

# Leading schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand: Understanding and supporting the weight of culture for Māori teachers

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## **Abstract**

*Leading schools in Aotearoa New Zealand is a critical role. In a bicultural country, a key aspect of this role is developing a school ethos where culturally responsive practices are strongly embedded. Frequently, this is considered in light of the tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau within the wider school community. However, an area where there is a dearth of research is the experiences of Māori teachers working in mainstream schooling. This article focuses on the lived realities of six Māori teachers who completed a graduate qualification in immersion and bilingual teaching in Māori, and returned to their respective schools. The research consisted of the collection and analysis of a detailed written questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with the Māori teachers. The research found that the additional professional and cultural tasks and responsibilities that this group of Māori teachers undertook often went unrecognised financially or otherwise by their employers and fellow colleagues. These Māori teachers felt they were “culturally obliged” to tautoko the students they serve and to support their schools’ respective Māori communities.*

**Keywords:** *Māori teachers; leadership; principals; culturally responsive practices; schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand; school ethos*

## **Introduction**

There has long been an expectation that school principals play a pivotal role in supporting the development of effective teaching and learning outcomes for all learners (Caldwell, 2006; Stewart & Prebble, 1993). As Fullan (2011) suggests, drivers for systemic positive change should foster the intrinsic motivation of teachers to develop teaching pedagogies that focus on improving teaching and learning, involve collective team work, and affect the entire school population, including those students marginalised in the education system. This type of change includes developing culturally responsive practices that support Indigenous learners. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori students (Indigenous peoples) have had significant educational disparities in achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics (Chamberlain, 2014; OECD, 2014). Macfarlane (2010) describes how the apparent lack of understanding of a Māori worldview by the dominant culture in New Zealand may be a key precipitator of why a number of Māori students underachieve in New Zealand mainstream schooling education and are excluded from it. He explains that in a society which is often depicted as bicultural or multicultural, it is not unexpected that underachievement is frequently “explained away” by pathologising particular students on the basis of supposed cultural deficits.

A principal’s role in leading change to culturally responsive teaching is critical. With this in mind, it is important to have an understanding of the issues that Māori teachers within the schooling system can encounter. Māori teachers in mainstream settings are often faced with significant challenges. The challenge of working in an Eurocentric environment, intercultural misunderstandings, and the additional cultural expectations and responsibilities all impact on the wellbeing of Māori teachers.

In 2017, 11% of New Zealand teachers prioritised their ethnicity as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2017). As a minority group within the schooling system, Māori teachers can be marginalised (Archie, 1993; Bloor, 1996). However, despite numerous government initiatives, legislation and strategies to raise the academic

achievement levels of Māori students, there is only a relatively small body of research that specifically addresses the real needs and wants of Māori teachers, as a distinct group within the teaching workforce. This research article, which is part of a wider study (Torepe & Manning, 2017), draws upon the perceptions and experiences of six Māori teachers. While much research has focused on raising Māori student achievement levels, the voices missing in research seem to be those of Māori teachers themselves.

## Literature Review

### *The New Zealand context*

New Zealand is the home of Māori language and culture. School settings should promote te reo and ngā tikanga Māori, making them visible and affirming their value for children from all cultural backgrounds (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 42; Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 9). Education needs to emphasise the principles associated with both kaupapa Pākehā (European) pedagogies and kaupapa Māori pedagogies (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003) and “focus on culturally-congruent and empowering pedagogies, such as place-based efforts, to produce content that is relevant to and supports the educational aspirations of Māori” (Conner, McGrath, & Lancaster, 2008, p. 30).

Since the arrival of early British settlers, New Zealand’s schooling system continues to reflect the cultural ideals and values of the dominant Pākehā culture. Despite recent government attempts to adopt initiatives and policies to ensure Māori succeed within this system, significant educational disparities still exist for Māori students. For some Māori teachers, the conflict between maintaining their own identity and culture whilst working within a Pākehā system and framework is demanding (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). In essence, the manner in which New Zealand schools operate often requires Māori teachers to function in a non-Māori manner. This finding is not unique to New Zealand. Australian research conducted by Santoro (2007) also suggests that:

Teachers of difference are frequently marginalised in white “mainstream” education communities. The different cultural understandings and expectations of learning and teaching that they bring to their work are not always valued by students, colleagues and parents. If their potential to productively engage with students of difference and their contributions to cross cultural teaching are not valued, many are at risk of resigning prematurely from the teaching profession. (p. 92)

The hegemonic nature of the schooling system in New Zealand has not necessarily supported the Māori language or Māori teachers either. Some schools do not recognise te reo Māori as an academic subject or value its presence in the school’s curriculum (Whitinui, 2007, 2010). This can be illustrated by the ongoing pattern of unsympathetic and often unreasonable timetabling of classes with other academic subjects or against subjects considered to be more attractive to students (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993).

Historically-speaking, there has been a dearth of studies that have addressed the wellbeing of Māori teachers in New Zealand English medium speaking schools. Research carried out in 1993 sought to determine the factors influencing why Māori teachers leave the classroom (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). The following year, a Wellington regional survey was conducted (Livingstone, 1994) and while not specifically focused on Māori teachers, a Māori immersion teacher emphasised work pressures. Two years later, another survey was conducted that examined the workloads of Māori secondary school teachers (Bloor, 1996). This research found that Māori teachers, in addition to their teaching, were expected to fulfil cultural tasks and requirements without formal recognition.

Some research suggests that Māori language teachers often appear to find themselves positioned in language departments with little support from their heads of department, who have little knowledge or understanding about the Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies required for the teaching of te reo Māori.

Inevitably, in these situations, Māori teachers receive little collegial support and carry out the role of Head of what is otherwise a Māori language Department, without any financial recognition or acknowledgement (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). However, as this research was conducted in 1993, it is timely to revisit these issues.

A more recent report authored by Judie Alison (on behalf of the NZ Post Primary Teachers Association) examined the introduction of the new secondary school qualification, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) introduced in 2002 (Alison, 2005). While this report appears thorough in its examination of the impact of NCEA on secondary school teachers, it does not extrapolate data specific to Māori teachers and their experiences. Had this information been available, it would have provided a significantly more recent profile of the experiences of Māori teachers in the secondary sector.

The most recent research into the specific workload issues of Māori secondary school teachers was a report by Gardiner and Parata, commissioned by the Ministry of Education (1999). This research aligned with results from earlier studies and provides remarkably similar data on workload pressures to Bloor's (1996) survey findings. Whereas the Mitchell and Mitchell study (1993) drew primarily upon qualitative research methods (including semi-structured interviews), all subsequent research has drawn extensively on quantitative surveys and questionnaires.

#### *Additional cultural expectations*

Irrespective of whether Māori teachers are employed in the primary or secondary sector, or in mainstream or Māori medium environments, the extra responsibilities placed on them do not diminish. Many Māori teachers expressed the notion of "a sense of duty" somewhat akin to being an "ambassador-at-large" (Bloor, 1996, p. 19) or being "The School Māori" (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993, p. 59). These additional duties are diverse and frequently the teachers are not trained or resourced to undertake such responsibilities. Often Māori teachers are expected to deal with any matters relating to Māori children, particularly difficult children or behavioural problems (Archie, 1993; Bloor, 1996; Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993; Ministry of Education, 1999). This, too, is echoed in international research where Santoro (2007) comments that the responsibility for ethnic minority and Indigenous students should not be placed solely on Indigenous educators.

Māori teachers are frequently called upon to fulfil numerous cultural (e.g. ceremonial) requirements for school-related activities. Organising school hui, and pōwhiri, coupled with the expectation to liaise with the schools' Māori families in a pseudo social worker role, are all tasks that Māori teachers are asked to perform. These same teachers are also often involved in professional development programmes to educate their non-Māori colleagues and are expected to provide support and advice when consulted by these colleagues (Bloor, 1996; Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). According to Reid and Santoro (2006) and Santoro (2007), this merely "absolves "mainstream" teachers of the responsibility to work towards developing strategies to teach for difference and diversity" (Santoro, 2007, p. 93).

Additional cultural expectations being placed on Māori teachers are not unique to New Zealand schools. Research in Australia (Reid & Santoro, 2006; Santoro, 2007) revealed that minority teachers are burdened with tasks which they are expected to perform purely on account of their ethnicity. In matters of Indigenous education and social issues, these teachers are considered the "expert" (Reid & Santoro, 2006). Furthermore, Indigenous interviewees in an Australian study (Reid & Santoro, 2006) commented on:

the expectations placed on them in their workplaces because of the generic "Indigenous Teacher" label, and raised other issues related to how Indigenous teachers are often expected to fill the gaps in the knowledge of White teachers about Indigenous education and issues. (p. 150)

Similarly, Padilla (1994) has documented the phenomenon of the overburdening and overtaxing of ethnic minority academics in the United States of America. Among other things, Padilla explores the idea of responsibilities constituting a form of cultural taxation based primarily on a teacher's ethnic or cultural background. Latterly,

other authors have explored this idea of cultural taxation (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2008; Samano, 2007), which according to Padilla (1994) can best be defined as:

the obligation to show good citizenship toward the institution by serving its needs for ethnic representation on committees, or to demonstrate knowledge and commitment to a cultural group, which may bring accolades to the institution but which is not usually rewarded by the institution on whose behalf the service was performed. (p. 26)

Some of the more easily recognised forms of cultural taxation identified by Padilla (1994) include being asked to provide expertise in matters of diversity within an organisation and being asked to educate individuals of the majority group on such matters. Minority academics may also be asked to serve on committees or act as a liaison between the organisation and the ethnic community, even though their own personal views may not align with the institution's stance or policies. Finally, being asked to provide translation services as well as being asked to act as a mediator for any socio-cultural differences within an institution are all illustrations of cultural taxation. Frequently, those persons asked to fulfil these various tasks or roles may not feel (culturally) equipped to do so. These duties are often not listed in minority teachers' job descriptions, nor are they recognised or given the status and monetary recompense that would normally accompany additional responsibility that sits beyond the scope of a teacher's stated contractual obligations.

In addition to their teaching role, Māori teachers often felt a sense of obligation and responsibility for Māori students (Bloor, 1996) and were frequently called upon in a disciplinary role (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1993). Mitchell and Mitchell (1993), for example, observed that, "[the] Māori teacher's class became a dumping ground to rid other teachers of difficult Māori pupils" (p. 609). Archie (1993) similarly concluded that, "any Māori problems in the school end up on your plate" (p. 80).

For teachers teaching in bilingual and immersion environments, the workload and accompanying stress increases exponentially. The increased demands of these teachers include developing and delivering programmes that serve the expectations of the school and the wider community. These teachers must also continually justify the importance and value of bilingual and immersion learning, as well as the need to overcome negativity from staff and some sectors of the community (Cooper et al, 2010; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). This also needs to be acknowledged.

We contend that there is a "black spot" in research both nationally and internationally on the experiences and realities of being an Indigenous teacher in a European dominated schooling system. In this regard, the article opens the lens on addressing how school leaders can significantly support Indigenous teachers to develop culturally responsive schooling in a manner that nurtures the well-being and professional development of these Māori teachers.

### *The present study*

This article explores the lived realities of six Māori teachers who had completed a graduate qualification in immersion and bilingual teaching in Māori, and had returned to the respective schools in which they were employed. Exploring the supports and barriers these six teachers encountered as they worked alongside their respective principals and teachers will further inform understandings of promoting culturally responsive schooling.

## **Methodology**

### ***Kaupapa Māori methodology***

The methodology sits within a kaupapa Māori framework that is consistent with the works of Te Awēkotuku (1991), Bishop (1992, 1996), G. Smith (1992a, 1992b), L. Smith (1999), Irwin (1994), and Kana and Tamatea

(2006). L. Smith (1999, p. 120), for example, lists seven culturally appropriate practices that Māori researchers should be mindful of when conducting kaupapa Māori research. These practices or principles include: *Aroha ki te tangata* (a respect for people), *Titiro, whakarongo ... kōrero* (look, listen ... speak), *Manaaki ki te tangata* (share and host people, be generous), *Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata* (do not trample over the *mana* of people) and *Kaua e mahaki* (don't flaunt your knowledge). The notion of *kanohi kitea* ("the seen face", that is to present yourself to people "face-to-face") represents the idea that it is important to maintain contact and keep the bonds of the relationship strong. This principle is also associated with *whanaungatanga* where considerable value is placed on maintaining contact with extended *whānau* and *hapū*. Finally, as a researcher employing a kaupapa Māori framework, the idea of *Kia tūpato* (be cautious) requires addressing where one needs to be alert and manage ethical and customary obligations within the research paradigm.

#### *The research questions*

The research questions that this article focuses on are: What challenges and opportunities did Māori teachers face both professionally and personally at school? What strategies did they use to negotiate these challenges?

#### *The research participants*

Participants were recruited using professional networks and relationships built over a period of 13 months during the course the first author taught and the months following it. A high level of trust and respect (*whanaungatanga*) was established prior to a formal approach. This assisted the request for individuals to participate in the study and was the result of *kanohi kitea* or the "seen face". It seemed necessary and a cultural prerequisite, that a sense of *whanaungatanga* be established prior to formally approaching individuals to participate in the study (Bishop, 1996; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; L. Smith, 1999).

Further to the idea of *whanaungatanga*, a Collegial Research Reference Group was also established to enhance the quality assurance processes central to the smooth development of this research. This group comprised the first author's supervisory team, colleagues who had a vested or significant interest in the research and also colleagues who were able to provide research mentorship.

#### *Phase one*

Phase one of this research consisted of the collection and analysis of a detailed written questionnaire. The questionnaire, according to Cohen, Manon & Morrison (2007), "is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, [and] often numerical data" (p. 317). The questionnaire used in this research project contained a combination of factual, dichotomous and open-ended questions. Cohen, Manon & Morrison (2007) state it is the open-ended question that "is a very attractive device for smaller scale research or for those sections of a questionnaire that incite an honest, personal comment from respondents" (p. 330). Respondents identified *iwi* and *hapū* affiliations, their tertiary qualifications, and competency in *te reo Māori*. They outlined their involvement in, and commitment to participation in cultural activities within *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi* settings, and offered perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of their formal and post-compulsory education in meeting their needs as Māori learners. This information provided a foundation for discussion during the second phase of the data collection when individual interviews were carried out.

#### *Phase two*

The second phase of the data collection process was carried out using a semi-structured interview schedule. This provided a more in-depth investigation of data collected in the first phase and enabled the identification of additional sources of data. The objectives which guided this second phase included a further investigation of the significant challenges and opportunities the interviewees identified after a year in the classroom, and a consideration of the strategies they used to negotiate these.

These semi-structured interviews enabled participants to share their experiences of the first 12 months back at school after taking part in a qualification to grow and develop strengths in te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. Burns (2000) suggests that such “illustrative data provides a sense of reality” (p. 423) that indicates what an informant feels and perceives at a specific point in time. The interview technique also allowed participants the freedom to comment on specific content of the research without being confined by overly structured wording or format.

#### *Data analysis*

The analysis of data was a three-step process. In the initial stage of analysis, the data were organised by the repetition of themes and patterns that were identified and recorded from each of the participants’ transcripts. Such an approach “automatically groups the data and enables themes, patterns and similar to be seen at a glance” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 466). The transcripts were then reread numerous times in order to gain familiarity with the data and common themes voiced by each participant were charted under the already identified themes, along with the participant’s pseudonym. This two-stage process allowed the comparing of themes without the voice of each participant being lost. The final stage of the data analysis process involved selecting themes that were most commonly voiced by the participants.

#### **Findings and discussion**

The challenge of working in an Eurocentric environment, intercultural misunderstandings and the additional cultural expectations and responsibilities all impact on the wellbeing of Māori teachers. This article focuses on the interfaces amongst the Māori teachers, the principals of their respective schools and their teaching colleagues.

#### *Intercultural understandings of biculturalism*

Undoubtedly, the professional and personal influences that a principal brings to his or her role within a school, particularly in shaping the tone of the learning community, are critical to the recruitment and retention of Māori teachers. Thus, it seems only logical to conclude that the dominant Pākehā culture’s reproduction of institutional processes can affect the experiences of Māori teachers just as much as they impact upon Māori students (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). However, whilst much research has examined how the reproduction of Pākehā cultural capital impacts upon Māori students, little research has addressed the implications of institutional racism confronting Māori teachers. Ignorance of Māori culture, insufficient resources, questionable support, unsympathetic timetabling and indifferent attitudes to kaupapa and tikanga Māori often left the Māori teachers interviewed in this current study feeling marginalised and vulnerable. Sadly, approximately 20 years earlier, the Ministry of Education (1999) drew similar conclusions and, most notably, also found that the indifference of school management towards Māori teacher aspirations, when planning timetabling te reo Māori against academic subjects, was highly problematic. Totoweka (pseudonym) epitomized this view when (referring to the value his school put on things Māori) he remarked:

*I’m at a school where they’re [senior management] just picking what they want to do. Without realising how if it’s [curriculum planning] not done properly, you take away its integrity and you water down [te reo Māori], and you filter down what it [te reo] really means. That’s the challenge I have to face.*

In a similar manner, when talking about kaupapa Māori in her school, Kahurangi (pseudonym) said: “Where I’m at the moment, it just feels like an add on.”

Given that Māori represented only 9.7% of principal, senior and middle management and teacher positions nation-wide as at April 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2011) it was not surprising to discover that, with

regard to ceremonial cultural roles, the expectations of school management teams and teaching staff placed too many expectations on too few teachers. Inevitably these teachers are Māori teachers and their performance of these customary tasks is often non-negotiable and/or not remunerated.

The desire to work in an environment that physically reflected biculturalism was another recurring theme to emerge from the data. Inanga (pseudonym) in particular, wanted to initiate this bicultural element, though some colleagues proved resistant to the idea. This was because she wanted to erect bilingual signage that was visible to the community as they drove past the school. According to Inanga, the principal made comments that, reading between the lines, felt to her as though the principal did not want to portray the school as being “too Māori” because the wider community would not necessarily perceive this as a “good thing”. After some critical reflection, the principal was later forthcoming with an apology to Inanga and he agreed to support her call for the development of bilingual signage.

The logic underpinning the participants’ shared desire to see cultural icons and an environment reflecting the Treaty of Waitangi partnership was often similar to that outlined in the key findings of a study conducted by the Ministry of Education (1999). The Ministry found that such initiatives contributed to increased motivation and morale amongst both students and staff. Additionally, such initiatives were widely considered to be pivotal to creating positive “cultural and environmental changes in school environments” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 64).

Mitchell and Mitchell’s (1993) research also suggested that it is the principal who possesses the greatest potential to influence the ethos of the school and to model appropriate values and behaviours in cross-cultural settings. If his or her attitude towards cultural inclusion is indecisive or questionable, then this allows teachers to relinquish their responsibilities also. Mitchell and Mitchell (1993) state that “the role of the principal is crucial in determining the school’s priorities, how it operates, and how it is regarded” (p. 79). Many of the former (Māori) teachers interviewed in the Mitchell and Mitchell study stated that one of the most significant determinants for leaving was the “behaviour, attitudes, and personality of the principal” (p. 79).

All-too-often, the participants in this current research stated that they were conscious of an unwritten expectation within their schools that Māori teachers should fulfil the dominant culture’s perceptions of what constitutes Indigenous cultural requirements. This, they concurred, results in a “dial-a-pōwhiri” school culture identical to that described by Manning (2008) and Whitinui (2007, 2010). Raukaraka’s (pseudonym) frustrations with the perceived racism of non-Māori colleagues was evident when she said “that’s [the way it’s] always going to be. I just need to get thicker skin”. Participants in this research repeatedly recounted that they were often expected to organise and facilitate ceremonial roles such as kaikaranga or kaikōrero in pōwhiri that were often truncated or restricted by the requirements of mechanical time and/or mechanical school timetables. An incident that epitomised cultural taxation was when Kawakawa’s (pseudonym) colleague handed her a document to be translated. Her colleague was not at all interested in the translation process nor was the colleague interested in the correct pronunciation of the Māori words, despite the material having implications for all staff and in fact the whole school. Further, the pressure of these additional tasks was often exacerbated by the frequent lack of communication from school management teams. Furthermore, these Māori teachers were often informed of pōwhiri and/or other customary events at the last minute, thus denying them adequate time to prepare.

Although the six teachers in this study affiliated with various iwi, none of the teachers commented on any tensions or complications arising when they were not affiliated to the local iwi where the school they taught in was located. Informal local networks often fulfilled the need for much support. The participants suggested that these networks helped them to alleviate the feelings of isolation they were experiencing within their respective schools, providing the opportunity to collaborate with peers, to seek guidance and share resources.

### ***Cultural upskilling***

Another task frequently identified by the participants in this research was the expectation placed upon Māori teachers to upskill their non-Māori colleagues in relation to official Māori education policy guidelines and/or Treaty of Waitangi related (legal/ethical) matters. Inanga, for example, stated that:

*I'm kind of reluctant to do everything, to run [Māori programmes and support activities], to do critical awareness on stuff that should actually be senior management's job and I guess this year, I have done most of the things, not because I thought I should, but I knew that if I didn't, I knew that nobody else would and I knew that other people weren't ready to run stuff or didn't have the skills or the confidence to say well this is what happens in a pōwhiri.*

Manning (1998) recorded similar sentiments being shared by the Māori teachers participating in his study of the post-colonial politics surrounding the development of a secondary school Polynesian club. One of the teachers interviewed by Manning said:

I spent so much time trying to improve the cultural awareness of Pākehā colleagues that I got sick of it and I thought in the finish, “stuff the Pākehā”, why should we always be trying to improve the cultural awareness of Pākehā. (p. 114)

All of these findings coincide with an Australian study conducted by Santoro and Reid (2006). According to Santoro and Reid the majority of interviewees commented that:

The expectations placed on them in their workplaces because of the “generic Indigenous teacher” label, [...] raised other issues related to how Indigenous teachers are often expected to fill the gaps in the knowledge of white teachers about Indigenous education and issues. (p. 150)

Padilla (1994) identifies this practice as a form of cultural taxation, whereby “ethnic” and “Indigenous” educators are called upon to educate their non-ethnic (white) counterparts.

### ***Aligning schooling with Ministry documentation***

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) also offers guidelines that do not appear to have been consistently upheld by all the research participants' non-Māori colleagues i.e. fellow teachers and principals, or their employers i.e. Boards of Trustees. The New Zealand Curriculum outlines eight principles which should be consistent and “underpin all school decision making” (p. 9). Most significantly, the Treaty of Waitangi Principle states that “The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga”. While this curriculum principle is supposed to inform the planning and decision-making of all schools' curriculum activities, the findings of this research suggest that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi have seldom been prioritised in decision-making processes. The participants felt, to varying degrees, that their school leadership teams had relinquished their responsibility for incorporating Māori culture into different aspects of daily school life. Therefore, they felt they had been given a limited form of autonomy that made them responsible for “all things Māori”, without being provided with the resources and power to implement their decisions. The participants believed they had little power to make anything change within their schools' institutional cultures. Put simply, they did not have the same degree of power as their school leaders to transform school institutional cultures and neither did the local Māori communities that fed into these schools.

In relation to the staff and management of the school, Tangiwai (pseudonym) acknowledged that attitudinal change and critical awareness can take time. While he acknowledged that a programme like Te

Kotahitanga (a project that investigated how to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in mainstream secondary school classroom) could not be implemented in his school, because of low Māori student numbers, he believed that a professional development programme would still be hugely beneficial. He suggested that:

*If these teachers were interested [in Te Kotahitanga] and you took them away for a few days to a marae and did tikanga and reo, stuff like that, and they made an extra effort, they might come back in to the class and they'd see some benefit.*

He added that:

*You should be able to sit down with the children's names on a real simple level and just say "you know this is how you say the student's name" and you go, go through and say it properly and the children will notice won't they?*

Tangiwai decided to look for a new teaching position that required a higher level of te reo Māori proficiency than required in his current position. Coming from a curriculum area where only basic commands and phrases were used, he wanted to use his new language and teaching skills more fully. He was successful in applying for a position at another school where he taught in his established curriculum area but also had a year nine te reo Māori option class. Not only did this new school allow Tangiwai to teach a reo Māori class, but it was also stronger in kaupapa Māori, as was its school community.

## Conclusion

Within this research the principals held a key role as significant others in leading and supporting culturally responsive bicultural schooling. For some of the research participants, sustained, proactive and planned school wide professional development in culturally responsive pedagogies would have helped mitigate the complex issues that confronted these Māori teachers. A lack of critical awareness of tikanga Māori was the cultural misunderstanding most frequently cited by participants. Some participants responded to these collegial misunderstandings or collegial "ignorance" as some of them put it, by facilitating professional development sessions for their colleagues and school leaders. In each instance, this reflected an attempt, by the participants concerned, to alleviate their colleagues' levels of cultural misunderstanding. However, in each instance, this extra work was not factored into their workloads.

Moreover, the additional professional and cultural tasks and responsibilities that this group of Māori teachers undertook often went unrecognised financially or otherwise by their employers or fellow colleagues. Frequently, these teachers would describe themselves as "ambassador-at-large" or a "one-stop-Māori-shop". Yet, the participants in this research still felt a deep sense of being ethically and/or morally obliged to play these roles. These Māori teachers felt they were culturally obliged to tautoko the students they serve and to support their schools' respective Māori communities i.e. as fellow Māori. This deep sense of duty, however, significantly increased their likelihood of feeling "overwhelmed" "stressed", "tired" and "burn-out"

In moving forward, the challenges that Māori teachers face today, and have faced in the past, may be reduced as a result of this research and, hopefully, further research. Boards of Trustees (governing body of a school) and principals have the ability to set the ethos of their schools and to ensure that their schools adopt inclusive, culturally-responsive practices that reflect the true nature of New Zealand, as detailed in the New Zealand Curriculum and the Education Council professional standards for school leaders and registered teachers.

The attitudes and behaviours of non-Māori within a school can significantly influence the experiences of both Māori teachers and students. Ultimately, it is school leaders who possess the greatest potential to immediately alter any behaviour or attitudes that may have contributed to the challenges that Māori teachers

faced in their schools. In the spirit of positivity, this article concludes with the whakataukī which reminds all the stakeholders, with a vested interest in this research, that no problem is insurmountable. It states:

He manga-ā-wai, koia, kia kāore e whitikia?

Is it a river that cannot be crossed?

(Implying every river can be crossed, one way or another)

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