

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Agents of retention and
achievement of Māori girls at
secondary school.**

**A thesis presented as a fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts Māori Studies
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand**

**Robyn Anne McLaren
2010**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Table of contents | i |
| Acknowledgements | 1 |
| Abstract | 2 |
| Chapter One: Introduction | 3 |
| Background | 3 |
| Design of the study | 5 |
| Development of the research question | 7 |
| Structure of the thesis | 8 |
| Chapter Two: Historical Perspectives | 9 |
| Teaching and Learning in pre-colonial Aotearoa New Zealand | 9 |
| The arrival of schooling | 12 |
| National State schooling | 21 |
| From integration to Kura Kaupapa Māori | 28 |
| Chapter Three: The Research Study | 39 |
| Overview | 39 |
| Indigenous research | 41 |
| Kaupapa Māori research | 42 |
| Making contact | 43 |
| The researched community | 45 |
| The Interviews | 47 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter Four: The Research Findings | 50 |
| Perceptions of identity | 50 |
| Perceptions of support and expectations | 56 |
| Perceptions of opportunity | 62 |
| Perceptions of motivation | 66 |
| Summary | 69 |
| Chapter Five: Te Whakatipuranga Ruamano | 70 |
| Chapter Six: Conclusions | 86 |
| Summary of findings | 86 |
| The research questions | 86 |
| Implications for the school | 87 |
| Appendices | 91 |
| Bibliography | 103 |

Acknowledgements

While undertaking this study I became aware of the many that had travelled the same pathway seeking understandings about Māori educational achievement. I acknowledge their work, and the guidance and knowledge their work has imparted to me.

I wish to acknowledge those whānau who suggested a focus for this study, and especially my supervisor, Dr Taiarahia Black, who encouraged me to research an area in which I have a passionate interest. His belief in my ability to carry out this research and his endless patience and guidance gave me continued confidence.

To the school who participated in the study, your consent to allow me to undertake this project, and your assistance made this work possible.

And especially I acknowledge the willingness of the wonderful young Māori women who were prepared to share their stories with me in the hope that other Māori girls, now and in the future, might be helped by the school to take confident steps into their worlds.

Whaia te iti kahurangi

Me tuohu koe, he maunga teitei

Abstract

This research investigates positive agents of retention and achievement for Māori girls in mainstream secondary schooling. The study focussed specifically on pupils engaged in post-compulsory education at a selected state secondary school in Te Waipounamu.

The impact historically of schooling on Māori girls was reviewed as were changes and developments in educational policy in New Zealand.

Methodologies such as critical theory, Kaupapa Māori research, and indigenous research methods/tools informed the research. In order to investigate and empower Māori girls and the community of the school involved, qualitative methods of study, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews were used. Māori concepts of manaakitanga, mana, whanaungatanga and tino rangatiratanga were integral to the study.

By focussing on those things which provided positive impetus for the girls to remain at school and to achieve success, it became more possible to avoid any emphasis on pathological explanations for alleged lack of retention and achievement by Māori girls in New Zealand mainstream state secondary schools.