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*A three-way partnership to raise Māori
student achievement*



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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all educators, but especially to minority and indigenous group students, and their whānau, particularly acknowledging Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the words of Nelson Mandela:

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

ABSTRACT

The New Zealand education system produces high levels of academic performance (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD, in Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Contradictorily, New Zealand is also one of the few countries that produce a huge divide in performance levels between Māori and other minority culture groups on the one hand, and non-Māori and dominant culture groups on the other (ibid.). However, school policies on Māori student initiatives appear to generate minimal success for Māori students. Therefore, an urgent critique, and transformation of school policies are required to bring about better educational outcomes for Māori students. Hence, this qualitative study is underpinned in critical and socio-constructivist theories, and adopts a Kaupapa Māori orientation that is grounded in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Obstacles to Māori student achievement were firstly identified to determine how partnership relationships among students, whānau, and the school can be strengthened to raise achievement. Teacher questionnaires, parent individual interviews, and student semi-structured interviews were used to gauge perceptions of Māori student achievement, and explore the rationale and nature of partnership relationships. Misperceptions of Māori and education were found to significantly contribute to severed partnership relationships. Therefore, this research study advocates for power-sharing consultative, and collaborative decision-making processes within a culturally inclusive curriculum to *strengthen* partnership relationships among students, whānau, and the school...to raise Māori student achievement.

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PROLOGUE

In the context of much literature (Macfarlane, 2007a; Bishop & Glynn, 2004) around the negative impacts of the dominant discourse on indigenous and/or minority groups, I have become more aware of my role as researcher in the New Zealand/Aotearoa context. I am an immigrant member of a non-Māori minority group, and have experienced throughout my primary, secondary, and tertiary years the stifling impact of a White, Western, dominant culture that frequently used Christianity as a means of cultural assimilation.

The socio-politico-cultural context of apartheid (separateness) in South Africa meant the races (Whites, Indians, Coloureds, and Africans) were kept separate in their compartmentalised schools and tertiary education institutions, and a tiered education budget saw the education system's power to manipulate the access to knowledge, and how and what resources are distributed among the four races. This perhaps radical overview was brought to light in the late 1970s when freedom of the press and people's rights became much of the business of my peers at the University of Durban-Westville (renamed University of Kwa-Zulu Natal), a university ironically attended by individuals such as me 'under protest' because of its policies based on the oppressive dominant discourse. Thus, while generally White peers were celebrating the transitional tertiary phase, and having the freedom to choose a university and courses of their choice, many non-White peers became comrades against political oppression, and went underground to rally support against practices of apartheid in the South African education system.

My primary school years were somewhat smooth and uneventful in accepting the prescribed curriculum until I became embarrassingly aware of how my cultural background conflicted with that of the dominant culture through the poetry lessons (where every poem was based on the dominant Western ideology). In the dire need to excel academically, and make my parents proud, I was determined to fulfil the expectations of my teachers. Then, at university, the history of the nation (taught at primary school) became more apparent. I can now appreciate Smith's (1999) reference to the *dirty* word *colonialism* since one of the nation's *heroes* and colonists had been found to be actively exploiting the indigenous Africans – an important finding that would have changed the course of South African history taught at

schools! It became very apparent that the education system was a puppet of the government's strategy of *divide and rule*. The four races and their cultures were kept apart, but the knowledge of the dominant culture was taught at all schools. The non-White students were taught to marvel at the superiority of the White culture, and accept they were different and *inferior*, with their communities have no voting rights in the national elections. Education became a significant political tool to control and prevent non-Whites from the power-sharing processes of the country.

I believe I am in a fortunate and unique position to experience the realities of two education systems and their learning and teaching contexts. In the South African context, the lived experiences were in homogenous classes of non-White (Indian) students taught only by minority group (Indian) teachers, and in the New Zealand context, heterogenous classes taught by predominantly dominant discourse teachers. Both contexts create concerns of equity for minority and indigenous group students. As an employee of the Crown in New Zealand, I have become more aware of the access to knowledge by Māori. This has become a matter more concerning than statistics exposing the low academic performance levels of Māori students – that is, it is the *process* rather than the *outcomes* (Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999) of lower academic success among Māori students that appear to be the greater concern.

Thus there was the need to reflect on the above-mentioned process through a critical examination of the New Zealand education system, and particularly the meaning of *tikanga* which underpins the process involved in the teaching and learning relationships. Williams' dictionary gives *tikanga* as a derivative of *tika* - that which is fair, true or just (Durie, July 1998). This has implications for power-sharing partnerships, and equity in education. Therefore, Māori student underachievement in itself becomes a label worth scrutinising, as it can be used as a form of deficit thinking, and may demonstrate the ineffective consultative and collaborative partnership between the school and home.

Bishop (in Taylor, 2007) extends a fresh and apt challenge, open to *all* capable people (Māori and non-Māori) able to make positive contributions toward raising Māori students' achievement. Underlying this challenge is very likely to be the factor of *ownership*. In this research study exploring the three-way partnership, particularly looking at the relationships among Māori students, the school, and family, the tahuhu

(ridgepole) of the thesis would be in the word *strengthen*. The current perception appears to be a sympathetic view to curricular transformation, of educators being sensitive to cultural issues, and schools being advised to include Māori programmes to satisfy one of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's NEGs (National Educational Goals). Guidelines they will be, and without them being mandatory, and legitimated, these guidelines can arguably create room for marginalisation of indigenous group students.

In the context of this dissertation, I acknowledge the impact of my being non-Māori, and not affiliating to an iwi, or hapu, but as an employee of the Crown, saw the obligation to understand the Māori cultural worldview to be able to successfully work with Māori research participants with whom I also co-exist in a learning community. Smith (1999) points out that the identity politics of *by Māori, for Māori* can paralyse development, and advocates that non-Māori can participate in research with Māori if a Kaupapa Māori orientation is adopted. To this end, my supervisors were able to guide me through a reflexive research study with Māori.

I have been inspired by awhinatia (the move towards restorative justice practices) within the case school. A restorative justice initiative aims at providing forums to expand communication channels among students and teachers, and between the school and wider community on matters *that matter* about the student's wellbeing, and the healing or building of relationships (Macfarlane, 2007). Alton-Lee (2003), Bishop and Glynn (1999), and Dimmock (1995) have consistently advocated for educational professionals to provide an education system that is more responsive to beliefs and cultural practices of all their students. Restorative justice practices could thereby enhance consultative and collaborative practices through a three-way power-sharing partnership (students/family/school), to promote equity in education, and a genuinely inclusive curriculum.

Toia te waka matauranga

Ma wai e to? Maku e to, mau e to

Ma te whakaranga ake e to

Haul forth the canoe of education.

Who should haul it? I should, you should.

All within calling distance should haul the canoe (cited in Macfarlane, 2007, p. 161).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This ethnographic study set out to explore factors that can strengthen home-school partnerships to bring about better educational outcomes for Māori students. *Chapter one* provides a brief contextual framework of student/whānau/school partnerships. It attempts to illustrate if these partnerships are to be strengthened, one has to understand the socially constructed phenomena such as perceptions drawn from statistics on Māori student achievement, and knowledge; the premise is that these phenomena have been used in pathologising practices that frame Māori as inferior, and a problem (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999).

Chapter two provides background literature in five parts: *Part one* discusses theoretical perspectives underpinning the study; *Part two* places Māori student learning within the context of socio-constructivist learning constructs; *Part three* examines some key concepts related to Māori student achievement; *Part four* builds on these key concepts to discuss challenges experienced by Māori students and their whānau; and *Part five* uses these challenges in an attempt to identify steps to strengthen student/whānau/school partnership relationships to counter Māori student underachievement.

Chapter three provides a substantiated argument for the qualitative research design, particularly examining implications of a Kauapapa Māori orientation to research. An overview of the research findings is outlined in *Chapter four* under the two broad themes embraced in the research questions: challenges to Māori student achievement; and, strengthening of the three-way partnership. A critical discussion of the findings follows in *Chapter five*, drawing from the literature on Māori student achievement. *Chapter six* details conclusions from the findings, and discusses implications for schools in respect of strengthening the three-way partnership among students, whānau, and the school.

1.1 *The current situation – a reflective enquiry*

The notion of partnership is already part of the discourse in curriculum reform initiatives (Smith, 1999; Hohepa, Jenkins, Mane, Sherman-Godinet, & Toi, 2005). Schools are required by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to include policies that create effective school learning communities through partnership relationships. Recent research in New Zealand schools by Bull et al. (2008) has found that partnerships between the school and home can improve student achievement. However, the *rationale* behind partnership relationships can dictate the nature of educational outcomes for Māori students. Furthermore, the notions of consultation and collaboration also have a bearing on partnerships. For example, Hohepa et al. (2005) point out that in a flawed consultative relationship, one party decides who to consult/collaborate with, when, and on what terms.

Two kinds of rationale are forwarded by Timperley and Robinson (cited in Smith, 1999). One embraces a social theory perspective, and is underpinned in a political and social agenda that includes values and outcomes such as equity and social equality. There are two inferences in this type of partnership: Firstly, the partnership relationship is based on equal power relations between/among the partners (Durie, 1998), and secondly, the partnership relationship contributes positively to the school as a site of social transformation (Smith, 1999; Shields, et al., 2005). The other rationale for a partnership relationship is based on *general platitudes* and *working together* of the partners (Robinson et al., cited in Smith, 1999). The implication in this type of partnership relationship is that it is not necessarily based on equal power relations, and therefore the status quo of the dominant discourse may still be accepted, and marginalisation of certain groups of students may continue to be perpetuated (Gorski, 2007).

This postgraduate study supports the rationale that partnership relationships are grounded in a deliberate purpose to bring about better educational outcomes for Māori (and all) students. However, since the disparity in achievement between Māori and non-Māori students still exists (National Qualifications Authority, National Certificate of Educational Achievement - NCEA, Ministry of Education, 2008d), the rationale and nature of home-school partnership relationships require critical examination. It is argued that *strengthening* the partnership relationships through power-sharing consultation and collaboration can contribute to better educational

outcomes for Māori students. Therefore, this study works to enhance the rationale toward equity and social equality.

Cognisance is taken of the *little* things that count that can sever partnership relationships within the discursive terrain, for example, words such as *less likely*, and *less capable* are used in statistical analyses to draw conclusions about Māori. *More likely* and *more capable* are examples that sum up the way in which Pākehā or non-Māori are represented. However, statistics on student achievement constitute outcomes. They can determine evidence, proof, or measures of performance of Māori student achievement. This postgraduate study consistently argues that educational outcomes such as Māori student underachievement do not exist in a vacuum; they exist by virtue of the means/processes that bring about the outcomes. Thus, educational outcomes alone provide partial information, and therefore one is cautioned about erroneous conclusions on any group of people.

In an attempt to understand the process, the researcher critically reflected on statistical conclusions on student achievement in New Zealand drawn from the 2007 NCEA results (Ministry of Education, 2008d). The following questions were derived from those reflections. While the researcher notes the questions raised, she acknowledges the virtual impossibility of answering all the following questions, within this thesis:

- Who owned the research?
- How were the statistics extrapolated?
- What exactly was meant by an underachieving Māori student?
- Whose knowledge for *achievement* was considered valid to set the benchmark for comparisons?
- Did the statistics imply that Māori students generally (and stereotypically) achieve at a certain (*lower*) level, and that their performance was even lower than the expected level?

These questions generate an enquiry of how statistics on student achievement can dictate school strategic plans and policies because clearly there was a call for curricular reforms as evidenced from the Draft Curriculum Framework document

(Ministry of Education, 2007c). Thus, implications of school policies, and practice provide more definition to this research enquiry, and leaves one with the question: If mandatory school policy documents embrace the bicultural perspective, and implied inclusive curriculum, why was there still a divide in the statistics between Māori and non-Māori? (Note that the 2007 NCEA results - Ministry of Education, 2008d - indicate a disparity between Māori and non-Māori student achievement, with Māori *less likely* to achieve at a higher level than non-Māori.)

1.2 Research questions

If the underlying process of Māori student underachievement is understood, this study argues for action to strengthen home-school partnerships to improve Māori student achievement. Therefore, the following two research questions embrace an intrinsic case study where the purpose is both theory building, and exploratory in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005):

- What are the obstacles to Māori student achievement?
- Assuming that a partnership approach to achievement will enhance educational outcomes for Māori students, how can a three-way partnership (student/whānau/school) be *strengthened*?

1.3 Whose knowledge?

The education system grapples with power relations, and initiatives to validate Māori knowledge (Durie, 1998; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2007b). Therefore, this research study has involved continuous critical inquiry into *whose* knowledge is validated when defining Māori student achievement. O'Sullivan's (2007) views on Māori knowledge, the meaning of knowledge within the context of the Knowledge Wave Conference of 2003, and the knowledge of the Draft Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 2007c) are critically examined in this section.

O'Sullivan (2007) uses the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Appendix L) to rationalise the need to centralise Māori knowledge. He points out that the Treaty did not intend for Māori to surrender, and assimilate the dominant culture. The implication for education is that Māori knowledge should be cherished as a taonga

tuku iho (cultural treasures handed down through the generations, Metge, 1984). O’Sullivan (2007) contends that validation of Māori knowledge contributes to one’s success and wellbeing in the national and global communities, but Māori have become a junior partner with the Crown. He therefore aptly calls for an endorsement of Māori ways of knowing, and for greater levels of self-determination to dissolve “patterns of asymmetrical life-chances” (p. 169). Thus, the recent lobbying for the insertion of Māori knowledge in the Draft Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 2007c) is not only apt, and valid, but a state obligation derived from the Treaty of Waitangi (Macfarlane, 2007b).

Macfarlane’s (2007b) article *In search of a culturally-inclusive curriculum*, points out that the Draft Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 2007c) omits a significant element of identity, that is, Māori as tangata whenua (indigenous people of New Zealand), and therefore strongly argued for its reinstatement in the draft and final documents. Macfarlane (2007b) substantiated his position by referring to Glynn’s (1997, in Macfarlane, 2007b) explanation of the implications of the three articles of the Treaty of Waitangi. He maintains that:

- Article 1 established the shared responsibility between two partners of the development of education policy;
- Article 2 emphasised the rights of Māori to define pedagogy within a cultural framework; and
- Article 3 inferred equity in education for Māori students.

The articles include three important elements pertinent to school learning communities: *partnership*, *culturally-responsive pedagogy*, and *equity in education*. An understanding of tikanga Māori, and validation of Māori knowledge are crucial elements as the knowledge adopted by schools is used as a “benchmark for the progress” of students (O’Sullivan, 2007, p. 167).

There are two implications of the omission of Māori as tangata whenua in the Draft Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 2007c) document: Firstly, access to dominant group knowledge can empower or disempower. It is argued that one can be empowered when one has a critical understanding of reality. Therefore, one can be

critical of the *normalisation* of the dominant culture. Conversely, one can be disempowered if the dominant group culture is accepted as the norm. Secondly, omission of Māori as tangata whenua implies minimal access to indigenous or Māori knowledge, and concomitant *drying up* of one's cultural capital (Durie, 1998).

In the case of the *new* knowledge espoused at the Knowledge Wave Conference held in New Zealand in 2003 (Carpenter, McMurchy-Pilkington, & Sutherland, 2004), the sub-themes of economic growth, knowledge, and community were examined within the conference's overarching theme of New Zealand Leadership Challenge. The inferred *new* knowledge within the education context was seen to challenge the deep-seated ideology of the dominant discourse to dismantle power relations (ibid.). Establishing the challenge does not by itself, however, guarantee authentic partnerships among the relevant stakeholders (students/whānau/school) of the education sector. The so-called new knowledge is, firstly, perhaps no different from the knowledge of the dominant discourse in respect of *whose* knowledge is validated, and secondly, it may be an end in itself. The researcher's scepticism stems from views held by Bishop (in Webber, 1996), and Simon (1990). While Bishop (in Webber, 1996) points out its (the inferred *new* knowledge of the Knowledge Wave) *holistic* aim, where pluralistic societies may be advanced, Simon (1990) rejects the idea that the *new* knowledge can dismantle power because of his (Simon's) claims that the *new* knowledge may not remove class (which forms the building blocks of socio-economic status). The concern in this dissertation is that the *new* knowledge, and the intended assumption that authentic home-school partnerships are created, may not be enough by itself to equip Māori students to participate effectively as self-determining individuals in Māori society if *socio-economic issues* dictate *whose* knowledge is validated.

According to Christians (2002, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), validating Māori knowledge through *the enhancement of moral agency* depends on good-will. However, giving Māori a voice to validate Māori knowledge is itself insufficient; it is the sharing of power, and the right to practise Māori knowledge that are the intended ideal (O'Sullivan, 2007).

1.4 *A way forward?*

Amidst the rapid pace of school self-reviews with a view to *new* educational pedagogies for *new* teaching and learning strategies, for *best* practice, there is also the call for the curriculum to be transformed (Alton-Lee, 2003; Townsend & Bates, 2007). To this end, Smith (1991, p. 4) is quoted in Townsend and Bates (2007) asserting that curriculum initiatives should not be tokenistic measures, but rather strategies to challenge the status quo that marginalises minority and indigenous group students:

simply adding courses that plug holes in the curriculum...(but) asking new questions that more naturally embrace...the perspectives of those at the margins by placing them at the centre. (Smith, 1991, in Townsend & Bates, 2007, p. 230).

Smith (ibid.) makes the point that educational institutions may continue introducing new strategies for better learning outcomes, but without power sharing, collaborating and co-constructing, there will only be instructing and informing which can stagnate equitable educational outcomes. So, while schools may agree in principle that home-school partnerships create better learning opportunities for all students, the nature of this partnership is not nearly so clear.

This study advocates for the endorsement of school policy, with the emphasis on policies that are *well-understood*, *culturally-safe*, and *well-implemented* to benefit all students (Macfarlane et al., 2007). Two significant and mandatory documents have the potential to bring about visible and positive outcomes for Māori students: Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success/ Māori Education Strategy- 2008-2012, (Ministry of Education, 2008a); and the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008d). These documents infer that Māori knowledge should be validated through school wide curricula for an equitable education to be accessed by Māori students. Māori knowledge is directly related to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Therefore, without access to Māori forms of knowing, it can be argued that the Māori learner is more likely to become distanced, excluded, and non-engaged, especially if teachers continue to assume a mainstream centric curriculum, and engage in discriminatory practices that further entrench this omission.

The Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success/ Māori Education Strategy (ibid.) makes significant reference to the Māori Potential Approach (Ministry of Education, 2008a) as a strategy that can counter misperceptions of Māori students, and strengthen partnership relationships. The approach comprises three underlying principles, all of which are interwoven in this thesis to illustrate Māori students *are capable* of academic success:

1. Māori potential: all Māori learners have unlimited potential.
2. Cultural advantage: all Māori have cultural advantage by virtue of who they are – being Māori is an asset; not a problem.
3. Inherent capability: all Māori are inherently capable of achieving success (Ministry of Education, 2008a, p. 19).

Note that the Māori Potential Approach makes overt reference to *who* Māori are. While dominant group members also have a cultural advantage by virtue of *who* they are, it is less prominent in policy discourse because their *dominance* or *dominant discourse values* are assumed. Thus, the Māori Potential Approach is significant because one cannot assume normalisation of the dominant discourse.

The way forward (the process to raise Māori student achievement) is also underpinned in L. Smith (1997) and G. Simon's (1990) Kaupapa Māori theoretical constructs, Alton-Lee's (2003) Best Evidence Synthesis guidelines for teachers, and Bishop et al.'s (2004) Te Kotahitanga professional development programme on a culturally responsive teaching/learning context. These initiatives validate Māori knowledge, and incorporate culturally inclusive pedagogical approaches that build on partnership relationships, and can thus serve to expedite endorsement of school policies.

Summary of Chapter One

This first chapter introduced the socio-political rationale for partnership relationships among students, whānau, and the school. It has briefly pointed out that misinterpretations of statistics on Māori/non-Māori student achievement can impact negatively on Māori student achievement. Statistics (Ministry of Education, 2007a) on Māori (*less capable* of academic success), and non-Māori (*more capable* of academic success) reveal a disparity that problematises Māori (Smith, 1999).

However, current curriculum initiatives do not appear to contribute to significant gains in Māori student achievement. They may be viewed as mere plugs in the curriculum (Smith, 1999) if initiatives focus on the technocratic reality of school communities where the focus is on *how to* rather than *why*. The actual problem may lie in Māori knowledge not validated. Thus, an alternative way of thinking, toward power-sharing partnerships, is required to contest the normalisation of the dominant discourse (Johnston & McLeod, 2001, cited in Patrick, 2003) in an effort to validate Māori forms of knowing. One way to validate Māori ways of knowing would be to *strengthen* the three-way (students/whānau/school) partnership that this thesis advocates.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter takes the reader through a deep-seated *process* that can help better understand the *outcomes* of Māori student achievement (Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999). It consists of five parts with the theme *Māori student learning and achievement within the context of the three-way (student/whānau/school) partnership*. *Part one* discusses critical, socio-constructivist, and Kaupapa Māori theories as guiding constructs of this research study. *Part two* examines Māori student achievement within the context of socio-constructivist theories on learning. The premise is that what motivates learners to learn can bring about desired educational outcomes (Dweck, 1999). *Part three* critically examines some key concepts inferred in the project's title within the background of education in New Zealand. *Part four* explores identifiable obstacles/challenges to Māori student achievement, particularly examining the significant role of deficit theorising of Māori and achievement, and *Part five* asserts that if obstacles/challenges to Māori student achievement can be identified and critically analysed, then action, such as strengthening the three-way (student/whānau/school) partnership, can be taken, to raise achievement in Māori.

To decode the tiered process is just scratching the surface of New Zealand education that was supposed to be suffering from *narration sickness*, a phrase used by Freire (1970) in his explanation of the banking concept of education that can be used to understand issues of inequity in education. Freire (ibid.) described education as a pedagogy of a unilateral act where students are seen as passive individuals to be filled with a certain type of knowledge; knowledge to be banked to make students adjust to the world with a fragmented sense of reality. In the twenty first century, Freire's (1970) *narration sickness* continues to parallel the *one size fits all* notion of the New Zealand mainstream classroom where the dominant discourse is still mainly the knowledge set as a benchmark for academic progress of all students, Māori and non-Māori (O'Sullivan, 2007).

New Zealand schools are obligated by the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi through the National Administrative Guidelines (NAGs), and the National Education

Goals (NEGs) to provide an equitable education to all students (Ministry of Education, 2008d). One of the guidelines on Māori student achievement for Boards of Trustees is:

in consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2008d, p. 44).

The “consultation” (ibid.) in the above guideline may not necessarily bring about equity in education because consultation may not be underpinned in equal power-sharing among the relevant partners (McLeod, 2002). Patrick (2003) contends that power-sharing home-school partnerships contribute to enhanced sharing of information, and greater likelihood of Māori student achievement. Therefore, it is argued that the consultation process between the Māori community (Māori students and their whānau), and the school can be effective through power-sharing partnership relationships. The research supports Patrick (2003) recognising the importance of the work of Kaupapa Māori researchers such as Graham Smith (1997), Durie (2003), Johnston and McLeod (cited in Patrick, 2003), Macfarlane (2007a), Berryman and Glynn (2001), and Linda Smith (1999) which calls for curriculum change for equity in education in New Zealand.

PART ONE: Theories that guide this research

2.1.1 Critical theory

Coxon, Annae, Mara, Wendt-Samu, and Finau (2002) posit that critical theory is required to review present education practices in New Zealand. These critical theorists recognise that, if the natural world is accepted as a given, there will be no change, but since *facts* are socially constructed, social change *can* take place (ibid.). In the context of colonialism, subordination and dominance are not natural, nor are concepts such as underachievement, and innate intelligence. Critical theory rejects the scientific notion of naturalness (Gibson, 1986; Smith, 1997).

Critical theory is a sociological approach with the premise that the school can be the site of struggle to contest unequal power/social relations (Simon, 1990; Smith, 1997; Schick & Donn, 1995). Therefore, a critical theoretical approach can critique

technocratic rationality (a practice limited to method and efficiency) by exposing the dominant ideology, and questioning the underlying purpose of school practice (Gibson, 1986; Coxon et al., 2002). According to Larrain (1979, p. 60, cited in Simon, 1990), critical theory is not “a blind deterministic process” to satisfy the ministerial criterion for school self-reviews, but rather a theoretical critique that intends to transform existing school structure. Gorski (2007) would strongly support such transformation when he challenges teachers who accept the naturalness or status quo of the dominant culture that marginalises minority and indigenous group students and their whānau.

Thus, an approach underpinned in critical theory would allow for an alternative to the *norm* of the dominant discourse. For example, teachers would be required to take agency as critical thinkers to advocate for conscientisation, self-determination, and autonomy in order to emancipate oneself by sharing power with those groups in subordinate social positions (Coxon et al., 2002; Smith, 1999; J. M. McLeod, personal communication, December 2008). While teachers can be instrumental in overcoming asymmetry in social relations, only whole school intervention is likely to expedite such change (Simon, 1990; O’Sullivan, 2007; Bruner, in Shields et al., 2005).

A school wide transformation of the curriculum involves the critical review of school structures, policies, the hidden curriculum, and pedagogical practices (Gorinski & Abernethy, 2007; Hooley, 2005). For example, a review of teaching practice has revealed that students are more engaged in the course of an inclusive pedagogical approach: “better teaching, and teaching of an appropriate content for the individual learner in a more caring and humane atmosphere” (Gorinski & Abernethy, 2007, p. 10).

The value of critical theory within this research study is not only for the school to reflect on its pedagogical practices, but also for *student* and *whānau* participants to have a voice in this study to review school policy and practice, thus widening the sharing of power. Collectively, students, whānau, and teachers can participate in school reviews to examine deep-seated issues of control and power, and exclusion of minority and indigenous groups. Thus, critical theory can change unequal social

relations as it embraces democratic dialogue with a view to transformation (Shields et al., 2005), “particularly given that critical theory works to disclose true interests” (J. M. McLeod, personal communication, 24 December 2008).

Hooley (2005) expounds on the nature of the transformation when he writes on the *holistic* aim of critical research, and noting the school is a microcosm within (and interconnected with) the wider society: “To link the immediate concerns of local communities with the broader context of indigenous rights and to provide outcomes that will restructure schools for the mutual benefit of all students” (Hooley, 2005, p. 80).

Bruner’s (in Shields et al., 2005) view of changing education inequities through critical pedagogy is localised within the school, an approach that Russell Bishop (in Taylor, 2007) infers requires an emphasis on a national level. Bishop (ibid.) speaks of the New Zealand education system experiencing an “education crisis”, a situation already asserted by Graham Smith (1997). Bishop (in L. Smith, 1999) points out that critical theory entails a local theoretical positioning for Māori to be empowered, but that it does not embrace emancipatory goals. Simon (1990) and Fay (in Hooley, 2003) provide further views to Bishop’s (in Smith, 1999) argument. While Fay (ibid.) believes explanations of the social order are catalysts for social transformation, Simon (1990) advocates for critical theory and pedagogy to enhance informed understandings of school structures by Māori students, and their whānau.

This study supports the argument forwarded by Linda Smith (1999), and Graham Smith (1997) that examining the purpose of technocratic rationality may be one step towards equitable educational outcomes. The advantage of schools adopting a critical theoretical approach can be illustrated in a school where verbal abuse, and physical violence are manifestations of racial and ethnic disharmony that prevent Māori students from effective participation in their education (Schick & Donn, 1995). Critical pedagogy can not only promote an academically effective environment through acceptance of cultural difference, but can also expedite effective partnerships among all students, their families, and teachers (Schick & Donn, 1995; Bishop & Glynn, 2000).

2.1.2 Kaupapa Māori theory

Resistance is a key concept in Kaupapa Māori theory (G. Smith, 1997). Since resistance is a response to existing structures, and practice, the theory is dynamic in its adaption to contemporary influences (Johnston, McLeod & Kenrick, 2008). However, it is firmly grounded in Māori ways of thinking and being, identity, whānau, and self-determination (Smith, 1999; Patrick, 2003).

A Kaupapa Māori theoretical approach is distinguishable as an intersectoral approach (education, health, justice), and therefore heavily set in whānau or holistic principles (Milne, 2005). Linda Smith (1999) draws on Graham Smith's (1990) underlying principles of Kaupapa Māori theory to illustrate the holistic approach: tino rangatiratanga (the principle of self-determination); taonga tuku iho (the principle of cultural aspiration); ako Māori (the principle of culturally preferred pedagogy); kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga (the principle of socio-economic mediation); whānau (the principle of extended family structure); kaupapa (the principle of collective philosophy); te tiriti o Waitangi (the principle of the Treaty of Waitangi); and, ata (the principle of growing respectful relationships).

One can argue that the broad scope of the underlying principles of Kaupapa Māori theory can provide authentic critique of school policy, and practice in New Zealand schools. For example, misinterpretations of statistics on Māori student achievement can harm people's self-esteem rather than restore or repair a situation (Macfarlane, 2007a). These misinterpretations can create misperceptions of Māori students, and their whānau, and alienation of Māori from the schooling system. A Kaupapa Māori approach to school review can draw on all the above-mentioned principles to counter the issue of misperceptions, and simultaneously critically examine the wider ideological implications of the dominant discourse.

Furthermore, Durie (1998) points out the need for a Kaupapa Māori focus to ensure no slant of interpretation of research findings will concur with current dominant thinking. The processes underlying Māori student achievement can be looked at from a critical standpoint rather than assuming too much about Māori (Durie, 1998). Therefore, a Kaupapa Māori approach can invoke more understanding of Māori

learners, and concomitant curricular transformation to meet all students' learning needs.

2.1.3 Socio-constructivist theory

Socio-constructivist theory suggests that knowledge can be claimed on many grounds, and all people have the ability to take charge of their lives (Burr, 2003). It is underpinned in social justice (which has roots in *tikanga* [Māori ways of knowing] - Durie, 1998), and shared understandings among students, whānau, and teachers. The implication is that negotiation of diverse perspectives underpin the dialogic relationship among the dominant discourse, and minority and indigenous groups (Shields et al., 2005). Thus, if school policy embraces socio-constructivist constructs, it is inferred that schools also embrace restorative practices because these practices are grounded in shared understandings (Macfarlane, 2007a).

According to Shields et al., (2005), and Schick and Donn (1995), a socio-constructivist approach underpins a discourse of *community* within a school. Since socio-constructivist theory also advances the notion that minority and indigenous group people can shape their own destinies (Burr, 2003), a discourse of community also promotes a community of difference, and all students' equity in education.

Socio-constructivist theory can be paralleled to Kaupapa Māori and critical theories on the premise that the educator is capable of exposing social and educational inequities, and challenging ethnic-racial oppression (Ghosh, in Craft, 1996). For example, in acknowledging the highly politically volatile nature of race relations, Patrick (2003), Bishop and Glynn (2004), and Schick and Donn (1995) strongly advocate for the challenge of authority to achieve the basic principles of social justice.

PART TWO: Māori students' learning

Māori student achievement, like any student's, is based on the process of learning. The process, not necessarily like any student's, requires understanding within a Māori worldview. Challenges to learning can cause a range of responses from learners. For

example, a *helpless* response can limit an individual's achievement of her/his goals (Dweck, 1999). The point here is that a challenge can be an obstacle to learning. A dominant Euro-Western education system, for example, can conflict with a Māori worldview on human development, and thereby pose a challenge and obstacle to Māori student achievement (Berryman & Glynn, 2001). Hence, this section outlines some key learning theories that develop the argument for the holistic nature of Māori students' learning.

2.2.1 *Socio-constructivist learning theories*

The Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane, 2007a) is an example of a learning model that adopts a broad socio-constructivist approach. It derives from a Māori worldview of human development grounded in a holistic representation of the world according to three spheres of life – mind, body, and spirit (ibid.). A brief explanation of four amalgamated models illustrates the notion of *wholeness* of the Hikairo Rationale. Model one, posited by Irwin (1984, in Macfarlane, 2007a), explains the holistic worldview through the three sides of the triangle, representing the mind, body, and soul. Model two (Te Whare Tapa Wha), advocated by Durie (1994, in Macfarlane, 2007a) builds on model one by adding a fourth and crucial side, *whānau*, that is, the individual within the broader context of whānau. Model three (Te Wheke), devised by Pere (1991, in Macfarlane, 2007a), includes the four aspects of the Te Whare Tapa Wha model, and four additional elements, namely, *mana ake* (status), *mauri* (life force), *ha a koro ma a kui ma* (breath of life coming from the tipuna), and *whatumanawa* (emotional life). Model four (Te Rakau) is based on the metaphor of the root system of the tree, that is, *orangatanga* (developing a nurturing environment, Macfarlane, 2007a).

Elements of all four models are incorporated in the Hikairo Rationale. The relevance for the three-way partnership (student/whānau/school) is that the Hikairo Rationale asserts a holistic approach of human development by interweaving seven areas that promote wellbeing of a community: *huakina mai* (opening doorways); *ihi* (being assertive); *kotahitanga* (seeking collaboration); *awhinatia* (helping learners); *i runga i te manaaki* (caring that pervades); *rangatiratanga* (motivating learners); and, *orangatanga* (nurturing environment – Macfarlane, 2007a). Each area has positive

implications for Māori (and all) students' learning, and partnership relationships because of individual and collective goals. It is argued that incomplete development in any one area can sever partnership relationships, and Māori student learning/achievement. For example, a mainstream classroom short of *orangatanga* (nurturing environment), can result in unproductive student-teacher partnerships, and student disengagement.

The challenge and struggle the dominant discourse creates for minority and indigenous culture groups can also be explained in terms of localised experiences of learning within the classroom (Pintrich, 2000; Mayer, 2003; Newman, 1998). While Pintrich (2000) illustrates how the environment can contribute to self-regulated learning, Mayer (2003) provides an explanation of participatory modelling, and Newman (1998) brings to attention adaptive help seeking. According to Pintrich (2000), self regulated learning is a process whereby the learner actively constructs, and monitors learning goals in a controlled way, and by interrelating with factors in the learning environment. The notion of participatory modelling stems from social collaboration in the classroom, and scaffolding to assist learning (Mayer, 2003). An expert and a novice take turns to accomplish the learning task (*ibid.*). Adaptive help seeking is part of a social-interactional process where a student actively seeks help either from the teacher or peers (Newman, 1998). Newman (*ibid.*) posits that motivational factors such as goals and self-perceptions can encourage engagement in learning.

The theme in the above-mentioned socio-constructivist theoretical constructs of learning is enhancement of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. More importantly, they point to a *whānau*-type of learning where a sense of belonging is encouraged (Bishop & Glynn, 2004), and which Pintrich (2000), Mayer (2003), and Newman (1998) claim can be achieved in an environment of safety. Macfarlane's (2007a) reference to *manaaki* (growing a caring environment) in the *Hikairo Rationale* also clearly articulates his call for a culturally-safe learning environment for Māori (Macfarlane et al., 2007b).

In the context of misperceptions of Māori and capability of academic success, it may be relevant to critically examine the ongoing heredity versus environment debate to

explain the concept of human learning (and particularly the learning of Māori students). On the one hand, pseudo science attempts to validate the claim that some individuals and groups are innately less intelligent. On the other hand, a socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) on human learning explains misperceptions of Māori. In this respect, Nuthall (2001, in Webber, 2005) makes an apt comparison between culturally-determined factors (which are explained as something that *can* be controlled), and biologically-determined factors (which cannot be controlled). The implication then from the heredity debate may be summarised as follows: ethnicity (including indigenous groups) is an invariable; dominant/ minority groups, perceptions, and Māori student learning are variables. One can argue if variables can be controlled and thereby changed, then Māori student underachievement can change. The relevance for this study that supports a socio-cultural approach is that Māori student learning is culturally-determined (Macfarlane, 2007a). Thus, strengthening a three-way partnership among students, whānau, and school lies in changing the social dynamics of the partnership, and in this study's case, by including the power-sharing principle (McLeod, 2002).

Furthermore, Tomlinson (in Thomas & Loxley, 2001) uses a socio-cultural perspective to explain deficit theorising of Māori. Social contexts were found to both reproduce a “society where the achievers are almost always white, upper- or middle-class males” (ibid., p. 34), and an increasing number of cases of Māori youth who have experienced interruptions to their academic learning. Socio-cultural critique generated explanations of social contexts by asking a different set of questions about educational experience leading to Māori underachieving. Given the power of statistics to create misperceptions, this study looks at the ways in which statistics explain and reinforce the disparity between Māori and non-Māori student achievement.

2.2.2 Culturally-inclusive learning contexts

A sense of belonging may be central to human behaviour for all individuals (Balsam, 1991), but to the Māori student, it may be a criterion that determines the extent to which she/he will be motivated to learn in a social context. Ian McCormack (1997) argues this is the case in creating an effective learning environment for Māori students, and devised a model of good practice as a result. In the context of the

dominant discourse within the school, Māori students may experience lower levels of a sense of belonging unless teachers provide fully inclusive classrooms (Bishop & Glynn, 2004).

Catering for the sense of belonging in diverse classrooms, through non-conflicting, trusting, caring, and collaborative instructional methods enhances levels of student engagement in learning (American Psychological Association – APA, 1995). This research challenges one of the findings of the Hunn Report (1960, in Bishop & Glynn, 1999) which suggested that Māori language and culture is an obstacle to learning. In fact based on the research cited here and data derived from this study the contrary is argued: that the unconditional acknowledgement and practice of *te reo*, and Māori ways of knowing can be contributing factors to improve Māori student achievement. Conclusions of research on culturally inclusive learning contexts have clearly explained how learning is enhanced through co-construction of knowledge (Macfarlane, 2007a; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bevan-Brown, 2003). This advances the argument for Māori culture as an indigenous right in a New Zealand classroom, and cognisance to be taken that academic success of Māori students is more likely to occur when there are effective partnerships among students, *whānau*, and the school.

PART THREE: Key concepts within the context of Māori student achievement

2.3.1 Colonialism

Freire, as early as 1970, commented on New Zealand - that its “Education is suffering from narration sickness” (p. 52). The sickness Freire refers to is articulated in his explanation of the banking of the dominant discourse in the student. The long-term *illness* of New Zealand schooling may lie in the perpetuation of the dominant discourse because of far-reaching implications within a framework of colonialism which has become a context of epistemological racism underlying the dominant culture (Bishop & Glynn, 2004; Ryan, 2007). If the assumption underlying the New Zealand education system that compulsory, universal and secular education brings about social equality and justice for all (Coxon et al., 2002), how does the school consistently reproduce unequal educational outcomes of Māori, and non-Māori students?

Unequal outcomes are likely to be a result of inequity in education (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The significant implications of the inequity have led to many Kaupapa Māori researchers such as Smith (1991) to call for a critique of school policy and practice. New Zealand schools require a transformation from deficit pedagogy that stultifies effective communication, to culturally inclusive pedagogy that embraces manaaki (caring and nurturing), and where Māori students can be who (individual – Māori), and what (collective – Māori) they are (Macfarlane et al., 2007).

Townsend and Bates (2007) point out that Western social scientists, especially sociologists, claim that culture moulds people's beliefs, and conflict can result when people from different cultures dictate the roles and expectations for others. The conflicting result is likely to be due to minimal knowledge and understanding of cultural backgrounds (ibid.).

Detrimentially, inequity in education for the underachieving Māori student may not only reverberate in government-driven policy but also in educator-internalised knowledge and power structures within schools. This claim underpins Ghosh's (in Craft, 1996) explanation of consensus and conflict theories. Consensus theorists view the school's function of transmitting culture and human capital formation, with a mono-cultural society in mind, and conflict theorists saw the school being directly involved in the socialisation of students by the dominant culture (ibid.).

In a study of Australian classrooms by Ghosh (in Craft, 1996), the educator was seen to fulfil an accommodating role where she/he adopted the dominant discourse to include the excluded groups. This accommodating role however, posed conflicting forums of accessing an equitable education, and left indigenous and minority group students disengaged. In an analogy with the New Zealand classroom, Johnston and McLeod (2001, in Patrick, 2003) have challenged the normalisation of the dominant Pākehā culture and resulting inequity in the access of education by Māori students, advocating for genuine relationships between all students and all teachers.

Cognisance is taken that the educator may not have had appropriate professional development training to cope with culturally diverse classrooms, but that this case can contribute to conflicting value systems in the classroom and a greater probability of disengagement of Māori students. Therefore, one would argue that changes are

required in tertiary providers of pre-service education programmes to better equip teachers to forge authentic partnerships with their students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

A major paradigm shift in pedagogical practices to change the deficit focus is advocated by Bishop and Glynn (1999), and Graham Smith (1997) who saw the need for Kaupapa Māori theory and messages in mainstream classes. The underpinning principle of these messages is *power-sharing*. Kaupapa Māori approaches can provide teachers with an excellent basis for understanding Māori students where power-sharing through reciprocal learning (*ako*) can be an alternative way to address relationships in the classroom (Bishop & Glynn, 2000; Macfarlane, 2007a). The researcher argues that this shift in pedagogical practice can enhance understanding and respect of minority and indigenous group students, not to merely tolerate their difference in the culturally diverse classroom, but to affirm Māori as *tangata whenua* (indigenous people of New Zealand), and the right to validate Māori knowledge in the mainstream classroom.

2.3.2 Curriculum reforms

The power and control issue within home-school partnerships has already been discussed within the context of New Zealand education's curriculum reforms (Smith, 1997; Patrick, 2003). The neo-liberal educational reforms of the 1990s impacted on school management where teachers were required to satisfy the requirements of the National Educational Goals (Ministry of Education, 2008d) and National Administrative Guidelines (*ibid.*), together with meeting the obligations of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. However, while teachers' autonomy was encouraged, schools were required to marketise education to meet the demands of globalisation of education. In the process a critical focus was removed – the dynamics of the classroom, and the issues of moral and social justice (Patrick, 2003). Since “enterprise and globalisation” continue to be an overarching aim of education (New Zealand Curriculum, Ministry of Education, 2008d, p. 9), it is argued that hegemonic spaces of the classroom can be compromised to meet entrepreneurial goals. The implication is that Māori ways of knowing can become included in the curriculum as *tokenistic measures* (Smith, 1999). If this is the case, it can jeopardise Māori student

achievement due to *incomplete* mutually established goals among students, whānau, and the school.

Ironically, the aim of the Knowledge Wave Conference (Patrick, 2003) corresponds with the future focus of the global entrepreneurial goals of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008d) that provides a framework for *best* practice affirming “New Zealand’s unique identity” (Ministry of Education, 2008d, p. 9). However, this thesis attempts to frame globalisation as another obstacle to Māori student achievement because socio-economic disparities between Māori and the discourse of dominant cultures can cyclically create obstacles to Māori student achievement (Simon, 1990).

Curriculum reforms intend to strengthen home-school partnerships, but they have often been viewed *sympathetically* (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). For example, schools are advised to include Māori initiatives to satisfy the requirement of one the New Zealand Ministry of Education’s (2008d) National Educational Goals (NEGs). One can argue that the interpretation/understanding of the guideline leaves room for a continuum of levels of practice, and therefore leaves room for marginalisation of Māori students. Conversely, it is argued that if the Māori initiative guideline is interpreted as being underpinned in equal power-sharing in collaborative and consultative processes, effective partnership relationships among Māori students, whānau, and teachers can authentically focus on Māori student learning/achievement.

Research studies in North America (Cockrell et al., 1999, Merryfield, 2000, Sleeter, 2002, Valli, 2000, Zeichner, 1996, Zeichner & Melnick, 1996, in Patrick, 2003) have suggested there are disadvantages of curriculum reforms if this is the sole focus of reform. The researchers found an insufficient number of teachers with varied cultural experiences, and teachers who concentrated on students from the dominant culture. Applied to the New Zealand mainstream classroom, social justice issues are perceived as incidental matters to deal with, which leaves the litany of statistics on the disparity of Māori and non-Māori students unchecked (Durie, 1998; Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

*Deficit theorising is discussed in more detail in *Part four* of this chapter as an obstacle to Māori student achievement.

Schick and Donn (1995), and Carpenter et al. (2004) elaborate on the issue of social justice when they bring to attention the disengagement of students because of a culturally intolerant society. Carpenter et al. (2004) argue that the New Knowledge Wave (Patrick, 2003) has brought about further hostility and low levels of social cohesion due to the challenges of the underlying power relationships within society. They develop their argument by exposing the concern of an intolerance of cultural differences - that the intolerance can generate verbal and physical violence, and negative emotional and academic outcomes. Furthermore, it would require an absence of a democratic mandate to bring about equitable educational outcomes (Schick & Donn, 1995; Carpenter et al., 2004). Thus, it leaves one with the question: how effective are New Zealand schools in ultimately creating socially just and cohesive communities to strengthen partnership relationships among students, teachers and whānau?

Mainstream schools have adopted inclusive initiatives such as *biculturalism* and *multiculturalism* to achieve equity in education, but while initiatives may have good intentions to celebrate the cultural differences in culturally diverse classrooms, they can continue to ineffectively contribute to Māori student achievement (Bishop & Glynn, 2000). This point is illustrated in the curriculum reforms and policies in respect of biculturalism and multiculturalism (Hunn, 1960, cited in Bishop & Glynn, 2001) that did not adequately address Māori student underachievement (Spoonley, 1993, Ramsey, 1972, cited in Berryman & Glynn, 2001). Clarity of these terms is important since their use may depend on the user's frame of reference. The need for this clarity is encapsulated thus:

Just as the use of the word multiculturalism can be used to undermine tangata whenua status, so too can the term biculturalism... it depends on who is defining the term and who has the power to legitimate that definition. That is, both may be used to camouflage the power relations involved by focusing on different aspects such as the inclusion of cultural diversity (J. M. McLeod, personal communication, 24 December 2008).

Biculturalism has been a term used for the partnership relationship between Māori and Pākehā (Europeans) following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. In 2008, the term may more likely be used to affirm the partnership, and a reminder that Māori is tangata whenua (indigenous people of New Zealand), but simultaneously, it also acknowledges equity in opportunities of all students.

Multiculturalism in the context of curriculum reforms can be easily, but unjustifiably used to perpetuate the dominant discourse through the *one size fits all* notion (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Too much is based on the assumption that all students are familiar with the same/dominant culture (Durie, 1998; O'Sullivan, 2007). Durie (ibid.) explains that while Māori structures have been dismantled and Māori appear to lead a Westernised lifestyle, the change is too much assumed. Validation of knowledge of the dominant discourse would arguably conflict with the knowledge of Māori students' cultural backgrounds, and this can weaken partnership relationships among students, whānau, and the school.

However, there may be justification for its use if the differences within the cultural diversity promote equity in educational opportunities. Durie (2003) affirms the multicultural composition of New Zealand society through an explanation of the equity required for cultures to co-exist, together with recognition of Māori as tangata whenua:

All cultural groups have a right to co-exist and to flourish, and all need to acknowledge the special place of Māori as the indigenous people of New Zealand (p. 2).

2.3.3 Ownership – taking responsibility for Māori student underachievement

The preceding discussion has illustrated that Māori student underachievement does not exist in a vacuum; outcomes exist by virtue of the participants in a given situation. Therefore it is argued that all participants in that situation, including the education system (Robson & Reid, 2007), participate in and therefore should take responsibility for the outcome. An in-depth understanding, and ownership of the process underlying Māori student underachievement can mean reflecting on teaching practices to satisfy a minimal requirement of the Te Reo me ona Tikanga dimension in the Professional Standards for teachers: Criteria For Quality Teaching (Ministry of Education, July 1999, p. 9):

demonstrate commitment to the promotion in education of: the appropriate and accurate use of te reo Māori, (and) the adoption of Māori protocols where appropriate.

Thus, over and above the curriculum and corresponding assessment components, a requirement for teachers is to be able to work in a socially and culturally diverse

classroom, and acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi, as a founding document of the nation (Patrick, 2003). The implication is for schools to take agency to adopt inclusive practices, which can nurture student/whānau/teacher partnership relationships.

The issue of ownership in respect of taking responsibility for lower Māori student achievement compared with non-Māori students points to participants and relationships within partnerships in the learning situation. Although figures of low Māori school performance has dropped from 40% in 1996 to 25% in 2005 (Maharey, 2007), current statistics still highlight lower Māori student achievement (Ministry of Education, 2007). The concern is particularly within the ratio per student population. Māori student underachievement rates are still high although this group makes up a smaller part of the total student population. The issue of equity in education appears to be fundamental in understanding the disparity between Māori and non-Māori student achievement. Hence, Māori student underachievement requires the active attention of all stakeholders in education.

Furthermore, shared responsibility for Māori student achievement can positively contribute to social cohesion that embraces the concept of belonging (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Being included/excluded may depend on shared values, commitment to the community and identity. For example, Carpenter et al. (2004) found exclusion of ethnicity and cultural factors in explanations of educational outcomes work against social cohesion. Therefore, insufficient responsibility by all stakeholders of Māori student underachievement can arguably be a significant obstacle to Māori student achievement.

When Bishop (in Taylor, 2007) extended a fresh and apt challenge open to all capable people (Māori and non-Māori) to make positive contributions toward raising Māori students' achievement, he may have inferred that underlying this challenge is ownership. It is from this standpoint of ownership that the researcher has embarked on this study which looks at strengthening the three-way partnership among Māori students, the school, and whānau. The tahuhu (ridgepole) of this postgraduate study then would be in the word *strengthen*, but, the school needs to take agency to effect successful partnership relationships.

2.3.4 Partnership

A partnership, like Māori student underachievement, is an outcome. The process contributing to a partnership lies in power-sharing relationships (McLeod, 2002). In these relationships individuals position themselves within the interactions. The notion of power-sharing is not a modern invention; it underpins the partnership declared at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. The partnership inferred in Article One of the Treaty of Waitangi promising governance to the Crown has implications for its metaphoric use in power-sharing. About a century later, the ingrained misperception of Māori as *the problem* in the partnership resulted in Durie's (1998) explanation of the Māori law of relationships based on good will. The implication for educational systems is taking cognisance of the five power and control issues that form the basis of Kaupapa Māori theory:

the voices (representation) need to be authoritative (legitimation) and the partnership will be accountable (accountability) to both partners, who in turn should be there at the start (initiation) to identify the benefits (benefits) both partners want from the enterprise. Such relationships can be extrapolated to teachers and students in classrooms and guide us to seek means whereby teachers can govern goals mutually established (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 192).

Bishop and Glynn's (ibid.) notion of the mutually established goals parallel Grace's (1994) reference to an appropriate whakatauaki (Māori proverb) to explain the concept of a shared partnership – Ko koe ki tena, ko au ki tenei kiwai o te kete (You take that handle of the basket, I'll take this one). Within the implied partnership in the proverb, are relationships based on values such as trust, equitable outcomes, and mutual respect (Grace, 1994).

A successful relationship involves the participants' reciprocal responsibilities to minimise control or power by one side (Durie, 1998; Grace, 1994). Grace (ibid) argues that one partner has the option to withdraw if there is no complete satisfaction. For example, there may be plausible reasons for whānau withdrawal from their partnership with the school. In such a case, school initiatives to scaffold a dialogic relationship with whānau may require reviewing. If mutually established goals are *incomplete* between teacher and student, and school and whānau, a student's engagement in learning is compromised (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Therefore, power-sharing through mutually established goals can effect productive partnerships.

A critical review of literature points to how studies may incorrectly use the terms *empowerment* and *partnership* (Crozier, 1998, 1999, in Biddulph et al., 2003). A partnership is likely to result from empowerment within the processes of consultation and collaboration between whānau and the school, and student and teacher, but Crozier (ibid.) aptly demonstrates the exploitation of empowerment and partnership when the school masks efforts to decide for parents what is important for their children. Hence, a power-sharing partnership may prevent such exploitation.

2.3.5 *Achievement*

The word *achievement* in the project's title refers to *academic* achievement of Māori students. The researcher has taken into consideration other connotations of achievement that do not mean academic performance only, since individuals can achieve in many ways out of the academic field. This study contests narrow conceptualisations of achievement, and supports O'Sullivan (2007) in challenging the view that knowledge and standards derived from the dominant discourse should be the only ones used to determine achievement in Māori students.

Cognisance is taken that achievement refers to an outcome, a performance. A Western view of achievement would incorporate Piaget's human developmental phases where individuals are expected to acquire certain skills in predetermined time frames (Macfarlane, 2004). The assumption in this framework of compartmentalised human development is that all people are *the same*. Further, people are viewed in an individualistic way, with individual achievement, and thus implying individual competition, and self-gratifying behaviours. However, the Māori view of human development resonates with metaphors that counter the *individual* approach. For example, Durie's (1994, in Macfarlane, 2007a) Te Whare Tapa Wha model of human development, with its four walls of mind, body, spirit, and whānau, is significant in understanding achievement from a holistic perspective. The Māori worldview is underpinned in the notion of whānau within which the individual participates. Therefore, an individual's achievement is the result of interactions, and interrelationships within the social milieu. If this is the case, it is argued that achievement has implications for collective or shared responsibilities.

2.3.6 *Whānau*

While *whānau* or *family* are not mentioned in this project's title, reference to these words require clarity in the context of the participants in the Māori learner's education. In a Western society, *family* would refer to a nuclear group of family members, but in the Māori community, the nuclear family is a limb of the *whānau*. *Whānau*, according to Durie (1998), is not merely an extension of the family unit, but a lineage to a common *whakapapa* (cultural identity) where members are required to maintain certain obligations. This understanding of *whānau* is important in the light of the school's communication with either the student or student's family, because the latter may be representing the *whānau* (and *whakapapa*).

Furthermore, *whānau* comprises the fourth wall in Durie's (1994, in Macfarlane, 2007a) *Te Whare Tapa Wha* model of human development, and firmly grounded in *Kaupapa Māori* theory. *Whānau* is an appropriate inclusion to the *mind, body, soul* Māori world view of human development because socio-constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) has already affirmed that the wider society can shape an individual's development, actions, and wellbeing. Assuming that the notion of *whānau* promotes *manaaki* (growing a caring community), it is argued that it can also be an underpinning principle to strengthen the three-way (student/*whānau*/school) partnership.

Constantino (2003) also advocates for *family* instead of *parent*, but his explanation of family includes all adults responsible for the rearing of children. The explanation is appropriate to this study as it compares well with the notion of community within the school context. If the school community is seen as a *whānau*, then it can be argued that its practices should incorporate *whānau* principles of respect, caring, and power-sharing, consultation, and collaboration (Smith, 1999).

PART FOUR: Challenges to learning and achievement

This section will critically examine the following factors within the context of obstacles/challenges to Māori student learning and achievement: deficit theorising; statistics of Māori/non-Māori student achievement; teaching practice; student-teacher relationships; *whānau* involvement; immigrant teachers; and, teachers'

training/programmes. Critical, Kaupapa Māori, and socio-constructivist theoretical constructs are inferred when Ryan (2007) posits that students, educators and parents should identify areas of exclusion: “understand them, and then contest them” (p. 25) since discriminatory culture within the school requires altering (Patterson, Purkey, & Parker, 1986, cited in Constantino, 2003). The point of importance is that Ryan (*ibid.*) suggests a critique of the status quo of *exclusive* practices of schools. Further, the apt reference to three pivotal partners (students/ whānau/ teachers) advances this study’s argument for collective responsibility to transform the curriculum.

2.4.1 Deficit theorising

Deficit theorising has been one of the driving neoliberal strategies to socialise people into complicity (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Gorski, 2007), for example, its use to explain Māori student underachievement. Deficit theory has origins in Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution that resulted in the social construction of superior and inferior races. Popularity of Darwin’s theory within the dominant culture group transformed the theory of evolution into a field of science that asserted scientific interpretations of race, that is, people of European descent possessed intelligence that was biologically determined, while native-born/indigenous/minority culture groups did not possess the *same* intelligence, and were beyond educating (Gorski, 2007). Hence, Darwin’s race theory inferred that all peoples possessed biologically determined intelligence, and as a result some were determined more intellectually superior than others. This thesis acknowledges that all people possess biologically determined aspects, but that achievement is not *only* biologically determined. Instead, the social context of the learner also plays a significant part to explain learning. (The socio-constructivist views on learning bear reference here.)

A deficit theoretical approach can attribute social inequality to certain groups of people who have moral, spiritual, and intellectual deficiencies (Shields et al., 2005). Therefore, from a deficit theoretical standpoint, Māori student underachievement is due to ethnicity, rather than individual academic potential/ability, systemic inequity in education, or ingrained mainstream stereotypes, or a combination of these factors. Deficit theory works within limited parameters and does not necessarily consider the *wider picture* (Osei-Kofi, 2005, Rank, 2004, Tozer, 2000, in Gorski, 2007; Shields et

al., 2005). The relevance for this study is the harm in using deficit theory to misplace Māori students, and their whānau by assuming that Māori students are incapable of academic success, and Māori whānau are to blame for Māori student underachievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Much literature (Simon, 1990; Smith, 1999; Shields et al., 2005) rejects deficit theorising since not only is too much assumed about groups of people, it is also a form of social injustice and oppression (Durie, 1998).

Johnston, McLeod & Kenrick (2008) cite some key aspects of deficit theorising, which can be used as descriptors for schools' critique of their policies and practice.

- The mainstream status quo is accepted as *natural*, and normalised.
- A narrow and localised perspective is used to theorise instead of examining the broader context.
- Adoption of a *fix to fit* approach.
- Deficit theorising views non-compliance as a *problem*, and compliance implies power to control.
- Acceptance of power structures.

2.4.2 Misperceptions of statistics

Statistical conclusions on Māori student achievement have consistently been framed from a negative perspective (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, 2004; Durie, 1998). According to the Confirmed Education Review Report of the 2006 Education Review Office (ERO) of the case school, here is the concluding statement on Māori student achievement which serves as an example of the negative framing of Māori:

NQF (National Qualifications Framework) information at Level 1, 2, and 3 indicates that Māori student achievement is below that of students from schools of a similar type (p. 9).

The above conclusion conveys misperceptions of Māori students, for example, that Māori are less capable of academic success. Can this mean that educators also teach according to perceived students' *capabilities*? Can one assume that Māori students are capable of *that much* learning? If Māori student underachievement is viewed in this deficit way, Mark Freedland's (in Pring et al., 2000, p. 25) reference to *imposed contractualism* provides an apt response: If teachers are employees of the Crown, their practice is commodified (ibid.). The implication is that teachers would be

delivering a curriculum of an education system that has found Māori learners to be less capable of academic learning. Thus, while teachers may claim to teach all students to maximise their learning potential, many teachers may also find it baffling that Māori students still do not perform as well as their non-Māori counterparts.

From a socio-constructivist frame of reference, Māori students' learning can be understood as shaped by perceptions derived from statistics on achievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). If statistics generate erroneous perceptions of Māori, then Māori students may be perceived as incapable of academic success. The creation of this misperception by statistics can best be described by deficit theorising where deficit terms such as *deprivation*, *deficiency*, and *problem* are associated with Māori student underachievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Deficit theorising from statistics may be noted in Else's (1997) summary report on Māori education, and student performance. Else (*ibid.*) adopts a deficit approach in normalising Māori student underachievement in her opening words "It's a well-known fact..." (p. 13). It is therefore contended that if schools adopt a deficit approach to Māori student underachievement, they may also have low expectations of Māori students who may then be more likely to adopt a self-fulfilling prophesy of *no goods* (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

Further, conclusions from statistics can normalise the superiority of the dominant discourse where the dominant culture group is perceived as *more capable* of academic success, and the minority and indigenous groups, *less capable* and a subordinate *other* (Smith, 1999; Johnston & McLeod, 2001, in Patrick, 2003). For example, the 2007 statistical conclusions on senior Māori student achievement of all national certificates on the New Zealand National Qualifications Framework (Ministry of Education, 2007, pp. 2-6) read as follows:

- Overall, Māori students were less likely to gain an NCEA qualification at the typical level or above than their non-Māori peers.
- Māori Year 13 students, especially males, were less likely to gain an NCEA Level 3 or above than their non-Māori peers.
- Māori Years 12 and 13 students were more likely to gain an NCEA qualification below the typical level of study than their non-Māori peers.
- Māori students were less likely to meet the UE requirements by the end of Year 13 than their non-Māori peers.
- Māori students were less likely to meet both the literacy and numeracy requirements for NCEA Level 1 by the end of Year 11 than their non-Māori peers.

The above conclusions from statistics confirm a pantheon of research negatively framing Māori who are told how to live their lives according to Western values and norms (Smith, 1999; Durie, 2002, cited in Webber, 2005; Robson & Reid, 2002). However, Robson and Reid (2002) develop Smith's (1999) notion of Māori as specimens further by inferring the dominant culture should also be placed under the microscope to understand the deeper issues around statistics:

Māori students are over two and a half times more likely than non-Māori students to leave school with no qualifications (39 percent compared with 14.6 percent). However, most people will have a question or an assumption about why. A superficial assumption is that the Māori student has failed.... It could be equally presented as the New Zealand education system is two and a half times more likely to fail Māori students than non-Māori students, or again as, New Zealand society, through the education system, privileges Pākehā by the time they leave school (Robson & Reid, 2002, p. 8).

Robson and Reid (2002) argue from a critical theorist's standpoint that conclusions derived from statistics require scrutiny, and advocate for a critique of the education system in respect of shared responsibility for Māori student underachievement. It is inferred that teachers, as representatives of the education system, are also required to adopt a critical theorist's stance when examining statistics on Māori student achievement. It is argued that if teachers adopt a power-sharing stance with their students, and whānau, they also share the responsibility for Māori student underachievement. The notion of power-sharing would mean that teachers are required to reposition themselves, and reflect on their pedagogical practices to cater for the needs of their culturally diverse classrooms (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

Misperceptions of statistics on Māori student underachievement have also been used to draw erroneous conclusions on whānau (Bishop, 2006; Patrick, 2003). For example, Māori student underachievement may be misperceived by the school as systemic and beyond its control, making an *other* party (such as whānau) accountable (Patrick, 2003). Patrick (2003) points out how blame can easily be placed on the *other* or *them* (that is, whānau), rather than teachers' reflection on school practice. The issue of blame has often been camouflaged in generalised terms where teachers are required to involve themselves in *quality teaching* (ibid.). The inference here is that the notion of quality teaching must be broken down into understandable chunks for

enhanced teaching, for example, Constantino (2003) advocates for quality teaching by suggesting that teachers acknowledge whānau as crucial resources for student learning. The claim is derived from whānau as experts of students' prior knowledge, and out-of-school experiences.

It has been thus far argued that statistics on Māori student underachievement are value-laden, and can determine people's perceptions. Since generally quantitative statistics give particular information from mechanistic calculations such as frequency, and number, they do not necessarily inform of the *why* and *how*. For example, the New Zealand Ministry of Education 2006/2007 conclusions from statistics on truancy generate negative stereotyping of Māori. The reports logically explain why truancy (of all students) is a problem: Truancy can disrupt learning, alienates students from their learning, and restricts further opportunities in life. However, the statistics on truancy also draw conclusions in deficit terms of Māori and achievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Robson & Reid, 2002). It is argued that statistics on truancy, together with those that illustrate the disparity between Māori and non-Māori student achievement, cannot be viewed in isolation; the process for such an outcome is flawed because of other factors such as student/teacher/whānau partnerships.

It is therefore contended that erroneous conclusions from statistics on achievement can create misperceptions of Māori students and the Māori community, and can sever home-school partnerships. While some students develop a resiliency to the *no good* stigma (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) and seek active ways to improve their academic performance, a larger number can withdraw from academic learning. Literature (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994; Vercoe, 1998; Langley, Ritchie, & Ritchie, 1996; Sharpe, 1998, cited in Macfarlane, 2007a) points to the process, for example social rejection, that can cause negative indices such as hostility, disruptiveness, and underachievement. Therefore, it is unproductive to draw erroneous conclusions from statistics on Māori student underachievement.

Nuthall (2001, in Webber, 2005) also exposes the misperceptions of statistics on student achievement through a description of disruptive experiences during an assessment period at a case school. The assessment results were perceived as *most*

important, from the high level of presentation to their use as descriptors to make judgements:

(The results) will be entered into machines where they will be transformed in complex and sophisticated graphs and tables that politicians and newspaper editors will use to berate and/or praise (p. 100).

The quantitative nature of statistics illustrated in Nuthall's (ibid.) comment provides partial information that neglects the social dynamics of the classroom during the assessment period. Therefore, it is argued that qualitative exploration of the processes, such as pedagogical approach and teacher-student relationships in the teaching-learning environment of Māori students, may reveal deep-seated inequities not easily identified through quantitative methods. In Nuthall's (ibid.) study, the hidden curriculum (classroom dynamics/management) was not reflected in the quantitatively analysed statistics. Thus, statistics on Māori student underachievement require further critique through shared understandings among students, whānau, and the school.

2.4.3 Unequal power relations

Unequal power relations are the seeds of pathologising practices (Shields et al., 2005), and thus it is inferred they prevent successful three-way partnerships among students, whānau, and the school. Many models are developed on home-school partnerships, but authentic consultation and collaboration cannot be assumed (Dale, 1991, in Wearmouth, Glynn, & Berryman, 2005).

Wearmouth et al. (2005) explain Dale's (1991, in Wearmouth et al., 2005) presuppositions on home-school partnership models:

- the Expert Model assumes teachers *only* are the experts in the student's learning;
- the basis of the Transplant Model is that teachers transfer their skills onto parents to become the teachers;
- the Consumer Model looks at parents as consumers where parents decide on what they want for their children; and
- the premise of the Empowerment Model rests on the school empowering parents to recognise their crucial support in their children's learning.

It can be argued that all four models are flawed because of a lack of power-sharing in the partnership between the home and school. The Empowerment Model though may appear a favourable model because of its aim in *empowering* parents. However, the inferred empowerment relates to only making parents aware of their role, thus, the model alludes to a deficit practice – that whānau are not already aware of their crucial role in their children’s learning.

In summary, Dale’s (1991, in Wearmouth et al., 2005) models bring to attention the “intersecting responsibilities” of teachers, the school, and the home (Glynn et al., 1992, in Wearmouth et al., 2005, p. 244). This project goes further by advocating for *equal power-sharing* in these intersecting responsibilities of the school and home through effective consultation and collaboration with *students* as well.

The Empowerment Model may create a forum for a partnership between the home and the school to expedite Māori students’ learning. However, in the classroom context, an unproductive partnership may result from teachers continuing to value their privileged position of dominance over student achievement, their knowledge of pedagogical strategies, and students’ cultures (Young, 1991). These unequal power relations which Shields et al. (2005) refer to as a “pattern of pedagogical and curriculum dominance” (p. 15), is a pathologising practice where teachers may perceive minority and indigenous group students as less educatable than dominant group students, and this can contribute to student non-participation. It can be argued that this control by teachers can be demoralising for Māori students who face a compounded control (by the dominant discourse both in society and in the classroom), which makes non-participation in the education system, and negative indices more likely.

Ineffective partnership relationships, due to unequal power relations between teacher and student, can also be attributed to a sub-conscious process, as Orsborn (1995) noted in teachers’ questioning. Orsborn (*ibid.*) explains how students may have to guess what a teacher is thinking in her/his questions, resulting in a conflict in the frame of reference that may be central to the teacher from a dominant discourse. The students’ answers may sub-consciously be expected to fit the teacher’s cultural frame

of reference. Differing frames of reference of teachers and their students discourage verbal interactions, and decrease student engagement (Shields et al., 2005). It can be inferred that sub-conscious marginalising of students may result, and if teachers continue to maintain a frame of reference of the dominant culture, they can marginalise minority and indigenous groups further.

In the teaching-learning context, Hattie's (1999) words of teachers making the difference resound in Jan Hill and Kay Hawk's (2000) 1996 Achievement In Multicultural High Schools (AIMHI) baseline report (Hawk & Hill, 1996). Hill and Hawk's (2000) research findings point to the importance of partnership relationships between students and teachers in effective learning. The absence of the *right kind* of relationship between teachers and students can prevent a productive partnership where knowledge and learning experiences are co-constructed (Bevan-Brown, 2003).

2.4.4 Culturally conflicting classrooms

If teachers have insufficient training to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, home-school, and student-teacher partnerships are jeopardised (Alton-Lee, 2003; Patrick, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 2004). This section critically examines the following factors that can contribute to culturally conflicting classrooms, and Māori student disengagement:

- unequal power relations between students and teachers (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; O'Sullivan, 2007; McLeod, 2002);
- deficit theorising (Gorski, 2007; Smith, 1999; Shields et al., 2005); (Pring et al., 2000; Wearmouth et al., 2005; Alton-Lee, 2003; Macfarlane, 2007a);
- immigrant teachers from a dominant discourse background (Townsend & Bates, 2007; Patrick, 2003);
- teacher training programmes that result in ill-equipped teachers in the area of diverse student backgrounds (Townsend & Bates, 2007; Ghosh, in Craft, 1996), and
- insufficient professional development training on culturally-safe classrooms (Macfarlane, 2007a).

*Note that deficit theorising, and unequal power relations have already been discussed in an earlier section.

2.4.4.1 Immigrant teachers from dominant backgrounds

The New Zealand Ministry of Education's recruitment process has significantly increased the number of immigrant teachers employed in New Zealand schools (Patrick, 2003). An article review on immigrant teachers in New Zealand, Australia, and Canada points out that immigrant teachers "negotiate the authoritative discourses in their professional lives" (Reid, 1957, in Patrick, 2003, p. 10). The inference is immigrant teachers can more readily comply with the dominant discourse. Immigrant teachers are from differing cultural backgrounds, and may not have sufficient knowledge of Māori ways of knowing to form an effective partnership with their Māori students. If these teachers were part of a dominant discourse, it can be argued they may more likely maintain the dominant ideological thinking within the culturally diverse classroom.

2.4.4.2 Insufficient pre-service teacher training/professional development

While there is much research on beginning teachers around the areas of stress and management, and skill and knowledge development, there is little evidence of programmes on teaching in diverse communities (Lang, 2001, Sard-Brown, 1996, Sleeter, 2002, in Patrick, 2003). According to Patrick (2003), New Zealand trained teachers do not have the necessary preparation for the cultural diversity in the classroom. She justifies herself by referring to two single case studies conducted by Martinez, and Birrell (1994, 1995 respectively, in Patrick, 2003) who raise concerns about insufficient preparation during the teacher training period to effectively cope with ethnically and culturally diverse classrooms. The researchers found that teachers who were insufficiently trained in teaching students of diverse backgrounds were more likely to (even if unconsciously) marginalise minority and indigenous group students.

An Australian study by Ghosh (in Craft, 1996) also supports the claim that insufficient teacher training on culturally diverse classrooms can contribute to the

disengagement of minority and indigenous group students. The study found many teacher educators in Australia neglected the three goals of multicultural education, namely, meeting the needs of ethnically diverse students, achieving an intercultural understanding through the curriculum, and encouraging students to challenge the ethnic-racial oppression. Further, student teachers had a choice to study a paper on cultural diversity, but a watered down unit on cultural diversity was compulsory. Specialist multicultural subjects were considered unimportant; as subjects to extend one's interest (ibid.).

Patrick (2003), in her paper presented at the 2003 Annual Conference of the New Zealand Association of Research in Education (NZARE), felt there was a paucity of research on whether beginning teachers are sufficiently equipped to represent the social and cultural issues they would experience in a culturally diverse school. She therefore argued strongly for beginning teachers themselves to describe their experiences of professional, political, social, and cultural issues in order for teacher training courses to equip them better to smoothly transition into culturally diverse classrooms so that knowledge is co-constructed to meet the learning needs of all students. The smooth transition is more likely to create effective student/whānau/school partnerships, and concomitant engagement in learning.

PART FIVE: Strengthening the three-way partnership - to raise Māori student achievement

As stated in the introduction, this study advocates for the delivery of school policies that are well-understood, and effectively integrated in the curriculum to benefit all students. Two significant and mandatory documents that can expedite the process of policy to practice for more visible and positive outcomes for Māori students are: Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success/ Māori Education Strategy- 2008-2012, (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008a); and the New Zealand Curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008d). These two documents articulate the sovereignty of the Treaty of Waitangi, validation of Māori knowledge, and acknowledgement of Māori as tangata whenua.

The Ka Hikitia document (Ministry of Education, 2008a) places emphasis on the validation of Māori knowledge, and Māori potential through the Māori Potential Initiative strategy that asserts Māori students are capable of academic success. The document would call for a critique of school policies toward an inclusive curriculum. Its positive implications for Māori students' academic aspirations can counter deficit theorising of Māori student underachievement, and strengthen the three-way partnership. The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008d), on the other hand, asserts the rightful place of the Treaty of Waitangi within the curriculum, but also incorporates principles and values underpinned in globalisation, and entrepreneurialism. (Note an earlier discussion on globalisation framed as an obstacle to authentic validation of Māori knowledge.) Therefore, the two ministerial documents require shared understandings of information among students, their whānau, and the school so that knowledge is co-constructed for the benefit of all students.

The strengthening of the three-way partnership then has implications for the power participants have to create accessible knowledge, transform social situations of inequity, and effect tangata whenua (commitment to community, Webber, 1996). The notion of "connectedness" (New Zealand Curriculum, 2008d, p. 8) can be assumed only if students, whānau, and the school are in a power-sharing partnership.

Using the guiding principles of social justice, and consultative and collaborative power-sharing partnerships, this section examines ways of strengthening the three-way partnership. The assumption is that a dominant Euro-Western ideology may not necessarily provide the relevant answers to Māori student underachievement (Spoonley, 1993, Ramsay, 1972, in Berryman & Glynn, 2001; Macfarlane, 2007a). Through the following discussion, it is argued that if the partnership relationship (students/ whānau/ school) is strengthened through alternative ways of theorising, then there can be more likelihood of better educational outcomes for Māori students.

2.5.1 Social justice and collaborative accountability underpinning the three-way partnership

The legislation for equity policies in education in 1988 from the Royal Commission into social policy meant further recommendations and developments for social

change, and improvement in outcomes for Māori (Simon, 1990). Underpinning social change for an equitable education that fosters agency and self-determination of students, whānau, and the school, is *social justice* (Durie, 1998). The notion of social justice implies a fair and just education system accessed by *all* through processes that counter unequal power relations, and enhance power-sharing consultative and collaborative partnerships among students, whānau, and teachers.

Shields et al. (2005) explain how a restorative school underpinned in social justice challenges traditional practice by building on shared understandings through respect, and collective goals:

People speak respectfully of one another, including teachers, students and their families, recognising that all families want success for their children...School achievement soars (p. 7).

Another example of social justice that builds on a restorative approach is illustrated in The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989 that has made it possible for Family Group Conferences to become part of the school culture (Adams, 2003). These conferences adopt a hui-whakitika (meeting in Māori context - Berryman & Glynn, 2001) approach, and can benefit students in a situation of alienation or disorientation where their identity is threatened, and learning jeopardised (Adams, 2003). The cultural context of the hui whakatika is grounded in respect and shared understandings, and these provide support for whānau, students, and teachers/school.

The Parent Mentoring Initiative Project, funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education between the years 2002-2005, also adopts a restorative approach. It looks at the forming of relationships between parents and the school that enables both parties to contribute more effectively to the education and achievement of students (Gorinski, 2005). One finding is the considerable benefits to teachers and schools through collaboratively reframing the home-school partnership. The evaluation report of the initiative does not provide achievement statistics, and there is no reference to Māori, but the collaborative repositioning of partners in the home-school partnership can imply a discourse of community underpinned in social justice, and restorative practices (Shields et al., 2005; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). It is argued, however, that the

collaboration must be grounded in power-sharing relationships among students, whānau, and the school for quality educational outcomes for Māori students.

Shields et al. (2005) are mindful of how the challenge of collaborative accountability occurs. If it is constructive, and embraces power-sharing, then positive outcomes can result (ibid.). While in the context of discussion, they do not place blame on whānau of Māori students, they also argue that placing blame entirely on the dominant discourse or the school *cannot* benefit positive outcomes. Therefore, a combined collaborative understanding of accountability by students, whānau, and teachers can invite mutually established goals to transform inequities in Māori access to education, and underachievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Grace, 1994; Macfarlane, 2007a). Collaborative accountability has also been emphasised by Patrick (2003). In her discussion on beginner teachers, she argues that support for collaborative processes within the school promotes job satisfaction among teachers. However, collaboration, as in the case of *masked* partnership, was found through an Australian study to adversely affect the learning and teaching context, as teachers did collaborate during professional development, but did not endorse effective partnership relationships in the classroom (Patrick, 2003). Therefore, Schick and Donn (1995) strongly advocate for a critique of school practice to create effective learning communities that minimise unequal power-relations.

2.5.2 Partnership between whānau and the school

Whānau can be regarded as an agency for improved Māori student achievement (Macfarlane, 2007a). Bishop's (2007) extensive research on the significance of acknowledging students' culture, has found that whānau of Māori students saw trust, fairness, and consistency of teachers' actions as important ingredients to enhance the relationship between school and whānau. Bishop (ibid.) contends that if the social justice principles of fairness and trust underpin such a relationship, it nurtures into a power-sharing one. For example, in recognising the need to build on students' prior knowledge to make subject content relevant, teachers' dialogue with whānau plays a key part, rather than teachers' reliance on stereotypes or assumptions (Civil, Andrade,

& González, 2002, in Fitzsimmons, 2003). One would argue that whānau understands the Māori learning context better because it includes Māori students' cultural capital.

In a Ministry of Education professional development programme (Te Mana – korero: Relationships for better learning) intended to enhance the partnership relationship between the school and home, parent participants felt more comfortable about engaging with the school when there was a sharing of teacher and parent perspectives on Māori student learning (Education Gazette, 2004, 2007). The home-school partnership was also enhanced because whānau was actively involved in the professional development programme in the school (ibid.). It can be inferred that not only was there an understanding of misperceptions of Māori and education; whānau views were also respected, and valued.

The significant role of whānau has already been explained by empowerment or enhancement theory that contends whānau have the expertise to build on their children's learning potential (Biddulph et al., 2003). Studies with native-born minority groups conclude with an emphasis that parents want their children to do well in school (Bucuvalas, 2003). Therefore, whānau want to get involved in their children's education as they have made it very clear in overt submissions that they desire excellent outcomes from the schooling of their children (Smith, 1997; Fitzsimmons, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2007c). However, how whānau actualise their aspirations may depend on the nature of their involvement within the school learning community; if the school takes agency to actively involve whānau through effective partnership relationships, whānau can actualise their aspirations, and Māori student learning can be enhanced.

Qualitative and quantitative research studies (August & Hakuta, 1997, Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2002, Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000, in Fitzsimmons, 2003) have found a direct positive link between academic performance and prior knowledge. The studies point out home-school partnerships are strengthened if whānau possess the understanding of their children's household, community, and cultural environments, and educators share this knowledge. The assumption is that whānau and educators can collaboratively decide what is best for Māori students' learning.

However, the perception of whānau can become thwarted in the burgeoning of statistics on Māori student underachievement. The positive view of whānau is contrary to what most teachers felt in Bishop Russell's (2006) Te Kotahitanga Project study, where teachers pointed to other areas of blame (such as whānau) for underachievement in Māori students. Nonetheless, literature (New Zealand Ministry of Education, Statement of Intent, 2006) points to a positive correlation between strong whānau engagement, and positive school-home partnerships. Alton-Lee (2003) also emphasises sharing of information, knowledge, and expertise between whānau, and teachers to effect home-school partnerships, and optimal skill development in students.

Further, in an education improvement and development project aimed at raising Māori student achievement levels - Te Pūtahitanga Mātauranga - two initiatives were designed to actively engage parents and whānau in decision-making in schools. To attract and keep more Māori members on Boards of Trustees, a pre-election campaign was held, and subsequently, a wananga-a-takiwa (support for Board members after they were elected - Hohepa et al., 2004). These initiatives have arguably been sought because of the positive impact of parents and whānau in the decision-making of their children.

Therefore, conversations on students' learning between whānau and the school are not incidental. There has to be *carefully planned collaboration* between the school and home by the school taking agency in scaffolding dialogue (Alton-Lee, 2003; Fitzsimmons, 2003). Thus, the school has to foster collegial relationships with whānau by using proven strategies such as use of the students' home language. To this end, the Better Relations for Better Learning Project (Ministry of Education, 2000) suggests the use of Māori preferred styles of communicating, for example, kanohi kit e kanoh (face-to-face communication), and considering site logistics such as provision of childcare, for a reciprocal involvement of whānau, and the school (Fitzsimmons, 2003). The impact of conversations between home and school on student achievement is evident in Fitzsimmon's (2003) research report highlighting a small yet significant example. A science-related question to a parent by the child was transferred to a parent/teacher conversation, resulting in the teacher using the question to plan a lesson. It's the *little things*, such as placing value on whānau views, that

counted, but things that made a positive difference in creating an inclusive curriculum.

Whānau of Māori students also favoured positive expectations teachers have of their students, as this was seen to raise students' levels of engagement in learning (Bishop, 2007). According to Bishop (2006), Māori students' self-confidence improves significantly when there are sound relationships between students and teachers. The inference is whānau may have already been engaged in effective communication with teachers for students to have a positive self-concept. An example Bishop (2006) highlights is when Māori students' whānau are invited to share their talents within the school. Students may interpret this as the school's acceptance of their culture, and this sense of belonging can promote a healthy self-concept (ibid.). It is argued then that sound student-teacher relationships are interrelated with positive whānau-teacher relationships, thus a three-way partnership among students, whānau, and the school.

One of the recent (2006/2007) strategic plans of the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007) explores the crucial role of whānau engagement in Māori students' achievement. The plan aims to strengthen whānau expectations of their children, and encourage engagement with the community through integrating education perspectives into wider social policy. Much literature (Smith, 1997; Bishop, 2004; Fitzsimmons, 2003) has, however, already proven that Māori students' whānau care about their children's learning, and want the best educational outcome for their children. With this understanding, it can be inferred that whānau alone cannot bring about the desired educational outcome for their children – the school is also required to have high expectations of their Māori students. Thus, if teachers reposition their thinking in respect of academic aspirations for their Māori students, the Māori student can be the benefactor of better educational outcomes.

2.5.3 The teaching and learning context as agency

The three-way partnership among students, teachers, and whānau is embraced in the teaching and learning situation in the simple yet complex nature of relationships within quality teaching. Macfarlane (2007a) explains how a teaching and learning

context (ako) that incorporates reciprocal learning builds on respect between teacher and student because the teacher and the learner continuously switch roles.

The teaching and learning context also serves as an agency of discourse (Shields et al., 2005). The agency in itself implies the purposeful engagement of actors. Freire (in Shields et al., 2005) calls it “emancipatory praxis” (p. 128) whereas “the Kaupapa Māori approach is one of tino rangatiratanga... setting up students to become more autonomous” (J. M. McLeod, personal communication, 24 December 2008). It is within the social world of the classroom that the child participates to learn how to work and live in the wider reality since the learning context is a microcosm within the macrocosm. Thus, to accommodate this vital role of the learning context, Coxon et al. (2002) emphasise the importance for students to participate in a whānau relationship with others in the classroom.

A teacher’s understanding of the Māori world view (Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999) can strengthen the teacher-student partnership, enhance the teaching and learning process, and raise Māori students’ achievement (Shields et al., 2005). If the teacher can adjust “his or her understanding to that of the student’s narrative, there is potential for the student’s narrative to develop and not to dry up” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 201). The student’s narrative here refers to her/his prior cultural knowledge and experiences of Māori metaphors. The drying up of Māori ways of knowing would imply the dismantling of Māori culture (Durie, 1998). This is argued to counter the bicultural perspective, and promote Freire’s (1979) banking concept of education which stultifies critical thinking. Therefore, a dialogic relationship based on validation of Māori ways of knowing can encourage co-construction of knowledge, and strengthen student-teacher partnerships (Bevan-Brown, 2003).

Further, literature (Giroux, cited in Shields et al., 2005) suggests that the teaching and learning context should reflect the democratic public spheres. However, while New Zealand claims to be a democracy, the agency of discourse in the classroom has become eroded (Shields et al., 2005). Assuming that mainstream classrooms provide minimal opportunities for minority and indigenous views and participation, this study would challenge the application of the *majority view* principle of democracy to minority and indigenous group students since these students can still become

marginalised because of acceptance (and normalisation) of the majority view. To this end, Macfarlane et al. (2007a) advocate for inclusive classrooms, firstly, because Māori are tangata whenua, and secondly, all students benefit from an environment that is culturally-safe. Inclusive classrooms are built on mutually established values such as a sense of belonging, care, respect, and social justice, and therefore can nurture student-teacher relationships into partnerships (Macfarlane, 2007a; Coxon et al., 2002).

Much literature points to effective teaching and learning to promote student-teacher relationships. For example, Alton-Lee (2003), in the document Best Evidence Synthesis, advocates for quality teaching for quality outcomes for diverse students through relevant subject content. Education policy, through the Ministry of Education's (2007) strategic plan, places emphasis on the relevance of subject content where educators are required to promote learning in Māori students with the aim of forming a direct link with community providers and the wider society. The building blocks of this link rest in the classroom where teachers need to teach in *certain ways* (Hattie, 1999) to promote learning, and achievement. Hattie's (1999) reference to the ways teachers teach argues well for the impact of pedagogy on student engagement. Hattie (1999) is adamant that amidst the structural and social influences that could contribute to students' engagement, it is the teacher who makes the ultimate difference to students' learning. The inference here is that effective pedagogy, for example, through inclusion of minority and indigenous group students, can strengthen student-teacher partnerships, and engage students.

Quality teaching though can become masked or clichéd lest it embraces the *little* things that count (Hill & Hawk, 2000). For example, pronouncing students' names and Māori words properly, and making references to concepts from students' culture are part of the invisible curriculum that contribute to effective teaching and learning (ibid.). Evidence from an interview response of a Māori student, interviewed by Russell Bishop (in Taylor, 2007), reveals how an inclusive classroom is capable of strengthening the student-teacher partnership: "You have the power to change things for me by having a good relationship with me."

Hill and Hawk (2000) also place emphasis on the teacher-student relationship for better educational outcomes. The researchers cite Belton's (1996, in Hill & Hawk, 2000) fieldnotes on the response by a senior American student to explain the positive impact of teacher *motivation* on students:

I believe that if teachers can motivate themselves to teach, then the students will want to learn. Teacher motivation can make or break a learning situation (Hill & Hawk, 2000, p. 66).

Moreover, Alton-Lee (2003) found a 59% variance in student performance that was due to differences between teachers and classes. Compared to the 21% due to school level variables, this figure is significant enough to consider the part *quality teaching* plays in Māori student achievement. Therefore, teachers' high expectations of all students are not sufficient for desired learning outcomes, but rather quality teaching of all students in a culturally diverse environment.

Alton-Lee (2003) and Hattie's (1999) focus on the student-teacher relationship in the learning environment is also supported in Hill and Hawk's (2000) 1996 AIMHI research report where emphasis is placed on teachers to provide quality teaching through an understanding of students' lives. A teacher quoted in the research explained the importance for teachers to identify with the developmental phase of the student: "It is essential that we get the relationship right. I try to understand them as teenagers. I try to remember how I felt when I was a teenager and it makes me more careful working with them."

Effective student-teacher partnerships can be strengthened if teachers use the cultural diversity in the mainstream classroom as a pedagogical resource to draw on proactive links with the wider society to form a learning community (Fitzsimmons, 2003). A culturally inclusive curriculum can encourage Māori students to identify with learning material, and engage them (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Active engagement with texts would imply a critical approach to subject material, co-construction of knowledge, and an unbiased curriculum (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bevan-Brown, 2003).

Macfarlane (2007a), and Relf et al. (1998b, cited in Hill & Hawk, 2000) develop the argument for teachers to initiate inclusive environments underpinned in specific behaviours such as caring, respect, and support. The following has been observed by

Hill and Hawk (2000) of teachers showing respect, which the researchers felt contributed to strengthening teacher-student relationships:

Display body language which gives positive messages e.g. a smile, arms unfolded. Talk in a friendly manner and use a friendly tone of voice with pupils. Remember what pupils have talked with us about previously. Say a genuine please and thank you. Be sincere and professional. Accept that we may be wrong, mistaken. Be ready to apologise for our own behaviour as a gesture of friendship (p. 30).

The implication from the above account from the researchers' (Hill and Hawk, 2000) fieldwork notes again points to the teaching and learning environment as an agency of discourse (Shields, et al., 2005), and its impact on teacher-student partnership relationships.

In their Te Kotahitanga Project, Bishop et al. (2002) have reported that the teacher-student proximity in cooperative learning classrooms improved students' (including Māori) interactions with their teachers, thereby improving learning. Pedagogical practices such as collaborative group learning (Alton-Lee, 2003) may also contribute to strengthened teacher-student partnerships. The benefits for learning are likely to be: firstly, Māori students would adapt more readily to a familiar learning context as it resembles the whānau-type of teaching and learning context (Durie, 1998), and, secondly, all students are likely to benefit from the co-operative sharing of information (Macfarlane, 2007a). It is argued that collaborative group learning pedagogies can promote a power-sharing teacher-student partnership since collaborative learning is underpinned in mutually established goals (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Grace, 1994). The communal approach of the whānau-type of learning encourages the interrelatedness of participants, a sense of belonging, sharing of knowledge, and negotiation of decisions (Durie, 1998). These aspects can contribute positively to partnership relationships toward better educational outcomes for Māori (Shields et al., 2005).

2.5.4 Minority/indigenous group teachers

This study takes cognisance that ultimately any teacher (irrespective of cultural background) can make a positive difference in any student's life. However, literature also supports the notion that teachers teaching in certain ways can influence a

classroom of students with diverse learning needs (Hattie, 1999; Alton-Lee, 2003). The inference on who the teacher is, is critically discussed in this section in the context that if the teacher creates an inclusive teaching and learning environment, then there is more likelihood of a partnership relationship between student and teacher, and concomitantly between home and school (because, as pointed out earlier, whānau involvement with the school is enhanced when teachers had high expectations of their children - Bishop, 2006).

Literature argues that minority group teachers can enhance the self-efficacy of minority and indigenous group students by identifying with their cultural experiences (Eubanks & Weaver, 1999). Minority group teachers are viewed as providing manaaki (caring and nurturing) in a teaching and learning environment, and which can build on student's self-efficacy of education:

an agency for providing the diverse student populace with a sense of belonging..... Children of colour need teachers who look like them, who share similar cultural experiences and who can be role models to demonstrate the efficacy of education and achievement (ibid, p. 452).

As teachers of mainstream heterogenous classrooms, minority group teachers may bring with them the sensitivities to accord their students “the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will require to adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing community, province, and nation” (Bascia, Thiessen, & Goodson, 1996, p.148).

While Eubanks and Weaver (1999) discuss the minority group teacher's microcosmic role within the classroom in respect of building student-teacher relationships, Bascia et al. (1996), point out the capability of the minority group teacher to bring about emancipatory goals provided the teacher acts as an agent of social justice, and practises critical pedagogy. In both cases, however, the respect between teacher and student can enhance a partnership relationship toward better educational outcomes.

Bascia et al. (1996) further demonstrated the positive impact of immigrant teachers by conducting research with immigrant minority teachers with a view to exploring their background philosophy to teaching. A participant's narrative illustrates the importance placed on students' cultural backgrounds:

In Canada, Simon endeavoured to preserve his sense of teaching as involving work

with children not as generic individuals but in terms of their membership in families, communities, and cultures (ibid., p. 155).

It can be inferred that being immigrant was a secondary factor to the teacher participant; belonging to a minority group culture could have easily made the teacher initiate a culturally-responsive environment.

Further studies of the Canadian education system by Carr and Klassen (1997) have also proven the positive impact of immigrant minority group teachers, as findings of their study conclude with six areas that make a positive difference in the Canadian mainstream classroom:

- enhancing cultural compatibility,
- demystifying the hidden curriculum,
- developing positive attitudes towards persons from a variety of backgrounds,
- expressing lived experiences,
- connecting with the students, and
- connecting with the communities (p. 70).

Thus, there is sound argument for immigrant minority, and indigenous group teachers in New Zealand to more readily create culturally-responsive learning environments, and identify with minority and indigenous group students. However, while the reasoning behind Bascia et al. (1996), and Carr and Klassen's (1997) studies is sound, there may also be the case of immigrant minority teachers embracing a superiority over Māori because of exposure to negative stereotyping of Māori (perhaps from statistics that reveal a disparity in Māori/non-Māori student achievement), thereby making themselves appear *superior* to the *other*. Further, as pointed out earlier in the section on obstacles to Māori student achievement, immigrant minority teachers may choose to assimilate, and normalise the culture of the dominant discourse (O'Sullivan, 2007; Gorski, 2007).

However, whether immigrant teachers are from dominant or minority group cultures, they may experience a culture shock in the New Zealand mainstream classroom, thus the understanding of tikanga (Māori ways of knowing) can not be assumed (Durie, 1998), and appropriate teacher training is essential. Insufficient literature in the field of immigrant teachers' readiness to teach in culturally diverse classrooms makes it difficult to comment, but it would be worth exploring since there is an increase in the

number of immigrant teachers in the New Zealand mainstream classroom (Patrick, 2003; Townsend & Bates, 2007).

2.5.5 Professional development for teachers

According to Hawk and Hill (2000) and Zachlod (1996) it is easier to teach skills and subject content rather than change one's attitude to life. If quality teaching practices do not permeate the classroom, teachers can become alienated, and teaching as a profession can become an unfulfilling job (ibid.). Especially first year teachers are required to challenge the relevance of ongoing development of their professional development knowledge and practice (Loughran et al., 2001, in Patrick, 2003).

Teachers' needs, rather than their interests, are primarily to create effective learning contexts, and professional development programmes should therefore focus on this need (Patrick, 2003). However, effective learning contexts and communities do not exist in a vacuum; they depend on effective consultative and collaborative relationships among students, whānau, and the school. This study takes cognisance of constraints on teachers to satisfy curriculum requirements in respect of partnership relationships, and therefore supports Townsend and Bates (2007), and Bishop (2006) in advocating for ongoing appropriate professional development training to endorse inclusive school practice.

Conclusions from research (Bishop & Berryman, 2002; Bishop et al. 2002, in Patrick, 2003) funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education into students' narratives have generated professional development programmes for teachers to critique their relationships with students by deconstructing their deficit thinking. For example, the Te Kotahitanga Project (Bishop et al., in Patrick, 2003) aimed for more engagement from all students, implying that teachers are required to take agency and scaffold dialogic relationships with their students.

The Te Kotahitanga professional development programme (Bishop & Glynn, 2004) suggests that the key to improving Māori student achievement is teachers critically reflecting on their own theorising of their Māori students. It was found that school achievement in Māori students was directly related to increased, positive teacher-

student relationships, increased student/class expectations, and increased student academic engagement (ibid.). While Roger Openshaw's (2007) conclusions question the underlying assumptions of the Te Kotahitanga Phase Three Project, one cannot overlook the educational advantages of a *culturally responsive learning environment* (Gay, 2000; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The Te Kotahitanga research team points out the positive environmental changes of the learning context, for example, an increase in student engagement.

Although one can argue the case for better educational outcomes if students are engaged, the Te Kotahitanga researchers admit that increased student engagement may not necessarily result in improved Māori student achievement. However, the project does stress the *interactive discursive mode* that can result from a culturally responsive context. This postgraduate study supports all students' enhanced participation in the discourse of the classroom, and takes cognisance of the implications of achievement; that it does not necessarily only mean *academic excellence*, but rather an opportunity to be part of a fair, equitable education system (Durie, 1998; Shields et al., 2005).

Patrick (2003) also calls for narrative enquiry into new secondary school teachers' experiences so that teacher educators can develop suitable professional development programmes with the aim of enhancing teacher-student relationships in the classroom. The Māori community could be an important resource here, not only to inform the school of their children's prior knowledge but for the school to take agency, and invite the Māori community to participate in the professional development with teachers. According to Patrick (2003), this can significantly enhance the partnership between the school and whānau. Therefore, it can be argued that the partnership between the school and whānau is one of reciprocity because one partner alone cannot bring about the intended learning outcomes for students. A sharing of knowledge and information of students by the school and whānau can contribute to consultative and collaborative relationships, strengthen home-school partnerships, and engage Māori students.

In 2005 the New Zealand Ministry of Education funded four te reo Māori professional development pilot programmes for mainstream primary school teachers (Murrow et al., 2007). Participating teachers have reported greater student involvement in the classroom, which could have been attributed to an enhanced sense of belonging, and use of te reo Māori in instructional phrases. Further, with students' increased involvement in the school kapahaka group, students felt a sense of pride, which was believed to flow into their academic learning (Patrick, 2003). Thus, professional development programmes focusing on relationships can contribute positively to students' learning.

The limitless time spent on finding out what is wrong with *them* (Māori students) detracts from looking at the other partner in the *problem* – the teacher. This thesis fully supports Patrick (2003) in strongly arguing for more quality research into the experiences, and professional development of beginning teachers. This thesis would add the critical examination of professional development in schools to also benefit Māori students as tangata whenua.

Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter pointed out that in order to understand Māori student underachievement, contributing factors need to be understood – that is, the *process* needs to be examined to understand the *outcome* of Māori student underachievement. Within this macrocosmic process is the crucial microcosmic home-school partnerships. The importance is that the Māori student may be able to comfortably traverse the journey from school to the wider world...if, there are *strengthened* home-school partnerships. The multifaceted-challenges for Māori students' learning have been outlined, and relevant theories discussed with a view to framing Māori student underachievement within a macrocosmic frame. Further review of the literature provided an insight into alternative ways of theorising to support the argument that a power-sharing, consultative, and collaborative partnership among students, teachers, and whānau can bring about equitable educational outcomes for Māori students, and thereby increase the likelihood of Māori students being engaged in their learning.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter details a bricolage research study. Critical and socio-constructivist theories are amalgamated in an overall underpinning Kaupapa Māori orientation that this thesis argues for. The focus in this approach to research is: theory building through an exploration of social relationships. (with the intention of understanding obstacles to Māori student achievement, and home-school partnerships); understanding the interplay between dominant and minority/indigenous discourses (to gauge perceptions of Māori students, whānau, and teachers; and, use of narrative enquiry into the lived experiences of Māori in an educational context (to better understand and validate this research through comprehensive descriptions of experiences of research participants).

The ethical issues, as laid out by Massey University Human Ethics Committee were rigidly adhered to. Qualitative and quantitative data gathering tools were used to survey students identified as Māori, their parents/whānau, and teachers. A sample of Māori students and their parents formed the major part of the sample. Qualitative techniques such as individual and semi-structured interviews were the main source of data gathering. A questionnaire was used to elicit teachers' perceptions on Māori student achievement. Creating and feeding back to the participants draft transcripts, and findings gave student and parent participants an additional opportunity to reflect on their responses, and make further comments if they desired. This enhanced the validity of the research. The data was then analysed and used to write up the report.

3.1 A Kaupapa Māori Orientation

The past view of research with Māori participants who have not themselves benefited from the research (Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999) was carefully considered before embarking on this research project. Jahnke and Taiapa (1999) point out the importance of a *culturally-based enquiry*, rather than one constructed by the dominant discourse. The world view of Māori was carefully considered, together with an understanding of the Māori cultural environment that is spiritually and tribally based (ibid.; Hohepa et al., 2005). Durie (1998) further expounds on this understanding by

emphasising the need to *look inside* a cultural context to understand the underlying values.

Conducting cross-cultural research in Māori contexts poses a challenge for researchers who are non-Māori. Graham Smith (in Smith, 1999) offers four models: the tiaki or mentoring model; the whangai adoption model; a power-sharing model and an empowering outcomes model. This study closely parallels the whangai adoption model since the researcher sees herself as being “incorporated into the daily life of Māori”, and intends to “sustain a life-long relationship which extends far beyond the realms of research” (ibid., p. 177).

Issues of accountability, forging a partnership in research (Smith, 1999) and the outcomes of the research were all important considerations. An intrinsic interest in the topic of Māori student achievement (as the researcher is a minority group educator in a pastoral role at the secondary school), together with a view of strengthening the three-way partnership of student/teacher/whānau combined provide the motivation to carry out this research.

The researcher has noted the school as a point of entry into Māori communities but does not assume access to Māori knowledge. Thus Smith’s (1999, p. 173) fundamental questions for researching in a cross-cultural context were carefully considered:

- Who defined the research problem?
- For whom is this study worthy and relevant? Who says so?
- What knowledge will the community gain from this study?
- What knowledge will the researcher gain from this study?
- What are some likely positive outcomes from this study?
- What are some possible negative outcomes?
- How can the negative outcomes be eliminated?
- To whom is the researcher accountable?
- What processes are in place to support the research, the researched and the researcher?

This project could not be a neutral endeavour as educational researchers are required to “identify a political perspective or worldview from which new knowledge is described and interpreted” (Hooley, 2005, p. 67). Hooley (ibid.) made this statement when he lobbied for participatory action research to be legitimated as another research methodology. He strongly defended the point of educational researchers

identifying with an epistemological and philosophical perspective which he claimed was neglected in educational research. He argued further that knowledge within a social arena had an ideological intention. He quoted Carspecken and Apple (1992, in Hooley, 2005) to defend his argument that social research was driven by a particular orientation that was underpinned by a theoretical view. The researcher of this project strongly acknowledges the aforementioned authors' views of a critical and emancipatory approach to research (Bishop & Glynn, 2004). Critical, socio-constructivist, and Kaupapa Māori theoretical constructs guided this research.

Careful selection of the research participants was also considered. Research (Hawk & Hill, 1996, in their 1996 AIMHI baseline report) has found that teachers and students are significant resources when exploring obstacles to student achievement. Since Māori social units (Hohepa et al., 2005) also include parents and whānau as part of the school community, whānau are unequivocal partners within this learning community. This research, sitting within a Kaupapa Māori framework as outlined in *Chapter two, Part one*, adopts a case study approach in order to develop a fuller understanding of students identified as Māori, their parents and whānau, and teachers of a secondary school community in order to examine the types of interrelationships that exist in one educative site of study. The research intends to focus on partnership relationships and processes within that school community which impact on Māori student achievement.

Within the case, semi-structured interviews were designed to provide an increased understanding of the three-way partnership among students, teachers, and whānau. Qualitative research, as a shift from the dominant positivist paradigm (Bishop & Glynn, 2004), can lessen researcher imposition. The context for data gathering may be seen as a forum not only to give participants a voice, but also to encourage the researcher to share ideas with research participants. Reinharz (1992) advocates for the researcher's immersion in the interview situation where reciprocal interactions (Eisner, 1991) take place. The struggle for the researcher was to be mindful of the power differentials, and to constantly work toward minimising the unequal power relations between the researcher and research participants.

The researcher has been particularly aware that she herself cannot interpret and define the reality of others, but that all research participants consultatively share information. The researcher has favourably considered the notion of emancipatory research where much reflection on the Māori world view and Kaupapa Māori research contributed to the researcher challenging her own values and beliefs (Hooley, 2005). The consultation group (including the researcher's supervisors) for this research study afforded the opportunity for critical self reflection and a two-way enquiry on cultural issues and protocols in the search for information (Habermas, 1996a; Hooley, 2002; Hohepa et al., 2005). Cognisance was taken that emancipatory goals could not be fully achieved during the period of the research study, rather that the process of emancipation begins with a level of conscientisation through exploration of knowledge and information (Hooley, 2005).

Communal benefit as an aim of Kaupapa Māori research infers the research process of active participation of the participants in the research (Hohepa et al., 2005). Underpinning this research paradigm is the significance of the process rather than the outcomes. Within this process is imbedded the concept of authentic partnership as an obligation of the Treaty of Waitangi. As a non-Māori researcher this posed a challenge, as Western research approaches typically have empowered the researchers only. The researcher has made concerted efforts to provide opportunities to share power with participants by adhering to the ethical principles of emancipatory action research keeping in mind not to dominate agenda-setting, but to enhance a dialogic relationship with the potential for long-lasting trust (Oakley, 1981).

The relationship between the researcher and the researched has been carefully considered. The researcher is in a pastoral relationship with the student, parent, and teacher participants. Challenges included the overlap of roles of the researcher, together with non-Māori constructions and definitions of Māori, but adhering to the analytical and critical approach of a Kaupapa Māori orientation, through the guidance of a consultation group, afforded research confidence, and support.

Furthermore, Kaupapa Māori is a partnership-based indigenous research. The researcher and research participants are expected to be in a mutually empowering and trusting relationship (Smith, 1999). Smith (1999) qualifies the nature of the

partnership by referring to Helen Timperley and Viviane Robinson's emphasis on the identification of the purpose of the partnership, and in the case of the schooling context, it should adopt a social theory perspective embracing social equity, democratic participation and responsiveness. Kaupapa Māori thus embraces a deeper notion of a researcher-researched relationship where task accomplishment is the intended outcome rather than simply being in a relationship and mechanistically working together (Timperley & Robinson, in Smith, 1999).

Given that this postgraduate study uses the interview as a qualitative data gathering tool, it has carefully noted the requirement of the co-participant (the research participants) of the research. Berryman and Glynn's (2001) advocating the need for a dialogic relationship between the researcher and research participants has been a helpful guide for this study.

Transcriptions were handed back to interviewees for any further comments. All interview participants chose to be together at a culturally appropriate hui where the findings were shared and discussed. Further comments on interpretation of transcripts, and findings continued telephonically, or via email. A process called spiral discourse by Bishop (Berryman & Glynn, 2001) was achieved where the researcher and research participants (Māori students and their parents/whānau), co-constructed meaning. Bishop (Berryman & Glynn, 2001) posits that the use of spiral discourse enhances "autonomous partnerships" (p. 33) within Kaupapa Māori research. It is argued then that this research study has adhered to a Kaupapa Māori orientation because of the use of Bishop's (Berryman & Glynn, 2001) spiral discourse, whereby a power-sharing relationship between researcher and research participants has been successfully attempted.

Underpinning a Kaupapa Māori orientation to research is a whānau approach which should be part of the methodology of the research to keep Māori values central to the study (Smith, 1999). Tuakana Neke (in Smith, 1999) argues that the whānau approach is the epistemological foundation of Kaupapa Māori research. With a shift in approach from the late 1960s, there has been the move to a more ethical research approach. The paradigm shift includes more critical and reflexive approaches that adopted an empathetic, and culturally sensitive approach, with the emphasis on

respect (Smith, 1999). Cognisance is taken that the early subordination and dominance of Māori by Pākehā has had a domino effect on generations of Māori, and Māori students in the mainstream classroom form part of the stifling effect of such oppression (Mead, 1996). Therefore, Māori research paradigms stress the importance of ethicality where the research is consistent with provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi (Powick, 2003).

3.2 The research design – a case study

The case study approach which involves a depth of study was used to explore the relationships that are interconnected and interrelated within a social and educational setting. The case study lent itself to an examination of the processes underpinning Māori student underachievement – why and how the outcomes resulted (Denscombe, 2003, p. 31). For the purpose of the research project, with its focus on partnerships, the case study design was useful in examining the relationships between the student and teacher, teacher and whānau, and student and whānau. An exploration of the educational and cultural processes within these relationships was intended to understand factors that contributed to Māori student achievement.

“Significance rather than frequency is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 185). The advantage of using the case study approach is that it lends itself to ethnographic research, and the use of multiple sources and methods for data gathering which can validate data (Bishop, cited in Smith, 1999).

3.2.1 A spiral discourse with ongoing negotiation

The research undertaken was exploratory in nature, and allowed for an interactive and circular process, thereby always keeping in mind new realities that came to the fore. The consultation group comprised the researchers’ supervisors, the local iwi representative, the school’s te reo Māori teacher, and the co-ordinator of the school’s teacher Māori Committee. Ongoing dialogue with the consultation group afforded clarity and advice on matters regarding Māori world views, Māori protocols, and ethical research considerations.

3.2.2 The school as case study site

The rationale for using a school as the case study site was in part theory building, and because the “subtleties and intricacies” of the interrelationships among students, parents/whānau, and teachers contribute to “complex social situations” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 35). If the social context of the school is a microcosm of the wider community, it increases research validity. The school was also a unique opportunity in that it afforded the researcher convenience to conduct research in a site where there was ongoing contact and communication with Māori students, and their parents/whānau and teachers. As a member of the school community, this allowed for naturalistic research and the sharing of constructed realities with the stakeholders in that context. The researcher is aware that one cannot generalise from case study findings, but cases may be similar in some respect, and the chosen case study was one example of “a broader class of things” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 36).

3.2.3 *Ethical considerations*

Approval to undertake the research was sought from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The research project was not without ethical challenges. One of them, as explained by Durie (1998), is the breadth of consultation among tribal persons as there may be bias consulting with just one tribal group. Because of the local nature of the study, the local iwi, as representative of the local Māori community, was consulted.

Another ethical challenge was the conflict of interest situation with the researcher being employed at the site of study, and in contact with research participants in a pastoral role. To overcome this, care was taken for the researcher to be introduced as a postgraduate-student, and participants were informed of the confidentiality of their responses. The following comment from a parent participant assured the researcher of the appropriateness of interview style which in a way enhanced further interview sessions:

I think you slip in and out of your role well...you don't use your (researcher) status to go out and say “Look what I found !”(Fieldnotes, April 2008).

The researcher took cognisance of the concern of the situation in being non-Māori, and of any challenges to data gathering. The researcher is also part of a minority group but employed with the Crown at a New Zealand school as a teacher. While negotiating entry into the study it was clearly laid out to participants so that they

understood their rights to opt into the study free of coercion and they could equally withdraw at any time. The researcher's rights and obligations in the research project that she was also a part of was spelt out. The communal benefit was primarily the aim of the research project.

3.2.4 Gaining access

Access to use the secondary school as a site for study was negotiated and approved by the school's principals, and the Board of Trustees. The school's permission was sought to: access school records that were not public information; invite school students, teachers, and parents to participate in the research; and use school facilities to conduct focus group student interviews, and survey teachers through the use of a questionnaire.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Selection of school

The school chosen for the project was an urban secondary school located in a large city. The school has a decile ranking of ten. The school was chosen for a number of pragmatic reasons primarily related to proximity of the researcher. Students identified as Māori constituted less than 10%, but higher than 5% of the total student population attending the school.

3.3.2 Data gathering techniques

Three data gathering techniques were used for the study: semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, and a questionnaire. The data was triangulated also in order to increase research reliability and validity.

Although the use of the interviews was considered to be particularly appropriate in the cultural context the researcher was also aware that being non-Māori, this could inhibit some participants, preventing some from offering authentic opinions (and which may have affected the quality of data). In the attempt to minimise this effect the researcher primarily adopted a "passive and neutral stance" not to "provoke

hostility or put the interviewee on the defensive” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 171). The researcher also worked to provide opportunities for power-sharing among participants at times acting as an informant to them regarding school policies, processes and practices .

3.3.2.1 *Individual interview (Appendix I)*

The individual (semi-structured) interview was used as a “discovery” rather than “checking” technique (Denscombe, 2003, p. 167) to survey parent participant views on their children’s learning. It was used to gather data for the subsequent processing of research material by making comparisons with how teachers and Māori students interpreted reality (Bishop & Glynn, 2004). The interview was semi-structured to allow the interviewer and interviewee to jointly construct ideas, while remaining mindful that as the researcher remained part of the manuhiri (the visitor) waiting to respond (as in the case of a powhiri – *ibid.*). This formed part of the initiation in the research project. Although a list of sequenced questions were created, participants were able to either pass or respond to any question as they felt comfortable. Furthermore, with the many open-ended questions, parent participants were afforded the opportunity to respond creatively and freely and to also seek clarity of questions, or comment on any related aspect of questions raised. The interview as a method was consciously chosen as it was likely to favour Māori participants who have a rich heritage in oratory and who generally prefer to engage oral discussion rather than in written form of communication.

The use of interviews can be justified for a further two reasons. Firstly, the research covered areas that encompassed Māori knowledge and as a principle for practice face-to-face or *kanohi ki te kanohi* is a preferred method of engagement, and secondly, group interviews allowed participants to be in a *whānau*-like setting where support from cultural peers would also fit within Māori cultural practices.

The researcher was mindful of the unacceptability of simply listening and recording participants’ responses. The participatory connectedness with the interviewees within an indigenous context was an essential consideration, while giving the research participants the opportunity first to tell their story (Bishop & Glynn, 2004). Connelly and Clandinin (1987, 1990) have pointed out clearly the need for the indigenous

research participants to be heard first, acknowledging the voice of the indigenous research participant who had been silenced for too long in the research partnership. Heshusius (1994) has picked up this point in his discussion of the need for participatory consciousness. The interview in this research has been particularly favoured to meet with the indigenous research participants in a cultural context to co-construct reality. The researcher 'lived the context' (Heshusius, 1994) of the research participants through her pastoral care of the parent participants' children.

Some aspects of the Interview Schedule were clarified from the researcher's perspective, such as the broader implication of *learning*. All parents perceived learning to be related only to the reality of the classroom although they agreed learning took place out of the classroom context. Learning within the school context was seen as contributing to general outcomes, while learning in the whānau context appeared to have much more significance.

It also had to be made clear that the roles of the school and whānau were looked at from the responsibility and accountability of these two agencies/partners in Māori student achievement.

Reliability of the interviews was returning transcripts to respondents for comment. A period of six weeks was allowed to give respondents an opportunity to rethink their views to amend the transcripts. Some parents expressed their reassurance of this, taking the opportunity to make additional comments.

The individual interviews were part of the triangulated data gathering, and provided greater scope for validity of this research study. The topic areas covered in the Interview Schedule were sufficient to include the many dimensions of the research topic. The researcher is aware that a list of questions for a study is not exhaustive, and therefore interviewees were encouraged to initiate discussion on aspects related to the research topic. Encouraging this freedom of expression enhanced power-sharing partnership between the researcher and research participants.

3.3.2.2 *Focus group interview (Appendix J)*

The sample group of students took part in a focus group (semi-structured) interview. Each of the two focus groups comprised five students. The rationale for using the face-to-face interview, as suggested above, was to again favour Māori participants who have a rich heritage in oratory, and also because students could feel comfortable in a group learning environment where each member could pick up ideas to comment on from other group members, or not respond to a question, and thus could feel at ease. There is focus on the group's view (Denscombe, 2003). The researcher was thus cautious not to allow any single participant to dominate the discussion. Students could feel a sense of importance and empowerment in participating in the project knowing their ideas were valued. Providing them with the opportunity to comment on the research findings upon completion of the fieldwork, also included them in the consultative process.

3.3.2.3 *Questionnaire (Appendix K)*

Teachers participated in a questionnaire. Given the time constraints as teachers, they were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in their own time over a period of about a week. A Likert scale questionnaire was used with questions ranked on the following scale: Strongly Agree / Agree / Not Sure / Disagree / Strongly Disagree. The Likert scale was also a convenient method to obtain participants' responses (Oppenheim, 1992, in David and Sutton, 2004) because there was one overall instruction to participants.

Statements were grouped into topic areas:

- the school;
- teachers and classes;
- the whānau and the school;
- Māori students and their whānau;
- teachers and their Māori students; and
- general.

Provision was also made for respondents to comment further, if necessary. This gave them the opportunity to freely make comments from the nature of the questioning to verbalising their responses. The questionnaire is a far less intrusive method of data

collecting, and considering the nature of the project (including teachers from the same school as the researcher) the questionnaire was seen as a suitable data gathering tool “to obtain personal knowledge and attributes, beliefs and opinions” (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 173).

Twenty four teachers completed and returned the questionnaire within a week, while two handed in theirs after two weeks. Many teachers provided additional comments in the space provided, and some teachers indicated their willingness to be interviewed on a one-to-one basis. Computation of scores was not used as it would have posed difficulties for interpretation. Their data was coded according to themes, as explained above.

Reliability of the questionnaire was not tested as it would have involved the test-retest method, and this could be a weakness of this research project. But, there might have been additional problems of a different sample population. It would have been interesting to conduct another survey of the respondents if they had professional development on tikanga Māori, and Māori student achievement (since a finding of this project study was teachers’ insufficient knowledge of the Māori community, and Māori student achievement, and teachers’ desire to know more about their Māori students). A retest survey may have redirected the research as teacher respondents would be likely to have *more* knowledge of the Māori community.

The questionnaire measured different dimensions, as stated above, of teacher perceptions of Māori student achievement.

3.4 *Research participants*

All research participants played a pivotal role in assisting with this research project. In the case of the parent individual interview and student group interview sessions, participants were at liberty to discuss related aspects not covered in the Interview Schedules but related to Māori student achievement. The participants were also informed of their right to comment on the research findings, over and above accessing a draft transcript of the interview for further comments.

In the case of the teacher questionnaire, teacher participants were given the opportunity for open comment after each of the sections (Appendix K), and they too had the opportunity for comment on the findings after completion of the fieldwork and approval from the researchers' supervisors.

In appreciation of participants' time and effort in the research project, all participants were invited to morning teas. Because of conflict of interest and confidentiality issues that might have resulted among students/teachers/whānau, separate morning teas were held for each group of participants. Research findings were shared with each group of participants, and with the local iwi representative, after approval was sought from the researcher's supervisors. At a meeting with the school's teacher Māori Committee, the local iwi representative presented the committee with a copy of the research report which was recommended to be placed in the school library for wider readership. The local iwi representative was also presented with a copy of the research report.

3.4.1 *Students -focus group interview* (*students included engaged and non-engaged individuals)

The choice of a focus group method for this research study is embraced in Friere's (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) argument for the goal of education: that "we all are *subjects* of our own lives and narratives, not objects in the stories of others" (p. 889). This underpinning philosophy complements the dialogic nature of the focus group that has been regarded by the researcher as an opportunity for the researcher and research participants to produce and transform the reality together (ibid.). The dialogic relationship between researcher and participants contributes to the "interactional dynamics" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 902) that was enhanced by the choice given to participants to respond to relational aspects of the schedule questions. Participants were encouraged to seek clarity of questions, and were assured that there were no *wrong* answers. The dialogic relationship was also enhanced by the researcher actively sharing information, and co-constructing the reality with the participants.

Participants were students identified as Māori:

- age levels 13-18;
- school year levels 9-13;
- male and female;
- mixed ability students;
- varying levels of involvement in extra-curricular activities such as kapahaka, and sport; and
- reside in/out of school zone.

At a school student hui, students were invited to participate in the project through a focus group interview. Permission was sought from the student convener to address the meeting. The researcher was introduced as a post-student to minimise the conflict of role situation. An overview of the research was given and the researcher left the meeting to give students an opportunity to consider participation. Research packages were made available to interested students. Each package consisted of an Information Sheet, Focus Group Interview Schedule, Participant Consent and Confidentiality Form, and a Parental Consent Form (Appendices C, J, G, and H respectively).

Of those who were interested, ten were selected using non-probability sampling on the basis of year level, gender, academic performance and extra-curricular involvement. The names of these students were checked against the school data base to confirm they were students identified as Māori. Students who were not selected but wished to participate were given the opportunity to participate, and students had the right to decline participation. Students were given about four days to consider their participation.

A briefing was called for selected students during a time in the school day when students were not expected to miss out on crucial learning. Details were given of the focus group interview in respect of date, time, venue, and students' rights. All participating students were expected to complete a Parental Consent Form (irrespective of whether they were 16 years or over), and a Participant Consent and Confidentiality Form.

Two focus groups were held over two lunch times. Students were invited to eat their lunch during the session. Each student participated only in one session of about an

hour's duration. There were five students in each focus group. Students were informed of their rights, including the right to decline participation, or responding to any question.

3.4.2 *Parents – individual interview*

Parents:

- caregivers of students identified as Māori;
- Māori and non-Māori; and
- reside in/out of school zone.

At a school parent hui an overview of the research was given, and parents were invited to participate in an individual interview. Names of interested parents were noted and research packages were issued to them. Each research package comprised of an Information Sheet, Interview Schedule, and a Participant Consent Form (Appendices B, I, and F respectively).

Ten names were randomly selected and confirmed against the school data base that they were parents/caregivers of students identified as Māori at the school. These parents/caregivers were then telephonically contacted to negotiate a time and venue for the interview, and were reminded of their right to decline participation. They were given a week to consider their participation. (Participants were welcome to discuss the Interview Schedule or Information Sheet with other whānau members.)

Ten interviews were conducted, with each about an hour's duration. Four were conducted on the school site, one at the participant's place of work, and the remaining five, at parents' homes. Participants were encouraged to make comments on aspects from the Individual Schedule without being obligated to the order of questions. Parents were also encouraged to comment on aspects not included in the interview schedule but they thought could be relevant to the research study.

The interviews adopted a narrative enquiry approach, with participants *storying* their experiences (Berryman & Glynn, 2001). The researcher took cognisance of the appropriateness of also sharing her experiences within this dialogic relationship. Many participants responded with their children and themselves as frames of

reference, but also commented on how they perceived experiences of other Māori children and their parents/whānau.

Transcripts were given to participants to authenticate them, and make further comments, if necessary. Participants were agreeable to being contacted for clarity of the researcher's interpretation of their responses.

3.4.3 *Teachers – participation in the questionnaire*

Teachers of the school:

- Māori, and non-Māori;
- involved in time-tabled ongoing professional development in Assessment in Learning, Information Technology, subject curriculum, and in the school's How we behave /How we learn philosophy based respectively on relationships, and Habits of Mind;
- include overseas' and locally trained teachers.

The sample required was 20, but 26 questionnaires were completed and handed in (24 by the end of the first week, and two at a later date). An electronic invitation was sent to 124 teachers inviting them to participate in the research study through completion of a questionnaire. A research package (Information Sheet, and Questionnaire-Appendices D, and K respectively) was placed in every teacher's pigeonhole. Completion of the questionnaire was regarded as consent to participate, and although *about a week* was specified for completion of the questionnaires, late ones were welcome, considering the time constraints placed on teachers. Twenty four completed questionnaires were returned by the end of the first week, and two were handed in after two weeks.

3.5 *Informed Consent to participate*

The overt nature of qualitative research meant that all participants consent to participate. Informed consent was gained by participants who were informed of the details of the research study through an information sheet, and in the case of student participants, a briefing with them as well. Anonymity of student participants was

achieved through students returning consent participation forms to the researcher individually out of the Māori Committee hui time. It was made clear to all participants that participation was voluntary, and that confidentiality of their participation would be maintained.

Students who agreed to participate (whether 16 years old or younger) were required to gain parental consent, and complete a Participant Consent and Confidentiality Agreement form (Appendix G), but even if parents consented, students themselves were given the choice to participate. Parent participants were required to sign a Participant Consent form (Appendix F). Teacher participants' completed and returned questionnaires served as consent to participate.

3.6 Data analysis methods

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used to understand student/whānau/school partnerships, and the differing perceptions of Māori student learning and achievement. The researcher considered the implications of using small samples in the light of qualitative methods for analysis since speculations can contribute to theory (Townsend & Bates, 2007). The duality of data analysis was nonetheless mutually inclusive and provided for an in-depth discussion of research findings.

Ordinal (quantitative) data analysis was used for the questionnaire. Responses were coded as per the Likert scale used, and according to the questions in each of the sub-categories (Appendix K). Some participants also provided worded responses, and these were qualitatively analysed after being grouped into themes, and included in the discussion of the findings.

Qualitative data was developed from the face-to-face individual interviews, and focus group discussions. Interview transcripts, together with non-verbal responses were used to interpret responses. After open-coding, and horizontalisation, the detailed textural descriptions were unitised to write up the research report (Cresswell, 1998). Because of the wide range of questions used for the interviews, a constant comparative approach (ibid.) was used to saturate the categories into themes. Researcher bias in the interpretation of the lived experiences was reduced through a

dialogic relationship with the culture-sharing group (ibid.). Some teachers *identified* themselves as participants, and were willing to further discuss their views in a face-to-face context. Parent-researcher communication was largely via email. Naturalistic generalisations (ibid.) were finally developed in order to answer the research questions. These generalisations were considered valid given the respondents' *choice* in their participation in the research project.

Summary of Chapter Three

This section argued for the adoption of a *Kaupapa Māori* orientation to conduct a triangulated research study, using an overall qualitative design. The premise for a *Kaupapa Māori* approach has been motivated as being gate-keeping for harming interpretations of research findings. This was achieved through a rigorous process of an *ethics application* for the use of human participants. The *Kaupapa Māori* approach aims to enhance validity and reliability of this culturally appropriate study through individual and semi-structured interviews, and a thorough sharing of information. *Triangulation* (teacher questionnaire, parent individual interview, student focus group interview) has been argued to enhance the opportunity of obtaining a greater understanding of underlying issues in student/whānau/school partnership relationships, and differing perceptions on Māori and education. The perceptions of the three categories of participants were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed to make interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations on the identifiable obstacles to Māori student achievement, and the process of strengthening the three-way partnership among students, whānau, and the school.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter, made up of two parts, intends to provide a summary of the findings of this research study based on the two research questions listed below. In the first part, some obstacles to Māori student achievement are critically identified. It is noted here that all the identified obstacles are interrelated. For a deeper understanding of Māori student underachievement, all identified obstacles have to be carefully considered within the *three-way* partnership that this thesis advocates for, since the microcosm of the Māori student's learning is interrelated with the student's lived experiences. In the second part of this chapter, a summary is provided of factors related to *strengthened* student/school/whānau partnerships that can contribute to Māori student academic success. The summary in this part illustrates the notion of interrelatedness, within a *well-connected* partnership. The study suggests that isolating any one stakeholder can be detrimental to Māori student learning. This view concurs with literature that supports a holistic approach to positive human development (Glasser, 1975, Durie, 1994, in Macfarlane, 2007a).

The research questions:

What are the *obstacles* to Māori student achievement?

Assuming that a partnership approach to Māori student achievement will enhance educational outcomes for Māori students, how can a three-way partnership (student/school/whānau) be *strengthened*?

4.1 Challenges to Māori student achievement

The following factors which find their roots in socio-constructivist, critical, and Kaupapa Māori theories, have been found through this study to impact on Māori student learning. Literature (Simon, 1990; Bishop and Glynn, 1999, 2004; Alton-Lee, 2003; Patrick, 2003; Bull et al., 2008) has consistently drawn attention to the following non-exhaustive list of factors: Māori students' academic aspirations; teacher professional development; student-teacher/parent-teacher relationships;

classroom pedagogy; communication between the home and school; the school curriculum; socio-economic background; peer pressure; and, human development.

Differing perceptions held by students/teachers/whānau of Māori and education were seen to be a major obstacle as perspectives were inconsistent between home, and school. What was consistent though was that Māori students and their whānau felt alienated from the school, while teachers felt they provided an inclusive curriculum. For many research participants these views have become ingrained in their lived experiences so that while the school may have intentions of sound educational outcomes for their Māori students, in practice these ideals were not necessarily reflected.

4.1.1 *Differing perceptions*

The findings in this section are discussed according to differing perceptions of Māori held by students, whānau, and teachers. Teacher participants in this study were generally uncertain about Māori students' whānau views on education, but the *lived experiences* of Māori students, and their parents have revealed a range of factors contributing to deficit theorising of Māori. The following is a list of differing perceptions held by student, parent, and/or teacher participants on Māori students' learning, Māori aspirations, and whānau involvement in their children's education. A critical analysis of these perceptions follows in the following chapter.

- While teacher participants felt that generally teachers provide quality educational programmes for their Māori (and all) students through inclusive practice, whānau felt an inclusive school policy was not endorsed.
- Contrary to teachers' perceptions, whānau of Māori students have high educational aspirations for their children.
- Contrary to teachers' perceptions, whānau of Māori students felt that Māori students (like all learners) enjoy learning, but situational factors such as the relationship between student and teacher are crucial for students to be engaged.
- Teacher participants felt that their classes were inclusive, while Māori students and their whānau felt that mainstream classrooms were not culturally

inclusive/safe. There were differing perceptions of inclusiveness in respect of biculturalism, multiculturalism, equality, and equity in education. For example, most teachers felt that teachers are *fair* to all their students, and treat them *equally*, but at the same time claim to teach effectively to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- There were differing perceptions on te reo Māori. Teachers felt Māori students should choose te reo Māori as an elective subject; they also felt Māori students preferred kapahaka to their 'academic' subjects. Parent participants felt that the choice of te reo Māori, and/or kapahaka are a Māori student's decision.
- Contrary to teachers' perceptions that Māori students' whānau were not interested in communicating with the school (for example, through parent/teacher interviews), Māori students and their whānau felt there were justifiable reasons for reduced attendance of whānau at school meetings (for example, because of past negative experiences).
- Parent and student participants pointed out the importance for Māori students to feel connected with their teachers:

It doesn't really matter what culture the teacher comes from, but it does really matter who that person really is, whether they are seen to be genuine by our kids or not, and I think it is possible for most Māori kids...they know whether the teacher is for real or not...they really do (fieldnotes, April 2008).
- While teacher participants felt that generally teachers respected all students, there was uncertainty whether generally teachers understood their Māori students, or whether teachers made reference to positive Māori experiences in their teaching. The implication of teachers' uncertainty may be that generally teachers are not well-connected with their Māori students.
- Teachers assumed Māori students preferred sport and cultural activities over their *academic* programmes, while Māori students and their parents regarded this assumption as deficit theorising, and an example of stereotypical thinking to explain Māori student underachievement.

Literature (Alton-Lee, 2003) provides strong evidence that strong home-school partnerships can result from sharing of information. Thus, it can be argued that the

above *differing* perceptions would be more likely to weaken home-school partnerships because if whānau/students/teachers do not share each other's perspectives about Māori learning and achievement through effective consultative and collaborative processes, then initiatives to improve Māori student achievement can be delayed. In the meantime, inequitable educational opportunities for Māori students may continue to exist.

Further, research (Bishop & Glynn, 2004) has proven the negative implications of differing perceptions, as they can create the cultural walls that divide. In articles in the New Zealand Ministry of Education *Education Gazette* (2004, 2007), the professional development programme Te Mana – korero: Relationships for better learning was argued to have enhanced the partnership relationship between the school and home. The parent participants involved in the professional development programme felt more comfortable about engaging with the school when there was a *sharing* of teacher and parent perspectives of Māori student learning. This study goes further to acknowledge that students also have agency, and therefore adjudicates for *students* as well in korero (relationships) that are underpinned by power-sharing consultative and collaborative practice, thus a *three-way* partnership.

4.1.2 *Insufficient professional development*

Most teacher participants felt that the school did not provide sufficient professional development on a curriculum underpinned by a bicultural perspective. They did not feel well-supported with professional development with regard to the Treaty of Waitangi. Built on this premise of minimal understanding of obligations to the Treaty of Waitangi, all teacher participants agreed that professional development on a Māori world view, and Māori student achievement can enhance teaching in a mainstream classroom with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Minimal understanding by the school of Māori ways of knowing may be attributed to many factors, for example, immigrant teachers who may “negotiate the authoritative discourses in their professional lives” (Reid, 1997, in Patrick, 2003, p. 10), by adopting a dominant culture frame, or, teacher training programmes that do not

include compulsory courses in teaching in culturally diverse classrooms (Ghosh, in Craft, 1996; Patrick, 2003).

4.1.3 *Key contributing factors*

Another obstacle to Māori student academic achievement has been brought up only by *parent* respondents – that of Māori students coming from a low socio-economic background. Parent participants pointed out that many Māori coming from predominantly low socio-economic areas was mainly due to wider unjust societal issues. The issue arising from Māori students from a low socio-economic background was seen to lie in many students less likely to engage in school-related dialogue with their whānau. Family life was seen to be compromised when whānau were pushed into more than one job situation, and the resulting lack of time for quality dialogue with their children on school matters. Parent and student participants commented on the deficit approach that was used by educators that stultified whānau communication with the school. For example, school leaders of schools in low socio-economic areas made decisions for whānau about their children's learning, or the negative labelling of low socio-economic areas as *neighbourhood* areas related to gangs. Thus, socio-economic categories are at times used by society as a descriptor to generalise, and measure academic capability.

Closely related to socio-economic factors, student/parent/teacher participants (to a lesser/greater extent) saw deep-seated inequities of a Euro-centric society to be an obstacle to Māori student achievement. These inequities have been explained as resulting from the dominant groups cultural knowledge taught in mainstream New Zealand schools (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Concurring with literature, this study has also found the domino effect of dominant discourses mainstream classrooms were not being inclusive and that deficit theorising was common.

Negative peer pressure mainly from conflicting values of students from different *neighbourhoods*, and learning development time were factors brought up particularly by parent participants. These factors were seen to contribute to Māori students becoming alienated from the education system.

Parent participants also provided detailed narratives on the challenges and struggles of whānau of Māori students amidst a Euro-centric society that subjugates the culture of the indigenous group. Māori were also perceived as incapable of academic success, and therefore whānau experienced the compounded challenge of rearing a Māori teenager.

4.2 Raising Māori student achievement through partnership relationships

Positive partnerships are an outcome of established goals such as trust, equity, and respect (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Grace, 1994). The findings of this report indicate that differing perceptions of Māori educational aspirations have created the perpetuation of deficit theorising (a strong negative influence on Māori student underachievement – Smith, 1999). The findings point toward a need for a greater understanding of the views held by the relevant stakeholders (students/whānau/school) which can result, through overt expression and through consultative and collaborative processes, a power-sharing partnership.

Quality teacher-student / teacher-parent / student-parent relationships were seen to be the key to strengthening the three-way partnership towards raising Māori student achievement. The implication is that mechanistic processes that endorse school policies have to be challenged to transform school practice. Participants of this study felt the *quality* of the three-way partnership can be enhanced, among other factors, through an active understanding of:

Māori ways of knowing. For example, Euro-centric and Māori views on human development and learning can contribute to mutually established educational goals. The Hikairo Rationale's holistic approach (Macfarlane, 2007), Glasser's (in Macfarlane, 2007a) *mind, body, soul* framework, and Piaget's (in Macfarlane, 2004) *developmental stages* explanation of human development can enhance teachers' understanding of their Māori students' learning. Further, an understanding of concepts such as *whānau* and *hui* is essential because each concept has significant metaphorical messages. For example, *whānau* may not only refer to the notion of an extended family, but its underpinning principles may be used to create culturally inclusive classrooms that benefit all students. *Hui*, too, can be perceived in a symbolic

way because it has implications for levels of *connectedness* among students, whānau, and the school.

Consultative, and collaborative processes among students, whānau, and school were also seen to be important. It was found through this study that unequal power relations have contributed to pathologising practices that were manifested in notions of “different” in deficit terms, and “condescending” attitudes (fieldnotes, April/May 2008). Understanding the implications of *consultation* in Ministry of Education documents (2001, 2008d) has significant relevance to this project study because the quality of the three-way partnership can depend on the nature of consultation. For example, consultation may not necessarily imply an effective partnership if there is no power-sharing (McLeod, 2002). It is also noted that while consultation and collaboration may take place during professional development, it may not necessarily be put into practice in the classroom (Patrick, 2003).

Culturally-inclusive learning environments. Key themes for greater understanding include: equality, equity, diverse, same, whānau-type pedagogies, teacher-student/teacher-whānau relationships. Cognisance is taken that in teachers’ often good intentions to cater for the diversity of students’ backgrounds to include all students, and treat all students equally, and the same, there is a confused perception of inclusive practice.

Teachers’ professional development needs. School policies are underpinned in the bicultural perspective derived from the Treaty of Waitangi, but teachers strongly acknowledge that *teachers* can impact significantly on Māori students’ learning. Hattie (1999) has already asserted that it is teachers who can make the difference in students’ lives. Thus, teachers felt they needed professional development to understand Māori student achievement. Teachers’ need for professional development could have also been due to their uncertainty in their understanding of Māori students. The underpinning bicultural perspective in school policies – its understanding, and practice. In current times in the New Zealand mainstream classroom, there is an increase in immigrant teachers of a diverse range of ethnicities (Townsend & Bates, 2007). The term bicultural can be misperceived because of connotations of two cultures, implying the exclusion of others. However, the principles of biculturalism derived from the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi must be better understood for a quality three-way partnership based on social justice, and equity (Durie, 1998).

Kaupapa Māori research findings toward best educational practice. The principles of negotiation, consultation and collaboration derive from notions of whānau, respect, and ethicality (Smith, 1999). Kaupapa Māori messages challenge the dominant discourse, and advocates for the adoption of critical pedagogy towards emancipatory goals.

Summary of Chapter Four

The chapter provided an overview of the findings of this research study. The two parts complemented each other in that obstacles to Māori student achievement were critically examined, and used to initiate steps that can strengthen the partnership relationships among students, whānau, and teachers. The findings were drawn from the process of triangulation, and a spiral discourse, thus enhancing interpretation of information. It was found through this study that deficit theorising of Māori and education contributed negatively to Māori students' engagement in their learning. Deficit theorising of Māori and education have resulted in challenges faced by whānau in a society where Māori and Euro-centric values conflict. Participants hold a consistent view that shared understandings through an inclusive curriculum can strengthen partnership relationships.

Thus, what do the partners in a school community want, to better the educational outcomes of Mori students?

The school should validate Māori knowledge.

The school should take agency to scaffold dialogue with whānau (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Co-constructed knowledge, to prevent a biased curriculum.

Authentic relationships between Māori students and their teachers.

Negotiated decisions of school policies by students, whānau, and teachers. Thus, a restorative practice approach is favoured.

An inclusive curriculum that has a holistic view of human development, and learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter attempts to critically analyse the findings of this research study using a Kaupapa Māori approach to better understand the deeper underlying issues regarding Māori student underachievement. The interpretations from the fieldwork were gained through a spiral discourse (Bishop, 1996), where additional comments from interview participants contributed informatively to the interpretation of data. Differing perceptions were analysed about Māori and education among three categories of stakeholders (students/whānau/teachers), and within the context of a non-Māori gaining access to Māori ways of knowing. Through the following discussion, it is argued that a three-way partnership based on power-sharing consultation and collaboration within an inclusive curriculum can bring about better educational outcomes for Māori students.

The findings of this study reveal that there are *differing* perceptions among students, whānau, and teachers on factors that play a vital part in Māori student achievement, namely, Māori student aspirations, Māori student learning, student-teacher relationships, teacher-whānau relationships, student-whānau relationships, and school policy. Therefore, shared understandings among students, whānau, and the school are crucial to *strengthen* the three-way partnership. Bishop and Glynn (1999) posited that educators need to reposition themselves to provide the best educational outcomes for their Māori students. They would also agree that effective consultation and collaboration can enhance the delivery of school practice (Berryman & Glynn, 2004; Macfarlane, 2006). However, this study has found that the schools do not always and easily implement principles of partnership effectively into school practice which means the three-way partnership is flawed. Principles of consultation, and collaboration, although understood are difficult to endorse for a number of reasons which will be discussed.

This chapter will firstly explain the lived experience of the researcher's adoption of a Kaupapa Māori orientation, and then discuss the differing perceptions held by

students, teachers, and whānau using the following broad themes to illustrate how they impact on the three-way partnership, and Māori student achievement:

- Māori students' learning/academic aspirations,
- deficit theorising, and
- principles that underpin school practice.

5.1 A Kaupapa Māori orientation as praxis: non-Māori researcher gaining access to Māori knowledge

It was found through this research study that being a non-Māori researcher also brought up pre-empted issues around access of Māori knowledge, and an understanding of a Māori worldview. This section discusses the reflective enquiry into the research process.

Introduction to Kaupapa Māori research during the time of submission of the proposal for this thesis initiated a deeper reflection by the researcher on how the process of implementing school policies into practice may be flawed, and notions of diversity can give opportunity for inequity, and that *we are one nation* implies the assimilation of a dominant discourse embracing Euro-Western values (Berryman & Glynn, 2001). The research findings highlight that the school's policy (as a school strategic plan) in respect of Māori student achievement is compromised in its own practices. The policy emanating from the National Administrative Guideline (Ministry of Education, 2008b) criterion on consultation and collaboration with the Māori community has yet to be fully implemented. The school is seen more to *inform*, rather to effectively consult or collaborate.

The researcher's role in this study was continuously revisited because of researching into Māori community, Māori knowledge, and use of a Kaupapa Māori approach. A non-Māori researcher's access to Māori knowledge may not appear to be a *finding*, but from the earlier discussion, together with research participants' queries on ethicality, the *finding* lies in acknowledgement of a research report being a start to a spiral discourse (Bishop, in Berryman & Glynn, 2001). Ongoing dialogue with

research participants and the research consultation group (including the researcher's supervisors) expedited reflective inquiry.

An issue brought up by one parent participant was the interpretation of the word *partnership*, whether in this or other research projects undertaken by non-Māori, or its general use by non-Māori:

our people have a problem with that partnership...it's a Pākehā perspective, and a lot of our Māori reel when that word 'partnership' is brought up...is it partnership or is it control or is it 'you just want to suck our brains and tell us we know this'...I can't blame them...(Parent, fieldnotes, 17 May 2008).

The researcher's response was an invitation for discussion on the power-sharing principle of partnership in the relationships between student and teacher, and whānau and school, and as outlined in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi document (Appendix L). The notion of *ako* (reciprocal learning in the teaching and learning context) illustrated the process of shared understandings, and co-construction of knowledge, and effective consultative and collaborative processes within a school learning community (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Macfarlane, 2007a). *Ako* is influenced by the *tuakana* (older sibling)/*teina* (younger sibling) relationship (Alton-Lee, 2003). It embraces a Māori holistic view that when applied to the teaching and learning context, the teacher is also a learner. Underlying such a principle is co-operative learning, a learning situation that minimises unequal power relations, but maximises effective partnership, consultation, and collaboration. Thus, *ako* can also have relevance for Kaupapa Māori research because the researcher and research participant continuously switch roles for shared understandings of information. *Ako* was achieved in this study through the individual and group interviews.

5.2 Māori students' academic aspirations

An effective partnership relationship among students, teachers, and whānau can engage students in their learning (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2007a). Literature has found if teachers have high expectations of their students, it can enhance students' self-efficacy, student-teacher relationships, and raise achievement (Shields et al., 2005; Biddulph et al., 2003). There is also literature to support a socio-constructivist view of learning where the student's self-efficacy is shaped (through

perceptions) by the social environment of the school learning community (Vygotsky, 1978; Newman, 1998; Pintrich, 2000; Mayer, 2003). This section illustrates how misperceptions of Māori student academic aspirations, and wider school involvement have been created by the ineffective implementation of school policies based on National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), and National Education Goals (NEGs).

An example of the mandatory requirement of school Boards of Trustees from a NAG is:

in consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 44).

The requirement for “consultation” can be interpreted in two ways: Firstly, the school consults with the Māori community to negotiate decisions on Māori student achievement progress, and these collective decisions are implemented through school wide practice. Secondly, one group holds the power to choose who/when to consult, and on what terms (Hohepa, et al., 2004). Since “consultation” may not necessarily imply consensual negotiation, its reference in the policy document is open to differing interpretation, and practice. This study has found there were differing perceptions by students, whānau, and the school in respect of Māori students' academic aspirations/achievement. It is inferred that these perceptions are due to minimal dialogic relationships of shared understandings within the school learning community. Therefore, schools may be required to critically review consultative processes to maximise shared understandings of Māori student achievement.

5.2.1 Progress monitoring

Teacher participants' responses to the following questionnaire statements revealed that there is an inconsistency in perceptions held by the school on the one hand, and Māori students and their whānau on the other, on Māori students' academic aspirations and achievement.

Māori students have high expectations of themselves.
 Māori students usually want to continue with a tertiary education.
 Māori students show an active interest in academic success.
 Māori students are making good progress with their academic performance
 (Teacher Questionnaire, Appendix K).

The majority of teacher participants felt that Māori students do not:

- have high expectations of themselves,
- want to pursue further study,
- show an active interest in academic success, and
- demonstrate positive academic goals.

Further, most teacher participants were *uncertain* about Māori students' academic progress. From another teacher questionnaire statement on teacher expectations of Māori students, it was perceived that teachers had high academic expectations of Māori students.

There are three perceptions of the school on Māori students' academic aspirations/achievement:

- the school has high academic expectations of Māori students,
- Māori students do not have high expectations of themselves, and
- the school is uncertain of Māori students' progress.

On the contrary, there is evidence from this study's fieldwork that there are Māori students who do have high academic aspirations, as explained by one parent participant of her/his child:

He wants to be an artist. He knows that he has to study to go to college but he is also very keen on photography and that is why he is taking it as a subject. He knows these subjects will take him somewhere... (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

If there is *uncertainty* by the school of Māori students' progress, it is inferred there is ineffective communication and consultation in the school community. Whānau felt that the misperception on Māori academic aspirations must change. The implication here is that if it is perceived by the school that Māori do not have high academic aspirations, it could negatively influence their academic achievement, and further study. An example of how misperceptions can lessen the chances of Māori representation in further study programmes is revealed in a parent participant's narrative:

there's absolutely the need for a change (in perceptions)...look at me...I'm the only Māori in the department. ...I'm quite aware of the students who come into my section....(about number of Māori students)...it's quite obvious they (tertiary providers) don't see us in higher studies....it actually starts at kindergarten or even before that...it's crucial for whānau support... (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

Therefore, the school's perception that Māori students do not have high academic aspirations is based on an unfounded assumption, but more importantly, socio-constructivist and Kaupapa Māori theorists (Macfarlane, 2007a; Mayer, 2003; Coxon et al., 2002) would argue that misperceptions can shape people's behaviour. Thus, teachers' misperceptions about Māori students' academic aspirations can firstly, deter effective student-teacher / whānau-school partnerships, and secondly, impact negatively on Māori student achievement either at school or further study (if students adopt the *no good* notion – Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

The uncertainty among teacher participants of Māori students' progress can be explained thus: although there was awareness by teachers of the bicultural perspective in school policies that called for appropriate monitoring of Māori student achievement (Ministry of Education, 2001b), the school policy has not been endorsed in effectively consulting with the relevant stakeholders.

5.2.2 Academic aspirations and wider school involvement

The relationship between Māori students' academic aspirations, and wider school involvement was examined to better understand the perceptions by Māori students, whānau, and the school on the notion of *academic* aspirations. The assumption is perceptions can *normalise* expectations, for example, if there is a negative perception of Māori academic aspirations, there may be minimal expectations of Māori student academic success (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

Wider school activities refer to participation and leadership roles in sport, and cultural activities such as kapahaka. Both these categories of activities were perceived by all participants as not part of the *academic* or core curriculum. Most teacher participants felt that Māori students liked to participate in kapahaka, but that Māori students did not have high academic aspirations. (Note: The school kapahaka group has a membership of 20 Māori students which comprises 1.3 per cent of Māori students at the school.) Whānau seemed aware of the school's stereotyping of Māori and kapahaka, and felt the school made provisions for Māori student's cultural need through kapahaka, but that there was a lesser emphasis on achievement. The implication is Māori students are not perceived as academically inclined:

It's all culture. It's all culture....A lot of those (Māori) kids aren't achieving academically. Most of the activities are only culture...and sport...there is not a major focus on academic abilities (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008).

Student and parent participants felt schools misperceive Māori students' preference for *kapahaka* rather than *academic* achievement. Smith (in Townsend & Bates, 2007) has been adamant that in the perceived right gesture of schools to implement school policy, for example, by making provisions for Māori students through Māori student initiatives such as *kapahaka*, Māori students may become further marginalised. From Smith's (ibid.) assertion, there are two inferences: firstly, if schools provide for cultural activities, an *inclusive* curriculum is assumed, and secondly, *kapahaka* is a *non-academic*, and therefore an *unimportant* activity. Both inferences point to *exclusion*. Therefore, parent participants may have inferred negative stereotyping when they expressed the concern of some *whānau*; that their children participate in certain *non-academic* and *less important* activities within the school, at the expense of *academic* learning.

One parent participant has encapsulated the misperception as a concern. She/he said:

Sport or cultural activities can positively impact on the child's learning because it can make the child go to school and participate, but negatively if it becomes the sole focus at the expense of study and homework (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

On the other hand, parent participants observed that some Māori students were less keen to participate in *academic-related* extra-curricular activities because of negative peer pressure:

Oh no...they won't do it ! It's about ...they will stick out... They do it (activities other than sport or culture) but they have to be very strong to do it, like say they want to do debating, or want to do the science fair...because they're pulling away from the group (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008).

The peer pressure can be explained from a critical and socio-constructivist theorist's viewpoint that would confirm the harm of negative stereotyping: Society perceives Māori to be incapable of academic aspirations/achievement, and the normalisation of this perception makes it difficult to resist (Vygotsky, 1978; Simon, 1990; G. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 1999).

Māori student leadership in the wider school community was also examined to gauge the relationship between student leadership and academic aspirations. Most teacher

participants strongly agreed there should be more Māori students in leadership positions across the school. It is inferred that a positive perception of Māori student leaders is likely to motivate students in enhancing their self-efficacy of academic study. Student participants also favourably perceived Māori students in leadership positions. These student leaders were admired for their high levels of “confidence”, “social skills”, “intelligence”, “respect”, and “good ideas” (Students, fieldnotes, April 2008). This admiration is noted in the context that student participants felt Māori student leaders did not appear to get recognition across the school, and were thus not seen to be valued for their participation in a cultural school activity that was misperceived as *unimportant*. Student participants’ perceptions bring up a very significant point: the misperception that things Māori are categorised as *cultural*. It is argued that all subjects, academic or otherwise, are set in a cultural context, and are therefore cultural.

It was felt by student participants that a very small number of Māori student leaders were likely to achieve at an “excellence level” (comparing *excellence* with the *Excellence* that can be gained in NCEA), and “most of them just don’t know” of any future plans (Students, fieldnotes, April 2008). The implication here is that Māori student leaders are not encouraged to pursue their academic studies as well. One can argue their holistic development is incomplete if one considers Durie’s (1994, in Macfarlane, 2007a) Te Whare Tapa Wha model of human development.

The assumption that Māori students did not have high academic aspirations can be interpreted as a misperception stemming from negative indices on Māori being incapable of academic success (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This misperception has been found to have a harmful effect on student-teacher relationships, and Māori student engagement (*ibid.*). Considering the socio-constructivist theory of malleable intelligence (Dweck, 1999), which makes clear reference to learners cultivating their intellectual abilities through appropriate guidance, it is argued that deficit theorising on Māori students’ academic aspirations can, not only lessen the extent of intellectual abilities to be cultivated, but also weaken the student-teacher partnership.

Teacher perceptions on the above-listed questionnaire statements on Māori students’ academic aspirations/achievement can also be interpreted within the context of

outcomes (Jahnke & Taipapa, 1999). It is argued that perceptions of *high expectations*, *tertiary study*, and *academic success* are socially constructed forms of knowledge and skills, for example, academic knowledge; so are *low expectations*, *drop outs*, and *underachievement*. Statistics on the disparity between Māori and non-Māori student achievement appear to have contributed to these outcomes (Robson & Reid, 2002; Tomlinson, in Thomas & Loxley, 2001). Thus, there is merit in Bishop's (in Taylor, 2007) urgent call for teachers to reposition themselves from a dominant cultural frame, to reflect on school practice, to understand the underlying deep-seated process of inequity in education, and to make provisions for an inclusive curriculum that promotes high academic aspirations and success (Shields et al., 2005). The Māori Potential Approach (Ministry of Education, 2008a), and the Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education, 2008a) documents provide schools with the *new* potential-focused activities: firstly, to validate Māori knowledge and secondly, to rightfully assume that Māori students *are* capable of academic success.

Besides the school's insufficient consultation, and monitoring of Māori student achievement, Glasser's (1975, in Macfarlane, 2007a) notions of human development, and the Hikairo Rationale's – (in Macfarlane, 2007a) concept of mana can be used to explain the negative impact on students who do not have high expectations of themselves. Glasser (*ibid.*) explains human development that rests on the considerations of “giving and receiving love; achieving a sense of worth in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others; having fun; and becoming self-disciplined” (p. 165). The implication is that a Māori student's wellbeing can be negatively affected because of incomplete wholeness of development, and this can impede learning. Therefore, shared understandings of information on Māori ways of knowing in respect of human development and learning of Māori students are important for effective student/whānau/school partnerships.

Effective consultation on school policy can be achieved through these ways:

1. A critique of school practice in respect of an inclusive curriculum, and progress-monitoring of Māori student achievement in the school learning community (Shields et al., 2005).

2. Power-sharing partnership relationships among students, whānau, and the school, because a minimising of unequal power relations can promote negotiated decisions for collective benefit (Durie, 1998; McLeod, 2002; Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

3. Appropriate teacher professional development on Māori student achievement (Patrick, 2003). Literature (Murrow, 2007) has found te reo Māori professional development programmes in mainstream schools gave rise to students participating with a sense of pride in kapahaka which was part of their *academic* programme. Therefore, involvement in cultural activities such as kapahaka cannot be seen in isolation. It must be seen within the holistic approach taken by Māori to the learning and teaching situation. Thus, it is argued that a culturally-inclusive curriculum is likely to strengthen the partnership relationship among students, teachers, and whānau, mainly to share differing perceptions of Māori student wider school involvement, but more significantly, accept the rightful place of kapahaka in the school curriculum. The relationship between cultural involvement and academic achievement is an area for schools to examine because if the teaching and learning context is enhanced, then achievement in kapahaka can become synonymous with *academic* achievement, and *academic* aspirations, and part of a unified school goal of Māori students.

5.3 Deficit theorising and ‘coping’ with it

Deficit theorising propagates notions of power and privilege over certain groups of people (Shields et al., 2005). The inference is that deficit theorising can impact negatively on student-whānau-teacher relationships, and prevent effective negotiation of decisions within the school community. Bishop and Glynn (1999, 2003) explain the nature of deficit theorising when they posit how colonialism has created a context of epistemological racism. Ryan (2007) expounds on the explanation by stating that firstly, racism can contribute to Māori student underachievement, and secondly, it can challenge the dominant culture group:

Behind the educational underachievement and general exclusion of ‘minorities’ is a phenomenon that many ‘majority’ culture members are often uncomfortable acknowledging – racism (p. 15).

Many student participants shared detailed narratives on manifestations of deficit theorising. Negative stereotyping, for example, led students to feel embarrassed when

Māori students did not meet required academic standards. Student participants felt that whatever Māori students did - positive or negative - the labelling of being Māori seems to prevail in their daily lives:

Student 1: "I want them to work but what can I say...they're only Māori ! They can't do any better."

Student 2: "Oh well, he'll be stealing my car..."

(Students, quoting comments that have been made by teachers, fieldnotes, April, 2008).

Another example of negative stereotyping is illustrated through a parent participant's narrative of a situation where students and teachers (including Māori) were not able to readily identify Māori student leaders. Some student participants in this study also held the perception that not many Māori students held leadership positions in the school because minority group students were unlikely to be perceived as leaders. It can be inferred that negative stereotyping has resulted in the assumption that Māori students were not capable of leadership roles, and this can be explained by the *no good* notion, a situation where an individual adopts a self-fulfilling prophecy because the experience is so ingrained, it becomes a norm (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). It is argued that Māori student *underachievement*, too, may become normalised among Māori, lest steps are taken to counter deficit theorising, as would be the need from the following parent participant's narrative:

At my school, we got all the teachers, all the Māori teachers. Of all the successful Māori students, they could only name one student. When we checked this up, we found Māori students who were head of Houses, head of committees, in the top 5 in subjects like Maths and Science in school. I came to a realisation that for a lot of teachers... and even Māori students identified Māori students as ones who are struggling (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

Deficit theorising of Māori and education was brought up by a student participant who commented that as a fair-skinned Māori, who was performing well academically, it alarmed her/his peers that firstly, she/he was *Māori*, and secondly, she/he was *capable* of academic excellence, something that Māori students were perceived not to be capable of, neither were they likely to aspire towards. Misperceptions of Māori and education through deficit theorising can demoralise Māori students when issues of moral and social justice are compromised (Patrick, 2003; Simon, 1990; Smith, 1999).

To illustrate the flaw in deficit theorising of Māori and academic capability, parent and student participants recalled positive learning experiences of hands-on learning through participatory modelling (Mayer, 2003) from elders in the whānau:

they're taught things of the Māori culture by sitting along beside by the grandmother and watch her weave baskets while they get a chance to try it out themselves, but they're very much involved in what's happening (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008).

Participatory modelling in this example of basket weaving can be explained from a Māori, and a Western perspective on knowledge, and pedagogy. From a Western perspective, basket weaving would be perceived as a non-academic activity, and the participatory modelling learning style may not be considered a Western approach to pedagogy. From a Māori perspective, basket weaving may not be academic but can be linked to academia in two ways: firstly, basket weaving builds on Māori ways of knowing, and secondly, the pedagogy of co-operative learning is espoused. The parent participant intended to illustrate the intuitive and pedagogical advantages of the basket weaving experience from the Māori perspective.

Mayer (2003) has proven that participatory modelling enhances cognitive strategies. The issue here is the Māori student's *capability* of academic success amidst deficit theorising of Māori. Macfarlane (2007a) explains the misconception of dominant cultures to dismiss Māori knowledge learning as not essential to academic knowledge, and linked to low level (low culture and low knowledge) constructs. He argues that if Māori culture comprises decoding spiritual metaphors within the whānau, then Māori students are capable of higher order thinking. Research (Romaine, 1995, Cummins, 1996, Corson, 1998, Baker 2001, Cummins, 2001, in May, 2006) has also found that the ability to think divergently and convergently as a bilingual and bicultural being can promote skills well above the monocultural being:

are superior to monolinguals on divergent thinking tasks and in their analytical orientation to language, and demonstrate greater social sensitivity than monolinguals in situations requiring verbal communication (May, 2006, p. 6).

Student participants' lived experiences in the classrooms revealed the damaging nature of deficit theorising. Māori students felt intimidated during class discussions for fear of what may be said is not going to be taken seriously because they were "Māori" (Fieldnotes, April 2008). The implication here is that Māori students were aware of the misperception of Māori, and that Māori views were not valued. Student

participants felt if they wished to contribute positively to class discussions, they would have to produce only *correct* answers. Māori students felt distanced from non-Māori students although they did not usually convey this overtly in the classroom. Feelings of inferiority through exclusive practice may have led Māori students to feel alienated in a heterogenous classroom because student participants spoke of Māori students perceived as “different” (Student, fieldnotes, April 2008) in *negative* terms. It is argued that this form of negative stereotyping is likely to encourage a culturally conflicting learning environment, and may prove Shields et al.’s (2005) point that the agency of discourse in the mainstream classroom is eroded.

Deficit theorising through negative references misplaces Māori (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Teachers’ reference to “different” (Fieldnotes, April 2008), in respect of Māori having “a different way” (ibid.) of thinking, was perceived as something “wrong” (ibid.). The following student narrative proves my point:

Teachers need to know about our culture as well. They think they know, but they just don’t know- and then you tell them as much as you can, but they take offence with it. ... ‘this is what your people are like... this is what they used to do... your people were wrong before, but now the British came and made it better’ (Fieldnotes, March 2008).

The above narrative does not contribute to a community of positive difference (Shields et al., 2005), and authentic inclusiveness. According to student participants, some teachers may have had good intentions and unintentionally propagated this wrongness in lessons involving Māori people. It is inferred these teachers advocated for acceptance or *tolerance* of the difference in the Māori culture, but at the same time explained “how Māori were cannibals” (Student, fieldnotes, April/May 2008). Difference was used by the teachers (intentionally or unintentionally) to advance deficit aspects of culture since student participants voiced their embarrassment of having to painfully listen to demoralising subject content on how “barbaric” (Fieldnotes, April 2008) their people were, and “how the British colonised them” (ibid.). The implication here is that colonisation was viewed as a benevolent movement with the aim of *civilising* Māori, and telling them how to live their lives. (Note a similar view held by Smith, 1999.)

Thus, Māori knowledge in the classroom appeared to be tolerated, rather than valued. *Tolerated* and *valued* may have significant repercussions on partnership relationships

between students and teachers. If students perceive the teacher to *tolerate* them, it is likely students may become disengaged. Concurrently, it is argued that if students perceive the teacher to *value* their culture, this can enhance a sense of belonging, and concomitant engagement.

Literature exists to support the harm deficit theorising can cause to effective student-teacher partnerships, and student engagement. Freire's (1970) banking concept of education is one example where the educator transmits the dominant discourse by informing rather than co-constructing knowledge. Students are not given the opportunity to critically examine how the *normal* understanding of reality does not necessarily have equal value to the realities of others. This approach reinforces a biased (mainstream-centric) curriculum, the inferiority/superiority notion, and a classroom that is not culturally inclusive and safe (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane et al., 2007). Further, a teacher's frame of reference that conflicts with that of the student's can discourage verbal interactions, and decrease student engagement (Smith & Hodkinson, 2005).

Literature also exists to illustrate components of effective student-teacher relationships that counter deficit theorising. Mutually established goals of respect, trust, and social justice between teachers and students minimise unequal power relations, promote co-construction of knowledge, and create culturally-safe learning environments (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bevan-Brown, 2003; Macfarlane et al., 2007).

'Coping' with deficit theorising

This section explains how Māori students are faced with the challenge and struggles in coping with deficit theorising. One parent participant spoke about the emotional stress caused by misperceptions of statistics on Māori student achievement:

it's the statistics...they are scary...and probably in the boys' minds ...as they got older they realised it was statistics (that were going to marginalise them). From intermediate...they talk about Māori in South Auckland...' (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

Some students find it difficult to cope, which compounds the issue of Māori student underachievement (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The basis for this assumption is that

pathologising practices and deficit thinking may not have been identified by the school, and therefore steps are not taken to challenge such thinking.

Student participants felt that Māori students appeared to cope with situations of negative stereotyping by “joking” about the stereotypes and then beginning to live up to “other people’s expectations” (Student, fieldnotes, April 2008). Students felt that this type of response to stereotyping “happens all the time” (Fieldnotes, April/May, 2008). Students have articulated the phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecy where individuals behave in ways that are expected of them. This raises the question of whether the school endorses inclusive practices, including appropriate and effective student support for minority and indigenous group students. However, unless critical pedagogical practices expose negative stereotyping, deficit theorising is perpetuated (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The harmful repercussions of deficit theorising can create a sense of hopelessness, and minimise levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem, as inferred by student participants:

...you might be smarter ... and more knowledgeable on content...(but)...you’re still a Māori...(Fieldnotes, March 2008).

Parent participants did not seem to know of students downplaying negative stereotypes of Māori, for example, when students *joked* about negative references to Māori. However, they did note that when Māori students became disengaged in their learning, they were more likely to become “trouble-makers” (Parents/students, fieldnotes, April 2008), often as a response to negative stereotyping. Hence, problematising the indigenous by the dominant discourse may make it more likely for many Māori students to challenge the status quo of the mainstream classroom (Smith, 1999; Macfarlane, 2007a), but in the process these students can become alienated from the education system. Normalising Māori as *trouble makers* is a stereotype that schools are required to challenge in their critique of *inclusive* school policy and practice.

Teachers, on the other hand, appeared to be unaware of the prevalence of deficit theorising of Māori as they generally agreed to these questionnaire items (Appendix K):

Teachers include reference to positive Māori experiences in their teaching. Māori students’ comments are valued in the classroom.

Perhaps the Teacher Questionnaire should have included statements specifically related to deficit theorising to illicit teacher responses on the issue. Therefore, the *interview* data gathering tool may have been more effective than the questionnaire. It is also noted that the researcher may have incorrectly assumed teachers' knowledge of deficit thinking. However, the issue of deficit thinking was brought up prominently by Māori students and their whānau. It can also be noted that deficit theorising is not an unknown phenomenon in schools, since a Staying at School Suspension Consultation Report of 2006 by TNS and Monarch Consulting Ltd (Ministry of Education, 2008c, p.14) included the following suggestion by school principals:

Te Kōtahitanga was mentioned by principals as a positive practice (focusing on effective relationships between teachers and students, and recognising that deficit theorising by teachers can be a major impediment to students' educational achievement).

Bishop and Berryman (2007), in their research of the views held by Māori youth in New Zealand secondary schools, conclude by calling for the repositioning of educators, as their studies point to *teachers* as a major influence on Māori student achievement. They argue that if teachers hold negative imagery of Māori students, this can unintentionally reflect in their practice and interactions with their students.

A finding on misperception of Māori and education from this postgraduate study may concur in part with Bishop and Berryman (*ibid.*). When teacher participants (in this study) expressed their uncertainty of the prevalence of deficit theorising, could the reason be misinterpretation of the questionnaire items, or that teachers had so thoroughly internalised the mainstream school culture as the norm that the idea that other perspectives existed or should be acknowledged held little credence? Furthermore, Shields et al. (2005) make explicit reference to deficit theorising as a form of oppression, thus, one is reminded of Ryan's (2007) words that explain the likely discomfort of the dominant culture group's acknowledgement of racism underpinning exclusion of "minorities" (p. 15).

5.4 Whānau involvement

Research conclusions on effective home-school partnerships reveal that the school should take agency for deliberate collaboration, and effect scaffolding dialogue with

whānau (Biddulph et al., 2003; Fitzsimmons, 2003; Alton-Lee, 2003). The inference is that shared information and understandings between whānau and the school contribute to an effective home-school partnership. To better understand the partnership, this study analysed student/whānau/teacher perceptions on the themes of whānau aspirations, and whānau support. These themes are discussed below.

5.4.1 *Whānau aspirations*

Most teacher participants felt that teachers had high expectations of Māori students, and wanted Māori students to continue with tertiary study, but that Māori students did not have high expectations of themselves. However, teachers responded with uncertainty to the following statement on *tertiary education* (which implied *educational aspirations*):

Māori students' whānau do not see the need for their children to continue with tertiary education (Teacher Questionnaire, appendix K).

Teachers' uncertainty may have been due to unsuccessful communication between whānau and teachers. (Note that teacher participants felt that generally whānau did not attend parent/teacher interviews.) One teacher participant substantiated her/his uncertainty of whānau aspirations by commenting that the section on whānau (Teacher Questionnaire, appendix K) required

...knowledge of an outside group with which teachers have little or no contact ... Without knowing the whānau, it is virtually impossible to answer these questions (April 2008).

Contrary to teacher perceptions, whānau support in Māori student achievement was perceived with confidence, as a given. Examples of narratives from parent participants illustrate their support:

I like to know...about any tests...essays...grades.

I tend to ask him every day... 'How was your day?' ...He doesn't say much, but I will always ask him...I will ask of his subjects 'What's coming up?'... I will still ask to show my continual interest. ...It does not mean that because you don't get an answer, you must stop asking....Well, in the first term, he asked me to look at an essay...now that's probably the third time he asked for help (Fieldnotes, April/May 2008).

Literature strongly supports whānau high academic aspirations for their children. Smith (1997) and Fitzsimmons (2003) point out that whānau made it very clear in overt submissions for excellent outcomes from the schooling of their children. Parent participants saw whānau as the tower of strength to motivate children, and student participants were adamant of whānau positive views on school, as remarked by one student, of a typical Māori parent's response to their children: "Go to school (and learn)!" (Fieldnotes, April, 2008).

Further examples of whānau aspirations for their children are conveyed in the following narratives by parent participants:

Parent 1: You go to school for this number of years, and then you go off to university. I've never given them the opportunity to think about not going to university... But, if they're thinking down, that's fine, but I'm always making them think up there... And they know if they want to do well, that's where they ought to go. If they want to earn money...

Parent 2: I know Winnie (pseudonym) sat down with me to go through what subjects she was taking...I wanted to know where the subjects were taking her....to be either a PE teacher...or air hostess.

The inferences from the above narratives are that firstly, some whānau have high aspirations for their children. Secondly, that secondary education was seen as part of the journey for further study, qualifications, and financial stability. Thirdly, whānau felt their children also needed to be goal-orientated and effectively participate in appropriate subject selection.

Because whānau have often been blamed for Māori student underachievement (consistent with deficit theorising), they assert their right to counter such deficit thinking through shared understandings within the school learning community (Patrick, 2003; Bishop, 2006; Shields et al., 2005). *Blame* is a deficit term, since it has connotations of *failure*, and *exclusion* that can harm an individual's wellbeing. Therefore, the reader is made aware of the challenges and struggles experienced by whānau in the mainstream schooling system entrenched in the dominant discourse, and any existing misconception of whānau aspirations for their children. Besides the statistics normalising Māori student underachievement (McLeod, 2002), statistics generally have been further used to problematise indigenous peoples (Smith, 1999). For example, a misperception of statistics may have led teacher participants in

Bishop's (2006) Te Kotahitanga Project to place blame on whānau for Māori student underachievement. Patrick (2003) would concur with Bishop's (2006) findings when she comments on how teachers' adoption of deficit theorising is regarded as systemic, and beyond their control.

The deficit theorising of Māori and education concerned parent participants of this study. They felt the added pressure (compared to Pākehā) to take agency. The following comments by one parent participant bring up two relevant points, among others, for consideration. Firstly, there are whānau who have high academic aspirations of their children, and thus negative assumptions on whānau and their children's education are unfounded. Secondly, education (through its curriculum – school/teachers/students/whānau) plays a pivotal role in bringing about social change:

Once they are achieving, they are going to get a definite job. They will be able to do what they want to do...what they enjoy...it's important...rather than doing what they don't like doing and end up on the dole. Also it would change the statistics. Education is so important to break that cycle...to bring them up. That's the only way! (Fieldnotes, April, 2008).

5.4.2 *The nature of whānau support*

Parent participants felt that whānau had to overtly demonstrate to their children, their support for education, in a climate of misperceptions of whānau, and Māori academic aspirations. Many lived experiences of whānau demonstrated the nature of whānau support. According to some parent participants, Māori students who were talented in a particular field, for example music, may be more likely to extend their interest through the subject choice process in which parents are collaboratively involved with the student and school. Bishop (2006) goes a step further by advocating for *whānau* to be invited into the school to share *their* talents, and knowledge with teachers (Alton-Lee, 2003). Some parent participants also viewed the school's encouragement of whānau talent/expertise positively as it was perceived to enhance a healthy self-concept among Māori students through acceptance of Māori culture.

Parent participants felt that home environments that encouraged open dialogue about education were more prone to elicit feedback from children on the highlights of a school day:

I always ask her 'How was your day?' Last year it was 'good' or 'bad', but this year she is giving me some details, generally the good things, but sometimes the negative. She told me she got the CCC (Courtesy/Commitment/Citizenship) thing and yeah..the good and bad (Parent participant, April 2008).

At the same time, parent participants also felt valued if children requested assistance with homework from them: "I think he should be asking *me* more than the teachers. I felt good because he usually doesn't want any help..." (Parent, fieldnotes, May 2008). It was felt that some whānau succeed in building their child-parent relationship through open dialogue, and this could impact positively also in their dialogue with teachers of student progress.

Although teacher participants felt that the school communicates with whānau about the achievement of Māori students, parent participants felt there was not enough encouragement from the school in respect of praising students for their achievement. One parent participant spoke about how academic success was overtly celebrated among whānau members, which demonstrates that whānau valued education and academic achievement:

teachers need to tell the parents what the child is good at because the only time the child will get recognition for schoolwork is if they do the family proud. ...If she comes home and said she got an award for achievement things, ... and through her report I can see she is good at Science, so that made me proud...I told the whole family...and the whole family was brought to that point. So, it's about rewarding achievement ... there's not enough encouragement at school - Fieldnotes, April 2008).

The differing perceptions held by whānau and the school in respect of praise can be explained thus: deficit theorising of Māori and achievement has created a challenge for Māori to overtly counter the social injustice. While the school, with good intentions, wishes to be *fair* to all students in its *equal* treatment of *all students*, careful consideration should be given to *equity*. Equity implies acknowledging difference, and providing different treatment in order to be fair. Therefore, *same* treatment is in fact unfair. Thus, the school should critically reflect on communication with whānau about praise and achievement of their children to promote self-efficacy of education in Māori students (Eubanks & Weaver, 1999; Bull et al., 2008).

Parent participants also pointed out that whānau are likely to respond immediately in support of their children to any issue around social injustice. They would respond:

- (if) there was a situation where there was something different...then I would look further into it...or if I had some suspicion of anything unfair...
- (if) something's not quite right.
- (by contacting the school)...you get it (unfair practice) all the time.He sometimes gets worried that I may approach his teachers who may take it out on him.

In the third comment above, reference is made to “you get it all the time” (Note that the comment was made by a non-Māori/Pākehā parent.) These words have resounded in many narratives of student and parent participants. The implications are significant: Firstly, the words relate to an example of social injustice, namely, discriminatory practice, or racism. Secondly, the issue may be endemic, and racism is normalised. Thirdly, it points to ineffective delivery of school policy with regard to respect for the diversity of cultures. This raises questions such as:

- How *inclusive* is the curriculum?
- How *culturally-safe* is the learning community?
- What systems are in place to counter discriminatory actions/racism?
- Who initiates action?

Effective communication through power-sharing consultation with whānau and students by the school is crucial to better understand the issue of discriminatory practice. If the school is a site for social transformation (Shields et al., 2005; Simon, 1990; Macfarlane, 2007a), then power-sharing partnerships among students, whānau, and the school are essential to heal the harm of improper school practice.

5.4.3 *Factors that cause whānau to withdraw from the home-school partnership*

5.4.3.1 *Mainstream schooling*

Parent participants inferred deficit theorising in their reference to the different methods and means for valuing education. It was noted by whānau that students' families from any culture may withdraw from a partnership with the school, but because of many Māori whānau past negative experiences with the school, many have

withdrawn their partnership. Parent participants implied that whānau withdrawal from the school was mainly because of underlying factors such as distrust, as explained by this parent:

it's a historical issue than anything else...their (whānau)experience at school, and their parents' experience at school, and so on, and so on...so, it's quite a historical thing...there was no trust, so based on that parents will be cautious to actually engage in...at the school. You know you get a lot of these kids (of parents who are not engaged with the school) who get themselves in trouble... (Fieldnotes, 22 April, 2008).

Whānau withdrawal from the mainstream schooling process can be explained in terms of mutually established goals such as trust and respect that were compromised by the school (Grace, 1994; Bishop & Glynn, 2004). The implication is two-fold. Firstly, the cultural capital of the mainstream school is not familiar with Māori ways of knowing. Secondly, experiences within the cultural capital of the school have not been pleasant ones, thus the choice of whānau to dissociate with the school or have little to do with it. For example, parent participants felt that whānau communication with the school at parent-teacher interview nights was *intimidating* largely because of previous negative experiences with the school. These past experiences were seen to be either because of current parents and the previous generation of parents' awareness of the imbalance of power-sharing between them and the school, suspicion of the school's intention, and deficit theorising of Māori, including blame placed on whānau by the school for Māori student underachievement. Is it likely that schools adopt Dale's Empowerment Model (1991, in Wearmouth et al., 2005) where whānau are made aware of their crucial role, but at the same time made to feel totally responsible for their children's learning?

Another reason for whānau withdrawing from the home-school partnership was that the mainstream schooling process is different from the traditional Māori schooling process. The difference in schooling can be explained in three ways: Firstly, the process of learning is perceived differently between Māori and non-Māori; secondly, there is a difference in the cultural capital of Kura Kaupapa Māori, and mainstream schools; and thirdly, parents' experience of different eras of schooling.

Process of learning

The mainstream view on human development and learning may derive from Piaget's developmental phases, where acquisition of certain skills takes place at specific stages, and where emphasis is placed on values such as individual achievement, and individual competition (Macfarlane, 2004). The Māori view is that human development is a seamless process (Metge, 1990). One parent participant felt that among many Māori children there was "a time" for learning (that children were more inclined to be engaged in their learning when "the time was right" (Parent, fieldnotes, May 2008). This time could "unfortunately" (ibid.) be when the child leaves school prematurely. The implication here is that the child would not have completed a secondary school education, and from a Western standpoint, may be regarded as a drop out or failure. While the Western view of the school's role would be to turn out qualified individuals at a *certain* stage (in accordance with Piaget's developmental phases), the Māori view of the seamless nature of learning may unjustifiably be used as a basis for deficit theorising of Māori where blame is placed on whānau for Māori student underachievement. More importantly though is that the school should take agency to provide the necessary *positive* and *authentic* support for the student, not because the student is *at risk*, but because there has to be a shared understanding of the different views of human development and learning.

One parent participant was emphatic about wellbeing being a priority over academic success: "...the wellbeing is very important. If her wellbeing is not looked after then she would not work to her full extent" (Fieldnotes, May 2008). The concept of wellbeing has significance for teachers' enhanced understanding Māori values. Glasser's (1998) mind/body/soul triangle model, and Durie's (1994) Te Whare Tapa Wha representations of human development bear apt reference. Glasser (ibid.) posits that if one side of the mind/ body/ soul triangle is incomplete, there is loss of the wholeness of behaviour. In Durie's (ibid.) model, the inclusion of *whānau* is crucial in understanding the parent participant's reference to "not looked after". The notion of whānau can be applied to both the school as a community of learners, and the members of the extended family where there is a collective responsibility to create a caring and nurturing environment (Macfarlane, 2007a).

Kura Kaupapa and mainstream schools

Kura Kaupapa Māori schooling (Māori philosophy and principles' based school), is build around Māori ways of knowing, and this cultural capital can conflict with the cultural capital of mainstream schooling. One parent commented thus:

they (children) loved being in a bicultural setting (Kura Kaupapa), so they thoroughly enjoyed learning, and then we took them out of the bicultural setting and put them into a mainstream setting; they found it very difficult to adjust to the style of teaching... they were more used to being hands on (in their) learning instead of being in the sitting and listening sort of context... (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

When the parent participant referred positively to Kura Kaupapa schools, she/he acknowledged *validation* of Māori ways of knowing. However, the reference to "sitting and listening" infers a pedagogical context of passive learners where the learner is viewed as an empty vessel in which the dominant culture knowledge is *banked* (Friere, 1970), or the learner is required to *assimilate* the dominant culture knowledge (O'Sullivan, 2007). The issue of knowledge in mainstream schools concerned whānau of Māori students. One would argue that the concern is relevant since mainstream schools' validation of Māori knowledge is not a given (Metge, 1984; Durie, 1998; Bishop & Glynn, 1999, 2004; Christians, 2002, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Macfarlane, 2007a). The recent lobbying for the insertion of Māori as tangata whenua in the draft and final documents of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b/2008b) proves that the issue of validation of Māori knowledge has not been a significant consideration of education policy-makers. The point here is that if Māori knowledge is not validated by schools, how can there be equitable outcomes for Māori? Therefore, parent participants felt the challenge to motivate their children to engage in their learning. Hence, it can be argued if schools took agency to expedite power-sharing, consultative and collaborative relationships, the student/whānau/school partnership can be strengthened because knowledge is shared to benefit all students.

Another example that illustrates the conflict of two cultures is children raised in different cultural settings. One parent participant described two of her/his children's education experiences: one child was brought up in a mainstream school; the other, on a marae. The child brought up in a Kura Kaupapa school with te reo Māori as the

medium of instruction, was proud to stand up and perform in hapahaka. This child also enjoyed academic success. The other child received mainstream schooling, and fitted the urban Māori mould where she/he was reluctant to show pride in being Māori, and preferred sport to *academic* achievement. The experience of this child (who fitted the urban mould) can be explained in terms of her/him struggling to form an identity in a society that rejects her/his culture (Durie, 1998).

Literature supports the view that too much is assumed about the sameness between Māori and Pākehā in a Westernised society (Durie, 1998). One can argue that Māori teenagers are in a developmental stage in human development, that is, that those entering adolescence and emerging adulthood become more absorbed with the task of forming an identity (Erikson, in Berk, 2009). But, formation of this identity is compounded when society places unequal value on the Euro-Western, and Māori cultures. Thus, parent participants explained the struggle of doing this was more difficult when Māori youth are not brought up on the marae.

One parent participant explained the added struggle of conflicting cultures. When students transition into high school, whānau seem to experience a sense of alienation. The relevance of the following discussion is for schools to understand the compounded struggle experienced by whānau of Māori students, and also for schools to critically reflect on the crucial transition of students from primary/intermediate to high school. From parent participants' assertions, it seems that the socio-cultural milieu of high school assumes independence of the child. While at primary schools whānau may have been involved in school activities such as "working bees and galas" and there was more connection with the teachers ("you are working alongside teachers"), at high school parent involvement seemed alarmingly reduced, thus disconnecting whānau and teachers ("you don't really know what goes on at high school" - Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008). Whānau acknowledge that high-school students (because of their developmental stage) do not encourage their parents' communication with the school (already posited by Buchan, 2004). However, whānau felt that the school should consider this, take agency, and provide for the step up in engaging parents, something that Constatino (2003) has strongly advocated for.

Too much of the change to a Westernised lifestyle by Māori youth has been assumed (Durie, 1998), for example, teacher participants agreed to the following statement in the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix K): “Māori students prefer adopting a non-Māori way of life.” However, teacher participants also agreed to this questionnaire statement: “Māori students demonstrate pride in being Māori” (Appendix K). The inference from teacher perceptions is that there is insufficient understanding of Māori students. Hence, this points not only to ineffective student-teacher relationships, but also to an assumption by teachers that Māori students prefer assimilating the dominant culture (O’Sullivan, 2007).

Tomlinson (in Thomas & Loxley, 2001) and more recently, Bishop (2006), have found through narratives of their research participants that pressures of the dominant culture can stifle the healthy growth of Māori teenagers. Of relevance is Durie’s (1994, in Macfarlane, 2007a) Te Whare Tapa Wha model that asserts the essential wholeness of wellbeing for human development. Therefore, there is justification for parent participants of this study commenting on the pressure on Māori students to be even more motivated to pursue their academic goals, as articulated by one parent:

with our (Māori) kids it’s not the same. They cannot do it unless they do it with someone else (whānau)...they do not want to walk the path by themselves, and they have to be quite strong (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008).

Different eras of schooling

One parent participant aptly pointed out the issue of different eras of schooling: “I’m too oldit depends on the age of the parents... We Māori are part of the old system, and there is quite a difference in that...” (Fieldnotes, April 2008). There are further implications here: one, that the old system reflected the colonial times of Māori in the Native Education System where te reo was seen to prevent academic achievement (Hunn Report, 1990, in Berryman & Glynn, 2001), and its use was thus banned in mainstream schools. Secondly, the age of parents can stultify communication with the school. Thirdly, the parent’s reference to “difference” may infer a positive perception of the school in respect of making provisions for te reo, and Māori, and whānau may perceive the school as catering for the learning needs of Māori.

5.4.3.2 School-home communication

The school report

Parent participants in this study affirmed that whānau can be regarded as an agency for improved Māori student achievement, a view held strongly by Shields et al. (2005). They also felt that there was a need for more active participation by whānau, but that the *school* should take agency (also posited by Smith, 1999), and effectively communicate with whānau. For example, while the school, whānau, and students perceived the school report as a good way of communicating academic progress, it is also noted that the mid- and year-end reports are hand-issued to students; so are school newsletters. The point here is that teacher participants were *unsure* if whānau knew about the school newsletters. Therefore, there was no guarantee of effective communication with whānau in respect of their children's academic progress. In another example, a parent commented on the uncertainty of her/his child's subject selection. It was felt that whānau relied on their children for information about the courses their children were accepted for. They acknowledged they were part of the selection process the previous year, but there was no subsequent information about their children's acceptance into the courses -

the information about the courses she's/he's doing comes from her/him. I (parent) don't get communicated that by the school. We wrote down some options last year when she/he enrolled which was months ago, and then when the term started, I couldn't remember. I did write it down, but I couldn't remember and didn't know what books to buy...Also what you chose was what you're going to get...that wasn't clear (Parent, fieldnotes, 28 April 2008).

Therefore, there is the need for schools to critically reflect on communication with whānau, and the nature of their consultative and collaborative processes. It is argued that a collective responsibility among students, whānau, and the school minimises notions of blame, and deficit thinking. Such a collective responsibility can result from the school adopting a critical critique of policy where the naturalness, or status quo is challenged (Gorski, 2007).

Parent-teacher interviews

Parent-teacher interviews on student progress were held twice a year. The initiative has advantages in respect of face to face meetings between whānau and teachers. However, parent (and student, and teacher) participants felt parent-teacher interviews

were not well attended by whānau of Māori students. Parent participants explained that interview nights may not be well attended by whānau because of “not being bothered” (Fieldnotes, April/May 2008), but that this may be the case of parents from any other culture. They felt that with many Māori students’ whānau, non-attendance was due to deep-seated negative experiences with the school as an institution. This withdrawing from the school can be explained by Grace’s (1994) view of parents withdrawing from a partnership they are not satisfied with.

Parent participants stressed the importance of the relationship between the teacher and whānau, since any chances of a sound partnership may likely to be manifested in this relationship (Bishop & Glynn, 2006). Teacher participants were uncertain of whether Māori students’ whānau understood “teachers’ way of talking”, or whether “whānau like(d) most of their children’s teachers” (Teacher Questionnaire, appendix K). Parent participants, on the other hand, wished that teachers were “less condescending” in their relationship with parents, especially with those whānau members who didn’t have a sound education, or who were not well-informed of their children’s course requirements (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

Parent participants felt they needed to feel comfortable that they could bring up issues in an atmosphere of respect and trust, and knowing that their children will be protected from any harm – an atmosphere that was acknowledged to be essential for the strengthening of the partnership among students, whānau, and the school. Many research studies, for example, by Grace (1994), and Bishop and Glynn (1999, 2004), have already proven that effective partnerships between whānau and the school are underpinned by mutually established goals such as trust, respect, and social justice.

It was felt by parent participants that reviewing the parent-teacher interviews (“to make them less stressful” – Fieldnotes, April 2008), and responding promptly to parent concerns about their children’s progress can enhance whānau communication with the school, and thus home-school partnerships.

Parent participants acknowledged the school's communication about the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) qualification through school meetings, but understanding the curriculum reforms of NCEA posed a challenge for whānau. Some parent participants expressed their feelings of guilt for not maximising their partnership relationship with the school because of confused understandings of NCEA. The researcher notes that the cultural context of NCEA is difficult enough but when Māori whānau must negotiate that context within a school system that does not recognise their cultural capital, the issue is compounded further.

Moreover, parent participants expressed their concern about NCEA in respect of it becoming synonymous with the *statistics*, that is, statistics of achievement that explain Māori *less likely* to perform as well as their non-Māori counterparts (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2007a). Parent participants' concern about NCEA and Māori student underachievement relates to another concern, that is, teacher participants were *uncertain* whether the school supported whānau in raising Māori student achievement. Teachers responded with uncertainty to the following statement in the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix K):

The school suggests to whānau of ways for improving Māori student achievement.

Māori ways of knowing: the value of education

The alienation resulting from the challenge faced by whānau was also seen in those who want to involve themselves with the school, but are shy. A parent's response is as follows:

(Whānau) lack(ed) the skills to engage them (Māori students) – to see their children excel to their maximum potential in the current education system. Our people are very shy with things like that...they rather sit in the background...that it's the school's job...they won't come forward...they won't say 'What do I have to do to make my son/daughter/niece/nephew do better?' (Parent, fieldnotes, 7 May 2008).

The reference to the "school's job" can be explained in terms of the *mana* (respect for status) whānau attach to the school to deliver its important role in education, while *whakama* (humility) can be implied in the reference to "shyness". Whakama is also closely related to *whakaiti* (to humble oneself and not put oneself forward). The importance placed on the school as an institution of learning may create situations

where whānau (as an indigenous and minority group) may be reluctant to speak up and question its practice (Macfarlane, 2007a), unless invited to do so, in which case whānau can then be *whakanui* (to make *big* of oneself). Thus, if schools have minimal knowledge of Māori ways of knowing, whānau withdrawal from the school may be misperceived in deficit terms.

One parent participant referred to the school as “a surrogate parent” (Fieldnotes, April 2008) in the context that some whānau from low socio-economic backgrounds send their children into a high decile school, and assume trust in the school to deliver a curriculum to meet their children’s needs. The parent implied that whānau may assume too much from the school, and withdraw their involvement with the school. At the same time, the parent felt that the trust whānau placed in the school is part of teachers’ professional obligation:

I feel sorry for schools...they are becoming more and more as surrogate parents and that’s totally unfair. ... (but) that trust is part of their professional values....It shouldn’t matter who, where, what it is...our (teachers’) role is to give them the opportunity...

Socio-economic background

Parent participants felt that Māori students’ socio-economic backgrounds can impact on Māori student achievement. Simon (1990) clearly expounded on the negative impact of low socio-economic backgrounds on Māori student achievement. Parent participants felt that while Māori students from high socio-economic backgrounds appear to have active whānau support in their learning, those from low socio-economic backgrounds had minimal conversations about school and learning due to parents’ long hours at work, commitment to more than one job, and the resulting pressure on older children who take on parent responsibilities, and house chores. One parent encapsulated these pressures on whānau like this:

If the parents do shift work...then they’re just not there...Dad comes home. Mum goes to cleaning or the other way around. They (whānau) don’t spend enough time (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

Parent participants commented on another concern about socio-economic backgrounds, that is, whānau who enrol their children in high socio-economic areas. The assumption in the reference to socio-economic backgrounds is that some Māori

students came from low socio-economic areas. Parents felt that while it would be a “normal” (Fieldnotes, April 2008) and convenient transition into high school for a Pākehā student from a high socio-economic area (into a high decile school), some Māori students from low socio-economic areas were burdened with the inconvenience of commuting *into* the new school-of-choice learning community. This burden (an earlier start to school, and later return home, together with the fatigue and bus-related issues) was seen to impact negatively on the time whānau from low socio-economic areas spent with their children on homework and studying. The point here is that these whānau experience *additional* struggle to be proactive in enrolling their children in reputable schools, but simultaneously face out-of-zone challenges.

Socio-economic background also has wider implications, for example, in its use in deficit theorising of Māori achievement (Pihama & Gardiner, 2005):

Within deficit theorising the home environment and family background became the focus by which to explain differences in school achievement and underachievement, providing the framework through which to categorise children’s achievement levels. The categorising of children in such a way allowed for the development of the conceptualisation of those groups of children designated as *underachievers* as being *culturally disadvantaged* or *culturally deprived* (p. 21).

In applying deficit theory then to underachievement in Māori, the home environment and Māori student’s upbringing (which implies *whānau*) are perceived in deficient terms (ibid.). One parent participant counter argues this view by referring to whānau from low socio-economic backgrounds that require *support* in their children’s learning. The inference is that irrespective of socio-economic background, whānau have academic aspirations for their children, and schools should take agency to provide the appropriate support:

Māori living in the South Auckland ...they will just send their kids to the school which has a really good environment ...if the school has a reputation of high achievers... ‘My kid will achieve’...They still care about their children’s education. They just don’t have the skills to engage them (Fieldnotes, April, 2008).

It is argued that if deficit theorising on Māori student underachievement locates whānau as *the problem*, the school can minimise its responsibility in Māori student achievement. However, education (through schools) shapes people’s lives. The school curriculum (from partnership relationships to pedagogy, and the core curriculum) is a

significant social agent that can shape students' future lives (Shields et al., 2005). One can argue if inclusive practices are endorsed, Māori student achievement becomes an agenda within a shared partnership. Therefore, this study advocates for schools to take agency, and promote forums for sharing of information among students, whānau, and teachers, to counter deficit theorising of Māori students, and their whānau.

Peer pressure

Parent participants viewed peer interactions at school as important for students' learning because they contributed to friendships, and depending on how motivated friends were to learn, they impacted on Māori students' engagement in their learning, and academic success.

Parent participants felt that negative peer pressure from Māori peers often prevented some Māori students from pursuing academic activities: "...their (whānau of Māori students) children (who were academically focussed) were peer pressured from other Māori children to fit their mould..." (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008). Negative peers were seen to negatively impact on Māori students' learning. Although parents referred to the issue of negative peers, literature points to the *process*, for example social rejection, that can bring about negative indices such as hostility, disruptiveness, and academic failure (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994; Vercoe, 1998; Langley, Ritchie, & Ritchie, 1996; Sharpe, 1998, cited in Macfarlane, 2007a).

Transitioning from intermediate to high school

While the transition of students may be an issue with all high school parents, whānau seem to experience a sense of alienation once their children transition into high school. The culture of high school appears to acknowledge the independence of the child. While at primary and intermediate schools parents/whānau may have been involved in school activities like working bees and galas and there was more connection with the teachers, at high school parent involvement seemed alarmingly reduced, thus disconnecting parents/whānau and teachers. There was acknowledgement though that high-school students would not encourage their parents' communication with the school (already posited by Buchan, 2004), but that

the school should consider this, take agency (Shields et al., 2005), and provide for the step up in engaging parents (Constatino, 2003).

5.5 Principles that underpin school practice

5.5.1 Power-sharing consultation, and collaboration

School policies on home-school *partnerships* often envisage the ideal relationships schools aim for (Beveridge, 2005). From most parent participant responses, there was an overall positive view of the school. Māori students' enrolment at the school was seen to be due to choice, to extend the interests of Māori students. (Note the case school is a well-resourced school that has a decile ranking of ten, and a reputation for meeting all students' learning needs.) However parent participants commented that while whānau were overall satisfied with the policies of the school, there were concerns about insufficient *practice* to raise Māori student achievement. For example, ineffective/insufficient communication with whānau may impact negatively on Māori students, considering whānau are crucial contributors in informing the school of their children (Webber, 1996, in Patrick, 2003).

In schools' often well-intentioned policy to effectively consult with whānau, parent participants have provided narratives of the flaw in the process of consultation. Although the principles of participation may not suit either the teacher's world view, or the parent's cultural values, *all* student's learning should to be at the centre of the teaching-learning situation (Beveridge, 2005; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). However, initiatives such as consultative hui may be *plugs in the curriculum* if they are ineffective in which case they are mechanistic tools that do not work to better educational outcomes for Māori students (Smith, 1999).

Student and parent participants raised the issue of insufficient/ineffective consultation with the Māori community. The students' comments that follow express the ineffective consultation of the school due to unproductive consultation hui:

Student 1: One of the hui we had last year, ... they (school) said things they were going to do...however, nothing happened and the second thing they said was they had all these programmes ...

Student 2: ... nothing ever happens (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

While parent participants acknowledged the benefits of a consultative hui, there was also acknowledgement of the ineffective process in respect of continuity of shared understandings. The advantage of the consultative hui is illustrated by a parent participant:

... the two hui last year...they were very important. Māori student achievement as a whole was discussed...reference to the statistics...which was disturbing. I think it must want to make them achieve...make them think about success...for improving...they must start getting it quite early, and it must follow on as they leave school. ...Just listening to other people...different opinions...if anything is going to benefit...the statistics must change...for the Pacific Island children as well...(Fieldnotes, April 2008).

The ineffective practice of the consultative hui is expressed through this narrative of another parent participant: "We are called in to do a hui...once...twice a year...we are tagged on....We didn't even have a hui this year and the first term's gone" (Fieldnotes, 27 April, 2008). While whānau acknowledged that the school made improvements by starting the initiative with the consultative hui with whānau, they felt there was no adequate positive action generated from the hui largely because of ineffective consultation and collaboration.

Minimal satisfaction (Grace, 1994) in the partnership relationship with the school can result if the school masks efforts to decide for whānau what is important for their children (Crozier, 1998, 1999, in Biddulph et al., 2003). One parent participant made reference to an unsuccessful partnership with the school because it was felt that the school management usually comprised policy decision-makers of the dominant culture, and decided for whānau:

parents struggle to communicate with the leaders of the schools who are European...(the school leaders) have all the say in what is best for these brown (Māori) kids and that's always been the problem (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

Thus, school practice based on effective consultation with whānau has not been endorsed, with the resultant distancing of whānau from the school. Taking advantage of the kanohi-kit e-kanohi (face-to-face) interview situation, the researcher shared information with parent participants on how whānau can take agency on matters of concern, for example, by whānau communicating with relevant Year Level Managers, the dean, the school Parent-Teacher Association, Board of Trustees, or the school's iwi representative.

Strengthened home-school relationships, and better communication and co-operation with the school can be desired outcomes if whānau held positive perceptions “that their children are liked and valued by teachers” (Biddulph et al., 2005, p. 2). A student participant commented on a transformed way of talking: “Make it *we* ...school, students, and whānau...” (Fieldnotes, April 2008). However, preceding discussion on the suspicion whānau may have of the school’s connectedness with Māori students, can leave whānau withdrawing from the partnership, as has been the case of some parent participants in this study. The findings of this study reveal that if there is fragmented support for Māori students’ learning because of an incomplete partnership relationship between the teacher and the student, this could very likely impact negatively on whānau communication with the school. This assumption stems from the metaphorical implications of the Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane, 2007a, p. 165) – *Ki te kore te uptake e makukungia/ E kore te rakau e tupu* (If the roots of the tree are not watered/ The tree will never grow). Thus, it is argued if teachers (authentically) value the knowledge of their Māori students, there is more likelihood of effective partnership relationships among students, whānau, and teachers.

There were concerns among some parent participants whether Māori students experienced a sense of protection within the school. It was felt that non-collaborative processes, and insufficient information prevented active participation by whānau. For example, in the case of students who are stood down, the school’s action was seen as a given, as if “it’s written in the law” for the school to ineffectively consult with whānau (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008):

The parents have to feel protected, ay. When we (Māori) want to talk about the Treaty of Waitangi ...you (school) talk about participation...you (school) talk about partnership...partnership is a collaborative process and I think a lot of our parents ...they felt unjustly treated in that collaborative process. There’s no collaborative process when these kids get stood down because it seems, it’s already written down, and it’s legal...which usually progresses to a full exclusion...eventually...or if it’s not full exclusion they get redirected into some learning centre somewhere in Manurewa. I mean for them to feel safe in that environment (school), they must feel some form of protection. I mean for a lot of them they need assistance....

According to the Guidelines on stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions (Ministry of Education, 2008e), it is noted that the stand down process includes

natural justice as part of the criteria of section 14(1) of the Education Act 1989. The section details the following information about a student's right, and also reflects on the deliberate, and collaborative three-way communication among students, whānau, and the school: The student has the right to –

- be given notice of possible outcomes (as this could help determine the nature of representation);
- know the reason for the stand-down/suspension (know the case or charge);
- know all the information (evidence) on which the principal's decision to suspend was based;
- be able to comment on/challenge that information (be heard);
- be able to correct adverse or biased material and challenge irrelevant material (defend oneself);
- have time to prepare a response to the information - therefore the information and the principal's report is to be **in the hands of the student/parent at least 48 hours before the board meeting**; and
- be represented at any meeting about the stand-down or suspension (Ministry of Education, 25 November 2008e)

The stand down/suspension process clearly provides details including negotiated consultation and collaboration. Consequently, shared understandings of information among all students, whānau, and the school can strengthen partnership relationships. It is argued that shared understanding of information contributes to effective partnerships because whānau may not only perceive that their children are *safe*, but whānau, students, and the school are equal partners in a fair process. Thus, we note the relevance of the Ministry of Education's (2007b) strategic plan to promote the learning of Māori students by forming direct links with whānau, and community providers.

Minimal acknowledgement of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, and ineffective home-school relationships have resulted in whānau questioning their consultative and collaborative partnership with the school. The inferred reference is the bicultural perspective that embraces the National Educational Goal (Ministry of Education, 2008b) regarding the school's consultation with whānau. Note that this thesis argues that consultation on its own is an insufficient criterion for effective partnerships, but that a power-sharing one can effect authentic partnerships (McLeod, 2002).

Generally, whānau were more ready to come to school personally if the concern was about a social justice issue rather than academic performance. They were keen to promptly deal with the situation. Many felt this would be possible if whānau understood fully the nature of the concern and thus would not hesitate to personally communicate with the school. Whānau response to issues of social justice can be viewed in the light of student achievement being a secondary concern in respect of the school being a socially just agency (Shields et al., 2005). The Te Kotahitanga Project Team (Bishop, 2004) may also infer that academic achievement is secondary to student engagement which was seen (ibid.) to result from an interactive discursive mode based on equity in education.

Since knowledge is not neutral, a collaborative and consultative approach among students, whānau, and teachers may make it possible for exclusive discourses to be identified, understood, (Ryan, 2007; Bishop & Glynn, 2000; Coxon et al., 2002) and transformed.

Teacher participants were in favour of a paradigm shift to restorative practices at the school by strongly agreeing to the following questionnaire item: (*Note that teacher participants have already attended professional development workshops on restorative practice.)

Adoption of a restorative justice practice approach in schools can enhance teachers' relationships with all their students (Appendix K).

There are many significant implications of teachers favouring a paradigm shift to restorative practice. Firstly, it can imply that teachers also support some of the underlying principles of restorative practice, namely, consultative, collaborative, and power-sharing partnership relationships that are built on mutually established goals such as trust, equitable outcomes, mutual respect, and open dialogue (Grace, 1994; Macfarlane, 2007a; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Secondly, there is more likelihood of a culturally-inclusive learning community underpinned in manaaki; caring and nurturing environment (Macfarlane, 2007a). Thirdly, in the process of the school community adopting restorative practice, the school becomes a site for social transformation (Shields et al., 2005; Simon, 1990). Kaupapa Māori messages of resistance and change can challenge the dominant discourse and power relations that stultify effective partnership relationships (Macfarlane, 2007a; O' Sullivan, 2007),

thus with a paradigm shift to restorative practice, the three-way (student/whānau/school) partnership can be strengthened. Fourthly, teachers, as representatives of the school, education, and society become the agents for social change; with a restorative approach that is based on social justice, the change can be assumed to be beneficial for all students. Hattie (1999) has already posited it is teachers who make that difference in students' lives only if they teach in *certain* ways.

A parent participant expressed a related idea of change; teachers need to reflect on their practice, and make a choice to change: "It is teachers we need to change ...who need to reflect (on their teaching). It's the same with the teacher (who 'can't change')...they need to make a choice...to change..." (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

5.5.2 *An inclusive curriculum*

The school was perceived by parent participants as an extension of the home, and thus perceived as another forum for whānau relationships. A parent participant's comment illustrates the perception of how a *sense of belonging*, pivotal to the notion of whānau and relationships, contributes to culturally inclusive practice:

Māori children need to have that belonging...that whānau thing...they need to believe "this is my whānau, and I will always be safe and looked after here" because that's their (Māori students') experience...they're raised that way (Fieldnotes, May 2008).

How whānau of Māori students see the school is perhaps how *all* students' parents see the school, that is, it should be culturally-safe (Macfarlane et al., 2007), and create inclusive environments of care and respect (Coxon et al., 2002; Pierce, 1994).

Inspiring educators were seen by parent participants to create flow experiences in students' learning. It was felt that teachers who had high expectations of Māori students, and who were genuine about extending Māori students' interests, were more likely to also engage students toward academic success: "I'm so impressed with his improvement in English in Year 9. It was about his/her teacher" (Fieldnotes, April 2008). Another parent participant (Fieldnotes, April, 2008) reflected on the *little* things that count, for example, the student-teacher relationship:

it's about who the educator is, ay. It doesn't really matter what culture the teacher comes from, but it does really matter who that person really is, whether they are

seen to be genuine by our kids or not, and I think it is possible for most Māori kids...they know whether the teacher is for real or not...they really do.

The notion of “connectedness” (Fieldnotes, April May 2008) resounded among parent, and student participants. It was attached to either the school or the teacher, and implied a state of genuineness, and inclusive forms of communication. In the context of the classroom, the implication was clear; the connectedness between the teacher and the student enhanced the partnership relationship. It is inferred that it is the *teacher* who can create a culturally inclusive classroom where the teacher can strive to make tasks relevant and enjoyable, and who can positively influence the relationship between teacher and student and the learning of Māori students (Hattie, 1999; Hill & Hawk, 2000). Teacher participants also acknowledged the impact teachers have in a culturally diverse classroom: “The experience of the teacher can have a positive or negative impact on students from differing cultural backgrounds” (Teacher Questionnaire, appendix K).

Thus, there is cause for concern when most teacher participants responded with *uncertainty* to these questionnaire statements (Appendix K):

Māori students’ whānau usually like most of their children’s teachers.
 Teachers understand the Māori worldview.
 Positive references to Māori people are often made either in or out of the classroom.
 Teachers include reference to positive Māori experiences in their teaching.
 Teachers understand Māori students.

It can be inferred there was no guarantee of teachers’ understanding of the culture of their Māori students. Bishop and Glynn (1999) have found insufficient understanding of the Māori world view limits teachers’ relationships with their Māori students. Furthermore, if there is teacher uncertainty of Māori students’ cultural backgrounds, there are limitations on best practice since Fitzsimmons (2003), and Civil et al. (2002) found that building on students’ prior knowledge is a significant pedagogical resource.

Literature (Voltz et al., 2001) supports the notion of confused definitions of inclusiveness when there is uncertainty of teachers of their Māori students’ cultural background. Teacher participants of this study were also uncertain of Māori students’ cultural background (and progress), while at the same time perceived teachers to

“value Māori students’ comments in the classroom”, and “use a collaborative approach to include all students” (Appendix K). One would argue there is a contradiction in teacher perceptions. The *uncertainty* of a student’s cultural background conflicts with a *collaborative* approach since the latter is underpinned in negotiated decisions, and shared understandings. Thus, there is strong evidence to support the existence of homogenous class groups where Māori students were perceived as *the same* (and, to be treated “equally” – Teacher respondent, fieldnotes, April 2008) as the collective group. Therefore, there is a confused perception of inclusiveness. Teachers may unknowingly support the way dominant policy-makers challenge cultural diversity from a mono-cultural position (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). However, while teachers may possess a confused meaning of inclusiveness, and delay professional development on teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, indigenous and minority group learners are at the receiving end: *Their* identities are damaged, and *they* suffer the humiliation of having to deny their culture by leaving it at the school gate (Macfarlane, 2007a), and then picking it up at the end of the school day, only to leave it at the gate the following day. It is argued that this cyclic conflict of cultural capital between minority and indigenous culture, and the dominant discourse can impact negatively on the holistic development of the student. This point has been clearly articulated by many education academics such as Graham Smith (1997), Linda Smith (1999), Bishop and Glynn (1999), and Macfarlane et al. (2007).

One can argue three wider implications of the school’s uncertainty of Māori students’ cultural backgrounds. One, there is minimal contact between the school and whānau. Two, the school has limited knowledge of whānau expectations of teachers, and three, one may wonder if teachers are reluctant to make positive references to Māori amidst the diversity of cultures in the classroom because of being *misperceived* as racist. If these implications generate teacher uncertainty, one can argue whether there is reluctance to critique teaching practice, or challenge the social injustice of marginalising certain groups of students. An educator is likely to adopt an *engineering task* (Ryan, 2007) of maintaining power relations, and normalising the dominant culture (Johnston & McLeod, 2001, in Patrick, 2003). This option, however, perpetuates the erosion of the classroom as an agency for discourse (Shields et al., 2005).

From the three wider implications then, it means there are limitations in the school's endorsement of inclusive practice since mutually established goals among students, whānau, and teachers are compromised (Grace, 1994; Bishop & Glynn, 1999, 2004). An inclusive curriculum also relates to subject content, and pedagogical styles. One student participant commented on the irony of teachers' reference to the textbook to inform students on how to do a hangi when there were Māori students in the class who could explain the Māori tradition. She/he felt the textbook paid "lip-service" (Student, fieldnotes, April 2008) to an important Māori tradition such as a hangi. This omits the idea that the discussion topics and modes themselves might not necessarily be conducive to Māori ways of sharing information. For example, whakama (humility) and whairiki (to humble oneself and not put oneself forward) may prevent Māori students from speaking up, and questioning the knowledge under discussion in the classroom. The cultural capital of Māori students can become ignored if teachers assume too much about Māori becoming Westernised, and with time, tikanga Māori can *dry up* (Durie, 1998). Further, the student participant felt that Māori students in the classroom could have engaged in a discussion on Māori culture but implied that they can become marginalised. What is also inferred from the student's comment on the hangi is that it is the *little* things that count toward strengthening the student-teacher partnership, for example, respect of one's culture (Relf, in Hill & Hawk, 2000).

This thesis has advocated for acknowledgement of Māori as tangata whenua, and the guiding principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of the nation, ideals, among others, that educators should aspire to. One teacher participant in this study has clearly articulated the ideal of an inclusive school where all students are different, *equitable* and valued:

When a school treats all students the same regardless of ethnicity, the richness of cultural diversity disappears and students lose their sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth' (Fieldnotes, April, 2008).

It is argued that a three-way partnership (student/whānau/school) can be strengthened if there is a partnership relationship between student and teacher. If the teacher takes agency to create a culturally appropriate learning environment, the implication is that effective whānau involvement is assumed because a culturally inclusive classroom can create an effective learning *community*. According to socio-constructivist theory

(Vygotsky, 1978), the school is a social construct. Much literature advocates for socially constructed aspects such as respect, connectedness, reciprocal relationship, care, and pedagogy that can promote co-construction of learning material, and negotiation of decisions (Alton-Lee, 2003; Grace, 1994; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Shields et al., 2005). These aspects can build on partnership relationships between students and teachers (Macfarlane, 2007a), and in turn home-school partnerships (Bull et al., 2008).

5.5.3 Pedagogy that promotes culturally-inclusive classrooms

Whānau-type learning environment

Young (1991) has clearly pointed out how teachers who value their own knowledge of pedagogical strategies *only*, can lessen a genuine partnership between the student and teacher, and home and school. Thus, if Māori students' preferred whānau-type learning is valued, it could strengthen all teacher-student relationships - something that parent participants wanted.

A culturally appropriate pedagogy can positively influence the social interactions in the classroom, and student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003). Student and parent participants preferred a "hands-on" / "whānau-type" learning approach which was associated with "problem solving", and "real life experiences" (Fieldnotes, April 2008). Such a pedagogical approach is underpinned by ako (a reciprocal teaching and learning environment where the teacher is also a learner - Macfarlane, 2007a).

Problem-solving implies high levels of thinking, derived from metacognitive and self-directed learning within the social context (Pintrich, 2000). It contributes positively to the learning of all students because of all participants being responsible for their own and others' learning (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Reluctance to participate actively in learning contexts can stifle the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies such as adaptive help seeking where students actively seek and evaluate assistance (Newman, 1998) from either the teachers or other students. Therefore, minimal use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies can minimise motivation, and reluctance to participate in learning activities, thus, a situation that can contribute to lower academic performance among Māori students (Shields et al., 2005).

Macfarlane (2007) has well expounded on the notion of whānau-type learning and its association with metaphorical language that involves higher order thinking and application. The point here is if Māori students desire hands-on, whānau-type learning, then the assumption is they are *capable* of being motivated into higher order thinking. This explanation is important in respect of the misperception that Māori may be *incapable* of higher order thinking, and *less capable* of academic achievement (note earlier references to misperceptions of statistics on Māori and non-Māori student achievement). This misperception has origins in deficit theory, and racial discourse where non-European groups of people were viewed as deficient in academic ability, and therefore *inferior* (Gorski, 2007).

However, whānau-type learning situations can minimise unequal power relations, and notions of inferiority and superiority. In a culturally diverse classroom, whānau-type pedagogy encourages ako (reciprocal learning situation). Because socially constructed realities are not necessarily of equal value, ako encourages shared understandings, and co-constructed knowledge, and all students benefit (Macfarlane, 2007a; Bevan-Brown, 2003).

Parent and student participants repeatedly referred to a whānau-type of learning situation to improve teacher-student relationships. Durie's (1998) explanation of *whānau* would be an appropriate reference here because of the notion of collaborative hui (Māori meeting) stemming from Māori communities. The collaborative nature of the whānau-type learning context is likely to promote a sense of belonging in diverse classrooms through collaborative instructional methods which were found to enhance student engagement (American Psychological Association, 1995). Further, the whānau-type learning context, similar to Newman's (1998) adaptive help seeking learning, may be more likely to bring about better educational outcomes for all students if teachers understood their students' cultural backgrounds (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 1999; Hill & Hawk, 2000; Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999). Also, Alton-Lee's (2003) best practice recommendation to teachers of scaffolding reciprocal roles either between teacher and student, or within student group work as a form of pedagogy could promote self-regulated learning (Newman, 1998). More importantly, the whānau-type of learning can promote active engagement in texts (Alton-Lee, 2003),

and co-construction of knowledge (Bevan-Brown, 2003), and the student would not have to guess the answer to a dominant culture teacher's question (Orsborn, 1995).

5.5.4 *Wider implications of te reo Māori*

The reference to te reo Māori in the Curriculum Framework draft and final documents (Ministry of Education, 2007b/2008b) is a significant factor in respect of the Treaty of Waitangi, and Māori as tangata whenua. Perceptions on te reo provide valuable insight into Māori student achievement. This section will therefore attempt to place the context of teacher and parent participants' perceptions within the context of Stephen May's (2005) analysis of New Zealand's national languages policy made public in 2005. May's (2005) argument challenges monolingualism on the premise that bilingual/bicultural beings are more a *resource* rather than the misperceived *problem* of mainstream schools:

While some politicians and policy makers continue to construct this bilingualism/multilingualism) as a language problem, this increased diversity can be seen instead as a significant language right ... (after all, monolingual English speakers presume, automatically, the right to speak their first language where, when, and to whomever they please, so why should this right be denied to other language speakers?). More broadly, we can see this increased linguistic diversity as a language resource for New Zealand; challenging our inherent monolingualism, that is, our general infelicity with languages other than English, and therefore, also, our linguistic insularity (p. 5).

Most teacher participants felt that Māori students should take te reo Māori. It can be inferred that teachers saw te reo as a way of promoting Māori culture, and/or self-determination among Māori students, and either teachers recognised this and responded accordingly, or they felt te reo Māori was a means of the school supporting Māori students, and promoting cultural inclusiveness. Most teacher participants also felt that Māori whānau wanted their children to take te reo Māori. The implication here is that teacher participants were confident of their information on whānau expectations. However, this perception is not coherent with the perceptions held by teachers on the other statements in the "Māori students and their whānau (Appendix K) section where the response was *uncertainty* of whānau expectations. This study therefore interprets teachers' perception of whānau wanting their children to take te reo, as an unfounded assumption.

Parent participants acknowledged te reo was crucial for survival of the Māori culture; they also felt te reo was a student's choice, like a student's choice to participate in kapahaka. Kaupapa Māori researchers (Smith, G., 1997; Durie, 1998; Smith, L., 1999; Shields et al., 2005) would strongly argue for the rightful place of te reo in the school curriculum to prevent drying up, or dismantling of Māori culture (Durie, 1998; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). However, they would also support the view that te reo, and Māori ways of knowing should be integrated in the whole school curriculum for *all* students' access, and not isolated within the confines of a subject for predominantly Māori students. While Bishop and Glynn (1999), and Smith (1999) hold the view that Māori can become marginalised in schools' good intentions to make provisions for minority and indigenous students, such a provision can become diluted within the school's learning community. The point here is that although schools may offer te reo as a subject, it does not necessarily mean the bicultural perspective is endorsed. For example, if English continues to be the dominant language in terms of it being valued at the expense of other languages such as te reo, students who are *other* language speakers, together with their families and whānau can become alienated from the mainstream education system (Bishop & Glynn, 2004).

May (2005) strongly argues support of a bilingual/bicultural education. The relevance for this study is the need for shared understandings on the significant place of te reo in mainstream schools. Besides Māori being tangata whenua, and te reo acknowledged as a national language of New Zealand, the literature (May, 2005, p. 6) points to cognitive, and social advantages of a bilingual/bicultural education, for example, success in acquiring academic English, divergent thinking, and social sensitivity. An excerpt from May's (ibid.) research can be accessed from Appendix N.

The researcher takes cognisance of an oversight in this research project not to make explicit reference to te reo in mainstream schooling. Parent participants, unlike the way most teachers felt, were partially satisfied with te reo *only* offered to promote cultural identity, and all-round academic engagement. They provided these alternatives to the primary focus on te reo as a subject:

1. Schools should have a "proactive stance" (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008) to recruit Māori staff, and also encourage Māori students to be

proactive and take up opportunities for scholarships to pursue fields in teaching – (the school) “encouraging more students into the field of education ...to become teachers” (Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008). The understanding here was that schools required the visible presence of Māori in educational institutions, or in leadership positions. This can be interpreted as schools providing positive Māori role models to enhance the perception that Māori viewed education positively which was likely to positively impact on Māori students’ learning, and academic success.

2. If Māori student achievement initiatives were *actively* promoted, there can be more support from whānau to engage in their children’s learning. This could be interpreted thus: if schools took agency through deliberate collaboration, a scaffolding dialogue with whānau can be enhanced (Alton-Lee, 2003; Fitzsimmons, 2003; Ministry of Education, Statement of Intent, 2006). Parent participants saw Māori student initiatives to be expedited in a dialogic medium between whānau and the school through the te reo Māori Head of Department. This is how one parent participant (Fieldnotes, April 2008) expressed herself/himself about a school’s te reo/Māori representative:

(to) advocate for things Māori...and I don’t mean just for them (students) to perform kapahaka...(but, to ensure) that things Māori would be well into the context of the school...because that’s why (she/he is) there.

3. Māori initiative policies were seen by parent participants as sound driving forces to raise Māori student achievement, but clearly there was a call by whānau for the school to take agency (“the school has to take on the lead” – Parent, fieldnotes, April 2008), to implement policies. The Ministry of Education’s Ka Hikitia: Strategic Plan (2008) was viewed by one parent as a positive implementation tool with “its common knowledge”, that Māori students *are* capable of academic success (Fieldnotes, April 2008), to raise Māori student achievement:

Parent: They (the school) got to be proactive in their recruitment of Māori staff within their system.

Researcher: So, how can that improve the academic performance levels of Māori students?

Parent: I mean the school itself should be targeting people like Billy (pseudonym) and given the current situation of Māori students to learn within their cultural context ...you know you need to look at the laws of Ka Hikitia ...the new New Zealand Ministry report to see that maybe they need to look at ...its common knowledge...

4. Further, parent participants saw te reo Māori in *practice* through the school advocating for things Māori, for example, the powhiri, hui, marae (Māori meeting house). It was felt that when the school makes that initial contact through powhiri at the start of the year with whānau, it was also seen to play a significant part in embracing, and welcoming whānau, and showing them (whānau) that the school acknowledges their important role. Subsequent frequent hui were also seen to strengthen whānau's engagement with the school because whānau were now seen to be *connected* with the school. The marae was seen to provide additional support to whānau; for Māori students to remain at school and achieve to their maximum academic potential. Conversely, the absence of a marae in the school community was seen to reduce whānau influence on Māori students' engagement.

Therefore, whānau see it as a *given* that te reo is vital for fostering cultural survival, as would be vehemently supported by Durie (1998), but felt that te reo is not an end in itself. It is argued that if te reo was made compulsory for all students at a junior level in mainstream schools, schools may be required to recruit Māori staff. Note that recruitment of Māori staff was strongly suggested by some parent participants. It is also argued that there are positive implications of more Māori (and minority group) teachers in schools. The positive implications are:

1. Māori students can identify with Māori in professional / leadership roles, and there is a greater likelihood of Māori students' efficacy of education. Eubanks and Weaver (1999) conclude in their study that minority group teachers are "an agency for providing the diverse populace with a sense of belonging...and who can be role models to demonstrate the efficacy of education and achievement" (p. 452).

2. The greater likelihood of indigenous and minority group teachers to provide culturally inclusive classrooms: Bascia et al., (1996) have found that minority group teachers work with “children not as generic individuals but in terms of their membership in families, communities, and cultures” (p. 155).

From the implications of minority group teachers in mainstream schools discussed above, it is contended that minority and indigenous group teachers are more likely to form effective partnership relationships with their students in culturally diverse classrooms.

Thus, teachers’ assumption that Māori students taking te reo can improve Māori student identity, and therefore, academic success reflects partial understanding of Māori student achievement, but could be an area for further study. However, teacher participants saw the need for teachers to reposition themselves from a dominant discourse, and strongly favoured professional development programmes on Māori student achievement. This anticipated enhanced understanding of Māori ways of knowing can be significant in building partnership relationships between the home and school (Jahnke & Taiapa, 1999; Bishop & Glynn, 2003; Bull et al., 2008).

Closely related to students’ views on the relevance and explanation of subject content, parents stressed how crucial it was for the unbiased teaching of subjects such as Geography and History to Māori and non-Māori students especially after the Year 9 level, for students to develop a perceptive understanding of Māori in New Zealand. This view held by parents concurs with literature (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Alton-Lee, 2003) that infers a biased curriculum can alienate or marginalise minority and/ or indigenous group students.

5.5.5 Biculturalism versus multiculturalism

The three-way partnership (student/whānau/school) can be understood in respect of schools’ reform initiatives to include the bicultural perspective in the curriculum (Berryman & Glynn, 2001). The following discussion illustrates that Māori students,

whānau, and teachers hold differing perceptions around the meaning, and practice of the bicultural perspective principle.

Student participants narrated examples of the practice of the bicultural perspective through their reference to Māori perceived as *different* to other cultures. However, while practice of the bicultural perspective is noted, a deficit theoretical view is adopted to explain the notion of difference. For example, students referred to teachers' classroom discussion of the benevolent role of the British who colonised the Māori, thereby reinforcing the superiority of one group of people over another.

Parent participants inferred their understanding of the bicultural perspective by comparing it with multiculturalism. They acknowledged the school's good intentions to cater for the needs of diverse cultures, but also saw the need for schools to acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua, and not to marginalise Māori students. Teacher participants perceived the school to actively practise the bicultural perspective, but also felt they required professional development on the subject. The inference is that teachers may be unsure of their understanding, and felt appropriate professional development can enhance their understanding, and practice.

Good research practice may point to report discussion on the majority view. However, the researcher has taken into consideration that because the large majority of the teachers at the school belong to the dominant culture group, the sample population may also be representative of the dominant culture group view. Thus, because this research project is underpinned by emancipatory goals, and adjudicates for equity in education, and the importance of the *minority* view, the minority viewpoint held by teachers is also discussed. The assumption is that the majority view does not necessarily imply the *correct* view.

5.5.5.1 Teachers' perceptions

Teacher participants' response to this Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix K) statement is analysed:

The bicultural perspective is generated from the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi rather than just a teacher performance criterion.

Most teacher participants agreed that the school's policy of a bicultural curriculum has been generated from obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi rather than merely from the tick-box criterion of the teacher's professional standard of the teachers' performance in respect of Te Reo me ona Tikanga (Ministry of Education, 1999) - the need to embrace the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, adopt Māori protocols, and work effectively in the socially and diverse classroom (Patrick, 2003).

The inference is that teachers understood the bicultural perspective policy stemming from the Treaty of Waitangi

as central to, and symbolic of, our national heritage, identity, and future.....a document that protects Māori learners' rights to achieve true citizenship through gaining a range of vital skills and knowledge, as well as protecting te reo Māori as a taonga (Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 3).

The teachers' awareness of the policy regarding the bicultural curriculum stemming from the Treaty could also have been because of their awareness of the National Education Goal (Ministry of Education, 2008b) regarding the school's consultation with whānau in respect of improving the achievement of Māori students. Teacher participants also generally agreed that the school's curriculum *actively* supported the bicultural perspective, but this perception appears to conflict with their strong agreement for professional development on the Treaty of Waitangi, and Māori ways of knowing so as to better understand Māori achievement. This can be interpreted as teachers' uncertainty of their understanding of the bicultural perspective. Therefore, the views of some teachers who disagreed that the bicultural perspective was integrated into the curriculum will also be considered in this discussion. The premise is that these comments can point to possible misunderstandings around the bicultural perspective.

Two teachers provided evidence of integrating the bicultural perspective, with a teacher commenting that the subject Art offered "Study of Māori Art and artists – from Years 9 -13", and that many school-community programmes on Māori art were set up to extend students' interests (Fieldnotes, April 2008). The bicultural perspective is viewed in terms of the arts only here, and it can be questioned what about the placing and value of, for example, Māori science and Māori technology.

This LADSS (Language, Arts, Dance, Singing, and Social Studies) approach is regarded as a limited approach to Māori education (McLeod & Johnston, 2001).

Another teacher responded to the questionnaire item on the bicultural perspective, by honing in on the equity issue, and notion of personalising learning: “Any good teacher would allow for differentiation despite race, religion, or creed. They should take into account student learning needs” (Fieldnotes, April 2008).

The implication from the above teacher responses and assumptions is that there is teacher awareness of the teacher performance criterion on the Treaty of Waitangi, and the bicultural perspective. However, while teachers generally felt that the school curriculum actively supported the bicultural perspective, they also felt that they were not well-supported with professional development programmes in respect of the Treaty of Waitangi, and bicultural perspective.

A few teacher participants strongly disagreed that teachers usually supported the bicultural perspective because of an obligation to the Treaty of Waitangi. These teachers felt the bicultural perspective of the curriculum was essentially an obligation to a teacher performance criterion. One teacher (Fieldnotes, April, 2008) commented thus: “I have noticed teachers regard the biculturalism requirement of the curriculum as a box to tick off – a very tokenistic approach.”

These teachers also concurrently strongly disagreed that the school’s curriculum actively supported the bicultural perspective. Contrary to the implication of the majority view, the implication here (with the few teachers) is that the school’s implementation of the bicultural curriculum policy was insufficient.

The multi-faceted implications of teacher participants’ views on the bicultural perspective for student/whānau/school partnerships then are as follows: Firstly, as a Ministry of Education requirement, the bicultural perspective intended to ensure the practice of Te Reo me ona Tikanga (Ministry of Education, 1999). For teachers to work effectively (as per explanation of the teacher performance criterion - *Chapter two*) in a diverse classroom, teachers would also be required to acknowledge whānau as an agency for improved Māori student achievement (Biddulph et al., 2003;

Alton-Lee, 2003; Macfarlane, 2007a; Bishop & Glynn, 2004). While teachers acknowledged the policy, it is clear they were unsure of its implications in practice as most teachers felt more professional development training on Māori student achievement was needed. It can be inferred that while the bicultural perspective was included in school policy, it was not sufficiently reflected in practice. Thus, there is a need for teachers to reflect on teaching practice (Patrick, 2003; Alton-Lee, 2003). Through this research study, teacher participants perhaps became more aware of the need for professional development programmes on the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi, and bicultural perspective. It also infers that they were not aware of Treaty of Waitangi issues yet have responded to questionnaire statements on it.

Secondly, it is noted that the bicultural perspective has been an insufficient educational reform to address the issue of Māori student underachievement (Spoonley, 1993; Ramsay, 1972, cited in Berryman & Glynn, 2001). While the bicultural perspective, and hence the implied Māori-Pākehā partnership, was initially a response to one of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, deficit theorising of Māori continued (Bishop & Glynn, 2004) with negative stereotyping on Māori knowledge and culture (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974, cited in Berryman & Glynn, 2001; Macfarlane, 2007). Thus, it is argued that while the bicultural perspective exists in the written documents of school policies, schools' delivery of an equitable education is flawed because of the minimal provisions for whānau involvement. Note that none of the teacher participants (who provided additional comments on the questionnaire item on the bicultural perspective) referred to whānau.

Thirdly, literature (Shields et al., 2005; Durie, 1998; Smith, 1999; McLeod, 2002) has consistently advocated for schools serving the role of agency for social change, and discouraged partial intervention within school communities to overcome asymmetry in social relations (Simon, 1990; O'Sullivan, 2007). The implication for this study is if schools adhered to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in practice there may be more opportunities (for example, through a power-sharing partnership with whānau) for an equitable education for Māori students. However, the researcher has taken cognisance that even when schools claim to put policy into practice, assessing the *extent* of the practice is not straightforward because of the hidden curriculum that

includes student-teacher and teacher-parent relationships, and the social dynamics of the classroom have yet to be sufficiently addressed.

Fourthly, the term biculturalism in the current year may more likely be used to affirm the partnership between the Māori community and the school by a reminder that Māori is *tangata whenua*, but at the same time also acknowledging equity in opportunities of all students. The resulting notion of multiculturalism could easily and unjustifiably be used to perpetuate the *one size fits all* notion through assimilation of the knowledge of the dominant discourse. The notion of multiculturalism was perceived by some teacher participants as treating all students *equally*, but Durie (1998, 2003) and O'Sullivan (2007) would agree that this perception of Māori being *the same* is flawed. The New Zealand education system may be viewed as set up for non-Māori to excel academically, and socially, while dismantling Māori (Durie, 1998), and creating patterns of asymmetry in society (O'Sullivan). Durie's (ibid.) explanation of multiculturalism embracing the notion of equity for cultures to co-exist, and the acknowledgement of Māori as *tangata whenua*, would more likely encapsulate parent participants' view. Justification should be accepted for its use in acknowledgement of the diversity of cultures, *plus* the latter's *differences* noted in terms of equity in educational opportunities.

Durie (2003) affirms the multicultural composition of New Zealand society as follows: "All cultural groups have a right to co-exist and to flourish, and all need to acknowledge the special place of Māori as the indigenous people of New Zealand" (p. 2). Durie's (ibid.) explanation of the diverse New Zealand society, however, may not be easily understood, as has been the case in this study where most teachers agreed that professional development on the Treaty of Waitangi, the bicultural perspective, and Māori ways of knowing can improve their relationship with Māori students.

The above findings and discussion may reveal the divide among teachers on the understanding and practice of biculturalism, a notion derived from the Treaty of Waitangi, and referred to in school policy documents. One teacher articulated another view of biculturalism, which proves my point of the diverse perceptions of biculturalism, and support for appropriate teacher professional development:

I would contend a bicultural perspective is not an obligation forced by a Treaty or appraisal process but from one's own personal and behavioural beliefs and experiences (Fieldnotes, April, 2008).

Therefore, there is merit in education academics (Bishop & Glynn, 2004; Macfarlane, 2007a) calling for educators to reflect on their practice. Minimal understanding of biculturalism (and multiculturalism) can give rise to misperceptions about teachers' expectations of Māori students, and their whānau. Considering the uncertainty among teacher participants of Māori students' academic progress, and whānau expectations of their children, Bishop and Glynn (1999) would agree that it can contribute to teachers being more likely to perceive their Māori students as having low academic aspirations.

5.5.5.2 *Whānau perceptions*

Parent participants provided detailed accounts of biculturalism by making comparisons with multiculturalism (with both notions regarded as *obstacles* to Māori student achievement – Berryman & Glynn, 2001). Parent participants continuously referred to “all students” in their discussions pertaining to engagement of students in their learning (Fieldnotes, April/May 2008). They felt strongly opposed to the perception of Māori children needing *preferential* treatment at school, while at the same time strongly desiring that Māori students be acknowledged, and listened to in power-sharing partnerships with their teachers. The point inferred here is that preferential treatment is not necessarily *different* treatment especially that *preferential* has connotations for the *preferred* dominant discourse in mainstream classrooms. Parent participants instead desired different, but *fair* treatment of Māori students.

O'Sullivan (2007) holds the view that biculturalism may be considered one step towards Māori autonomy, and self-determination, but it locates Māori as the junior partner, and as a cultural guide. Multiculturalism on the other hand, may be viewed positively, but one parent responded aptly, as continuously made overt by researchers using a Kaupapa Māori approach such as Macfarlane (2007a), Jahnke and Taipapa (1999), Bishop and Glynn (2004), and McLeod (2002), by referring to Māori as tangata whenua (indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand), and non-Māori as manuhiri (visitors to Aotearoa/New Zealand). One parent articulated this point by

explaining how manuhiri could not whakapapa to the land, and that was the reason for them to continue to remain and to be accepted as manuhiri, but not at the expense of Māori students who are tangata whenua.

As noted in an earlier discussion, parent participants expressed a concern that at times Māori students' needs are silenced in *one size fits all* school contexts. While generally this was the perception among whānau, teacher participants perceived the school as offering an inclusive curriculum catering for the diversity of cultures in the classroom. Some parent participants felt that immigrant students were manuhiri (visitors to Aotearoa/new Zealand) and deserved attention, but they (whānau) hold the view (proven through studies by Berryman & Glynn, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Macfarlane, 2007a) that in teachers' quests to create culturally-safe environments, the indigenous Māori students are marginalised. The significance is that if Māori students are marginalised, then the school's delivery of policy is in contradiction to the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008b, p. 9) which states that the curriculum is non-discriminatory:

The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students' identities, languages, abilities, and talents are recognised and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed.

Parent participants also viewed manuhiri to New Zealand (immigrants creating the multicultural society) as a *supportive agency* because they (manuhiri) were not "tainted by...the colonial stuff (referring to prejudiced negative perceptions of Māori)" - (Parent participant, fieldnotes, 5 May 2008). But, literature has shown that immigrant teachers as a supportive agency cannot be assumed. While Eubanks and Weaver (1999) found minority group immigrant teachers to be an agency for improved self-efficacy in minority and indigenous group students, Reid (in Patrick, 2003) points out that immigrant teachers may assimilate the dominant discourse.

Thus, a critique of school practice is essential, and this process requires the unequivocal partnership of students, whānau, and teachers based on the principles of power-sharing consultation, and collaboration.

5.5.6 Professional development

5.5.6.1 Repositioning from a dominant discourse frame

This study has argued, and supported the work of Bishop and Glynn (1999), that if there was a favourable repositioning of teachers from a dominant cultural frame, there can be more likelihood of an effective partnership relationship between student and teacher. Through this study, it was found that there was awareness by teacher participants of the need for a repositioning of teachers from a dominant cultural frame when they agreed that Māori student underachievement is not just a Māori people's issue, but all teachers' issue as well. They felt that schools should actively address concerns about Māori student underachievement.

When Bishop and Berryman (2006) advocate for a repositioning of educators, they make clear reference to those educators who place blame elsewhere, for example, whānau, (Patrick, 2003), and do not also take responsibility for the outcomes of Māori student underachievement. Teacher participants in this study did not blame whānau, but were nonetheless uncertain about whānau participation in the education of Māori students. Teacher uncertainty has been explained in an earlier discussion as a limitation because whānau *are* important educational resources for Māori student achievement.

However, teacher participants acknowledged their ownership of Māori student underachievement by generally agreeing that it is all teachers' responsibility as well. Therefore, it can be inferred that teachers are aware of one of the aims in teaching - to afford "Māori students quality educational opportunities" (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 275). The inference here though is that there is only an awareness; an empathetic approach to Māori student achievement which is insufficient to contribute to better educational outcomes for Māori students. This study is underpinned in critical, socio-constructivist, and Kaupapa Māori theories, and would not only motivate for advocacy, but also for an overt repositioning from a dominant cultural frame. Thus, schools should adopt critical pedagogy through power-sharing partnerships among students, teachers, and whānau to overtly reflect on practice.

5.5.6.2 Teachers' needs

Teachers' perceptions on the following selected list of questionnaire items (Appendix K) intended to firstly, critically examine factors that influence Māori student-teacher partnerships, and secondly, to identify teacher needs to strengthen student-teacher partnerships: There was agreement with these statements from most participants:

Academic expectations are high for all students and not subverted by social norms.

Teachers respect all students, irrespective of cultural background.

Teachers use a collaborative approach to include all students.

The experience of the teacher can have a positive or negative impact on students from differing cultural backgrounds.

All teachers should take ownership of the concern around Māori student achievement.

The implications are: Teachers are aware of their important role as educators of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and that they intend to provide a culturally inclusive classroom learning environment for all students. However, there was an uncertainty in respect of these statements:

Positive references to Māori people are often made either in or out of the classroom.

Teachers include reference to positive Māori experiences in their teaching.

Teachers understand Māori students.

Immigrant teachers understand the Māori worldview.

The implication is teachers assume that they create culturally inclusive classrooms since, for example, they are uncertain about teachers' understanding of Māori students, and whether immigrant teachers have sufficient knowledge of tikanga Māori. A wider implication is teachers may have confused perceptions of *diversity*, and *inclusiveness*, and while they intend not to use the *one size fits all* approach, they may have in fact done so in practice. This point has been discussed in detail in an earlier section that revealed the confused perception of inclusiveness when a teacher participant (with good intentions) referred to treating all students "equally" (Fieldnotes, April 2008). The relevance of this confused perception then is schools cannot assume to endorse an inclusive curriculum, and thus there is a need for shared understandings.

A further list of Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix K) statements revealed areas for critical reflection. The responses were collated from the "Unsure" and "Disagree"

columns, but were collectively considered as issues for review in respect of promoting student-teacher partnerships:

- Teachers take an active interest in the progress of Māori students.
- Māori students feel a sense of pride towards their school.
- Teachers use Māori words in the classroom.

Teacher participants have expressed their agreement to these questionnaire statements:

- Teachers are aware that understanding the Māori worldview could enhance their teaching of Māori students.
- Adoption of a restorative justice practice approach in schools can enhance teachers' relationships with all their students.

The inferences are clear – there is a teacher need for greater understanding of tikanga Māori because teachers feel it can improve teaching practice in respect of effective teaching in classrooms with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Further, a restorative practice approach can promote shared understandings because the process promotes effective consultation and collaboration (Macfarlane, 2007a).

Two important teacher perceptions that refer directly to Māori student achievement, and teachers' needs have been elicited in these questionnaire statements:

- Māori students are making good progress with their academic performance.
- Teachers are well supported with professional development with regard to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural perspective.

Firstly, there was uncertainty about Māori student academic progress, and secondly, teachers were not well-supported with professional development on tikanga Māori. Therefore, there is a need for teachers to reflect on their practice. School policy should include effective school wide professional development programmes for shared understandings on tikanga Māori, and concomitantly, an inclusive curriculum. The teacher participants' overwhelming call for professional development on the Māori world view, and Māori student achievement concurs with evidence from literature about professional development aiming for teachers to redefine their roles according to the social and culturally diverse contexts they find themselves in (McClaughlin, 1997; Townsend & Bates, 2007).

Programmes on student-teacher relationships were found to enrich secondary school teachers' experiences, enhance all students' involvement in the classroom, and

change how teachers perceived their students (Bishop & Berryman, 2002; Bishop et al., 2002, in Patrick, 2003; Murrow et al., 2007).

Critical to this study is that it does not assume that professional development programmes include only teacher participants. Shared understandings mean effectively consulting, and collaborating with students, and whānau. So, while the professional development is *for teachers* (because it is teachers that count – Hattie, 1999), there should be transparent, power-sharing, and ongoing dialogue among students, whānau, and the school.

Summary of Chapter Five

The chapter intended to illustrate that the issue pertaining to Māori student achievement is, as pointed out in the introduction, just scratching the surface of the New Zealand education system. The multi-faceted underlying areas draw attention to the significance of an inclusive education, based on the power-sharing, consultation, and collaboration principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, in providing equitable opportunities for all students to maximise learning potential. The chapter points out that an exclusive discourse is a challenge and obstacle to the learning of minority and indigenous group students. The domino effect is marginalisation of these students, and alienation from the education system (Bishop & Glynn, 2004). Besides such alienation arising from weakened student-teacher partnerships because of an exclusive discourse, whānau are also faced with an obstacle – that of bringing up a Māori child who exists largely within a Euro-centric classroom and society. It is consistent with all participants that there needs to be an urgent sharing of information to alleviate misperceptions, and genuinely place the Māori student's learning in the centre to enhance engagement in learning, and more likelihood of academic success. This chapter also pointed out the interrelatedness of the three participants in the three-way partnership, and thus called for attention of student *and* whānau participation in teacher professional development programmes.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study based on the qualitative data collected in one secondary school has argued that three-way partnerships (students/whānau/school) should be *strengthened* to raise Māori student achievement. A tolerance for the diversity of cultures in New Zealand mainstream classrooms, and an empathetic approach to education are limited attempts to bring about better educational outcomes for Māori students. Therefore, the rationale of the student/whānau/school partnership has to be more than partners *working together*; instead, a socio-political rationale based on equity and social justice can strengthen partnership relationships (Timperley & Robinson, in Smith, 1999).

Many factors were found through this study to pose a challenge to effective student/whānau/school partnership relationships, and subsequently Māori student achievement.

- Deficit theorising of Māori and education.
- Normalisation of a Euro-centric world view.
- Culturally conflicting perceptions held by teachers, students, and whānau.
- Mainstream classrooms that are not culturally inclusive.
- Māori knowledge not validated across the school curriculum because of ineffective implementation of policies based on a bicultural perspective.
- Insufficient professional development for teachers on tikanga Māori.
- Unequal power-relations between student and teacher, and whānau and school.

The researcher has advocated for a partnership rationale based on equal power relations. This in keeping with Ryan (2007), and Bishop and Glynn (2004) all of whom argue that there has to be a transformation of exclusive discourses to bring about equitable educational outcomes for Māori students. Validation of Māori knowledge is a significant contributing factor to enhanced partnership relationships. When Māori knowledge is not validated through school curricula, there is more likelihood that Māori students and their whānau are alienated from the education

system. Normalisation of the dominant discourse causes culturally conflicting relationships among students, whānau, and the school. Therefore, shared understandings of information through power-sharing consultation and collaboration are crucial to enhance partnership relationships. Furthermore, this thesis continues the assertion of Shields et al. (2005) to strongly recommend for the school to take agency to strengthen the student/whānau/school partnership relationship.

The phenomenological approach in this case study has revealed an overall misinterpretation of perceptions of the school of its Māori students' whānau, and perceptions of whānau of their children's teachers. Teachers' minimal knowledge of Māori students' cultural background has been interpreted as a significant obstacle to Māori student achievement. The school's perception of Māori student achievement appears to cease within the school, that is, that Māori student achievement is an end in itself. The gestalt of the lived experiences of Māori appears to be unknown to teachers. Evidence from the parent, and student interviews, and teacher questionnaire illustrates that the school and whānau have differing perceptions of the lived experiences of Māori. A summary of teachers' perceptions reveals that while teachers have good intentions to deliver an inclusive curriculum, this is not evident in practice because the school does not place appropriate emphasis on getting to know the aspirations and experiences, and worldview of Māori students. This then has an impact into whether or not Māori students engage in their learning, and as a result achieve or not.

The findings from the teacher questionnaire reflect teachers' limited information of Māori student progress, and achievement. Insufficient power-sharing consultation and collaboration among the relevant stakeholders have contributed to a wide range of differing perceptions of Māori students and their community on one hand, and teachers, on the other. Generally, teachers felt both Māori students and their parents and whānau do not value formal education. Teachers also felt there is minimal contact with Māori whānau by the school, and that teachers possess insufficient knowledge of the Māori world view, thus, their desire for professional development on Māori student achievement. Contrary to most teachers' perceptions, whānau value education, but because of partnerships that did not endorse power-sharing

consultation and collaboration, many perceive the school not to have an open and welcoming approach.

While teachers intend to provide an inclusive curriculum based on best practice (for example, through quality teaching, and restorative practices), Māori students and whānau perception of the school continues to be understood from a consensus, and conflict theorist's frame of reference – that the school functions as transmitting a dominant culture with a mono-cultural society in mind (Ghosh, in Craft, 1996). Thus, while schools may intend to provide best educational opportunities for all their students, the *one size fits all* approach frames educational opportunities in a particular way, and “schools then become a filter” (J. M. McLeod, personal communication, 24 December 2008).

It may seem that the *one size fits all* notion is unintentionally perpetuated through the school's curriculum that aims to put into practice personalising learning, and differentiated education initiatives. These initiatives are limited by technocratic attempts to raise Māori student achievement. In this tradition for educational reform, schools may adopt a “museum approach to exotic cultures” (Ghosh, in Craft, 1996, p. 18) by including curriculum initiatives as plugs in the curriculum (Smith, 1999). It means that it is insufficient for schools to merely possess policies based on the bicultural perspective; these policies have to be endorsed in practice. The implication here is that curriculum reform should reflect critical pedagogical approaches to challenge the status quo of the dominant discourse (Gorski, 2007).

The narrative accounts in Bishop and Berryman's (2007) *Culture Speaks* is evidence that calls for the curriculum to be culturally responsive. Teachers may acknowledge the multicultural nature of schools, and claim to use inclusive practices, but the actual practice is flawed if there is minimal knowledge of Māori ways of knowing, or if knowledge is not co-constructed in the classroom (Bevan-Brown, 2003). Since engagement in one's learning may be a good indicator of students placing importance in academic achievement, learning strategies that promote cognitive and metacognitive learning have to be practised to become natural. Therefore, non-inclusive environments can restrict crucial learning for academic success, and

promote stereotypical labelling of Māori as trouble-makers (Parents/students, fieldnotes, April 2008).

With more professional development on the Māori world view, there can be more clarity on Māori culture, and the bicultural perspective referred to in the Te Reo me ona Tikanga dimension in the Professional Standards for teachers: Criteria For Quality Teaching (Ministry of Education, July 1999), and the new Education Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008b) document. A shared understanding in the school setting is required of *inclusive*, *bicultural*, and *multicultural* as these words dropped in incorrect contexts can create misinterpretations, misperceptions, and pathologising practices. It is concluded that mere rhetoric to the policy of a bicultural perspective can prevent culturally inclusive classrooms, and neglect a vital learning need of Māori students. It is noted that a discourse of community within schools should foster a community of valuing difference (Shields et al., 2005).

Further, it is insufficient to assume beginner teachers start their teaching careers *having learnt all about it* (that is, teaching in diverse classrooms) at teacher training courses. Patrick (2003) has pointed this out well enough not to assume this since she found a multicultural unit was only an elective subject in the New Zealand teacher training course. It should not also be assumed that all teachers know of culturally inclusive pedagogical practices, since the influx of immigrant teachers in mainstream New Zealand schools is on the increase (Patrick, 2003). Therefore, suitable professional development on teaching in diverse classrooms, and particularly noting that Māori is tangata whenua, is crucial for all students' learning.

In looking ahead, Māori achievement/underachievement is a double-barrelled issue in New Zealand schools. Higher academic performance does not necessarily rectify the inequalities of the dominant discourse. How does indoctrination of inequity through the *one size fits all* notion transform an unjust society? Academic success may be the answer, but not over cultural wellbeing, especially that academic success may imply assimilation of the knowledge of the dominant culture, and the class structure of society (Simon, 1990). Thus, critical pedagogy, and Kaupapa Māori metaphors such as manaaki (caring and nurturing environment), and whānau, embraced in the Hikairo

Rationale (Macfarlane, 2007a), can positively contribute to an inclusive curriculum, and strengthened partnership relationships among all students, teachers, and whānau.

The deep-seated cyclical nature of deficit theorising of Māori has clearly been explained by Tomlinson (in Thomas & Loxley, 2001) where the inference is as follows: lower socio-economic backgrounds can be an obstacle to Māori student achievement producing academic interruptions, underachievement, lower qualified individuals, lower paid jobs, and lower social status. If this sociotype is perpetuated, there may be a necessary cause for concern in *how motivated Māori students are* to live and work in a democratic society but without equitable opportunities.

This study has found that the many positive experiences of Māori children's active engagement in their learning in Kura Kaupapa schools have given Māori students a cultural edge where the child is likely to inculcate pride in being Māori, and thus there is an expectation for smoother further academic learning pursuits. However, the smooth transition from Kura Kaupapa to mainstream schooling cannot be assumed because students of this study have experienced a sense of alienation in classrooms that were not culturally inclusive. The additional minimal consultation and collaboration with whānau by the school widens the gap between school and home, and concurrently between Māori and non-Māori student achievement.

Shared responsibility for Māori student underachievement by whānau and the school is one step to strengthening the three-way partnership among students, whānau, and teachers. Since there is the claim that restorative practices can promote effective consultation and collaboration (Macfarlane, 2007a), they have implications for schools taking cognisance of the five power and control issues reflected in Kaupapa Māori theory: representation, legitimation, accountability, initiation, and benefits (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Underpinning such a process is 'tika' (that which is fair and just – Durie, 1998). Thus, assuming schools adopt restorative practices, the resulting inclusive curriculum can strengthen student/whānau/school partnership relationships, and enhance Māori student achievement.

Further, a school's open and sharing approach can strengthen the partnership between the school and home, if such an approach is underpinned by mutually established

goals such as respect, social justice, and equity (Grace, 1994; Bishop, 2004). The strengthened home-school partnership can in turn enhance the understanding of perceptions held by teachers, and whānau and the Māori community. A thorough understanding of the Māori world view can boost teachers' confidence in preparing for culturally inclusive classrooms, and not *one culture fits all* contexts, but teaching and learning contexts for all students to celebrate their differences and uniqueness. Even the word *differences* may have to be understood thoroughly; it does not mean the creation of less or more important individuals, but instead a range of unique cultures that cannot and should not assimilate the dominant culture's ideology. Celebrating differences of cultures (besides implying that one size *cannot* fit all), can make students value themselves more, have high expectations of themselves, enhance their self-efficacy and motivation to learn, and keep Māori students engaged in their learning. It is therefore strongly argued that when home-school partnerships are strengthened, conflicting views around the issue of Māori student learning can be minimised, and a caring and nurturing (Macfarlane, 2007a) educational context can be realised for better educational outcomes.

The strengthening of the home-school partnership can have further positive repercussions, namely, Māori students may become more motivated to pursue a tertiary education, in the understanding that Māori *are capable* of success in further education. Not all Māori students may appropriately verbalise the emotional harm of negative indices, neither should they have to because the school should take agency to advocate for equitable opportunities for all students, and particularly for an enhanced Māori (as tangata whenua) student support network (as indicated generally by teacher participants of this study). What motivates Māori students to further their academic study would be an area of particular interest, but from the findings of this research study, I argue that a strengthened, power-sharing home-school partnership can promote Māori wellbeing and success, in the spheres of school, further education, and the wider community.

Without schools' active communication channels (through welcoming and safe environments for whānau to express their views) it has caused much invisible conflict between the school and whānau, and Māori students and their teachers, and emotional harm to the well-being of all stakeholders because of differing perceptions about

Māori and education. Whānau in this research study have adopted a futuristic perspective (noting that in order to go into the future, one has to go into the past – fieldnotes, November 2008). They were keen to look to their children’s education now, and how it would empower Māori through equal power-sharing opportunities in the wider community.

Thus, through this research report, the stakeholders in Māori students’ learning, and school korero (relationships), Māori student underachievement *can* be placed under the microscope, but only within the context of the dominant discourse, not to create another opportunity to inform Māori of what is already known, but to draw an analogy between *processes* and *outcomes* (Jahnke & Taipapa, 1999). Shared understandings underpinned in power-sharing consultative and collaborative partnership relationships, can reposition the dominant culture group so that all students can be placed at the centre according to their cultural context.

APPENDIX A: Letter of request to principal, and BOT

February 2008

The Principal/Second Principal (Representatives of the Board of Trustees)

Dear

REQUEST TO SCHOOL: access and consultation group

My conversations with you in April/May 2007 regarding my interest to conduct research at the school bears reference.

I am a student of Massey University, pursuing a Masterate in Education. My project title is: *'A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement'*. My chief supervisor is Jen McLeod (Senior Lecturer/Chair of Massey University College of Education Peer Review Ethics Committee/Chair Kaupapa Māori Board). For the purposes of my study, I wish to seek your permission to use [REDACTED] as a site for my research. I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality of participants' names and details, including the name of the school, however, this cannot be assured. The research report will refer to 'an Auckland secondary school'.

My proposed research is a qualitative case study of 10 students identified as Māori at [REDACTED], parents of students identified as Māori (10), and 20 teachers of the school. A whole school sample method will be used to recruit teacher participants to maintain anonymity of teachers. It is hoped that the research would explore obstacles to Māori student achievement, and point at ways to strengthen the three-way partnership among students, school and family to promote student achievement of Māori students.

The plan for my research is as follows:

- I will seek permission to address students at a Māori student hui, inviting them to participate in the study. Of those who agree, a 15-minute briefing will be called in the school library, inviting them to participate in a focus group interview. Parental and participant consent, and confidentiality agreement will be sought. The te reo Māori teacher's () permission will also be sought to assist the researcher in matters of te reo Māori and cultural concerns.
- Permission will be sought by the researcher to address parents at a Māori parents' hui, inviting them to participate in the study. Of those who agree, 10 will be randomly selected for an individual interview.
- All teaching staff will be emailed and invited to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaires will be placed in their pigeonholes, and completed ones returned to the researcher's staff pigeonhole.

I am very aware that I will be conducting research on human subjects at a site I am employed, and the ensuing conflict of interest context. I am also aware that my

research is with indigenous people, and that sensitive cultural issues may arise, and may have negative repercussions within the school, and Māori community. For these reasons, I intend to be in continuous dialogue with a consultation group, comprising Jen McLeod (my chief supervisor and Chair of the College of Education Peer Review Ethics Committee- Massey University), (Associate Principal and Chair of the school Māori Committee), (Principal), (te reo Māori teacher), (the school Director of Learning), and the local iwi representative ().

All potential participants will be informed of their right to decline to participate in the research study, to withdraw from the research, and to refuse to answer any question. Consent and/or confidentiality agreement forms will be required to be completed by participants, except in the case of the questionnaire (where completion and return will be regarded as consent to participate in the research study).

I hereby seek permission to:

1. Access school records that are not public information, namely, students who identify as Māori (selection based on age, gender, year level, school reports and NCEA results, and their extra-curricular involvement), their parents', and teachers' names.
2. Invite students, teachers and parents to participate in the research; and,
3. Use school facilities to conduct focus group interviews and questionnaires.

Please sign the attached *Informed Consent* form if you approve of my request. My chief supervisor and I will be available for comment at any stage of the research.

*Please note that I wish to reciprocate to participants by holding a morning tea for all participants to gift a book of the research findings for representatives of the participants to present to the school Māori Committee.

Yours sincerely

Neera Sundrum

neeras@xtra.co.nz

Work:

Home:

My chief supervisor's details:

Jen McLeod

Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education Peer Review Ethics Committee- Massey University
 Chair Kaupapa Māori Board
 Massey University College of Education
 (J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz)

APPENDIX B: Information Sheet - parents

March 2008

Project title : A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

Dear parent/caregiver

Tena koe

I, Neera Sundrum, a Massey University student, am pursuing research with a Kaupapa Māori orientation to partially fulfil a Master's Degree in Education. The purpose of my study is to research obstacles to Māori student achievement, and specifically to explore ways of strengthening the three-way partnership of the student, school, and family/whānau to improve academic performance levels of Māori students.

I wish to survey 10 parents/caregivers of students identified as Māori. Permission to use the school database has been sought from the Principal/Associate Principal (as representatives on the school Board of Trustees). I have already consulted with the Associate Principal and Chair of the school Māori Committee (), the te reo Māori teacher (), the local iwi representative (), and the school Director of Learning ().

Thank you for your interest in this research project. Participation in the study will involve an hour long individual face-to-face interview to be held at a negotiated venue/time with the participant. Ten participants will be randomly selected, and a research package will be posted to them. If your name was not selected, but should you wish to participate, you are most welcome to do so, in which case please contact me.

The research package will comprise an Information Sheet, an Interview Schedule, and Participant Consent form (to be handed in at the interview). Participants will have about a week to read the Interview Schedule to become familiar with the questions to be asked, and decide on participation. Consultation with whānau members is most welcome.

Also please note that there is no obligation to participate. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- 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; and,
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when the project is conducted.

Participants will be given an opportunity to make comments on the findings of the study, and confidentiality of participants, including the school name, will not be disclosed.

In appreciation of participation in this research, the researcher would like to invite participants to a morning tea once the research fieldwork is complete.

My chief supervisor for the project is Jen McLeod, Senior Lecturer at Massey University College of Education, who may be contacted if you have concerns about the study.

Once again, thank you for your interest in this research project.
Yours sincerely

Neera Sundrum

Massey University Student: Neera Sundrum
: neeras@xtra.co.nz

Chief supervisor: Jen McLeod
Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education Peer

Review

Ethics Committee- Massey University
Chair Kaupapa Māori Board
Massey University College of Education.

J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz 06 3569099 x 8628 or 021611495

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 07/47. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

APPENDIX C: Information Sheet - Students

March 2008

Project title : A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

Dear student
Tena koe

I am a Massey University student doing research towards a Master's Degree in Education. The purpose of my study is to explore obstacles to Māori student achievement, and specifically to look at ways of strengthening the three-way partnership of the student, school, and family/whānau to improve academic performance levels of Māori students. School records will be accessed for student academic performance levels, and participation in extra-curricular activities.

Thank you for your interest in this research study. You will have about 4 days to consider whether you wish to participate. Ten students will be randomly selected and invited to a meeting on . If you were not selected, but wish to participate, feel free to attend the briefing as well.

Participation will be in the form of a focus group interview. There will be 5 students in a focus group. An interview schedule is attached to this sheet so that you can be familiar with the questions to be asked.

The focus group interview will take place during a lunch time (to be decided by you and I) for the full duration of a lunch hour, and therefore I appreciate you sacrificing your time for this study. You are welcome to eat your lunch during the interview session.

I will require your signed consent, as well as your parent's, to participate. Please note that even though your parent might consent to your participation, you will still have the right to refuse to participate and non-participation will not affect your studies in any way. Participants' names are not to be mentioned out of the research situation, and confidentiality of participants' responses should be maintained – thus, you will have to sign a Consent and Confidentiality Agreement form.

You will be entitled to make comments on the findings of the study, and a copy will be given to you for this purpose. Confidentiality of participants, including the school name, will not be disclosed. In appreciation of participation in this research, I would like to invite participants to a morning tea once the research fieldwork is complete.

My chief supervisor is Jen McLeod, Senior Lecturer at Massey University College of Education, who may be contacted if you or your parent may have concerns about the study.

*Please note the following documents:

1. This information sheet (for you to read and consider participation).
2. The interview schedule (to be used at the interview).
3. Participant Consent and Confidentiality form (to be signed by you and handed in at the interview).
4. Parental Consent form (to be signed by your parent and handed in at the interview).

Once again, thank you for your participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely

Neera Sundrum
Massey University student

neeras@xtra.co.nz

Work:

Chief supervisor: *Jen McLeod*

*Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education Peer Review
Ethics Committee- Massey University
Chair Kaupapa Māori Board
Massey University College of Education.*

J.McLeod@massey.ac.nz 06 3569099 x 8628 or 021611495

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APPENDIX D: Information Sheet - Teachers

March 2008

Project title : A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

I, Neera Sundrum, a Massey University student, am pursuing research to partially fulfil a Master's Degree in Education. The purpose of my study is to explore obstacles to Māori student achievement, and specifically to look at ways of strengthening the three-way partnership of the student, school, and family to improve academic performance levels of Māori students.

Thank you for responding to my email and showing an interest in the research project. If you decide to participate in the project, you will be expected to complete the questionnaire which is attached to this information sheet. You will have about a week to complete the questionnaire, and place it in the school staff pigeonhole labelled 'SU'. Completion and return of the questionnaire will be regarded as consent to participate in this research study.

Please note your anonymity will be maintained, but if you opt to name yourself, your responses will remain completely confidential.

Also please note that there is no obligation to accept this invitation. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- 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; and,
- be given access to a summary of the project findings.

All participants of the research will have the opportunity to make comments on the findings of the study. Confidentiality of participants, including the school name, will not be disclosed.

In appreciation of participation in this research, the researcher would like to invite participants to a morning tea once the research fieldwork is complete.

My chief supervisor for this research project is Jen McLeod (Senior Lecturer at Massey University College of Education) who may be contacted if you have concerns about the study.

Once again, thank you for your time and interest in this project.

Neera Sundrum

Massey University Student: *Neera Sundrum*
neeras@xtra.co.nz

Chief supervisor: *Jen McLeod*
Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education
Peer Review Ethics Committee- Massey University
Chair Kaupapa Māori Board
Massey University College of Education.

J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz 06 3569099 x 8628 or
021611495

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 07/47. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

APPENDIX E: Email Invitation Letter - Teachers

All teachers of [REDACTED]

Kia ora

Invitation to participate in research study

I am a student of Massey University, pursuing a Masterate in Education. My project title is '**A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement**'. My chief supervisor is Jen McLeod, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Māori and Multicultural Education, Massey University. Permission to conduct research at [REDACTED] has been granted by representatives of the school's Board of Trustees, the principal, [REDACTED], and second principal, [REDACTED].

I wish to invite you to participate in the research study by completing a questionnaire (hard copy). I intend using a whole school sample method to minimise any conflict of interest situation, and maximise anonymity of participants.

You have the right to decline this invitation, but should you decide to participate, a research package (Information Sheet and Questionnaire) can be found in your pigeonhole, in which case you would be expected to complete the questionnaire and place the completed one in my pigeonhole labelled 'SU'. *Return of a completed questionnaire will be regarded as consent to participate.

Your participation in the research would be much appreciated.

Thank you for your time.

Neera Sundrum

Massey University Student: Neera Sundrum

[REDACTED]

Chief Supervisor: Jen McLeod

Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education Peer Review
Ethics Committee- Massey University
Chair Kaupapa Māori Board
Massey University College of Education.

J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz

(06) 3569099 x 8628 or 021611495

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 07/47. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

APPENDIX F: Participant Consent Form - parents

Project title : A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years.

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet, including the right to withdraw from the research at any time I choose.

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Full Name – printed _____

Student: Neera Sundrum



Chief Supervisor: Jen McLeod
J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz
(06) 3569099 Ext. 8628

APPENDIX G: Participant Consent and Confidentiality Form - students

Project title: A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I read the Information Sheet on the study, and had it explained to me at a briefing given by the researcher. I understand I have the right to ask further questions.

I have been informed that my academic results and extra-curricular involvement will be accessed from the school records, and of my right to withdraw from the research at any time I choose, and refuse to answer any questions.

I agree to participate in the research study, keep confidential the names of other participants in the focus group, their comments/responses, and information regarding the research.

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Full Name (*please print*): _____

Student: Neera Sundrum



Supervisor: Jen McLeod
J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz
 (06) 3569099 Ext. 8628

APPENDIX H: Parental Consent Form - students**PROJECT TITLE: A THREE-WAY PARTNERSHIP TO RAISE MĀORI STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.****PARENTAL CONSENT**

I have read the Information Sheet for students on the study, and understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

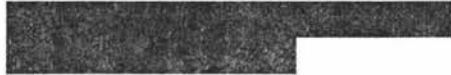
I give consent for my child to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet, including:

- * the confidentiality of my child's participation,
- * the researcher accessing school records of my child's academic results and extra-curricular involvement, and,
- * my child's right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Full Name – printed _____

Student: Neera Sundrum



Supervisor: Jen McLeod
J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz
(06) 3569099 Ext. 8628

APPENDIX I: Individual Interview Schedule – for parents

Project title: A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

INDIVIDUAL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (for parents)

To note:

- Parents are welcome to consult with whānau members, and/or request the presence of whānau members.
- Parents will have the right to withdraw from the research, refuse to answer any questions, and request that the audio-recorder be switched off at any time during the interview.
- Parents' answers do not necessarily refer to their own children.

Categories of questions :

1. The child's learning.
2. The part played by the school to improve Māori student achievement.
3. The part played by parents/whānau to improve Māori student achievement.

1. The child's learning

Do Māori children enjoy learning ?

If yes/no, please explain.

Do Māori children enjoy school ?

If yes, or no, please explain by mentioning some examples.

Do parents usually know what happens in the day-to-day life of their children during a school day ?

Please explain.

Are you aware of any school wide activities that your child or other Māori children may be involved in ? Can you please mention some activities ?

Are parents of Māori children aware of their children's course of study, and what their children intending doing when they leave school?

Do parents know the subjects taken by their children?

If yes, do they know what subjects their children intend taking the next year?

If Māori children are senior students, do their parents know if their subjects are based on Unit Standards, or Achievement Standards? Are parents aware of how the type of course their children take can impact on their further study or career prospects? Please explain.

Do parents of Māori students know how well their children are

progressing in school ? If yes, how do they know this?
 If no, what are some reasons for not knowing about their children's progress?

Do parents know their children's teachers? Are they aware of ways to communicate with them?

2. The role of the school

2.1 Does the school communicate with Māori students' parents about their children's learning?

Please mention some ways the school communicates with the parents.

Are these ways of communication effective? (Are parents satisfied with the ways of communication?)

If yes/no, please explain.

Can you suggest ways to improve the communication?

2.2 Do parents like coming in for information meetings and parent/teacher interviews?

If yes, what value do parents see in these meetings/interviews?

If no, what prevents parents from coming to meetings/interviews?

2.3 Are parents aware of any support provided specifically to Māori students and their parents/whānau?

If yes, please mention examples /nature of the support.

2.4 How can the school improve its relationship with parents/whānau to improve children's performance levels?

3. The role of parents/whānau

How can parents/whānau strengthen their relationship with the school to improve the performance levels of their children?

What support from the school or community would parents require to strengthen their relationship with the school?

Massey University Student: Neera Sundrum



Chief Supervisor: Jen McLeod

Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education Peer Review

Ethics Committee- Massey University

Chair Kaupapa Māori Board

Massey University College of Education.

J.M.McLeod@massey.ac.nz

(06) 3569099 x 8628 or 021611495

APPENDIX J: Focus Group Interview Schedule - students

Project title: A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

To note:

- The questions prepared may not be completed within the time allocated for various reasons, including another issue having come up, and which might have required priority before the following focus group question.
- The researcher will take cognisance of the conflict of interest situation, and assure students that neither their names nor their responses will be disclosed.
- Students will have the right to withdraw from the research, refuse to answer any question, and request that the audio-recorder be switched off at any time during the interview.
- A teacher aide's assistance will be sought if there are any students from the class that requires supported learning.
- The te reo Māori teacher's assistance will be sought if there are students who may have Māori as their first language.

*Students will be reminded not to refer to names of students.

1. Can you please give me examples of how Māori students are involved in either co- or extra-curricular activities in the school?

How many of those you know lead their teams, or play a leading role within the activity?

How many of those you know are just participating members?

In the case of the students who show leadership, can you tell me about these students' qualities that make them play a leading role?
Do these students also achieve academic success?

If yes or no, do you know if they have plans for further study?

Are you aware of any further study plans of these students?

2. What factors encourage Māori students to get involved within the school?
3. What factors discourage Māori students from getting involved within the school?
4. Now, let's talk about Māori students' learning in the classroom. You may comment on aspects like relationships with the other students and the teachers, the subject content, styles of teaching, styles of learning, classroom activities, or even where you sit. (Please do not mention names of students or teachers.)

What is it about classes that Māori students like?

What is it about classes that Māori students dislike?

5. Do Māori students feel included in the classroom? For example, are they part of group and class discussions, or, given permission to express their viewpoint, or have their questions answered by the teacher?

6. Do you think Māori students are achieving well academically?

If yes, what are some contributing factors for their academic success?

If no, what are some contributing factors for them not achieving academic success?

7. What support is offered at the school to Māori students to raise their performance levels?

* Can you give me examples of the support.

* Why do you think Māori students take up/don't take up the support opportunities provided by the school?

8. Are you aware of the school's mission statement 'Equipping individuals for life-long learning'? This means that even when students are out of school, what they learn in school could be transferred to their lives out of school. Now, when they are out of school, learning still continues, and their whānau becomes part of that learning.

Does the whānau play a part in Māori students' learning?

If yes, please explain their part.

If no, what reasons can you come up with of whānau not being part of their children's learning?

9. How do you think Māori students feel about the whānau coming to school to discuss their progress?

Do you see any advantage of the whānau talking to teachers? Please explain.

10. Do you think the school makes it easy for the whānau to know about their children's progress?

If yes, please mention some examples.

If no, please explain.

11. Do Māori students like their whānau coming into school for information evenings, and parent/teacher interview nights?

12. If Māori students want to achieve well academically, what can you suggest for better relationships:

- between Māori students and teachers?
- between the school and Māori students' whānau?
- between Māori students and their whānau?

Thank you kindly for your time.

Massey University Student: Neera Sundrum



Chief Supervisor: Jen McLeod
 Senior Lecturer and Chair of the College of Education Peer
 Review
 Ethics Committee- Massey University
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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 07/47. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

APPENDIX K: Teacher Questionnaire

Project title: A three-way partnership to raise Māori student achievement.

Name: _____ (optional)

Please complete this questionnaire by placing a tick in the relevant box that applies to you. You may also write a comment, if necessary, in the space provided. There are no right or wrong answers. * Your participation in this questionnaire is confidential, and completion and return of the questionnaire will be regarded as consent to participate in the research. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time you choose.

A. The school

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Further comments, if necessary:

B. Teachers and classes

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Teachers use the correct pronunciation of Māori students' names.				
2	Teachers use Māori words in the classroom.				
3	Teachers take an active interest in the progress of Māori students.				
4	Teachers respect all students, irrespective of cultural background.				
5	Students, irrespective of cultural background, respect teachers.				
6	Teachers understand the Māori worldview.				
7	Positive references to Māori people are often made either in or out of the classroom.				
8	Teachers include reference to positive Māori experiences in their teaching.				
9	Teachers understand Māori students.				
10	Academic expectations are high for all students and not subverted by social norms.				
11	Immigrant teachers understand the Māori worldview.				
12	Māori students' comments are valued in the classroom.				
13	Teachers use a collaborative approach to include all students.				
14	Māori students are making good progress with their academic performance.				
15	The experience of the teacher can have a positive or negative impact on students from differing cultural backgrounds.				
16	Teachers want Māori students to work hard in school and continue with tertiary education.				
17	Māori students take part in class discussions.				

Further comments, if necessary:

C. The whānau and school

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1					
2					
3					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

Further comments, if necessary:

D. Māori students and their whānau (caregivers/parents)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Further comments, if necessary:

E. Teachers and their Māori students

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Further comments, if necessary:

F. General

		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Most Māori students want to become leaders.					
2	Māori students show an active interest in academic success.					
3	Māori students would like to make a positive difference in the community.					
4	There should be more Māori leadership in Senior Management in schools.					
5	Māori student support should be enhanced in schools.					
6	There should be more Māori students in leadership positions at school.					
7	Recognition of Māori art and culture are contributing factors for Māori student achievement.					
8	Māori students should be encouraged to do Achievement Standards.					
9	There are concerns about Māori student achievement in New Zealand schools.					
10	Schools should actively address concerns about Māori student achievement.					
11	Māori student achievement is a Māori people's problem.					
12	All teachers should take ownership of the concern around Māori student achievement.					
13	Māori students prefer adopting a non-Māori way of life.					
14	Māori students demonstrate pride in being Māori.					
15	Non-Māori teachers are more in conflict with Māori students rather than with other Non-Māori students.					

Further comments, if necessary:

Thank you kindly for your time in completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX L: *Treaty of Waitangi*

PRINCIPLES OF THE TREATY OF WAITANGI AS DETERMINED BY THE CROWN

1. The Kawanatanga Principle/ The Principle of Government

The first Article of the Treaty gives expression to the right of the Crown to make laws and its obligation to govern in accordance with constitutional process. This sovereignty is qualified by the promise to accord the Māori interests specified in the second Article an appropriate priority.

2. The Rangatiranga Principle/ The Principle of Self Management

The second Article of the Treaty guarantees to iwi Māori the control and enjoyment of those resources and Taonga which it is their wish to retain. The preservation of a resource base, restoration of iwi self-management, and the active protection of Taonga, both material and cultural, are necessary elements of the Crown's policy of recognising rangatiratanga.

3. The Principle of Equality

The third Article of the Treaty constitutes a guarantee of legal equality between Māori and other citizens of New Zealand. Furthermore, the common law system is selected by the Treaty as the basis for that equality although human rights accepted under the international law are incorporated also.

The third Article of the Treaty also has an important social significance in the assurance that social rights would be employed equally by Māori with New Zealanders of whatever origin. Special measures to attain that equal enjoyment of social benefits are allowed by international law.

4. The Principles of Cooperation

The Treaty is regarded by the Crown as establishing a fair basis for two peoples in one country. Duality and unity are both significant. Duality implies distinctive cultural development and unity implies common purpose and community. The relationship between community and distinctive development is governed by the requirement of cooperation which is an obligation placed on both parties to the Treaty.

Reasonable cooperation can only take place if there is consultation on major issues of common concern and if good faith, balance, and common sense are shown on all sides. The outcome of reasonable cooperation will be partnership.

5. The Principle of Redress

The Crown accepts a responsibility to provide for the resolution of grievances arising from the Treaty. This process may involve courts, the Waitangi Tribunal, or direct negotiation. The provision of redress, where entitlement is established, must take account of its practical impact and of the need to avoid the creation of fresh injustice. If the Crown demonstrates commitment to this process of redress then it will expect reconciliation to result.

(Burke, 1990, pp. 54-55, cited in McLeod, 2002)

APPENDIX M: The Hikairo Rationale

Hikairo Rationale: a model embracing the models of *Te Whare Tapa Wha* (Durie, 1994, in Macfarlane, 2007), *Te Wheke* (Pere, 1991, in Macfarlane, 2007), and the elements of *Te Rakau*.

The *Te Whare Tapa Wha* model consists of four complementing aspects, namely, body, mind, spirit, and whānau.

The *Te Wheke* model consists of the four aspects of the *Te Whare Tapa Wha* model, and includes further four aspects – mana ake (status), mauri (life force), ha a koro ma a kui ma (breath of life coming from the tipuna, and whatumanawa (emotional life).

Te Rakau embraces the metaphor of tree roots (orangatanga). The root system performs many functions, and this is related to the teacher who takes agency to create a “well nourished classroom climate” (Macfarlane, 2007, p. 162).

APPENDIX N: Excerpt from Stephen May's (2007) research paper:

... that this approach is by far the most effective in not only learning another language, but also in successfully acquiring academic English, as well as in succeeding in school more generally ... bilingual education needs to be implemented in relation to established principles of good practice (cf. May et al, 2004), but suffice it to say that being bilingual and biliterate provides clear and consistent advantages – cognitively, socially, and educationally – for bilinguals over monolinguals. For example, there are now close to 150 major research studies, carried out since the early 1960s, which consistently report significant advantages for bilingual students on a range of metalinguistic and cognitive tasks. As a result, it is now widely recognised that bilinguals mature earlier than monolinguals in acquiring skills for linguistic abstraction, are superior to monolinguals on divergent thinking tasks and in their analytical orientation to language, and demonstrate greater social sensitivity than monolinguals in situations requiring verbal communication (see Romaine, 1995; Cummins, 1996; Corson, 1998; Baker 2001, Cummins, 2001). Given this, the arguments more regularly heard for the use of first languages in schooling, which have to do predominantly with language rights, and their importance to identity, while not unimportant, need to be complemented by the clear academic benefits of bilingualism as well (p. 5)..

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