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# A New Net to Go Fishing: Messages From International Evidence-Based Research and *Kaupapa* Māori Research

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This article draws upon a Māori metaphor to describe the theoretical framework underpinning the methodology and findings of a research project completed by researchers from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, in 2010. It explains how and why the project required the research team to synthesise key information from four New Zealand Ministry of Education Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) reports as well as *kaupapa* Māori research associated with the Ministry's *Ka Hikitia* Māori Education Strategy. The key messages outlined in this article were designed by the research team to serve as a new tool to assist whānau (family) and iwi (tribe) to actively engage in the New Zealand schooling system and assert their rights in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840). Given the large number of Māori children attending Australian schools, the findings of this research may be of interest to Australian educationalists.

■ **Keywords:** Māori, Ka Hikitia, Indigenous, Best Evidence Synthesis, Treaty of Waitangi

This article provides a description of a research project, commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2010), and undertaken by a team of researchers from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Given the large number of Māori children now attending Australian schools, this research holds relevance to Australian and New Zealand educationalists and policy planners. The ministry required the research team to identify key information from four of its Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) reports, and from *Kaupapa* Māori (Indigenous) research conducted in association with the development of the ministry's strategic plan for Māori education *Ka Hikitia*. To conduct the first phase of this research, the research team engaged with a panel of Māori academics, iwi (tribal) education leaders and ministry officials.

The second phase sought input from two focus groups of Māori community representatives. The article begins with a description of the research objectives. It then outlines the methodology central to the project. This is followed by a description of a metaphor designed to articulate the key findings of the research in a 'user-friendly' language, as required by the ministry. The relationship between the

Articles of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) and the intent of the metaphor adopted by the research team is also explained. The research findings are then summarised to outline the shared key messages for whānau Māori (Māori families), iwi (tribe/s) and schools to consider with regard to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. This is then followed by a description of recurring key messages specifically identified for whānau and iwi to consider in relation to their Treaty rights. There is then a summary of key messages identified specifically for schools to consider in relation to their Treaty obligations. A relevant whakataukī (proverb) draws this article to a close.

## Research Objectives

The research project sought to identify key information from four of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's

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best evidence synthesis (BES) reports and the research team was asked to present the information identified in a language and style that would be accessible to a wider Māori audience. This translation was required by the ministry to assist it in its efforts to increase whānau and iwi involvement in the education system, particularly the compulsory education sector. This research was commissioned in support of the core strategic statement vision of *Ka Hikitia Managing for Success* (the Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012), which is to see ‘Māori enjoying education success as Māori’ (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 9) and to give effect to the ‘principles of the Treaty of Waitangi’. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed by Crown representatives and leaders of different tribal groupings during 1840. While it is now widely regarded as New Zealand’s ‘founding document’, many of the rights guaranteed to Māori in the English and Māori texts of the Treaty have been ignored by successive governments. Despite the protection offered in the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori lost considerable amounts of land through the 19th and 20th centuries as a result of acts of conquest by Crown forces during the so-called ‘New Zealand Wars’ (1843–1872) and parliamentary acts of land acquisition following these wars.

Additionally, numerous acts of parliament have led to a succession of assimilation policies designed to undermine Māori cultural practices. A legacy of this trend has been the continued deficit theorising of many non-Māori education policy planners and teachers, who have dominated the teaching workforce. This cross-cultural disconnect continues to undermine Māori aspirations in schooling, today. However, the Treaty of Waitangi now has legally enforceable effect in 62 separate acts of legislation, including the Education Act (1989). Most of these legislative references to the Treaty are not made with regard to the Treaty texts but, alternatively, to the ‘principles’ of the Treaty (discussed in more depth, later). *Ka Hikitia* reflects the New Zealand Government’s recent attempts to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to remedy past injustices caused by earlier (Crown) Māori schooling strategies. As a result, this research was designed to translate jargon from a western research paradigm and to provide key messages for those whānau and iwi who have been most marginalised by the New Zealand schooling system. This translation, it was envisaged by the ministry, would assist marginalised whānau and iwi to assert their rights as informed Treaty-partners. The following section now describes the intent of the BES program and identifies the four BES reports central to the research.

## The Four BES Reports

The BES program critiques research projects and research-based educational literature, subjecting them to further analysis and interrogation. It aims to (a) identify key change factors associated with improving educational out-

comes in New Zealand schools and early childhood education contexts, (b) inform New Zealand education policy development, and (c) strengthen educational practices in New Zealand settings. The BES reports are, therefore, an extremely important body of work in the context of New Zealand educational research and wider (international) education discourses. A number of BES reports were integral to this research project (Alton-Lee, 2003; Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Having addressed the objectives of the assigned research as well as the significance of the BES reports, the following passage outlines the intent of *Ka Hikitia*, a strategy document that provides a key policy platform for this research project.

## *Ka Hikitia: Managing For Success*

The research fell under the auspices of *Ka Hikitia* in that it was required to contribute to goals and objectives for Māori schooling. A series of ‘levers’ for success were identified in *Ka Hikitia*. One is ‘Increasing whānau and iwi authority and involvement in education’. The strategy document (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008, pp. 29–30) states that:

- Parents and whānau play a critical role in supporting their children’s learning right from the start, and;
- Learning is more effective when whānau and iwi are valued partners in the education process, and when educators, whānau and iwi are open to learning from and with one another.

The research team supported the Ministry’s view that authority and involvement in education are particularly significant factors in improving the ability of schools to meet Māori educational aspirations. The research team also agreed with the ministry that increasing whānau authority is a critical task. This, the research team agreed, required (a) the need for increasing whānau and iwi understanding of ‘how’ the schooling system works, and (b) support for whānau and iwi to critically engage with the schooling system, so that all parties might better understand the implications of local and national education policies, local school cultures and pedagogical strategies. However, the research team also suspected that the idea of simply increasing whānau and iwi involvement needed to be investigated further.

Whilst there has been much international literature produced around parental involvement in education and the positive effects this has on student achievement outcomes, there appears to be little consensus in the literature around the sort of involvement that leads to improved outcomes. Consequently, the research team was interested in contributing to a discourse about how whānau and iwi might engage in education; particularly in ways that might enhance the quality of relationships between schools and whānau/iwi and improve academic outcomes for Māori

students. The research team did not want this project to use or reinforce a positivist and empiricist western paradigm that considers itself objective and neutral. So the team chose to narrate this project and to conceptualise research as the 'seeking and the articulation of knowledge [as] ... a process of story-telling' (Jackson, 2010, p. 27). It was felt that a metaphor would best enable us to recount the different dimensions of this work. However, before describing the metaphor used to frame our presentation of the key (translated) research messages for whānau and iwi, we will outline the methodology that is central to this project.

## Methodology

The methodology was made up of three interconnected stages. The first stage was the development of a framework (which in this research involved the use of a metaphor) to use in the identification of key findings for whānau and iwi to consider. In constructing the metaphor the research team carried out a secondary analysis of the feedback from the public consultation of the draft *Ka Hikitia* Māori Education Strategy document. The research team also looked at literature related to Māori educational aspirations. This formed the criteria for the preliminary synthesis of the four BES reports. In the second stage the research team completed a preliminary (initial) scan of the four BES reports for key findings, and presented these to a panel of Māori educationists, iwi representatives and policy makers (Reference Panel A) for their comment. The task of this panel was to ensure that the content was 'accurate' and 'meaningful' to Māori communities.

The third stage of the project was to 'translate' the key findings into more accessible language. The research team viewed the construction of BES reports as a discursive practice, that is, they were reports written in a language that was shared and understood by the communities taking part in their construction (i.e., academics and educationists). The task was, therefore, to 'translate' the findings into more accessible language while also ensuring that the complexity of the ideas was not lost. The research team met with another reference group (Reference Panel B) who were community members with varying levels of academic success and alphabetic literacy to assist with the translation process. In order to do this the research team carried out an initial translation of academic jargon frequently found in the BES literature and literature associated with *Ka Hikitia*. This translation was then presented to the reference group and both parties discussed the meaning of the messages and ways of rewording them. As a result, a project metaphor was developed in making strategic use of the space between both Pakeha and Maori fishing grounds, or bodies of knowledge (Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2011).

## Project Metaphor

The metaphor was inspired by Royal's (2009) reference to Sir Apirana Ngata's use of the well known whakatauki (proverb), *ka pū te rūha, ka hao te rangatahi* ('the old net laid rested while the new net is cast'). This whakatauki was first shared in association with a question raised during an address to the Hui Rangatahi (young people's gathering) held in Wellington in 1900:

I pēnei ake ai te whakamārama kia ea ai tēnei pātai, ki hea tuku ai te kupenga, ki hea hao ai te rangatahi? Ko te whakautu, hei waenganui, kaua hei ngā taunga tawhito i te wā o te Māoritanga, kaua hei ngā taunga hou rawa o te Pākehā, ēngari hei waenganui, kei reira te mano o te ika e porangirangi noa ana. Ko ngā tohunga hei hao i taua waenganui nā, ko te rōpūi whakatauria tahitia i roto i te mātauranga Pākehā, i te mātauranga Māori. Kei runga i a rātou te kupu nei, 'E hao rā e te rangatahi. (as cited in Royal, 2009, p. 3)

A metaphor was developed so the research team could best answer the question (posed in the original te reo Māori/Māori language above). When translated, Ngata's question asks us, 'where shall we (as Māori) cast our net?' The answer is, as Ngata originally suggested, between — not in the ancient conclusions of the time of Māoritanga (Māori ways of being and knowing) nor in the entirely new conceptions of the European (Pākehā) ways of knowing, but rather between them, in a third space. There the multitudes of fish (denoting different forms of knowledge) can be seen gathering. Royal accordingly drew upon Ngata to reaffirm that the notion of fishing and fishing nets 'is a powerful symbol which speaks to Māori experiences of seeking knowledge and understanding' (Royal, 2009, p. 3). For Royal the sea represents both the source of life and the abode of knowledge while the fish represent sustenance. He emphasised the fact that Ngata encouraged young Māori (1900) to cast their nets in between Māori and Pākehā fishing grounds, 'where the fish can be seen intermingling' (Royal, 2009, p. 3). Hence the research team framed the casting of the metaphorical net as the act of *seeking* knowledge and using Western research to assist whānau and iwi to uphold their Treaty-rights. Recognition of unequal power relations and the politics of knowledge construction in these negotiations are, accordingly, very important in making strategic use of the space between both Pākehā and Māori fishing grounds, or bodies of knowledge.

## Ngā Pōito

In the fishnet metaphor the pōito (or net floats) are themes identified in the consultation process of *Ka Hikitia* and wider literature related to improving schooling outcomes for Māori children. The pōito also represent Māori educational aspirations. In order to identify recurring Māori educational aspirations we analysed the Ministry's *Ka Hikitia* consultation feedback, and other key research reports on Māori educational aspirations (Cooper, 2008;

Durie, 2005; McKinley, 2000). The research team decided that, metaphorically speaking, some pōito are the responsibility of schools to uphold, some of parents and some are the responsibility of both parties to the Treaty of Waitangi, signed by the Crown and Māori leaders (1840). The pōito keep the top of the net as close to the surface as possible. The punga (Articles of the Treaty) represent the net weights and pull the bottom of the net downwards.

Together with the punga, the pōito create a tension that ensures that the net remains open and stretched out to achieve the maximum catch. Schools and whānau have the shared responsibility for identifying pōito and holding them in place. Partnerships between whānau and schools (and shared responsibility) were highlighted in the selection of information and choice of pōito integral to this project metaphor. The research team sought to identify the information relating to schooling from the BES that would increase whānau and iwi authority in their engagement with schools. This information was organised under eight pōito to be held in place by schools in the fishnet metaphor. For each pōito deemed the responsibility of the school, a corresponding pōito was identified from wider literature that would be the responsibility of the whānau, iwi and wider Māori community. These pōito relate to a broad body of literature that clarifies for parents the types of things that they might do to support their children's achievement in school.

### Ngā Punga

As stated elsewhere, the pōito (net floats) and punga (anchors/weights) ensure that the kupenga (net) is stretched open. In the project's metaphor these punga represent the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi) and the Crown's (1989) 'principles for Crown Action on the Treaty of Waitangi'. Members of Reference Group A, who participated in this research, advised us that they would like us to acknowledge that most Māori signatories to the Treaty of Waitangi placed their signatures on the Māori text, otherwise known as Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They also specified that we needed to value the legal, ethical and moral weight of the punga that denote Te Tiriti o Waitangi. To honour their requests the research team stated that the promise of tino rangatiratanga (full chieftainship) must be central to any further discussions, between the Crown and iwi Māori (Māori people), about the future design, development, implementation and evaluation of Māori education policy guidelines.

The research team determined that tino rangatiratanga should be included in this document as a core (metaphorical) pōito, in its own right; while it also represents the metaphorical weighted-chord that attaches the punga firmly across the bottom of the metaphorical kupenga (net). It is these punga (Treaty Articles and other Treaty rights embedded in Crown law) that assist the pōito (e.g., Māori aspirations) to hold the entire kupenga (net) firmly

in place against the metaphorical tides of intergenerational trends (such as institutional racism). Since the research team was also engaged in a 'Treaty partnership' with Ministry of Education officials, the team had to strive to align and translate the findings of the BES reports (and *Ka Hikitia*) in ways that would align with the Crown's two (1989) core principles for Crown action on the Treaty of Waitangi. The New Zealand State Services Commission (2005, pp. 14–15) advised that the Court of Appeal emphasised that there were originally two 'core principles':

These were 'partnership' and 'active protection' ... Both the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal have [among other things] determined that the principle of partnership includes the obligation on both parties to act reasonably, honourably and in good faith ... As to 'active protection', President Cooke observed that the duty of the Crown is not merely passive but extends to active protection of Māori people in the use of their lands and waters [and other taonga] to the fullest extent practicable.

Since 1987, the New Zealand Courts, including the Waitangi Tribunal, have developed other more detailed principles. However, as the New Zealand State Services Commission (2005, p. 15) observed, 'the concepts of "partnership" and "active protection" remain dominant'. Consequently, the pōito, punga and kupenga metaphor described in this article often alludes, directly and indirectly, to these two 'core principles'. In the following sections the key messages for whānau, iwi and schools are presented alongside some of the original quotes and references from the four BES reports and research used to develop *Ka Hikitia*. The key messages are organised using the pōito (Māori aspirations) and punga (Treaty rights) central to the research team's fishing metaphor.

### Shared Pōito, Mahi Tahi: Working Together to Help Mori Pupils Enjoy Success as Māori

One of the first (shared) key messages identified for whānau, iwi and schools revolved around the need for schools to reject deficit views and to work more closely alongside whānau and iwi as 'equal partners'. The research team deemed that this stance was consistent with the Crown's Treaty principle of 'partnership', and translated this as whānau and schools working together in an 'equal partnership' to support the education of children. The research team added that this means whānau and iwi making decisions together with teachers, school leaders and the children themselves as per the Crown's (Treaty) principles of 'partnership' and 'participation'. The team also explained that this suggests that whānau and iwi will have an equal say in relation to what happens in school for the children, and that whānau will be known and treated by teachers and school leaders with respect. In order to make this 'equal partnership' for learning possible, the research team added that *Ka Hikitia* demonstrates that it is necessary for teachers and school leaders to acknowledge that schools have a long history of not being open to

working with Māori parents as ‘equal partners’ (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4).

Whānau and iwi were also advised that the BES reports concur that equal partnerships for learning are important for the success of children in school and that children receive much better support when the partnerships exist (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 179). Similarly, *Ka Hikitia* and the BES reports repeatedly demonstrated that equal partnerships for learning should be based on collaborations built upon the principle of equality if they are to improve the academic achievement levels of children, irrespective of their ethnicity (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 179; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4). Like *Ka Hikitia*, the evidence cited in the BES reports consistently supported the view that ‘equal partnerships’ for learning can improve children’s learning both at home and in the school (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 143), and the belief that equal partnerships for learning can and should support both academic and social achievements (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 31).

This trend suggested to the research team that ‘equal partnerships’ for learning should be initiated in ways that (a) allow both parties to have their own perspective and say, (b) build on the aspirations of whānau/iwi, and (c) add to (rather than undermine or devalue) the values, experiences and competencies of whānau and their children. This led the research team to conclude that equal partnerships for learning should be based on the different strengths of different whānau, and not on negative (deficit) or stereotypical views of Māori culture. Additionally, whānau and iwi were advised that equal partnerships needed to be equal; basing decisions on the idea that whānau, iwi and/or other forms of Māori communities (e.g., urban Māori authorities) have valuable things to offer the schooling system. The analysis of the BES reports also revealed that a substantial body of New Zealand research suggests that the majority of whānau (irrespective of income levels) do care about the education of their children, and that they are prepared to work in partnership to support their learning. This finding challenges many teachers’ deficit views about whānau aspirations for their children (Macfarlane & Glynn, 2010; Smith, 1995). Whānau can and do help children achieve in school whether or not they have fiscal resources or a strong academic background (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 172). Similarly, we found that schools can help whānau who are going through financial difficulties by giving wider support, so that whānau can still support the schooling of their children (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 172).

The examination of the BES reports also demonstrated that Māori children thrive when Māori knowledge and culture are valued at school. However, the analysis also found that teachers often fail to incorporate Māori content, mispronounce names of Māori students, have lower expectations for Māori students, assess their work

using the wrong criteria and give Māori students less praise. It is, therefore, important that Māori knowledge and culture are valued, and that the voices and aspirations of Māori parents and students are taken seriously (see Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008; Manning, 2009). Likewise, the development of the pōito labelled ‘mahi tahi’ resulted from the research finding that there is considerable evidence indicating that children achieve best when there is a clear and strong connection between what happens at home and what happens at school. This includes a clear match between home and school of language, culture, ideas and ways of doing things (Alton-Lee, p. 44). School leaders (such as principals) should, therefore, make sure that what children are told and experience at school matches what they are told and experience at home (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 43). When there is a gap between the home and the school, it is the school leaders’ responsibility to ‘close the gap’ (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 45). Moreover, it is the school’s responsibility to find out about the lives and lived experiences of students in their whānau and communities, in order to change things in the school and to create better connections with the whānau and culture of the student (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 43; Manning, 2009).

## Key Messages for Whānau and Iwi to Consider

### Whānau/Iwi Pōito, Tū tangata: Feeling Confident to Get Involved

The research team concluded that those whānau/iwi who effectively uphold the po<sup>o</sup> ito ‘t<sup>u</sup> tangata’ (feeling confident to get involved) are usually those who do ‘feel confident to get involved’ with schools and in the teaching and learning of their children. The literature associated with *Ka Hikitia* (Margrain & Macfarlane, 2011) suggests that this confidence often comes from knowing that the school does recognise, respect, need and value ‘who they are as Māori’, and affirm their knowledge, ideas and authority and this equates to the Crown’s (Treaty) principles of ‘partnership’ and ‘active protection’. The BES reports also consistently suggested that when student learning is the focus of a school–home partnership, the quality of teaching improves in the school and children enjoy success (Alton Lee, 2003, pp. 38, 40–41). Another significant (recurring) trend suggested that schools should incorporate links to the places that children ‘connect with’, and that their ‘cultural heritage’ should be valued by schools. It is, the research team advised, ‘very important that schools respect, value and use the cultural wealth that Māori children bring to school’ (Alton-Lee, 2003, p. 37; Manning, 2009).

### Whānau/Iwi Pōito, ‘Ako’: Being a Learner and Teacher

The examination of *Ka Hikitia* and BES literature indicated that whānau and iwi successfully upholding the

pōito 'ako' (being a learner and teacher) are those who see themselves as life-long learners and the first teachers of their children. This suggests that parents recognise, use and create teaching and learning opportunities in their everyday interactions with their children. A large body of evidence reiterated the view that the involvement of whānau with their children's learning in school can help Māori children to achieve academic, cultural and sporting successes at school, especially if schools encourage this to happen (McRae, Macfarlane, Webber, & Cookson-Cox, 2010). It was significant that numerous studies cited by the four BES reports concurred that children with parents who had no involvement in school, frequently performed less well than children with active parents in many subjects, including mathematics, literacy and communication (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 125). The Crown's (Treaty) principle of 'participation' is applied when whānau are actively involved in schooling.

### **Whānau/Iwi Pōito, 'Māramatanga': Seeking Information to Make Informed Decisions**

In relation to the pōito 'Māramatanga' (seeking information to make informed choices), the research team envisaged that this would require some whānau to become more assertive in order to influence the schooling of their children. However, this is more likely to occur *if* whānau feel that their voice will be 'heard', 'respected' and 'acted upon'. Research conducted with Māori parents, in association with *Ka Hikitia*, demonstrated that parents need to know that they *do* have the right to stand up and have their voices heard (McRae et al., 2010). Moreover, they have a right to have access to knowledge and information that enables them to make informed choices. It is this information that will enable Māori parents to have meaningful input into curriculum decision-making processes related to the schooling of their children. When whānau have this information and participate in schools as informed citizens, the Crown's Treaty principles of 'partnership', 'active protection' and 'participation' are enacted.

### **Whānau/Iwi Pōito, 'Tino Rangatiratanga': Becoming Advocates for Māori Children's Success**

The BES and *Ka Hikitia* research repeatedly demonstrates that those whānau/iwi who are upholding the pōito 'tino rangatiratanga', tend to use te reo (Māori language) and tikanga (custom) at home and take pride in Te ao Māori (the Māori world). Both sets of research suggested that Māori children, who are secure in their Māori identity, *can* 'move forward' with confidence (McRae et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2009, p. 116). However, studies cited in these reports also show that 'if children feel they have to 'act white' to achieve in schools, they will "start hiding their abilities" (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 38). Similarly, the research team found that the BES research echoes much of the *Ka Hikitia*-research in finding that whānau, hap and

iwi may have their own ideas about 'what success looks like' for their child/children. Thus whānau and iwi were advised that they will need to exercise their Treaty rights, associated with tino rangatiratanga, to request and support changes that will help a school to match different types of whānau and not just those found in the so-called cultural 'mainstream'. Having outlined the key messages for whānau and iwi to consider, the following section outlines key messages for schools.

## **Key Messages for Schools to Consider**

### **School Pōito, 'Whanaungatanga': Removing Barriers and Building Meaningful Relationships**

The research team's analysis of the research associated with *Ka Hikitia* found that schools upholding the pōito 'whanaungatanga' (removing barriers and building meaningful relationships), are those that seek to maintain a strong relationship with the communities of their Māori students. These schools challenge negative ideas about Māori people and provide many opportunities for whānau and iwi to engage in ways that accommodate their different needs. They acknowledge that Māori communities want the best for their children and that they have much to offer schools. The BES research also consistently suggests that schools should 'recognise that whānau involvement and support has the greatest impact on [enhancing] the outcomes of children. (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 143). The process of integrating Māori values and norms with the values and norms of schools can have a positive impact. Hohepa, Hingangaroa Smith, Tuihawai Smith, and McNaughton's (1992, p. 15) analysis of the integration of cultural norms of whanaungatanga, āwhina [to help] and tuakana/teina [the process of older/more experienced sibling/s assisting younger/less experienced sibling/s] into language learning demonstrates the importance of making explicit and developing the sociocultural norms that support students, 'not only in strong cultural identity and social development but also in their achievement' (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 30). It is, moreover, important for schools to enact the (Treaty) principle of 'active protection' and be pro-active and to challenge negative ideas about Māori culture, knowledge and people.

### **School Pōito, 'Manaaki': Challenging Deficit Theorising**

Schools upholding the pōito 'manaaki' are committed to changing thinking and pedagogies to highlight and value Māori language, culture and identity. Schools upholding this pōito are often identifiable because they actively enact the (Treaty) principles of 'active protection' and 'participation' by challenging negative views about Māori knowledge, culture and people (Macfarlane, Cavanagh, Glynn, & Bateman, 2007). Unfortunately, many schools in New Zealand still hold negative views that blame whānau and children for a lack of academic success. There are

many reasons why Māori children may underachieve. One way that schools can lift the achievement of these children is by supporting whānau to support the learning needs of their child or children. 'When ERO (Education Review Office; 1995, p. 18) analysed policy documents from 272 schools identifying barriers to learning, they found that schools predominantly characterised underachieving students and their families as barriers to learning — suggesting that deficit theorising about student failure is common amongst New Zealand teachers and schools' (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 6).

The idea that certain groups of students cannot learn as well as others, or that they cannot achieve as highly as others is simply not true (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xxvii). Hence, schools should recognise that all children have the potential to achieve. Children coming from different families will need different ways of teaching and different kinds of support. (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. 112; Glynn, Wearmouth, & Berryman, 2005). 'Having a range of family resources, both human and material, seems to make a positive difference for children, but the circumstances surrounding the deployment of these resources can be complex. If Māori children (like Indigenous children elsewhere) feel they have to become 'white' to succeed in schools, they will tend to conceal and diminish their ability to achieve. An extensive body of research suggests this does happen when Māori children perceive that only one culture is valued by schools. (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 32). Schools should, accordingly, strive to apply the (Treaty) principles of 'partnership' and 'participation' improve relationships with Māori children and challenge the idea that only children from certain homes or communities can do well.

Furthermore, an extensive body of research, cited by the BES reports and *Ka Hikitia*, demonstrates that if schools, whānau and iwi have high expectations, Māori children are much more likely to succeed. Schools should, therefore, recognise that Māori culture, language, identity, intellect and imagination are all integral to the identity formation processes experienced by differing Māori children. Teachers need to change their teaching to cater for different Māori needs. Studies show that this makes has a huge impact for Māori children (Glynn et al., 2005). The BES reports repeatedly claimed that teachers and school leaders should recognise that school communities are made up of people from all walks of life. Valuing diverse cultures and identities should be seen in the practices of teaching and learning in schools because it is their legal responsibility to uphold the Crown's (Treaty) principles of 'partnership' and 'participation'. Quality teaching respects and affirms cultural identity and creates more and better opportunities for learning (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 31).

Another recurring and closely related message was that schools should value, embrace and make use of the language and ways of teaching and learning that Māori

children bring with them from home as per the (Treaty) principle of 'active protection'. The research team repeatedly noted that effective teaching for diverse children involves changing the culture of the classroom and the school in order to incorporate other cultures. When schools *do* value, uphold and 'celebrate being Māori and all that that means', it helps Māori children to feel 'proud of' and 'good about' who they are. Helping Māori children to 'succeed as Māori', means embracing Te ao Māori (the Māori world) in the culture of the school (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 32). It is also vital that, without being intrusive, schools should know about the lives of the Māori children they teach. This helps teachers to make good choices about what to teach them and how best to teach it.

What teachers know about the lives of children outside of school affects their pedagogical practices. Inquiry needs to become a common pedagogical practice. In the light of the diversity that is inherent in all classrooms, having the means to construct knowledge about differences among learners may be more important and less problematic than having information about learners in pre-packaged forms. (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 35)

### **School Pōito, Wānanga: Effective Teaching and Shared Ownership**

Schools effectively upholding the pōito called wānanga (effective teaching and shared ownership) are those schools where teachers become learners and learners become teachers. This is consistent with the (Treaty) principle of 'partnership'. Whānau are also recognised as teachers and learners. The *Ka Hikitia* research suggests that effective teachers tend to make the most of opportunities to learn from Māori children, their whānau, their hapū, iwi and/or the wider community in the context of Te ao Māori (McRae et al., 2010). These schools and teachers *do* draw upon spaces (and places) in which teachers, whānau/communities and their children can make decisions together about the kind of learning that will be most relevant to them (Manning, 2009). The educational research underpinning *Ka Hikitia* and the four BES reports reiterated that teachers should see themselves as 'agents of change', both in relation to the learning of their children/students and with regard to their own learning (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xiiv). This emerging trend also reiterated the message that schools should assume collective responsibility for the effective learning of each and every student and believe that schools *can* make a difference. 'In some BES studies, school leaders went beyond this organisational brief to ensure that professional learning opportunities existed and systematically developed a learning culture in the school, where they participated as learners rather than organisers of others' learning' (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xxxi). It was also equally evident that support for initiatives, which offer both whānau and teachers opportunities to support the learning of Māori children (at home and school), *are* beneficial for children.



‘The highest overall effect was for interventions that were designed to help parents or other community members support children’s learning at home and school and that simultaneously provided teachers with professional development’ (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 144). The BES reports revealed that it makes a huge difference when schools show strong leadership in the development of a school culture in which teachers see themselves as learners. Studies indicate that teachers learn best in schools where they participate as learners rather than ‘organizers of learners for others’ (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xxxi). ‘In some studies, leaders went beyond this organisational brief to ensure that professional learning opportunities existed and systematically developed a learning culture in the school, where they participated as learners rather than organisers of others’ ‘learning’ (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xxxi).

The research team also frequently encountered the message that there is a theory behind every single practice. Teachers of Māori children need to think about, and to know, what their own personal theories are or they will continue to do what they have always done. Reflection on practice creates new possibilities. Schools should have leaders who promote and participate in teacher learning and development for all staff in school (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 101). Furthermore, the research team advised that schools should work with whānau, iwi and the children themselves, to set and work towards common learning and life goals (Timperley et al., 2007, p. xiv). Teachers, similarly, should value and link the cultural resources that children bring from home to all areas of learning in the school. As one BES report stated, ‘the cultural resources that tamariki [children] bring from home should be valued and linked to all areas of learning in the school’ (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 37). Another recurring message to arise from this research was that teachers should tell whānau what their children are learning and *why* they are learning. They need to see that what they are learning is going to be useful to them in their everyday lives (Glynn et al., 2005). Learning needs to be for a purpose that has meaning and relevance (refer Alton Lee, 2003, pp. 37–38). This clearly suggests that teachers need to promote meaningful intellectual engagement with learning tasks, which means getting Māori (and other) students to develop their thinking and to think for themselves, rather than just repeat what they perceive the teacher wants to hear (refer Alton Lee, 2003, p. 25).

### **School Pōito, ‘Tino Rangatiratanga’: Embedding Te Ao Māori in Schooling Practices**

The evidence cited by the BES reports and the *Ka Hikitia* related research repeatedly suggests that those schools successfully upholding the pōito ‘tino rangatiratanga’ are those that do respect both the Māori and English texts of the Treaty of Waitangi, and embed the Treaty principles of

‘partnership’, ‘active protection’ and ‘participation’ in all learning activities in schools. This means, for example, that Te Reo (the Māori language), tikanga (custom) and Māori epistemologies and ontologies, are included in what is taught to children (Macfarlane et al., 2008). Effective schools tend to provide support for parents to help children learn Te Reo at home. The educational research encountered in the team’s analyses of *Ka Hikitia* and the four BES reports revealed that it is important for schools to recognise that ‘what’ students are and ‘where’ they come from *does* matter. As one report noted, ‘[school] leaders create educationally powerful connections when they: establish continuities between student identities and school practices; develop continuities and coherence across teaching programs [and] ensure effective transitions across educational settings’ (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 116). Another recurring message indicated that schools should address unequal power relations in order to form ‘equal partnerships’. Equal partnerships mean that schools support whānau to support the learning of their children by addressing systemic issues that might prevent whānau from doing so. The Treaty of Waitangi was frequently cited by the *Ka Hikitia* and BES research as a significant ethical and legal lever to support whānau and iwi aspirations for an ‘equal partnership’ with schools.

A compelling body of evidence was cited by the four BES reports to argue that schools should know and work with local Māori people residing in the area that encompasses the school. Moreover, the research team found that leaders can ‘create educationally powerful connections when they: establish continuities between student identities and school practices; develop continuities and coherence across teaching programs [and] ensure effective transitions across educational settings’ (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 116). Similarly, the research team noted that

schools should provide effective teaching that (a) addresses the learning needs of individual students regardless of their levels; (b) provides opportunities for children to think deeply and to come up with their own solutions to problems; (c) enables children to practice what is taught and apply new knowledge in different situations. (Alton Lee, 2003, p. 53)

It is important to note, once again, that teachers *should* link what is taught at school to what students actually experience at home or in other social settings. Similarly, school leaders should ensure that their schools cater for different types of whānau (Alton Lee, 2003, pp. 21, 33; Manning, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

An extensive range of educational research, cited within the four BES reports and research informing *Ka Hikitia* reiterates the message that it is essential for New Zealand schools, whānau and iwi to work as ‘equal partners’ (or ‘mahitahi’) to remedy the negative legacies of previous

(Crown) assimilation policies. This 'equal partnership' is consistent with the intent of the Crown's (1989) principles for action on the Treaty of Waitangi, particularly the principle of 'partnership'. Despite having this Treaty-based right to an equal partnership, many whānau may need to be supported by iwi to uphold the pōito 'tū tangata' (feeling confident to get involved). The research team's analysis of four BES reports clearly suggests that those whānau who have historically had negative experiences of cultural assimilation models of schooling, are much less likely to feel confident enough to become actively involved with schools to enhance the learning of their children. This problem will be compounded if whānau continue to encounter teachers with deficit views of Māori people and/or cannot see that their children's school *does* recognise, respect, need and value who they are as Māori people.

Like teachers, whānau must also be encouraged to see themselves as life-long learners. They also need to be involved in processes typified by the pōito the research team coined 'ako' (being both a learner and teacher, simultaneously). This pōito was most evident in the *Ka Hikitia* related research that recorded parents/caregivers recognising, using and creating teaching and learning opportunities in their everyday interactions with children in culturally responsive ways. Similarly, when whānau are empowered to take hold of the pōito 'māramatanga' (seeking information to make informed decisions), they are more likely to become advocates for their children in school settings. Whānau and iwi do have the right to have access to knowledge and information that will enable them to (a) make informed choices and (b) participate in decision-making processes related to their children's schooling. Furthermore, 'ako' and 'māramatanga' are pōito that resonate with the principles of 'participation' and 'active protection' set out within the Crown's (1989) principles for action on the Treaty of Waitangi. The whānau/iwi pōito, 'tino rangatiratanga', is, likewise, best upheld when whānau and iwi become active advocates for the educational success of tamariki Māori (Māori children) and rangatahi (youths). Tino rangatiratanga is, moreover, enshrined within Article Two of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Māori text of the Treaty of Waitangi) and is, subsequently, a Treaty-based right or entitlement for whānau and iwi to cite in support of their aspirations.

The first key message to emerge for schools to consider is, notably, the pōito called 'whanaungatanga' (removing barriers/building relationships). This pōito complements the Crown's core (Treaty) principles of 'partnership' and 'active protection'. It suggests that those schools that uphold this pōito have a strong relationship with the communities of their Māori students. These schools actively challenge negative ideas about Māori people, and provide many opportunities for whānau, iwi and other Māori social groupings (such as pan-tribal urban authorities) to engage with the schooling process in ways that accommo-

date their different needs and give effect to the Treaty principle of 'partnership'. Schools successfully upholding the pōito 'manaaki' are therefore those schools that actively challenge negative views about Māori culture and people. These schools are committed to changing (racist) thinking and practices to validate Māori language, tribal/community cultures and identities. This anti-racist stance is consistent with the Crown's two core (Treaty) principles of 'active protection' and 'participation'. So too is the pōito 'wānanga' (effective teaching and shared ownership). 'Wānanga' stresses the need for teachers to make the most of opportunities to learn alongside children, their whānau, hapū (subtribe/s) and iwi (tribe/s). Culturally responsive pedagogy is a craft that takes time and energy to develop. The process includes practical inquiry, and self-directed learning that values cultural realities and supports the ongoing development of teacher cultural competency. Having used a metaphorical framework to describe the key research findings in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), this article will conclude with an appropriate whakataukī. This is the same whakataukī that inspired the weaving of our metaphorical net. It suggests that changes are needed in the New Zealand schooling system and that this is an opportune time for whānau, iwi and schools to reflect upon the opportunities provided from the key messages found in the third-space overlaps between Western evidence-based research (the BES reports) and Kaupapa Māori (Indigenous) research (*Ka Hikitia*). The time has come to work together as 'equal partners', in research and teaching, to 'cast a new net'.

### Whakataukī : Proverb

*Ka Pū te rūha, ka hao te rangatahi*

'The old net laid rested while the new net is cast'.

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