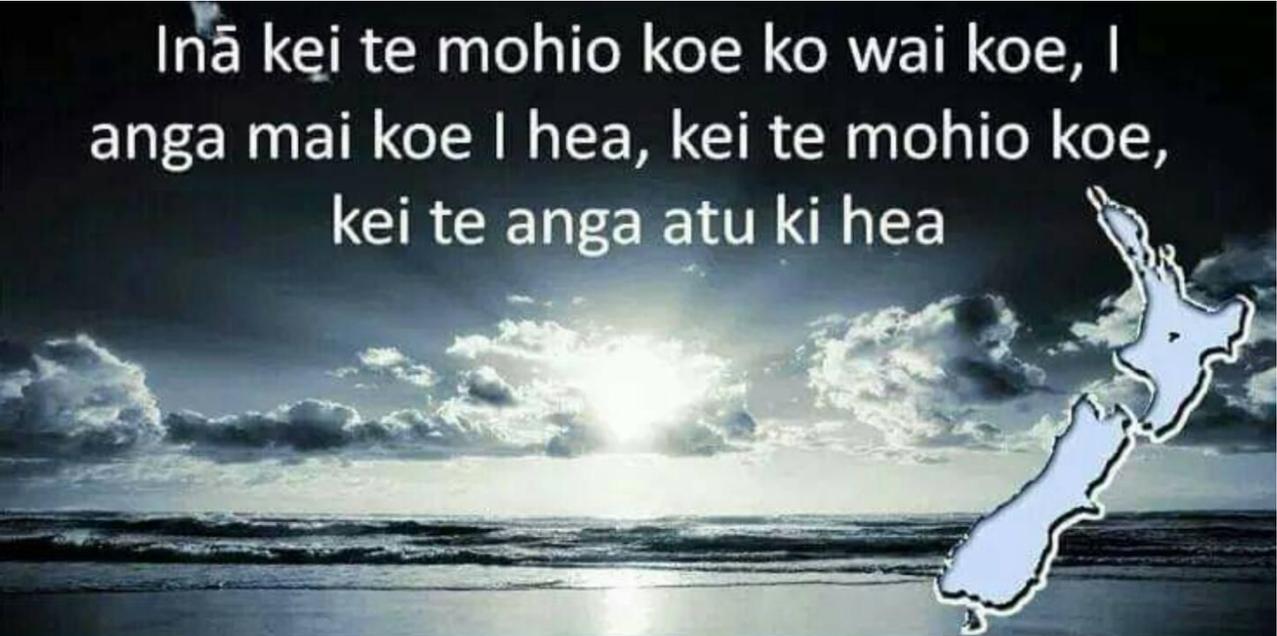


Developing Cultural Confidence to Improve Student Achievement

Inā kei te mohio koe ko wai koe, I
anga mai koe I hea, kei te mohio koe,
kei te anga atu ki hea



If you know who you are and where you are from, then
you will know where you are going

Brenda McPherson
Windy Ridge School

ASB / APPA Travelling Fellowship Recipient 2018

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Acknowledgements

I wish first to acknowledge the commitment by both the ASB and APPA for this very generous Fellowship. With the current focus on wellbeing and concerns about the retention of school staff, it is vital that we find ways to support the growth of our school leaders. This award provided me an opportunity to think deeply about one area of personal and professional interest, and to refresh and renew my commitment to the challenging role of school leadership.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank:

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- Ann Milne for inspiring my study and helping me to understand the importance of culture in our lives.

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Executive Summary

This report outlines how teachers and leaders can practically and strategically engage in practices that develop cultural confidence and are based in a culturally responsive pedagogy that has shown improved outcomes for Māori students.

While my focus was on the needs of Māori learners as a disadvantaged group in our system, the recommendations apply to other ethnic groups working as a minority in our predominantly mono-cultural education system.

It outlines:

- The research, both national and international, that underpins the importance of culture for indigenous students in order to improve outcomes.
- A range of specific actions that can be taken at various levels of school structure to influence improved outcomes for Māori students.

The recommendations for schools and school leaders include:

1. Identifying the impact of unconscious bias at all levels of influence in their organisation.
2. Recognising the impact of perspective on the knowledge and values they are reinforcing in their programmes
3. Providing opportunity and requirement for all staff to participate in cultural learning, starting with Maori.
4. Prioritising Te Ao Maori in their efforts to be culturally responsive, before moving to multiculturalism.
5. Authentically living the values espoused in Ka Hikitia by ensuring policies, procedures and practices align with them.

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6. Designing measures alongside whanau and iwi that reflect what success for Maori students looks like.

Background

In 2009 I read *Colouring in the white spaces : Cultural identity and learning in school (Ann Milne ASB/APPA report)* and was inspired by the challenges posed in it; to make a difference for our Māori students. I was troubled by the implications that if you were Māori you were less likely to be successful at school. Nine years later we continue to address the same issues. It is a national tragedy that despite significant research and numerous reports we have not yet managed to turn around the outcomes. The experience of Māori in NZ mirrors the shared experiences of other indigenous cultures who have been colonised, and the ongoing negative impacts of that process.

Colonisation is very thorough and intentional - it involves a well documented process of invasion, assimilation and control in order to achieve economic wealth and political power. Education has always been a very successful driver for this process as it allows a large portion of the population to be re-programmed quickly. We need to acknowledge that the loss of culture and language was not a choice - it was the result of a determined systematic plan to remove the identity of Māori to make them easier to control in the process of creating wealth for the British.

My investment in the outcomes for Māori learners is personal; I am the Pakeha mother of two Māori children, aunty to 35 and great- aunty to nine others. All of our children have done (or are doing) well in their educational endeavours, be it in mainstream or immersion pathways. I found myself questioning what it was that made the difference for our tamariki compared to so many other Māori children in our schools. Through the knowledge, experience and commitment of their grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and cousins, they had access to their culture on a regular and authentic basis. I believe it provided them with a resilience and self-confidence that supported them to be successful in their academic work. While I acknowledge that other factors were in play also, this seemed to me to be a significant factor in allowing them to engage with and have success in learning.

In 2016, after reading Angus Macfarland's Ka Awatea project report, I chose to investigate this connection between culture and success further with a small group of Māori students in our school. We asked the learners what they wanted to know more about with regards to their culture. We found out that very few had a regular connection with the cultural side of their identity. So we learned about their whakapapa, about their marae and their place as mana whenua. We met with whanau and asked them about their

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aspirations for their tamariki, and discovered the challenges they faced in supporting their children to find their place as Māori in these times.

The programme impacted positively on the learners attendance, engagement and achievement, and created meaningful bonds with our Māori parents and whanau. It could be considered as successful for those students in relation to traditional academic measures of success, but the more I read, the more I questioned those measures - what is considered successful for a Māori student living in Aotearoa in the 21st Century? This was the motivation for this sabbatical research, and finding an answer has been frustrating, challenging and inspiring.

My research and study centered around the following questions:

1. What is culture?
2. Why is it important?
3. What is 'cultural connectedness'?
4. What systems, programmes and practices do schools implement to encourage and celebrate cultural connectedness and confidence?
5. What behaviours do culturally connected students demonstrate?
6. How does cultural connectedness influence or impact on student engagement in a school setting?
7. What is the impact of cultural connectedness on student achievement?
8. What does 'success as Māori' look like?

During my travels I found myself straying from these questions as I spoke to school leaders about their schools and experiences. We talked about the NZ journey of self awareness in relation to indigenous peoples' experiences, and where they had come to in that journey in their own land. I realised that many of the barriers that stand in the way of changing the outcomes for indigenous students started in our own perspectives and beliefs. Being able to change that requires us to be honest and courageous, and sometimes even unpopular as we require others to consider their own bias in order to deliver a culturally sustaining education for their Māori students.

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Literature Review

Much has been said for a very long time about the need to address the inequalities within the education system in Aotearoa New Zealand. For generations Māori children have experienced an education that reinforced the idea that indigenous beliefs, aspirations and values were inferior to those in Western cultures. Other communities around the world have been travelling a similar path to us - looking for a way to address the inequities of their education systems that negatively impact on their indigenous and/or minority students.

In NZ, the Ministry of Education document designed to influence Māori success in our schools, Ka Hikitia, was produced in 2008 (later updated in 2013) and outlined the four key areas of focus for educators - that all Māori students will;

1. have their identity, language and culture valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success
2. know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to enjoy success
3. experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging, rewarding and positive
4. gain the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to achieve success in te ao Māori , New Zealand and the wider world.

School leaders found it difficult to articulate how they would enact these goals within their schools. Even the phrase - 'Māori Achieving Success as Māori' - created confusion for many professionals. There was some concern that Ka Hikitia would evolve into a compliance tick list rather than a broad commitment to improve education for and with Māori learners.

A subsequent review of the document in 2017 found that Ka Hikitia itself had too many combined targets, goal statements, strategies and actions for those who are looking for a place to start.

A good 'place to start' is to have a clear understanding of culture and why it is important for a person to have their culture validated.

Culture refers to the customs, practices, languages, values and world views that define social groups such as those based on nationality, ethnicity, region or common interests. Cultural identity is important for people's sense of self and how they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can contribute to people's overall wellbeing. Identifying with a particular culture helps people feel they belong and gives them a sense of security. An established cultural identity has also been linked with positive outcomes in areas such as health and education. It provides access to social networks, which provide support and shared

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values and aspirations. Social networks can help to break down barriers and build a sense of trust between people – a phenomenon sometimes referred to as “social capital”. (Ministry of Social Development, 2016)

We need to see that being responsive to culture is more than simply including words, phrases and artistic representations around our school. *“ It's not race that matters in culturally responsive teaching but the awareness of implicit bias that gets in the way of healthy student-teacher relationships and narrow interpretations of learning that ignore the [cultural capital] of our students.”* (Z.Hammond quoted in ‘Making connections: CRT and the brain’, 2015)

According to Dr Gloria Ladson Billings (an American pedagogical theorist and teacher educator on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Education and researcher at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research) culturally relevant education rests on three criteria;

1. Students must experience academic success
2. Students must develop and /or maintain cultural competence
3. Students must develop critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order.

This is reflected in the work of Haley Milne at Kia Aroha College. The previous principal, Ann Milne, started the work at Kia Aroha college to better suit their learners, and this work has continued to grow under Haley’s leadership. There is an intentionality about the policies and pedagogy that guides the learning in their school. They focus explicitly on the value of self, culture and diversity. The curriculum is designed to be relevant, personalised, purposeful and critically conscious; allowing students to use their literacy and other academic skills to consider their place in the world and challenge the status quo. The development of the Warrior Scholars, senior students who work collaboratively to present their research and recommendations on a social issue of their choosing, has been very successful, with presentations at the NZ Assoc of Research in Education (NZARE) conferences. The school has developed a critical pedagogy that empowers cultural identity, expects academic achievement and encourages social critique.

Dr Deborah Gabriel (Bournemouth University, UK) has been working for many years to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Her belief that curriculum should reflect the cultural diversity of the school, drawing on the different forms of knowledge and varying perspectives of the students, has led to the development of the ‘3D Pedagogy’ - a framework that aims to support, enhance and improve outcomes for all students. She presented this framework at the CICE Conference in Toronto that I attended in June of this year.

The framework focuses on ways to decolonise, democratise and diversify the curriculum; it asks us to consider how the current curriculum perpetuates inequalities. It challenges us to consider how we present events, knowledge and perspectives to our students. She cautions us about presenting

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perspective as universal fact. It is our responsibility to reflect global universals and different perspectives in order to stop perpetuating inequalities. For majority cultures that is about being critically conscious about the inequalities faced by minority groups and feeling empowered to be part of a solution for addressing these.

Inquiry learning is an obvious vehicle for this to occur. The ultimate goal of inquiry learning is to create a social action - for the learners to do something that changes their world for the better in some way. Pedagogies that are evident within the inquiry framework encourage students to work in ways that are consistent with traditional ways of working; they are experiential, require interdependence, value community or collective wisdom, and encourage collaboration.

The work of Russell Bishop et al that resulted in the Kotahitanga Project, and then developed further in other frameworks such as Kia Eke Panuku, has emphasised the importance of relationship between teacher and learner for improving outcomes for students.

Working with Year 9 and 10 Māori students, researchers developed the Te Kotahitanga Effective Teaching Profile. This research showed that teachers who implemented this profile effectively developed pedagogy that was culturally responsive and relational. Pedagogy such as this involves:

- working in ways that support interdependence and power sharing,
- respecting that everyone's culture counts,
- ensuring that pedagogy can be interactive, dialogic and spiralling,
- acknowledging the importance of relational connectedness, and
- co-constructing a common vision for educational excellence.

All of these attributes link directly to the 5 cultural values embedded in our curriculum documents: *Manaakitanga, Aroha, Whanaungatanga, Mana and Ako*, and are echoed in the student voice collected as part of the *Education Matters to Me: Key Insights* document produced by the Children's Commissioner in January 2018. So now we must move from knowing to doing, to leverage these influences for better outcomes.

In the article *'From the rakau to the ngakau: Exploring authentic approaches to leadership, policy and pedagogy'* Macfarlane and Derby challenge us to move beyond simply 'ticking the culturally-responsive box' and finding ways to live the values that we espouse in our charters and school plans.

They use the analogy of rakau (pencil) and ngakau (heart) to demonstrate the move from compliance to authenticity. They acknowledge that a rākau approach is a first step - a simple, concrete, manageable step, but *'does not signal a final destination. Rather, [they] are advocating for continued learning and progression towards a ngākau approach where Māori values are operationalised authentically.'*

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I believe this to be our greatest challenge.

Study and Findings

During my leave I was able to travel to a number of schools overseas and within NZ to investigate how they were supporting their indigenous students in their school settings. I want to acknowledge the welcome I received in all the schools I visited, and the honest and professional discussions I had with teachers and school leaders in those schools. All the leaders I spoke with discussed the challenges they faced in delivering an authentic and relevant curriculum to indigenous students in their schools. They talked about the residual guilt, confusion and anger felt by many in the majority population regarding historical actions, the push-back from some members of their communities around any perceived special treatment for indigenous students, the long-term underachievement of indigenous students in their communities, and the anxiety from staff around delivering cultural content correctly. These themes were common in all of the discussions I had.

There were many consistencies between the different countries in relation to the intent to do better for indigenous students. All the countries I visited have had recent and national focus on addressing the historical injustices and ongoing disadvantage faced by indigenous people. This process has been reflected in changes to the guidelines for schools around curriculum, pedagogy and consultation. While we all seemed to be on a similar journey, it was clear that NZ was further along the continuum of change in addressing things on a national level, likely due to the size of our country and relative ease of implementing change within a smaller and less complex system than those countries dealing with both federal and state legislation.

There are common practices that existed in all of the education systems I looked at. These included systemic actions such as

- specific reference to culturally responsive practices within the curriculum documents, including guidelines around the teaching of history to include the perspectives and experiences of indigenous people,
- The development and inclusion of cultural competencies within appraisal and registration requirements for teachers and other school staff, eg Alaska cultural competencies, Aboriginal Understandings Rubric in Canada, and in NZ Tataiako and the Effective Teacher Profile in Te Kotahitanga .
- requirements to identify and track the progress and achievement of indigenous students within and between school settings.

Many systems looked to influence classroom practice by increasing the number of indigenous teachers in their classrooms. We have seen this in NZ with the provision of a Huarahi Māori pathway in ITE, in

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Australia where the Stronger Smarter Institute promotes quality practice and leadership for teachers of indigenous students and in British Columbia, the University has implemented a pre-service training for indigenous teachers- NITEP: Indigenous Teacher Education Programme to encourage more indigenous people to take up teaching roles in schools. The hope is that these initiatives would provide successful role models for students and influence the delivery of curriculum in mainstream classrooms.

There were other initiatives in place that were more school-specific, rather than systemic or centrally driven.

In Canada, I observed very little diversity within the teaching and support staff communities I visited, and this provides a challenge for presenting diverse perspectives in the curriculum. In Vancouver, British Columbia, I was able to spend time in a central city school where the leadership and staff have a strong commitment to indigenous education and outcomes, despite having very few indigenous students and no indigenous teachers. However they believed that if non-indigenous students understood the ongoing impact of colonisation for their indigenous peers they would think differently about the challenges faced by them in their community. They had sourced teaching resources that allowed them to reflect a strong indigenous presence in their rooms and an authentic cultural perspective in their teaching. One example of this was a unit of learning for a class of 8 year olds looking at the UN Convention for Children's Rights, and identifying how many of those had been contravened by the actions of Settlers in the colonisation of the area, and how the effects of that colonisation continued to impact the local indigenous children.

Further east across Canada, I visited Sir Adam Beck Elementary School, situated in rural Baden, Waterloo, Ontario. They also have very few children who identify as indigenous. The Education Board (Kitchener-Waterloo) and their System Leaders have acknowledged the importance of recognising the identity of the various indigenous cultures in their communities, and are now working towards demonstrating this within their own schools. Their initial actions are around acknowledging the local First nations peoples and their lands, and to begin discussing how pre-invasion histories can be taught in their schools.

Briar Road Public School is in Campbelltown in Southwest Sydney. They have a large number of children who identify as Aboriginal, with Pacific peoples their next largest group. The school promotes all cultures as a way to celebrate diversity and show that they value the identity of all students; however their priority is Aboriginal culture. They have employed a Cultural Support person and allocated a designated space in the school to promote and celebrate indigenous knowledge and practices. The CST works with teachers to include an aboriginal lens in their planning and delivery of topics, and include activities that demonstrate and teach traditional values and knowledge. He works alongside the classroom teacher to deliver

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learning, and also provides expertise in how they might include more indigenous content in their everyday programmes. This initiative is a way for them to move beyond 'events, holidays and heroes' to a more responsive curriculum that has culture authentically embedded in everyday practice.

In Rotorua, I spent time in two different Intermediate schools; Mokoia and Kaitao. The schools are part of a wider community that has access to a well organised iwi-based support structure. Ngati Whakaue (Te Arawa) have a clear education support plan in place and through this they provide scholarships, grants and resources to schools and whanau. The leadership provided gives a culturally located story for all schools in the area, and support in finding, using and celebrating local histories, stories and landmarks. The Ngati Whakaue Trust is also available to support schools with professional development opportunities related to local traditional knowledge and values, and with the development of te Reo Māori programmes in schools. This allows for local indigenous students to see their own identity and history represented in their schools. It validates them as tangata whenua, having a special place in the community.

There are many examples of interventions that have been successful in pockets around the world. It was clear to me that the ones that were most effective were the ones that were designed with a particular community in mind - contextualised to the local cohort. Schools and communities that worked together to improve outcomes for students had greatest success. Schools that focussed on the quality of the relationship between teacher and the learner also had significant improvement in outcomes. None of this should be a surprise as the research and literature has been very clear about the impact of relationship on learning.

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Recommendations

What I saw and learnt during my visits has convinced me that NZ has fewer barriers to address in order to improve outcomes for our indigenous students than many other countries.

We have legislation in the form of the Treaty of Waitangi that outlines very clearly the rights of Māori in relation to identity, language and culture. We have a single national system of education that can relatively quickly influence change in practice if there is a will to do so. We also have a single indigenous language to teach in our schools so we do not have to choose which of dozens of languages to teach as our colleagues in Australia or Canada might have to. While I acknowledge that within Te Ao Māori there are iwi differences in language and tikanga, these are not overly complex to accommodate within our programmes with support and guidance from local iwi.

We need to find an authentic way to embed indigenous language, culture, knowledge and perspectives in the curriculum, leadership, governance and pedagogy in our schools. An honest review of the beliefs and perspectives that we promote in our classrooms, alongside an audit of the resources we use to teach our students, is a great start.

We need to question how school values are operationalised in our schools - are they living practices, or simply words in our documents? Cultural values such as:

- Manaakitanga (ethic of care)
- Aroha (compassion)
- Whanaungatanga (building relationships)
- Mana (dignity and respect)
- Ako (reciprocal learning)

are regularly included in both Ministry and School documents to demonstrate a knowledge of Te Ao Māori.

What is there about our actions that demonstrates that these things guide our decision-making every day?

We need to connect with whanau and iwi to make explicit what their measures of success are for their children, and then work to achieve those. Instead of very narrow focus of academic success, we should be looking for ways to include cultural and social goals in our plans for improving student outcomes.

With reference back again to the article *'From the rakau to the ngakau: Exploring authentic approaches to leadership, policy and pedagogy'* I have compiled some examples that fit into one category or the other to illustrate how we might move from compliance to embedded practice in our schools. These ideas have

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come from a variety of sources, both national and overseas, and I have referenced the documents in this report. It is certainly not an exhaustive list, but I hope gives a starting point for schools to work from.

	Rakau - of the pencil, compliance 	Ngakau - of the heart, authentic 
Classrooms and Classroom teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Te Reo taught in isolation once a week. ● Teacher driven curriculum ● Teaching <i>about</i> Māori - the learner in a position of observing, ● Attempting to find a race-based connection to content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Te Reo used in the classroom incidentally (instructions, greetings, karakia, waiata) ● Te Reo taught regularly in every room with clear progressions for increasing student capability. ● Student focussed learning - connected to students own life, culture, concerns and interests ● Play-based pedagogy ● Inquiry learning that produces a social action ● Teaching resources that reflect the accurate cultural perspective and knowledge of Māori - local histories, sites of significance, local stories and narratives. ● Giving consideration to students cultural learning styles and tools eg meaning-making is oral and active, preference for collaborative tasks.
Leadership teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collecting and accepting achievement data as predetermined and predictable ● Setting achievement challenges that focus only on academic goals, and ignore cultural capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Questioning the data - what is the story behind each learner's data? How do we explain the data? What other factors are influencing outcomes other than ethnicity? ● Finding ways to include cultural and social goals as measures of success ● Shared understanding of the goals within Ka Hikitia
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Events - Matariki, Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori ● Punitive behaviour management practices ● Bilingual signs displayed but not used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural practices that are integrated into the fabric of the school eg powhiri for new families at enrolment, ● Bilingual signage around the school - taught, explained and used. ● Teacher professional learning of te Ao Māori required and provided for all. ● Restorative behaviour management practices that promote

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		whanaungatanga and manaakitanga
Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Treaty of Waitangi workshop ● Approval of charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation of Hautu - guidelines for implementing ToW through policy ● Personal professional learning of Te Ao Māori ● Commit to staffing, property and resourcing that promotes greater cultural representation in the school. ● Succession plans that focus on cultural representation.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual consultation or presentation of data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular focus groups with school leaders ● Involved in supporting or delivering cultural content ● Involvement in designing the school's measures of success for Maori students (MASAM) ● Regular review of schools MASAM framework and progress

CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PRACTICES

Culturally sustaining practices seek to make teaching and learning relevant and responsive to the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of students across categories of difference and (in)equality. Each member of the school community has different areas of responsibility that contribute to schoolwide change and improvement.

TEACHERS



- PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- PEDAGOGY
- CURRICULUM PLANNING & DELIVERY
- ATTITUDE
- PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



- PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- PLANNING AND EVENTS
- STAFFING
- MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY
- STRATEGIC GOALS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



- PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- POLICY
- PROPERTY
- FINANCE AND RESOURCING
- STAFFING
- STRATEGIC PLANNING

All members of the school community must commit to challenging the existing structures and systems that have contributed to and maintain inequality of outcomes

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Culturally Responsive Teaching in a Mastery Learning Environment

Emily Smith, April 19, 2018

<https://knowledgeworks.org/resources/culturally-responsive-teaching-mastery-learning-environment/>

Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

G.Ladson-Billings, American Educational Research Journal, 1995, Vol 32, Number 3, pp 465-491

Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: *Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57438b77f699bbfae400bbca/t/5750ead5f850827880ea8e39/1464920802604/Colouring+in+the+White+Spaces+%C2%2B+Cultural+Identity+and+Learning+in+School.pdf>

Warrior Scholars - Decolonising education

Video - Kia Aroha College <https://vimeo.com/215812317>

The Social Report 2016 - Te purongo oranga tangata

Ministry of Social Development

<http://socialreport.msd.govt.nz/cultural-identity.html>

Dr Deborah Gabriel (Bournemouth University, UK) - <http://deborahgabriel.com/research-2/>

Making connections: CRT and the brain

Elena Aguilar, Edutopia article - 2015

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/making-connections-culturally-responsive-teaching-and-brain-elena-aguilar>

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Education Matters to Me: Key Insights

Office of the Children's Commissioner and NZSTA, January 2018

<http://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/OCC-STA-Education-Matters-to-Me-Key-Insights-24Jan2018.pdf>

Other Useful Resources:

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools (1998)

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/publications/culturalstandards.pdf>

What Works. The Work Program. Improving outcomes for Indigenous students. The Workbook, 2nd edition. Published by National Curriculum Services and the Australian Curriculum Studies Association September 2005

<http://www.whatworks.edu.au/dbAction.do?cmd=displaySitePage1&subcmd=select&id=399>

Te Kotahitanga

University of Waikato

<http://tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/About>

Kia Eke Panuku

University of Waikato

<https://kep.org.nz/> (Content moved to <https://poutamapounamu.org.nz/>)

The Māori Education Strategy: Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 -2017

Ministry of Education

<https://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-maori-education-strategy-ka-hikitia-accelerating-success-20132017/the-maori-education-strategy-ka-hikitia-accelerating-success-2013-2017/introduction-to-ka-hikitia-accelerating-success/introduction/>

Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners

Education Council

<https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/t%C4%81taiako-cultural-competencies-teachers-m%C4%81ori-learners-0>

Māori Achieving Success as Māori

NZSTA resources, including Hautū: Māori Cultural Responsiveness Self Review tool for Boards of Trustees

<https://www.nzsta.org.nz/maori-student-achievement/>