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An Investigation into how Māori Students who are Gifted and Talented are identified in Mainstream Schools

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master in Education
at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Emma Scobie-Jennings

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Abstract

This study examined the current practices used by 11 schools in one region of Aotearoa New Zealand when identifying Māori students who are gifted and talented. It sought to establish and discuss definitions and identification procedures schools are using as well as the barriers and challenges that schools face when attempting to identify Māori students who are gifted and talented.

A multi-method approach to gathering data was used. Survey research methodology was used to gain information from principals and teachers in charge of gifted and talented education. Content analysis was used to analyse the policies and documents the schools used when identifying gifted and talented students to cross-reference and add to data gathered through the survey.

The key finding of this study was that the identification of Māori students who are gifted and talented was an area that the majority of sample schools were not confident in. Several of the schools involved in the research indicated this was an area they were pursuing professional development and learning in. The research indicates that although some schools have definitions and identification practices which are culturally responsive, their practices are not resulting in the formal identification of the numbers of gifted and talented Māori students that are suggested by the literature.

The research concludes that culturally responsive environments are the most appropriate way of generating effective identification practices, but in order to create these teachers need to have the knowledge and expertise required. As the main barrier to culturally responsive identification of Māori students who are gifted and talented is the lack of teacher expertise and knowledge, there is a major need for ongoing professional development and learning in this area.

Glossary

Definitions of words used in this text were taken from the Māori Dictionary (www.maoridictionary.co.nz) for the specific context used in this research.

Āwhinatanga	Helping, assisting.
Haka	Performance of the haka - vigorous dances with actions and rhythmically shouted words. A general term for several types of such dances.
Hapū	Kinship group, tribe, sub-tribe - section of a large kinship group.
Ihi	Essential force, excitement, power, charm, personal magnetism – psychic force as opposed to spiritual power.
Iwi	Extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race - often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor.
Kaiako	Teacher, instructor.
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship, trustee.
Karakia	Incantation, ritual chant, chant, intoned incantation - recited rapidly using traditional language, symbols and structures.
Karanga	Formal call, ceremonial call of welcome to visitors onto a marae, or equivalent venue, at the start of a <i>pōwhiri</i> .
Kaumātua	Adult, elder.
Kaupapa Māori	Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.
Kōhanga reo	Māori language preschool.
Kowhaiwhai	Motifs and symbols.
Mana	Prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma.
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness.
Māoritanga	Māori culture, practices and beliefs.
Mātauranga	Education, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill.
Mau rākau	Wield weapons.
Mihimihi	Speech of greeting, tribute.

Poi	Poi dance – songs performed, usually by women, in which the poi is swung in various movements to accompany singing.
Rangatiratanga	Sovereignty, chieftainship, right to exercise authority, chiefly autonomy, self-determination, self-management, ownership, leadership of a social group, domain of the <i>rangatira</i> , noble birth.
Raranga	Weaving.
Taiaha	A long weapon of hard wood with one end carved and often decorated with dogs' hair.
Tautoko	To support, prop up, verify, advocate, accept (an invitation), agree.
Te Mahi Rēhia	Sport and recreational pursuits.
Tikanga	Correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention.
Toi whakaari	Performing arts.
Tukutuku	Ornamental lattice-work - used particularly between carvings around the walls of meeting houses.
Waiata	Song, singing.
Wairua	Spirit, soul, quintessence - spirit of a person which exists beyond death.
Wairuatanga	Spirituality.
Wana	Be exciting, thrilling, inspiring awe.
Wehi	To be awesome, afraid, fear.
Whaikōrero	Oratory, oration, formal speech-making.
Whakairo	Carving.
Whakapapa	Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent.
Whakataukī	Proverb, saying, cryptic saying, aphorism.
Whānau	Extended family, family group.
Whānaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. Develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which also serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. Also extends to others to whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship.

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