

**Leadership practices that raise the achievement  
outcomes of Māori learners: An examination of  
practices.**

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## Abstract

This dissertation aims to inquire into the practices of educational leaders that seek to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. Despite the efforts of policy makers and educators, Māori learners achieve below their New Zealand peers, many of whom are of European descent. This gap begins from their formative years and is evident throughout their schooling thereby resulting with a disproportionate number leaving school without the qualifications they need. It is accepted that some factors are beyond the scope and influence of schools, but it is the factors within schools where educational leaders can make the most difference that is pertinent.

Educational leaders by virtue of their influential position can make a difference, although they may not be involved with students in terms of day to day instruction. They however, lead teachers and support staff who are in direct contact with students and hence are capable of making a difference. An important pre-requisite highlighted by many researchers and academics is a culturally responsive pedagogy for improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. This approach values what students know and how they do things and therefore incorporates the same in the teaching and learning environment. It is incumbent on educational leaders to ensure that a culturally responsive pedagogy permeate the entire school in spirit, word and deed if gains are to be made with improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.

In this small scale qualitative study, semi structured interviews were conducted with three educational leaders from full primary schools in Auckland that had between 10%-15% learners who classify themselves as being Māori.

The findings indicated a genuine commitment by the three educational leaders towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. The common themes emerging from the practices of the educational leaders included culturally responsive pedagogy, targeting and tracking Māori students, high expectations and home school partnerships. The practices of educational leaders unique to their contexts were the *Literacy Enhancement Creativity Programme* (LEAP), *Positive Behaviour for Learning* (PB4L) and *Accelerated Learning in Literacy* (ALL).

This study emphasised the important role that educational leaders play in providing direction and motivating their staff towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners as leaving it all to Māori could be seen as abrogating treaty obligations. The recommendations arising from this study include providing professional development for overseas trained teachers on pedagogical practices appropriate for Māori learners and professional development programmes for teachers where their personal beliefs like stereotyping and ethnocentrism could be reflected on and interrogated in a non-threatening manner. Other recommendations arising from this research was providing a mentoring programme for beginning principals and the support for Māori learners at the start of their intermediate years (Year 7) where most disengagement would likely occur.

### **Attestation of authorship**

*I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), no material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma or a university or other institution of higher learning.*

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# Glossary of Māori Terms

Ako	Reciprocal Teaching and Learning
Aroha	Love, Affection, Sympathy
Ka Hikitia	To Step Up
Kotahitanga	Unity and Bonding
Kohanga Reo	Kindergarten where instructions are in Māori
Mana	Prestige
Manaakitanga	Ethos of Care
Māori	Indigenous People of the Land
Marae	Tribal Meeting Ground, Courtyard
Pumanawatanga	A Beating Heart
Rangatiratanga	Self Determination
Ruia	Shake, Flutter
Tangata whenua	People of the Land
Te Reo Māori me ona tikanga	Honouring Māori language and culture
Wairuatanga	Spirituality
Whānau	Family, Extended Family
Whānaungatanga	Relationships

## Chapter 1: Introduction

New Zealand has fast become a super-diverse country both culturally and linguistically with people from many countries of the world making this country their home. Consequently, there are 200 ethnic groups and over 160 languages spoken (Spoonley, 2014). It is also the land of the indigenous Māori population who are referred to as tangata whenua or people of the land. When the British settlers arrived in New Zealand, an agreement was reached between the Māori chiefs and the settlers to live under an accepted set of laws and this agreement paved the way for the Treaty of Waitangi to be signed between the two parties. Article 2 of the Māori version of the Treaty provided an assurance for the language, customs and beliefs of Māori to be protected thus acknowledging that schools be a culturally safe environment for Māori learners (Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh & Bateman, 2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum* acknowledges New Zealand's unique bicultural identity and emphasises that the curriculum endorse the Treaty of Waitangi as integral to one of its principles. (Ministry of Education, 2007b). The other principles of the *New Zealand Curriculum Document* include high expectations, cultural diversity, inclusion, learning to learn, community engagement, coherence and future focus (Ministry of Education, 2007b). In spite of the efforts by the government and policy makers, schools have been challenged to put into practice the principles of the Treaty and the *New Zealand Curriculum Document*. There is still however, a huge disparity between the achievement outcomes of Māori learners and their non- Māori peers many of whom are of European descent (Berryman, Nevin, SooHoo & Ford, 2015).

Teachers have to attend amongst other cogent competing agendas, the diversity of learners in terms of their gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity and special needs (Alton-Lee, 2003). They are also obligated to provide students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge of Te Reo Māori me ona tikanga (Ministry of Education, 2007b, p.9). The question then arises as to how schools and teachers respond in order to cater for these diverse needs and similarities in order to ensure that all learners achieve to their maximum potential. Ultimately, they have a significant role to play in ensuring that the learning outcomes of Māori learners are improved. Researchers in the recent past have suggested that teachers use a culturally responsive pedagogical practice where the culture of the learners is valued and respected and where

teachers incorporate experiences that are relevant and appropriate for the learners (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Teachers however, cannot achieve much on their own but through support, guidance and direction provided by educational leaders at their schools through their practices. There are innumerable examples in educational research that associate leadership with student learning outcomes. School leadership is critical not only to student achievement outcomes but to any form of education, and is second only to teaching (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004) maintain that when leadership improves so does student learning outcomes.

## **The Research Rationale**

I was born, raised and educated in South Africa during apartheid. I was discriminated in virtually every facet of my life; my only crime being the colour of my skin. From an early age, I can recall my parents and elders in the family stressing the importance of education. Fortunately, I took heed to their sound advice and made it to university under very trying circumstances, due to financial hardship and absolutely no assistance from the government. Hard work and perseverance paid off when I graduated with a BA degree majoring in industrial psychology and criminology. I subsequently completed a Certificate Programme in Management, Graduate Diploma in Education and a Post Graduate Diploma in Literacy Education. From my personal lived experience, I know the value of education and how it can open doors that would otherwise be closed to you. It was my educational qualifications that afforded me the opportunity to migrate to New Zealand under the skilled migrant category in 2006.

Presently, I serve as an educational leader. During the past twelve years, I have worked predominantly in low decile schools with Māori learners. I have come to realise that Māori learners like learners from other ethnic communities have immense potential. However, a pre-requisite for achieving success with Māori learners is forging sound relationships, having high expectations as well as including a culturally responsive pedagogical practice. I am passionate about improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners because I believe it is a moral obligation and it gives me a sense of immense personal satisfaction when I see Māori learners making consistent progress. Hence, I have undertaken to conduct this study whereby the

practices of educational leaders to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori would be inquired into

## Research Aim and Questions

This research aims to inquire into the leadership practices of educational leaders that seek to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. The aims of this research will be supported by the following questions:

- What are the practices of educational leaders in full primary schools towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners?
- How do leadership practices inform decision making to raise Māori student outcomes?
- How does your school monitor the leadership practices that contribute to the achievement outcome of Māori learners?

## Dissertation Overview

This dissertation consists of six chapters, each contributing to this study. **Chapter one** provides an introduction to this study, the research rationale, research aims and questions and the dissertation overview.

**Chapter two** is the literature review and identifies three themes emerging from the literature on the topic viz. educational leadership, culturally responsive leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy together with the sub themes. It highlights the historical disparity in Māori student achievement outcomes. Limitations and gaps in the existing literature were included as well as the challenges associated with implementing leadership practices to promote a culturally responsive pedagogy. **Chapter three** explains the research design that outlines the methodology, methods, data collection and analysis. It also includes the ethical considerations and limitations that apply to this study. **Chapter four** provides the research findings from the semi-structured interviews in relation to the three themes and related sub themes identified in chapter three. **Chapter 5** provides a discussion of the key findings in relation to the research question. **Chapter 6** summarises the findings and limitations of this study and makes recommendations for further research.

## Summary

This chapter set the tone by providing an introduction to the study and alluded to the Treaty of Waitangi obligations in catering for the protection of Māori language, beliefs and culture. It acknowledged that the *New Zealand Curriculum Document* affirmed New Zealand's unique identity and that the curriculum document recognises the Treaty of Waitangi as one of its principles. The chapter also outlined the research rationale, research aims and questions and provided a summary of how this dissertation is organised.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review chapter plays an important role in elucidating what emerges from the existing literature on the research topic. For this study, I have identified three common themes from the existing literature on how the achievement outcomes of Māori learners could be improved when the practices of educational leaders cater for the ethnically diverse needs of their learners. The three main themes identified are educational leadership, culturally responsive leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy. Within each of these main themes are sub themes and these are reflected in Figure 2.1, models of leadership: themes and sub themes framework. These themes and sub themes are by no means exhaustive, but which I consider relevant to the leadership practices of educational leaders to raising the achievement outcome of Māori learners.

Themes	Educational Leadership	Culturally Responsive Leadership	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
Sub Themes	School Culture	Servant Leadership	The Educultural Wheel
	Transformational Leadership		Ka Hikitia
	Kiwi Leadership for New Zealand Principals		Ako
			High Expectations
			Home School Partnerships

*Figure 2.1: Models of Leadership: Themes and Sub Themes Framework*



Before expanding on the themes and sub themes, evidence supported by literature and statistics highlighting the historical disparity in the achievement outcomes of Māori learners is provided.

### **Historical Disparity in Māori Student Achievement Outcomes**

Disparities in Māori achievement outcomes became apparent in the 1960 Hunn Report (Hunn, 1960). This report endorsed the closure of all Native schools as a means of addressing this disparity and by 1969 all Māori students were sent to mainstream schools (Calman, 2012). Despite the educational reform efforts from the 1970s onwards, there have been minimal changes in the achievement outcomes of Māori students attending mainstream classes (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2009). The authors argue that over fifty years have since elapsed without yielding any meaningful changes for Māori students.

In the 2006 *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) study, there was a significant disparity in Māori student achievement outcomes (Telford & Caygill, 2007) where Māori students were below the average levels of achievement. These poor levels of achievement became euphemistically known as the “long tail” of underachievement (Arini, McNaughton, Langley & Sauni, 2007). This prompted Samu (2006) to argue that our educational system does not take care of all students particularly Māori and Pasifika students.

Disturbing statistics released by the Ministry of Education during 2013 indicated the following:

- Twenty percent of Māori learners will not achieve the basic standard in literacy and numeracy when transitioning from primary school (Ministry of Education, 2013a).
- Māori learners’ disengagement from school occurs at the start of intermediate years (Year 7) (Ministry of Education, 2013c).
- Māori students leaving secondary school with the *National Certificate of Educational Achievement* (NCEA) Level 2 or higher will be less than half (Ministry Of Education, 2013a).
- More than a third of Māori students will leave school without any qualification (Ministry of Education, 2013a).

Moreover, Māori students have higher rates of suspension and receive more referrals for behaviour to special education services (Ministry of Education, 2007a). In 2014, the number Māori learners being stood down from school was 1.5 times higher than Pasifika learners and

2.4 times higher than Pākehā learners (Ministry of Education, 2016). Education is paramount for the development of human potential of all learners and, despite efforts to improve the learning outcomes of Māori learners, disparities continue to exist (Robson, Cormack & Cram, 2007). The urgency to improve Māori students learning outcomes was highlighted by the 2013 census which indicated that 14.9% of New Zealanders identified themselves as Māori and therefore represent the second largest ethnic group in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Māori are therefore an integral part of the New Zealand population and the New Zealand economy will also be dependent on their contribution as a well- educated and productive workforce (Rubie-Davies & Peterson, 2016). The underachievement of Māori learners is therefore a concern for policy makers, researchers and educators. The report by the Auditor General is emphatic that this underachievement is wrong and contributes to poor social and economic outcomes where every New Zealander is affected (Auditor General, 2016). This report emphasises the importance of children thriving physically, socially, academically and culturally. However, far too many Māori children leave school without the education they deserve. I believe that Māori children should leave school when they are equipped to enter into tertiary institutions or the workforce where they could be gainfully employed. Any failure in this regard could ultimately lead to reliance on the welfare system and a pre-occupation in anti-social behaviour and even crime. This in my view is a waste of human potential as we are aware of the immense potential Māori students have in the performing arts, trades and in the academic field. Moreover, we have an education system that has the potential to improve the learning outcomes of all learners, hence the practices of educational leaders and their teachers have a critical role in ensuring that Māori learners achieve to their maximum potential.

I introduced this chapter by providing a framework of the emerging themes and sub themes from the literature review. An overview of the historical disparity in Māori student outcomes was also highlighted and is indicative of the task at hand for educational leaders, especially those at schools where there is a high percentage of Māori learners. The first theme, i.e. educational leadership, is introduced next by providing a definition of educational leadership and strategies that educational leaders could adopt as they embark on leading their schools. It makes reference to literature from New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States of America.

## **Educational Leadership**

Educational leadership is unique to other forms of leadership as its main focus is improving student learning outcomes (Southworth, 2009). It means different things to different people, hence, an understanding of what leadership is, is of paramount importance (Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Northhouse (2007) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). In the educational sector, it could be among other things the principal influencing teachers to improve the learning outcomes of all learners. Educational leaders are increasingly under pressure to create learning environments conducive to teachers teaching more effectively and students learning more efficiently and this function is the role of school principals and educational leaders. There is one unifying concern amongst all schools and that is all students achieving academic success (Portin, Alejano, Knapp & Marzolf, 2006). Effective leaders know how to use their position of influence to improve teaching and learning (Cardno, 2012) and it is the passion and commitment that drives so many to become educational leaders in their pursuit to make a difference in the schools they lead (Southworth, 2009). Elkin, Jackson and Inkson (2008) argue persuasively that where leadership is non-existent, people do not unleash their full potential in pursuit of achieving organisational goals. However, the authors acknowledge that there is no ‘philosopher stone’ or a ‘recipe’ for leadership. Southworth (2009) is adamant that when leadership is weak, it is harder for teachers to do their job but when leadership is effective, staff and students are motivated due to clear lines of communication. Leidl (2007) maintains that the capacity of a learning community is dependent on the strength displayed by the leader.

Bush (2011) argues that the main purpose of schools and colleges is to promote effective teaching and learning and any practice outside education is unlikely to yield any positive outcomes. Poor achievement outcomes, school dropouts and suspensions are an everyday occurrence in schools throughout the world. Whilst there is a great deal that are outside the sphere of educational leadership and therefore the school, there is much that can be done with the time and resources available at schools. Southworth (2004) maintains that educational leaders positively impact on learning outcomes by utilising the strategies of modelling, monitoring and dialogue. Modelling is about leading by example and guiding leaders serve as positive role models because of their interest in pedagogical practices and are keen to learn more in this regard. Monitoring entails observing teachers in their classrooms and providing

them with constructive feedback and dialogue is about teachers talking with their colleagues and sharing best practice (Southworth, 2004). Southworth alerts us that each of the three strategies make a difference. However, it is the combination of the three that yields positive results. Litchka (2016) argues that teachers appreciate the leaders who spend real time in their classrooms and this is therefore a reflection of his/her priorities. Indirect leadership incorporates aspects like the leader providing direction and establishing goals, resourcing strategically and establishing relationships punctuated with trust (Cardno, 2012; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). The direct and indirect influence of educational leaders is affirmed by Bush (2011):

While a strong emphasis on learning is important, leaders should stay focused on other aspects of school life, such as socialisation, student health, welfare and self- esteem, and such wider school level issues as developing an appropriate culture and climate linked to the specific needs of the school and its community. (p. 18)

Literature is replete with examples of the extremely important role that educational leaders play at school. A seminal study in 2014, *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, claims that leadership is the second most important school-based pre-requisite in children's academic outcomes and it was extremely rare for ineffective leaders positively influence under performing schools (Leithwood et al., 2004). After six years of further research, the authors confirmed their earlier finding thereby lending credence to their earlier claim (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010). Research by the *Wallace Foundation* identified five salient practices that are integral to effective school practices viz. shaping a vision, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction and managing people, data and processes (Wallace Foundation, 2013) and it is when educational leaders incorporate these elements into their practices that they have a chance to improve the learning outcomes of their students:

- Shaping a vision: Effective leaders develop a vision for their schools by committing to high expectations for all their students. They define the vision and obtain a buy in from all the role players.
- Creating a climate hospitable to education: Here safety and orderliness inform students that the school is conducive to teaching and learning. Teachers work collaboratively by

sharing best practice to improve their instructional practices with a view to improving student learning outcomes.

- Cultivating leadership in others: Effective leaders are mindful that they cannot do everything by themselves. They use the expertise and talents of their staff and encourage them to take on leadership roles. It is leadership emanating from different people that contribute to improved student learning outcomes.
- Improving instruction: Effective leaders stress on quality instruction that is informed by research with a view to improving teacher's teaching and students learning. They observe teachers in their classrooms and evaluate instruction on what is working well and what is not.
- Managing people data and processes. Effective leaders work assiduously to retain competent teachers and are supportive of them. Data is an integral part of school life and effective leaders work collaboratively with teachers to identify emerging trends and hence use data to inform planning and practice. Effective school leaders also know how to go about their work in a methodical and systematic manner (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

It is evident from the foregoing that the leadership displayed by educational leaders is key in a school environment. I believe that these leadership qualities are also dependent on other variables like experience, passion for the job as well as educational leadership qualifications. Moreover, in the literature, no mention is made of context, e.g. in smaller schools where principals often have to teach as well as lead thereby compromising their leadership time. To mitigate the heavy workload that principals have to deal with on a daily basis, the creation of a school culture conducive to leading cannot be underestimated and is hence included as a sub theme under educational leadership.

### ***School Culture***

Creating the correct school culture is of paramount importance for educational leaders as is demonstrated by several studies in this regard (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 1996). According to Maslowski (2001), school culture is defined as "the basic assumptions, norms and values, and cultural artefacts that are shared by school members which influence their functioning school" (pp. 8-9). A school culture finds expression in rituals, customs, stories, ways of treating one another, and the culture's artefacts like language (Stoll, 1999). A school with a

strong organisational culture is characterised by high commitment and high performance (Sergiovanni, 2006). However, changing a school culture is challenging. Peterson and Deal (1998) suggest that educational leaders could change the culture of a school when they lead by example by communicating the core values of the school in word and deed, they recognise staff and students for their accomplishments and when they support student centred learning. There is evidence that the culture of a school, both what it entails and how it is applied has a positive effect on students' learning outcomes (Dimmock, 1993). Fullan (2001) suggests that when principals are faced with competing demands exacerbated by limited time, they should expend their time transforming the culture of the school as this would impact the way teaching and learning is conducted in the school. Defining what is tantamount to good school culture is a matter of an individual's viewpoint. However, in this study, it has already been highlighted with reference to literature that positive student outcomes and effective leadership practice would result in a positive culture at a school.

Creating a culture conducive to improving the learning outcomes of learners, however, is time consuming. The principals have to sometime contend with teachers who are resistant to change or who sometimes demonstrate loyalty to their syndicates rather than seeing the bigger picture and cooperating to meet organisational objectives, particularly in larger schools. There is however, adequate evidence from research on how adopting transformational leadership practices where leaders inspire teachers, set direction and encourage reflection on practice have benefitted organisations like schools.

### ***Transformational Leadership***

The achievement outcomes, result driven focus of schools have made schools function like business organisations and hence, school leadership calls for strong performance and improved student outcomes (Anderson, 2017). The author therefore argues that adopting transformational leadership practices would benefit organisations like schools. On the other hand, there is adequate empirical evidence that asserts its suitability to schools where challenges are faced for change and higher levels of accountability (Day, Harris, Hatfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994) provide a comprehensive definition of transformational leadership:

The term 'transform' implies major changes in the form, nature, function and/or potential of some phenomenon ; applied to leadership, it specifies general ends to be pursued although it is largely mute with respect to means. From this beginning, we consider the central purpose of transformational

leadership to be the enhancement of the individual and collective problem –solving capacities of organisational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement. (p. 7)

In transformational leadership, the leader inspires individuals within an environment to be intrinsically motivated (Burns, 1978). An important pre-requisite for any organisation is that its members be motivated. It is within this transformational leadership environment that the leader engages individually and collectively to maximise motivation, increase morale and breed a sense of motivation (Stewart, 2006). Educational leaders engaged in transformational leadership encourage teachers to re-think old methods of doing things (Pounder, 2008) and inspire intellectual stimulation where teachers are emboldened to try new innovative methods (Nguni, Slegers & Denessen, 2006). I believe that when teachers dispense with old, ineffective pedagogical practices, they embrace new methods that have the propensity of improving learning outcomes, however, continuous reflection on practice is paramount to yield maximum benefit.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) produced a model on transformational leadership that incorporates three broad categories of leadership practices viz. setting directions, developing people and redesigning the organisation:

- Setting directions: Transformational leaders assist staff in understanding the school goals and activities associated with the goals that strengthens a sense of purpose in the school. People are motivated when they know what the goals are, especially if they are challenging but achievable. Having goals provides people with a sense of purpose as they attach meaning to what they are doing.
- Developing people: While setting the direction is important, it is for the leader to engage in developing teachers so that the quality of teaching and learning can be improved. The leaders' emotional intelligence comes to the fore when he/she devotes time to the employees' capacity thereby increasing motivation and enthusiasm.
- Redesigning the organisation: Transformational leaders create conditions that support the performance of teachers and students by building learning communities. Other practices in this regard include working collaboratively for participation and decision making (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Although transformational leadership has been beneficial in organisations like schools, this form of leadership is not devoid of its limitations. Critics of this model argue that it places too much emphasis on the transformational leadership qualities thereby emphasising the idea that the principal is the main source of leadership at school (Evers & Lakomski, 1996). The authors argue that there is difficulty when differentiating between transactional and transformational leadership and therefore this questions the integrity of empirical research regarding transformational leadership. They also emphasise the unpredictability of transformational leadership due to different versions of leadership manifesting itself at different points in time and in different situations. Barnett, McCormick and Connors (2001) in their Australian study found that teachers could not distinguish between transformational leadership and transactional leadership because both these leadership styles are so closely linked that transformational leadership is only effective when it incorporates the characteristics of transactional leadership. Likewise, Yukl (1999) alerts us to the ambiguity of transformational leadership due to it 'overlapping' and its 'intercorrelation' with transactional leadership.

In the New Zealand context, principals are guided by the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008b).

### ***Kiwi Leadership for New Zealand Principals***

*The Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (KLP) provides principals with guidelines as to how they could improve student learning outcomes within the New Zealand context and include aspects like goal setting, obtaining and managing resources to achieve goals, initiating change, solving problems and building trusting relationships (Ministry of Education, 2008b). Educational leadership is at the heart of this model (Figure 2.2) and five key elements are highlighted as to how educational leaders could lead learning:

- Improving the learning outcomes of all learners, especially Māori and Pasifika learners.
- Creating the appropriate conditions conducive to teaching and learning.
- Schools are developed and maintained as institutions of learning.
- Creating connections and networks both inside and outside the school.
- Developing others within the school as leaders (Ministry of Education, 2008b).



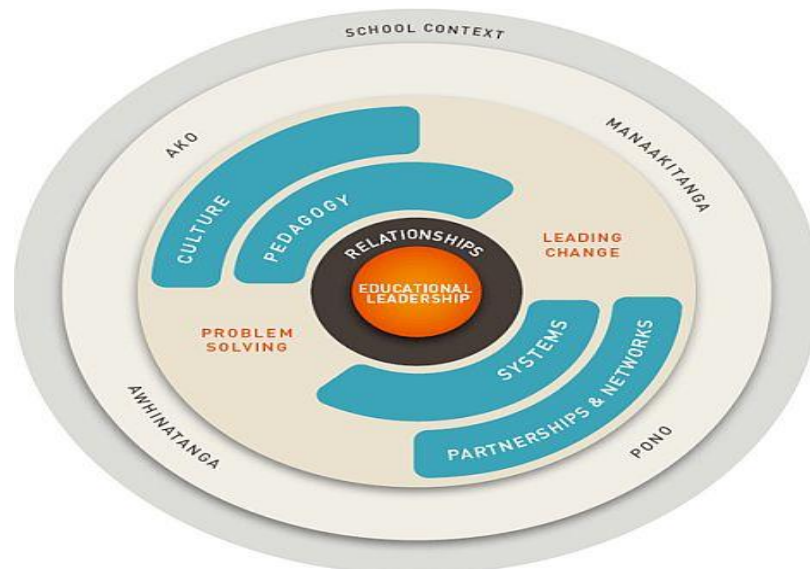


Figure 2.2: Model of Educational Leadership (MOE, 2008b p. 12)

This model provides excellent guidelines for principals and educational leaders, however, it must be utilised as a document to improve the learning outcomes of all learners, particularly Māori learners. Interestingly, educational leadership is at the heart of this model and it would be ironic if educational leaders do not use it for professional development, leading change and problem solving at their schools. In the past, I have observed this document occupying a prominent place in the staffrooms of schools I was employed in, but rarely being used.

Educational leadership as the first theme alluded to the important role that educational leaders play in leading their schools. Specific mention was made of practices like modelling, monitoring and dialogue and how educational leaders could operationalise these practices. As an educational leader, I can identify with these practices as they are among a repertoire of practices that an educational leader should have in his toolkit in order to ensure that teaching and learning are not compromised. Research by the Wallace Foundation (2013) provided five salient practices that educational leaders could adopt as part of effective leadership practices i.e. shaping a vision, creating a climate hospitable to education, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction and managing people, data and processes. I believe that while these practices take time and determination to implement, they are realistic and an important pre-requisite for any educational leader. The sub themes of educational leadership viz. school culture, transformational leadership and *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* were introduced, explained and critiqued.

The second main theme identified in this literature review is culturally responsive leadership and allude to studies abroad and in New Zealand. In the New Zealand context, particular mention is made of how leaders who utilise a culturally responsive pedagogical practice could improve the learning outcomes of Māori learners.

## **Culturally Responsive Leadership**

Johnson (2007) provides a detailed explanation of who a culturally responsive leader is:

Culturally responsive leaders support academic achievement, work to affirm students' home cultures, empower parents in culturally and economically diverse neighbourhoods, and act as social activists who advocate for social changes to make their communities a better place to live. (p. 54)

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), (2012) maintains that high performing educational institutions are those that have a combination of equity and quality and “give all children opportunities for good quality education” (p, 3). It has also been proposed that a leadership approach incorporating culturally responsive pedagogical practice could be a catalyst for improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners (Brown & Trevino, 2006). The Ministry of Education in New Zealand is also aware of the dire need to improve Māori student learning outcomes and this commitment is endorsed in the *Kiwi Leadership for Principals* (Ministry of Education, 2008b) document where the importance of leadership in this regard is stressed:

We face a number of challenges that require committed and responsive leadership at all levels. A critical leadership challenge is reflected in the disproportionately large number of Māori and Pasifika students who are not achieving to their potential within the current education system. These challenges require leaders who are committed to ongoing professional learning, who are receptive to new evidence as to what works and who are skilled at relating to students and their school communities. (p. 4)

Johnson (2006) however, calls into question the scarce attempts in the application of culturally responsible frameworks to leadership in schools while Leithwood and Riehl (2003) state categorically that educational leadership practices can make or break a school, thus alluding to the extremely important role a culturally responsive leader plays at a school.

Culturally responsive leaders disrupt the conventional modes of thinking and engage in relationships where nobody feels excluded by promoting a sense of identity and belonging. (Berryman, SooHoo & Nevin, 2013). This view is shared by Robinson (2007) who asserts that effective principals work hard towards forming relationships and also tackle the educational challenges contemporaneously thereby incorporating both to their repertoire. According to Khalifa, Gooden and Davis (2016) “culturally responsive leaders develop and support the school

staff and promote a climate that makes the whole school welcoming, inclusive, and accepting of minoritised students” (p. 1275). There have been studies in New Zealand that have demonstrated that schools differ appreciably in the manner they cater for their Māori learners socially and in terms of learning (Clark, Smith & Pomare, 1996; Reedy, 1992). Consequently, many Māori learners already experiencing difficulty at school may find it challenging to access social and academic skills that are required to successfully participate in their schooling. Here the role of the teacher cannot be underestimated in building and fostering relationships with a view to improving learning outcomes (Weamouth, Glynn & Berryman, 2005). I believe that generally accepted guidelines should be adopted to ensure that fundamentally schools are catering for the learning needs of Māori learners in a similar manner because irrespective of an urban or rural context, the culture does not change.

Santamaria and Santamaria (2016) call for educational leaders to become innovative by pushing the boundaries of “status quo leadership” (p. 1) and developing culturally responsive practices. It could be attributed to the continued disparities that exist in our educational landscape because the strategies being employed to assist the learners at risk have not changed. Hargreaves and Fink (2004) question why there is such a large disparity in the educational landscape when educational leadership ought to be making a difference, thereby suggesting that educational leaders might not be doing something or not doing something the way it is meant to be done. Santamaria and Santamaria (2016) offer an approach as to how educational leaders could address disparity in diverse school contexts by suggesting that educational leaders serving diverse communities can be placed in a continuum of status quo leaders, culturally responsive leaders and culturally sustaining leaders (Figure 2.3).

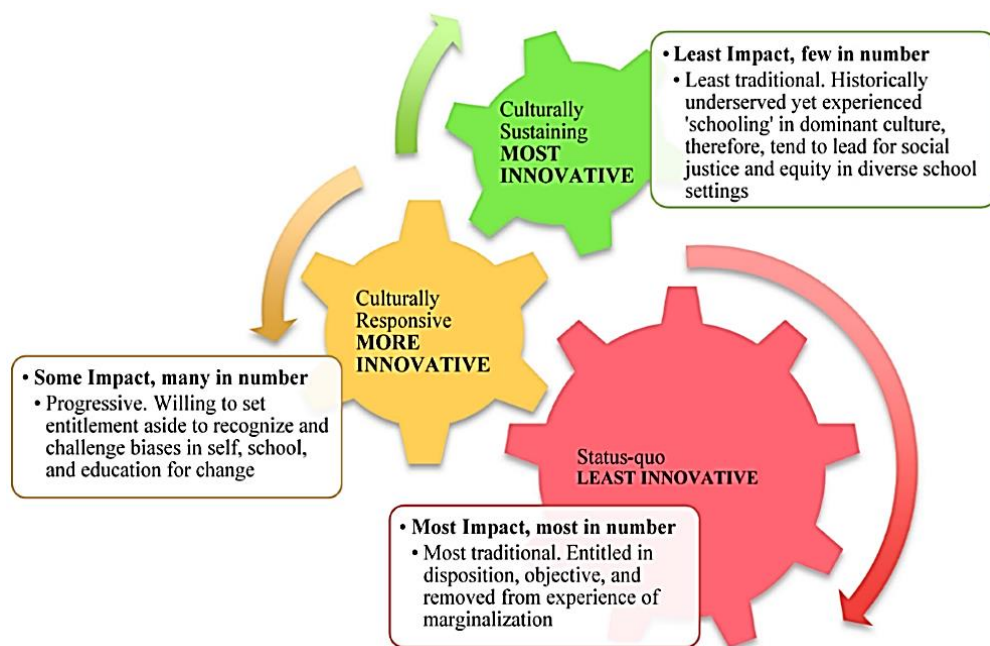


Figure 2.3: A continuum toward culturally sustaining leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016)

There is acknowledgement that the three forms of educational leadership make a difference towards the improved achievement outcomes of learners, however, it is the culturally sustaining leader who transcends the other two leaders and is therefore most effective. The wheels represent a continuum of practices towards culturally sustaining leadership, however, it is the direction and speed at which the wheels turn that impact on student achievement. This however, is dependent on how leaders address issues relating to educational disparities (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016). The authors expand further on culturally sustainable leadership by stating:

As a result of working with or on behalf of marginalized students, families and communities, culturally sustaining leaders work hard to understand and respect their schools' socio-cultural and socio-political context, which can serve as a critical resource for enacting transformational change. These leaders are aware of disproportionality in education and the mismatches between teachers and students. Culturally sustaining leaders bring this knowledge and attention into the practice of personnel hiring, support and retention. (p. 5-6)

A case study was conducted by Ford (2012) that demonstrated how a principal improved the learning outcomes of Māori learners in reading. This school in question had a significantly large number of Māori learners underperforming in 2004. By 2009, 72% of Māori learners at this particular school were achieving at or above the national expectations in reading (Ford, 2012). The principal of the school attributed the success to three aspects fundamental to culturally responsive leadership (viz., prioritising face to face relationships, establishing mechanisms to

support the development of relationships and creating a culture of learning throughout the entire school community). New Zealand has fast become a culturally diverse country and it is therefore paramount that the new generation of leaders not only focus on international work but also work within the national boundaries (Thomas, 2001). Graen and Hui (1999) refer to these leaders as 'transcultural creative leaders'. Transcultural creative leaders are those people who go beyond their own childhood acculturation and respect those from different cultures by forging cross-cultural partnerships and demonstrating mutual respect.

Khalifa, Gooden and Davis (2016) exert their position emphatically by stating that minoritised students have been historically disadvantaged by teachers either intentionally or unintentionally by reproducing this oppression and it is therefore incumbent upon educational leaders to act morally against any form of oppression. As early as 1973, Ranginui Walker highlighted the mono cultural mind set of many teachers in New Zealand, most of whom were of European descent. Walker argued that many of the teachers delivered a pedagogy through a "single cultural frame of reference" (p. 4) and this did not resonate well with Māori learners as they could not identify with it thereby developing a negative attitude towards learning.

Khalifa et al., (2016) in their synthesis of literature identified four strands for culturally responsive school leadership such as critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, culturally responsive and inclusive school environments and engaging students and parents in community contexts. Critical self-awareness is about the leader being aware of his/her values, beliefs and dispositions when serving the needs of financially needy children of colour. Educational leaders have a crucial role to play in their schools by ensuring that teachers are continually culturally responsive. School leaders have an obligation to ensure that their schools are culturally responsive environments by being inclusive. Lastly and most importantly, school leaders must engage with students, families and communities in culturally suitable ways.

In a New Zealand study on how principals lead ethnically diverse schools, it was demonstrated that the principals adjusted their leadership styles to ensure an ethos of inclusivity for all students at their school (Billot, 2008). The words of a principal in this study succinctly captures how he adjusted his leadership style:

So a lot of my style is different and a lot of it is me. To me, in terms of ethics, it is about being accessible, being fair, being consistent and not having an agenda and being a good listener. A lot of

what I do is about trying to relate to people and trying to understand where they're coming from and trying to also be proactive. (p. 93)

The context of the school and its unique characteristics have to be considered as “off the shelf diversity programmes or initiatives are likely to achieve only limited success” (Jones, Pringle & Shepherd, 2000, p. 378).

Culturally responsive leadership is also closely linked to social justice (Johnson, 2007) and places the culturally responsive leader as a social activist. The author argues that an aspect of the curriculum that challenges the inequities in society has been neglected or even ignored. I am in no way implying that we should encourage our students to become rebellious but to responsibly question the inequalities that exist in societies across the world, including New Zealand. According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2005) “In a democratic society, it is vital that students learn to think reflectively, function at high stages of moral reasoning and be autonomous decision makers” (p. 156). In this regard, the role of the school leaders in creating and sustaining a democratic culture cannot be underestimated. Fullan (2003) reminds us that a strong educational system is an important pre-requisite to a prosperous democratic society and hence “One of the great strengths one needs, especially in troubled times is a strong sense of moral purpose” (p.19). As educational leaders, we could be unintentionally perpetuating the status quo of inequality or simply ignoring the same because it does not appeal to our conscience. The challenge therefore would be for educational leaders to factor in aspects like social justice and inequality into our social studies curriculum. The greater challenge, however, would be changing the mind set of educational leaders who do not regard it as important.

Culturally responsive leadership could be augmented with adopting servant leadership practices, especially for improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Servant leadership lends itself well to Māori leadership where people oriented practices are constructed for the care and well-being of those serving the organisation while the focus is on the leaders' relation to others as well as the act of leading (Ruwhiu & Elkin, 2016). Servant leadership is applicable to matters concerning diversity, and social justice where each individual is catered for irrespective of their origins and character traits (Greenleaf, 2002).

### ***Servant Leadership***

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) describe leadership as a “many-headed hydra” (p. 181) that affords us the opportunity to view the different perspectives of leadership by placing it alongside

other perspectives of leadership, for example, servant leadership. The term 'servant leadership' was first coined by Greenleaf (1977) who describes a servant leader:

The Servant-Leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant: - first, to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived? (p. 7)

Spears (1998) identified ten characteristics of a servant leader that are summarised in Table 2.1

*Table 2.1: Ten Characteristics of a Servant Leader*

Characteristics	Description
Listening	Automatically responding to any problem by receptively listening to what is said, which allows them to identify the will of the group and help clarify that will.
Empathy	Striving to accept and understand others, never rejecting them, but sometimes refusing to recognize their performance as good enough.
Healing	Recognizing as human beings they have the opportunity to make themselves and others 'whole'.
Awareness	Strengthened by general awareness and above all self-awareness, which enables them to view situations holistically.
Persuasion	Relying primarily on convincing rather than coercion.
Conceptualisation	Seeking to arouse and nurture theirs' and others' abilities to 'dream great dreams'.
Foresight	Intuitively understanding the lessons from the past, the present realities, and the likely outcome of a decision for the future.
Stewardship	Committing first and foremost to serving others' needs.
Commitment to the growth of people	Nurtures the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of each individual
Building Community	Identifies means of building communities among individuals working within their institutions, which can give the healing love essential for health.

I believe that educational leaders and teachers adopting servant leadership as a practice in their schools, especially where there is a large percentage of Māori learners could improve their learning outcomes. I see close links of servant leadership characteristics to Māori values like aroha (love, affection), kotahitanga (unity and bonding), manaakitanga (ethos of care) and whānaungatanga (relationships). Moreover, those educational leaders and teachers adopting servant leadership practices would be those who have a genuine desire to serve.

The question then arises as to how schools could implement servant leadership? Crippen (2005) offers some suggestions in this regard by suggesting that schools:

- As part of professional development, the school could start by reading and discussing aspects of Greenleaf's writing beginning with *The Servant as Leader*.

- The ten characteristics of servant leadership could be used as a framework when staff are developing school plans.
- The concept of giving back to the community could be incorporated as part of the school culture.

The implementation of servant leadership is not without its challenges. It has already been mentioned in this study that New Zealand has quickly become an extremely diverse country. The challenge therefore lies in sensitising diverse individuals to servant leadership because not all cultures accept servant leadership as a viable method of leading.

I provided a definition of culturally responsive leadership and alluded to the New Zealand Ministry of Education concern on the importance of sound educational leadership practices to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Reference was made to literature that provided guidelines as to what culturally responsive leaders could do. An approach by Santamaria and Santamaria (2016) elucidated what culturally responsive leaders could do at their schools in terms of practice in order to improve the disparity in learning outcomes at their schools. I quoted an example of a case study conducted in New Zealand where the learning outcomes of Māori learners in reading improved significantly and the principal of a school attributing success to culturally responsive leadership. Specific mention was made to culturally responsive leadership being linked to social justice and what educational leaders could do to incorporate aspects of social justice into the curriculum. I alluded to the possible challenges to introducing social justice in the school curriculum and provided an explanation as to why and how servant leadership could cater for the needs of Māori learners. The characteristics of a servant leader and how schools could introduce servant leadership at their schools concluded the second main theme i.e. culturally responsive leadership.

The next main theme in this literature review is culturally responsive pedagogy and includes the sub themes: the educultural wheel, ka hikitia, ako, high expectations and home school partnerships. Reference is made to international literature, however, significant reference is made to the New Zealand context in particular, with a view to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.



## **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) was popularised and can be attributed to the work of Geneva Gay (2010, 2013) and research by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014) with a view to reducing the achievement gaps for the diverse school student population. According to Madhhlange and Gordon (2012) "Cultural responsiveness should be at the centre of efforts to improve performance of underachieving groups in multicultural societies; moreover, it is a powerful, persistent, and vitalising force for improving education for all students" (p. 180). Often people are not conscious of their ethnocentric beliefs, thereby judging other people by the standards of their own culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2005) and, in a school context, teachers having difficulty understanding the culture of their students (Gay, 2010). Gay (2000) defines cultural responsiveness as a process of:

Using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strength of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. (p. 29)

On the other hand Richard, Brown and Forde (2007) define culturally responsive pedagogy as that which encourages and promotes learning in an environment where the strengths of learners are identified and utilised thereby improving their learning outcomes. The authors identified three dimensions for culturally responsive pedagogy such as institutional, personal and instructional. The institutional dimension reflects the policies and values of the administration, the personal dimension refers to the cognitive and emotional operation of teachers in order to become culturally responsive and the instructional dimension has to do with the very act of teaching. All the three dimensions work in combination in the teaching and learning process for culturally responsive pedagogy to be effective.

Although many researchers have argued that poor achievement outcomes were as a result of low socio economic status (Harker & Nash, 1990; Nash, 1993), Ministry of Education research undertaken by Hattie (1999, 2003a) and Alton-Lee (2003, 2006) indicate that the effectiveness of the teacher had the most influence on student achievement outcomes. In the New Zealand context, there has been an awakening to the relevance and importance of culturally responsive pedagogy with a view to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). According to Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh and Bateman (2007) "There is a clarion call for educators to develop sensitivity and sensibility towards the cultural backgrounds and

experiences of Māori students” (p. 65). There is a link between cultural responsive pedagogy and the achievement outcomes of learners who are not part of the Eurocentric culture of mainstream schooling (Bell, 2011). This is indicative in an increasing number of research studies regarding the relevance and importance of culturally responsive pedagogy within the New Zealand context to improve the achievement outcomes of Māori learners (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop et al., 2009; Bishop, Ladwig & Berryman, 2014; Macfarlane et al., 2007).

The socio-cultural theory of human learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978) is based on the understanding that both social and academic learning are interdependent from birth and throughout the life of an individual and is dependent on the interactions with others. Macfarlane et al., (2007) alert us that this view of learning is different to the traditional western way where social and academic learning is seen as independent. The Māori world view however, is based on establishing quality human relationships in the learning environment (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito & Bateman, 2008). Hence, from a socio-cultural perspective, it is for teachers to establish and forge relationships when working with Māori learners. According to Bell (2011) “Teaching can be viewed as a cultural practice as our teaching is embedded in and determined by culture” (p. 39). The socio-cultural process also make a compelling case for teachers to know their own culture and that of their students.

Spindler and Spindler (1994) clarify this standpoint by explaining:

Teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background. They perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students, and the school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviours, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal. (p.12)

In the New Zealand context, the educultural wheel has been suggested as being a culturally responsive pedagogical tool especially when working with Māori learners.

### ***The Educultural Wheel***

Macfarlane (1997, 2004) developed a culturally responsive framework which was designed to support the development of positive interactions between teachers and Māori students entitled *The Educultural Wheel* (Figure 2.4).

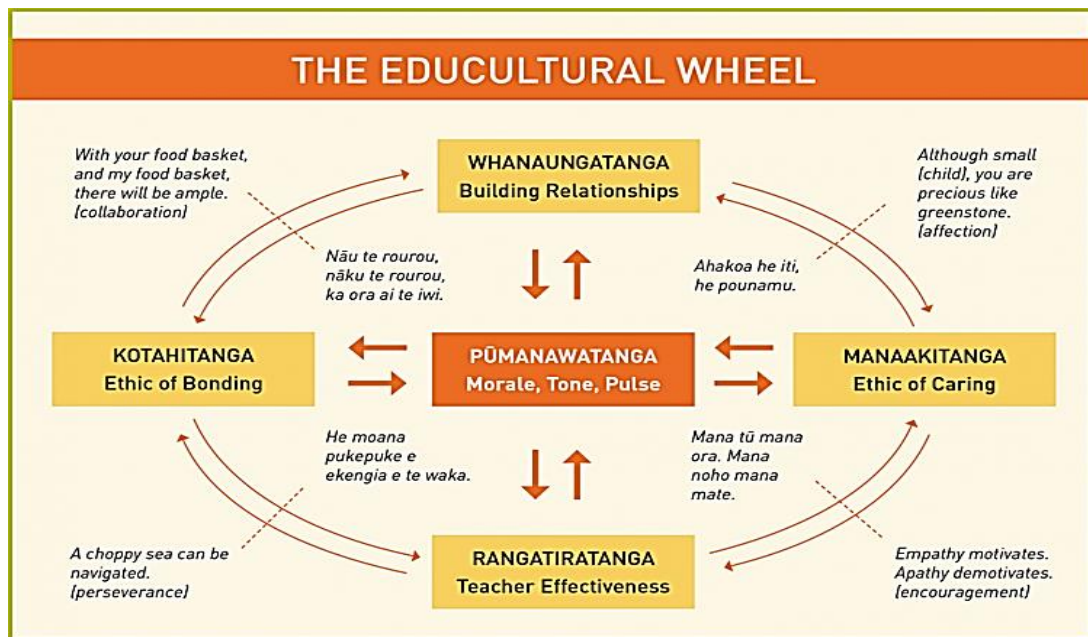


Figure 2.4: The Educultural Wheel (Macfarlane, 1997, 2004)

The framework consists of five interrelated principles:

- Whānaungatanga (relationships): Teachers engage in forming relationships by getting to know each learner as well as building mutual trust and respect. It also involves parents assisting in classrooms and support of the community.
- Rangatiratanga (self-determination): Here the teacher develops his competency by recognising the dignity and integrity of the learner.
- Manaakitanga (ethos of care): Encompasses reciprocal respect and kindness.
- Kotahitanga (unity and bonding): Creating a sense of unity and inclusiveness by greeting learners in a culturally appropriate manner, creating safe learning environments and resorting to restorative justice when things go wrong.
- Pumanawatanga (a beating heart): Breathing life into the other four principles (Macfarlane, 1997, 2004).

*The Educultural Wheel* recommends incorporating the five principles for increased participation and maximising the success when working with Māori learners. Hence, it is for educational leaders to adopt these principles and ensure that it is part of their modus operandi in schools where there are Māori learners. Culturally responsive pedagogy help Māori learners feel comfortable with their own identities at school (Macfarlane et al., 2007) and calls for teachers to

bring together their heads, hearts and hands (Sergiovanni, 1994). It is for teachers to understand what is interfering with the performance of their students in order for them to remove obstacles for success without blaming their learners (Gay, 2010) and this is highlighted by her:

Simply blaming students, their socioeconomic background, a lack of interest in and of motivation for learning, and poor parental participation in the educational process is not very helpful. (p. 17)

Bell (2011) identified eight characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy that have relevance to Māori learners:

- Culturally responsive pedagogy is not blind and is mindful of the culture and ethnicity of students.
- There is an absence of deficit theorising in culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Culturally responsive pedagogy is about teachers having high expectations
- Culturally responsive pedagogy is about caring responsive relationships with students.
- Culturally responsive pedagogy is about teachers knowing their learners as human beings linked to a particular culture.
- Culturally responsive pedagogy is about relationships and communicating with parents and caregivers.
- Culturally responsive pedagogy is about the teacher considering the culture and value of students when planning lessons.
- Culturally responsive pedagogy is liberating and transforming and is punctuated with social justice.

### ***Ka Hikitia***

Ka Hikitia is an initiative by the Ministry and it means “to step up, to lift up or to lengthen ones’ stride. It means stepping up how the education system performs to ensure Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori” (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 5). It provides teachers with a guideline “to make a significant difference for Māori students in education” (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p.6) and is guided by five principles (Figure 2.5):

- **Treaty of Waitangi:** How it relates and applies to the New Zealand education system.

- **Māori potential approach:** Encouraging and promoting the success of Māori learners without deficit theorising.
- **Ako:** The reciprocal nature of teaching and learning being a two way process.
- **Identity, language and culture:** Affirming Māori language, culture and identity of Māori students.
- **Productive partnerships:** Emphasising the relationships with parents and caregivers in an atmosphere of trust and respect (Ministry of Education, 2013a).



Figure 2.5: The Critical Factors of Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2013a p. 23)

I view Ka Hikitia as a positive response by the Ministry of Education to the disproportionality in the achievement data of Māori learners to their peers. However, it is for educational leaders to ensure that it is being utilised for professional development whereby this document can be re-visited and where their teachers understand the contents of this document and more importantly putting it into practice. Other strategies that are an integral part of cultural responsive pedagogy include ako, high expectations and home school partnerships. Again, it is for educational leaders to ensure that these strategies are implemented and practised by teachers at their schools and to demonstrate the urgency and importance by incorporating them as part of the school culture.

### **Ako**

Ako or reciprocal teaching and learning is fundamental to culturally responsive pedagogy.

*Tataiako* (Ministry of Education, 2011) describes ako as the behaviour of culturally responsive

teachers when they “participate with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners’ achievement” (p.13). A culturally responsive environment is characterised by teachers and learners interacting in relationships punctuated by dialogue (Bishop, 2010). In this environment teachers acknowledge and promote students’ contributions in the classroom where students are active participants in their own learning and where teachers understand and accept that students do come with prior knowledge. Bishop (2010) alerts us that when Māori learners are active contributors as opposed to being passive recipients, they are motivated to learn thereby reducing deficit theorising (Bishop et al., 2009). Ako recognises that the role of teacher and learners are fluid, however these roles are dependent on sound relationships (Greenwood & Te Aika, 2009).

### ***High Expectations***

High expectations means believing that a learner has the capability to succeed irrespective of the circumstances and this view is affirmed by *The New Zealand Curriculum*: “The curriculum supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of their individual circumstances” (Ministry of Education, 2007b, p. 9). Turner, Rubie-Davies and Webber (2015) in their research indicate that teachers have the lowest expectation for Māori learners when compared to European, Asian and Pasifika students. Clearly, this kind of self-fulfilling prophecy is neither motivating to Māori students, nor will it improve their learning outcomes. Turner, Rubie-Davies and Webber (2015) found that when teachers have low expectations of their learners, they are presented with less challenging and repetitive work thereby perpetuating low achievement outcomes. On the other hand Bishop et al., (2009) in their research concluded that a recipe for improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners includes forging and maintaining sound relationship as well as having high expectations. Teachers who have high expectations of their learners do not engage in deficit conversations and see themselves as problem solvers (Bishop & Berryman, 2009).

### ***Home School Partnerships/Parental Involvement***

Parental involvement is defined as “...parental participation in the educational process and experiences of their children” (Jeynes, 2007, p. 83). The parent involvement has been recognised by the governments in the UK, USA and New Zealand (Hornby & Witte, 2010). The ecological theory of human development popularised by Bronfenbrenner (1977) explains that

human development is a result of influences in the environment of the individual. The relationship between the individual and immediate environment is part of the micro system, the relationship between the individual and major settings is the mesosystem, the exosystem are settings where the individual does not actively participate while the macro system form part of the educational, social and political settings. It is the exosystem that incorporates aspects like home school partnership and parental involvement in schools. Research into home school partnerships and parental involvement demonstrates that when schools have strong relationships with the parents and families of their learners, better student learning outcomes are achieved (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2006). From a Māori perspective, home school partnerships and building relationships is akin to whānaungatanga. The improvement in the learning outcomes of Māori learners as a result of home school partnerships has been acknowledged by research conducted in this regard (Bishop, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2011).

Effective parental involvement benefits the parents, teachers and students. It improves parent-teacher relationships, boosts the morale of the teacher and improves the school climate. Parent involvement improves the attitudes of students towards school as well as their behaviour and contributes to their overall mental health (Christenson, 2004). According to Mutch and Collins (2012) "The better the engagement between parents, families, and schools, the greater the positive impact on student learning" (p. 168). However, even home school partnerships and parent involvement have been at best described as being overly simplistic and hence misleading (Pemberton & Miller, 2015). The authors justify that parents experience challenges when departing early from work and transport problems as reasons for poor turn out at events where parents, teachers and the school community could meet. In my personal experience, I have found that many parents are unwilling to engage with schools because of their unpleasant experiences when they were students. It is for the educational leaders to ensure that an open door policy is established and to allay the doubts and fears of these parents by establishing a rapport with them. Where parents cannot attend the designated times for home school partnership sessions, alternative dates and times could be arranged to accommodate them.

Culturally responsive pedagogy also has the propensity to limit the achievement outcomes of Māori learners and hence become counter-productive. Sleeter (2012) argues that culturally

responsive pedagogy could be viewed as nothing more than a cultural celebration where teachers could occupy themselves with learning the cultures of disadvantaged learners. This is pertinent in the New Zealand context where we have a significant number of overseas trained teachers in classrooms where there are a high number of Māori learners. Sleeter adds further that there is a tendency for culturally responsive pedagogy to be over- simplified, there are no clear guidelines as to how to teach culturally responsive pedagogy and that most of the culturally responsive pedagogical studies were case studies thereby justifying further research in this regard.

Throughout the literature, there is an overwhelming assumption of the homogeneity of Māori learners. Durie (1994) placed Māori into three distinct categories. The first group being those who understand their cultural orientation and are therefore familiar with traditions and customs. The second group who see themselves as bicultural and identify themselves as Māori and New Zealand European and the marginalised third group who are neither Māori nor NZ European. Hence, learners from these three groups would invariably find themselves in New Zealand schools. The challenge therefore is how to cater for the diverse needs of Māori learners who are heterogeneous. The current literature does not identify as to how these diverse Māori learners could be catered for.

## **Summary**

The literature review highlighted what current literature from New Zealand and abroad reveal about how the achievement outcomes of indigenous learners, in particular how Māori learners in New Zealand can be catered for in mainstream classes. The three main themes identified were educational leadership, culturally responsive leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy. Subsumed under the three themes were somewhat minor themes. Within the literature review, I highlighted challenges and limitations regarding existing literature. At the centre of catering for culturally diverse learners was the extremely important role of educational leaders. Not only must educational leaders reflect on their own mind set but how to lead the schools and teachers they are entrusted with. The provision of professional development for teachers, creating the climate conducive to teaching and learning as well as forging positive relationships both within the school and wider community are salient in this regard. For an educational leaders to be successful, it is about doing the right things right.



## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology and method used in this study. The theoretical perspective within the interpretivist approach is described and the semi-structured interview method and sampling is explained. Data collection and analysis are explained. The chapter includes ethical considerations that is considered in this study. Data collection and analysis is explained as well as validity and limitations conclude the chapter.

Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin and Lowden (2011) define educational research as “a systematic enquiry in a learning environment carried out by someone working in that setting, the outcomes of which are shared with other practitioners” (p. 3). Educational research could entail asking people questions, listening, observing and appraising programmes and teaching methods (Wellington, 2015). Methodology on the other hand refers to the procedure and method utilised by researchers to obtain knowledge and therefore answers to their research questions (Creswell, 2012). Wellington (2015) alerts us that the value of research can be judged by the methodology used. This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Merriam (1998) defines a theoretical framework as a “lens through which the researcher views the world” (p. 45). In qualitative research, a framework is a structure that provides guidance about the research using an interpretive lens through which to view the data (Baden & Major, 2013). The aim of this research requires the researcher to inquire into the educational practices of educational leaders in mainstream primary schools and how these practices raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners, hence, an epistemological framework of constructionism was assumed. Within the epistemological framework, an interpretivist paradigm was adopted as an “interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world...attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). In this study, I interpreted the practices of educational leaders and how their practices contributed to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. O'Donoghue (2007) affirms that the interpretivist paradigm is beneficial to “make sense of the real world” (p. 27). For the purposes of this study, a small scale qualitative study within the interpretivist paradigm was conducted where three educational leaders were interviewed via semi-structured

interviews. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the research design within the theoretical framework.

*Table 3.1: Overview of the research design within the theoretical framework*

<b>Epistemology</b>	Social constructionism
<b>Theoretical Perspective</b>	Interpretivism
<b>Methodology</b>	Small scale qualitative study
<b>Method</b>	Semi-structured interviews

## **Epistemology**

Wellington (2015) defines epistemology as “the study of the nature and validity of human knowledge, or the difference between knowledge and belief” (p. 341) and ontology to “the study or theory of what is, in other words, the characteristics of reality” (p. 343). Epistemology consists of theories of knowing and the relationship that exists between the researcher and what was researched and serves as a guide to understanding what is being studied (Baden & Major, 2013). On the other hand, Guba and Lincoln (1994), affirm that epistemology asks the question “what is the nature of the relationship between the would-be-knower and what can be known?” (p. 108). Ontology determines the nature of existence of a particular occurrence and when researchers seek answers to their research questions, they are making reference to knowledge that exists externally to them (Edirisingha, 2012). The ontological position guiding this study is that reality is multiple and also relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988) implying that what the researcher interprets will vary from person to person. This aligns itself with the interpretive theoretical perspective where the aim of this study is to inquire into the leadership practices of educational leaders that seek to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. The interpretivist ontological perspective is that meaning is not established in isolation but through ongoing interaction and communication (Neuman, 2014).

In literature, the terms constructivism and constructionism are sometimes used interchangeably. Crotty (1998) clearly differentiates between the two terms by acknowledging that constructivism is about people while constructionism is the sum total of interaction between people to create meaning. On the other hand, Harper (2011) differentiates between the constructivist and social constructionist. The author states that constructivists acknowledge that

individuals form their own perceptions of the world while according to social constructionists, constructions are developed in a world where different social power exists in the constructions. Both constructionism and constructivism, however, offer a similar view that as individuals we are makers of meaning; not entering a world of 'behavioural associations' (Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Social constructionists argue that the world is understood through interchanges between people and focus on dialogue and negotiation (Baden & Major, 2013). Kvale (1996) affirms that constructionists believe that "The conception of knowledge as a mirror of reality is replaced by the conception of the social construction of reality where the focus is on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the world" (p. 41). Social constructionists acknowledge that there is a social reality and how knowledge is constructed and understood and therefore has an epistemological perspective (Andrews, 2012). They have an interest in how a particular phenomenon is seen and how knowledge is generated (Gergen, 1985). In this study, I enquired into the practices of educational leaders, how practices informed their leadership practices and decision making and how they monitored leadership practices; all of which to improve the learning outcomes of Māori learners. In doing so, I was able to establish what the reality was of the practices of the educational leaders at their schools and what practices they understood as important to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners.

## **Interpretivism**

Two theoretical perspectives are often contrasted within research viz. the positivist and interpretivist and both represent "specific clusters of epistemological and ontological commitments" (Bryman, 2008, p. 593). Positivism provides a lens to view events influenced by external factors (Hammond & Wellington, 2013) while interpretivists approach to research places emphasis on words and the understanding of their subjects world view (Bryman, 2008). Neuman (1994) defines an interpretivist approach as "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (p. 68). Interpretivists believe that reality is multiple (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988) and is dependent on other variables thereby making it more difficult to interpret fixed realities (Neuman, 2000). According to Carson, Gimore, Perry and Gronhaug (2001) for the interpretivist "knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined" (p. 5). The interpretivist researcher enters the field with some knowledge of the context but is

receptive to new knowledge that emerges and this is developed together with the participant (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The interpretivists' goal is to first gain an understanding and then interpret the meanings occasioned by the interaction rather than make predictions of causes and effect (Neuman, 2000).

For this study, symbolic interactionism positioned within interpretivism was adopted as I interacted with educational leaders to inquire into their educational practices regarding improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Baden and Major (2013) define symbolic interactionism as "a sociological tradition that is concerned with small-scale, everyday human interaction and communication" (p. 460). Blumer (1969) provides a more comprehensive definition by defining symbolic interactionism as:

... the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their 'response' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behavior. (p. 145)

Blumer claims that symbolic interactionism is based on three principles. The first being that human beings respond to situations based on meanings. Secondly, these meanings emanate when people interact with one another. Thirdly, the meanings are adjusted through interaction. These principles determine how symbolic interactionists view structures of society and see it not as living entities but as society consisting of people and their actions (Jacob, 1988). Symbolic interactionists "seek to know how individuals take one another's perspective and learn meanings and symbols in concrete instances of interaction" (Denzin, 1978, p. 7; Ritzer, 1983, p. 308). To collect appropriate data, symbolic interactionists use participant observation and interviews (Jacob, 1988). The method employed in this study was semi-structured interviews where educational leaders were interviewed to inquire into how their practices impact on the achievement outcomes of Māori learners.

## **Qualitative Study**

Cresswell (2012) refers to methodology as to how a researcher will obtain information to answer research questions. Methodology justifies the method a researcher would use when conducting research and in order to pass judgement on a piece of research, one has to know what the methodology is (Wellington, 2015). This study took a small scale qualitative approach as I inquired into the practices of three educational leaders and how their practices impacted on the

learning outcomes of Māori learners. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as “an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world...attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). While Baden and Major (2013), define qualitative research as “social research that is aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences. A fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is the importance of conducting research in a natural setting by understanding the participants’ perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research affords researchers the opportunity to examine human experience by interactions in order to discern their actions and behaviour (Merriam, 2009). Bishop (1997) succinctly captures the aim of qualitative research being to “paint a picture, potentially facilitating the voice of the research participant to be heard, for others to reflect on” (p. 30). Higgs and Cherry (2009) acknowledge the strength of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is increasingly regarded as a powerful and credible tool for revealing and understanding the human world. The rich range of qualitative research approaches is one of its great strengths. It provides multiple ways of understanding the inherent complexity and variability of human behaviour and experience. (p. 8)

Qualitative research however, has its own disadvantages. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) acknowledge that qualitative research may not be generalizable to other settings and people and that “results are more easily influenced by the researchers’ personal biases and idiosyncrasies” (p. 20). Other criticisms levelled against qualitative research is the smaller sample sizes, and the narratives being subject to the researchers’ interpretation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The purpose of my study was to gain access to schools and conduct semi-structured interviews with educational leaders, hence, a qualitative approach was adopted.

## **Data Collection**

There are a variety of methods that qualitative researchers use to gather data (Lichtman, 2010), however, the dominant means of data collection in qualitative research are interviews and observations (Gibson, 2010). As a researcher, I set up a situation whereby the participants revealed their “feelings, intentions, meanings, subcontexts, or thoughts on a topic, situation or idea” (Lichtman, 2010, p. 140). As my study had a qualitative approach, I chose semi-structured interviews as a method of collecting data from participants. Baden and Major (2013) advise that

semi-structured interviews are a good approach when the researcher has only one opportunity to interview the participants. It also provided me with an opportunity develop an understanding and interpret people and situations.

The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded as this would provide me with verbatim accounts of the interview sessions. Baden and Major (2013) acknowledge the advantages of audio recordings as they provide for accurate accounts that can be listened again, especially when analysing the data. Roberts (2004), however, cautions us that although verbatim accounts are helpful, even these have to be interpreted and analysed. During the semi-structured interviews, I was an attentive listener and observer (Rubin and Rubin, 1995), avoided talking too much and encouraged the participants to speak by using probing questions (Baden & Major, 2013).

Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews, I was aware that I could have Māori participants. Hence, I familiarised myself with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations when conducting interviews with people of Māori descent and was assisted by my principal in this regard. The Māori world view is based on values and experiences that evolved over time. Hence, the understanding of Māori cultural values of manaakitanga (caring and supporting), kotahitanga (unity), whānaungatanga (familiness), wairuatanga (spirituality), rangatiratanga (leadership) and mana (prestige) “ensures a friendly, trusting passage for the non- Māori researcher” (Mutch, 2013, p. 68).

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

All the interviews were conducted on a mutually agreed date and time at the schools of the educational leaders. I began the semi-structured interviews by briefly introducing myself and reiterating contents of the participant information sheet which by then was already in their possession. The participants were once again reminded that the information obtained from the interviews would be for research purposes only and pseudonyms would be used for school and participant names. I also mentioned that the interviews would be audio-recorded to facilitate the data analysis process and that they would be provided with the draft transcripts for editing. Before the interviews, I ensured that my Android smart phone recording device was operative by testing its ability to record.

A method appropriate for this study was the use of semi-structured interviews as I believed it was a suitable and appropriate manner to answer my research questions by affording the participants an opportunity to provide their own explanations (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Kvale and Brinkman (2009) define interviews as “guided question-answer conversations, or an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (p. 2). Bryman (2012) affirms the flexibility and reduced rigidity of semi-structured interviews as they give insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important” (p. 470). The use of semi-structured interviews for this study allowed me to use the questions I prepared before the interviews as well as use follow up or probing questions in order to glean more information. I made use of interview protocol by asking questions and only strayed when I followed up with probing questions.

The administration of semi-structured interviews provides a framework to the interview process due to the presence of the interviewer and allow for both verbal and non- verbal communication (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Baden and Major (2013) affirm that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to read the non- verbal communication like body language and an opportunity for the researcher to obtain an overview of the participants’ surroundings. The authors also acknowledge that a weakness in semi-structured interviews is that it does not always allow the participant to provide his/her unique perspective. Yin (2009) on the other hand, suggests that sometimes the participant may provide information that he/she knows that the researcher wants to hear in order to cast themselves in good light at the expense of providing accurate information. There were three main questions asked during the semi-structured interviews and the follow up probing questions were dependent on the responses I received from main questions. The semi-structured questions are attached as Appendix A.

### **Sampling**

Sampling is integral to the research process and the robustness of the study is determined by the sound sampling process. Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013) define sampling as “the process of selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion into a study” (p. 41). Baden and Major (2013) affirm that sampling depends on the research questions and the most effective way in which to obtain answers to those questions. In research, it is not practical to collect data from every participant in a setting or population (Mertens, 1998). Two main types of sampling usually differentiated in research are theoretical and purposive or purposeful

sampling (Curtis, Gesler, Smith & Washburn, 2000). Theoretical sampling is a method of analysing qualitative data in order to produce theory and is hence associated with grounded theory (Coyne, 1997). Purposeful sampling “is a strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). For the purposes of my study, I used purposeful sampling whereby I selected three educational leaders from mainstream schools that had a minimum of between 10% to 15% learners who classified themselves as Māori. Participants A and School B were school principals from South Auckland while Participant C was a deputy principal from an East Auckland school. In qualitative research, the goal is to describe and interpret rather than generalise, hence, there are no hard and fast rules as to how many participants should be included (Lichtman, 2010). I chose these schools as I believed that the percentage of Māori learners would be adequate to justify the educational leaders catering for their needs and the fact that the educational leaders of these agreed to participate in this study.. Johnson and Christensen (2012) clarify that in purposeful sampling, the researcher establishes the characteristics of participants that are of interest first, then attempts to locate participants who meet those characteristics. Teachers and students were not considered as my study entailed the leadership practices of educational leaders.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) alert us that in purposeful sampling, the researcher deliberately chooses participants who will be able to provide answers to the research questions. The authors also recommend that when conducting a study on aspects of school effectiveness, key staff should be interviewed as opposed to random staff samples. Patton (2002) justifies the rationale for using purposeful sampling:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations. (p. 230)

Table 3.2 provides the demography of the participants and includes aspects like the gender of the participants, ethnicity, years of experience as an educational leader, school type and decile and the percentage of Māori learners at the school.



*Table 3.2: Participant demography*

	Gender	Ethnicity	Experience as Educational Leader	School Type/Decile	% Māori Learners
Participant A	F	Māori	15-20 years	Full Primary Decile 1	50%
Participant B	F	NZ European	11-15 years	Intermediate Decile 3	33.5%
Participant C	F	NZ European	10-15 years	Intermediate Decile 3	25%

## Data Analysis

Flick (2014) describes data analysis as "the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it" (p. 5). Although guidelines do exist for conducting qualitative research, each project has its own unique features (Clark & Veale, 2018). The authors emphasise that due to the researcher being the main instrument for data collection and analysis, interpretive thinking is paramount. The data was analysed through an interpretive approach. Patton (2002) argues that the analysis of data within the interpretive approach is about making sense of the data and identifying themes and patterns during data gathering. Analysing data using the thematic approach is known as inductive analysis where themes emerge from the data (Bryman, 2012). The analysing of qualitative data involves transformation (Gibbs, 2007) and data is placed into categories where patterns and relationships are established within the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). After interrogating the data, I coded parts of the transcriptions that I considered important and placed the common codes under themes and sub themes.

I conducted my semi-structured interviews as and when it was convenient for the participants, hence, the interviews were scattered over three weeks. I therefore engaged in what is called interim analysis. Miles and Huberman, (1994) refer to interim analysis as a process of collecting data in cycles, analysing the data then collecting more data and this cycle is a continuous process. This is a strength of qualitative research as by "collecting data at more than one time,

qualitative researchers are able to get data that help refine their developing theories and test their inductively generated hypotheses” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 517). After the interviews, I recorded my thoughts by memoing whereby I wrote down my thoughts about emerging themes and patterns because it helped me keep track of my ideas. I also did not have to rely on my memory later on.

After each interview, I listened to the audio recordings repeatedly as it helped me to solidify my understanding of the data and then proceeded to transcribe the data. When I completed the transcribing, I forwarded the transcriptions to the participants for confirmation. Transcription is undertaken prior to conducting analysis and transcribing afforded me the opportunity to give sense to and interrogate the data as well as figure out what is important (Gibson, 2010).

## **Ethical Issues**

Ethics is an integral part of any research process. Wellington (2015) alerts us that ethics should be “foremost in the planning, conduct and presentation” (p. 113). Mutch (2013) affirms that ethical issues are extremely important as the researchers are in a position of power as they enter into the lives of participants to obtain information. Wellington (2000) succinctly explains the importance of ethics in the research process:

Morals underpin ethics, but the two terms are not quite synonymous. An ‘ethic’ is a moral principle or a code of conduct which actually governs what people do. It is concerned with the way people act or behave. The term ‘ethics’ usually refers to the moral principles, guiding conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession. (p. 54)

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) acknowledges the intrusive nature of qualitative research and the consideration for aspects like informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and care. Throughout this study, I was guided by the guidelines stipulated by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC, 2014).

Upon receiving ethics approval from the Ethics Committee, I provided the participants who agreed to participate in the study with the participant information sheet (Appendix B) where all aspects appertaining to the study was explained. Bell (2010) affirms that in educational research, ethics is about “being clear to the participants regarding the nature of the study and the features of the agreement they have entered into as informants in the study” (pp. 46-47).

The participants were then allowed two weeks to decide whether they wanted to still continue with participation in the study or not. This catered for the voluntary participation notion of the

research whereby the participants were free to choose whether to continue or not. When the participants agreed to participate in the study, I obtained informed consent (Appendix C) from them when they signed the consent form. O'Toole and Beckett (2013) explain that informed consent is the implication that the participant is aware and also understands the risks and benefits of participation. Allmark (2002, as cited in Flick, 2014) provide guidelines for informed consent i.e. consent should be given by the people competent to do so, the person providing consent has all the information pertaining to the research and that consent is voluntary.

Before starting the semi-structured interviews, I once again allayed the fears of the participants by informing them that all information obtained from the interviews would be for research purposes only. I established a rapport with them by expressing my genuine appreciation for their time and reminded them that any information they disclosed would not be judged in any way whatsoever. Lichtman (2010) affirms the responsibility of the researcher to create an environment that is trustworthy and to be mindful of the power they hold over their participants. The author also highlights the importance of developing a rapport, especially when conducting an interview that produces meaningful and useful data.

The audio recording and transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were not shared with anybody. Pseudonyms were used for the school and participants' names thereby ensuring the confidentiality of the participants. The participants were informed that pseudonyms will be used in the participant information sheet, however, I re-iterated this before starting the semi-structured interviews.

Validity considers authenticity, credibility and trustworthiness with regard to data and its analysis. Burton and Bartlett (2005) define validity as "the truthfulness, correctness or accuracy of the research data" (p. 27). To ensure that the information obtained from the semi-structured interviews were a true reflection, participants were provided with transcripts of the interviews. They were afforded two weeks to make any changes if they felt that the contents were not a true reflection of the interviews. To avoid data misinterpretation, I listened to the audio recordings repeatedly and compared them with the transcripts and made changes where necessary. Lichtman (2010) affirms that "A researcher is expected to analyse data in a manner that avoids misstatements, misinterpretations, or fraudulent analysis" (p. 57). Research among other things entail the production of data and being able to trust the research results is

extremely important (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Maxwell (2013) alerts us that in qualitative research, reality can never be truly captured because this reality is interpreted differently by different people. Validity was enhanced by me being mindful of seeing relationships when they were non-existent, rejecting them when they were there and by not asking the wrong questions (Kirk & Miller, 1986, as cited in Flick, 2014).

It must be acknowledged that this study also had its limitations as the information was processed through the lens of the interviewer (Creswell, 2008), moreover the potential for researcher bias is always there. I regard myself as a novice researcher and one usually gets better with experience. I was mindful of keeping an open mind during interviews and listening attentively, however, Krueger and Casey (2015) affirm that “as human we tend to selectively hear comments that confirm our points of view and to miss or avoid information that we don’t understand or that causes us dissonance” (p. 140). Another limitation was the number of participants being only three, therefore I will not be able to definitely conclude that the data obtained from the participants would be representative of educational practices of all educational leaders working towards the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. Hence, it questions generalisability, however, my findings could well be transferable in whole or part to other settings. Shenton (2004) however, cautions us that findings of qualitative project are specific to a smaller number of environments and participants, hence, it is extremely challenging to demonstrate that the findings are applicable to other situations. This study provided detailed accounts to enable the readers to make their own conclusions regarding transferability of the findings to their settings. Transferability in qualitative studies can be achieved by contextualising the study in terms of context (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

## **Summary**

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework of this study and within this framework included the epistemology, ontological positioning, theoretical perspective, methodology and method. It also elaborated on sampling, data analysis and ethical issues. The chapter concluded with the validity and limitations of this study.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### Introduction

The aim of this study was to to inquire into the leadership practices of educational leaders that seek to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. It was underpinned by three research questions:

- What are the practices of educational leaders in full primary schools towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners?
- How do leadership practices inform decision making to raise Māori student outcomes?
- How does your school monitor the leadership practices that contribute to the achievement outcome of Māori learners?

Three educational leaders were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Two of them were school principals and one was a deputy principal. See chapter 3, p. 38, Table 3.2 for the participants' demography. The findings are presented as themes and sub themes that emerged when the research question 1 was posed to the participants. The themes that emerged from research question 1 are presented in *Table 4.1*. The themes common to the participants are highlighted in the same colour for ease of reference.

***Table 4.1: Themes and Sub Themes that Emerged from Research Question 1, What are the practices of educational leaders in full primary schools towards improving the learning of Māori learners?***

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Themes	Practices for Raising Māori Student Achievement :	Practices for Raising Māori Student Achievement :	Practices for Raising Māori Student Achievement :
Sub Themes	Literacy Enhancement Activity Programme (LEAP) Quick 60 Intervention	Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L)	Accelerated Learning in Literacy (ALL)
Themes	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Targeting and Tracking Māori Students
	Targeting and Tracking Māori Students	Targeting and Tracking Māori Students	
	High Expectations	High Expectations	High Expectations
	Home School Partnerships	Home School Partnerships	Home School Partnerships

## Practices for Raising Māori Student Achievement

All three schools had unique practices suited to their context to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners, however, each of the three participants indicated a significant difference in how they approached this task. Participant A indicated that they have a *Literacy Enhancement Activity Programme* (LEAP) that assist learners with problems in literacy. She explained:

***One of them is our LEAPS programme operating which is based on the Mutukaroa Model developed at Sylvia Park. It addresses the early literacy and numeracy of children on entry to school. So, on enrolment, we make appointments with whānau there and then for meetings to talk to them about early learning and to provide after a quick assessment, the learning resources that they would benefit by having at home.***

The other practice she talked about was *Quick 60 Intervention* and this programme brought students to an average level of reading after sixty lessons. She stated:

***In addition to that we have our Quick 60 Intervention, prevention programme which was devised by Sandra Iverson who was a reading recovery tutor. And she developed that as a group intervention rather than a one on one intervention like reading recovery and it is called Quick 60 because it brings children up to average levels of reading after sixty lessons.***

Participant B talked about a positive behaviour practice at her school where it was planned and taught across the school. She confirmed “So we have a positive behaviour system that is modelled and taught and lesson plans are organised right across the school”.

Participant C explained that they were involved in *Accelerated Learning in Literacy* (ALL) to improve the literacy levels of learners. She mentioned: “***We are part of the ALL programme so accelerating literacy learning and within that many of the students involved are Māori students because they come from our targets students and they come from our school targets***”. All three participants indicated that their practices are working well.

## Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Participant A emphasised that at her school there was a commitment to adhere to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi when catering for the needs of Māori learners. This was captured in her words:

***Another call it what you like intervention, prevention, initiative is that the principles of the Treaty are really embedded in everything that we do at this school. And they are the principles of participation, protection and partnership. And in terms of Māori, we really adhere to those principles.***

She affirmed that the School Board was also committed to the Treaty principles and was supportive of her in this regard. She stated:

***They will never see any Māori disadvantaged because they don't have money, they will put up the money. They ask that where we got scholarships, there is that***

***expectation that will always be a Māori student who receives that scholarship. And they may not always meet the criteria, but the fact that they are Māori makes them eligible and they must be selected.***

In order to ensure that teachers were delivering a culturally responsive pedagogy, Participant A stated teachers at her school are appraised according to the *Ruia Framework*. This framework appraised teachers in relation to how they catered for Māori learners. She confirmed:

***There is a Ruia Framework of teacher appraisal and it specifically targets teacher practice in relation to Māori students-which is why I chose that framework so that I could make sure that we were deliberately catering for Māori in our professional learning development, in our processes and clearly embedded in the way we operate.***

Participant A was appreciative of the fact that their school was so close to a Marae and this also assisted her in catering for the needs of Māori learners.

Participant B stated that she was informed by research on the importance of forging relationships with all learners and in particular Māori learners. She explained:

***Because one thing the research tells us that Māori children in particular as do all children but in particular Māori children need that sense of relationship so it is really important for our teachers to develop a strong relationship with these students.***

Participant B emphasised that it was important for her teachers to have ownership of their learning and to recognise and let the children know their sense of self and culture.

## **Targeting and Tracking Māori Students**

Participant A stated that when Māori students were enrolled at the age of 5 at her school, the first thing that she did was obtain baseline data. In other words to find out how many letters of the alphabet the learners could identify. They were targeted depending on their need and also tracked to ensure progress is made. She confirmed:

***And yes, we know it works, eh we know the intervention programme works because we know of the children at secondary school who were in danger of failing, who caught up and have gone on to be very successful in life.***

Participant B affirmed her belief in targeting and tracking Māori students. She confirmed:

***Well, we have our annual plan where we have very, very specific targets. Then of course, we review our annual plan at the end of the year. Our curriculum director does that and we see, we set targets if we have reached our targets or not. If we have not reached our targets, for the next year we revise the actions we have taken to ensure that we meet our mark. One thing we do in our annual plan and we have done it ever since I have been the principal is have a specific area and have an annual plan and plan for our Māori and Pasifika children. It's quite specific to their needs.***

Participant C explained that at her school they targeted Māori learners by completing a class description where the learners needs both academic and social needs were highlighted. From

the class description, Māori learners were placed in target groups and are monitored for the time they are at the school.

## High Expectations

ALL three participants indicated that they had high expectations for all their learners at their schools, including Māori learners. Participant A was emphatic that she did not compromise high expectations, neither was she apologetic about it and all her teaching staff were required to cooperate in maintaining high expectations for all learners. She stressed:

***So people are very clear when they come here that you have to be culturally responsive, you have to have high expectations for children, it's kind of not negotiable and I don't know and maybe because I am Māori and that's the way I operate. I don't know but it's who I am and I don't ever compromise that. If you work here, that is what is required. And I just never had the issue of people engaging in deficit thinking, not wanting the best for their children in their classrooms.***

Participant B stated: ***“So we believe that we have very high standards here for all children, because the majority of our children are Māori, they receive the expectation of high standards right across the board really”.***

Participant C indicated that they had high expectations of their learners, ***“and I can tell you that the majority of teachers follow those school expectations. And our school vision talks about leadership, identity, determination, thinking and connections”.***

## Home School Partnerships

Another common theme that emerged from all three participants was home school partnerships, although it is approached differently by each school.

Participant A:

***Over the time that I have been here in ..... especially, but before I came to ..... in an equally Māori populated area., what we always worked with was face to face. These letters and correspondence have a place, but they are not that successful. So we do things and opportunities, like we have learning discussions, we hold them every year and that is for whanau to come and share achievement information around their children. So we allocate half of our time slots and we provide a range of times and days when they can come. And if they are not able to come during the week, they can come in on the weekend. So we really cater for the needs of whanau and you know we normally have over 90% turnout.***

Participant B:

***One thing that they do- what we found we will have whānau meetings, because remember our children move every 2 years. Some years we would get a lot of parents, and some years we would hardly get any. So now, our young cultural leaders take the beginning of the meeting. So every child that is a young cultural leader have to bring their parents. Their parents have to bring a friend. They come to the hui and then one of the cultural groups would perform at the end, not at the beginning. We found that when we did it at the beginning, then they would go. So children talk to the parents.***



***The teacher responsible for cultural responsiveness across the school talks to the parents and then we have a performance. So we have found by drawing in our children, our young cultural leaders to the meetings, to chair the meetings, to do the greetings, to do some of the presentations, we have probably increased our parents coming to the hui by at least about 50%. We think at the moment, it's our most successful thing.***

Participant C:

***What works really well for us is when we have events. So at the end of this term, we are having our celebration of learning which is a completely informal. We give a time frame so between 4pm and 6pm, the school is open, the teachers would be here. Please come in and walk around the school and see what the kids are learning about. Come in with your students. And that gets a really good turnout. I suspect because there is no pressure involved in that. No one is going to ask the parent any questions, no one is expecting them to be here at a certain time and to stay for hours on end.***

All three participants expended considerable effort in ensuring that they had parents turn up by being flexible and accommodating.

The themes that emerged from question 2 of the study demonstrated differences and one similarity in the leadership practices of the three participants i.e. monitoring teacher pedagogy.

The themes are presented in *Table 4.2* and I highlighted the common themes. Professional development for teachers was common to Participants A and C while student voice emerged as a theme for Participant B. Participants A, B and C demonstrated similarity as all indicated monitoring teacher pedagogy as part of leadership practices and decision making to raising Māori student outcomes. Participant B indicated recyclable learning as an additional theme.

***Table 4.2: Themes that Emerged from Research Question 2, How do leadership practices inform decision making to raise Māori student outcomes?***

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Themes	Professional Development for Teachers	Student Voice	Professional Development for Teachers
	Monitoring Teacher Pedagogy	Monitoring Teacher Pedagogy	Monitoring Teacher Pedagogy
		Recyclable Learning	

## **Professional Development for Teachers**

Participant A and C indicated that they were actively involved in the professional development of teachers. Participant A stated:

***Ok, so I work very closely and monitor very closely the professional development that we have here. I sit on every professional development meeting. I talk to the facilitator about the need to be a culturally responsive aspect to it, no matter what we are doing, I just don't take what comes through the door. I work with them to make sure it hits the mark. I've mentioned that I often run our own school leg workshops exploring current research in data. The other thing is that I am very pro-active and the Board is too in encouraging staff to better their qualifications. And so two of our young Māori teachers in this school have been supported in the last three years and the end result is that they have both graduated with Master of Education Degrees.***

She explained further:

***So ok, we have increased teacher knowledge which leads to an increase in effective strategies for raising achievement. Increased teacher knowledge, not only through pedagogy but also through academic study. And ours is always informed by data. So that's it.***

Participant C mentioned that they had PD for teachers and senior leadership with the RTLB (resource teacher for learning and behaviour) on how to deliver a differentiated curriculum by best utilising the services of the teacher aides productively. When asked about the effectiveness of the programme, she stated "still early stages, yeah".

## **Student Voice**

Participant B stressed the importance of student voice at her school where the focus had moved from the teacher to the student whereby students are interviewed by the curriculum director.

She stated:

***Something new that we have done over the last 3 years is visible learning so now instead of the full focus being on the teacher, he now interviews students, so he talks to the learners about what they say the purpose of the lesson is, what they are learning, how they feel their teacher relates to them, how they feel in the class. So what is important to us is children feel safe, secured and loved so that they are open for learning. So these are very rigorous appraisal visits. They take long, long, long time.***

## **Monitoring Teacher Pedagogy**

Participant A stated that she played an active role in monitoring teachers in their classrooms together with the external facilitator. She confirmed:

***When we have the professional learning that is going on, it is external facilitator led. So, I go around and observe in all classrooms with the facilitator. So, I get to see everybody working. I observe teacher, leader practice with the external facilitator. And the other thing that I do is that I sit in on the facilitator feedback to the teacher. The other thing that I also do is attend every professional learning workshop and I listen, evaluate and participate. So I have a very hands on approach to it all. And I often listen carefully so that if I see the opportunity to change things or to further support, I can do it straight away.***

Participant B emphasised that at her school, monitoring teacher pedagogy was extremely important and every classroom had standardised prompts for literacy and numeracy. Deliberate acts of teaching, modelling books and the role of the curriculum director came out strongly in her explanation. She explained that:

***We have a lot of transparency of practice, we have a curriculum director that is.....who you just saw. We have numeracy across the school is viewed twice a year in all classes. Literacy across the school is viewed across the classes and it's also viewed to see good practice. It's also viewed so that the curriculum director can get***

***cognisance of what is happening in literacy, strengths and weaknesses for our learners, strengths and weaknesses for our boys in particular and our Māori children.***

She confirmed that when teachers were observed in their classrooms by the curriculum director, it was against a set criteria and they are provided with feedback. She stated:

***There is a template so there are no surprises as what the focus is against our.....good practice sheet. We have templates as to what literacy should look like at....We have criteria and it is very explicit. It is super explicit and he talks to the teacher about their practice against that.***

Participant C affirmed that at her school teachers are monitored in their classrooms but that the observations are specific and worked out with teachers prior to the observations. She explained:

***Well, the observations will have a different focus depending on which teacher is being observed because the observations come from the teachers' inquiry into their own practice. So, if a teacher is inquiring into their reading practice, then when we go to observe,, we speak with the teacher beforehand. What is it that you are doing in your practice? What is it that you want to do differently and what do you want me to be looking for specifically? So, formal observations are very focused observations and they certainly won't cover everything. We used to, probably like many schools, go in and do an observation. Here are the practicing teaching criteria, I am doing an observation and I have to tick off as many as I can and give the information. But we don't do that anymore, the observations are very specific.***

## **Recyclable Learning**

Participant B indicated that recyclable learning was extremely important at her school and teachers used modelling books with examples to assist learners when they were absent. Upon students returning, they caught up by looking at examples in the modelling book. She emphasised:

***So sometimes decisions would be made and the teachers might say but why we're doing that. And we would say, we are doing it for the child, we are not actually doing it for you. It's always got to be about the child. Why do we insist on modelling books? I'll tell you why we do because on a Monday, we have quite high absenteeism. So you have taken your Maths group on a Monday. Those of the children who have missed the teaching opportunity- in our modelling books, we do examples of what the teacher did that day. So you are away, but you know you could go to the modelling book, you can look on Monday, 11 June (Interview date) to see an example of what was done. Now that's fine, but what if you are away a week which is often the case. Actually our Māori children with truancy more rather than long term lack of attendance, you have missed 4 days and that is a lot of learning you have lost. You have the modelling book, you have 4 days, you have got your little buddy who will go through it with you. So we insist on this, not actually for the teachers' benefit but for the students.***

The themes emerging from question 3 of the study demonstrated similarities and differences in monitoring the leadership practices that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. The common theme across the three participants was monitoring student data. The themes are presented in *Table 4.3*.

**Table 4.3: Themes that Emerged from Research Question 3, How does your school monitor the leadership practices that contribute to the achievement outcome of Māori learners?**

	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Themes	Monitoring Student Data	Monitoring Student Data	Monitoring Student Data
	Non Exclusion of Māori Students	Professional Development for Educational Leaders	

## Monitoring Student Data

All three participants indicated that they monitored the leadership practices that contributed to Māori achievement outcomes by monitoring their student data and this was captured by their words:

Participant A:

*Well, everybody participates in gathering assessment data, entering the data into the appropriate site. Then what happens is we are collated, we collate it by class, we collate it by year level, then it all goes down on the table and we pull it to bits. Now one of the latest aspects that we identified as needing to be worked on was on the observation survey after one year, the writing data, writing words had gone down, there was a dip. And Woolf Fisher picked that up in their research and development. So we have really been engaged in discussion and reflection and a lot of dialogue as to why that could possibly be.*

Participant B:

*Yeah, definitely. We can look at our data because it is very interesting. When we dig deeper, and we look at cohorts instead of Year 7, Year 8 and we look at classrooms, we can see where the modelling books were not as effective, where the deliberate acts of teaching reading and writing were not as evident, we can see that the achievement is not as good. It's absolutely cut and dry and you can't refute that, you know.*

Participant C:

*So, there is obviously the data monitoring. There is also monitoring of things like I mentioned at the start, there's the classroom descriptions which include data in them but they also include some evaluative information, some emotional information. So, that actually gives you a good idea of how the teachers see each student, what their understanding of each student is. If you have a description where one particular student where everything surrounding them is negative, then it gives you a really good idea. Yeah, and that's done through looking at the data which comes through from school wide testing 3 times a year. But we also have various other achievement information that comes through at different points in the year. So looking at those class descriptions and that's more informal as well as what goes on. What do I notice about what they are speaking, what's happening around the school, what conversations are happening.*

Although the three participants approached monitoring student data differently, however, they placed emphasis on this strategy.

## Non Exclusion of Māori Students

Participant A regarded the non-exclusion of Māori student as important to leadership practices and decision making that contributed to Māori achievement outcomes. She confirmed:

***We got our Māori children, you know right at the fore, But you know, we are very lucky, we are a small school and it's easy to identify. I think that the fact that we have so many Māori staff which would be 50%, ensures that it remains priority- Māori wellbeing, Māori welfare, Māori student achievement. The other thing that I never mentioned to you is that we've got a policy of non-exclusion. We will never exclude any child from this school no matter what they do. You know I have not mentioned that here but especially it would go against the grain to give up on a Māori child. And you can go back on my record at my time here at .....and find that out that I have not excluded one student. We have a moral obligation to work with what we've got. Yeah, and it might be very hard sometimes. The people might always not agree with me but I got zero tolerance for exclusion.***

Her commitment to catering for the needs of Māori students was demonstrated by her commitment not to exclude any of them, irrespective of the circumstances.

## Professional Development for Educational Leaders

Participant B saw the professional development of educational leaders at her school as significant to leadership practices and decision making that contributed to the achievement outcomes of all students, including Māori. She stated:

***We have, we have done something differently this year. We decide, we feel that the team leaders are pivotal because they have got a class, they also have a team that they have to look after so that's a lot of students. And so we decided this year we would put a huge amount of professional development into the team leaders. It's an ongoing contract for a year to raise the team leaders-this is the goal to raise the team leader's capability to raise the capability within their team for student learning. So that is full day workshops, it's one on one mentoring, it's the facilitator going in and talking with the team leader about how they raise achievement in their team, how they ensure that inclusiveness happens in their team. There is a whole range of things we are covering to keep them focused on achievement in their team. So every time I am talking here, I'm not saying Māori achievement because if I was really honest, we don't differentiate achievement at .....We do not. We have high expectations of everybody right across the board because what we believe works for all. That is our philosophy.***

Hence, she had a one year contract with an external facilitator to provide professional development for the educational leaders at her school.

## Summary

In this chapter, I reiterated the aims of the study, the research questions as well as the method of data collection. Using an inductive approach, I condensed the data into major themes and sub themes and presented them in tables where I highlighted the common themes that emerged from the data. The data from each theme was captured using the exact quotes from the participants.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I discussed the important findings of Chapter 4 and organised this around the research questions. The focus of this discussion centred on the results that matched previous research and results that did not. Where the results matched previous research, the appropriate references were alluded to. When results did not match previous research, this was highlighted and recommended as an area for future research. The first question of this study sought to determine the practices of educational leaders towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners, the second being leadership practices that inform decision making to raising Māori student outcomes and the third being how the school monitors leadership practices that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. The themes identified from the findings with regard to research question one, practices for raising Māori student achievement were culturally responsive pedagogy, targeting and tracking Māori students, high expectations and home school partnerships. The second research question established professional development for teachers, student voice, and monitoring teacher pedagogy and recyclable learning as significant themes. The third research question confirmed monitoring students' data, non-exclusion of Māori students' and professional development for educational leaders as significant themes.

The next part of this discussion acknowledged that there had been some gains in the achievement outcomes of Māori learners, but questioned whether we can say confidently that we had done enough for our treaty partners. It provided some strategies that educational leaders could adopt to improve the achievement outcomes of Māori learners and acknowledged the resurgence and commitment towards Māori learners, including the inclusion of Te Reo Māori in mainstream classes.

### **The Practices of Educational Leaders towards Improving Learning Outcomes of Māori Learners**

All three participants demonstrated a genuine passion and commitment towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. I observed this during the interview sessions where there was a congruency between what they said, how they said it and what they did to improve the learning outcomes of Māori learners. There was a genuine sincerity in their tone of voice, in their non-verbal expression and general demeanour that convinced me of their commitment

towards Māori learners at their schools. Moreover, what I gleaned from the narratives of each of the participants were not practices that were all generic, but some practices tailored to the needs and context of their Māori learners. The generic educational leadership practices were appropriate because the study involved the practices of educational leaders in mainstream classes and this was alluded to by the participants when they stated that what was good for other students would also be good for Māori students. The educational leadership practices that specifically targeted Māori students included culturally responsive pedagogy, forging and maintaining relationships and home school partnerships. Hence, there were some similarities and differences in their practices to raising Māori student outcomes, in their practices informing decision making towards improving Māori student outcomes and the manner in which they monitored leadership practices that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners.

With respect to the first research question, all three participants had unique practices that they considered important for their learners as these practices were suited to their contexts. The role of educational leaders on improving student learning outcomes was highlighted in the literature (Cardno, 2012; Portin et al., 2006; Southworth, 2009), however, these studies alluded to the generic practices of leadership rather than those specifically targeted for Māori learners.

Participant A was the principal of a full primary school, she was of Māori descent, was the most experienced of the three participants and had the highest percentage of Māori learners. She placed great emphasis on the formative years of the learners, especially where many five year old Māori learners arrived at school not being able to identify letters of the alphabet and therefore not being able to decode high frequency words. Her focus was on attending to the fundamental literacy and numeracy learning needs of learners on admission. Hence, she adopted the *Literacy Enhancement Activity Programme* (LEAP) and the *Quick 60 Intervention* that targeted the reading needs of learners and brought them up to speed after sixty lessons. She strongly acknowledged its effectiveness and hence continued with these practices.

Participant A enthusiastically shared that when she tracked these learners who were part of these intervention practices, significant improvements were made even when these learners transitioned into college.

Participant B was the principal of an intermediate school and out of the three participants had the second largest percentage of Māori learners. Interestingly, she placed a strong emphasis on

behaviour as pre-requisite to learning because she was catered for the needs of teenage Māori learners where behaviour could become an obstacle to learning. Reference was made in literature where the disengagement in learning of Māori learners occurred at the start of their intermediate years (Year 7), (Ministry of Education, 2013c). Consequently, she adopted *Positive Behaviour for Learning* (PB4L) where it is planned and taught throughout her school. She stated that *Positive Behaviour for learning* (PB4L) worked extremely well at her school as the behaviour of learners did not affect their learning.

Participant C was the deputy principal of an intermediate school with the smallest percentage of Māori learners. She talked about their Accelerated Learning in Literacy (ALL) at her school where the practices were tailored towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners in writing. This practice basically involved providing extra writing lessons for learners challenged with writing at their appropriate year level. Participant C indicated that this intervention was effective at her school and was mindful that at an intermediate level, they had only two years for their Māori learners to make gains before they transitioned to college. I understood this to imply that as an intermediate school, they were preparing their Māori students for college.

In this study, participants made mention of practices specific to their context. The *Positive Behaviour for Learning* (PB4L) as identified by Participant B did not match previous research and therefore did not feature in the current literature. Hence research ought to be conducted in this area and was suggested in Chapter 6 as a recommendation for further research.

Culturally responsive pedagogy was the second theme established from the findings with reference to research question 1. Participant A alluded to the Treaty of Waitangi and how for her it was important to cater for the needs of Māori learners whereby the principles of participation, protection and partnership were recognised and acknowledged. The protection of Māori culture, language and beliefs in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi was identified in current literature (Ministry of Education, 2007b; Macfarlane, et al., 2007). Participant A ensured that Māori learners were given priority at her school in terms of scholarships even when they did not meet the criteria and was well supported by her Board in this regard. She emphasised that in upholding the principles of the Treaty, she was also well supported by her Board and that in order to ensure that her teachers delivered a culturally responsive pedagogy, she appraised them according to the *Rua Framework*. This framework appraised teachers against a set of



criteria on how they catered for the learning needs Māori learners. In doing so, the principal demonstrated her strong commitment to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Moreover, her supportive Board understood the importance of Treaty obligations and supported their principal in this practice. The appraising of teachers according to the *Ruia Framework* was a contextualised practice and did not feature in the existing literature and was an unexpected finding.

Participant B described how she was guided by research on the importance of forging and maintaining relationships with learners, especially Māori learners as part of her culturally responsive pedagogical practice. Establishing relationships with learners was well referenced in existing literature (Macfarlane, 1997, 2004; Macfarlane et al., 2008). It was an essential part of her leadership practice for teachers to establish relationships with learners and instil a sense of self-worth in them in a culturally responsive manner. Hence, this was paramount at her school. Culturally responsive pedagogy was acknowledged in the current literature (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bell, 2011; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Bishop et al., 2014; Berryman et al., 2009; Cavanagh & Bateman, 2007; Gay, 2010, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Macfarlane et al., 2007; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2013; Richard et al., 2007; Sergiovanni, 1994) as a practice that contributed to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.

Targeting and tracking the achievement of Māori students using data was prioritised and hence was an important practice at the schools of Participant A, B and C and was highlighted in current literature (Wallace Foundation, 2013). All three participants used different practices to track and monitor Māori students that were suited to their environment. Participant A targeted Māori students on their first admission to school at the age of five by testing them to find out how many letters of the alphabet learners they could recognise. Learners identified as requiring extra assistance were intentionally targeted in order to bring them up to speed with fundamental letter recognition. The principal tracked these learners and was confident that this practice worked as they went on to be successful in life. This justified the continuation of the practice at her school as she was mindful of its effectiveness.

Participant B had very specific targets at her school and the targets were included in her schools' annual plan. Targeting students were inextricably linked to achievement data and she stressed that Māori students always made up the targets at her school. Participant B placed

great emphasis as part of her practice on targeting and tracking her students and this was demonstrated by her including targets in the schools' annual plan as well as employing a curriculum director. She incorporated the role of a curriculum director as part of her senior leadership team. Her curriculum director was responsible for among other things, setting achievement targets and when targets were not achieved, revising their targets. As a school, they then discussed possible reasons as to why the targets were not met and accordingly made amendments to the schools' annual plan.

In contrast to Participants A and B, Participant C acknowledged that completing class descriptions where both the academic and social levels of the learners were highlighted worked well at her school. She, as well as other senior leadership team members, looked at the class descriptions and monitored the progress of their targeted learners. The Māori students were always part of the targeted group and their achievement outcomes were monitored for the two years they were at the intermediate level. I believe that targeting and tracking Māori learners is of paramount importance and this practice affords the educational leaders to gauge the effectiveness of their practices by engaging in robust discussion with their teachers in terms of what is working well and what needs to be adjusted or changed.

High expectations formed an integral part of the educational practices towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners' at all three schools and was therefore the common fourth theme identified. The three educational leaders placed emphasis on high expectations across their schools. High expectations were about a genuine and sincere belief that learners had the potential of achieving at a higher level.

Participant A was emphatic that she did not compromise her stand on high expectations for all learners at her school and even said that it was not negotiable. She also attributed her high expectations practice to her being Māori. She confirmed that she was fortunate that all teachers had high expectations of their Māori learners and attributed it to her having teachers who were predominantly of Māori descent. Participant B confirmed that most of the learners at her school were Māori and these learners benefitted from the high expectations they had for all learners at her school. In contrast to Participants A and C, she emphasised that in terms of expectations, if it was effective for non- Māori learners then she believed that it would also be effective for Māori learners. Similar sentiments were echoed by Participant C who acknowledged that all teachers

at her school had high expectations for all learners and that having high expectations for learners at her school was part of their school vision. High expectations was adequately researched and acknowledged as a notable practice of educational leaders to raise the achievement outcomes of all learners including Māori learners and was therefore highlighted in current literature (Bell, 2010; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2007b; Ministry of Education, 2013a; Rubie-Davies, 2015; Turner et al., 2015; Wallace Foundation, 2013).

The last theme with reference to research question 1 was that of home school partnerships which was common across the three schools included in this study. Although all three participants used different home school partnership strategies, they adopted strategies that worked well in their contexts. The three participants encouraged home school partnerships and encouraged parents and caregivers to attend by being extremely flexible. Participant A accommodated parents who could not make it during the weekdays by opening her school doors during the weekends and this open door policy had tremendously improved her making contacts with parents to discuss the learning of their children. It was obvious that this practice worked well in her context where many parents worked shifts or could not leave work earlier than usual to attend home school partnership meetings.

Participant B used another strategy by having her students who were cultural leaders at her school to run the beginning of their home school partnership sessions. The student cultural leaders would have to bring their parents and in turn their parents had to bring in a friend. Parents were motivated to stay for the home school partnership sessions because the student cultural leaders performed at the end of each session. This principal emphasised the effectiveness of this strategy whereby the number of parents attending increased by 50%. Participant C revealed how they approached home school partnerships as an event to celebrate learning and the focus was less formal. Parents accompanied their children to school and walked around to see what their children were learning. This strategy also significantly improved the number of parents attending. Adequate reference was made on the benefits of home school partnerships in existing literature for all students, including Māori (Bell, 2010; Bishop, 2010; Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Hornby & Witte, 2010; Jeynes, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2013a; Mutch & Collins, 2012).

## **Leadership Practices Informing Decision Making to Raise Māori Student Outcomes**

From the second research question, four themes emerged from the findings viz. professional development for teachers, student voice, monitoring teacher pedagogy and recyclable learning. Hence, these themes are included as part of the discussion of the chapter.

Professional development for teachers featured prominently in two of the three schools that were part of this study (viz., Participant A and C). Participant A was extremely selective of what professional development she opted for at her school. As principal, she engaged in conversation with external facilitators to ensure that all professional development for teachers had an inherent culturally responsive pedagogy to it. She emphasised that she did not accept anything that came through the door. In doing so, she catered for the needs of the learners at her school, most of whom were Māori. She also conducted her own professional development for teachers at her school whereby collectively discussion was generated on articles and current research of pedagogical practices and how the same could be implemented at their school. This with a view to raise Māori student outcomes. She and the school Board also encouraged teachers to better their qualifications and she firmly believed that increased teacher pedagogical knowledge resulted in better learning outcomes for Māori students at her school. Participant A stressed that she was pro-active in this regard and her efforts contributed to two teachers of Māori descent obtaining qualifications at the Masters level.

Participant C on the other hand stated that the focus at her school was working with Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) to assist teachers on how to utilise teacher aids deliver a differentiated curriculum whereby all learners, most of whom were Māori were catered for in their classrooms. In doing so, she stated that teachers would be better equipped with strategies in utilising their teacher aids in their classrooms to cater for all students. When asked about its effectiveness, she stated that it was still early days to conclude whether this practice was effective or not. The value and importance of professional development for teachers was addressed in existing literature (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). I firmly believe that professional development for teachers is an important pre-requisite to improving the learning outcomes of all learners, including Māori learners as pedagogical practices are being reviewed and refined on a daily basis based on current research.

Student voice enjoyed priority at the school of Participant B where the focus had shifted from the teacher to the student. She stressed that the curriculum director at her school interviewed students to find out what they had learnt, and how their teacher treated them as well as how they felt in class. Participant B emphasised that obtaining student voice was a rigorous process and took a long, long time. She believed that the Māori students had to feel safe and cared for and loved as a pre-requisite for learning to take place. She stated that her teachers understood the importance of student voice and gave students a greater say in their learning. The students therefore felt empowered and were motivated to give off their best. Student voice was not identified in the current literature as a practice informing decision making to raising Māori student outcomes and was recommended as an area for future research in the next chapter.

Monitoring teacher pedagogy was linked with current literature (Southworth, 2004; Wallace Foundation, 2013) where teachers are observed in their classrooms and was identified by Participants A, B and C as a practice informing decision making to raising Māori student outcomes at their schools. Participant A played an active role in monitoring teacher pedagogy at her school. When external facilitators were engaged with monitoring best practice in classrooms, she sat in with the facilitators and observed the teachers at her school. In doing so, she was made aware of what was going on in the classrooms at her school. She observed all feedback sessions by the facilitators to teachers upon completion of classroom observations. Participant A stated that she listened and observed carefully so that she could make changes if necessary and provided further support for teachers if needed, promptly.

Participant B had a curriculum director who monitored teachers in their classrooms for literacy and numeracy twice a year and provided them with feedback against a set of criteria. She stated that monitoring teachers at her school was therefore a transparent process. They had standardised prompts for literacy and numeracy in all classrooms at her school and part of the observations were to see if teachers used the prompts when they taught. The observation of teachers in their classrooms was extremely important at her school as the curriculum director could see what was happening and gauged how her learners, especially boys and Māori students were being catered for and more importantly progressed.

Participant C confirmed that teachers were monitored in their classrooms but this was negotiated with senior management as to what pedagogical aspects were to be observed.

Hence, the observation of teachers in their classrooms at her school was very specific and arose from the teachers' own inquiry i.e. areas that they would like to improve on. She confirmed that they had dispensed with observing teachers according to the teaching criteria as they did in the past. I believe that the practice of monitoring teacher pedagogy is critical to improving the pedagogical practices of teachers and improving the learning outcomes of all learners as strengths are identified as well as areas requiring further support.

Recyclable learning was extremely important at the school of Participant B and teachers were aware that it was for the benefit of the learners. The principal stated that they had a problem with short term absenteeism of Māori learners at her school where learners could be absent for up to four days. During this time, the learners would have obviously missed out on important learning. To circumvent this problem, all teachers at her school were obligated to using modelling books where the learning intentions and examples of the strategies used in literacy and numeracy were highlighted for ease of reference. When learners returned after a few days, the teachers used the peers of learners who were absent to go through the modelling book and looked at the examples and strategies used. In doing so, the learners who were absent caught up with whatever learning they had missed out on. Existing literature does not mention recyclable learning as a practice informing leadership practice and decision making to raising Māori student outcomes and was therefore recommended as an area requiring research in Chapter 6.

### **Monitoring Leadership Practices that Contribute to the Achievement Outcomes of Māori Learners**

The three themes identified from the findings that became apparent from this third and last research question were monitoring student data, non-exclusion of Māori students and professional development for educational leaders. Monitoring student data was considered important by all three participants at their schools as a means of monitoring leadership practice that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. This finding was aligned with existing literature (Wallace Foundation, 2013) where it was acknowledged that effective leaders worked collaboratively with teachers to identify emerging trends from student data and hence used the same to inform planning and practice.

Participant A acknowledged that all teachers at her school were responsible for gathering, collating and monitoring student assessment data. Collectively as a team, they analysed the data by drilling deeper and looked for trends and emerging patterns. She cited an incident whereby the observation survey writing results for junior learners at her school had deteriorated and was subsequently picked up by them monitoring student data. She stated that senior management and all teachers were engaged in discussion, reflection and dialogue as to why this possibly happened.

Participant B stated that they analysed student data by cohort level instead of Year 7 and Year 8 and found monitoring student data very interesting. She confirmed that she could determine which teachers were using modelling books and deliberate acts of teaching. Teachers who used modelling books and deliberate acts of teaching as decided by senior management had students who produced better results than those teachers who did not. She stated that it was absolutely cut and dry and this could not be refuted.

Participant C reiterated the use of class descriptions at her school in terms of how teachers monitored their students because the academic and social levels of learners were recorded on the class descriptions. Teachers engaged in discussions with senior management regarding their students' progress and this was how management gleaned what teachers thought about their students. Monitoring student data at her school was also occasioned by school wide testing that took place three times a year. The trends that emerged from the data were then used to inform planning and practice. The fact that testing was conducted three times a year, afforded them the opportunity to monitor Māori student progress. Although all three participants used different practices as discussed in the foregoing, they were suited to their contexts.

The non-exclusion of Māori students were a priority and was only considered by Participant A. She stated that she was fortunate to have 50% of her staff who were Māori and therefore Māori student well-being and achievement was paramount at her school. As a principal, she had never excluded any Māori student during her tenure at the school and went on to confirm that this was a moral obligation at her school. Although her non exclusion stance was not always well received at times, she was committed and catered for all Māori students irrespective of their circumstances. Non exclusion of Māori students did not feature in current research and was recommended as an area that required further research in Chapter 6.

Participant B was the only participant who regarded the professional development of educational leaders as a means of monitoring leadership practice that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. She was cognisant that the educational leaders at her school catered for a large number of students. Not only did they have students in their own classrooms but were also team leaders to teachers who catered for a number of other students. Hence, the principal indicated that they had an external facilitator who engaged in improving the capability of team leaders at her school. She rationalised that if team leaders were better equipped, this would percolate to their own classrooms as well as to the classroom of teachers they led and the achievement outcomes of learners would therefore be improved. Professional development for educational leaders was consistent with existing literature (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2008b; Wallace Foundation, 2013) as a hallmark of an effective educational leader as educational leaders would not be able to achieve everything on their own but by developing their leaders. I believe that the provision of professional development for educational leaders is however, suited to larger schools where the number of students and therefore teachers necessitated more educational leaders.

It must be acknowledged that there have been some positive achievement outcomes of Māori learners. The question was whether we can say with conviction and confidence that we had done enough for our treaty partners. The effort by those educational leaders committed to raising the achievement outcomes of Māori learners was commendable, however, it would have been naïve to assume that this practice was pervasive and across all schools in New Zealand. Hence, the literature questions why the efforts to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners over the past fifty years have not yielded the desired results (Bishop et al., 2009). Literature (Hargreaves and Fink, 2004) also questioned the significant disparity in the educational landscape when the practices of educational leaders could be making a difference.

I believe that there is a reason that could be contributing to this ongoing disparity in the educational landscape. One collective voice was non-existent in this regard even when contexts were considered because culture remains the same irrespective of the context. Literature did highlight how studies of schools in New Zealand differed considerably in the manner that they catered for their Māori learners socially and in terms of learning (Clark et al., 1996; Reedy, 1992). A concerted, collective approach in this regard could possibly contribute to positive



achievement outcomes of Māori learners e.g. specific guidelines by the Ministry of Education on how to cater for Māori learners in a culturally responsive manner. Moreover, Māori cultural capital needs to be recognised, respected and acknowledged in the classrooms.

This study has alluded to the practices of educational leaders being placed in a continuum of status quo leaders, culturally responsive leaders and culturally sustaining leaders (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016). Whilst acknowledging the role that status quo leaders and culturally responsive leaders played, the authors emphasised that it was the culturally sustaining leader who made the most difference. It was the culturally sustaining leader who understood and valued their schools' 'socio cultural' and 'socio-political' context, and was aware of the disproportionality in achievement outcomes in education. It was this awareness that the culturally sustaining leader brought to decision making when hiring, supporting and retaining staff (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016). I viewed the culturally sustaining leader as being one whose espoused theory and theory in practice being congruent. There was a strong commitment in the culturally sustaining leader where there was a confluence of heart and mind when decisions were made towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Emotional labour was integral to the practices of a culturally sustaining leader as it was with any human endeavour where success was achieved. The culturally sustaining leader did not merely tick off the boxes occasioned by obligations from the Ministry of Education, but led, directed, motivated and inspired his/her staff to see the wisdom in working towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.

The New Zealand educational landscape was unfortunately still punctuated by some educational leaders and teachers who had a mono cultural mind set. This mono-cultural mind set found expression in the lackadaisical manner in which these educational leaders and teachers catered for Māori learners at their schools. There was no urgency or commitment and many saw it as simply another task that they had to perform. Literature alluded to the disadvantages of a mono- cultural mind set (Walker, 1973) and how it did not resonate well with Māori learners thereby contributing to a negative attitude towards school and learning. The educultural wheel (Macfarlane, 1997, 2004) highlighted in the current literature could be a viable alternative for educational leaders where the principles of whānaungatanga (relationships), rangatiranga (self-determination), manaakitanga (ethos of care), kotahitanga (unity and

bonding) were embraced, nurtured and sustained by the fifth principle, pumanawatanga (a beating heart) whereby life was breathed into the other four principles.

In their quest to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners, educational leaders could have adopted the characteristics of a servant leader (Spears, 1998) suggested in literature. In this regard, the characteristics of listening whereby leaders were receptive to what was being said, being empathetic by understanding the plight of others and not rejecting them and stewardship where there was a commitment to serving the needs of others. Talking, listening and working collaboratively as equal partners was what dialogue was about. These characteristics resonated with Māori culture and was integral to who Māori were as distinct ethnic people. Educational leaders could utilise the characteristics of servant leadership in their interactions with Māori learners as well as whānau and caregivers.

Educational leaders could have also adopted culturally responsive leadership practices as evidenced by literature (Johnson, 2007) where educational leaders were seen as social activists because culturally responsive leadership was linked to social justice. Here the role of the educational leader could include inter alia, promoting social justice by including aspects of social justice in the curriculum, acknowledging the importance of social justice in society amongst teaching staff and promoting the school as a learning environment to be inclusive and equitable for all students. In doing so, educational leaders could be creating an environment where teachers and more importantly students could realise that social justice was integral to a prosperous democratic society. The inclusion of social justice would go beyond rhetoric and prepare our students to become critical thinkers where they could one day challenge structures that perpetuated economic, social and political injustices.

There was however, a genuine and sincere desire to depart from the mono cultural mind set. There was a renewed respect for Māori culture and the desire to include Te Reo Māori into the mainstream curriculum. I attributed this to the pronounced tendency of people in New Zealand and other parts of the world who respected and accepted other cultures and languages. Moreover, people were increasingly becoming disillusioned with their political leaders and were crying out for change and acceptance. The social media also provided an alternate voice for people who for far too long had been provided with one side of the story. In the New Zealand context, Māori leaders challenged the status quo of previous governments for decades with

limited success, however, I believe that the political leaders of today demonstrate a commitment to treaty obligations, were more accountable and sensitive to the needs of Māori. A case in point in the educational sector was when the Educational Review Office conducted an audit at any school, a question that was always posed was: How did you cater for the needs of your Māori learners? Not only was an explanation warranted in this regard but also irrefutable documentary proof from educational leaders that justified their commitment.

## **Summary**

This chapter summarised the key findings of this study and the discussion centred on the three research questions and the themes that emerged from the findings of the data obtained from the semi structured interviews. The findings were the result of the personal leadership journeys of the three educational leaders viewed through their individual lenses. Where the findings were consistent and therefore aligned with existing literature, reference was made to the same. When findings were not consistent with existing literature, this was highlighted and recommended as an area requiring further research in the next chapter. As an educational leader, I also expressed my personal voice to the educational practices of the three participants, their practices informing leadership practices and decision making to raising Māori student outcomes and the monitoring of leadership practices that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. I concluded with my observation from an educational leader lens to the resurgence and commitment towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners and attributed it to a change in mind set in New Zealand and other parts of the world as well the advent of the social media where an alternate voice was provided with a platform.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

The objective of this study inquired into the leadership practices of educational leaders who sought to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. This chapter summarised the key findings of this study, provided the limitations of this study and made recommendations for further research.

### **Summary of the Key Findings**

The three participants in this study, two principals and one deputy principal demonstrated a strong commitment in their practice towards improving the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. This became apparent by the unique programmes they had adopted to suit their contexts viz. one mainstream primary school and two mainstream intermediate schools. In this regard, specific mention was made of catering for the literacy and numeracy needs of junior learners by Participant A, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) by Participant B and Accelerated Learning in Literacy (ALL) by Participant C. Although the programmes were different, they nonetheless were targeted towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners' at their schools due ostensibly to their contexts. On the other hand, there were many practices that were the same and I attributed this to the fact that the educational leaders were mindful of their responsibility towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. These included culturally responsive pedagogy (Participants A and B), targeting and tracking Māori students (Participants A, B and C), having high expectations for Māori learners (Participants A, B and C) and engaging in flexible home school partnerships (Participants A, B and C). Where practices were linked to literature, references were made to the same. Likewise, when practices were not aligned to literature, this was highlighted as a recommendation for further study.

I observed that all three participants in this study could talk confidently about their practices towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. They were spontaneous when responding to the questions posed during the semi structured interviews. I interpreted this to a genuineness and sincerity in their commitment to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners as their responses were not a mere response to my semi structured interview questions. This also became evident during the follow up prompt questions. However, none of the participants shared any achievement data of their Māori learners', suffice to say that they

were aware that their educational practices were making a difference both academically and socially for their Māori learners. I understood this as a confirmation of them tracking and targeting Māori learners as all three participants indicated that they tracked and targeted Māori learners at their schools.

In this study, I found that leadership practices were a major perceived influence in improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. The three educational leaders were either directly or indirectly involved in implementing the practices, practices that informed leadership practices and decision making and the monitoring of leadership practices that contributed to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. Participant A, B and C placed strong emphasis on observing teachers deliver best practice in their classrooms. However, Participant B was indirectly involved due to her utilising the services of a curriculum director. She was however, aware of his day to day activities because he was part of the senior leadership team who could therefore also be regarded as an educational leader. The observation of teachers by the two educational leaders and curriculum director informed them of the quality of pedagogical practices in the classrooms, whether agreed school wide practices were being adhered to and where teachers required further support. The three participants demonstrated a clear preference to them monitoring their leadership practices internally as they did not allude to any external feedback from either, whānau and caregivers, their respective Boards or from the Education Review Office (ERO).

In view of the over fifty years of limited success in improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners, the role of educational leaders was paramount. Educational leaders had a critical role in ensuring that their school culture was conducive to this obligation by goal setting, having high expectations for teachers and learners, forging mutual respect and trust amongst all staff and being flexible and reflective on their practices. As educational leaders, we would not want to witness limited success in the achievement outcomes of Māori learners after another fifty years as this would undoubtedly place us on the wrong side of history.

I am of the opinion that the findings of this study resonated with other educational leaders as it did with me, who are engaged in improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners in mainstream classes. While there were different approaches occasioned by contexts, the educational practices of incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy, home school

partnerships and high expectations cannot be dispensed with as was evidenced from existing literature, especially when working towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. I believe that the objective of this study was met and made evident in the findings chapter of this study where the responses of the participants came to light.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study included the size of the sample and the geographical area of the three participants. There were only three participants engaged in this study. A larger sample would have enabled a more comprehensive conclusion to be made. The participants from two schools were from South Auckland and one from East Auckland. A wider Auckland geographical area would have provided a general account of the practices of educational leaders towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Despite its limitations, this study provided an understanding of the leadership practices of three mainstream educational leaders as to how they catered to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners at their schools.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation One**

New Zealand is a country of migrants and on a daily basis, teachers from other parts of the world migrate here in search of a better life. Many of these teachers equated their qualifications and are accepted as teachers and subsequently found themselves in classrooms where the presence of Māori learners was inevitable. Many overseas trained teachers did not have any knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bi cultural nature of this founding document. Moreover, many overseas trained teachers came from countries where relationships between teacher and student were non-existent or minimal due to the conservative nature of their societies. It is therefore recommended that the Ministry introduce professional development whereby overseas trained teachers could be sensitised to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, culturally responsive pedagogical practice and Māori culture prior to entering New Zealand classrooms. In doing so, there would be mutual benefit for the teachers and students.

#### **Recommendation Two**

In addition to pedagogical professional development, schools could conduct professional development programmes where the personal beliefs of teachers were interrogated in a professional and non-threatening manner. Aspects like stereo typing, and ethnocentrism could

form an integral part of these professional development sessions where teachers shared their beliefs and viewpoints honestly and freely. At these sessions, generalisations and stereotyping could be debunked and a mutual respect for all encouraged. Not only would Māori students benefit but all multi- cultural students. This awareness is critical in a multi- cultural country like New Zealand because people are a microcosm of society.

### **Recommendation Three**

Culturally responsive pedagogical practice, forging and maintaining relationships with Māori learners and whānau are a pre-requisite integral to Māori students' achievement outcomes. Principals are at the forefront of providing direction for their schools and establishing a culture of care. Hence, beginning primary school principals could be mentored in this regard in the likely event of them securing a principal position in a school where there is a large percentage of Māori learners. Moreover, there are many principals leading primary schools in New Zealand who have come from abroad. These principals could first be mentored on cultural sensitivity and how to develop and support their staff in this regard. Ultimately, it is about the collective effort by all educational leaders and not just isolated cases for positive results to be achieved.

### **Recommendation Four**

It has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and mentioned in this study that Māori students' disengagement from school occurs at the start of their intermediate years (Year 7). Education leaders could provide extra support for Māori students at this level e.g. teacher aid support, resource teachers, social workers etc. Moreover, they could make contact with whānau and care givers promptly should this be deemed necessary and maintain an open door policy in order for maximum support to be provided. A lackadaisical response in this regard could lead to Māori students not being successful at school as was alluded to in this study by the Ministry of Education where more than a third of Māori students would leave school without any qualification.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

It became apparent that some findings were not aligned with existing literature on practices that contributed to improving the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. Hence, it is recommended that further research be conducted in the following areas:

- The Ruia Framework where teachers are appraised according to how they cater for Māori students.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) as a practice for improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners in mainstream classes.
- Recyclable learning as a practice towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.
- Māori student voice as a practice to inform leadership practice and decision making to raising Māori student learning outcomes.
- The non-exclusion of Māori students as a means of monitoring leadership practices and decision making that contribute to the achievement outcomes of Māori students.

## **Final Remarks**

This study set out to inquire into the leadership practices of educational leaders in mainstream schools that seek to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners. There were similarities and differences in their practices and all three participants acknowledged the importance of catering for Māori learners in a culturally responsive manner. Importantly, the three participants were committed and dedicated to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. The current literature drew attention to the critical role that educational leaders played in providing direction for their schools and inspiring and motivating their staff to do their best for their students, particularly Māori. We all have a moral obligation to improving the achievement outcome of Māori students as leaving it all to Māori could be seen as abrogating treaty responsibilities.



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## **Appendix A: Semi Structured Interview Questions**

**The semi-structured interviews will be guided by three main questions and the follow up prompt questions will emanate from them depending on the responses I receive when the main questions are posed.**

### **1. What are practices at your school towards improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners?**

- a. What initiatives or programmes do you use for raising Māori student achievement? What do these initiatives entail? Are they working well? How can you tell? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?
- b. What practices do you think are working well in your school towards raising Māori student learning outcomes? How can you tell? What aspects need further development? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?
- c. Let's talk about expectations. Talk to me about expectations of Māori learners at your school. Do all staff have high expectations of Māori learners at your school? How do you know?
- d. Can you talk about any strategies you use to contact whānau and care givers at your school? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?
- e. Let's move on to staff professional development. What type of professional development is offered to raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners? Have they been beneficial? How can you tell? Is there anything more you would like to add?

### **2. How do leadership practices inform decision making to raise Māori student outcomes?**

- a. Let's begin with decision making. Who makes decisions relating to Māori student achievement at your school? Tell me more.
- b. Have any practices changed the way decisions are made at your school? Tell me more.
- c. Do you think the way decisions are made contributed to raising Māori student outcomes? How can you tell?
- d. Have any practices changed the leadership practices at your school? How can you tell? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?
- e. Do you think the leadership practices have contributed raising Māori student outcomes? Can you tell me how? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?

### **3. How does your school monitor the leadership practices that contribute to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners?**

- a. Who monitors the leadership practices that contribute to the achievement outcomes of Māori learners? What does he/she do? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?
- b. What type monitoring takes place at your school? Is there anything more you would like to add?

- c. Has the monitoring of leadership practices contributed to improving the achievement outcomes of Māori learners? How can you tell? Is there anything more you would like to tell me?

## Appendix B

**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

**10/04/2018**

**Project Title**

**To identify and examine the leadership practices of educational leaders that raise the achievement outcomes of Māori learners.**

**An Invitation**

**Kia Ora:** I, Komal Singh am presently a student at Auckland University of Technology completing a Masters in Educational Leadership. As part of my studies, I am inviting you to participate in this research whereby I will be asking Educational Leaders some questions examining their practices regarding the learning outcomes of Māori learners. They will be asked how their roles contribute to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

I am interested in your practices and ideas and how they contribute to improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners. As educational leaders, you could identify areas that require improvement and introduce new strategies that are non-existent with the view to improving Māori student learning outcomes.

This research would contribute significantly in me obtaining a Masters in Educational Leadership qualification. It would also afford me the opportunity to reflect on my practice and that of our staff at my school.

By participating in this research, you will be assisting me in contributing to the body of research regarding the understanding of educational leadership practices of how Māori learners are catered for in mainstream classes. In doing so, it would provide policy makers, educational leaders and whānau with information regarding how schools are engaged in improving the learning outcomes of Māori learners.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

Your school forms part of the COL (community of learning) of which my school is part of where strategies are discussed and shared as to how to improve the learning outcomes of all learners. My research involves the learning outcomes of Māori learners. Hence, I chose schools with a minimum of between 10% to 15% learners who classify themselves as Māori.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate in the research, kindly complete the consent form. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will not disadvantage you in any way. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

**What will happen in this research?**

For this research, I will be interviewing participants (up to 6 Educational Leaders) from schools that have a minimum 10% to 15% learners who classify themselves as Māori. You will be required to answer questions regarding Māori

student learning outcomes. Your responses will be audio recorded. The data obtained will be used for research purposes only, thereby assisting me in completing a Masters in Educational Leadership.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

I do not foresee any risks. Pseudonyms will be used for your name and that of your school. Whatever information obtained from the interview will not be discussed with any of the participants from the other schools.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

You will be free to stop the interview and not answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. I assure you that the interview will be conducted in a friendly, non-confrontational manner. You will not be judged in any way as this information will be used for research purposes only. The audio recording will be used for interpreting and analysing the data and will assist me in being an attentive listener without having me asking you to repeat yourself. Hard copies of the data related to the research will be kept in a locked filing cabinet separate from the research questions. All electronic data will be kept on a password-protected computer. The data will be kept for six years by the researcher and then destroyed. All paper copies will be shredded and any digital documentation permanently deleted.

**What are the benefits?**

This research will enable me to obtain a Masters in Educational Leadership qualification. It will also contribute to the body of research regarding the improvement of the learning outcomes for Māori learners. It is also part of my learning journey where I could adopt strategies not being used at my school. There may also be a conference presentation and/or journal article. Moreover, it will provide me with an opportunity to reflect on my own practices as well as that of other teaching staff at my school.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

I will not share any information obtained from the interviews with anybody. The information shared with me will be for the researcher and participant only.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

I believe the cost will be your time.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Two weeks to consider my invitation.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

I will provide you with feedback on the findings of this research.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Contact the Project Supervisor: Dr Lynette Reid, email: [lynette.reid@aut.ac.nz](mailto:lynette.reid@aut.ac.nz)  
Tel: (09) 921 9999 ext 8206

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of ATEC, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Researcher Contact Details:**

**Komal Singh** email: [kamalsinghsa62@gmail.com](mailto:kamalsinghsa62@gmail.com) MOB: 021 178 5228

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

**Dr Lynette Reid** email: [lynette.reid@aut.ac.nz](mailto:lynette.reid@aut.ac.nz) Tel: (09) 921 9999 ext 8206

of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date final ethics approval was granted, ATEC Reference number type the reference number.

## Appendix C

### Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

**Project title: To identify and examine the leadership practices of educational leaders that raise the achievement outcomes of Maori learners.**

**Project Supervisor: Dr Lynette Reid**

**Researcher: Komal Singh**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10/04/2018.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number**