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Te Hautaka Mātauranga o Waikato

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Restoring honour: Māori students and a Māori teacher reflect

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Abstract

My return to classroom teaching in 2009 served as a "wake-up" call to my own assumptions of how I viewed my identity "as Māori" and as a Māori teacher. I was challenged by disruptive behaviours directed towards me by a small group of Māori students in our English medium mainstream classroom. I had assumed that being Māori would make it easier for the Māori students to relate to me as their classroom teacher. Together with these students, I introduced a weekly hui (meeting) process that served to engage us in a power sharing approach to respond to these challenging behaviours. Weekly hui provided an opportunity to foster reciprocal listening and learning. This article draws from a qualitative research study which included a retrospective analysis of hui discussions and decisions throughout 2009, and of Māori student reflections of their experiences with classroom hui. The findings from this analysis suggest that the weekly hui contributed to improved classroom relationships and increased learning engagement for these Māori students.

Keywords

Māori, English-medium mainstream, culturally responsive pedagogy, relationships, inclusion.

Introduction: Prior teaching and learning experiences

I began teaching full-time in an urban, mainstream primary school located in Rotorua at the beginning of 2004. The school roll consisted predominantly of Māori students (73%) and reflected the percentage of Māori students in my classroom. The school's teaching staff participated in the Ministry of Education's Te Kauhua Project (Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins, & Broughton, 2004). Te Kauhua was a professional development initiative that sought to develop teachers' understandings of tikanga Māori

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(pp. 23–35)

(Māori cultural principles and values) in order to improve Māori student achievement levels. I found Te Kauhua to be culturally affirming:

> I feel … that this contract supports me professionally with the kaupapa and whakaaro of the holistic approach I practise with my students, both Māori and Pākehā. For example, making and retaining contact with parents and caregivers, fostering a safe place within the classroom for the students to feel valued by demonstrating and practising values such as whānaungatanga, manaakitanga, tautoko and awhi, and most importantly raising expectation levels of achievement by scaffolding learning carefully both individually and collectively for student successes to be realised and celebrated. (Diary Entry, 04/09/2005)

I moved from Rotorua to Auckland in 2007 and began working as a Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) based in a cluster of schools in a multi-cultural urban area. In contrast to my previous teaching-learning experiences, I found that teacher attitudes and teaching approaches generally placed little emphasis on Māori values and principles. I also found that I had minimal agency as an RTLB to initiate changes of this kind in the schools I was serving. Hence, after two years, I left the RTLB role to return to a mainstream classroom teaching position in a Decile 1 intermediate school located within the same area. I believed that at least I would be able to implement a more culturally responsive approach within my own classroom.

Initiating the research study

The research focus was based on producing a retrospective account of the student behavioural transformation, using both student and teacher evidence and voice. The research interest was initiated by the weekly hui minute book, my personal reflections (recorded in my diary) and class-wide term evaluation documents. I sought to explore the hui process from the Māori students' individual and collective perspectives. I also sought to understand if hui was perceived by the students as culturally responsive to their cultural identities "as Māori" within a mainstream classroom. This study was designed as qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) contend that "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 3) and as such relays events from within the natural settings and perspectives in which they occur. The retrospective analysis of classroom interactions sought to understand the students' behaviours and their experiences as Māori students within a Māori cultural frame of reference (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In contrast to westernised forms of qualitative research, whereby research typically gathers information and interprets data from a dominant discursive point of reference, Kaupapa Māori research seeks to retain Māori ownership and control of the complete research process (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop, O'Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010; Smith, 1999). Kaupapa Māori research involves negotiating methods that are "taken for granted" ways of learning and behaving within a Māori worldview.

The research project included six participants who a) self-identified as Māori and b) were classroom students during 2009. Kaupapa Māori research principles (Smith, 1999) wove throughout the research study and ensured that the process of whakawhanaungatanga (building and maintaining relationships) remained at the centre of the study. For example, parental consent and support was sought because the six

students were below 16 years of age. I chose to visit with each whānau so I could talk with the parents in their own homes. This supported the whakawhanaungatanga between the parents, participants and myself by re-establishing the relationships we had developed during 2009. The home visits also embodied other kaupapa Māori research principles of "kanohi kitea" (a face to be seen), "aroha ki te tangata" (care for the wellbeing of everyone) and provided the opportunity to "titiro, whakarongo, kōrero" (look, listen and speak) with each participant and parent (Smith, 1999). The parents were included in all decision making such as interview times, venues and transportation to and from research hui.

Because the research study was a retrospective analysis of teacher and student experiences during 2009, it was important to understand the need for researcher reflexivity to ensure that my role as an insider researcher remained critically reflective and culturally responsive. Researcher reflexivity was important because the insider's position is one that retains relationships beyond a research project's conclusion, especially when research projects are formed from pre-existing relationships (Smith, 1999). The teaching and learning relationship that the participants and I experienced during 2009 minimised the "power and control" issues as researcher/participants (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Cohen et al., 2000).

Research methods and analysis

A focus group interview was conducted four months after the 2009 school year concluded and was formally initiated at a local marae (ceremonial meeting place). The research participants and I were supported through the pōwhiri (protocols of welcome) by two parents, my daughter and my whānau kaumatua (senior male elder). According to Cohen et al. (2000), focus groups are a form of group interviews whereby participants "interact with each other rather than with the interviewer" (p. 288). I viewed the focus group interview as a forum for the participants to contribute their opinions and reflections as they felt comfortable rather than for me to dominate the interview process. An interview schedule consisted of prompts to encourage participant reflections of their experiences as Māori students in a mainstream class during 2009. Research prompts included:

1. How you feel you were supported as a learner.
2. Whether or not you feel that the teaching/learning programmes were relevant for you as a Māori student and included Tikanga Māori and Te Reo Māori.
3. How you were involved with different teaching/learning programmes.
4. How you feel you were motivated to participate with learning programmes. If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Whether or not you feel that you made any changes in learning, thinking and/or feeling over the year.
6. Were there any times you felt being Māori was honoured?
7. Were there any times you felt being Māori was not honoured?

Individual follow-up interviews were completed over two weeks after the focus group interview. The individual interview sought further clarification and explanations of the participants' respective contributions during the focus group interview.

Both the focus group hui and individual follow-up interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. I ensured that the completed group hui transcriptions that were returned to each participant had their respective contributions bolded; however, the remaining participants' names were blacked out to maintain a high level of confidentiality and anonymity. The purpose of providing the total transcript was to maintain a sense of logical "flow" of each participant's contributions within the total discussion. Each individual follow-up interview was also transcribed and presented to the participant to review and for comment. Qualitative data analysis is described by Cohen et al. (2000) as an interaction that occurs between the researcher and "decontextualized data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (p. 282). I applied categories, groupings and coding as I prepared the data for analysis. The interview transcriptions were cross-referenced with the weekly hui minutes from 2009 to identify any connecting categories and themes. Finally, I grouped similar themes and aligned the corresponding thematic clusters alongside some of the Māori principles and values of ako (sharing in teaching and learning), whakawhanaungatanga and manaakitanga (caring for each other) (Macfarlane, 2004; Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman, 2007; Metge, 1984).

Research findings and outcomes: Classroom context 2009

I began the first week of 2009 with a class of 24 Year 7 and 8 students. Nine were Māori (38%) and 14 were from Pasifika backgrounds (54%), which included seven Tongan (25%), three Cook Islanders (13%), two Niuean (8%) and two Samoan (8%). There was also one Sudanese student (4%). This classroom had the largest number of Māori students in the school, and I was the only teacher in the school who identified as Māori. The intensity and frequency of the disruptive student behaviours during the first week of school caused me concern. Examples of disruptive student behaviours within the classroom included punching, swearing, mocking and shouting. Some students refused to participate in learning activities. Research participants' (P) descriptions of the classroom context and student behaviours early in the school year included:

> Before we started our class hui it was worse, I was talking back and got stood down or I was sent up to the principal and them. No one got to say what was happening. (P2)
>
> There were a lot of problems and people knew about them but just didn't really care because they had nothing to do with them … usually mine was actually my temper and I didn't know how to control it. (P1)
>
> In the beginning, everyone didn't really care about anything, they did stuff on the field and they hurt people. They didn't listen that much and played around … you didn't know how to really do stuff. (P6)
>
> At the beginning, everyone didn't know everyone. (P4)
>
> Everyone was just not listening. (P5)

The level of resistance displayed by the group of students impacted negatively on me and on other students. My initial response to the disruptive behaviours was to "roam" the classroom and I quietly approached students individually and asked them to reduce their noise levels and re-focus on the activities. This response was only as effective as my proximity to a student because the noise, swearing and shouting

resumed as I moved away. By the beginning of the second week, I chose to abandon the planning I had prepared for the morning's learning session. Instead, I decided to find a way to invite students to reflect on their behaviour and on why they were engaging in their behaviour. I began by asking what they expected from me as their teacher. In response, several students said that I was "too soft" and suggested that I should "harden up". When I asked the students to clarify "harden up", I was told that I needed to be more like other teachers they had experienced and respected. "Hard" teacher behaviours that they felt would elicit their respect were

- slam the big ruler on the window so it has a loud crack;
- stick the big ruler up to a student's nose to scare them into silence;
- lift a student on top of a shelf; and
- shout loudly and mean it.

(Classroom hui, February, 2009)

Two research participants described how their prior schooling experiences had influenced some of the disruptive behaviours I had witnessed. Participant insights included:

> How we were treating people in Terms 1 and 2 in 2009 was more or less because of what we had experienced in 2008. We were still on that buzz "OK, who cares what they say, let's do what we want" because that's how we felt in 2008. At the end of 2008, we had no self-control over ourselves, we were just in that stuck mode. We didn't try and help ourselves and actually feel motivated. It didn't really help because even if we were motivated then we would still have that crap attitude. I used to like going to school just because I knew I'd turn up to start shit. I'd start trouble, walk around. I think that at Term 1 that crap attitude was in my head and I thought "yeah OK, I'm Year 8 and I can be like the Year 8s from last year" and I'm going to be loud because I didn't get that chance then. (P1)

> In my other schools I used to punch out at people or kids when someone would mock your family or mock you instead of talking. (P3)

Further examples of underlying tensions revealed that some of the Māori students experienced being "mocked" or "put down" because they were Māori.

> Like getting mocked because of who we are … being called "hori". Sometimes there were put downs involved, like who we are as tangata whenua. Usually they put me down when people discussed how Māori dislike people and that … see, like the Islanders used to call us that at the beginning of the year in Term 1 and Term 2. In the classroom we knew that they [Pacific Islanders] were playing around but out in the playground the other students were taking it serious. (P2)

> When other groups, when you don't know how to do things in other groups like Islander groups and you don't know how to sing or talk their way … they [Pacific Islanders] would say we're ruthless and stuff. (P3)

Reflecting on how student "put downs" of one another were responded to, two participants replied:

> You just lied about your culture. Let your culture down. (P3)
>
> And say you're ethnic, or you're like "I'm this" or "I'm that" when you know you're not just to be cool like them … in a way that can lead to wanting to cause trouble so you can get out of the environment that you're in or knowing that if you're going to school and you're mocked, you wouldn't really want to go to school at all because of who you are. (P1)

The participants' responded to the "mocking" and "put downs" by denying their own cultural identity. "Lying" and wanting to be "cool like them" demonstrates how they would leave their cultural experiences and identity "as Māori" at the "school gate" and "… behave according to the constraints set by the majority culture" (Wearmouth, Glynn, & Berryman, 2005, pp. 219–220).

Hui: A culturally responsive approach to improve relationships

I was aware of the "traditional" teaching practices the students were more likely to be accustomed to through my previous role as an itinerant RTLB. I understood the benefits of discursive pedagogies from a theoretical perspective (Bishop, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999) as well as through my own teaching and RTLB experiences. Discursive pedagogy fosters a learning environment where classroom students and teachers learn together as co-inquirers and promotes an authentic power-sharing relationship (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995). "Student voice" underpins the reciprocated relationships inherent to co-participation and co-constructed learning (Fielding, 2004; Freire, 1996; Robinson & Taylor, 2007) in a power-sharing educational model.

My rejection of typical deficit theorising about Māori students meant that I needed to re-locate the behavioural challenges I faced within my own realm of responsibility as the classroom teacher. Communication is a social process and central to effective power-sharing learning relationships. Student voice is an empowering and transformational process for both teachers and students as learners (Fielding, 2004; Schneider, 1996) because of the "dialogical nature of communication" (Robinson & Taylor, 2007, p. 9). I knew that I wanted to increase the level of positive communication within our classroom discourse, hopefully to improve student participation in classroom interactions. I also wanted to include the students as partners in developing a sustainable solution, which might also serve as a preventative strategy and reduce the level of disruptive behaviours. "Hui" is a cultural metaphor for an inclusive communication process often used formally and informally in Māori cultural settings such as pōwhiri, marae and/or poukai (significant Kingitanga gatherings). According to Macfarlane (2007), "hui whakatika" can also represent a facilitative process whereby "harmony" is restored in a culturally responsive process and focuses on "… building, nurturing and repairing relationships" (p. 152). I felt that hui addressed a cultural need for the Māori students and within a social justice framework, also served as a forum to facilitate a safe learning environment that was inclusive of all students (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Davies, 2004) Having sought advice and guidance from my immediate whānau members during the following weeks of Term 1, 2009, I introduced the students to the notion of hui. I drew from my experiences of attending monthly whānau marae committee meetings and described how we were responsible for managing and organising the affairs of the marae for and on behalf of our marae

beneficiaries. I explained how marae hui provided an opportunity for whānau to meet regularly and to discuss and problem-solve "take" (issues) collaboratively. The students seemed outwardly supportive to trial a committee meeting. Two participants reflected on the initial hui discussion:

> When you actually brought up the idea of having a committee meeting, everyone at that time wanted to be the chairperson and one of those writers. They were really keen to do it, participate in a committee meeting. (P1)

> Everyone wanted to speak up. (P3)

The students chose to nominate two chairpersons and two secretaries so that there were reserves in case a student was absent on a hui morning. Additional committee positions such as encouragers and timekeepers were also established. The two chairperson positions were identified as a shared role for students who demonstrated positive leadership skills. It was also agreed that the secretary positions would require people who had strengths with writing to prevent disruptions to the flow of meeting discussions. The timekeepers and encouragers were generated by students who wished to participate in a leadership role but were too shy to put themselves forward as a chairperson. The remaining students were identified as both beneficiaries and committee members. Finally, it was agreed that classroom hui would be held every Wednesday morning from 9.00am to 9.30am. The time was deliberately chosen so all beneficiaries could participate with hui before attending other option classes.

The first classroom hui was held on 1 April 2009. A hui agenda set the kaupapa or purpose for the first and subsequent weekly classroom hui. The committee meeting followed a set structure. The chairperson opened the hui with a short greeting and invited a beneficiary to volunteer an opening karakia. The karakia could be a formal prayer, "thought" or a reflection given in a student's first or second language such as Māori, Samoan, Tongan or Sudanese. "Take" on the agenda were discussed amongst the beneficiaries, followed by the chairperson requesting any ideas as possible solutions to the issues. Solutions would be discussed, follow-up support organised and consequences agreed. For example hui minutes recorded:

> Two students were identified as "swearing too much" in the classroom so a "swearing jar" was organised to collect fines from any offenders at a cost of 10c per swear word. The swearing jar was to be placed in a position for all people to pay any money owing. (Committee Minutes, 01/04/2009)

> Consequences for disrespecting the Mau Rākau (Māori weaponry) tutor ranged from 20 push ups, detention and picking up rubbish, writing lines, scraping bubble gum. (Committee Minutes, 13/05/2009)

> Consequences for flicking rubber bands in the classroom included taking the offending student to the deputy principal or social worker. (Committee Minutes, 27/05/2009)

One participant described student attitudes towards consequences agreed in a hui:

> When people did something naughty then they had to do the consequences. We didn't do like, just easy things that you can do

> straight away and it's already finished, we did things that are real consequences like scraping bubble gum off the ground. When we mentioned that as a consequence, then no-one made an issue, they were just being good. (P4)

Transforming relationships

The participants felt that the quality of student relationships in the classroom improved and that their motivation to engage with learning increased. They found weekly hui useful as a collective problem solving process. For example:

> We actually got problems solved that had been problems. It actually brought us together knowing each other's problems, how we could solve them together. (P1)

> We achieved solving all the problems. Yeah, it was cool because we got to share our feelings and tell all the consequences. (P4)

> But when we had our class hui then everybody started speaking up, opening up. (P2)

> Like you didn't need to hide, just told the truth and people helped you to solve any problem and helped you find a better way to do stuff. (P6)

As a problem-solving process, the weekly hui encouraged the Māori students to share in collective decision making. Whanaungatanga improved as trust developed amongst the hui beneficiaries. Manaakitanga was demonstrated as participants sought to help each other "find a better way to do stuff". The changes in relationships and attitudes towards each other and towards the weekly hui were described in the following ways:

> If you were to recap on the beginning of the term you would have been like "I can't believe I was like that", but by the end of the term it's like now you know how to be disciplined and know that there are actually solutions out there for your problems and stuff … I think it's just knowing that I'd been talking to people that knew what I was going through and I think it's just encouragement. (P1)

> Helped them to stop fighting and do bad things and told them to stop lying. It changed our class from being like, mad and liars and all the other stuff. They just changed after our hui, they learned to stop. When we started the hui we had to tell everyone what we had done and what to do to stop. Then when you kept doing it and doing it you got to know better and you got good at it. Everyone started being different, helping people and making friends. Yeah, it was better than when we started school. (P6)

> In Term One I had done no work and by the end of the year I started to do my work and stuff. I got higher grades and that. I wasn't like showing respect like when I was at the back of the line I was just mucking around then. When you put me as a leader I had a goal to stop mucking around in line and talking. (P2)

> By the end of the year everyone knew everyone and they all became friends. When our whole class would play one game and then we'd stop playing it, on the next day we'd go back and everyone in the school was playing it. They must have liked our class, eh? Yeah. (P4)

> When I first started I was getting hustled but I was too scared to tell everyone so I just kept it in and I didn't want to share it. Once I got to know everyone then I started coming out of my shell. (P3)

Inherent to whanaungatanga is a sense of belonging within a shared community of practice (Davies, 2004; Macfarlane, 2007). The classroom culture shifted from being fraught with disruptive forms of communicating to more respectful dialogue and maintaining respectful friendships. Indications of participants developing a sense of belonging included:

> We didn't really want to put our class down. They knew how far we'd come to "kill our buzz" and go around tagging and stuff like that. So we just made up a game for the whole class … [like] the times when we played handball out of the class with each other, then other teachers looked at us like it was a nice settled class. If you were to look back at our reputation you wouldn't believe that was actually our class … I remember we'd all run out of our class just to play our games with each other. (P1)

Reflections on their improved attitudes towards school attendance were also shared:

> Actually coming to school was one. Knowing that you were there to help us actually function to what we were doing and focus on what we were trying to achieve. (P1)

> Came to school for something, not just to eat or play. (P3)

> And to learn … instead of just mucking around you can just catch up on your work and that. (P2)

Participating in the class hui and participating in performance-based arts such as kapa haka and mau rākau provided a way in which the students felt proud of being Māori.

> Kapa haka showed the other students what Māori are made of. (P4)

> Kapa haka was more about cultural groups and I understood the values of being Māori. It had honour to it when I was the leading Māori female for kapa haka. (P1)

> When we had mau rākau, we were learning Māori and English. Some of the kids in the other classrooms liked it too because when we were doing mau rākau on the courts they were looking out of their classroom windows watching us. (P2)

The whole class participation in weekly mau rākau sessions during Term 2 had positive benefits for the relationships between the Māori and Pacific Island students within the classroom. An example of how the participants related to the Pacific Islanders in the classroom contrasted with the student relationships in the playground. One participant commented:

> Because we had done mau rākau as a class, the other classroom students wanted to learn more about our languages. Like one time we said something and they said "oh this sounds the same in our own language". They actually buzzed out because their language was similar to ours with just different letters but the pronunciation still sounded the same, like it linked. (P1)
>
> We made friends with them. (P2)

According to the participants, the mocking they experienced decreased during the school year. They attributed an improvement in playground relationships to their role as mau rākau "teachers". For example, during Term 3 the participants took the opportunity to teach mau rākau to the other three-syndicate classes:

> I think we were so positive towards mau rākau taking it wider. The other students wanted to experience what we had already experienced and when they actually saw us as students standing in front of them teaching what we knew, they were like "oh, so they do know what they're talking about". (P1)
>
> Yeah and usually at lunchtimes we could see them trying to do the hand game and stuff. (P1)
>
> It made me feel like a leader. (P4)

The participants were acknowledged as Māori and could share a performance-based activity involving te reo Māori with their peers. They identified kapa haka and mau rākau as teaching and learning programmes relevant to them as Māori because of the te reo Māori component. Both learning programmes were viewed as representations of "being real Māori". For example:

> It was like Māori was at specific times. The only time we learned Māori was in mau rākau or kapa haka. (P3)
>
> Kapa haka felt as if you're being like a real Māori and having fun while being disciplined at the same time. Māori songs, prayers and kapa haka represented me as Māori. (P6)
>
> Yeah I think we had done a little lesson about how the languages link because you went around and said "how do you say this in Samoan", "how do you say this in Tongan", "how do you say this in Māori", you did it on the board. Yeah I think that was a type of Māori lesson I took up because it involved Māori. (P1)
>
> I enjoyed kapa haka. I was learning new stuff like new songs and the haka. I felt kind of shy and there were heaps of people there watching but I thought it was cool. I learned more te reo Māori in mau rākau and the cultural groups. (P5)

The participants discussed how they collectively valued te reo Māori as a language representation of the cultural values and belief systems relevant to them. Language is central to how cultural "norms" are conveyed and acquired (Bruner, 1996; Vialle, Lysaght, & Verenikina, 2005).

Conclusion: Explicitly forging cultural connections

Despite describing the weekly hui as a transformational learning and behavioural process, the participants' responses revealed that only teaching/learning programmes which were inclusive of te reo Māori were perceived as relevant for them as Māori students. The difference between the participants' perceptions and mine was that even though the weekly hui were conducted in English, I had viewed the forum as a culturally responsive construct which encompassed tikanga Māori values such as ako, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga. However, the issue with viewing te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in isolation from each other has implications for my teaching pedagogy. Lack of explicit connections between te reo and tikanga Māori has exposed cultural assumptions I had made as the classroom teacher during 2009. I had assumed that the high number of Māori students in the classroom would naturally recognise Māori cultural concepts and instead, I had ignored the cultural diversity the students represented. The implications of the participants' insights have exposed to me a deeper level of understanding of how "culture counts" (Bishop & Glynn, 1999) as a Māori teacher in a mainstream classroom.

Further participant discussions identified negative experiences they had encountered as Māori in the school-wide context. Their perspectives revealed the extent of the ethnic stereotyping that was occurring in the playground. The "mocking" was something I was unaware of during 2009 as their classroom teacher. Participant reflections included feelings of being "put down" and how they addressed those feelings by denying their own identity as Māori. They explained that their participation with kapa haka and mau rākau made them feel proud to be Māori because of their engagement with te reo Māori. There was a strong connection between using "te reo Māori" and feelings of "being a real Māori".

I started to forge deeper links between te reo and tikanga Māori when I returned to New Zealand in 1995 through my own engagement with whānau and with tertiary studies. A reflection that I have documented during this research process explains:

> I continue to develop my level of understanding of "Māori ways". What I consider to have been a surface level understanding continues to shift deeper as I become older and engage with on-going learning. This is pivotal to my personal identity journey. My commitment and service to our "kinship" or "whakapapa" whānau Marae over the past few years has become my main source of learning. My aunties and uncles are supportive, patient and encourage my cousin and me to "have a go" as we return to our papakāinga (home of our ancestors). There are frequent lessons learned from "hands-on" experience, which textbooks can only theorise or describe. Indeed, I fear an over-intellectualisation of things Māori has made tikanga Māori more complex than the reality. (Personal Research Journal, 08/04/2010)

A key question that I ask myself as a result of these findings is "Have the socio-cultural constructs from my primary school education influenced my understanding of 'being Māori' more than I have understood until now?" For example, some of my early school experiences focused on activities with a strong emphasis on learning te reo Māori (karanga and waiata) rather than on exploring and making connections to tikanga Māori (understanding meanings embedded within karanga and waiata). Was I behaving

in the same way that I was socialised into accepting as a mainstream Māori student during the 1970s and 1980s? Had I failed to make tikanga Māori transparent to my Māori students? Or had I simply taken whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and ako for granted as shared cultural "norms"?

This research study was initially driven by my interest to explore and understand the research participants' attitude and behavioural changes during 2009. I have come to understand that the greatest transformation occurred within my own cultural and professional knowledge as a Māori mainstream teacher.

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