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A critical investigation into the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

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Abstract

In late 2014 the government announced the 'Investing in Educational Success' initiative with a $359 million budget. The initiative invited schools to form into local school clusters called Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL). Ninety-three per cent of these clusters and CoLs, identified culturally responsive practice as a core objective. The Ministry of Education has through a number of initiatives attempted to address the achievement disparity between Māori and non-Māori that has resulted in a clear directive for teaching and learning to shift towards a pedagogical practice of 'culturally responsive teaching.' The intention of this research was to examine one CoL that ostensibly focussed on raising Māori student achievement. A qualitative case study approach was utilised that involved participants directly included in one Community of Learning that focussed on Māori achievement in State education, disparity, educational initiatives, and implementing the aspirations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The critical issue was whether there was evidence of tangible and measurable success for Māori students, and what, if any, barriers the CoL confronted in achieving its intended goals.

The research shows that there were benefits to the schools and staff operating as members in the Community of Learning, such as the opportunity to network and work alongside colleagues from other schools. A strong view to emerge was that Across School Teacher (AST) positions benefitted substantially (and perhaps excessively) in the form of professional development, leadership opportunity, classroom release and increased pay. There was an absence of evidence to indicate any significant benefit to regular classroom teachers. The most damning finding of this research is that after four years of operation and over $2 million dollars there is *no* tangible evidence of any improved educational outcomes for Māori students. The CoL initiative, although meritorious in design, has in this specific CoL case

study has failed to deliver any measurable benefit to priority learners. The Investing in Educational Success, with regard to the CoL can be considered, like a number of other initiatives, another lost opportunity for Māori. Further research into the impact of the Investing in Educational Success and Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL) initiative is therefore warranted and highly recommended.

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Ma whero, ma pango, ka oti te mahi

(With red and black the work is completed)

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Definition of Terms

Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako: are groups of schools and/or kura that will come together to raise achievement for all children and young people by sharing expertise in teaching and learning; supporting each other; and reflecting the educational pathway from primary through to secondary. (Ministry of Education: Guide for Schools/Kura, August 2014, p. 1)

Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP):

> *In short, an education: where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; participants are connected and committed to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes.*
>
> (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007, p. 15)

Decile rating: used by the Ministry of Education to work out some of the funding for schools. A school's decile measures the numbers of students living in low socio-economic community. It does not measure school performance or the quality of education. Schools are given a rating between 1 and 10. The lower a school's decile rating, the more funding it receives.

Effective Teacher Profile: was implemented in the classroom of participating teachers in 2004 and 2005 by means of the Te Kotahitanga Professional Development Programme. The six elements:

1. ***Manaakitanga*** – teachers care for their students as culturally located human beings above all else.
2. ***Mana motuhake*** – teachers care for the performance of their students.
3. ***Nga whakapiringatanga*** – teachers are able to create a secure, well-managed learning environment.
4. ***Wananga*** – teachers are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori.

5. ***Ako-*** *t*eachers can use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners.
6. ***Kotahitanga*** – teachers promote, monitor and reflect on outcomes that in turn lead to improvements in educational achievement for Māori students.

Kaiako: teacher

Kaupapa Māori[1]: Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.

Mainstream: Students enrolled in a State-run school.

NZE (Pākehā): King (1985) denotes people that derive originally from Europe, but which are no longer European (p. 12).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi translates in English to Treaty of Waitangi

[1] Māori dictionary definition: www.maoridictionary.co.nz/kaupapamaori

Acronyms

AP:	Assistant Principal
AST:	Across School Teacher
CoL:	Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako
CRP:	Culturally Responsive Practice
DP:	Deputy Principal
ETP:	Effective Teacher Profile
MoE:	Ministry of Education
NCEA:	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZE:	New Zealand European
NZEI:	New Zealand Educational Institute
NZQA:	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PLC:	Professional Learning Community
PLD:	Professional Learning Development
PPTA:	Post Primary Teachers' Association
RP:	Relational Practice
WST:	Within School Teacher

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

In January 2014 the National Government asserted a policy that required the investment of $359 million over four years ($155 million per year) to help raise student achievement. Succinctly, the announcement described that "groups of schools and/or kura will come together in Communities of Learning | Kahui Ako" with a specific focus on "ākonga/students that are at most risk of underachieving" (Ministry of Education , 2014, p. 1, 5). While "at most risk" and "underachieving" were vogue expressions in 2014, more recently there has been shift away from such deficit terminology and subsequently replaced by the term priority learners[2]. While it is not fully understood of the ministries reason for the selection of this label or category of learner, this research acknowledges that the term does have some merit in embracing an inclusive approach that acknowledges learners that have historically been marginalized in mainstream education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Review Office, 2012).

A Ministry of Education Guide for Schools (Ministry of Education, 2016) states a Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako, that is, a cluster of schools needs to "reflect the educational pathways of their students; include around ten schools; have a geographic basis, and be committed to focusing on student achievement" (p. 6). Furthermore, it is required in consultation with key stakeholders, to identify the following factors for their CoL:

- *Their shared achievement challenges.*
- *Their plan for addressing the shared achievement challenges*

[2] Priority learners are groups of students who have been identified as historically not experiencing success in the New Zealand schooling system. These include many Māori and Pacific learners, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs. (Education Review Office, August 2012).

- *How they will involve parents and whānau in implementing the plan*
- *How they will monitor progress on their shared achievement challenges*
- *What structures could be put in place to support their Community of Schools to set challenges, implement, and monitor their plan*
- *Issues related to size or type of schools in their proposed Community of Schools and how these will be addressed*
- *How they will identify themselves as a Community of Schools.*

(Ministry of Education Information Pamphlet, 2014)

Philosophically, the journey of this investigation began with a very basic inquiry: "Has the Investing in Educational Success (IES) policy, and $359 million of taxpayer money failed to deliver the improved outcomes for all students, and in particular Māori students?" Consequently, and more precisely, this research aims to investigate one specific Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL), and whether it has achieved its stated objectives of improving outcomes for priority learners, specifically Māori. An analysis and informed critique of the anatomy of one specific CoL allows a unique insight into the elements of leadership, school involvement demography, impact of newly formed teacher roles, and configuration of funding, guidelines, and iwi engagement. Examining the tiers of leadership created within the CoL - the Lead Principal (LP), Across School Teachers (AST), and Within School Teachers (WST) - was imperative, to assist in understanding the purpose and operation of these roles when considering student outcomes, and therefore attaining a clearer picture of Māori student success.

1.2 Rationale

As mentioned earlier, Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako have been operating in Aotearoa New Zealand since 2014 and sufficient time has elapsed to draw reasoned conclusions about

their progress. While the education sector welcomed the additional resourcing IES would provide, major concerns were raised immediately after the announcement (see Chapter 2). New Zealand Institute of Education (NZEI) President, Ian Leckie (2015), asked “where is the New Zealand-based evidence to support that this [CoL] will raise achievement?” (p. 1). Guided by Mr Leckie’s comments and my personal involvement in a Community of Learning, the research began to manifest itself, and was shaped by two major considerations.

Firstly, the personal interest in investigating the simple question of whether this CoL achieved the Ministry of Education goal of raising achievement for all children, and in particular, Māori students. Unfortunately, a disparity continues to exist between Māori and non-Maori within mainstream education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The specific CoL in this investigation has been operating since 2016, aligned with a particular focus on priority learners as a stated goal and agreed upon Achievement Challenges signed in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education. The agreed challenges:

1. *Addressing needs for identified priority groups in Literacy years 1-11;*
2. *Addressing needs for identified priority groups in Numeracy years 1-11;*
3. *Addressing the retention of priority students in school education beyond their 16th birthday to raise potential achievement at NCEA L2; and*
4. *Engagement and support of students with additional learning needs.*

By employing the earlier work of Bishop and Berryman (2006) who developed the Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) and six core elements of culturally responsive pedagogy, the research aims to provide whether the CoL has been able to “develop a means of working with teachers to help them understand how to develop positive learning relationships in mainstream

learning, have their cultural identities confirmed, and achieve at levels unheard of before" (p. 271). By determining the CoLs implementation of culturally responsive practice provides an insight of the levels of improved outcomes for Māori students within this CoL catchment area.

Secondly, as an experienced former primary school principal the interest in the role that leadership may play, became a sensible priority, given that leaders from a number of schools were being invited to 'come together' and to work on common achievement challenges. The process of selection for these newly appointed leadership roles during the construction and implementation of a Community of Learning would provide positive insights into the dynamics of leadership that is particular to cross-school collaboration. This is due to the simple fact that each school has the potentiality to contribute to the leadership roles in their respective collective learning community. Understanding the process of candidacy, selection, appointment and experience of involvement may provide an improved understanding of how to better navigate the challenges and negotiate the political agenda that certain schools may 'bring-to-the-table' in regard to the leadership dynamic and qualities required.

In summary the research question and objectives of this investigation are:

- **Research Question:**

  "Investigating the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako?"

- **Research Objectives:**

  i. To gather the experiences and perceptions of CoL leadership and Across School Teachers (ASTs) and Within School Teachers (WSTs) who are

involved in the implementation of a specific CoL initiative in the Aotearoa New Zealand context;

ii. Report on the ways in which a cross-school collaborative venture may assist in the development of leadership potential for both Principals and teachers involved in a CoL initiative;

iii. Explore and reveal the perceived impact of a CoL initiative in regard to encouraging, promoting and enhancing Māori education aspirations and success.

1.3 The Importance of the 'Insider Voice'

To ensure that the CoL specifically selected for this investigation was able to undergo rigorous investigation, it made sense to employ a methodology that would allow for the realities of those involved to be at the foreground. Hence a constructivist qualitative design was employed that consisted of the amalgamation of ten (N=10) one-to-one interviews the CoL leadership and Across School Teachers (ASTs) and Within School Teachers (WSTs) to substantiate an exploratory case study construct. By doing so, not only the voice and perspective of those included in the CoL are important, but also the inter and intra-actions are significant and relevant (in)between the differing groups (teachers and schools) involved (Tellis, 1997, p. 2). Notably, a case study methodology allows for an in-depth investigation to ensue and although all the findings are not generalizable across all CoLs in the Aotearoa New Zealand context, this case study does provide an exclusive comprehension of the enablers and challenges that maybe shared across CoLs, adding to a growing literature of educational leadership at the CoL implementation level and the most appropriate strategies to employ in order to attain the desired outcomes they have set.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis contains six chapters in total. This chapter, Chapter One, has outlined the intent of this research, outlining the rationale for a case study approach and the examination of one CoL and the outcomes for Māori students. Chapter Two examines the literature related to communities of learning, leadership, and Māori education. Chapter Three will detail the methodology justifying the use of a qualitative approach and how it was applied. Chapter Four presents the findings, via a thematic approach of the participant interviews. Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to the presented literature provided in Chapter Two. Chapter Six summarises the findings of this research and provides a set of suggestions for consideration for both Communities of Learning and Māori achievement in mainstream education. The research concludes with possible areas for future research.

1.5 Chapter Summary

The heart of this research is to investigate the perceived impact of the CoL in regard to the development of school wide and collaborative approaches to leadership and improved outcomes for priority learners, specifically Māori students. Furthermore, this introductory chapter explicates the need to reveal the opportunities and challenges that exist for teachers to assume leadership in newly created roles. In the end, the aim is to reveal the development of a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako and the benefit the Community of Learning has provided in regard to developing leadership in the role of Across School and Within School teacher positions.

It is argued that the Ministry of Education model for a Community of Learning is flawed and subsequently presents significant challenges in meeting its intended goals. Exposing how the

CoL is being experienced and interpreted by those involved as ‘insiders’ of the process, gives voice to their needs and aspirations for those considered as priority learners. Their voice and ascertaining whether the educational needs and aspirations of Māori are being met, are imperative if the government investment in this initiative is to be warranted.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following chapter will examine the literature relating to collaborative practice between groups of schools. As a new initiative in the New Zealand educational landscape, literature related to communities of learning is limited. This chapter will examine international findings of similar initiatives and seek to identify what research there is to support the model of a community of learning and its implementation in the New Zealand setting.

2.1 Investing in Educational Success: Communities of Learning Framework, Structure and Early Statistics.

Investing in Educational Success [IES] was an initiative announced by the Government in January 2014. The core focus was to raise student achievement by injecting $359 million over four years, with a view to contributing $155 million per annum after that. The Ministry of Education (2014) initiative encouraged clusters of local schools to form 'Communities of Schools'[3] (p. 6). The IES Government policy, as highlighted in the Ministry of Education Monitoring and Evaluation Report (2017) notes that the policy is designed to shift and lift student achievement in the following ways:

- *recognising and utilising expertise across the system where it is needed most;*
- *creating opportunities and incentives for good teachers to stay in the classroom;*
- *encouraging collaboration across the system;*
- *enhancing opportunities for teacher-led innovation of new and good practice, to make visible what is possible, new and exciting;*

[3] Communities of Schools were renamed Communities of Learning in late 2014 following an agreement between NZEI and MoE of a Joint Initiative where both "parties agree to work together through joint MOE/NZEI working parties to identify roles and resourcing to meet needs within communities of learning

- *incentivising outstanding leaders to take up principal roles to make schools better, and turn around struggling schools;*
- *creating more opportunities and two clear pathways to fuller professional career as a teacher or a principal;*
- *a developing group of measures to record and report on the progress of the achievement challenge.*

Ministry of Education (2017)

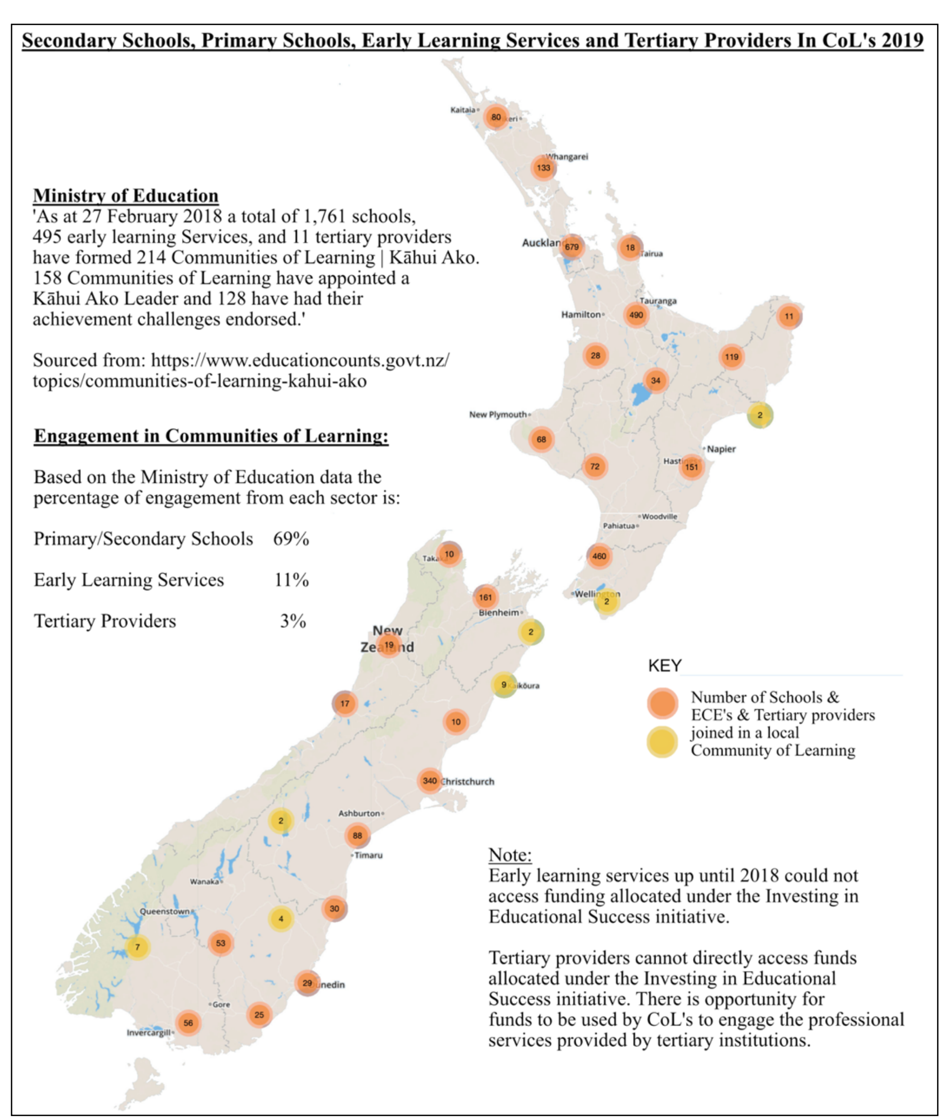
Two key IES themes were identified by the Ministry of Education:

1. 'Enable collaboration between teachers, leaders, schools and communities across the national network' (Ministry of Education 2014, p. 5).
2. 'Improve career pathways for teachers and leaders'.

Ministry of Education (2014, p. 5).

The first Communities of Learning began forming in 2015. In 2019 numbers have grown to 214 active Communities of Learning operating in New Zealand:

Figure 1: Current educational providers involved in a Community of Learning



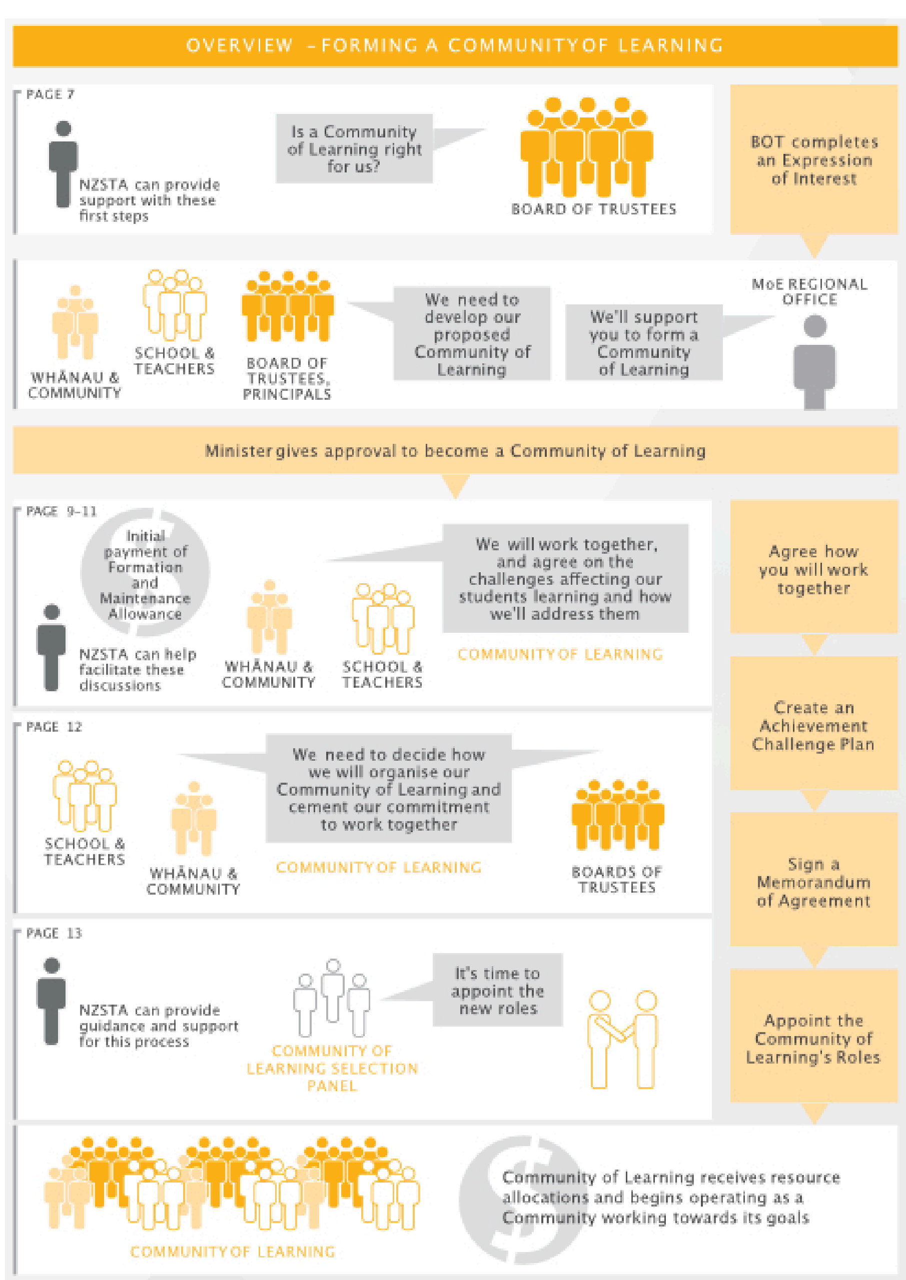
Data shows that after four years of the Investing in Educational Success (IES) initiative there are still 31 per cent of primary or secondary schools are not involved. Although beyond the focus of this research it would be interesting to know why a significant number of primary and secondary schools have decided not to join a Community of Learning.

Figure 1 shows that only 11 per cent of early learning services are involved in CoLs. This low percentage, however, is likely the result of early learning services not being able to access funding from the IES funding until 2018. This would have been a significant barrier to engagement, given the increased workload and the absence of financial support. It is important to note here that this factor has also been identified as a barrier for the CoL studied

in this research when attempting to engage with local iwi and is discussed later in this chapter. The low percentage of tertiary education (3 per cent) is likewise reflective that they are unable to directly access IES funding.

The Ministry of Education provided a graphical overview of the process to work through in joining a Community of Learning:

Figure 2: *Community of Learning Guide for Schools and Kura (2016)*



Once a group of schools was approved by the Ministry of Education as a Community of Learning a number of new positions became available for member schools. These roles are summarised by the Ministry of Education in an information booklet (2015, revised 2016) to schools and kura:

Figure 3: Community of Learning Guide for Schools and Kura (2016)

Appoint the Community of Learning roles

As part of the initiative the details for the three new roles have been agreed between the Ministry, SPANZ, NZPPTA and the NZSTA to support the Community of Learning in undertaking its activities. This section describes the three new roles and how to appoint them.[5]

Prior to application and/or initiating an appointment process for any of the roles you should review the terms and conditions for the role in the relevant collective agreements and associated guidelines. Further information is available in the *Role Selection and Appointment Information* booklet.

Understanding the new roles

Within a Community of Learning there are three new roles: the leadership role, the teacher (across community) role and the teacher (within school) role. In any Community of Learning only one leadership role is available. The number of the other roles is determined by the size of the Community of Learning.

This entire concept and policy for Investing in Educational Success came as a surprise to many in the educational community. There was little prior notice, and a lack of detail about how the CoLs would operate. A Ministry of Education working report (2014) acknowledged "there remain concerns within the wider sector which we believe would be addressed through

engagement on the details" (p. 9). The *New Zealand Herald* quoted[4] principal and NZEI representative Mark Potter's conclusion that "It was not designed for communities to collaborate. It was designed for one entity, the Ministry of Education, to impose its ideas on what schools should be doing." It is important to note that Potter at the time was the NZEI representative on an advisory group developing the IES survey tool, and therefore, in an informed position to make this claim. Charteris and Smardon (2018) noted their concern that:

> *The CoL initiative could adversely influence existing cross-school collaborations, with established, high performing groups destabilised. Further, the study suggests that the process of incentivising particular types of schools clustering could serve to produce greater homogeneity, rather than contextual and political school community individuality.* (p. 38)

Following the IES announcement the New Zealand Educational Institute, the union representing the primary education sector, sought feedback and presented its findings:

> *93% of NZEI members voted no confidence in the IES and we asked for genuine discussion with educators. We asked for flexible, locally driven ways to support collaboration. We asked for resourcing to support kids and their learning, not just for new roles. We rejected top-down, one-size fits all models and said we should build off existing successful practice. We voted against National Standards being the determinant of resourcing or roles. We asked for evidence-based approaches.*[5]

[4] *New Zealand Herald, April 1, 2018 – Teachers: $300m 'communities of learning' have flopped.*
[5] The Joint Initiative: NZEI: https://www.nzei.org.nz/NZEI/

This rejection of the proposed IES model by the primary sector led to a 'NZEI Te Riu Roa – Ministry of Education Joint Initiative' being established in late 2014. The NZEI agreed to 'Terms of Reference' with the MoE and noting in its context statement that:

> *Both parties recognise that collaborative practices already occur; for example, in clusters to improve subject knowledge and pedagogy, in learning and change networks, in the adoption of new technologies, and that the development of a whole of pathway approach does not replace or diminish the need for such ongoing collaborative work.* (p. 1)

What is clear from the literature is the rocky start IES experienced, particularly with the primary sector. However, following the joint agreement with the NZEI, the implementation of Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako were in a position to move forward heading into the 2015 year.

2.2 Community of Learning | Kahui Ako: Funding

The focus CoL for this research was established and commenced operation in mid-2016. Initially starting with eight schools (comprising of two secondary schools and 6 primary schools) the CoL has now grown to a current total of thirteen schools. An additional primary school has been approved to join in 2020 with another two primary schools currently in formal negotiations to be included. The CoL student population currently exceeds 7,500 students and this number will increase to approximately 10,000 when the three additional schools join the CoL.

An official information act request provided the following financial breakdown, to date, for this Community of Learning (accurate as of May 2019):

Table 1: Total funding allocated to the CoL[6] [7] [8]

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Totals	Percentage
Community of Learning operations grant	$13,215.00	$35,142.00	$69,581.00	$68,187.00	$186,125.00	8%
Change management support	-	-	$26,710.00	$23,110.00	$49,820.00	2%
Kāhui Ako Leader and teacher salary allowances and back fill costs		$432,458.00	$959,869.00	$715,277.00	$2,107,604.00	90%
Totals	$13,215.00	$467,600.00	$1,056,160.00	$806,574.00	$2,343,549.00	

To date the CoL in this research has received a total of $2,343,549 million with the bulk of this funding used to fund staff appointed to positions in the CoL. The levels of remuneration for the Lead Principal, Across School Teachers, and Within School Teachers are determined by the Education Act 1989 – School Staffing Orders (LI 2018/19) and provides a formula-based calculation for all CoL where AST and WST positions are based primarily around staffing entitlements that reflect student numbers. Based on the Staffing Orders this particular CoL commenced operations at the estimated levels[9] shown in Table 6.

The financial figures reveal that the majority of Investing in Educational Success resourcing is spent on AST and WST remuneration. The figures represented in Table 2 do not include the release component required for ASTs (2 days per week) and WSTs (2 days per term).

[6] This includes, but is not limited to, unit payments to teachers, governance group, lead principal, release costs, and outside facilitators.
[7] Funding figure for 2018-2019 only reflect level of spending at time of the Official Information Act request in May 2019.
[8] Two additional funding streams allocated as per Table 2.
[9] Definitive school roll numbers for 2016 were not confirmed therefore numbers are based estimated student rolls at the time.

Table 2: Calculated 2016-2017 remuneration costs for research CoL per annum[10]

	Number of appointments to positions	Collective Agreement Entitlement	Total per Annum Cost
Lead Principal	1	$25,000 per annum	$25,000.00
Across School Teacher	8	$16,000 per annum	$128,000.00
Within School Teacher	40	$8,000 per annum	$320,000.00
			$473,000.00

Official Information Act information also showed that to date the CoL has received two additional funding streams. A successful Teacher Led Innovation Fund (TLIF) application brought in $40,200.00 as a one-off payment. The Ministry of Education (2018) explains that the purpose of TLIF funding is an investment that supports and models collaborative inquiry as a discipline for innovation within and across learning organisations" (p. 2). The Ministry defined innovation projects as involving inquiring into new teaching practices, or applying existing practices in new contexts, and investigating in a systematic way whether they result in improved learning outcomes. The two key outcomes sought from the TLIF are "the development of innovative teaching and learning practices and sharing the findings and learning from inquiry projects so others can test promising innovative practices in their own context" (Ministry of Education Teacher Led Innovation Fund, 2018).

Table 3: Additional funding support TLIF and EPS

	Amount Funded
Successful Teacher Led Innovation Fund (TLIF) application	$40,200.00
Expert Partner Support (commenced 2017 & ongoing) - cost to date	$47,591.83
Total	$87,791.83

[10] Figures represent figures generated when the research CoL commenced with 8 member schools and represent approximate totals.

Since 2017 the CoL has also received Expert Partner support of $47,591.83 and this is an ongoing funding stream. The purpose of Expert Partner's (EP) is to act as 'critical friends' to "help Communities of Learning strengthen their evidence gathering practices, accurately define relevant achievement challenges, plan, and monitor activity that addresses the achievement challenges, and share effective practice" (Ministry of Education, 2019, para. 4).

The combined total of TLIF and EP funding of $87,791.83 when combined with CoL for the research CoL equals $2,431,340.83. TLIF and EP represent 3.5 per cent of the total CoL funding. The data shows that the majority of funding for the Community of Learning (approximately 90 per cent) is directed towards those appointed to Across School or Within School positions.

2.3 Community of Learning | Kahui Ako: Across School Collaboration

Anfara and Teague (2012) point out that the term "professional learning community, or PLC, has been widely used in education to represent various groups assembled to work together for a variety of reasons" (p. 58). The term used for collaboration between schools have is named in many iterations within the literature - for example; Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Communities of Practice (CoP), Community of Inquiry (CoL). In New Zealand's case it was the Communities of Learning[11] (CoL). Robinson (2018) identifies that "New Zealand's highly autonomous schools are now being encouraged to form loose networks of schools bound together by a common achievement goal" (p. 3). When considering Robinson's view, it is interesting to note the changes in the Ministry of Education's description of a

[11] The New Zealand Community of Learning is similar in structure and function to other models such as Professional Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, and Communities of Inquiry.

Community of Learning between 2014 and 2016. The definition provided in a guide for schools in 2014 and at the time described a Community of Learning as:

Groups of schools and/or kura that will come together to raise achievement for all children and young people by sharing expertise in teaching and learning; supporting each other; and reflecting the educational pathway from primary through to secondary.

Ministry of Education, Community of Learning – Guide for Schools and Kura (August, 2014, p. 1)

Whereas the updated 2016 'Community of Learning – Guide for Schools and Kura' described a Community of Learning as:

Communities of Learning are groups of kura/schools that come together, along with their communities, to raise achievement for all tamariki and young people by sharing expertise in teaching and learning (ako) and supporting each other. They focus on the compulsory educational pathway but can also engage with early childhood and post-secondary education to fully include the learning (ako) journey children and young people will take.

A Community of Learning will work with the students, parents, families, whānau, iwi and other communities within its catchment, as the support and involvement of these groups is essential for the Community of Learning to progress towards its goals.

Ministry of Education, Community of Learning – Guide for Schools and Kura (July, 2016, p. 3)

Over a two-year period, the description and guide for schools/kura was reworded significantly. The updated 2016 version now makes direct reference to a focus on 'compulsory educational pathways' along with a widening of scope to include both early childhood and post-secondary education. The changes between the 2014 and updated 2016 guide are significant when considered in the context of participant responses shared in the Chapter Four findings. Several participants believed that the Ministry of Education was 'making up' the CoL as they went along, and given the significant changes represented here, there may be some validation of the participants views.

2.4 An Analysis of Addressing the Needs of Priority/Māori Learners

When considering the intent of the Communities of Learning to raise achievement for all students and priority learners it is important to consider factors related specifically to Māori. When signing the Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) Māori must have felt some sense of comfort for their future. As Jackson (1988) observed, "for many Māori, the terms of the Treaty provided the ultimate protection for their way of life, their institutions, and their culture: they were mechanisms to protect their taonga" (p. 48). However, Ka'ai-Mahuta (2011) notes that the Te Tiriti o Waitangi has not been honoured and, almost immediately after its signing, a policy of assimilation was implemented by Pākehā (p. 198). An address by Bishop (1999) spoke of unsuccessful attempts by the Crown to "subordinate Māori through assimilation, integration, multiculturalism, and biculturalism" (p. 116).Bishop observes (1999) that "despite the guarantees of the Treaty of Waitangi, the colonisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the subsequent neo-colonial dominance of majority interests in social and educational research has continued" (p. 1).

The Waitangi Tribunal (1986) found that Māori learner needs were not being adequately met and as a result was one of the five recommendations to the Minister of Education:

> 3. *TO THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION that an enquiry be instituted forthwith into the way Maori children are educated including particular reference to the changes in current departmental policies which may be necessary to ensure that all children who wish to learn Maori should be able to do so from an early stage in the educational process in circumstances most beneficial to them and with financial support from the State.*
>
> Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Te Reo Māori Claim (1986, p. 51)

The Waitangi Tribunal's recommendation points to an education system, at the time, operating in breach of the guarantees given in the Treaty of Waitangi. Barrett and Connolly-Stone (1998) point out that "while the Education Act (1989) provides important recognition of Māori needs and aspirations in the education sector it does not specifically mention the Treaty" (p. 32). However, in short, Māori achievement in education, since the arrival of European settlers, can be viewed as an abject failure.

Prime Minister Helen Clarke in 2000 announced in a Budget Address the flagship *Closing the Gaps* strategy, focused on "reducing disparities between Māori and Pacific peoples and other New Zealanders." Humpage and Fleras (2001) argued that the "core function of Closing the Gaps was to encourage social cohesion by helping more Māori and Pacific peoples become more like well-off Pākehā" (p. 49) and argued this was evidence of "encouraging Māori to fit within Pākehā economic and social models" (p. 50). Mead (2016) asserts that Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and tikanga Māori have "been absent from school curricula during the first century of European settlement" (p. 3) while Nash (2001) claims that:

> *There must be teachers who suspect that the immediate effective cause of Māori educational underachievement is in large measure a deeply institutionalised Anglo-Māori working-class culture with destructive consequences for the aspirations and self-confidence of young people affected by it*. (p. 34).

Hook (2007) attributes the poor educational performance of Māori to "culturally inappropriate Eurocentric expectations and suggests that the remedy lies in the development of culturally appropriate educational programmes that should be delivered in a marae environment" (p. 1). Jahnke (2012) maintains that "after 150 years the New Zealand education system continues to undermine Māori achievement and has yet to find adequate solutions" (p. 1) and Bishop and Glynn (1999) that "Māori language and culture was seen as a prime obstacle to the educational progress of Māori students" (p.16). Durie (2008) highlighted a common theme that the failure of State Education to meet the needs for Māori. This view was supported by Ka'ai-Mahuta (2011) who cites the impacts of Eurocentric education, such as "cultural invasion, subordination, language domination, hegemony, curriculum, racism, and negative teacher expectations" (p. 196) as contributing factors for Māori failure in State education system. Hood (2007) notes that compared with students from the dominant Pākehā European culture the "overall academic achievement levels of Māori students is low, their rate of suspension from school is three times higher, and they are over-represented in special education programmes for behavioural issues" (p. 11).

When examining data as recently as 2017[12] the disparity between Māori and New Zealand European (NZE) students is clearly illustrated.

[12] Data sourced from Education Counts and New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Table 4: NCEA achievement percentages for Māori and NZE 2017

Roll based Year 11 Students Attaining NCEA Level 1	Māori 64.2%	NZE 81.8%
Roll based Year 12 Students Attaining NCEA Level 2	Māori 74.4%	NZE 84.5%
Roll based Year 13 Students Attaining NCEA Level 3	Māori 56.7%	NZE 70.4%

Table 5: Data for stand down, suspension, and exclusion rates 2017

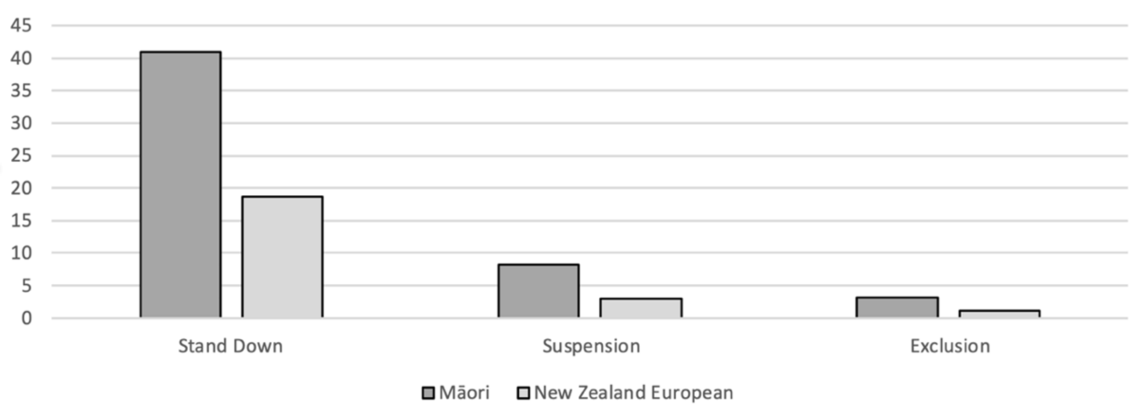


Table 6: Comparative percentages of Māori and NZE attending Decile[13] 1-10 schools

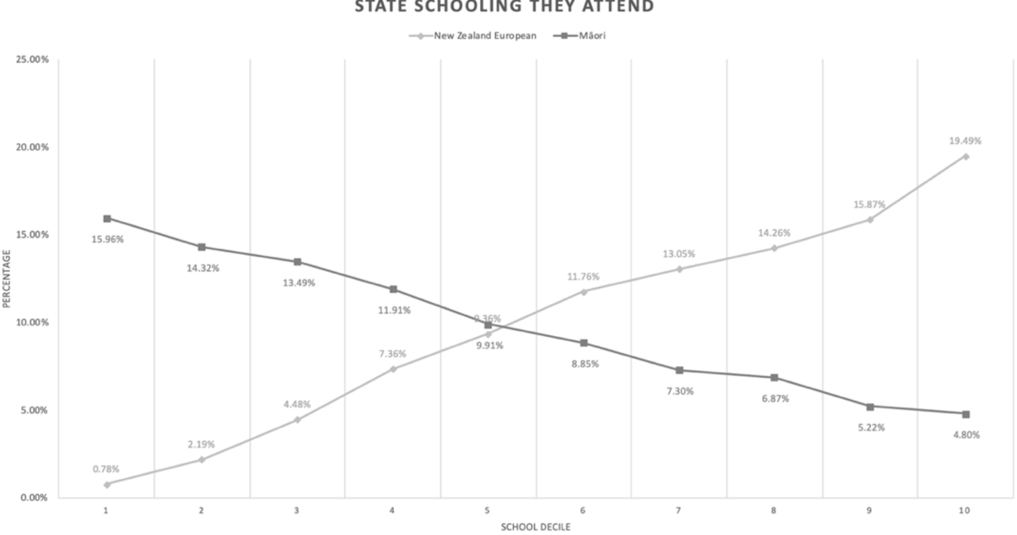


Table 4 data reveals that Māori students are achieving significantly lower than their New Zealand European counterparts, with the rates for stand down, suspension, and exclusion

[13] Decile Ratings are used by the Ministry of Education to calculate funding for schools. A school's decile measures the extent to which the school's students live in low socio-economic or poorer communities. Decile 1

significantly higher for Māori (Table 5). Moreover, the socio-economic background of Māori students (Table 6) tracks in the opposite direction when compared with New Zealand European students. Glynn (2015) asks the question of mainstream teachers "what is their responsibility to the treaty partner in the mainstream?" Glynn also advises that "in order to increase the academic success of Māori students all educators need to develop and deploy a culturally relevant pedagogy" (p. 111). This research is particularly focused on debate around Article 2 of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi where Māori were guaranteed self-determination over lands and taonga:

> *The Māori version of article 2 uses the word 'rangatiratanga' in promising to uphold the authority that tribes had always had over their lands and taonga. This choice of wording emphasises status and authority.*
>
> *In the English text, the Queen guaranteed to Māori the undisturbed possession of their properties, including their lands, forests, and fisheries, for as long as they wished to retain them. This text emphasises property and ownership rights.*
>
> Waitangi Tribunal (2019)

The view held by Māori, and subsequently supported by the Waitangi Tribunal (1987) [14], was that Māori were promised paramount authority (tino rangatiratanga) of the hāpu, over their lands, villages and all that is precious to them (taonga[15]). The Waitangi Tribunal (1989) notes that the word taonga in The Treaty of Waitangi is not limited to property and possessions, as stated in the Crown's English-language version.Understood within their cultural context, taonga is part of the natural world, and recognized as living with inherent value, and includes

[14] Report of the *Waitangi Tribunal on the Orakei Claim* (1987)

[15] Taonga includes property, goods, possessions, effects, object, treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques.

all things held precious: for example, language, culture and health (p. 15). Bishop and Glynn (1998) assert that "*taonga* encompasses the intangible, such as language and all those things to do with pedagogy and epistemology – what counts as knowledge, how that knowledge is to be preserved, transmitted and evaluated" (p. 4). Toki (2017) points out, that "despite the international jurisprudence and constitutional examples articulating the recognition of indigenous rights, including that of self-determination, how this right has manifested for Māori, is still unclear" (p. 144).

Jenkins and Matthews (1989) describe how "the impact of educational policy development on Māori schooling and education in New Zealand has largely been determined by ideologies reflective of the dominant Pākehā culture" (p.85). Following the release of the Waitangi Tribunal Report into the Te Reo Māori Claim (1986), Minister of Education (Russell Marshall) made the following recommendation:

> *That an enquiry be instituted forthwith into the way Māori children are educated including particular reference to the changes in current departmental policies which may be necessary to ensure that all children who wish to learn Māori should be able to do so from an early stage in the educational process in circumstances most beneficial to them and with financial support from the State.*
>
> Waitangi Tribunal Report, Recommendations (1986, p. 51)

The recommendation from the then Minister of Education in many ways defines the efforts of the State to better meet the needs of the educational needs of Māori. A number of academics suggested more empowering change, such as Durie (1998) who believed that any attempt at measuring better outcomes necessarily means that these outcomes must be defined by Māori, while Martin (2012) asks a pertinent question about Māori achievement – "What then does

success look like? And 'Who should define it?" (p. 112). In his address to the Ministry of Education in 2001 Sir Mason Durie proposed a bottom line for Māori education:

> *A starting point, and one likely to gain wide approval is that education should be consistent with the goal of enabling Māori to live as Māori. That means being able to have access to te ao Māori, the Māori world – access to language, culture, marae, resources such as land, tikanga, whānau, kaimoana. The extent that the purpose of education is to prepare people for participation in society, it needs to be remembered that preparation for participation in Māori society is also required. If after twelve or so years of formal education a Māori youth were totally unprepared to interact within te ao Māori [the Māori world], then no matter what else had been learned, education would have been incomplete.*

A consistent message emerges from the literature, particularly from Māori academics, (Berryman, Bishop, Cavanagh, & Teddy 2009; Durie 2001; Mahuika, 2011; Smith 1991) that there is a need for the education system to meet the needs for Māori, rather than Māori needing to fit the education system. The viewpoint of Durie (2001) – that comparing Māori achievement with non-Māori presupposes that Māori are aiming to be as good as Pākehā (p. 6) – highlights a concern that the methods for determining Māori educational success are flawed. However, examination of what constitutes educational success for Māori is the subject of further research that is beyond the scope of this thesis. In New Zealand Māori opportunities for self-determination are limited by the bureaucratic tendency towards centralised decision-making and the totalitarian nature of closed education market (Benton in Grace, 1990, p. 177). Hook (2007) urges change on the grounds that "poor educational performance and marginal economic success by Māori, is in large part, due to the imposition of culturally inappropriate Eurocentric expectations on the minority" (p.1). Similarly, Ka'ai-

Mahuta (2011) claims that "the State has an obligation to right the wrongs of the past and uphold the promises set forth in Te Tiriti o Waitangi" (p. 220). Examining the implications for education, Glynn (1998) asserts that "Māori perspectives on educational research are barely visible within mainstream education" and argues that "cultural differences between Pākehā teachers and their Māori students is as a barrier for improving the disparity for Māori" (p. 4). O'Sullivan (2001) argues that Māori have the right to self-determination, including in education (p. 157) and goes further noting that "in education there is a pronounced lack of objective data against which a Māori determined definition of progress could be measured" (p. 166).

Durie (2011) asks "what is the benchmark against which Māori should gauge progress?" and believes that Māori education will continue to suffer if a plan to integrate education and the wider Māori ambition are not combined (p. 6). Urlich-Cloher and Hohepa (1996) when researching the choice of Māori parents to enrol tamariki in kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori discovered the "importance on Māori knowledge and beliefs" (p. 39). Urlich-Cloher and Hohepa concluded that the "strong desire for, and value placed on Māori, and Māori whānau practices" (p. 39) was the most important reason for parents, while also noting that most participants felt these values were lacking in other pre-school centres. Macfarlane (2015) draws attention to efforts to improve outcomes for Māori:

> *The growing recognition of Māori education approaches and ways of knowing can be seen both as a response to the erosion and loss of traditional knowledge philosophies through the processes of colonialism and internationalism, and as a means of reclaiming and revaluing Māori language, identity and culture. Improving the educational success of Māori learners and their whānau contributes*

to ensuring that the goals identified as being critical for Māori advancement, are accomplished (p. 177).

This view is supported by O'Sullivan (2001) who argues that "self-determination to the greatest extent possible is a legitimate aspiration for Māori people" (p. 157). Rau and Ritchie (2010) maintain that "understanding the significance of culture, language and identity for Māori children and their whānau is critical to developing practices that support their successful participation in education" (p. 16).

The literature highlights the continuing frustration of Māori who cite the lack of Māori self-determination in education along with the ongoing disparity in educational achievement between Māori and their New Zealand European counterparts as a need for change. Tomlins-Jahnke (2006) asserts that disparity has occurred because "Māori have had little say in decisions that have helped shape schooling in Aotearoa and overtime this system has not worked for Māori children" (p. 2).

2.5 Initiatives to Address Disparity for Māori Learners

The Controller and Auditor General presented a parliamentary paper in 2012 to the House of Representatives, titled 'Education for Māori: Context for our proposed audit work until 2017.' The report produced by Berryman, Kerr, Macfarlane, Penetito, and Smith (2017), listed 26 past and current government initiatives ostensibly designed to improve educational outcomes for Māori. A subsequent report from the Controller and Auditor General, produced by Berryman Kerr, Macfarlane, Penetito, and Smith (2016) referenced 37 "Initiatives to improve

Māori student outcomes" (pp. 54-51)[16]. Of the 37 listed initiatives 24 can be categorised as placing an "Emphasis on Māori learners" or "Targeted at Māori learners" (p. 54-61). These 24 initiatives are as follows:

1. Building on Success
2. Count Me In
3. E-Ako Pāngarau
4. Hautū
5. Learning and Change Networks
6. School Leadership and Teachers
7. Māori Language Programme
8. Māori and Pacifica mentoring
9. Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora (Māori medium programmes for students)
10. Mātaiako (kura and Māori medium only)
11. NCEA and the Whānau
12. Partnership Schools
13. Puawaitanga Scholarships
14. Rauemi whānui (Māori medium publishing)
15. Teachers and Students
16. Schooling improvements – Iwi partnership
17. Starpath
18. Tātaiako
19. Ta Kahuna
20. Te Marautanga o Te Aho Matua

[16] Description of each initiative are located in Appendix 1 of the report (https://www.oag.govt.nz/2016/education-for-Māori/docs/Māori-education.pdf).

21. Te Matakura (Māori medium NCEA)
22. Te Whare Kōrero Pāngarau o Aotearoa
23. Whānau Education Action Plans
24. Youth Guarantee programmes

Additional government (Ministry of Education) initiatives included:

- *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success 2008-2012* and *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013-2017*[17] that was developed and implemented by the Ministry of Education. The focus to improve how the education system performs in ensuring Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. Currently the Ministry of Education website Eduction.govt.nz states[18], "Phase three of Ka Hikitia is currently being developed, and we are expecting to talk to you about it in early 2020 before it is finalised."
- *Ka Hikitia* also emphasises the importance of identity, language, and culture – teachers knowing where their students come from, building on what students bring with them, and facilitating productive partnerships among teachers, Māori learners, whānau, and iwi (p. 4).
- *Tātaiako – Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* places priority on teacher relationships and engagement with Māori learners, whānau, and iwi.The principles of *Tātaiako* are based on the *Ka Hikitia* initiatives mentioned above and are linked directly with the New Zealand Teachers' Council Graduating Standards.
- *Kia Eke Panuku: Building on Success* (2013-2016) was a professional development initiative that operated in 94 secondary schools from Kaitaia to Invercargill.

[17] *Ka Hikitia — Accelerating Success 2013–2017* is an updated strategy, not a brand new one. Its predecessor, *Ka Hikitia — Managing for Success 2008–2012*, set the direction for improving how the education system performs for Māori students.

[18] Retrieved from: https://minedu.cwp.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/ka-hikitia-accelerating-success

> The kaupapa of *Kia Eke Panuku* was for secondary schools to give life to *Ka Hikitia* and address the aspirations of Māori communities by supporting Māori students to pursue their potential.

Each initiative maintains links based around the concept of 'Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori' - outlined in the vision of *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013-2017*. Hook (2007) notes that "while many reports and strategies have emerged from government and its agencies with regard to Māori education, current attempts to eliminate race-based programmes have resulted in official recognition of only mainstream culture within this country" (p. 1). Similarly, Rau and Ritchie (2010) maintain that "understanding the significance of culture, language, personal identity for Māori children, and their whānau is critical to developing practices that support their successful participation in education" (p. 16). Nearly three decades ago Smith (1991) argued that:

> *Current education reforms contain very little which will intervene significantly in the current schooling crisis related to Māori education. Firstly, because Māori needs are not addressed to any degree either directly or specifically and secondly, because the reforms which are suggested for Māori contain elements that have been tried and have failed previously.* (p. 4)

When considering data presented in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6, one questions what has changed for Māori students in the 28 years since Smith made his comments. Although there is no definitive cost information for the listed initiatives, it nevertheless is reasonable to assume that this reflects a substantial investment by the government to address educational disparity for Māori. It is interesting to note that a report from the Controller and Auditor General

(2013) included a comment from Ministry of Education staff who believed that “there are too many initiatives and we need to pull back and think what is best” (p. 19).

The number of listed initiatives is an indicator of the Ministry of Education’s awareness and commitment to address the educational disparity between Māori and non-Māori. Given the number of initiatives over a sustained period of time, one is left asking the question, why are Māori learners continuing to achieve at a lower rate than other ethnic groups such as New Zealand European’s? Donaldson (2012) asks “why important Māori educational initiatives such as *Taha Māori* and *Ka Hikitia* failed to have the intended impact?” (p. 52). Penetito (2009) comments that “there is an unwillingness to change the cultural traditions of everything related to schooling, such as curriculum, assessment, accountability, school climate, organisation of the school day, relationships within the community” (p. 22) as barriers to improved outcomes for Māori learners. Furthermore, Springer’s (2015) research into teacher expectations for student’s as a possible barrier effecting change through initiatives:

> *An aversion to addressing difficult issues around ethnicity and underachievement suggests that there may be resistance to supporting Ministry of Education initiatives designed to raise Māori achievement, which have demonstrated positive effects for both Māori and non-Māori students. These include Te Kotahitanga, Ka Hikitia, and Tātaiako.* (p. 67)

2.6 Community of Learning | Kahui Ako: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)

It is important to draw attention to the high percentage of Communities of Learning identifying culturally responsive practice as a focus. A Ministry of Education report (2018) on Communities of Learning states:

> *Success factors for Māori and Pasifika students: Around 90% of endorsed Kāhui Ako had at least one explicit strategy in place to promote the success of Māori and Pasifika students. The most common strategy focused on raising teachers' expectations of student achievement.* (p. 53)

As stated in Chapter One, this research operates with the lens that the Community of Learning initiative, particularly given the high percentage focused on improving the success for Māori students, is another chance for addressing the disparity in academic achievement Māori continue to experience when compared with other non-Māori. The view of the iwi representative in this research, was that true partnership, as guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi, has not been met, stating that:

> *"The CoL actually underpins the marginalizing of Māori, in every phase of this educational initiative, to me continues, and is sustained by ongoing policy that is wrong. Because it doesn't go back to that initial issue of partnership, true partnership, and acknowledgement that Māori are indigenous here."*

Berryman, Lawrence, and Lamont (2018) note that "culturally responsive pedagogy currently holds cross-sector interest in the context of Investing in Educational Success, it is understood and defined differently across Aotearoa New Zealand, and indeed the world" (p. 4). Spindler (1994) observed that because teachers bring to the classroom their personal cultural

background, "they perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconceptions" (p. 134). Taking up this point Gay (2018) insists that:

> *Opportunities must be provided for students from different ethnic backgrounds to have free personal and cultural expression so that their voices and experiences can be incorporated into teaching and learning processes on a regular basis. These accommodations require use of various culturally centred ways of knowing, thinking, speaking, feeling, and behaving.* (p. 52)

Gay's argument echoes that of Bishop (2011) who asserts that fundamental to meeting the needs of Māori is "the creation of a culturally responsive context for learning where teachers understand the need to explicitly reject deficit theorising as a means to explaining Māori students' achievement" (p. 198). With 90 per cent of Communities of Learning identifying at least one culturally focussed strategy one must examine what the concept of 'culturally responsive' practice actually looks like. Bishop (2009) identifies the need to move away from "the traditional classroom where the culture of the teacher is given central focus has the power to define what constitutes, appropriate and acceptable knowledge, approaches to learning, understandings and sense-making processes" (p. 8). Spindler (1994) agrees that "teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background" (p. 34) and Hook (2007) asks whether "mainstream educational institutions can be adapted or improved to meet the educational needs of Māori?" (p. 8). Gaias, Johnson, Bottiani, Debnam, and Bradshaw (2019) discovered that with culturally responsive classroom practice "all teachers are in need of training to increase their use of these practices [cultural responsiveness]." (p. 137).

The literature supports a model of effective cultural responsiveness as well as defining what this could look like in the classroom setting, such as Berryman, Lawrence, and Lamont (2018) who proposed the best practice for teacher-student cultural relationship should include:

- *nurture mind, body, and spirit for the all-round development of students*
- *seek mana ōrite type relationships with whānau for the wellbeing of students*
- *build relationships that support students' mana and wellbeing*
- *respect each student's physical and spiritual uniqueness*
- *value and nurture culture, language, and identity that honours and respects all people*
- *emphasise the importance of whakapapa so that students grow secure in the knowledge of their identity*
- *create a context for all students to pursue what inspires them and determine their own success*
- *centre the student within the learning in ways that respond to the student's interests, questions and inspiration*
- *value and legitimate culture and identity through the curriculum*
- *promote learning as an enjoyable and stimulating experience for students*
- *encourage students to explore new challenges and take risks in learning.* (p. 6).

A focus on these principles, in the opinion of Berryman, Lawrence, and Lamont would improve outcomes for Māori students. However, they do caution that simply focussing on 'culturally responsive practice' runs the risk of remaining rhetoric with well-intentioned teachers undertaking tokenistic efforts to develop partnerships with Māori (p. 8). Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, and Bateman (2007) identify that:

> *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* (p. 73).

Bateman and Berryman (2008) have a similar view and identify that "for many professionals this may require a shift in mindset away from the familiar and preferred practices to those which uphold and respect the legitimacy of Māori cultural spaces" (p. 10). Springer (2015) found "that teachers do appear to have different expectations for students depending on their ethnicity" (p. 64) and this point needs consideration when viewing Communities of Learning implementing strategies to lift Māori achievement.

The majority of Communities of Learning identified a 'cultural' focus within their planning. Given the data on existing disparity for Māori within mainstream education this focus is both warranted and an acknowledgement from schools of the need to improve outcomes for Māori students.

Each CoL is required by the Ministry of Education to develop a set of Achievement challenges:

> *It is expected that you will have a number of achievement challenges, and we encourage your Community of Learning to identify about three to five challenges that you need to address. Understanding the links and other reasons for the challenges will help you fully develop what the achievement challenges are and set out your goals and objectives toward addressing them.*
>
> Ministry of Education: Community of Learning Guide for Schools and Kura

(2016, p. 9)

In the case of the research CoL[19], three of the four Achievement Challenges were specifically related to the New Zealand Curriculum core curriculum areas of reading, writing, and mathematics and were provided to the Ministry of Education in the Memorandum of Agreement:[20]

1. *Addressing needs for identified priority groups in Literacy years 1-11;*
2. *Addressing needs for identified priority groups in Numeracy years 1-11;*
3. *Addressing the retention of priority students in school education beyond their 16th birthday to raise potential achievement at NCEA L2; and*
4. *Engagement and support of students with additional learning needs.*

Additionally, Communities of Learning were required to develop a plan for achieving their specified achievement challenges. The Ministry of Education guidelines for schools (2016) noted that "plans needed to cover: what you will do, how resources will be assigned, how progress will be measured, and when progress will be measured" (p. 10). A Ministry of Education – Kāhui Ako[21] survey in 2017 highlighted the "largest area of focus for Across School and Within School teachers was on culturally responsive practice" (p. 28). Figures from this survey data highlighted that:

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[19] The scope of this research did not allow for gathering achievement challenges from other CoLs and this is identified as a possible future research focus.
[20] The Memorandum of Agreement is between the schools within the Community of Learning, regarding how they will work together and the goals they are working towards together. The Agreement is signed by the principal and Board of Trustees chairperson of each school and be provided to the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education: Guide for Schools and Kura, 2016, p. 8)
[21] This report describes findings from the second survey of Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako, which took place in October 2017. The survey focused on how effectively Kāhui Ako are developing and the extent to which early date from the perspectives of people within Kāhui Ako.

> *Culturally responsive practice was the largest area of focus for across and within schoolteachers. Seventy-four per cent of across schoolteachers and 54 per cent of within schoolteachers indicated they had focused on this in 2017.*
>
> Communities of Learning Survey (2017, p. 28)

The Community of Learning in this research, like the majority of other CoLs highlighted by the Ministry of Education, included a focus on culturally responsive practice:

> *Encourage and support teachers in their reflective practice, and the teaching as inquiry process, as they meet the code and standards, and Effective Teacher Profile (ETP) to:*
>
> - *Develop a culturally responsive and relational approach;*
> - *Address the needs of priority learners;*
> - *Develop educationally powerful connections within our community.*
>
> Community of Learning documentation (2016)

Bishop (2010) argues strongly for "a culturally responsive context for learning where teachers understand the need to explicitly reject deficit theorising as a means of explaining Māori student's educational achievement levels" (p. 60). Bishop similarly believes success for Māori learners requires "culturally responsive and reciprocal approaches to pedagogy in concert with the underlying aspiration for relative Māori autonomy, as the desire and solution for improving the educational achievement of Māori students in New Zealand" (p. 61).

There is literature identifying that changing teacher practice requires time to become accepted and embedded. For example, Robinson (2011) notes that "it may take one to two years for teachers to understand the difference between their current and the proposed practice, to

develop the pedagogical content knowledge that supports the new practices, and, finally, to become comfortable with using them in their own classrooms" (pp. 113-114). Blankenship and Ruona (2007) are critical of Communities of Learning believing them to be a barrier to improved student outcomes:

> *Although the PLC models address team or group learning that is focused on student needs and increasing student achievement, the models seem to place greater emphasis on the organizational level in terms of building a culture of collaboration that would lead to school improvement.* (p. 7).

Blankenship and Ruona's view suggests that learning communities lose sight of a student focus and become bogged down in operational matters is discussed further in both chapter four and five.

Within the context of determining culturally responsive strategies to improve outcomes for priority learners one must ask "what is success for Māori?" Berryman, Lawrence, and Lamont (2018) maintain that "positioning oneself within cultural relationships for responsive pedagogy we must resist the privileging of attaining standardised credentials as the single marker of success" (p. 9). Conversely, Macfarlane, Webber, McRae, and Cookson-Cox (2014) note that a "challenge remains for schools to adapt teaching and learning models to include both individual and collective aspirations for the success of Māori in mainstream education" (p. 41). The views expressed by Berryman et al, and Macfarlane et al, highlight a discussion topic for chapter four – 'is it possible to measure the impact of a cultural responsive focus by gathering academic data for reading, writing, and mathematics?'

2.7 Community of Learning | Kahui Ako: Leadership Development

There is substantial evidence in the literature supporting collaboration between schools as a promising educational initiative. Stoll (2006) notes that developing professional learning communities (PLCS) as "holding considerable promise for capacity building for sustainable improvement" (p. 221). Focusing on educational achievement Morrissey (2000) believes there is "distinct parallels between the issues that low-performing schools are struggling with and the dimensions that support a strong professional learning community in higher performing schools" (p. 13) and as a result "learning communities have become a 'hot topic' in many countries" (p. 22). DuFour (2004) identifies a key problem, that while there is "compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents best practice" many schools "continue to work in isolation" (p. 3). Hughes and Kritsonis (2007) found that "professional learning communities empower the faculty and administration to work collaboratively to provide quality instruction and improve student learning" (p. 5), a view supported by Bolam et al (2005) who concluded that "the idea of a PLC is one worth pursuing as a means of promoting school and system wide capacity building for sustainable improvement and pupil learning" (p. 157). Riveros, Newton, and Burgess (2011) summarised the literature on professional learning communities and concluded that "teacher practice or teacher's practices are something that is/are to be improved through the strategic application of a collaboration decision making process" (p. 204).

It is obvious to acknowledge the critical part a lead principal would undertake when leading a Community of Learning. A government working group report (2014) notes that originally the lead principal was to be titled 'Executive Principal' and explains why it recommended the name was altered:

> *Changing the name of 'Executive Principal' as if to infer a managerial hierarchy over other principals when the function is intended to deliver collaborative leadership and shared action across schools and between principals.*
>
> Investing in Educational Success: design and implementation (2014, p.2).

There are several factors in this Working Group recommendation that fit well with the literature, the concept of collaborative leadership and shared actions. As noted, the Ministry of Education emphasised that one of the core purposes for CoLs was to improve career pathways for teachers and leaders. Given that CoLs are a very recent initiative, very little literature is available that specifically reports on the impact of leadership roles within communities of learning. In a general sense, the definition of school leadership has sustained the notion that leaders in schools are people "occupying various roles in the school, who provide directions and exert influence in order to achieve the schools goals" (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003, p. 2). Although difficult to refute, it would be prudent to ignore the remarks of Hord (1997) whom, over two decades ago, noted that from 1977 to 1997 "principals in professional learning communities accept a collegial relationship with teachers, share power and decision making, and promote and nurture leadership development among the staff" (p. 24). Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) at a similar time supported that teacher leadership provides the chance to increase their "capacity and commitment to contribute beyond one's classroom" (p. 13).

Certainly, these statements signal the timely introduction of a unique teacher leadership development model that promotes a collaborative approach that is focussed on more than just the Principals and those who hold hierarchical stations. Supporting the idea of growing teachers as leaders, Pechura (2003) asserts that "as the demand for schools to become more effective and efficient learning communities, there is an increased need for principals to

cultivate broad-based, skilful participation in the work of leadership as essential" (p. 23). Harris (2005) too notes that leadership, education reform and enhancement "are closely related" and that "leaders and change-makers don't necessarily need to reside at the top of an organisation" (p. 15).

More recently, the concept of leadership and its development continues to face an ®evolution as the topic continues to be "debated internationally" especially given that "today's education requires innovation and new approaches to learning" (Robertson, 2016, p. 18). Heading this 'innovation and new approach' requires an insight that perhaps only those who operate at the 'coal-face' are able to provide. Indeed, Murphy (2005) points out that teacher leadership involves "explicit or implicit responsibility in providing professional development to their colleagues to influence among other things, their classroom practice" (p. 40). However, Danielson (2006) cautions that the promotion of teachers as leaders requires high levels of trust:

> *If teachers are to emerge as leaders, they must be treated in such a manner that they are, and feel themselves to be, valued as professionals. This suggests that they are treated as people who not only follow the directives of supervisors but also make professional decisions on their own authority. Their opinions and judgments are valued, and they are part of a collegial community.* (p. 65)

The Community of Learners initiative demonstrated this trust by inviting teachers to apply for positions referred to as Across School (AST) or Within School (WST) teacher positions. However, existing principals, were given the opportunity to apply for the Leader of the CoL position. The intention of the Ministry of Education was for the new AST and WST roles to be seen as high status while also supplying increased remuneration:

> *While the status associated with these new roles should be significant, the allowances proposed are also important. To be recognised as attractive career steps they should provide significant opportunity and reward. They also offer additions and clear teaching and management choices to the existing career pathways, with the current bias of trading off developing better teaching by having to go into management in order to improve remuneration.*
>
> Minister of Education, Cabinet paper (2014, p. 8)

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) take the view that when teachers are empowered to lead, innovation and new approaches are quickly followed and consequently, positive school reform ensues. They continue that the efforts of teachers are comparable to "waking [a] sleeping giant" that "has unlimited potential in making a real difference in the pace and depth of school change" (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p. 102*)*. 'Waking the sleeping giant' seems to be an apt definition of the Across and Within School teacher roles – to facilitate cluster-wide change for schools to meet the agreed achievement challenges.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the announcement and evidence in the literature that supports the concept of schools combining together to form professional learning communities. Figures show the significant amount of funding that has been used in the research CoL. Literature endorsed a move towards increasing the numbers of teachers assuming leadership roles and how this this can support the of embedding sustainable improvement. The disparity of Māori students in state education, along with initiatives to address this, have been investigated. This chapter has considered the CoLs potential to grow leaders and improve outcomes for Māori students through a targeted focus of culturally responsive practice and Chapter 3 will explore the methodology used to establish evidence of tangible outcomes.

Chapter Three: Method and Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter explains the constructivist approach employed for this research and considers the view that reality, shared experiences and research results are "created through consensus and individual constructions, including the constructions of the investigator" (Howell, 2013, p. 87). A constructivist approach provided the opportunity to investigate the CoL phenomenon and gain understanding of by exploring the views and experiences of participants. Interviews provided insight into the realities and values of participants within the CoL, which led to a deeper understanding of the overarching research question and associate objectives[22]:

- **<u>Research Question:</u>**

  "What are the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako?"

- **<u>Research Objectives:</u>**

  i. To gather the experiences and perceptions of CoL leadership and Across School Teachers (ASTs) and Within School Teachers (WSTs) who are involved in the implementation of a specific CoL initiative in the Aotearoa New Zealand context;

  ii. Report on the ways in which a cross-school collaborative venture may assist in the development of leadership potential for both Principals and teachers involved in a CoL initiative;

[22] Appendicies (p. 119) presents interview questions, participant consent form and information sheet.

iii. Explore and reveal the perceived impact of a CoL initiative in regard to encouraging, promoting and enhancing Māori education aspirations and success.

3.2 Qualitative Research and Exploratory Case Study Design

A qualitative research design was employed to gain insight into the nature of the research question and objectives and focussed on one specific Community of Learning | Kahui Ako. This particular CoL had identified a culturally specific strategy for achieving the stated Achievement Challenges outlined in Chapter Two (p. 26):

- *Developing a culturally responsive and relational approach;*
- *Address the needs of priority learners; and,*
- *Develop educationally powerful connections within our community.*

Avis (2005) describes qualitative research as "using methods of inquiry that produce text rather than numbers" (p. 5). Bryman (2006) highlights that "qualitative research normally emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (p. 266). Ary, Cheser-Jacobs, and Sorensen (2006) hold that "the intended result of a qualitative research study is a narrative report so rich and comprehensive that you can understand the social reality experienced by the participants" (p. 23). Ryen (2011) explains that qualitative research "relies on rich data in order to understand participants' practices and perspectives" (p. 416).

One-to-one interviews is acknowledged to be an intensive method of research, with Taylor, Bogdan, and Devault (2015) noting "it takes time to locate settings, negotiate access, arrange

visits, and get to know informants" (p. 105). Indeed, qualitative research is heavily reliant on the research skills and ability to identify and draw out themes. While the time required to complete transcribing and codification can be laborious, it allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the data as opposed to numerical quantitative data that is gathered quickly through surveys and other non-contact methods. In this respect, qualitative research is "criticised for lacking transparency in relation to the analytical processes employed, which hinders the ability of the reader to critically appraise study findings" (Maggs-Rapport, 2001, p. 376). However, given that the sample for this investigation was small, a qualitative research would tend to be a better tool in which to support the depth of case-orientated analysis that is fundamental to this mode of inquiry (Barnett, Thorpe, Vasileiou, and Young, 2018, p. 2).

Dworkin (2012) argues that the notion of saturation becomes a questionable factor "when mulling over sample size" (p. 1) in qualitative research, yet the strength of qualitative data tends to be in the way that it remains "open-ended" and "in narrative form" (see Grbich, 2012, p. 26), providing an opportunity for a richer and focussed interpretation of participants experiences to be revealed. Such personal accounts and opinions therefore meant that it was imperative that the presentation of the findings does not include any information that would allow the participants to be identified. Indeed, their guidance and constant input into the transcripts not only allowed for an intimate understanding of their accounts, but also acted as means to safeguard and maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

The use of the exploratory case study approach provided an opportunity to utilise data and documentation from the research participants. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) define a case study as "an in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single phenomenon" (p. 2). The decision to use a case-study approach was made in light of

the research literature, such as Tellis (1997), who identifies that the "researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them" (p. 2). Tellis goes on to highlight that "exploratory case-study fieldwork, and data collection may be undertaken prior to definition of research questions" (p. 5). Therefore, the intimate face-to-face presence of the interview process in qualitative research reassures the very process of listening, questioning, and interpreting responses is an essential task in understanding the context of responses that is encouraged by a case study approach.

Zainal (2007) describes how case-study research "allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues" (p. 134). In short, a case study approach, as Yin (1983) argues, involves "any research investigation which analyses a phenomenon in its real-life context" (p. 3). Crowe et al (2011) identify that "case study research has sometimes been criticised for lacking scientific rigour and providing little basis for generalisations" (p. 7), a view supported by Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2000) who note that case study research is often criticised on the "grounds that its findings are not generalisable, especially by comparison with those of survey results" (p. 98). Krusenvik (2016) concluded that the "case study as a scientific method has both advantages and disadvantages, like all research methods, and should be used when it's the most appropriate plan for addressing the research problem at hand" (p. 9).

3.3 Setting and Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used to select ten participants. The small sample size used in this research could be considered a limitation. Given the focus of this research on one specific CoL there were limitations potential participants. However, Adler and Adler (1987) note that "the number of people required to make an adequate sample for a qualitative research project

can vary from one to a hundred or more" (p.10). Morse (1991) defines purposeful sampling as "selecting the informants best able to meet the informational needs of the study" further adding that a good informant is "one who is articulate, reflective, and willing to share with the interviewer" (p. 127).Similarly, Heffron and Gil-Rogriguez (2011) assert that "fewer participants examined at a greater depth is always preferable to a broader, shallow, and simply descriptive analysis of many individuals" (p. 756). Marshall (1996) defines a strength of purposive sampling is "qualitative researchers recognise that some informants are 'richer' than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher" (p. 523). Mason (2010) notes that "samples for qualitative studies are generally much smaller than those used in quantitative studies" (p. 1). Marshall (1996) identifies that "the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research questions" (p. 523). The CoL involved in this study has been operating for four years, thus ensuring that the desired number of participants (ten) could be found. A two-tiered set criteria were developed to determine which participants were most likely to provide pertinent information for answering the research question. The first and most important tier was that participants had to be currently or have previously been a member of the selected Community of Learning in one or more of the following roles - principal of a member school; Iwi representative, member of the CoL Governance Group, or an Across School Teacher. The second-tier criteria - length of time a participant had been involved as a member of the CoL - provided a guideline rather than a requirement for selection.

Participants were invited to participate by way of a number of methods, including face-to-face, interviews, email correspondence, and telephone calls. A 'Participant Information Sheet' was provided to all participants outlining the purpose of the research. Of the 18 current or previous CoL members approached ten agreed to participate. This group included participants

currently or previously acting in one of the following CoL roles: five Principals[23] (1 College, 1 Intermediate, 3 Primary School), four Across School Teachers (AST) and one Iwi Representative.

3.4 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured approach to interviewing the ten participants provided flexibility to explore both pre-planned and emergent themes. Clifford, Cope, Gillespie, and French (2016) summarise the key features of semi-structured interviews wherein the researcher "formulates questions, selects and recruits participants, chooses a medium, and/or location and transcribes data while at the same time remaining cognizant of the ethical issues and power relations involved in qualitative research" (p. 146). Longhurst (2003) argues that a semi-structured interview represents "a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions" (p. 144). Galletta (2013) states that "each interview question should be clearly connected to the purpose of the research, and its placement within the protocol should reflect the researcher's deliberate progression toward a fully in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study" (p. 45). Using pre-existing knowledge of the CoL a set of predetermined questions, subsequently developed and refined, was developed to directly explore the phenomology of the CoL. The use of a semi-structured interview approach allowed flexibility to explore emergent themes and topics shared during interviews. Barriball and White (1994) identify that a key strength of semi-structured interviews is they "are well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues" (p. 330) and Longhurst (2003) notes that because semi-structured interviews are conversational and informal in tone "participants are able to answer in their own words" (p. 145).

[23] Principal's are by default also members of the Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako Governance Group

With the views of Barriball and White (1994), and Longhurst (2003) in mind, a series of one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted with participants, at a place and time of their choosing. Longhurst (2003) notes that "the main consideration is that interviewees and the interviewer feel comfortable with the location" (p. 150). Participants provided written authorisation for audio recordings to be made of interviews and as explained by Barriball and White (1994) "audio taping also reduces the potential for interviewer error by, for example, recording data incorrectly" (p. 330). At the conclusion of each interview, while information was still fresh, notes detailing any major points or views expressed by the participants were recorded. These notes, when combined at the coding stage, provided additional information in determining emerging themes.

3.5 Data analysis and validation

Recorded interviews were transcribed using 'interview Scribe' software. Shmidt (2004) states that any determination of the analytical categories begins with "an intensive and repeated reading of the material" (p. 254). Qualitative analysis software Quirkos was utilised to analyse the frequency of participant responses and thereafter the combined responses of all participants were coded collectively. Coding involved grouping responses according to similar themes in order to determine frequency. Although the use of computer software assists with data analysis, Patton (2002) explains that it is "human beings, not the software, that must "decide how to frame a case study, how much and what to include, and how to tell a story" (p. 1051). The frequency of responses in turn allowed major and minor themes to be identified. Support for the thematic coding approach comes from Alsaawi (2014) who notes that it is "the most heavily employed analytical tool in social research" (p. 153).

An interpretative analysis approach (IA) was used to examine the transcribed interviews, probing for connections in ideas and emergent themes. Noon (2018) notes that researchers wishing to conduct a 'good' IA they must "hold a grasp of the philosophy underpinning the methodology, strong interviewing skills and the ability to commit a systemic and meticulous analysis of accounts" (p. 82). Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, and Razavieh (2010) identify the an interpretive approach allows the researcher to ask "how are events, processes, and activities perceived by participants" (p. 453) while Merriam (1998) defines data analysis as "the process making sense out of the data …. [that] involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what is said and the what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning" (p. 178).

The interpretive analysis approach allowed for classifying participant cumulative responses into emergent themes, looking for connections in words and statements, with higher frequency counts indicating stronger emergent themes. Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) explain that inductive analysis involves "analysing the repeating patterns and themes from all participants," and through composite synthesis "interpreting the meanings and/or implications regarding the question under investigation" (p. 80). Smith, Jarman, and Osborn (1999) note a disadvantage of interpretive analysis being its dependence on "the skill of the researcher to effectively identify and interpret data" (p. 238). An inductive approach was employed to analyse the raw data (collective transcribed interviews). Zhang and Wildemuth (2017) note "this process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through the researchers careful examination and constant comparison" (p.319). Berg (2001) describes a theme in its simplest form as "a sentence, a string of words with a subject and a predicate" (p. 246). Griffee (2005) identifies that "if interviews were conducted with multiple

respondents" and where there are "duplicate questions" then "similar answers can be used to strengthen the validity of the interpretation" (p. 37).

3.6 Reliability

There is a scarcity of research related to the Communities of Learning. Therefore, interview questions were developed over a six-month period with informal discussions conducted with teacher colleagues involved in the CoL (none of whom were selected as participants for this research). Although informal, these discussions helped to provide an exploratory window into each teacher's experiences with the CoL. By utilising the views of these teachers, a broad set of questions were developed with a view to exploring specific aspects in depth.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Prior to engaging with potential participants ethical approval was obtained from Massey University Ethics Approval Committee. Each participant approached for this research was provided with an information sheet outlining the following: Myself as the researcher; Research description; Time required of participants; Potential benefits of participating; Invitation to participate; Participant identification and recruitment; Procedural requirements; Data management; Participants' rights; Confidentiality; Project contacts; and Compensation for injury. Participants who agreed to participate all signed a Participant Consent Form where they could agree / or not to: (a) the interview being sound recorded; (b) have the recordings returned to them; (c) have the data placed in an official archive; and (d) participate in this study under the conditions set out in the attached information sheet. Throughout the selection process candidates were made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage up until the point that the research is written up in thesis format.

Maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality for participants was paramount. The names and identifying features of schools, and the Community of Learning have been removed. On some occasions a respondent might be named as a principal or AST, but this information does not place the individual participant's identity at risk. Recordings of interviews were made on two electronic devices – mobile phone and iPad in order to dual ensure that the interview was not affected should one recording device fail. Recorded interviews were then transferred to one computer with a backup stored on a digitally encrypted hard drive.

3.8 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

As a teacher at one of the CoLs member schools there could be a perceived view of conflict of interest. Accordingly, all participants were provided with full information that included this information to consider prior to agreeing to participate. The point should be made that although a possible conflict of interest exists, the knowledge developed as a member of the CoL proved to be an advantage when interviewing the participants and is considered a strength of the research. Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015) maintain the need for researchers to "involve themselves with the community of people they wish to study" (p. 48) and my position as a teacher within the CoL allowed this to occur naturally.

3.9 Chapter Summary

A constructivist approach was used in this research investigation into one CoL. Through the use of a qualitative research approach in a single exploratory case study the views and experiences were gathered from 10 participants. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to allow scope for exploring views and experiences of participants as they arose. The next chapter supplies the responses from the participants and a thematic analysis is

conducted to consolidate shared responses. Percentages are provided, but no statistical significance is reported other than to highlight the frequency of common themes emerging from the interviews.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the establishment and subsequent development of a Community of Learning | Kahui Ako in the context of its inception, formation, and operation. Although anecdotal evidence exists regarding groups of schools working together on identified goals internationally, the Investing in Educational Success initiative to develop Communities of Learning was new to Aotearoa New Zealand. This research presents findings on the views, and experiences from participants about their experience in a specific CoL. Analysing this data provides a window into the operation of the CoL with the specific intention of investigating and critically evaluating the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning | Kahui Ako particularly in improving educational outcomes for Māori students.

4.2 Emergent Themes

Coded data as presented in Table 8 represents the emergent themes from the collective coding of all ten transcribed interviews. Through a process of coding, and re-coding both major and minor themes have been identified and emergent themes. In presenting the emergent themes a decision has been made to split present these as either positive or negative responses as a way to understand participants views on the same theme. Note that when percentages are used these are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 4: Themes to emerge from coded responses

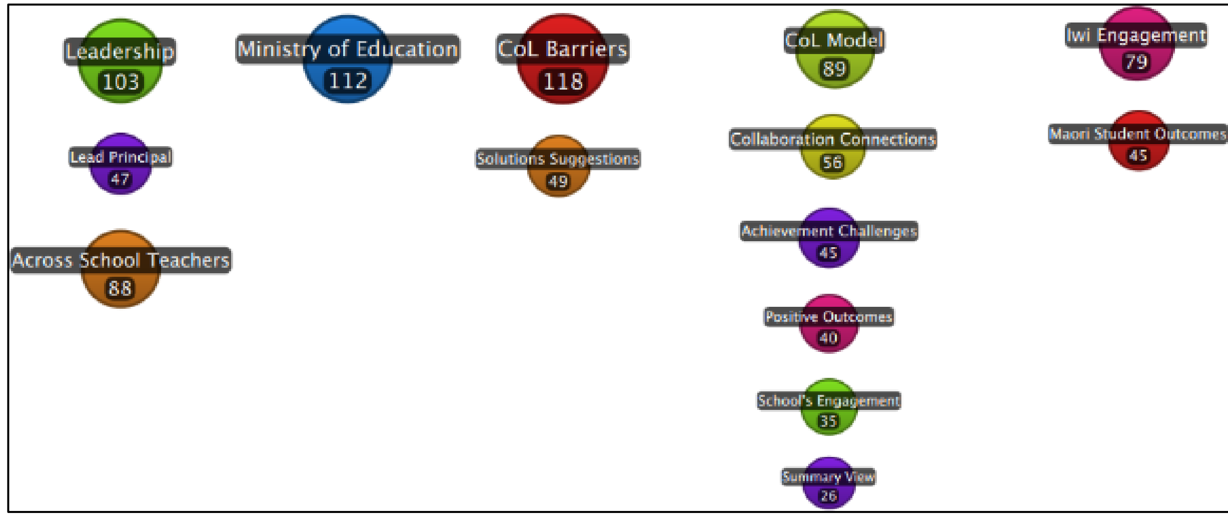

Figure 4 highlights themes that emerged from coding responses from all participants, with the major themes identified as leadership, Ministry of Education, CoL barriers, CoL model, and iwi engagement. The number represents the frequency of participant responses related to each theme. Table 9 presents a brief description of themes and total coded responses for each.

Table 7: Emergent themes coded totals

Emergent Themes		Description	Total Codes
1	CoL Barriers	Responses identifying barriers to success	118
2	Ministry of Education	Responses referencing the Ministry of Education	112
3	Leadership	Specific reference to leadership	103
4	CoL Model	Views on the CoL model used	89
5	Across School Teacher	Responses identifying input and requirements for AST's	88
6	Iwi Engagement	Responses related to iwi engagement with the CoL	79
Emergent Themes		**Description**	**Total**

			Codes
7	Collaboration Connections	Responses referencing collaboration/connections	56
8	Solutions Suggestions	Responses proposing changes for improving the CoL	49
9	Lead Principal	Specific responses related to the Lead Principal position	47
10	Māori Student Outcomes	Responses on outcomes for Māori students	45
11	Achievement Challenges	Development and implementation of Achievement Challenges	45
12	Positive Outcomes	Identified successes of the CoL	40
13	School's Engagement	Responses related to individual school's engagement	35
14	Summary View	Responses providing summary of the CoL to date	26
		Total Number of Coded Responses	932

Coded data allowed five significantly major themes to be identified; Community of Learning Model, Leadership, Iwi Engagement, Barriers, and Ministry of Education involvement. Eight additional sub-themes emerged within the major themes and are identified as major themes (bold text) and sub themes in italics:

1. **The Implementation of the Community of Learning | Kahui Ako Initiative**
   i. *Collaboration*
   ii. *Achievement Challenges*
   iii. *Positive Outcomes*
   iv. *School Engagement*
   v. *Participant Summary Views*

2. **Ministry of Education**

3. **Leadership Development Potential**
    i. *Lead Principal*
    ii. *Across School Teachers*

4. **Impact on Māori Education Success and Aspirations**
    i. *Māori Student Outcomes*

5. **Barriers to Success**
    i. *Proposed Solutions*

Between both major and minor themes there are associated crossovers, for example, where a participant may have commented on levels of school engagement, there may also be multiple elements within this response that are linked with other themes, for example leadership. The crossover of themes is an expected outcome resulting from a collaborative model of cross-school collaboration focused on a collective set of achievement challenges.

4.3 The Implementation of the Community of Learning | Kahui Ako Initiative

The Community of Learning model and associated themes was the most frequent theme to emerge from interviews (31 per cent). Key words identified within these themes highlighted both positive and negative views toward the model used in this Community of Learning.

Figure 5: Community of Learning Model and associative themes

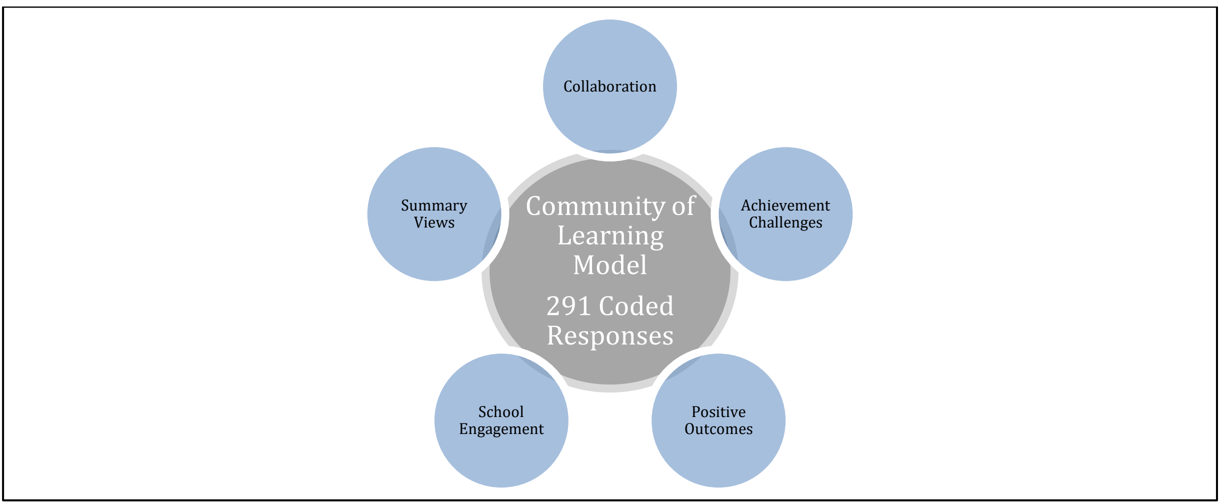

Table 8: Frequency of positive and negative words within CoL model theme

Response related to positive outcomes	Frequency Count	Responses related to barriers	Frequency Count
Potential	34	Flawed	29
Collaboration across schools	31	Lack of clarity	28
Connecting/Connections	28	Outcomes for Māori students	24
Priority learners	23	Disorganised/muddled	20
Cultural pedagogy	19	Units/Remuneration/Release	20
Leadership opportunity	18	Size	17
Total	153 (53%)	Total	138 (47%)
Total combined number of responses for the Community of Learning Model, Collaboration, Summary Views, Achievement Challenges, School Engagement, and Positive Outcomes.			291
291 represents 31per cent of the total 932 coded responses in the data.			

All participants spoke positively of how cross-school collaboration could benefit students. One hundred and fifty-three (53%) coded responses positively referenced the potential of the CoL model's ability to grow cross school collaboration, enhance cultural understanding, provide leadership opportunities, and establish cross sector connections for student learning pathways. Participant responses strongly endorsed this potential with one principal commenting that "the building of networks is really positive," and another principal stated that, "I could see that that was a sound philosophy, and I believe firmly we can learn things across the different sectors." One participant appointed to an AST role commented that it was a "chance to collaborate with other schools, and try a fresh approach, and somewhere in there would be this goal of improving outcomes for Māori students."

Contrasting the positive views, nine of the participants also identified aspects of the CoL structure hindering its capacity to achieve its goals. One hundred and thirty-eight (47%) of responses highlighted barriers stifling the potential of the CoL, for example, the size of the CoL, disorganisation, bureaucracy, and the lack of outcomes for Māori students. One participant believed that "the Communities of Learning were set up to assist those [schools] who were failing" and there is some evidence to support this view with a Cabinet paper

(2014) declaring "the proposal provides significant opportunities to strengthen the system and support individual schools as there is wide disparity within schools and between schools" (p. 2). Another participant concluded that "the kids are the losers because, actually everyone is the loser because it wasn't established correctly in the first place." One principal maintained that while "there was a clear vision by the CoL, actually implementing it was a different story."

Another issue raised by six participants was the imbalance between primary and secondary teachers who were appointed to Across School Teacher positions. In the first round of appointments eight AST positions were advertised. Following the appointments process six of the eight available positions were awarded to secondary teachers – a clear imbalance because at this stage the CoL consisted of two secondary and six primary schools. The appointments process involved teachers from member schools applying for an AST position. Requirements[24] for the AST positions listed the following tasks:

- *Focus on improving teaching practices in order to meet the shared achievement challenge*
- *Work with colleagues to identify and address problems of professional practice*
- *Work closely with the Community leadership role*
- *Promote best teaching practice within a school*
- *Strengthen the use of an inquiry approach to teaching and learning to achieve the shared achievement objectives.*

Applicants were then shortlisted by an appointments panel and interviews held. The requirements for the make-up of the panel as detailed by the Ministry of Education [25] was:

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[24] Taken from a sample advertisement provided to Communities of Learning by the Ministry of Education in supporting documentation.
[25] Community of Learning – Role Selection and Appointment Information 2016.

- *Ensure the panel includes representatives from Boards of Trustees and tumuaki/principals;*
- *Includes at least one adviser from the New Appointments National Panel of Independent Advisers (for Community of Learning leadership and teachers (across community) roles only);*
- *Effectively manages any conflict of interest (potential and actual) by, for example ensuring the applicants for a role are not on the panel considering other applicants for the same role.*

When commenting on the six secondary teachers appointed as AST's one participant asserted that "I didn't feel that it was a clear representation of our schools," while another noted the disparity between primary and secondary stating that "I look at the representation of across school team members to our schools it did not fit."

4.3.1 Collaboration

A significant number of responses (31%) from participants highlighted the potential for collaboration and sharing of ideas, expertise, and professional practice amongst the schools involved in the CoL Data highlights the importance participants placed on a model of cross school collaboration. Nine of the ten participants identified collaboration as a core reason for them joining the CoL, such as one participant who saw potential in "being networked and learning about what's happening in other schools" while another stated that "I have always believed that collaborating and working as a collective has potential for greater results." Another participant saw the advantage of collaboration in terms of developing "a greater understanding of the context of other schools". One principal noted that the opportunity to work with other schools "was a good reason why I joined the CoL." However, another participant believed that collaboration was not working "because our CoL has floundered on trying to satisfy all people all of the time".

AST participants all noted areas where networking had benefitted their professional knowledge. One explained that other ASTs "brought the knowledge from their schools in and that sharing space was good" while another highlighted the 'cross fertilisation of ideas' as a chance to learn and use professional practice from other schools.

Five of the ten participants noted their experiences of collaboration were hindered by operational requirements of teachers in their own schools. One AST noted the difficulty for ASTs from primary and secondary schools to meet on a regular basis was hindered because "you had two days a week [to meet], and it was problematic for secondary ASTs due to their timetables," and went on to share "it felt at times that the primary across school teachers are carrying a lot more than our secondary colleagues."

4.3.2 Achievement Challenges

No participants in the research commented directly on the academic achievement levels provided to the Ministry of Education in the Memorandum of Agreement. However, all participants spoke positively about the overarching aim the CoL developed to develop culturally responsive and relational practice; address the needs of priority learners; and develop educational powerful connections with our community.

One participant sharing that "a major focus of our Kāhui Ako is to ensure our priority learners, such as Māori, Pasifika and students with additional learning needs are given opportunities to experience and achieve successful outcomes during their time at school." One AST noted that "there was a sense of opportunity from participants about the opportunity to develop innovative approaches to specifically support Māori learners." Supporting this view another participant explained their understanding of the achievement challenge's was to

focus on “addressing the disparities between Māori and non-Māori, in closing the gap and coming up with another plan to a creative and innovative way.” Another praised the CoLs intention of “trying to think of something quite innovative, so they [governance] came up with culturally responsive and relational pedagogy.”

However, eight of the ten participants also highlighted concerns related to outcomes for Māori students, for example one principal commented that “I think it was the second year that we realized that achievement challenges didn't match to what we're actually doing.” One participant asked, “how do you measure cultural responsiveness? Where does it fit?” One principal maintained that “the model that we’ve used for assessing culturally responsive practice is what I call a white middle class colonial theoretical model,” adding that, “local tangata whenua have stated at meetings it [model of assessment] does not represent the identity of what they want in a student profile.” Participants further highlighted difficulties with measuring ‘success’ in teachers’ culturally responsive practice. One believed that “getting out of the European mindset of what success and achievement is” was one of the biggest challenges the CoL faced. The view of participants presents on one hand a CoL endeavouring to improve outcomes for Māori students while struggling to grasp what success actually is explored later in this chapter.

4.3.3 Positive Outcomes

The data highlights specific areas where participants felt there had been definitive positive outcomes from the CoL. Common themes related to connecting with colleagues, professional learning and development, upskilling, and collaboration. One participant explained:

I saw from other across schoolteachers they had some really good systems in place. That was really good because they brought the knowledge from the other schools in and that sharing space was good. And there was definitely, for some of the groups, when they came together and worked together like our whānau engagement group from all the schools was really, really powerful.

All participants held positive views that the CoL facilitated a space for sharing ideas by staff from different schools. One principal summarised the "positives are that it has given our AST and WST tremendous opportunity to network with other professionals and to upskill themselves." The view of one participant was that "CoLs get everyone talking who needs to be talking, including those who don't like talking to each other."

Four of the five principals commented that the CoL had strengthened their knowledge of other schools and connections with fellow principals, for example one commented "I now have a greater working knowledge of the local principals and their context." Similarly, another principal commented that "I have developed an understanding of the views of other principals on education,' adding that 'the building of networks is a real positive.' One principal welcomed the benefit of "growing relationships with colleagues.'

Nine of the ten participants maintained positive views on the leadership opportunity AST and WST teachers accessed in the newly created roles, such as one AST commenting that 'I got to experience new and different leadership roles and I have been challenged by that." One principal explained that "I have probably retained staff who won AST or WST positions, teacher who I might have lost because I didn't have leadership positions available for them in our normal school operations" while another principal noted the "additional benefit of being

able to offer leadership responsibilities to different staff." Another principal commented that "there was significant benefit in terms of growing leadership and allowing these staff to step outside their comfort zone."

The focus of cultural and relational practice was noted as a positive by five participants, such as one AST commenting that "what it has done is raised it [cultural responsive practice] as something schools are now doing." Another AST commented that "I think that teachers have become more culturally responsive." One principal believed that in their school Māori learners, "felt an improved sense of belonging and engagement in their learning, that has got better." In contrast one principal noted the CoL was "still getting teachers to understand this concept of culturally responsive relational practice" while another principal stated that "I don't see a lot of growth or improvement in what is actually being done yet.

4.3.4 School Engagement

The CoL began with eight schools and has grown to a total of thirteen. Coded data showed that all participants maintained a positive viewpoint that across-school collaboration and sharing was of benefit to themselves both professionally and developing greater understanding of how other schools operated. One participant went further, suggesting that "the Achilles heel of our CoL is that two of our major contributing schools are not members of our CoL[26]."

Participants were asked to share their views on the level of commitment shown by schools. Responses indicate varying degrees of engagement, ranging from several schools fully committed through to one school operating with its own agenda. One AST bluntly stated, "to call it a community of schools is not accurate, because it's a whole lot of schools that have

[26] The two school referred to in this statement have moved into formal discussions to join the CoL.

individual needs and individual visions in education." One principal clearly defined the key reason for joining the CoL was to enable staff to receive professional development and remuneration, stating "the reason that I encouraged our board to enter was because I could see opportunities for our staff to engage in excellent staff professional development and get paid for it.' One participant summed up the general view put forward by the majority of others involved in this research when commenting on the experience working with a range of schools:

> *Huge challenges. One of the schools I worked in, it was really hard to get in there. They really didn't want us in there, they didn't want our input, we would constantly ask if they wanted support and we just got 'no' all the time. And then we got 'we never see our ASTs.' Other schools were very welcoming.*

4.3.5 Participant Summary Views

Participants were asked to provide their summary view of the CoL, given it was into its fourth year. Participants were asked to consider areas such as collaboration, structure and operation, leadership, workload, leadership, and outcomes for Māori students. The responses revealed that in the initial stages, all ten participants viewed the potential for the CoL model to build connections across schools, and work towards common goals identified as achievement challenges. One participant believed "there was potential, there really is potential, the right people, the right way, right resource and you could really move mountains." An AST felt that "the collaboration part is the great part of it…that showed the power of meeting together." One principal maintains "the CoL is a good concept, but it needs a lot of restructuring in terms of who can do what," and maintaining that the Ministry of Education needed" a bit of

reality about what these roles entail and how much time was given for them, it they want it to succeed."

As noted earlier, nine participants identified benefits to ASTs and WSTs through leadership and professional development opportunities. One principal insisted that "the ASTs have grown significantly in terms of their professional relationships across the whole community." Four participants provided responses asserting the teachers not in these roles did not benefit from the CoL. One AST stated that "I think if I ask them [teachers] they would say it has made no difference to them, a lot of money going nowhere, could be spent in different ways." Another participant asked "has it achieved it [improved professional practice] for all teachers in all schools? I'd be reluctant to say that."

Five of the ten participants provided responses that were positive or optimistic about progress and outcomes. One felt that "teachers have become more culturally responsive."

When participants were questioned directly about identifiable outcomes for Māori students *all* ten participants stated that there was no verifiable data to support the CoL making any improvement for Māori students. Five of the ten participants criticised the lack of achievement outcomes, such as one stating "I don't think the CoL in three and a half years has had any impact at all on priority learners here." Another participant shared "I don't see a lot of growth or improvement in what is actually being done yet." One principal provided their rating of the CoL, "in terms of effectiveness for students, a rating of 2 out of 10. In terms of the effectiveness in upskilling teachers, and giving them quality, professional development, a 9 out of 10." One principal bluntly asserted that "if I had the guts, I would withdraw from the CoL because I don't think students are benefitting from it."

4.4 Ministry of Education

Participants provided 118 references that noted the involvement of the Ministry of Education. The majority of responses (86%) represented negative views of the involvement of the Ministry of Education with the CoL.

Figure 6: Ministry of Education

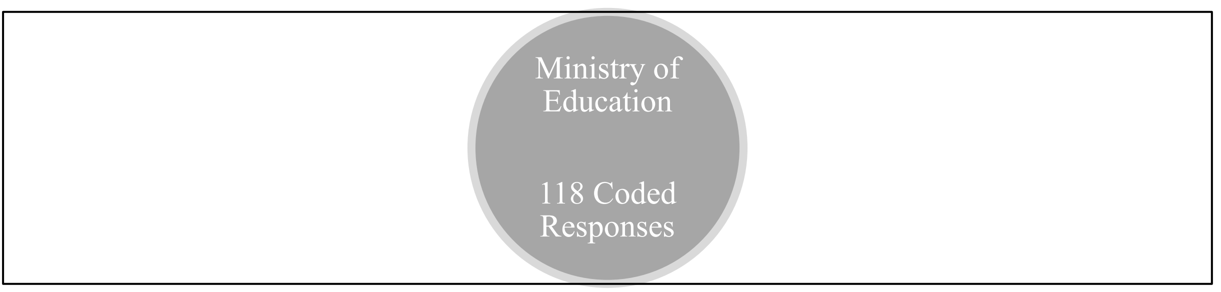

Table 9: Frequency of Ministry of Education themes

Positive responses related to MoE involvement	Frequency Count	Negative responses related to MoE involvement	Frequency Count
Funding	17	Lack of professional knowledge and guidance provided to CoL from the MoE	24
		Inflexibility with CoL model	23
		Bureaucratic processes for appointments	21
		Low trust model for appointments and decision making	17
		Unprepared to listen and work with the CoL on specific requests	16
Total	17 (14%)	Total	101 (86%)
Total number of coded responses for Ministry of Education			118
Total Ministry of Education responses 118 equates to 13% of the 932 coded responses			

All participants acknowledged the significant investment of $359 million for the Investing in Educational Success initiative. However, four of the ten participants felt the money would have been better utilised in other areas of educational need, such as special needs funding.

There was acknowledgement from all ten participants that the CoL provided opportunity for teachers to develop leadership through the AST and WST roles. However, as noted earlier in this chapter some participants believed that at least some of the appointed CoL staff did not maintain the skills or knowledge, particularly with tikanga Māori, to operate in the lead position they had had won.

The Ministry of Education 2017 survey highlighted concerns related to gathering and use of achievement data:

> *While 76% of endorsed Kāhui Ako have agreed which sources of student achievement data they will use, and 54% have agreed when this data will be collected, up to 86% have not yet made detailed plans for working with student achievement data.* (p. 2)

This research has found no evidence that the research CoL had any difficulty in gathering data related to literacy and numeracy achievement challenges. However, this research has identified significant challenges that exist when gathering data related to 'culturally responsive practice' and quantifying any impact this may or may not be having on improved outcomes for Māori students.

A significant number of responses (86%) believed that Ministry of Education involvement in the CoL did not enhance or contribute positively. Responses highlight levels of frustration related to the Ministry of Education's input. One principal noted that "[MoE] come up with this idea of Investing in Educational Success, the vehicle for what would be a CoL. So, you fellows make it up on the way and that's been a big Achilles heel, there was absolutely no direction from the government." Another commented that, "I think it [CoL] was unclear from the get-go, from the Ministry. We're basically handed this [initiative], here you go." This sentiment was echoed by another participant who was adamant that "the Ministry had no

idea," and that "they made the rules up as they went." Another participant expressed frustration saying that "we wanted to try some other stuff, be really creative," but "there was no flexibility, the Ministry always said no you can't." This view was supported by another participant who identified the inflexibility of the resource as being the problem.
One principal stating:

> *They have known that we have been a struggling CoL. And I felt that they had no idea about the detail of policy in relation to Kāhui Ako. They come up with this idea of investing in educational success, the vehicle for that would be a CoL, so you fellows make it up on the way. And I think that's been a big Achilles heel, there was absolutely no direction from the government. They just had a government policy; you make it happen. So, they would say when it comes to a tricky decision, well you make it happen. Then on the other hand, when they knew our CoL was struggling, they wouldn't help us out at all. They say, well, you know, you've made your bed, you lie in it. And there's some truth in that, you know? So, I'm cynical about the intent of the Ministry of Education.*

The professional integrity of the Ministry of Education was also questioned by five participants with one principal sharing that "they [MoE] sit at our governance meetings, more as a token gesture" while another believed that "the Ministry's level of support, ongoing, is pretty questionable." Participants also singled out the inflexibility of the MoE when concerns were raised in relation to the requirements of the lead principal position. One principal asserted that, "I don't think the role of a lead principal is viable. I don't believe anybody can do their job as principal of a school and do this job in a 0.4 capacity." Another principal noted issues with the 0.4 release component stating no school community "wants a 60 per cent principal and 40 per cent out." Another principal stated that "the MoE weren't helpful" and when the governance group signalled "this is going to be a problem [workload for the lead principal], the Ministry of Education were not interested." One principal noted that the MoE provided a solution "that we could disestablish all the positions and that we could appoint a

0.8 lead but the (additional 0.4) funding was to be divided and paid for by participating schools. I said, well, our school is not going to be part of it" before adding "that we [principals in the CoL] have also heard that a first time principal has been appointed to lead a CoL and we're thinking how could the Ministry or the Minister ever allow that to happen."

4.5 Leadership

The Lead Principal, and Across School Teachers have been grouped under the leadership theme as both roles involved facilitating and leading the change across all CoL schools.

Figure 7: Leadership, across schoolteachers, lead principal

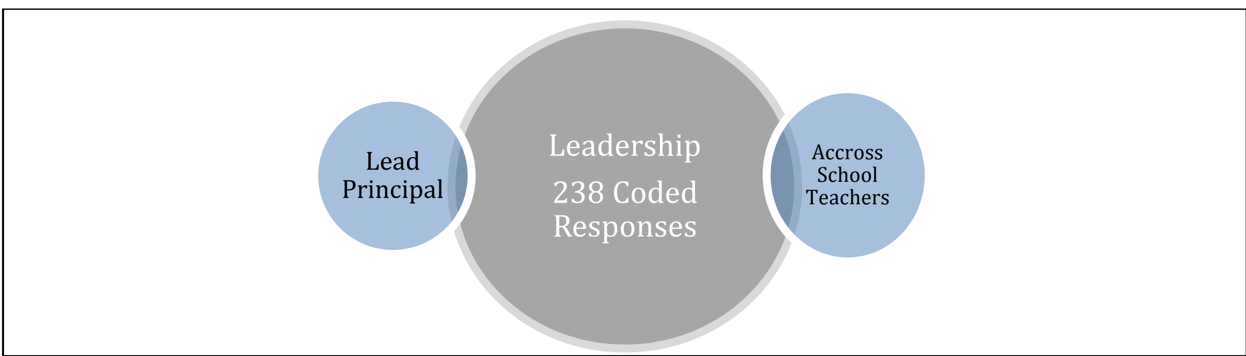

Table 10: Frequency of coded responses for leadership themes

Responses related to positive outcomes	Frequency Count	Responses related to barriers	Frequency Count
Lead principal	21	Lead principal	31
Across School Teachers	20	Across School Teachers	24
Upskilling	19	Workload	20
Māori learners	12	Remuneration disparity	19
Leadership pathways	12	Size of CoL	16
Opportunity	10	Meetings	16
Sector differences	9	Frustration	9
Total	103 (43%)	Total	135 (57%)
Total number of coded responses for Leadership, Lead Principal, and Across School Teachers			238
Total leadership responses 238 equates to 25.54% of the 932 coded responses			

4.5.1 Lead Principal

The role of the lead principal was the single most referenced theme in the coded data. Two thirds of the respondents highlighted negative aspects related to the requirements of this role, using words like ‘unrealistic’, ‘untenable’, ‘lack of direction/clarity/clear decision-making.’

The lead principal receives a release component of 0.4 (i.e. 2 days per week) from their school to lead the Community of Learning. Three experienced principals shared why they had not considered applying for the position. One stated that, “the workload is way too much. I would look at doing it if it was my full-time job.” Another stated that, “I think the whole CoL model was flawed to expect a principal to spend two days developing initiatives and monitoring budgets for thirteen schools.” The third principal described that the principal who applied to lead the CoL “put their hand up to be the leader, to the detriment of their own school, and probably to their own health.” Given these responses it is not surprising that when the lead principal position was advertised that there was only one applicant. This person was subsequently appointed to the Lead Principal position and subsequently resigned from the position in 2018. When the lead principal was advertised amongst the thirteen member schools for a second time there were no applicants.

A number of problems related to the 0.4 release were highlighted in the responses. Firstly that 0.4 was deemed insufficient time to fulfil the role when it is understood that the Lead Principal was responsible for thirteen schools, forty-eight staff (AST and WSTs), along with being a member of a large governance group comprising the thirteen principals, and selection of Board members from all schools. The lead principal stated that the actual time spent per week was closer to 0.8 (4 days a week).

It is important to note that this research has chosen not to include any specific reference to the performance of the Lead Principal. This decision has been made to protect any identity of this person. Although a number of varying views were shared during participant interviews the non-inclusion of these does not affect the findings of this thesis.

4.5.2 Across School Teachers

Information obtained under the Official Information Act highlights in a Cabinet Policy Communication (2014) the desire of the government to create Expert Teachers and Lead Teachers who would become Across School Teachers and Within School Teachers respectively. The cabinet paper states the purpose of these positions:

- *Augmenting the career structure, while seeking to avoid undue clutter and to maintain schools' flexibility to manage teacher careers at the local level;*
- *Seeking to make the roles high status and desirable;*
- *Providing choice of career direction between remaining in teaching or choosing school leadership;*
- *Effecting improvement in learning and achievement, particularly against the size of the achievement challenge; and*
- *Effecting system-wide shift and lift;*

IES: The Learning and Achievement Challenge, Cabinet Paper, (2014, p. 8)

The Cabinet document highlights the Government's intention to attach status to these new roles as career steps. The use of words such as 'high status and desirable' indicates the levels of prominence that it was hoped these roles would occupy. In interviews four participants commented that they viewed the WST and AST positions as opportunity to move into leadership, with one stating "I finally got a chance to move into leadership." All participants noted the CoL structure created pathways for teachers to take on and develop their professional practice, with one principal stating that:

> *I think that one of the strongest features of remaining the Kāhui Ako is the potential for leadership roles that I couldn't have offered, because we were maxed out in our own model.*

When questioned about benefits for staff, one principal identified a professional conflict in that the opportunities for staff since joining the CoL were at odds with their view that the CoL was not delivering outcomes for students. The principal commented that, "I want them [teachers] to have every opportunity possible. So that's where my dilemma is. But I think it's a flawed model. And I don't think it's having benefit for students."

One participant who was appointed to an AST position commented that a positive for them had been gaining access to other schools, seeing how they did things, and sharing different ideas. As a result, that AST shared that "the learning I did in professional development, that I was given as an AST improved my practise immensely."

The new AST and WST roles provided opportunity for increased professional development and potential career pathway, but additionally these positions attracted a new remuneration package in the form of allowances. A Cabinet Policy communication (2014) noted that "while the status associated with these new roles should be significant, the allowances proposed are also important. To be recognised as attractive career steps they should provide significant opportunity and reward" (p. 8). The announced IES initiative settled on a per annum allowance of $16,000 for AST and $8,000 for WSTs. A release component for an AST was set at 0.4 (2 days per week) and 0.02 (2 days per term) for WSTs. Evidence from four participants acknowledged that the remuneration and career pathways as an important factor in joining the CoL, for example, one principal stated that "if we had not opted in then one AST and seven WSTs [from their school] would have missed out on the professional

development and remuneration." Questions were also raised about the level of remuneration and/or release component for an AST with one principal stating that "it was not okay and that I and other staff had an issue with it not being an equitable model. It was a step too far with $16,000 for an AST." Another principal asserts that the remuneration for an AST is excessive when compared with responsibilities of staff within their own school, "I see the value in the time. I don't believe they [ASTs] needed 16K to do the job because that's equal to a senior head of faculty, or an Assistant or Deputy Principal." Another principal believed that the remuneration for WSTs and ASTs was "disproportionate to the number of management units that are given to schools for their various responsibilities. I think it's over funded directly for those people [AST and WST] in comparison for what we get." One principal proposed a more equitable model that would benefit all teachers, not just AST's and WST's. The principal suggested "funding the classroom teachers, so they can get out and look at other schools, not just the AST and WSTs because they are the only ones getting to see other schools."

Several participants raised questions around the low number of primary teachers appointed to Across School Teacher positions. Six participants highlighted concerns related to the first round of AST appointments in 2016 where eight positions were available for member schoolteachers to apply for. The appointments panel consisted of the lead principal, two secondary school principals, MoE representative, and an Expert Partner, and Board of Trustee representation from two schools. In the first round of appointments[27] data shows that only six of the eight positions were initially filled, all by secondary school teachers. The remaining positions were re-advertised, and appointments made during the following six months (both to primary teachers). This underrepresentation of primary school teachers appointed to AST positions was questioned, with one asking, "how can a CoL that consists of six primary and

[27] I have personal knowledge of several primary teachers applying in the first round of AST appointments. One of these teachers won an AST position in 2017 raising the question why they were not considered in this first round of appointments.

two secondary schools not appoint a primary teacher as an AST?" Another participant stated that, "when we got our full eight [AST] we had two primary and the rest were secondary, and I didn't feel that was a clear representation of our [CoL] schools." Another bluntly put that the CoL was "secondary dominated." The very concept of community would suggest representation from all parties. It should be noted that now into its fourth year, the CoL continues to operate with an imbalance in current ASTs with three primary and five secondary teachers.

Participants identified a number of barriers that restricted the ability of AST and WST to effectively fulfil their roles. This included lack of guidance, time, workload, and the challenges of working in different schools. One AST explained that "when I was appointed as an AST all I knew was that I'd be working with the schools in the CoL, and that I'd be leading a group of teachers." Three participants identified the workload as a challenge, for example one AST stating that "my role is too complex," and sharing that teachers whom they were supposed to be supporting in their role as an AST were "not necessarily people that need mentoring, for different reasons, for example in my school one of them is a syndicate leader, who was my leader (deputy principal)." Another AST admitted that they were not in a position to be mentoring others because they were "learning on the job," while a third AST felt the role had changed, stating "I felt that our focus became accountability about what's going on through these meetings. It's not like I don't like meetings but suddenly it's an admin meeting, it's an admin meeting, and more admin meetings." Working under constant pressure of time was identified by one AST as minimising the opportunity to share ideas and experiences, explaining that 'we needed time to share. It was a big thing, which we didn't do much of." A supporting view from one principal who noted that "an AST in a primary school, although in released for two days per week, was still responsible for their own class for five days," adding that "the addition of an AST leadership role meant "their workload is huge.'

4.6 Impact on Māori Education Success and Aspirations

The data from a Ministry of Education Summary Report (2017) identified the majority of CoLs in New Zealand have included a focus for developing culturally responsive practice:

> *Around 90% of endorsed Kāhui Ako had at least one explicit strategy in place to promote the success of Māori and Pasifika students. The most common strategy focused on raising teachers' expectations of student achievement.* (p. 3)

This information is significant in the context of this research as the focus of this research on one specific CoL, as the findings could be considered in the context of the 90 per cent of other CoLs with a cultural focus. The MoE report also identifies a "minority of endorsed Kāhui Ako, 25-50 per cent, have been regularly working with parents, families and whānau, iwi/hapū/marae, or the local community" (p. 3). Concerningly, this fact identifies a disconnect in that a high percentage of CoLs focus on raising teacher expectations around student engagement whilst a low percentage failing to engage with whānau, iwi, hapū, or marae. It would seem natural when developing culturally responsive practice that schools would seek to engage with whānau. Additionally, the iwi participant in this research highlighted the "issue starting to surface is that Māori are being lumped into the group labelled priority learners (with Pasifika)" and was adamant that Māori should retain their own identity.

There was an equal split of positive and negative views towards the CoLs engagement with local iwi.

Figure 8: Iwi Engagement and associative theme

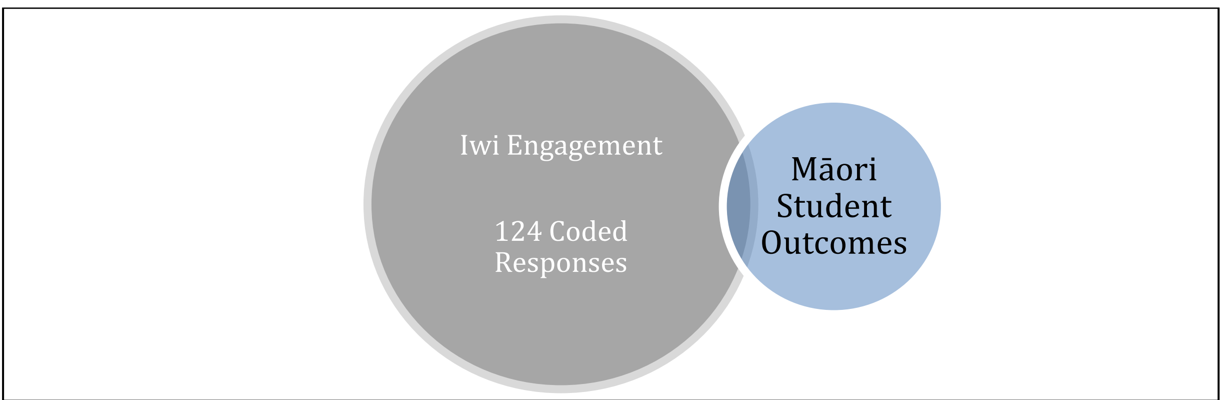

Table 11: Frequency of responses to iwi engagement themes

Response related to positive outcomes	Frequency Count	Responses related to barriers	Frequency Count
Relationships	21	Engagement	19
Teachers	16	Funding	17
Cultural understanding	15	Cultural understanding	14
Cultural focus	10	Leadership	12
Total	62 (50%)	Total	62 (50%)
Total number of coded responses for Iwi Engagement and Māori Student Outcomes			124
Total Iwi Engagement responses 124 equates to 13% of the 932 coded responses			

In the formation stages for the CoL (2015) iwi were not included in discussions. This oversight was identified by four participants who believed that iwi should have been involved much earlier, with one principal asserting that, "I'd have iwi involved a lot sooner." One participant maintained that the CoLs engagement with local iwi had "been 75 per cent effective, that the CoL was doing its best to cooperate with local iwi," while the iwi participant acknowledged that "iwi have got to collaborate with schools."

Lack of funding to support Māori with engaging and supporting the CoL emerged as a significant theme. Four of the ten participants noted that there was no direct funding for iwi involvement. This was highlighted as a core issue from the iwi representative who stated "you can't expect iwi to participate without funding," adding that "we [iwi] have a lot of expertise but without funding cannot utilise them, we've got families, they speak fluent reo, they've been trained, but we cannot participate, we are not a charity." An AST pointed out that "you need to engage with the iwi but actually there's not the funding." One participant pointed out that "we've finally managed to convince the Ministry in 2018 of what was needed so that iwi could genuinely work with us." The iwi representative provided a blunt assessment stating that "unless Māori are equal in power, and in resourcing, nothing's going to change." Furthermore, the iwi participant highlights how the CoL has an achievement challenge

focused on improved outcomes for Māori, whilst not involving local iwi during the formation stage of the CoL."

The challenge of engaging with multiple iwi was also highlighted by six of the ten participants. One participant commented, "I think there has been some coherence problems for the three iwi, in terms of coming together and engaging with Kaiako, but it's not a criticism, that's just a reality." Another participant observed that "iwi is yet to have dialogue between themselves where they may have some consistency, or even work together." One principal frankly asserted that "local iwi need to get their act together, because they have competing agendas." An AST noted that "you've got three iwi and each has their own strategic direction." One participant commented that "the iwi must come together with a combined philosophy of a student profile," to assist schools in understanding what success looked like for whānau. Another participant's comment supported the view of challenges for cross iwi collaboration when they recounted one iwi representative stating "we're not going to water down our cultural perspective to suit one of the other iwi." The iwi representative noted the need for iwi to come together, stating that "we've got to actually collaborate, iwi have got to collaborate," before adding "the three iwi need to overview total educational development in the region."

4.6.1 Māori student outcomes

Participants were questioned about outcomes for Māori students. Twenty per cent of coded responses showed positive views on the development of cultural understanding (15) and cultural focus (10). However, it is significant that nine out of the ten participants were adamant that there were no identifiable outcomes in terms of increased levels of Māori student achievement. One principal stating "I don't think the Col in two and a half years here has had any impact at all on priority learners." The view of the iwi representative was that

"mainstream schools are failing Māori students" and asks the question "can New Zealand afford that?" A number of reasons were advanced by participants for the lack of achievement outcomes for Māori students. One claimed it was because the CoL was "still in the planning stages," while another explained that "it was during the second year that we realised that achievement challenges didn't match to what we're actually doing." Another participant questioned what benefit the CoL had made for Māori student achievement:

> *I asked that question in a hui last year[28], because it was two years, last year. What I heard; it was still on administration. For the CoL, right up until last year. Now we've got an external manager now. But right up until then the focus has actually had to be on administration and organization of the entity.*

The iwi representative identified teachers own personal beliefs and upbringing as a barrier to achieving culturally responsive practice:

> *Those teachers, considering the education they had, and community views about Maoridom I don't expect them to change their personal beliefs. It's been really sunk in over their whole life, you know, do I expect them? Honestly, overall, I really admire, the teachers trying and the leaders trying. But overall it is about us [Māori] needing to do something ourselves.*

Six of the ten participants raised questions related to what constituted success for Māori students, with one asking, "how do you measure cultural responsiveness and where does it fit?" Participants were asked to provide their views of assessing culturally responsive practice. One participant held that "it's not measurable, and that is something that's really hard," a view that a Ministry of Education 2017 Kāhui Ako summary report identified, "the use of evidence to drive actions also appears to be problematic, as limited arrangements for working with data have been made" (p. 1). Another participant explained that "the trouble was that we still haven't come up with a collective vision for what a profile [Māori success] is," and

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[28] 2018

another that "the problem with it [collecting data] is very hard to quantify progress through a culturally responsive lens. Three participants expressed frustration about iwi not providing a clear definition of 'success as Māori.' One principal noted that an iwi representative, at a governance meeting, stated the model the CoL was using "does not represent the identity of what they want in a student profile for local Māori students." An AST highlighted "the trouble is that we still haven't come up with a collective vision of what a [Māori learner] profile is." The iwi participant conceded that "each iwi by itself is limited, and we need to work together." The iwi representative noted that "whānau and iwi need to take responsibility for the learning as well, not just schools."

4.7 Barriers to Success

Numerous references were made to areas where participants felt the CoLs effectiveness was restricted as a result of barriers such as Ministry of Education involvement, leadership, bureaucracy, CoL model, CoL size, time, and iwi engagement. All participants presented views where the potential of the CoL was stymied through a number of contributing factors as represented in Table 11.

Figure 9: Community of Learning barriers and solutions

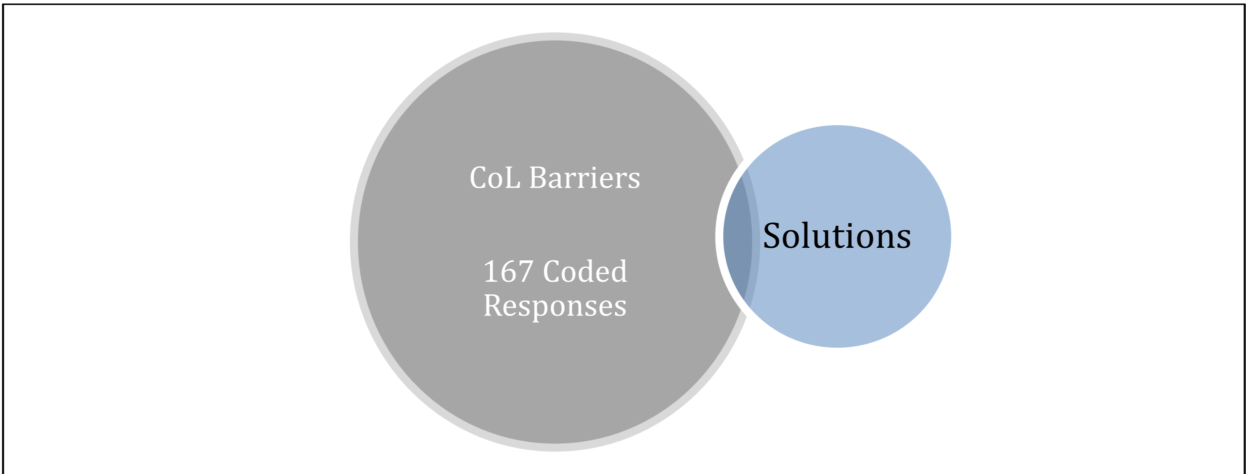

Table 12: Frequency of responses to barriers themes

<table>
<tr><th>Response related to positive outcomes</th><th>Frequency Count</th><th>Responses related to barriers</th><th>Frequency Count</th></tr>
<tr><td>Solutions</td><td>49</td><td>Ministry of Education</td><td>27</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Leadership</td><td>27</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Bureaucracy</td><td>21</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>CoL model</td><td>19</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Size of CoL</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Time</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Iwi engagement</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>49 (29%)</td><td>Total</td><td>118 (71%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Total number of coded responses for Community of Learning Barriers and suggested solutions</td><td>167</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Total CoL Barriers and Solutions responses 167 equates to 18 per cent of the 932 coded responses</td></tr>
</table>

The coded responses highlight a range of barriers that participants believed negatively impacted on the effectiveness of the CoL. Of the 167 coded responses, 124 (71%) highlighted characteristics considered problematic to the CoL meeting its specified achievement challenges and plan to improve outcomes for priority learners.

A Ministry of Education survey (2017) identified issues related to staffing as the greatest barrier to progress, “with up to 40 per cent of respondents indicating staffing issues have been a barrier to progress in their Kāhui Ako” (p. 4). Responses of participants in this research supported this view, such as one principal commenting “it’s problematic and actually trying to staff now is really hard” while another went further noting “we’ve got a lot of dis-jointed classrooms with teachers out a lot more than you would like.” One participant stated they did not agree with the release component of 2 days release per week and felt “professional development should be in holiday time.” Another principal summed up the challenges with staffing simply stating, “it’s a nightmare in attracting relievers,” and covering the release of ASTs “imposed a huge strain on the relieving pool for the school.”

All ten participants identified flaws in the structure and operation of the CoL, such as one principal commenting “we were building a plane while flying it.” Another principal describes that “when the Ministry of Education presented the CoL proposal at the local Principal’s Association, they didn't have answers.” Another principal was critical of the MoE claiming they did not have a clear direction for Communities of Learning and believed “they were just making it up on the way.” An AST identified that “our CoL was so disjointed and lacking in vision, and lacking in routine and structure,” going on to add that “we were all confused.”

Five participants believed the CoL became too large and unwieldy and this could be seen as a contributor to the confusion, as one principal emphasised, “the CoL is too big to network across people, the governance group in itself was up to 30 to 40 people around the table trying to make decisions.” The CoL initially comprised of eight urban schools, however, at the time of this research the CoL[29] has grown to thirteen schools with a student population of over 7500. One participant bluntly declared that “our CoL is too big.” When asked why the CoL had continued to grow in size one participant stated that “we couldn’t say no, the Ministry made it so that if they [other schools] are in your region they have the right to join.” Echoing the view that the CoL had become overly large in size, another participant insisted that there were “too many [schools]. No brainer really. You’re spreading it [resourcing] out more to try and cover. I think it would have been better smaller.” One principal believed that instead of joining the CoL “the country schools needed to do their own thing,” a view supported by another principal who suggested that “the rural schools who came on board afterwards, actually should form their own CoL” noting that “they are coming from similar communities, small, similar sized schools, and they naturally fit together.”

[29] This figure does not represent over 35 Early Childhood Centres who are also members of this CoL.

The inflexibility of the CoL funding was identified as a barrier by four participants. One principal maintained that “I think [the CoL] could have been done much better [than the MoE model]. Give the schools the resource and we will figure it out.” Another principal maintained that “I'd like it to be a whole lot different, like we really aren’t in each other's context and learning from each other and utilizing strengths. You know, the resourcing is just not in the right places to make that happen.”

Five participants expressed concern about the lack of professional knowledge ASTs brought to the position, questioned their experience in a leadership role, while also maintaining that they were not provided adequate professional development prior to beginning in the role. One principal commented “some ASTs were put in these big leadership jobs and weren’t there yet, they needed some guidance and support,” and another principal identified that the lead principal was expected to support the ASTs while doing everything else.”

Lack of cultural knowledge was identified as a barrier by three participants who felt some members appointed to positions within the CoL did not hold the knowledge in tikanga Māori to facilitate cultural change. One principal claiming that some ASTs “didn’t have the knowledge around things Māori to be able to work with others to enhance culturally responsive practice.” One AST was critical of colleagues, stating, “we had staff who had no idea about things Maori. Couldn’t even get close to saying some basic words correctly. Yet kind of flying the flag for an opportunity to support Maori.” Another AST commented “there’s not enough diversity in terms of experience and expertise [amongst the AST’s].” Data from the Ministry of Education ‘Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako 2017 Survey’[30] is at odds with the participants in this research stating that:

[30] The Ministry of Education survey only involved schools and learning centers involved in Communities of Learning.

> *Over 80% of across and within schoolteachers were positive about the levels of relational trust among teachers, indicating that classroom teachers and across and within schoolteachers had confidence in each other's expertise.* (p. 2)

It is important to note that these findings presented by the Ministry of Education are limited to the views of AST and WST's and not the wider teacher group within the CoL research. Without the voice of the classroom teachers the assumption that *trust* and *confidence* had been developed can be considered erroneous. One response from an AST highlighted the challenge of limited ti kanga Māori knowledge when working with iwi, "I feel powerless from my position because I'm not in the world of Maori, but from their position they're not in our world, so the whole idea was to bring both worlds together, but it is so disconnected that it's just so hard."

4.7.1 Proposed Solutions

Participants provided forty-nine suggestions/solutions' for improving CoL outcomes. This equated to 29 per cent of responses coded under the sub-theme for CoL barriers with all participants offering two or more solutions, such as adjusting the model of the CoL, alternate funding structures, high trust model, and flexibility in meeting the achievement challenges, and restarting the CoL. These suggestions assisted in forming the recommendations made in Chapter 6.

There were several concerns raised about iwi engagement with participants noting areas where the model could be adjusted to overcome barriers. Three participants asserted the need for iwi to be included from the outset, while also noting that funding for iwi involvement should be factored into the CoL funding model, with one participant asserting that "give iwi the funding they need to work with schools."

Five participants suggested the need for the CoL to have greater flexibility in decision-making, in areas such as resourcing, structure and implementation of the CoL model, and agreed outcomes. One principal insisted that allowing the CoL greater control of funding streams could improve the CoL, stating "we could have made a better job of it [than the MoE], give the money to us, as we know how to distribute it for the benefit of priority students." A similar response referred to the concept of collaboration being hindered because "the resourcing is just not in the right places to make that happen." The view of one participant was to remove compliance barriers stating, "minimise all the guidelines and requirements [placed on CoLs by the MoE]."

Five participants suggested that the CoL be rethought, reconfigured, and restarted. One participant declaring that the "governance group needed to say stop, stop there and start again," and another asserting "I think we need to scrap and restart." One principal made the observation that the CoL was "going slowly downhill and needed to be stopped and restarted," while an AST suggested it would "be a good idea if they just stopped and people had to reapply for the positions" as a way to "end the cycle and then change it." Elaborating on the concept of restarting as a way of utilising the knowledge gained in developing a more effective model, another participant boldly stated:

> *Start again. I liken it to a classroom, if your lessons going wrong, stop! And the thing is it [CoL] has just keep going and going and going. So, it's wasted time. Restarting would allow us to build on what we have learnt, it's just part of the inquiry.*

Increasing the Lead Principal role from a 0.4 to a full-time position was suggested by eight of the ten participants. Solutions put forward by participants included the lead person not being a

current principal or that the appointed principal granted one-year's leave to undertake the work. One principal recommended seconding a principal to the lead position, a view supported by another participant who explained "I'd make it a full-time job, that they're not working in a school at the same time, because they need to be completely invested in the CoL."

4.8 Chapter Summary

The two key positives to be identified in this research. The first is that the CoL has allowed connections and collaboration between local schools. Evidence overwhelmingly shows participants agreed that the greater understanding between schools and the primary/secondary sector were a result of the CoL. The second positive outcome is the opportunity afforded to teachers appointed to AST or WST positions. These teachers have benefitted through increased professional development and opportunities to visit a number of the schools in the CoL. Responses from all participants are consistent with the untenable position of a 0.4 lead principal position. Findings highlighted concerns related to barriers restricting the CoL in achieving its goals, such as MoE involvement, time, lack of knowledge in ASTs, disparity between primary/secondary ASTs and iwi engagement. Finally, the most significant finding to emerge has been the complete lack of evidence that the CoL has produced any improved outcomes for Māori students.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Introduction

Reflecting on the research topic ‘Investigating the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning’ the experience shared by participants provides a window into the inner workings of one large CoL. The qualitative approach provided opportunity to gather the views and experience of the participants, most of whom have been involved with the CoL for over three years. Moreover, this research focused on what outcomes (if any) the CoL had produced for Māori students. Participant responses, gathered independently, were analogous with one another, identifying and documenting the CoLs successes, deficiencies, and impediments.

The literature predominantly highlighted the *potential* for improved educational outcomes by clustering local schools to work together on collective goals. The literature mostly supports the concept for local schools forming clusters and working together on shared achievement challenges in a collaborative model. However, the literature was also explicit that benefits and positive outcomes could be limited by factors such as resourcing, staff knowledge and experience, structure, and staff/school engagement levels.

5.2 The Implementation of the Community of Learning | Kahui Ako Initiative

Findings identified that the opportunity to make across school connections and develop professional networks has been beneficial for deeper understanding between the early childhood, primary, and secondary education, mostly resulting from the opportunity to meet and share together with the structure of the CoL. Staff appointed to AST and WST positions

have benefitted from professional learning opportunities, collegial collaboration, and remuneration.

5.2.1 Collaboration

All five principals identified that the CoL presented opportunities that could benefit both their school and staff. It is clear from the feedback that significant importance for joining the CoL was placed on the opportunity to collaborate and develop across-school connections. One principal commented that "the big motivator for me was connecting to our high schools, more meaningfully." Another identified that during early meetings the collective group of principals "identified the existence of a huge resource that we should be tapping in to," adding that "the funding was probably the strongest motivation, along with a few of us who were quite keen on a collaborative model opposed to competitive model." Responses from participants outlined the potential they felt the CoLs considerable potential for forging across-school collaboration. There was also acknowledgement that the structure of the CoL did provide opportunities for leadership outside the norms of what a school had available to offer teachers.

5.2.2 Funding Model

The funded model of Communities of Learning is the first time such a targeted and widespread focus has been placed on clustering of schools. The substantial investment in the Investing in Educational Achievement initiative can be viewed as the first time the Ministry of Education has on a widespread scale, attempted to develop formal union across groups of local schools. Where there is anecdotal evidence of shared initiatives across clusters of schools this was the first-time schools were able to join Communities of Learning where

formal agreements were required with the Ministry of Education and significant funding available.

The findings identify that the bulk of Communities of Learning funding is used to pay AST and WST remuneration costs. The data presented in (Table 6) illustrates that an estimated annual combined cost in remuneration for the Across and Within School teachers equates to around $470 thousand dollars per annum. When this figure is multiplied by the four years the CoL has been operating this represents a significant figure of $1.8 million spent on remuneration for AST and WSTs. This figure does not include the release component or professional development accompanying these roles. Table 5 showed that as of May 2019 the CoL had received a total exceeding $2.3 million. The funding model shows that of the estimated 300 teachers employed at schools in the CoL that fifty[31] (17%) are appointed as AST or WST's. This research could find little evidence of how CoL funding was used to support all teachers at member schools. The model developed and implemented by the Ministry of Education relies on a filter down affect from the Across and Within School Teachers facilitating professional learning with all other teachers. Given concerns raised in the chapter four by some participants about the professional experience and knowledge of some ASTs the model appears to place all of its eggs in one basket by assuming that AST and WST's will be able to effect change.

What is not disputed by any of the participants is that $359 million is a substantive investment. Several principals did raise concerns that this level of funding at a time when schools were desperately seeking increased funding in areas such as special needs education. This view was compounded by the fact that the Investing in Educational Achievement

[31] This figure represents the number of AST and WST generated when the CoL commenced operation with eight schools in 2015.

announcement surprised many in the education sector. Evidence noted in the Chapter Two literature highlighted questions asked about where the research and evidence was for improving student outcomes through the newly announced Communities of Learning.

5.2.3 Achievement Challenges in a Culturally Responsive Practice context

One across schoolteacher summarised the basis for Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) being a targeted strategy to close the gap between Māori and non-Māori academic achievement. The over 90 per cent of CoLs identified a cultural achievement challenge and this indicates an awareness from mainstream schools about the challenges facing Māori students in education. This fact aligns with the view presented earlier in the literature review that Māori disparity with other ethnics groups remains a concern. Academics such as Durie, Berryman, Bishop, and Glynn advocate change in the education system to allow Māori to experience success on levels enjoyed by other ethnic groups.

5.3 Ministry of Education

From the perspective of the study participants the involvement of the Ministry of Education with this particular CoL has had a significantly negative effect. Their feedback highlighted a lack of understanding on the part of the Ministry of Education regarding the numerous complexities of operating an effective CoL.

Principals felt that during the formation stage of the CoL the Ministry of Education was engaged and supportive. Following the MoE's sign off on the Achievement Challenges that support appeared to cease and there was a feeling from several principals that the Ministry was attempting to get as many schools as possible to join the CoL rather than to proactively

determine any potential outcomes. This was highlighted with the CoL being declined any professional development funding for the 2019 school year, effectively restricting its ability to make change with the key stakeholders – the teachers. One principal noted, with irony, that "the MoE on one hand has supported this CoL to the tune of around 2 million dollars but on the other hand has declined the opportunity for staff development funding to the tune of $25,000." The principal believed that this highlighted the disorganisation within the Ministry of Education and its inability to understand the direction of the CoL to improve outcomes for students. Four of the participants referred directly to the lack of professional knowledge the MoE was able to provide to the CoL. This was directed at both a local and national level and was described by two principals the same way – "having to build the plane whilst flying it."

Evidence emerged about the practices and requirements of the Ministry of Education had a negative impact on the CoL. Perhaps the biggest issue was the Ministry of Education's inflexibility around the release of the Lead Principal. The findings highlight the rising level of concern for the principal (and only applicant) who was appointed to Lead Principal position. The principal colleagues in this research spoke frankly about the personal impact that position had had on that principals health and own school. Participants, particularly school principals, universally felt that the position of 0.4 release was an untenable proposition. To make matters worse there is evidence highlighting the Ministry of Education's resistance to make any changes or accommodate requests from the governance group. When the Lead Principal vacated the position of leading the CoL no other principals were prepared to apply. Participants eligible to apply stated categorically that they were not interested, due to the impossibility of the fulfilling the role whilst also running their own school. One experienced principal was seething of the Ministry of Education's onerous process to appoint a lead principal, stating they were not prepared to jump through hoops to simply satisfy the MoE

they were capable of doing the job. This principal was clear that this exemplified the Ministry of Education's low trust model.

When considering the ongoing disparity between Māori and NZE students it is natural to assume that the Ministry of Education would be doing everything in its power to support the Communities of Learning. However, evidence in this research shows that there was minimal input from the Ministry of Education following the formation of the CoL. Areas such as lead principal appointments were described as being onerous and two principals cited this as a reason for not applying.

5.3.1 Size of CoL

All respondents in this research maintained that this CoL had grown to a size that made it unmanageable. The CoL began with eight urban schools but grew to include a number of semi-rural based schools. In total the CoL currently comprises thirteen schools and an additional four schools indicating an interest to join. This single CoL is fast approaching 10,000 students and the responses have revealed that all participants believe it has grown too big. Some participants have suggested splitting the CoL to increase the effectiveness, or for smaller rural schools to break away and form their own CoL. The available evidence clearly indicates that the Ministry of Education was directing the CoL to accept new schools, based solely on their geographical location to the initial CoL schools. Currently, there is no set limit from the Ministry of Education pertaining to how large a CoL can grow too.

5.4 Leadership Development Potential

There is universal criticism from all participants of the untenable position of a Lead Principal appointed under the Ministry of Education and NZEI/PPTA Collective Agreements. Under

the Ministry of Education operation guidelines, the CoL principal was allocated a 0.4 (2 days) release per week for CoL duties. The feedback makes it abundantly clear that this release component is insufficient when compared with the workload. The complexity of the Lead Principal role meant attending meetings and conferences on a regular basis, something that could not be achieved with a 0.4 release component. This research argues that a lack of understanding about the requirements of the lead principal role is an indicator that the Ministry of Education (and it could be argued the unions) did not fully grasp the requirements of the role. Concerningly, this research has also identified that the Ministry of Education, when presented with evidence by the governance group about the lead position requiring more release, were not helpful in addressing this concern.

5.4.1 Across School Teachers (AST)

Data supports the view that Communities of Learning provided an opportunity for leadership in the form of AST and WST roles. Chapter 2 literature positively highlighted benefits to learning communities supported shared leadership involving teachers was put in place. There was limited feedback in the findings about the Within School Teachers and this could be because participants were limited to AST, principals, and an iwi representative. There was no evidence from participants to support the MoE's intent that the AST and WST positions be seen as 'high status.'

Staffing logistics were highlighted as a challenge, particularly around the release component for ASTs. Secondary teachers in AST positions could not simply take two days release per week as their primary counterparts due to timetabled teaching programmes. Principals from both primary and secondary schools highlighted the challenge of finding additional teachers

to release Across and Within School teachers, and this issue was compounded by the fact that *every* school in the CoL was requiring relievers at the same time.

All participants commented positively on the opportunity for ASTs to work across schools and collaboratively with colleagues from other schools/educational sectors. This collective view of the participants highlights the CoL providing opportunity for teachers to develop professional understanding of differences in early childhood, primary, and secondary schooling.

ASTs themselves expressed frustrations around barriers they experienced with working in different schools. ASTs worked collaboratively in pairs and across three to four schools. ASTs were responsible for facilitating and working with school staff in improving their professional practice. However, responses from three ASTs note varying degrees of engagement from different schools. Where some schools were open and engaging others operated with a closed mind-set, preferring ‘to do their own thing’. This view is supported by the evidence presented in chapter four where ASTs found some of the schools difficult to work with and as a result were not in a position to effect change with staff.

Four of the five principal’s questioned the levels of AST remuneration and release components. There was a view from the principals who participated in this research that an AST receiving an allowance of $16,000- and two-days release per week (0.4 release) was excessive when compared to staffing allocations they received for their schools. One principal drew attention to the fact that an AST was receiving more units and release than staff overseeing entire departments within their school. There also were responses that indicated a level of resentment within some schools towards the perceived disparity between an AST’s remuneration/release when compared with staff leadership within a school. It must be noted

the remuneration for WSTs and ASTs is the result of a rate negotiated and set between the Ministry of Education and relevant unions as part of the Collective Agreement settlements. Regardless of the driving force behind the remuneration/release component it is appropriate to question whether this has been set at a level that is more advantageous unbalanced than traditional school unit and release components.

Another underlying issue with the Across School Teacher positions was the Ministry of Education's view that these roles would be filled by 'Expert Teachers.' Although the Ministry of Education used the term 'Expert Teacher,' no formal definition of this was supplied to CoLs. Nevertheless, expert teachers were to become the Across School Teachers. The evidence shows that any teacher at a member school was eligible for an AST or WST role provided they were teaching at least 0.5 (2.5 days per week). This raises a number of questions, how could a teacher, drawn from a pool of existing teachers, be instantly considered an expert teacher? What were the requirements to be considered an expert? How were culturally responsive knowledge/experience built into selection criteria for these positions? Additionally, this research did not identify any significant benefit to any teachers not in an AST or WST role. Fullan (2000) argues that "school improvement will never occur on a wide scale until the majority of teachers become contributors to and beneficiaries of the professional learning community" (p. 581).

Disparity in the number of primary teachers appointed to AST roles has also been highlighted When six of eight Across School Teacher appointments were to secondary teachers there is clearly a disconnect when the CoL at this time comprised six primary/intermediate and two secondary schools. A number of participants raised concerns around this disparity, and this has only marginally improved with the current ASTs comprising of three

primary/intermediate and five secondary school teachers. Given this disparity has existed for the four years the CoL has been operating one can ask whether the broad concept of 'community' has yet to be embedded.

5.5 Impact on Māori Education Success and Aspirations

Concerningly, no participant in this research could identify any measurable improvement in outcomes for Māori students. All ten participants interviewed for this research were clear that after four years of operation the CoL had not had any identifiable effect on raising the achievement levels for Māori students.

Questions that urgently needs to be asked when examining the CoLs failure to lift Māori student achievement levels include; what is success for Māori and who gets to define what success is? Three participants felt that the model for measuring success was based on a Pākehā model. The iwi representative shared, "For me, success, and I'll use my mokopuna and my own children, is that they must be able to speak Māori, or some Māori, and they identify who they are."

It would be understandable if Māori are disappointed when reading this research. How can a collective group of schools, when supported by over $2 million dollars and with a focus on Māori, fail to deliver any tangible results for that group? This research, earlier in chapter two, highlighted over twenty-five initiatives, including Te Kotahi Tanga and Tātaiako, yet the disparity in achievement levels for Māori in comparison to other ethnic groups remains. The Investing in Educational Success initiative, and specifically this CoL are tracking like so many other initiatives – a pathway to fail Māori students. The evidence to support this view is clear to find because Māori students, as shown in data earlier in chapter two of this research,

are performing below NZE students and are overrepresented in statistics related to stand down and suspensions from school. It is noteworthy that what did not emerge from the collective views of participants was any succinct and unified criteria about what success for Māori is. Evidence emerged revealing challenges related to the three iwi agreeing to on a student profile for success as Māori. Furthermore, participants identified that the concept of what the CoL was actually seeking to achieve became confused and bureaucratic procedures quickly began to dominate decision making.

Another theme to emerge was related to the knowledge (or lack of) within the key roles for the CoL. This related specifically to the achievement challenge of lifting achievement levels for priority learners. One AST expressed concerns regarding the very group overseeing the advancement of Māori student outcomes.

> *There were staff on there [CoL], particularly who had no idea about things Māori. Couldn't even get close to saying some basic words correctly. Yet kind of flying the flag for an opportunity to support Māori. It's just not a good fit. So be really selective about who's there and what you're wanting to achieve. Again, it's not them personally, they've got a lot of great qualities as well. But when you've got this very specific goal there of Māori achievement, which is what it was, then I don't know how those appointments were made.*

The iwi participant identified a lack of te ao Māori (Māori world) knowledge in mainstream teachers was noted by the iwi participant in this study. Comments to this effect were not derogatory towards these teachers, but an observation that Māori students are failing in mainstream education and one major factor is teachers with little to no knowledge of te ao Māori. There was a sense from other participants that the CoL had been successful in raising

professional practice around culturally responsive practice. One participant believed that "what it [CoL] has done is raised it [cultural responsiveness] as being something schools are doing," while one principal observed that, "I believe there has been a shift in the [cultural] practice of our staff." Another principal commented that, "our priority learners are our teachers first. So, let's look at the shift in them first and call them our priority learners." However, even with the view of several participants that there had been a positive shift in culturally responsive practice this did not reflect in any outcomes for students.

5.5.1 Building Teacher Capacity

When considering the failure of the CoL, after four years of operation, to deliver any measurable outcomes for Māori learners, one needs to examine why. One theme to emerge is the need to enhance teachers' capacity in cultural knowledge, understanding, and implementation. This need was highlighted by several participants who clearly identified that teachers are limited in what they know, and without deeper levels of knowledge around te ao Māori (Māori world) then meeting the needs of Māori students, as Māori, is difficult.

One participant advocated for priority learners for the CoL should not have been Māori students but actually mainstream teachers. The view that you cannot improve student outcomes unless you increase the capacity of teachers - in this case, the culturally responsive (CR) practice is logical.Subsequently, cultural understanding requires high levels of expertise from local iwi to enhance such knowledge. It therefore appears that in order to meet the goal of Māori learning as Māori there needs to be widespread professional development of those mainstream teachers possessing a limited understanding of ti kanga Māori. There is evidence to suggest that the Community of Learning did improve teacher

awareness about culturally responsive practice but there is no evidence of this in student outcomes.

5.6 Chapter Summary

When discussing the findings alongside relevant literature there is a sense that the Investing in Educational Success initiative been hit or miss. Where the CoL promised and delivered was on improved cross-school collaboration and providing new leadership opportunities for teachers. However, the CoL failed to deliver in other areas, most significantly – the failure to improve achievement levels for Māori students. Participant responses indicate levels of disorganisation in the organisational requirements of the CoL. A number of barriers inhibiting success have been discussed, including the increasing size of the CoL, and varying degrees of engagement from schools, pressure on the lead principal, and mixed support from the Ministry of Education. Participants have questioned whether allocating the majority of the funding for AST and WST allowances was the best use of resourcing money, while at the same time recognising the benefits gained by AST and WST teachers. This chapter has raised more questions than answers about why the CoL has not delivered results for Māori students.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This research set-out to ascertain: "What are the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako?" It did so by:

a. Gathering the experiences and perceptions of CoL leadership and Across School Teachers (ASTs) and Within School Teachers (WSTs) who were involved in the implementation of a specific CoL initiative in the Aotearoa New Zealand context;
b. Reporting on the ways in which a cross-school collaborative venture may assist in the development of leadership potential for both Principals and teachers involved in a CoL initiative;
c. Exploring and revealing the perceived impact of a CoL initiative in regard to encouraging, promoting and enhancing Māori education aspirations and success.

The findings in this research identified five major themes in which to respond to the above set of questions. Coded data highlighted the contrast between the participants' views of successful elements of the CoL and those identified by participants as being failings or barriers. Overwhelmingly, the data identified that the majority of the participants believed that this CoL was more of a failure than a success. This is not a reflection of the intent of most schools involved, but rather the outcome of systemic barriers and inflexibility in the model itself. The transcribed interviews allowed a deep analysis of responses with data clearly indicating that of the 938 coded responses 554 (59%) identified negative aspects of the CoL and 384 (41%) positive.

This research has highlighted both strengths and areas of need in relation to the operation of the CoL in order to meet its intended goals. Smith (1991) commented about the continuing failure of Māori in mainstream education asserting that "Māori needs are not addressed to any great degree either directly or specifically," going on to highlight this was "because the reforms which are suggested for Māori contain elements that have been tried and failed previously" (p. 4). Smith's view supports the findings of this research, that highlights a discord between potential for success but the presence of significant barriers that prevent this from this happening. Participants were unanimous that after four years this Community of Learning had not produced any identifiable achievement improvements for Māori students, despite this being a core focus of the CoL.

The Minister of Education, Hekia Parata, presented a cabinet paper in January 2014 stating that, "The proposal has been designed in part to avoid adding complexity to the schools payroll and to avoid additional complexity for schools themselves" (p. 12). However, a consistent theme from participants was the significant increase in complexity and workload that the CoL had generated, particularly around increased workload and staffing.

As a result of participant feedback and analysis this research has identified three key reasons schools chose to join the CoL:

1. The significant commitment of $359 million was acknowledged as being a substantial investment and principals in this research all noted the desire for their school to tap into this funding source;

2. All but one of the participants held the view that across-school and sector collaboration had the potential to enhance what individual schools may be doing and this influenced decisions to join the CoL. Although a number of barriers were

identified in this research participants were positive about the CoLs success in connecting early childhood, primary, and secondary schools; and,

3. All principals identified one or more reasons related to the opportunity for staff to experience leadership, professional development, and additional remuneration as key reasons for joining the CoL. It was identified that AST and WST positions afforded opportunity to teachers above and beyond the staffing entitlement that a school could offer. One principal maintained that the only reason he signed on to the CoL was for staff to access the professional development and remuneration.

It is interesting to note that none of the principals cited lifting student achievement as a reason for joining the CoL. It would be fair to assume that principals did hold a view that the CoL had the potential to lift student achievement, but the fact remains that this was not cited as a reason for joining.

This research also notes the substantial benefit that AST and WST teachers experienced in this CoL - the ASTs, in particular, are able to access substantial professional development during their two days release per week. The literature in Chapter Two supports growth of leadership extending to teachers as an effective way to support others. Additionally, Principals in this research raised concerns about the levels of remuneration for AST and WSTs, believing them to be too generous when compared with the norms of regular school staffing models. The fact that over 90 per cent of the CoL money is used on Across School and Within School teachers, in light of zero identifiable outcomes for students, must be questioned.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research the following sets of recommendations are offered. The first set of recommendations pertains to improving the operation and function of the Communities of Learning while the second set relates specifically to lifting the achievement levels for Māori students.

1. Allow Communities of Learning to facilitate their own appointment processes for a leader without the bureaucratic requirements currently in place;
2. The Lead Principal position be made a full-time position (fixed term). This could be achieved by secondment, appointment with leave from a current position, or appointment of an external[32] lead;
3. Greater flexibility in resourcing, particularly funding, to allow Communities of Learning the opportunity to be innovative in facilitating cluster wide change;
4. Reduction of AST and WST remuneration to a level that aligns with levels of leadership recognition schools are able to offer staff (i.e., units for leadership);
5. Requirements that AST appointments fairly represent all schools that are members of the Community of Learning;
6. A six-month training period for AST and WST teachers to increase pedagogical knowledge related to the achievement challenges, along with the development of the necessary skills to deliver this in their roles;
7. Iwi led innovation, including access to greater levels of funding to allow engagement with a wider set of whānau;

[32] The research CoL has appointed an external lead as a result of no principals' or deputy principals' within the member schools applying for the vacant position.

8. A greater emphasis placed on whole staff/across cluster professional development to ensure that *all* teachers have opportunity to engage in meaningful learning to enhance their professional practice.
9. Ministry of Education engage professional support to determine what 'success' is for a CoL and how they could effectively support the this being achieved; and
10. Determining an optimal size for a Community of Learning to ensure they do not grow to an unmanageable size.

6.1.1 Impact on Māori Education Success and Aspirations

The fact is that this research shows that Māori students have not benefitted as a result of this CoL, despite a focus on cultural pedagogy is damning. A new approach, with substantial input from Māori, should be developed to determine what success is for Māori. The continuation of the current Pākehā focus on literacy and numeracy does not encompass the essence of being Māori and therefore will result in the continuing failure of Māori in mainstream education. A 2016 report from the Auditor General provides reference to what might be one of the most significant problems in mainstream education - that there is no single definition of what achieving educational success as Māori means (p. 26). As such, several recommendations are proposed in regard to defining what Māori educational achievement is, from the perspective of:

1. Criteria for success defined by Māori for Māori.
2. A pedagogical move away from traditional Achievement Standards such (as in NCEA) to systems of success built around tikanga Māori.
3. A greater focus on qualitative data and achievement that moves directly away from the colonial system of judging educational achievement based on reading, writing, and mathematics.

4. Appropriate resourcing for all state schools to deliver learning in a Māori context.
5. Direct funding streams to support local iwi to engage with schools in developing understanding of local tikanga.

6.2 Areas for Future Research

A number of areas highlighted in this research could be considered for future study. These include:

1. Research to define what success for Māori in mainstream schooling is;
2. Investigate the over representation of Māori in stand down, suspension, and exclusion rates in mainstream New Zealand schools;
3. Improving policies for delivering a more effective funding model to schools; and
4. Researching the set Achievement Challenges from all Communities of Learning in New Zealand.

6.3 Concluding Statement

The concept of across school collaboration could provide a powerful tool and has the *potential* to improve outcomes for students. To this end, facilitating opportunities for leadership, staff, and boards to work together must be viewed as a positive outcome from Communities of Learning. However, the CoL at the heart of this research has been a demonstrable failure, and in this case specifically for Māori students where no identifiable educational improvement has been achieved. The findings reveal this CoL, with over two and a half million dollars and four years of operation, has failed dismally in lifting achievement levels for Māori. Furthermore, there is little evidence to indicate any professional benefit to teachers other than those appointed to AST or WST positions. This Community of Learning, and by association the Investing in Educational Success initiative, represents another failure in a long list of initiatives that have promised so much for Māori but delivered so little.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Participant Information Sheet

Massey University
College of Humanities & Social Sciences
Level 3, Sir Geoffrey Peren Building
Manawatu Campus
Palmerston North 4446
Institute of Education – Te Kura Pūkenga Tangata

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Investigating the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning.

Researcher Introduction
My name is Daryl Aim and I am a student at Massey University Institute of Education. I am undertaking a Master of Education (Māori Education). My supervisors are Professor Howard Lee and Dr. Bevan Erueti. I have a Diploma of Education and Bachelor of Education and am currently employed as a Scale A teacher at [redacted] School.

Project Description
The purpose of the research is to explore a Community of Learning (CoL) with a focus on culturally responsive practice. Using the input of school leaders, across school teachers, and iwi representatives, the research will identify areas of areas of success and any challenges that may impact on the success of the CoL. The research will focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the CoL through the eyes of participants.

Time Required
Participants will participate in a one-on-one interview with myself. It is estimated the interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

Benefits
The opportunity to share experiences and involvement in the CoL allows for self-reflection. Collectively the anonymous responses of participants will contribute to the identification of common themes. The CoL has now been operating for several years and this research project will provide findings that could be used to inform future decisions.
On completion I will provide you with a one-page summary of the research findings which the CoL can then make available for other participants and interested parties. I am happy to provide a copy of the completed Thesis and/or deliver an oral presentation of the findings.

Invitation to Participate
The Tauranga Peninsula CoL has now been operating since July 2016. I would like to invite you as a Pr[redacted]ember school to participate in an interview. The interview will center around, bu[redacted] set list of questions. The purpose of the interview is to explore your view around the benefits and challenges you have experienced with the CoL.

Participant Identification and Recruitment
The following criteria has been used to select a participant group to participate in interviews:

- Current members of the Tauranga Peninsula Community of Learning
- Three identified groups[redacted]
  - Principals [redacted] when the CoL.
- 4 Current Across School Teachers (AST')
  - (2 Primary & 2 Secondary)
- 4 Previous Across School Teachers
  - (2 Primary & 2 Secondary)
- 3 Tauranga Moana Iwi representatives – Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāi Te Rangi

Project Procedures
All identified participants will be invited to participate in an interview. Interviews will be conducted over the months of March, April, and May. Where possible interviews will be conducted at interviewees schools, and agreed venue for iwi representatives. Interviews will be digitally recorded. You may ask for the recorder to be turned off at time during the interview.

Data Management
Data in the form of recorded interviews will be transferred from recording devices to two (1 a backup) password protected hard drives. The original recording on the devices will be destroyed immediately. Only the supervisors and I, as the researcher, will have access to the interviews. The consent form you sign will be stored in a secure cabinet for six years and subsequently destroyed. The finds from the data will be submitted as a Thesis, but neither the CoL's name, nor participants' names will be used.

Participant's Rights
You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time prior to the submission of the Thesis in November 2019.
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Confidentiality
The preservation of confidentiality is paramount. Participation is with the consent of the participant and the information that participants share will remain confidential to the researcher and the supervisors. If you choose to participate, the CoL will not be named and none of the CoL's identifying characteristics will be included in the study.

All interviews will be conducted separately and other participants will not have access to the identity of other participants. Information collated and used in the study will not contain any information that could lead to the identification of an individual.

Project Contacts
When you have read this information, I will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:

Student Researcher	Supervisors	Head of Institute
Daryl Aim Ph:	Professor Howard Lee Institute of Education Massey University Palmerston North Campus h.f.lee@massey.ac.nz Ph: +64 (06) 356 9099 ext. 84452 Dr. Bevan Erueti Associate Dean School of Sport, Exercise & Nutrition Massey University Palmerston North Campus b.erueti@massey.ac.nz +64 (06) 356 9099 ext. 83087	Professor John O'Neill Head of the Institute of Education Massey University Palmerston North Campus j.g.oneill@massey.ac.nz Ph: +64 6 356 9099 x 84384

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Prof Craig Johnson, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Compensation for Injury
If physical injury results from your participation in this study, you should visit a treatment provider to make a claim to ACC as soon as possible. ACC cover and entitlements are not automatic and your claim will be assessed by ACC in accordance with the Accident Compensation Act 2001. If your claim is accepted, ACC must inform you of your entitlements, and must help you access those entitlements. Entitlements may include, but not be limited to, treatment costs, travel costs for rehabilitation, loss of earnings, and/or lump sum for permanent impairment. Compensation for mental trauma may also be included, but only if this is incurred as a result of physical injury.

If your ACC claim is not accepted, you should immediately contact the researcher. The researcher will initiate processes to ensure you receive compensation equivalent to that to which you would have been entitled had ACC accepted your claim.

Daryl Aim
Student Researcher
Massey University

P.
E.

Appendix B: Participant consent form.

Massey University
College of Humanities & Social Sciences
Level 3, Sir Geoffrey Peren Building
Manawatu Campus
Palmerston North 4446
Institute of Education – Te Kura Pūkenga Tangata

PROJECT TITLE

Investigating the challenges and benefits in developing a culturally responsive framework in a mainstream Community of Learning.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, and I understand the Information Sheet attached as Appendix I. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

1. I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.
2. I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.
3. I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.
4. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the attached information sheet.

Declaration by Participant:

I ___________________________________ [print full name] hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: _______________________ Date: ________________

Appendix C. Interview Questions

Interview Schedule of Selected Members of Community of Learning

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you your involvement in your local Community of Learning. I felt it important to engage with you as you are a [Position of Interviewee] in the CoL and I value your input to my research.

I am particularly interested in the challenges and successes the CoL has experienced since its formation in 2016. In particular I am interested in examining the structure and operation of the CoL and any impact this is or is not having on meeting the stated goals:

To encourage and support teachers in their reflective practice, and the teaching as inquiry process, as they meet the code and standards, and 'Effective Teacher Profile' to:

- *Develop a culturally responsive and relational approach*
- *Address the needs of priority learners*
- *Develop educational powerful connections within our community*

All responses are confidential, and no participants will be identified. Furthermore, the research will not identify the [redacted] Kāhui Ako.

The questions I will be asking of you, and other participants, are designed to provide some insight into the operation of the CoL. Collectively the responses will be analysed for any common themes.

There are no wrong or right answers. Your views and opinions are important, and I ask that you be as forthright as possible.

Before I start do you have any questions you wish to ask of me?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PRINCIPALS (GROUP A)

1. Could you please provide me with brief overview of yourself, your role within your school, and length of time you have held this role?
2. Can you share with me your involvement, and that of your school, in the formation stages of the CoL?
    a. If you were not involved in the formation of the CoL, what has been your experience and understanding of the CoL since taking up your leadership role?
3. During the formation stages what was your understanding of the purpose and intent of the Community of Learning?

4. Do you feel that your Board of Trustees and you were provided relevant and comprehensive information needed to make an informed decision school for your school to join?

    a. Who, and to what extent, provided information?

5. Have your views on the purpose and intent of CoL changed since this time, and if so, how?

6. What, if any have been the benefits for any staff appointed to either Within School or Across School positions?

7. What, if any, have been the challenges for your school with CoL staffing appointments?

8. What are your thoughts on the funding and support as provided by the MoE for the CoL?

9. What do you feel have been positives for your schools involvement in the CoL?

10. If you were able to wind the clock back, with the knowledge you now have, would you join a Community of Learning?

11. What are your thoughts on the role of the Lead Principal, expectations for the job and ability to be effective in the roll?

    a. Why did you not apply?

12. Considering your experience to this point of time what do you feel the impact of the CoL has been on lifting achievement for Māori students?

    a. Evidence for this view?

13. The MoE is the overseer of Communities of Learning. Can you give me your view of MoE involvement, positive, negative or otherwise?

14. Have the guidelines/requirements of the MoE supported or negated the ability of the CoL in achieving its stated goals?

    a. Please can you elaborate on the reasons for these views?

15. Could the guidelines/requirements of the MoE be improved? If so how?

16. How effectively has the CoL engaged with local iwi?

17. When considering the stated goal of the CoL to:

'encourage and support teachers in their reflective practice, and the teaching as inquiry process, as they meet the code and standards, and 'Effective Teacher Profile' to:

18. What rating out of 10 (0 being complete failure and 10 outstanding success) would you give in each of the following CoL goals?

- *Develop a culturally responsive and relational approach*
- *Address the needs of priority learners*
- *Develop educational powerful connections within our community*

19. And finally, if you could provide a short summary on the following two questions:
    a. What are the identifiable successes of the CoL?
    b. Have there been barriers hindering the success of the CoL, if so, what are the identifiable major areas?

Is there any other information that may not have been covered in this interview that you wish to share about the CoL?

Before I conclude the interview do have any questions of me regarding this research?

As stated at the beginning of the interview I wish to highlight that your responses remain confidential. The completed research will not identify your Community of Learning.

A copy of the completed Thesis will be made available to you at a time that all requirements of Massey University have been completed in full.

Thank you for your time.

Interview Ends

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - ACROSS SCHOOL TEACHERS (GROUP B)

1. Could you please provide me with brief overview of yourself, your role within your school, and the length of time you have been employed at your current school?

2. How long were you or have you been in your role as an AST?

3. What prompted you to apply for the position of an Across School Teacher?

4. Prior to applying for a position as a Across School Teacher what was your understanding of the role?

5. Has your view of the role changed since you have become an AST?

6. Could you please describe for me your role as an Across School Teacher?

    a. Number of schools you are currently working with
    b. Release time component
    c. Frequency of Meetings
    d. Other roles and responsibilities within the CoL

7. Have there been positive outcomes from working in an across school setting? If so could you elaborate on these?

8. Have there been the challenges of working in an across school setting with other teachers/schools? If so could you elaborate on these?

9. Do you feel that the CoL is having a measurable effect on lifting achievement levels for Māori as priority learners?

    a. If so is there evidence to support this view, and if not why do you think this is?

10. What have been the positives for your school since the CoL began? If so can you elaborate on these?

11. Have you faced challenges in your role as an AST and if so can you describe these?

12. When considering your role as an AST do you feel you have been supported by:
    a. Your principal
    b. CoL Lead Principal
    c. The structure and requirements prescribed for your position?
    d. Schools in which you work.
    e. Iwi

13. If you could wind the clock back, with the knowledge you now have, would you apply for an AST position in your Community of Learning?

14. Can you give your views on the engagement/involvement with local iwi?

    a. Do you think there are areas this could be improved? If so can you elaborate on how this could be done.

15. How does the CoL measure success?
    a. Do you think it is fair to measure success of Māori learners based on reading, writing, maths?
    b. Do you think this is a culturally responsive way to measure Māori success based on their achievement in reading writing and maths?

16. How is this information shared with stakeholders? If so, can you explain with whom, and how this is done?

17. If you had a magic wand for improving the effectiveness of the CoL what changes would you put in place moving forward?

18. Has the CoL met its goal of improving culturally responsive practice for all teachers in all schools across the CoL?

19. Do you think the size of the CoL has impacted on any aspect of its goal?

20. When thinking about schools involved in the CoL what is your view of Principal's across the CoL commitment to its success.

Is there any other information that may not have been covered in this interview that you wish to share about the CoL?

Before I conclude the interview do have any questions of me regarding this research?

As stated at the beginning of the interview I wish to highlight that your responses remain confidential. The completed research will not identify your Community of Learning.

A copy of the completed Thesis will be made available to you at a time that all requirements of Massey University have been completed in full.

End Interview

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IWI REPRESENTATIVE (GROUP C)

Open Karakia

1. Could you please provide me with brief overview of yourself and your roll in the Community of Learning?

2. What is your understanding as to the purpose of the CoL?

3. To what level have you, on behalf of your iwi, been engaged with the goal setting for the CoL?

4. Have you felt the views of your Iwi have been listened to?

    a. Principal
    b. Boards of Trustees
    c. Ministry of Education

5. To what degree have the ideas and input of the iwi been included in the direction of the CoL?

    a. Do you feel genuinely invested in the goals and aspirations of the CoL?

6. What does success for Māori students look like?

    a. Do you feel that this view is reflected in CoL goals?
    b. If not, why not?

7. What are your thoughts regarding the comparison of Māori students with non-Māori?

8. What are your views about the context of judging success through academic achievement?

9. Do you feel the CoL will achieve the goals it has set for Māori students?

    a. Can you expand on why you think this?

Is there any other information that may not have been covered in this interview that you wish to share about the CoL?

Before I conclude the interview do have any questions of me regarding this research?

As stated at the beginning of the interview I wish to highlight that your responses remain confidential. The completed research will not identify your Community of Learning.

A copy of the completed Thesis will be made available to you at a time that all requirements of Massey University have been completed in full.

Close of interview karakia

End Interview