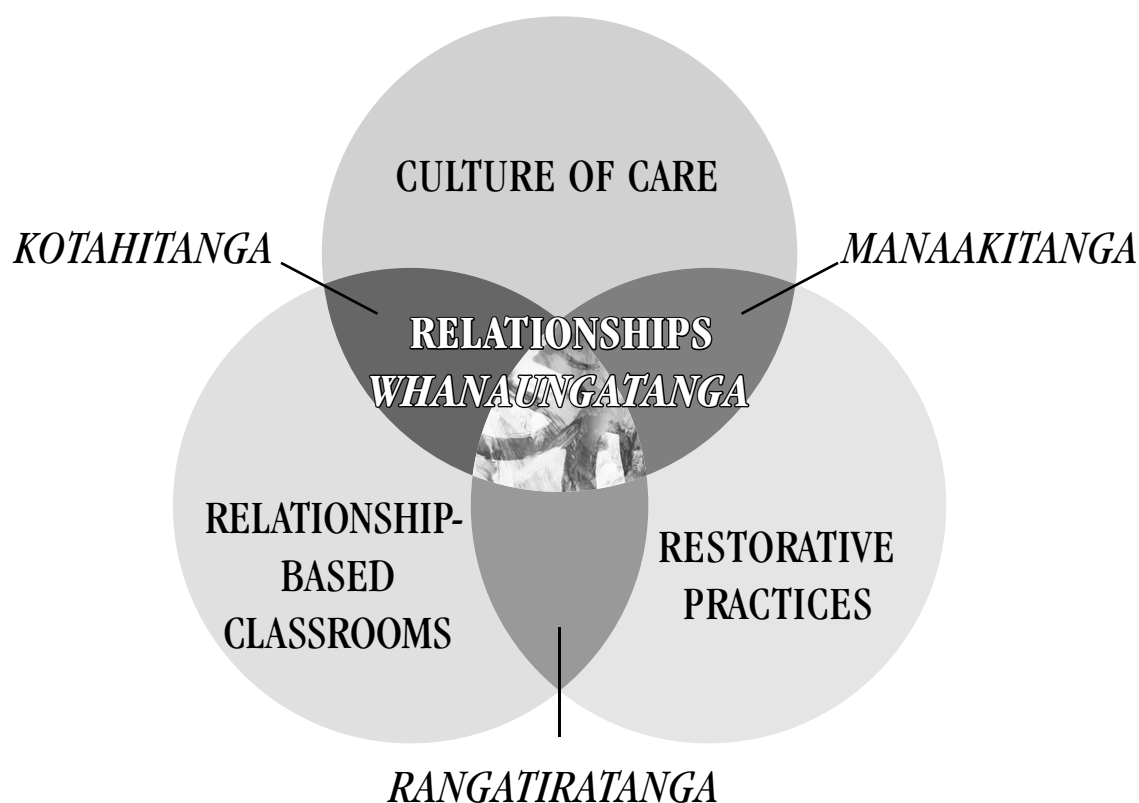


Figure 1. Creating culturally-safe schools for Māori students.

The primary theme emerging from this core idea of creating a culturally-safe school is relationships. Relationships are the key to a successful school and a key motivator for students. The findings made it explicit that relationships among teachers and staff should involve appreciating, supporting, valuing, and encouraging each other to share talents, expertise and knowledge in a non-judgmental manner of collegial sharing and tolerance for differences. Ideally, relationships with students should focus on welcoming each student, developing a personal rapport with them early in the school year, helping each child to feel successful about their learning, seeing themselves as successful learners from the beginning of school to the end, treating them fairly in an open and honest manner, giving them feedback, and making it fun.

#### ■ Restorative practices

“Although they are rough around the edges, in their hearts the students do care”, quoting a teacher (Fieldnotes, 6 August, 2004).

The second theme emerging from the research is restorative practices. Restorative practices typically respond to wrongdoing by striving to restore the *mana* of all those affected by the wrong, those harmed by the wrongdoing, those causing the harm, and their families and communities. Such practices are readily understood within a Māori worldview with its emphasis on collective identity and responsibility. While restorative practices in Aotearoa New Zealand are often equated simply with conferencing, Cavanagh contends that three key elements underpin the philosophy of these practices: safety, accountability, and competency. Safety means freedom from harm and the threat of harm. Accountability means taking responsibility to heal the harm to relationships resulting from wrongdoing. Competency is learning from an incident of wrongdoing how to choose to act differently in the future.

The work of Hooper et al., (1999), Macfarlane (2004) and Wearmouth, McKinney and Glynn (in press), provide Aotearoa New Zealand examples of restorative practices in action, in the context of school and community responses to the challenging

behaviour of Māori students. These examples demonstrate how to avoid merely assigning blame and punishment to individuals, and focus instead on how to put things right and restore the *mana* of all those involved. However, these examples show also that such restorative practices were not owned and controlled by schools alone. Rather, they were owned by Māori *iwi* (tribe), *hapū* (sub-tribe), *whānau* and students, and managed in partnership with schools and communities.

Conversations with parents revealed that bullying was a major safety issue at the school in this study. The parents were concerned when bullying occurred to their child; they were pleased when the school responded quickly to address the situation. Apologies are a major component of healing relationships. Helping students learn to offer sincere apologies is often difficult if they were taught at home not to express their emotions or to say they are sorry. Teachers need to work with students to help them to acquire this skill as this is a crucial element of healing the harm to relationships.

The school and classroom rules that Cavanagh observed emphasised respect in three areas: person, property, and the environment. These observations are consistent with the notion of Noddings (2002), that respect or care for the environment in our community is an important element of creating caring people. They are also very consistent with showing respect and caring for Papatuanuku (mother earth), a central value and practice within Māori culture.

### ■ Relationships-based classrooms

One staff member's philosophy of teaching: "Children want to learn, so find out what they want to learn and remove the barriers to their learning. Keep them safe" (Fieldnotes, 19 October, 2004).

Relationships-based classrooms are *whānau*-oriented and involve the *whānau*. They are place-based, constructivist, personalised, and encourage role models and mentorship (*tuakana-teina*). A *whānau*-oriented classroom empowers students to participate in creating a learning environment based on reciprocal relationships between the teacher and students and students with students. Involvement of the *whānau* in the classroom is based on trust. For *whānau* to feel welcome in the classroom they need to feel welcome at anytime, have an authentic role to play in the programme, and be allowed to have spiritual involvement.

Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Walker (2006) explain that the project commenced in 2001 and sought to address the self-determination of Year 9 and 10 Māori secondary school students by talking with them as well as teachers, principals and *whānau*

about just what happened to limit and/or improve their educational achievement. From these narratives of experience, the project developed an Effective Teaching Profile, which identifies understandings and practices that will assist Māori students to achieve to their potential in mainstream classrooms. The project seeks to implement this Effective Teaching Profile by creating a culturally-appropriate and responsive context for learning in classrooms, through the development of a pedagogy of relations. This development is undertaken through a process which promotes the pedagogies both within classrooms and beyond classrooms. According to Penetito (2004), place-based education occurs outside the classroom, and mainly in the communities within which the students live. This type of education helps students to become aware of their roles within the community, gain hands-on learning and experience, and also increases their awareness of the world around them. This study identified that place-based education was happening for the students.

Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al. 2006) is a research/professional development project that aims to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in Aotearoa New Zealand through operationalising Māori people's cultural aspirations for self-determination within non-dominating relations of interdependence. Te Kotahitanga exemplifies how to create a relationships-based classroom founded on a *kaupapa* Māori solution (a solution determined by Māori, based on Māori values, beliefs and practices to the educational crisis that is currently facing Māori students in mainstream educational settings. In this sense, the project is informed by a *kaupapa* Māori theory of self-determination.

Constructivism is a teaching philosophy consistent with the position taken in this paper that is based on 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. Constructivist classrooms are co-constructed and collaborative and involve an holistic approach based on collective learning, shared responsibility and shared ownership of the classroom. In these classrooms deep learning takes place because there is the opportunity for doing things differently, creativity is honoured, and students are allowed to be who and what they are. These classrooms are student-driven when students are free to be themselves. They are learning-centred when the teacher is a friend and has an equitable relationship with the students. Teachers can create personalised classrooms by developing a rapport with students early in the school year, being transparent, offering individual attention, and using "I" statements. During this study, it was observed that in a relationships-based classroom students are encouraged to be role models for their peers and younger students by mentoring,

intervening when misbehavior is occurring, and assuming leadership roles. Because this idea is based on the *tuakana-teina* (cultural role of the older being responsible for the younger) model, it is linked to the *whānau* orientation of the classroom and school.

### ■ Culture of care

We would love you to tell all the tamariki ... they showed excellent *manaakitanga* (caring) to everyone through their *waiata* (song) and *haka*. The school truly reflects our community and *whānau* by ... biculturalism and *whanaungatanga* (relationships) strengths ... you are a great example to heaps of schools around Aotearoa (New Zealand) (From letter dated 22 November, 2004).

Cavanagh's initial research in America resulted in a theory of a culture of care for schools. This theory was based on the elements of rituals, healthy relationships, and community. Similar themes emerged from the Aotearoa New Zealand rural area school study. It was clear from both studies that an ambience or atmosphere of care is central to creating a safe school.

### Rituals

Rituals at the school were seen to be framed in the context of providing *manaakitanga* (hospitality) to guests. Both Māori and Pākehā traditions formed the basis for the ritual of providing hospitality to guests. The Māori traditions of *powhiri* (formal welcome) and *whakatau* (informal welcome) for guests, and providing *koha* (gifts) to special guests (like student teachers and returning students), were an integral part of school life. *Karakia* in Māori was often shared at the beginning and end of meetings and gatherings. The English tradition of morning or afternoon tea was also a well-established ritual at this school. Whenever guests were present, *kai* (food) was provided by staff, parents, and students. Through these rituals the students learned the value of hospitality. Just as care is an exchange process – learning to care for and about others and how to respond appropriately to care – hospitality in the Māori tradition is a reciprocal process – providing hospitality to guests, expecting to be treated with hospitality when visiting these guests.

### ■ Relationships

This study identified the importance of schools building student competency in creating and maintaining relationships. Student choice, peer support and respect were the major themes found in this area. Students need to be offered choices when

misbehaviour occurs. Such choices help them to learn from their mistakes and to make better choices in the future. Peer support, among the teachers as well as among students is necessary for building healthy relationships. The study found that it was important to understand how teachers asked one another to cover duty for them, how a teacher sent a student to another classroom for time out, and how teachers spent time with one another socially. The students too were encouraged to support one another when they were injured and when they were being disciplined. Older students helped the younger ones with projects.

### ■ Community

The findings demonstrated that the concept of community meant there is a place for everyone. Solidarity or “all for all” at the school meant that once a student was part of the school *whānau* (regarding the school operating as an extended family) every effort was made to ensure there was a place for the student – a place to learn and a place to create healthy, positive relationships. Being bilingual and bicultural contributed to cultural safety in this school. Although the English language dominated, there was respect for *te reo* Māori (language) and *tikanga* Māori (culture). The school offered students many choices and was flexible in providing alternatives that responded to students' individual learning styles and needs. Another key attribute of this school was its small size. Ark (2002) reports on evidence that small schools experience less violence than larger schools. Where there is less violence there is a greater chance of establishing a caring community, but this does not preclude larger schools succeeding in this respect. Another important component of a culture of care in schools is continuity, and one of the main advantages of an Area School like the one in this study is combining students from primary and secondary years on one campus. While some people may see that as a disadvantage, the continuity of this process, particularly transitioning from primary to intermediate and intermediate to secondary school is a great advantage for students. Another advantage of the Area School is the older students can be a buddy or mentor to younger students (*tuakana/teina*), modeling appropriate behaviour and tutoring them in their learning.

### ■ Conclusions

Creating a culture of care in schools – culturally-safe classrooms and culturally-safe schools – involves challenging and reviewing the systemic processes and practices that exist. Education for students within classrooms and schools in Aotearoa New Zealand must be responsive to the learning needs and cultural values of those students: A well known *whakatauki* (Māori proverb) *Kia kite, kia matau, i Te Ao Māori, ma te reo* clearly espouses the message that it is only through exposure to and awareness of Māori culture and



language that an understanding of a Māori worldview – or what it means to be Māori – will develop. Holmes (1982) declares that cultures and languages which are regarded as useful or prestigious are more likely to be accepted and promoted by those in positions of power. Given that one's own culture and language reflects personal identity and self-worth, then it follows that school systems and programmes which are reflective of and responsive to the culture and language of Māori will be espousing a clear message about how Māori students and their *whānau* are perceived. Conversely, as stated by Macfarlane (1998), the continuation of a dominant and mono-cultural classroom delivery will essentially serve to perpetuate the underachievement of Māori students within mainstream education.

For many schools, creating a culture of care would initially require them to encourage and support their teachers to learn more about things Māori, to explore Māori concepts and perspectives, and to ultimately infuse this knowledge into their interactions with students. At the classroom level it would require teachers to focus on the classroom culture and practice, specifically drawing from the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, in deciding how a culture of care may be established. Building a positive classroom culture is contingent on students having input and being included in determining the cultural boundaries and guidelines as embodied within the concept of *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination). Bird and Drewery (2000) outline the significance of the four domains of Durie's (1994) Te Whare Tapa Whā (extended model of wholeness), and explore the implications of these four domains for Māori students in classrooms. This paper proposes that classroom routines and programmes need to reflect these fundamental domains in order to progress educational and social development for Māori students.

Rangihau (1975) describes the essence of learning as a Māori in a Māori world, and reflects on the importance of group dynamics in achieving self-concept and a desire for learning. The employment of such strategies as cooperative learning and peer tutoring should therefore be considered as preferred options for teachers when tailoring programmes. The need to ensure that programmes acknowledge, reflect and respond to Māori-preferred learning styles should also be understood and operationalised by teachers. Metge (1984), references eight aspects of learning which best meet the needs of Māori students. Holistic, group and oral/aural aspects are predominant in effective learning strategies. Cathcart (1994) outlines the importance of linking the culture of home and school, by incorporating specific cultural activities into the classroom programme as well as within the ethos of the school. These activities are reflective of many of the aspects referenced by Metge and include contextual practices preferred by Māori, namely the use of rhyme, rote and patterning. Macfarlane (2000)

discusses comments made by Makereti who describes Māori as a culture *putting the people before the self*, and further outlines the importance of *whanaungatanga*. The importance of sharing, consultation, collaboration and participation should not be underestimated. When such processes and concepts are embraced by teachers and schools, then strong cultural links are more meaningfully secured, leading to the likelihood of enhanced educational outcomes for Māori students.

The Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane, 1997), mentioned previously, is a bicultural approach that can be used by teachers and schools to improve behaviour and learning outcomes for Māori students. Macfarlane proposes that it may be too much to expect teachers to achieve full bicultural competence, however, it is not unreasonable to expect then to strive for this. Indeed, a desire to aspire to bicultural competence clearly indicates an appreciation of the uniqueness of Māori students and their culture. The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993), states that the framework "acknowledges also the value of the Treaty of Waitangi and of New Zealand's bicultural identity" (p. 1). The position of Glynn, Berryman, Walker, Reweti and O'Brien (2001) clearly recognises the importance of understanding and accepting the values of two traditions within bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand, and links directly to the partnership agreement of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Mauri Ora (Ministry of Education, 1990) epitomises the essence of biculturalism, reminding teachers that respect for others, provision of equity for all and the acknowledgement of difference and diversity, are true indicators of a society which is mature and tolerant. If we, as a society, are to believe that we are embracing biculturalism, then we must honour, practise and live the ideals agreed to when, in 1840, two cultures came together at Waitangi.

The Treaty of Waitangi (Article 2) guarantees Māori protection of their *taonga* (treasures – *taonga* such as the culture and the language. In honouring the *tikanga*, or intent, of the Treaty of Waitangi, teachers and educational professionals should ask the following questions: Does our organisation use Māori people to decorate a process that remains resolutely non-Māori? What is the role of Māori staff within our school? What are the connections with our Māori community? What training is available for our teachers and administrators on things Māori? As a school, what do we believe biculturalism to be? Are our classrooms and school processes truly reflective of Māori and bicultural practices, values and understandings?

Responses to these questions will provide the basis for schools to identify and address baseline issues. There is no easy solution. A determination to find passage through what may be challenging – sometimes even hostile – experiences, will lead to renewed understanding and commitment to creating culturally-safe schools. Listening to the voices of

the Māori students themselves is one of the integral factors throughout this process. The answer given by one senior Māori student in a secondary school to Cavanagh's question "What it is like to be a Māori student in senior school?" was "most of the time the lights are turned off. The light comes on Tuesday afternoon at kapahaka". This student was considered by administrators at the school to be successful and presenting no behaviours of concern. However, her response clearly indicates that the definition of success should not be based on external and observable behaviours only. Implicit in her response is the notion that success in the classroom should not require them to leave their cultural identity at the school gate.

No-one can pretend that getting a consensus on creating culturally-safe schools is a simple task for school administrators and classroom teachers. However, the findings from the research studies referred to in this paper may serve to encourage schools to develop policies and programmes tailored to their own contexts and cultures. Restorative practices, the Hikairo Rationale, and the copious strategies inherent within the Educultural Wheel, are suggested as educational approaches to improve the quality of teaching for Māori students. All these resources have an important role to play in teacher education programmes, special education programmes, professional development initiatives for teachers and resource teachers, and information materials for schools' governing bodies.

*Te whitingā kia tata ka nobo*

*Kia roa te putanga kē*

Let us work closer as a group

So that security and survival is ensured

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## ■ Glossary

Aotearoa	original name for New Zealand
aroaha	love, compassion
Awhinatia	helping process, interventions
haka	ardent and animated dance with chant
hapū	sub-tribe
Hei Awhina Mātua	a collaborative behaviour management programme
Hikairo	renowned ancestor
Huakina mai	opening doorways
I runga i te manaaki	pastoral care
ihi	assertiveness
iwi	tribe
kai	food, sustenance
kapahaka	a Māori performing arts group
karakia	prayer, incantation
kaumātua	older people in Māori society
kaupapa Māori	a Māori approach, a Māori philosophy
kawanatanga	governorship
koha	unconditional gift
kotahitanga	unity, bonding
manaakitanga	ethos of care
Māori	Indigenous people
Māoritanga	Māoriness, being Māori
mātua	parents
mihi	culturally appropriate greeting(s)
oranga	a vision of well-being
Pākehā	person of European ancestry
Papatuanuku	Mother Earth
pono	integrity
Poutama Pounamu	Ministry of Education Research Centre
powhiri	formal welcome
Pumanawatanga	a beating heart
Rangatiratanga	self-determination
Raranga	weaving process
Taha hinengaro	cognitive aspect
Taha tinana	physical aspect
Taha wairua	spiritual aspect
Taha whānau	family aspect
tangata whenua	Indigenous people
taonga	treasures, resources
Te Kotahitanga	a professional development project

Te Kupenga o te Manaaki	supportive process for assessment and planning
te reo Māori	Māori language
Te Whare Tapa Whā	an holistic framework in health and education
Te wiki o te reo Māori	Māori language week
tika	fairness
tikanga	custom(s)
tikanga Māori	values beliefs and practices held by Māori people
Te Hui Whakatika	restorative practice
tuakana-teina	cross-age mentorship
waiata	song
whakatau	informal welcome
whakatauki	proverb
whakawhanaungatanga	the process of building relationships
whānau	extended family
whanaungatanga	relationships



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*The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* is a peer reviewed research journal publishing articles in the field of Indigenous education, broadly defined. It is the only journal for educators devoted specifically to issues of practice, pedagogy and policy in Indigenous education in Australia. The journal has an international audience and is highly valued by its readers as a reliable source of information on Indigenous education issues. Contributions on the participation of Indigenous people in education and training; equitable and appropriate access and achievement of Indigenous people in education and training; and the teaching of Indigenous studies, cultures and languages to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are encouraged. Notes to Contributors can be found at the back of each issue. The journal is published by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland, under the strategic management and with the support of the Unit Director, Michael Williams.

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