

## **WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Science in Child and Family Psychology  
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by Neresa A. Hall  
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Ka hikitia! Ka hikitia! Hiki, hikitia!

Whakarewa ki runga rawa Herea kia kore e hoki whakamuri mai Poua atu te  
pūmanawa Māori He mana tikanga Me te uri o māia Poipoia ngā mokopuna Ngā  
rangatira mo āpōpō Ka tihei! Tihei mauriora!

Encourage and support! And raise it to its highest level!

Ensure that high achievement is maintained

Hold fast to our Māori potential

Our cultural advantage

And our inherent capability

Nurture our young generation

The leaders of the future

Behold, we move onwards and upwards!

*Created by Tokararangi Totoro, Pouarahi-a-Takiwa/District Māori Advisor based in  
Whangarei, who gifted it to all the people in the Ministry of Education.*

(Ministry of Education, n.d.a)

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Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to  
assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from the ruin which, except  
for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable.  
And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to  
expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor strike from their  
hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to  
prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.

(Arendt, 1954, p. 196)

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this research was to explore the mechanisms involved for engaging Māori whānau in their child's education during a key transitional period. This objective was achieved through conducting semi-structured interviews with five Māori parents of year nine and ten students from two suburban high schools in Christchurch, New Zealand. Through framing the research within kaupapa Māori methodology and employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, four superordinate themes were identified: Rangatiratanga (advocacy, leadership and commitment); Kotahitanga (working together with whānau); Whanaungatanga (maintaining connections with whānau); and Manaakitanga (caring for Māori students' learning and potential). These findings closely align with a Māori worldview (Ritchie, 1992), and Macfarlane's educultural wheel (2004). They have the potential to inform school policy and facilitate engagement with whānau as well as positively impact on Māori student achievement.

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Rationale

The importance of fostering whānau engagement in education cannot be underestimated. As a secondary school teacher, I have observed directly the benefits of parental involvement, as well as the frustrations for both home and school when there is a disconnection between these two settings. Furthermore, the broad range of positive outcomes that result from increased parental involvement for all stakeholders is evident in the research literature. Both the Treaty of Waitangi and Macfarlane's educultural wheel (2004) are key resources as they inform the Māori cultural context and are foundational to this research. Questions pertaining to why Māori students, why this age group and why a focus on policy are also discussed. The current situation in New Zealand (NZ) regarding parental involvement guidelines, initiatives, and practice is a particular area of focus, and specifically for Māori students and their whānau.

### Key Concepts

**Whānau.** The term *whānau* is commonly translated as *extended* family, community or family group (Williams, 2000). Subsequently the construct of whānau is a much broader version of the Westernized definition of *family*, which usually constitutes a single household connected through marriage and/or consanguinity (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 2013). According to Williams, the contemporary understanding of whānau encompasses a more expansive and multifaceted interpretation.

Most notably, what distinguishes the concept of whānau from the term *family* is based on *whakapapa* (genealogy), spirituality and responsibility to *iwi* (tribe); it is flexible and complex, and can involve several generations, including those who have

passed on (Walker, 2013). Metge (1995) discussed the definition of whānau in detail and concludes that irrespective of whether it is whakapapa-based (the connection between ancestors and their descendants) or *kaupapa*-based (principles or values); “the whānau is identified by Māori themselves as potentially the most effective form available to them for organising the provision of support and socialisation for children and adults, for nurturing new growth, and for managing and achieving change” (1995, p. 313).

**Parental involvement/engagement.** Parental involvement (PI) is a multidimensional construct that can integrate both educational and developmental concepts (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). In the literature, PI is broadly defined as the amount of resources a parent allocates to their child’s education (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008; Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007). Numerous studies have examined the differing dimensions of PI and the complex multi-faceted interactions between PI and child educational achievement, and cognitive, emotional and behavioural development. Grolnick and Slowiaczek’s (1994) research supported a multiple-factor model of PI, specifically three dimensions: personal, behavioural and cognitive/intellectual. Kuperminc et al. (2008) conceptualised PI as a form of social capital in which there were three main elements: investment of resources, social ties between parents, students and teachers, and norms of responsibility and reciprocity. Similarly, research by Waanders et al. (2007) supported a three-dimensional ecological hypothesis. The authors investigated school and home-based involvement, and the parent-teacher relationship. Regression analyses showed varying relationship patterns between the predictors (family demographics and parenting self-efficacy), and the dimensions of PI.

PI is the term more frequently employed in current research and can encompass a wide range of activities, such as: home tutoring, attending meetings, volunteering or being a representative on the Board of Trustees. Hornby (2011) proposed a contemporary theoretical model of PI, a synthesis and adaption of previous models (figure one). The model has two pyramids that represent progressive levels of parental needs and potential contributions: the top half is the hierarchy of parental contributions and the lower is the hierarchy of parental needs.

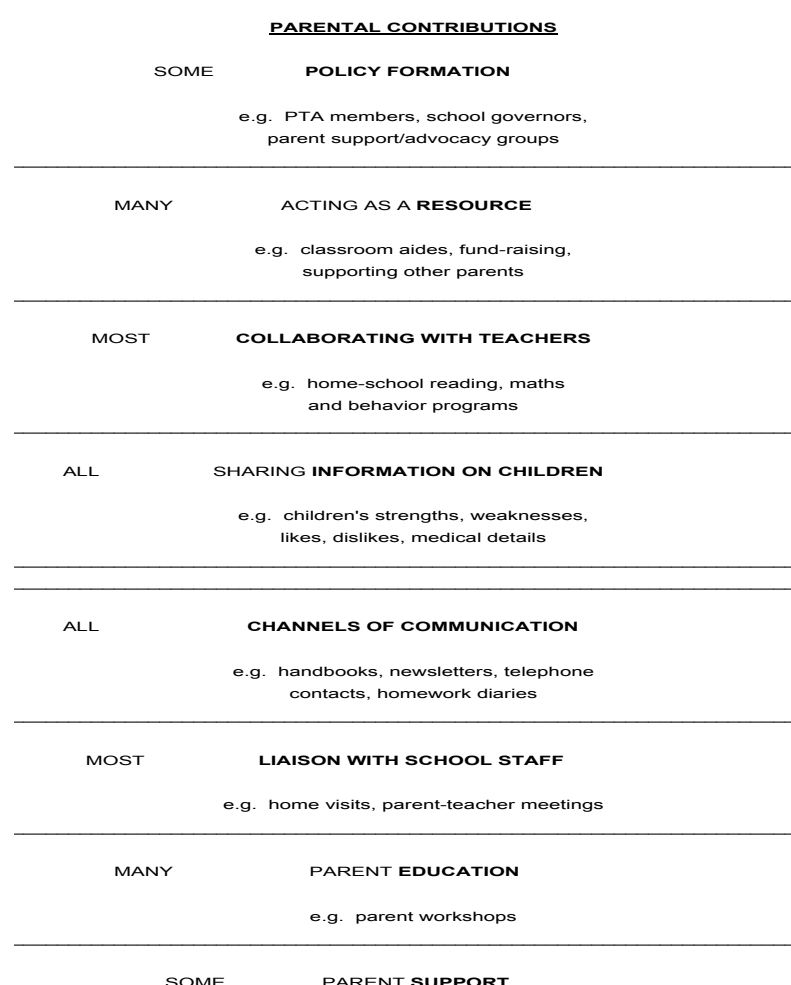


Figure 1. Theoretical model of PI in education (Hornby, 2011, p. 35-36).

In the current study, the term *engagement* will be used interchangeably with *involvement*. However, this research intends to emphasise that involvement must be

of value, and therefore the term engagement may be more appropriate. To engage with someone means to “establish a meaningful contact or connection...” (“Engage”, n.d.) and as Moles, Jr. and Fege (2011) observed, the term family engagement is supplanting PI as it denotes a further degree of commitment and participation.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) proposed a five tier causal model of PI that takes into account a range of psychological processes from initial parental decision making through to student outcomes (figure two). Level one of the model suggests that the variables regarding involvement decisions are influenced by parental role construction, a sense of efficacy, and perceived opportunities for participation. At level two, parents’ skills and knowledge, availability of time and energy, and a school’s specific invitations for involvement then impact on the way that parents choose to become involved. The psychological mechanisms of modelling, reinforcement and explicit instruction then determine a child’s educational outcomes at level three and these are mediated through the goodness of fit for the school-home dyad and the parent’s use of developmentally appropriate strategies at level four. Finally at level five, student outcomes are then differentiated as either skills/knowledge or self-efficacy for success.

### **Theoretical Influences**

A range of theories influenced and determined the direction of this study.

Historically, the emphasis within Māori research has been primarily on Māori deficiencies, therefore outcomes have been typically interpreted negatively (Mahuika, 2008). In an educational setting, deficit-based research assumes that it is the child or family who is inadequate and lacking in school readiness through an insufficiency in personal attributes such as motivation, experience, social skills, language, understanding or disability (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003; Stinson, 2006;

Trent, Artiles, & Englert, 1998). A social constructivist approach emphasises knowledge as collectively gained and as Biddulph et al. (2003) noted, limited recognition is given to the possibility that it is actually a systemic societal failure that is depriving the Māori child.

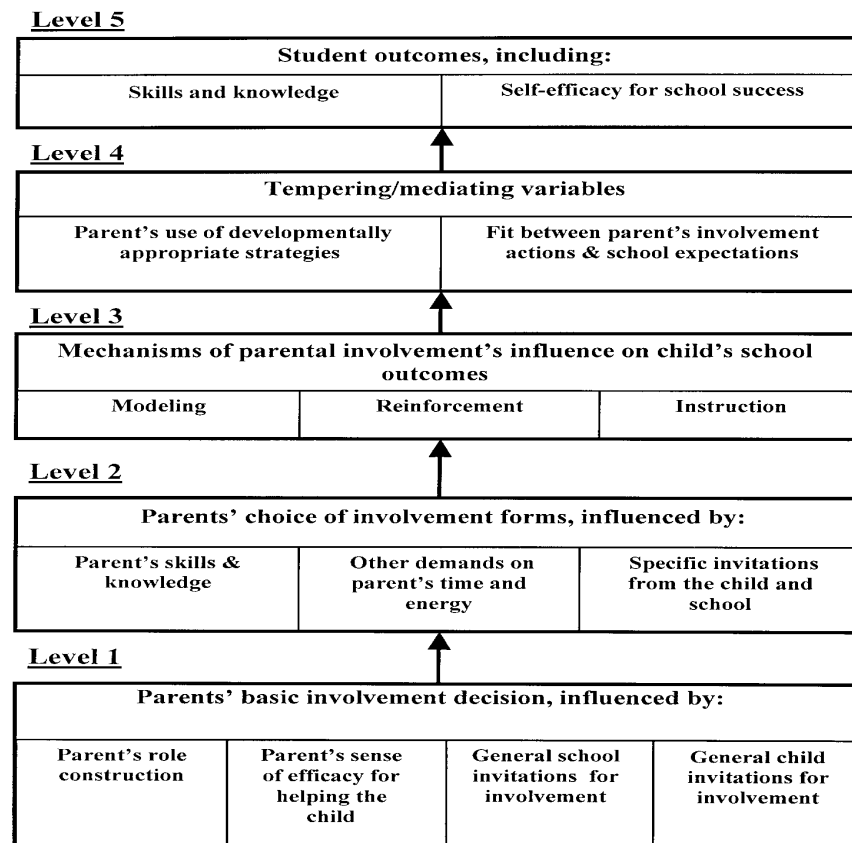


Figure 2. Theoretical model of the PI process (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

The intention in an increasing number of current culturally-based studies is to reject this deficit-based theoretical position, and in particular for Māori research, employ kaupapa Māori theory as an alternative. Kaupapa Māori theory is a proactive theory that has been developed from within Māori communities (Bishop, 2008). According to Bishop (1998), researchers in NZ have undervalued and belittled Māori knowledge and implied that poor social and educational outcomes result from an inability of Māori culture to cope with human difficulties. Durie (2006) comments



that a deficit paradigm presupposes that Māori culture is problematic, therefore the focus needs to be on detecting problems or identifying areas of dysfunction.

The aim of this research is to shift from this deficit perspective towards a strength-based approach, which has parallels with empowerment theory. Empowerment theory recognises that families have a range of skills and proficiencies they can build on if provided with opportunity and respect (Biddulph et al., 2003). Kaupapa Māori theory incorporates empowerment theory, as well as legitimizing Māori experience through consultation and validation. Most importantly it is “an attempt to retrieve space for Māori voices and perspectives through a fundamental philosophical shift from previous Western-oriented research in both epistemological and metaphysical principles” (Cram, 2001, p. 36).

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory of human development is also embodied within this study. The inter-relationship between home and school is the primary focus of this research. However, ecological theory posits that an understanding of human development requires the examination of other variables within the wider environment. According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), the child is nested within multiple inter-connected environments: the microsystem (relationship between the individual and the immediate setting), mesosystem (interrelation between major settings and the individual), exosystem (does not contain the developing person but this system impacts on their immediate social setting), and macrosystem (cultural contexts affecting the life of the individual, such as economic, social, educational and political systems).

Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) ecological theory focuses on these interactive environmental contexts and recognises that a child’s development is shaped through the dynamic and complex interface between biology and experience. The impact of

the school and home environment within the child's mesosystem, as well as the relationship between parents and school in the exosystem are key components of this study. Additionally, the influences of wider macrosystem variables, particularly the cultural and societal context, are equally important factors considered.

### **Treaty of Waitangi**

Any research undertaken in NZ, especially when involving the indigenous people, must acknowledge the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty is New Zealand's founding document, an agreement between 540 Māori chiefs and the British Crown, represented by Lieutenant-Governor Hobson (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014). Two versions of the Treaty exist; an English version and a Māori translation that contains some significant and controversial differences. The document has three articles. In the English version:

Māori cede the sovereignty of New Zealand to Britain;

Māori give the Crown an exclusive right to buy lands they wish to sell, and, in return, are guaranteed full rights of ownership of their lands, forests, fisheries and other possessions;

Māori are given the rights and privileges of British subjects. (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014)

However, ongoing debate and substantial distress centres on several key words. In the Māori version, the English word *sovereignty* was translated as *kawanatanga*, a transliteration of the word governance (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014). The Māori version also promised *tinio rangatiratanga* (full authority) over *taonga* (treasures). According to Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh and Bateman (2007), Māori view the Treaty as a charter for partnership and shared responsibility, as a means of autonomy and self-determination. Nonetheless, history has not proven this to be the

case. Instead, the Māori people have experienced political subordination, cultural derogation, powerlessness over their land, and loss of *mana motuhake* (identity/autonomy). The current educational situation for Māori, and subsequent purpose of this research, is a consequence of this history (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

### **The Educultural Wheel**

In response to the current educational situation for Māori, Macfarlane (2004) proposed a cultural framework designed to enable successful relationships between teachers and students. The educultural wheel consists of five interwoven concepts (figure three). The process of building relationships, *whanaungatanga* is described as an opportunity to establish trust and respect (Macfarlane et al., 2007). The importance of teachers becoming acquainted with each individual child, as well as involving families and the wider community is also emphasised. In the context of the educultural wheel, *Rangatiratanga* (self-determination and leadership) refers to teachers' developing the skills and knowledge for working effectively with Māori learners in the classroom. The notion of reciprocal and unconditional care is embodied in the third concept of *Manaakitanga* (ethos of care). In concept four, *Kotahitanga* (unity of bonding) represents a sense of cohesion and engagement in culturally appropriate rituals and routines, while promoting the principles of the Treaty: partnership, protection and participation. Finally *Pūmanawatanga* is the beating heart, where the teacher exemplifies the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of the four concepts of the educultural wheel within the classroom.

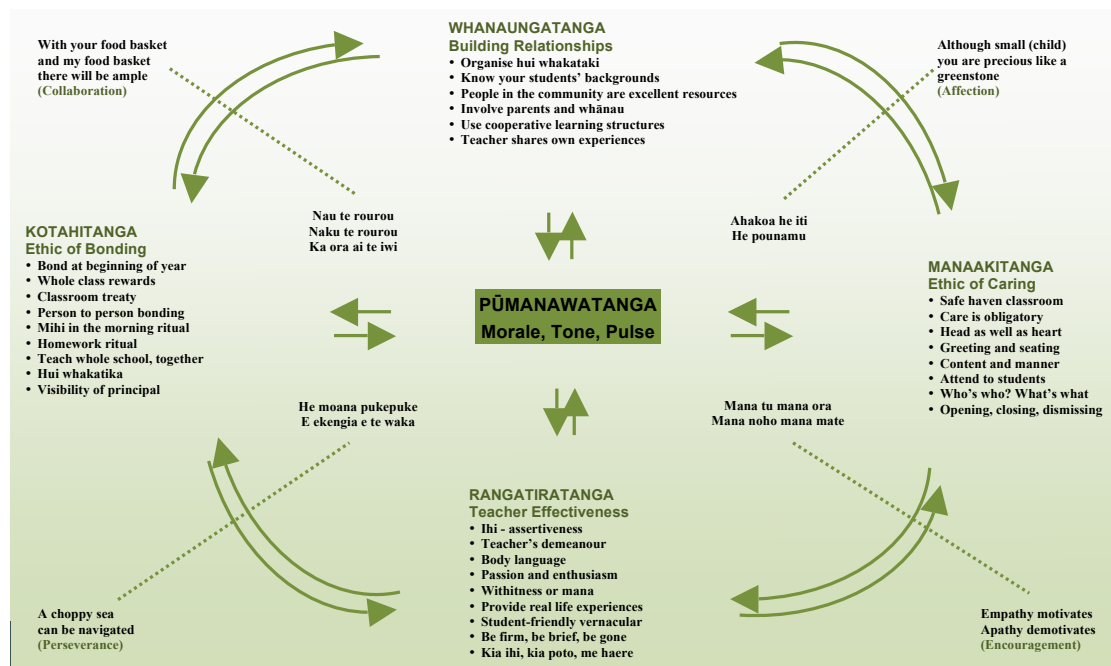


Figure 3. The Educultural Wheel (Macfarlane, 2004, p. 97).

Referenced in Macfarlane et al. (2007) are findings by Cavanagh, who conducted ethnographic research in a small public school in NZ using frameworks of socio-cultural theory. Data consisted of field notes, focus group interviews with parents, staff and students, formal and informal conversations, and journal entries. Students' were asked what it was like to be a Māori student and a particularly insightful response was, "Most of the time the lights are turned off. The light comes on Tuesday afternoon at *kapa haka*" ([Māori performing arts group], Macfarlane et al., 2007, p. 74). This research found that whanaungatanga was considered integral to a culturally safe ethos in the school. A culture of care, restorative practices and relationship-based pedagogy were then identified as the three key components that determine whanaungatanga. Cavanagh recognised that the glue that held these components together was manaakitanga, kotahitanga, and rangatiratanga, findings that align succinctly with Macfarlane's educultural wheel.

## **Justification for this research**

**Statistics on Māori educational achievement.** There is indisputable evidence that in NZ there has been an inequitable distribution of social, environmental, economic, political, health, and education between Māori and non-Māori (Robson, Cormack, & Cram, 2007). Education is recognised as integral to the full development of human potential, and various initiatives have been developed in NZ in an attempt to mitigate the negative learning experience provided for Māori students over the years (Robson et al., 2007). From the 2013 census, 14.9 percent of New Zealanders identified as Māori (Statistics NZ, n.d.a). Māori therefore represent the second largest ethnic group after NZ European. In 2009, Māori learners accounted for approximately 22 percent of learners in NZ primary and secondary schools, with just below 167,000 students (Education Review Office [ERO], 2010).

Through the Education Counts website, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has published a summary of key statistics for the participation and attainment of Māori students in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). NCEA is the main qualification system for secondary school students in NZ and each subject has a series of both internal and external standards used to assess students' learning (NZ Qualification Authority, n.d.). It has three levels of qualification; where level one is commonly assessed in year eleven when students are typically aged between fifteen to sixteen years.

Findings from Education Counts (2010) show that in 2009 only 48 percent of year eleven Māori students gained NCEA qualifications, compared to 69 percent of non-Māori. For year twelve students', 53 percent of Māori, compared with 70 percent of non-Māori achieved NCEA level two. In the same year, 35 percent of Māori gained level three qualifications or above, compared to 57 percent of non-Māori

students who gained the same qualification. Inferences from these findings indicate that non-Māori students have a higher attainment rate than Māori students. However, Māori performance appears to be improving at a faster rate than non-Māori, an indication that the “success of Māori students at school is a matter of national interest and priority” (ERO, 2010, p. 1).

For the decade 1991 to 2000, Statistics NZ (n.d.b) provided data pertaining to students’ leaving school with no qualification. An analysis of ethnicity indicated that Māori learners were substantially over-represented and made up between 36 to 39 percent of all students leaving with no formal qualifications. This was significantly higher than the national average of 19 percent (Statistics NZ, n.d.b).

The NZ Qualifications Authority ([NZQA], 2013) supplies the most recent statistics regarding numeracy and literacy results for year eleven NCEA. In 2012, 81.4 percent of Māori students achieved literacy, compared with 92.3 percent of NZ European students. In numeracy, 76.1 percent of Māori achieved the necessary standards, in contrast with 90.8 percent of NZ European. Although the rate of suspensions have dropped for Māori students since the year 2000, according to Education Counts (n.d.), in 2012 the age-standardised suspension rate for Māori students (10.5 suspensions per 1,000), was three and a half times higher than *Pākehā* ([NZ European], 3.0 suspensions per 1,000), and twice as high as Pasifika (4.4. suspensions per 1,000).

Socio-economic statistics from 2006 also show that there are significant differences in the distribution of living standards by ethnicity. According to Jensen et al. (2006), 40 percent of Māori specified some degree of hardship, compared with 19 percent of Europeans. In 2000, seven percent of Māori were considered to be at the

*severe hardship* end of the living standards continuum, and by 2004 this had increased to 17 percent (Jenson et al., 2006).

However, despite this concerning statistical data, there has been some indication of progress. *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga* ([Annual Report on Māori Education], MOE, 2007) specified that in 2007, 60 percent of Māori students met the numeracy and literacy requirements for NCEA, up from 52 percent in 2005. Additionally the proportion of year eleven Māori students to achieve NCEA level one or above increased from 33 percent in 2004 to 43 percent in 2006. The suspension rate for Māori students had also reduced by 11 percent from 2001 to 2006 (MOE, 2007). Despite these more promising statistics there is still a clear disparity between Māori and non-Māori students and more still needs to be done.

### **Research on the relationship between PI and student outcomes.**

**Meta-analyses.** It is well-established that PI has a beneficial effect on a range of school related outcomes. Evidence indicates that increased involvement from parents has resulted in greater academic success for students and remains an important predictor of academic outcomes during adolescence (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Jeynes has published several meta-analyses on PI: an examination of the effects of involvement on children from minority cultures and their academic achievement (Jeynes, 2003); a critique of the relationship between PI and urban elementary student academic achievement (Jeynes, 2005); and more recently an investigation of the efficacy of different types of PI programmes on minority students' achievement (Jeynes, 2012).

In the 2005 study, Jeynes proposed four research questions regarding urban American students: to what degree is PI associated with higher levels of school achievement; do school PI programmes have a positive influence; what aspects of PI

help the most; and when controlling for race and gender, is the relationship between PI and academic achievement still significant? Jeynes determined the effect size for 41 studies that measured overall PI, as well as sub-categories of involvement. The Hedge's  $g$  measure of effect size was employed. This uses the pooled standard deviation as the denominator. Corresponding to Cohen's  $d$  interpretation of effect size (ES), a Hedges  $g$  is considered *small* in magnitude at 0.20, *medium* at 0.50 and *large* at 0.80 (Durlak, 2009). Jeynes (2005) found that overall PI resulted in an ES of  $g = 0.73$  ( $p < .01$ ), with various controls. Statistically significant results were also found across a range of academic outcomes, the most notable being grades, with  $g = 0.85$  ( $p < .0001$ ). For studies that examined the role of specific parenting programmes on academic achievement, the results ranged from a small to a medium effect. Overall the ES without controls was  $g = 0.31$  ( $p < .05$ ), though still significant. Parental expectations produced the largest ES ( $g = 0.58$ ,  $p < .05$ ), when compared with other categories of PI, namely parental reading, checking homework, and parental style. Another outcome of particular relevance is that the correlations between ethnicity and PI across a range of outcomes were still significant, even when controlling for other factors. Jeynes (2005) proposed that PI might be a valuable mechanism for reducing the achievement gap that exists between predominant cultures and ethnic minority groups. He notes it is an area of particular interest to social scientists due to a concerning observable decline of PI in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jeynes, 2003).

Hattie (2009) synthesised findings from over 800 meta-analyses relating to the factors that impact on achievement in school-age children. Cohen's  $d$  was used to interpret the findings on the influence of a range of programmes, policies, and interventions. These covered most school subjects, all ages, and a vast range of



school-related areas. This research encompassed a total of 52,637 studies and more than 83 million students. The structure of this synthesis centred on six topics: the child, the home, the school, the curricula, the teacher, and approaches to teaching. Hattie noted that the overall ES of socioeconomic status (SES), as indicated by parental income, education, and occupation, had a notable influence on students' achievement ( $d = 0.57$ ). Regarding PI in learning, Hattie found a near zero effect when the involvement entailed a surveillance approach. For example a controlling and disciplining parental style resulted in decreased achievement ( $d = -0.09$ ). Interestingly, the effects of PI were increased in higher SES groups and varied amongst ethnicities. Across all examined home variables, parental educational aspirations and expectations had the strongest relationship with achievement ( $d = 0.80$ ). Most notably an effect size of ( $d = 0.51$ ) for PI was calculated, compared with an overall effect size of ( $d = 0.4$ ) for other educational interventions.

***PI and academic outcomes.*** An extensive range of studies have examined the relationship between various dimensions of PI and improvement in specific academic outcomes including: reading and/or comprehension scores (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Loera, Rueda, & Nakamoto, 2011; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005; Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011), vocabulary (Wen, Bulotsky-Shearer, Hahs-Vaughn, & Korfmacher, 2012), and mathematics performance (Hill, 2001; Hill & Craft, 2003; Hong, Yoo, You, & Wu, 2010; Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Wen et al., 2012). The following review of several significant international studies will contribute to the justification for undertaking this current research.

Historically, education policy in the United States of America (USA) has placed a strong emphasis on PI and reinforced this through the implementation of statewide

policy. In their research Miedel and Reynolds (1999) and Rasinski and Stevenson (2005) refer to the eighth goal in the USA National Education Goals, “Parental Participation - Every school will promote partnerships that will increase PI and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children” (USA Department of Education, 1994). Subsequently, Local Educational Agencies (LEA) created written policy around the execution of PI. Section 1118 “establishes the role of the school in involving parents and clarifies the relationship between the school's role in parental participation and the role of the LEA” (USA Department of Education, 1996). The USA Department of Education instituted a clear framework for PI and described specifically how it should be executed using targeted PI programmes such as Head Start and Fast Start. Additionally they specified that this should be conducted “with the involvement of parents and evaluated...[to determine] whether there are barriers to greater participation, particularly by parents who...[have] limited literacy or are of any racial or ethnic minority background.” Due to the emphasis placed on PI in the USA, researchers from North America have contributed a significant amount of the research in this area.

The Head Start initiative began in 1965 in the USA as a public preschool programme for children deemed to be disadvantaged (Garces, Thomas, & Currie, 2000). It currently provides comprehensive early childhood education and health support, and most importantly fosters PI in low-income families (Devaney, Ellwood, & Love, 1997). A recent publication by Wen et al. (2012) focussed on two dimensions of Head Start, of which PI was included. Longitudinal data was used from the 1997 FACES set (The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey). The sample consisted of 1968 children aged three to four years, 31 Head Start programmes and 484 classrooms. The measures of academic outcomes were the

Peabody Picture Vocabulary test-III, the Woodcock-Johnson III Dictation, and Applied Problems subscales. PI was assessed via interviews and questions rated on a three-point scale. Hierarchical Linear Modelling was employed, and once child, family, and programme variables were controlled for, two main effects were found. These were a positive association between PI and children's initial vocabulary scores, which indicates that the home environment may have a direct influence on early language development. Additionally, a small but significant negative relationship between PI and growth in vocabulary scores over the two years was noted. This indicates that children, who have unenriched home environments, subsequently have lower receptive vocabulary skills.

The Getting Ready intervention was designed to promote children's school readiness within existing early childhood programmes. Sheridan et al. (2011) note that an ecologically systems theory is apparent in the programme through the family-centred collaborative structure. The authors investigated the efficacy of Getting Ready on school readiness and early language and literacy. The study involved 29 Head Start classrooms over a two-year period. The sample included 217 children with a mean age of 43.05 months at baseline. Two hundred and eleven parents completed questionnaires and there was also a recorded parent-child observation session. Twenty-nine teachers completed the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy, and the Preschool Language Scale-Fourth Edition was used to directly assess language development. The intervention consisted of the teacher visiting the home for at least 60 minutes over two years (average of 8.35 times). The Getting Ready approach involved focussing on the child's strengths, discussing observations, goals and expectations, providing developmental information, making suggestions, and brainstorming collaboratively with parents around any issues. The results

demonstrated that the treatment group had significantly better outcomes over time when compared with the control group. Teacher report of language use for those involved in Getting Ready resulted in a strong effect size ( $d = 1.11$ ), along with reading ( $d = 1.25$ ) and writing skills ( $d = 0.93$ ). This indicates that the development of a strong bidirectional relationship between teachers and parents in the home environment, while focussing on strengths, can have a potentially positive impact on children's language and literacy development. However, both these PI programmes focus on preschool children.

In their research, Miedel and Reynolds (1999) utilised participants from the Chicago Longitudinal Study, which began in 1996. The researchers investigated the association between parent reports of involvement in preschool and kindergarten, and children's eighth-grade status (between approximately twelve to fourteen years). Seven hundred and four parents/care-givers completed a questionnaire that consisted of two main questions: the frequency of involvement, and the number of activities participated in. Hierarchical regression was used to analyse whether parents' retrospective ratings were related to kindergarten and eighth-grade reading achievement, rate of grade retention, and special education placement. The results indicated that both frequency and number of activities were significantly associated with children's higher reading achievement, lower rates of grade retention, and fewer years in special education. Although this study was limited by the use of recollective data, the implications re-emphasise the importance of fostering PI. The authors stated that their findings indicate that PI "can be a protective factor in counteracting risk conditions that may lead to school underachievement" (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999, p. 399).

Hughes and Kwok (2007) employed latent variable structural equation modelling (SEM) to test a suggested theoretical model regarding potential associations and mediators between the following relationships: parent-teacher, student-teacher, child background characteristics, teacher and child engagement, ethnicity, and child achievement a year later. The sample included 443 first grade children attending three schools in Texas who scored below the median on a statewide measure of literacy. The SEM findings supported the hypothesised theoretical model; specifically that a child's background characteristics (gender and ethnicity) predicted the quality of parent-teacher and student-teacher relationships. Furthermore, that these relationships have consequences on children's later achievement. The researchers found that students' academic achievement improved when the child and their parents reported that relationships with their teachers were supportive.

***PI and other school-related outcomes.*** Other positive school-related outcomes investigated in previous research have been related to increased PI: general cognitive performance (Hara & Burke, 1998; Phillipson & Phillipson, 2012), lower rates of high school dropout (Barnard, 2004; McNeal Jr., 1999; Rumberger, 1995), higher grade completion (Barnard, 2004; Simon, 2001), prevention of behaviour problems (Domina, 2005; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hill et al., 2004; McNeal Jr., 1999; Powell et al., 2010; Sanders, 1998), and a decrease in truancy (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Simon, 2001).

The emphasis placed on PI in the United Kingdom (UK) was embodied in the Children's Plan formulated in 1997. This was part of a government policy to improve and strengthen support for families during the formative years of their children's lives (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007). Harris and Goodall (2008) qualitatively examined how PI can impact on behaviour problems in twenty schools

across the UK. Three hundred and fourteen participants were involved in the research. Case study methodology was employed, along with data sets relating to academic performance, attendance, and behaviour. The researchers considered a range of variables that potentially impact on PI, including SES and ethnicity. Several key themes emerged, most notably that parental engagement was found to have a direct and beneficial impact on student behaviour, and that communication between home and school influenced students' behaviour in class. "If your parents had nothing to do with school, you could skip your classes and nobody will be bothered..." (Harris & Goodall, 2008, p. 283). Harris and Goodall summarised that the evidence indicates, "Parental engagement increases with social status, income, and parents' level of education. So, certain parents are more likely to engage in learning, while others face certain barriers, influenced by context and culture..." (Harris & Goodall, 2008, p. 286).

The impact of poor attendance at school has far-reaching consequences, including academic failure and later school drop-out (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Subsequently research into how school and family partnership programmes in the U.S can influence student attendance was undertaken in 2002. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) collated data from the *1996-1997 Focus on Results - Study of Student Attendance*. A range of background variables such as the location and size of the school were examined, along with other factors including attendance, family involvement and school practices around absences, the helpfulness of these. The sample consisted of 12 elementary schools serving over 5000 students. Correlational data showed that the following involvement practices were associated with a significant change in attendance: assigning a truancy officer ( $r = .822$ ); connecting parents with school contact ( $r = .581$ ); and communicating effectively with diverse

parents ( $r = .541$ ). For chronic absences (those students who missed 20 or more days of school/year), connecting the parents with school ( $r = -.623$ ), and making home visits ( $r = -.648$ ), resulted in the most noticeable difference.

***PI and social cognitions.*** The effect of PI is extensive, not simply affecting academic outcomes but also influencing children's social cognitions. This has been demonstrated in the following research on motivation (Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2011; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005), self-regulation (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong, & Jones, 2001), decreased sadness (Gottfredson & Hussong, 2011), and other social competencies (McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Powell et al., 2010).

Fan et al. (2011) investigated the associations between several dimensions of PI and various motivational constructs across a range of ethnic groups. Analysis was conducted applying structural equation modelling and data from the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002. The sample consisted of 12,721 participants who identified with four ethnic groups: Caucasian, African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic. Five dimensions of PI were examined: aspiration, advising, participation in school functions, and school contacts. Measures of motivation were adapted from existing questionnaires such as the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire. The hypothesised theoretical model was a good fit for the data. It included both direct paths between all PI factors to the motivational constructs, and eight correlated paths for the motivational constructs when both gender and SES were controlled for statistically. The hypothesised model then became the baseline model and the ethnic samples matched. Analysis indicated that higher parental aspiration for all ethnicities, except Asian-American, resulted in children who expressed more

confidence in their abilities and better behavioural engagement. A positive association between aspiration and intrinsic motivation was also noted. Most importantly evidence regarding parent-school communication showed that contact with homes regarding both academic and behavioural concerns were a strong negative predictor of students' intrinsic motivation.

McWayne et al. (2004) studied 307 children aged between five and seven years old. Sixty-one percent had attended the aforementioned Head Start programme. PI was measured using the Parent Involvement in Children's Education Scale, a forty item self-report scale consisting of three factors: supportive home learning environment, direct school contact, and inhibited involvement. Both parents and teachers assessed children's social competence in peer play interactions through the Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale. Parents also completed the parent version of the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) to describe prosocial behaviours such as cooperation and self-control. Finally teachers filled in the Academic Competence subscale of the SSRS. Bivariate correlations were computed and a significant relationship between the PI dimension, supportive home learning environment, and the variables: cooperation, responsibility, and self-control were identified ( $r = .41$ ,  $r = .29$ ,  $r = .28$ ,  $p < .0001$ , respectively). Furthermore, a strong correlation emerged between the home learning environment and children's academic motivation ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Additionally, through Canonical Variance analysis, the predictor: parents who were disconnected, in particular having low levels of direct contact with the school, was associated with externalizing and internalizing student behaviour in school. Parents also reported familial stress and work responsibilities as barriers to their involvement. The authors recommended that "schools and families need to co-construct a workable operationalization of *involvement*...accommodating families that



are experiencing stress due to time constraints, new work responsibilities or lack of adequate childcare” (McWayne et al., 2004, p. 374-375).

**Why year nine and ten students?** Longitudinal data was utilised by Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, and Fendrich (1999) to investigate the reported decline of PI as children get older, as well as teachers’ perceptions of PI with a range of other variables. Participants were 1,205 urban elementary school children from southern New England. Teachers provided information on PI and school performance for children aged between five and nine years old. Teacher perceptions of the quality of the parent-teacher relationship correlated significantly with home ( $r = .61, p < .001$ ), and school participation ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ). Regarding school performance in year three, parent-teacher interactions was also positively associated with students’ socioemotional adjustment ( $r = .25, p < .001$ ), math achievement ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ), and reading achievement ( $r = .25, p < .001$ ). Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences in PI over years one to three. The researchers found significant differentiation between year one and three for the number of contacts ( $M = 5.24, SD = 3.17$  vs.  $M = 4.68, SD = 3.02$ ), quality of parent-teacher relationship ( $M = 2.21, SD = .83$  vs.  $M = 2.14, SD = .82$ ), and participation in school ( $M = .45, SD = .44$  vs.  $M = .39, SD = .45$ ). Izzo et al. (1999) surmised that PI does decline as students get older. They also identified that parent-teacher contact does not necessarily have positive outcomes and suggested that this may be due to increased contact being frequently associated with problem behaviour. This research emphasised the importance of having constructive interactions between home and school (Izzo et al., 1999).

**Why a PI policy?** Hornby and Witte (2010) interviewed twenty-six Canterbury school principals about their written politics on PI. The authors argue that it is necessary for schools to have delineated strategies for involving parents in school

practice and subsequently require a targeted PI policy. In this study a structured interview was conducted on four aspects of PI and the needs of parents. The four key topics were: channels of communication, interaction with school staff, parental education, and parental support. There were also questions regarding parental contributions, namely involvement in policy formation, their role as a resource, collaboration with teachers, and information sharing with their children. The researchers established that there were a wide range of effective PI practices taking place in the schools, however many of these were inconsistently executed and only one school had a specific PI policy. This is an indication that PI documentation is paid insufficient attention in some Canterbury schools and the authors strongly recommended that schools develop targeted PI initiatives, which should be done in collaboration with parents.

**PI in New Zealand.** In NZ, governmental department reports and student theses are the principal contributors in the examination of PI. The Biddulph et al. (2003) report focussed on NZ children's achievement and the complex interactions produced by both family and community involvement. This was a comprehensive report completed for the MOE as part of a series of best evidence syntheses; an indication of the MOE's commitment to developing a strong evidence base on which to build current education policy and practice (Biddulph et al., 2003). The authors found that a key message emerging from both the NZ and international research was that effective home-school partnerships have the potential to have a greater magnitude of positive effects on children, compared with other institution-based educational interventions. The examples they provided were enhanced wellbeing, and improved behaviour and achievement. The evidence also demonstrated these results could persist into adult life and civic participation. Regarding ethnicity and culture, the

authors found that this was also interconnected with children's achievement. Overall, Pākehā and Asian children consistently achieve higher than Māori and Pasifika children. However, these findings are confounded by SES due to the families of a high proportion of Māori and Pasifika children "occupy[ing] the lower of levels of the SES scales (including poverty level) and these children also make up a disproportionate number of those in low-decile schools" (Biddulph et al., 2003, p. iii).

Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008) examined seven international case studies and conducted four evaluations of NZ home-school initiatives, as well as reviewed the literature on PI in education. The empirical component of this report consisted of seven case studies across NZ covering a range of schools. This evaluation was intended to improve understanding of the important elements of home-school partnerships. The researchers established unequivocal evidence that PI contributed to educational achievement, of which the following applies directly to this current research: that good parenting at home impacts significantly on achievement at school; PI decreases as children get older; and the range of involvement was typically associated with factors such as social class, poverty, and parental perceptions of education. Bull et al. (2008) also noted that the special character of *kura kaupapa Māori* (Māori philosophy and language primary schools) resulted in the home-school relationship being qualitatively different in these schools due to whānau involvement being fundamental to their management.

According to Kuperminc et al. (2008), promotion of interventions that focus on increasing the level of PI in children's education have become popular as a means of narrowing the perceived achievement gap between the predominant culture and students from other minority groups. Evidence also strongly supports the potential benefits of policies and programmes to increase PI across school years (Hill & Taylor,

2004). The previous research supports the range of positive outcomes for students who have parents actively engaged in their education. As Harris and Goodall affirm, “parental engagement in children’s learning makes a difference and remains one of the most powerful improvement levers that we have” (2008, p. 287). However, more information is required regarding how to facilitate worthwhile parental engagement, particularly for those families of lower SES and minority ethnicities. More information and support is required for families that occupy these groups in NZ and this is specifically the case for Māori students and their families.

### **Current policy and practice in NZ regarding parental engagement in education**

**Tomorrow’s Schools.** Historically, the involvement of the wider community has been emphasised in the policies regarding school administration in NZ. The 1877 Education Act, which established free primary schooling in NZ, allocated decision-making power to a central governmental Department of Education and ten locally-elected education boards (Perris, 1998). However, over the next 110 years, tensions between the Department and education boards intensified. The authority of the government continued to increase, resulting in a decrease in regional support, particularly from parent communities who were becoming more educated and therefore less tolerant of their lack of autonomy (Perris, 1998). As a result, in 1987 the Picot Taskforce was assembled in order to conduct an evaluation of governance. The intention was to consider a redirection of administrative services in order to improve client satisfaction, and to plan a reorganisation of structure to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and equity (Macpherson, 1989).

The Picot Taskforce found that the structure of the education system was over-centralised with too many decision-making tiers, which made it particularly difficult for educative administrators to be effective (Macpherson, 1989). From 1987 to 1997,

a dramatic political restructuring resulted in the decentralization of educational authority to a provincial level (Perris, 1998). A White paper – *Tomorrow's Schools*, was used to announce the reforms and set out a range of details regarding the following: administration at school level, Māori interests, government policies, national guidelines, and how the process would be implemented (Macpherson, 1989). Responsibility for school administration was devolved to members of the local institutions and their communities, and the Department of Education was disassembled and officially replaced by the MOE (Cusack, 1993).

NZ led the way internationally regarding the devolution of public education with each school being given decision-making autonomy through a newly elected Board of Trustees (BOT). The financial and administrative powers given to the BOT were a key element in the Tomorrow School's reforms. The BOT included parents, the principal and a staff representative, and in secondary schools, an elected student (Gordon, 1995). Openshaw (2010) contended that although neoliberal ideology clearly played an important role in these changes, the failure of educators to support Māori students and other marginalized groups also impacted on this educational devolution. In 1989, with the official roll out of Tomorrow's Schools, campaigns for the BOT elections portrayed images of women and Māori becoming involved in their child's school and finding it rewarding (Gordon, 1995). However, Gordon (1995) states that unfortunately the reality was that board members were predominantly male and Pākehā. Statistics from Ngā Haeata Mātauranga (MOE, 2007), showed that in 2007, 16.4 percent of elected parent representatives on BOTs were Māori, compared with 66 percent who identified as Pākehā. Although the aim of the educational reform was to empower communities and for whānau to take charge regarding their

children's schooling there appears to still be a low representation of Māori members active in the school community.

**Parent-school organisations and programmes.** A succession of school bodies and initiatives has been established in NZ that reinforce the importance of the home-school partnership. The NZ Parent Teacher Association (NZPTA) was formed in Hokitika in 1906 and advocates the importance of parental school involvement, as well as promoting the concept that education was a continuing bidirectional discourse between home and school (NZPTA, 2009). NZPTA Federations became necessary around the time of the First World War as the movement gained significant impetus. However, with the aforementioned socio-political reforms and the introduction of Tomorrow's School's, there has been a decline in the number of NZPTA groups over the past 30 years (NZPTA, 2009).

A recent initiative by the NZPTA called the *Give Me 5* campaign is focussed on bringing families into the school environment and supporting their child's schooling. It does not require a significant amount of time or commitment from parents, but simply asks them or other family members to donate five hours during the year. Sean, age nine, said of the programme, "I feel good when Mum can see me work" ("GiveMeFive", 2014). The NZPTA actively endorses USA National Standards for Parent and Family involvement, which are based on Epstein's six types of PI:

Standard I: Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.

Standard II: Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Standard III: Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Standard IV: Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their

support and assistance are sought.

Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Standard VI: Collaborating with the Community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning. (NZPTA, 2009)

**Government home-school initiatives.** Both the MOE and Ministry of Social Development (MSD) provide a range of information and resources that parents and whānau can access in order to provide support for their child's schooling. Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) is an MOE initiative that makes available programmes and various schemes for schools, teachers, and parents. The aim is to encourage pro-social behaviours in children and this is actualised through parents and whānau learning behaviour management strategies and increasing their confidence in the home-school relationship (MOE, 2014b). Additionally PB4L emphasises that educators also need to feel supported in addressing problem behaviours. Within the wider macrosystem, PB4L reinforces that school leaders and BOTs should continually monitor and develop their strategies in order to build on a positive culture within the school (MOE, 2014b).

As part of the PB4L scheme, the MOE also co-ordinates the implementation of Incredible Years (IYS), a course for parents of children aged three to eight years. The programme is a multifaceted, developmentally-based curriculum for parents and teachers that promotes social-emotional competence and aims to prevent, reduce and treat emotional and behavioural concerns (Webster-Stratton, 2004). The IYS co-ordinator works with parents to promote areas of child development, such as social competence, emotional regulation, problem solving skills, as well as methods to decrease problem behaviour (MOE, 2014c). The aim of the intervention is to assist

parents and teachers in providing children with strong emotional, social and academic foundations with the purpose of achieving long-term goals such as: reducing the rates of depression, school drop out, violence, drug abuse, and delinquency (MOE, 2014c).

Between 2002 and 2005, the MOE funded the *Parent Mentoring Initiative* (PMI). This project was aimed at strengthening bidirectional relationships between parents and teachers, parents and children, and communities and schools, in order to support the educational achievement of learners (Gorinski, 2005). Additionally the programme stressed the mutual responsibility and accountability surrounding these partnerships. The PMI project was rolled out across five cluster groups in three regions: the Far North, Counties Manukau and Flaxmere, reaching a total of 29 schools and an estimated 600 families each year (Gorinski, 2005).

Gorinski (2005) qualitatively evaluated the PMI programme using a cumulative case study methodology. Data was collected from 123 respondents that participated in focus group meetings, attended an interview or completed a questionnaire. Respondents also reported improved learner capability, specifically that new entrants transitioning from on-site playgroups demonstrated more confidence in both numeracy and literacy. A parent stated, “our children know how to write their names before they go to school, they can count numbers...” (Gorinski, 2005, p. 21). Also of note was the recognition from participants regarding improved relationships between the home, school, child, and family. A parent posited that “[I] never used to do anything with my child and now I do...” (Gorinski, 2005, p. 17). Additionally a teacher commented, “Staff have a better understanding of the homes...[it has] broken down walls” (Gorinski, 2005, p. 18). These reports were supported through evidential improvement in social, attitudinal and academic achievement for both parents and students. However, Gorinski concluded that the challenge remained for school



communities in sustaining and increasing PMI practices. Unfortunately several barriers still exist including staffing shortages, insufficient numbers of co-ordinators and family transience.

As part of family and community services, the MSD supplies information pertaining to over 35 programmes that provide some form of assistance and support to family and whānau. These include a free phone line to access general information about a range of family related issues, and *Parents as First Teachers*, an education programme that assists parents in their understanding about child development and learning (MSD, n.d.c). *Family start* is another MSD initiative, a home visiting programme that assists parents who are struggling with child-related concerns and focuses on improving children's growth and health, learning and relationships, family circumstance, environment and safety (MSD, n.d.b).

### **Current Practice in NZ regarding Māori Achievement and Whānau Engagement in Education**

**Educational disparity.** In a 1990 publication, *Towards Successful Schooling*, Graham Hingangaroa Smith stated “[that] the most significant crisis presently confronting New Zealand educationalists relates to high and disproportionate levels of inequality experienced by Māori, both within and as a result of the education system” (p. 73). Smith (1990) comments that educational policy-making and reforms have failed to address fundamental issues pertaining to Māori identity. A more recent publication by Bishop, O’Sullivan and Berryman (2010) reiterates Smith’s perspective, that current approaches have not worked for minoritised students due to efforts often being short term, poorly funded and abandoned early. The authors contend that the major societal challenges are the ongoing social, economic and political disparities, primarily between Māori and Pākehā (Bishop et al., 2010).

Subsequently Māori frustration and disillusionment has resulted in two key developments: *Te Kohanga Reo* (language nurseries) and Kura Kaupapa Māori schools.

Kura Kaupapa schools are total immersion language schools, and provide Māori with the authority to select curriculum they view as important and also advocates for the validity and legitimacy of Māori knowledge and culture (Smith, 1990). Smith considers state schooling to be an instrument that simply serves the dominant Pākehā interests of colonization and assimilation. However, 90 percent of Māori students between twelve to fifteen years still attend mainstream English-medium schools (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003). Therefore it appears indisputable that within the public schooling system, policy and reforms must provide for Māori learners and their whānau, instilling both educational and cultural empowerment.

Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy (2009) summarised a range of concerning evidence from the 2006 publication of Ngā Haeata Mātauranga regarding the potential reality for Māori due to educational disparity. In comparison to non-Māori, this included higher numbers of unemployment, increased likelihood of being employed in low paying employment, elevated levels of incarceration, illness and poverty and under-representation in the positive social and economic indicators of society. The specific educational outcomes for Māori students were also extremely concerning: a three times higher rate of suspension compared with non-Māori; over-representation in special education programmes for behavioural issues; lower proportions enrolled in pre-school; higher-proportions in low stream education classes; and fewer formal qualifications at school exit, again in comparison with non-Māori.

In 2003, Bishop et al. published a comprehensive report for the MOE regarding the educational disparities experienced by year nine and ten Māori students in mainstream classrooms. The researchers investigated how Māori learners experienced education and how they felt it could be improved. In-depth interviews were conducted with sixty students and the major discourses were centered on home/school relationships and school structure. Thematic analysis showed that family support was important. One student reported, “Having your family and friends support you...’cause they’ve all been through school and...have good jobs and I want to be like that” (Bishop et al., 2003, p. 45). Discourse two established common themes such as: being Māori is problematic; and the prevalence of racist and negative stereotypes. Additionally students reported that there was a lack of positive reinforcement for being Māori, teachers had low expectations, and Māori culture was not valued. In theme two of discourse two (the school/home relationship), students commented on parents and grandparents being too scared to come into school, “Well they’d be able to see that I am really doing okay at school, but I think they’d be scared to come into high school...” (Bishop et al., 2003, p. 49). Theme three focussed on student-teacher relationships, with an unfortunate number of poor relationships being over-reported. Finally theme four and five were centered on teachers’ behavioural and pedagogical practices. In this theme, students referred to teachers who blame students, and make them feel dumb, as well as lessons being taught too fast. From discourse three, streaming of classes was viewed as problematic and the relevance of curriculum context questioned. Overall, this report identified a number of significant factors impacting on Māori achievement including teachers’ expectations, experiences and skills, the school environment, socio-economic factors, home-school relationships, and whānau support.

Bishop et al., (2003) established that prior explanations for these outcomes were centred primarily on the aforementioned theory of Māori cultural deficiency. These reasons included the deprived home environment, limited literacy resources in the home, lower socio-economic status resulting in the child being linguistically disadvantaged prior to entering school, and a general lack of resources, both material and cultural. The researchers argue that this blame mentality was not contributing to any improvement for Māori children and their whānau. Instead they suggested that what was needed was embodied in the promotion of whānau engagement in education and professional development for teachers.

**Te Kotahitanga (unity of purpose).** The previous report by Bishop et al., 2003 was part of the much broader *Te Kotahitanga* (unity of purpose) project devised by Bishop and Berryman in 2001 and funded by the MOE (Bishop et al., 2010). Essentially the intention of this enterprise was to improve Māori students' learning and achievement. The central components of Te Kotahitanga involved providing professional development for teachers, as well as supporting school leaders and the wider community to reorganise school structures to enable teachers with this task (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.b). According to Bishop et al. (2010), the programme has been implemented in up to 33 secondary schools over four phases. The first phase was the aforementioned narrative report. It became clear from this dialogue that if Māori learners were to achieve at higher levels, teachers needed to theorise differently and build their skills around their ability to help this disadvantaged group (Bishop et al., 2010).

**The Māori language in schools.** During the mid-1800s, Missionary teachers dutifully learnt how to speak the Māori language so that Māori children were not deprived of the learning experience (Durie, 1998). However, in 1879, with the

transfer of Māori schooling to the Department of Education, a Native School Code was written. The code “provided for the instruction of Māori children in the reading, writing and speaking of the English language, and in arithmetic, geography and such culture as would fit them to become good citizens” (Durie, 1998, p. 301). This resulted in Māori students being physically punished for speaking the Māori language and as Durie notes, the exclusion of the Māori language and subsequent culture from NZ schools has had significant long-term negative effects.

In 2012, the NZ Council for Educational Research (NZCER) funded a three-year research project. The researchers, Bright, Barnes and Hutchings (2013) are investigating the optimum approach for supporting the continuity of te reo Māori development. This will involve engaging whānau during three key educational transitions: early childhood to primary, primary to secondary, and beyond secondary. The authors state that,

Over the past century, the natural process of reo Māori transmission within whānau...has been badly eroded by the effects of colonisation, urbanisation, and the privileging of English as the language of education, commerce and broadcasting. (Bright et al., 2013, p. 14)

Concurrently the MOE have also released *Tau Mai Te Reo* - The Māori Language in Education Strategy 2013-2017. This initiative aims to create the appropriate environment for learners to achieve Māori language outcomes, to support the coordination of resources, and provides a framework for improved government investment in Māori language (MOE, 2013). A clear emphasis is being placed on the renewal and advancement of the Māori language within education. As Durie (1998) affirms, language revitalisation is considered integral to a strong cultural identity and the subsequent wellbeing of whānau.

**Government policy and initiatives.** The preface to the *National Educational Goals* states that, “Education is at the core of our nation’s effort to achieve economic and social progress” (MOE, 2009). Goal number nine prioritises Māori student achievement and claims that it is necessary to have “increased participation and success by Māori through the advancement of Māori education initiatives” (MOE, 2009). At present there are several policies and programmes that specifically focus on enhancing the educational experience of Māori children and their whānau within government policy as a result of the evidential disparity referred to previously.

An Education Review Office (ERO) report, *Promoting Success for Māori Students: Schools’ Progress*, published in 2010 cites three main mechanisms considered as fundamental to Māori achievement. These are *Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success*; the recently updated NZ Curriculum; and a focus in ERO reviews on evaluating and reporting Māori success (ERO, 2010). *Ka Hikitia* is the Māori education strategy implemented between 2008 and 2012 and emphasises Māori achieving their potential, most importantly *as Māori* (MOE, n.d.a). Additionally, the NZ Curriculum has a range of principles that advocate Māori achievement, including acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi, and fostering a connection with students’ wider lives, in particular engagement with whānau and communities.

An evaluation in 2010 by ERO highlighted that many schools in NZ were lacking in relevant data regarding Māori progress and achievement. Forty-one percent of schools did not know if numeracy achievement had improved, and 33 percent did not have available the appropriate statistics regarding literacy. However, 27 percent of target schools could demonstrate that Māori achievement in literacy was higher than at the time of the previous review. Despite these improvements, this report recognised that when compared to both national and international research, a

higher proportion of Māori students continue to underachieve. Specifically ERO noted that schools must “improve relationships with whānau so that home and school can work in partnership to improve learning” (ERO, 2010, p. 30).

The next phase of Ka Hikitia is currently in development. *Me Kōrero - Let's Talk!* is an engagement document with questionnaires that seek ideas and feedback from external partners, including whānau. This strategy will be in place for five years, between 2013 and 2017, and focuses on accelerating success and is promoted as “an even greater step-up in achievement for Māori learners” (MOE, 2014a). The emphasis in the next phase is to support whānau to play a bigger role in their child's education. There is recognition that the education system has not worked well for many Māori children and a *pānui* (publication) created for Māori parents seeks the support of whānau to shift this pattern of failure. It states that “Māori learners do best in education when teachers, principals, their parents and whānau: believe in them; relate to them; value them; work together as partners-making decisions together; and provide them with help and support with their learning every day” (MOE, n.d.b, p. 3).

*Te Tere Auraki* (figure four) is a development strategy, produced by the MOE, that encompasses five different projects, all focussed on professional development for teachers: *Te Kauhua*, *Te Kotahitanga*, *Ako Panuku*, *Te Mana Kōrero* and *Te Hiringa i te Mahara*. These programmes were aimed at an improvement in the academic and social outcomes for Māori students. Most notable for its emphasis on enabling school-whānau partnership is *Te Kauhua* (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.a). This was a project implemented between 2001 and 2008 and endeavoured to help schools and whānau work together with the joint aim of improving outcomes for Māori learners.

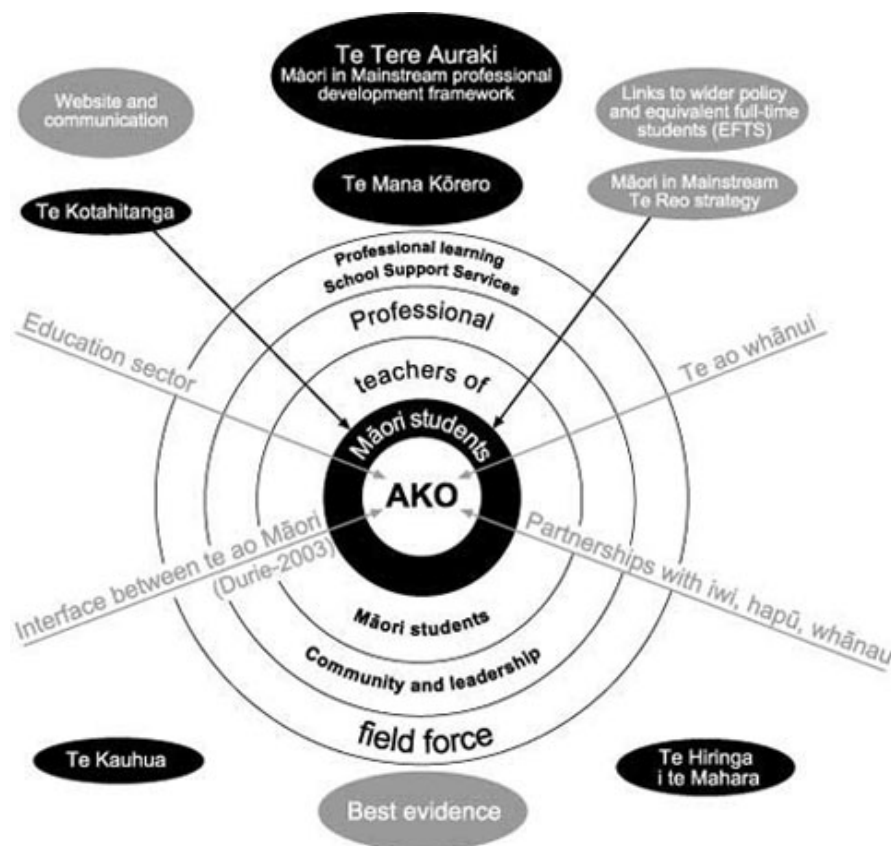


Figure 4: Concept map: teaching and learning Māori © Ministry of Education, Wellington, NZ, 2005 (Te Kete Ipurangi., n.d.c).

The emphasis of these programmes is the promotion of teacher abilities, and only Te Kauhua focuses specifically on the bidirectional relationship between home and school. However, the diagram above indicates that partnership with whānau is a key component of the MOE Te Tere Auraki strategy. This represents an ecological approach utilising the resources available in a move towards *Ako* (taking responsibility for learning).

A further Māori teaching initiative is *Tātaiako*, a joint venture between the MOE and the NZ Teachers Council. It outlines the competencies required of teachers



so that they can assist Māori students in their learning and also reinforces the philosophy of Ka Hikitia. Each competency describes various stages of teaching: *Wānaga* (participating with learners and communities in robust dialogue); *Whanaugantanga* (actively and respectfully engaging with whānau and the wider community); *Manaakitanga* (demonstrating integrity and respect for Māori beliefs, language and culture); *Tangata Whenuatanga* (affirming Māori learners as Māori and providing contexts for this to occur); and lastly, *Ako* (MOE & NZ Teachers Council, 2011). Dr. Pita Sharples provides a germane quote in the introduction,

We are shifting our emphasis away from Māori students being responsible for under-achieving in our compulsory education programmes, to look at how education can be delivered in the context of the vibrant contemporary Māori values and norms, reflecting the cultural milieu in which Māori students live. Genuine, productive relationships among teachers and their students, whānau, iwi and wider communities are vital foundations for effective teaching and learning. (MOE & NZ Teachers Council, 2011, p. 3)

The MSD also provides several resources specific to supporting whānau in learning and development. These include: *Whānau Toko I Te Ora* (MSD, n.d.d), an intensive home-based family parenting support programme administered by *Te Ropu Wahine Māori Toko I Te Ora* (The Māori Women's Welfare League). It is a programme for children with high needs who are under five years and involves supporting their whānau through positive skill-based education. Additionally, the MSD makes available a range of strengths-based community-based initiatives through the webpage *E tu whānau* (MSD, n.d.a).

Despite these efforts, there is still a clear disparity between Māori student educational achievement and other NZ students. Professor Sir Mason Durie is

recognised in NZ for his invaluable contribution to Māori health and support for Māori higher education. At the fifth Hui Taumata Mātauranga, Durie (2006) focussed on the role of whānau in education,

The immediate factors revolve around whānau and education; the interface between family and school. The ways in which the two institutions relate to each other will have a profound effect on Māori potential. (p. 20)

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **International Literature on the Barriers and Enablers for Parental Involvement**

Numerous factors have been investigated in PI research regarding the barriers and enablers to engagement. Several of these are explored in the two key PI models summarised below. This literature review also provides an analysis of the significant studies related to school factors, such as school leadership, teacher-parent relationships, opportunities provided for involvement, and school policies. Additionally the various parental demographics that may have a determining influence on PI are examined, which include work commitments, lack of time, single parenting, perceptions of the value of education, and the level of parental education. Also considered in this chapter are several studies that have been conducted into the impact of income and/or SES on PI, as well as the important function of culture and language. Within a NZ context, pertinent studies on the barriers and enablers to general PI in NZ, and specifically for Maori are discussed, as well as research pertaining to cultural practice taking place within NZ schools.

**PI models of barriers and enablers.** Hornby and Lafaele (2011) addressed the discrepancy between the extensive research conducted into PI and the limited practice of PI in schools. The authors suggest a four-factor model that illustrates the function of PI barriers involving individual parent and family factors, child factors, parent-teacher factors, and broader societal factors. According to the model, within both individual parent and family factors, a parents' opinion about PI may impact on their willingness to be engaged. This includes parental beliefs about role definition, confidence in their own ability, and their child's ability. Another parent/family factor is the parents' perception about the number of invitations for involvement from the school, either explicit or implicit. The authors posit that school staff who are

welcoming are fostering engagement, whereas staff who appear to devalue parental contributions are a clear impediment to PI.

The life experiences of the family can also act as an obstacle to PI according to Hornby and Lafaele (2011); for example those parents who have had negative educational experiences, who are solo parents, have work commitments, and who have limited income and time. Variation in class, ethnicity and gender are also considered to determine the amount of PI that occurs. These authors suggest that child variables such as age, whether they have learning difficulties, are gifted and talented or have behavioural problems may influence the operationalization of PI. The interaction between parents and teachers is also considered to have a determining effect. If parents and the school have differing goals for the child and use incongruent language, this may result in conflict and frustration. Additionally the attitudes of the parents, which are often “deeply rooted within their own historical, economical, educational, ethnic, class and gendered experiences” cannot be ignored (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011, p. 45).

The model by Hornby and Lafaele (2011) refer to the wider ecosystem and societal factors that can create further barriers to PI. Those mentioned include the historical context of education; namely the traditional formality and inflexibility of schools, which are viewed as counterproductive to fostering home-school relationships. A change in family demographics, such as increased parental work hours, more divorce, solo parenting, and community fragmentation are also cited as contributing to the difficulties of developing PI. In addition the authors posit political factors that impose restrictions on the practice of PI as another significant obstruction. These include a lack of written PI policy and limited available courses on promoting PI at teacher training institutions. Economic issues are closely associated with

political factors, mostly due to the lack of funding for PI initiatives. This model provides a comprehensive overview of the potential barriers to PI and many of these factors will be expanded on in the literature discussed below.

Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak and Shogren (2011) proposed a seven-factor model (pp. 138-182) that focuses on facilitating the school and home relationship, consequently breaking down the aforementioned barriers. This model was recommended for teachers, particularly those who work with children with disabilities. However, this model provides excellent insight into the enablers of partnership for all educationalists due to it being derived from “the large body of research on parent-educator relationships [which were used] to discover and define the seven principles of a partnership” (Turnbull et al., 2011, p.137). The authors also provide applicable exemplars on how to implement these basic principles.

In the Turnbull et al. (2011) model, communication is the first key factor. The communicative strategies suggested include being friendly, listening, being clear and honest, and providing and coordinating information. Professional competence is the second principle and involves teachers’ imparting a quality education to their students, continuing on their own learning journey, and having high expectations of their students. The third principle is respect and the authors posit that this requires teachers to honour cultural diversity, affirm the strengths of their students and to treat both students and families with dignity. Trust is the central principle and calls for teachers to be reliable, use sound judgement, maintain confidentiality, and also trust themselves. The principle of commitment calls on teachers to be sensitive to the emotional needs of their students, to be available and accessible, and to go above and beyond their job requirements. The sixth principle is equality and this emphasises empowering parents and providing them with options. The last principle is advocacy,

which encourages teachers to broaden alliances with the wider community, to pinpoint and document any problems, and to be involved and primed for any injustices students or their families may face. In their model, Turnbull et al. provide some fundamental guidance to teachers regarding how to break down barriers and foster constructive relationships between the home and school.

**School leadership.** Ho (2009) investigated how school leadership influences PI through examining a series of ethnographic case studies from three schools in Hong Kong. In total 68 interviews were conducted with three principals, 18 teachers, 18 involved parents (defined as either members of the PTA or active volunteers), and 29 non-involved parents. Three major findings were identified: firstly that the construct of PI is complex, multi-faceted, multi-layered, and differentially interpreted by parents, teachers and principals. Secondly, diverse opinions were expressed regarding the relative merits of PI by both principals and teachers. For example, the principal of School C considered PI to be foundational to his school's advancement. In contrast, the principal of School A viewed PI as peripheral to the function of the school. The third finding from Ho was that varying types of leadership directly impacted on the home-school relationship. The author surmised that there were three forms of school leadership: bureaucratic, utilitarian and communitarian.

The bureaucratic leadership-type involved a principal who considered school administration the purview of professional educators and that it was therefore inappropriate for parents to be involved in school governance. Ho (2009) posited that this resulted in an alienating home-school relationship and a rigid division of labour with teachers responsible for school matters and parents for home. The principal categorised as adhering to a utilitarian ideology was perceived as agreeing with the concept of PI as it provided extra human resources, however only in a supportive way

due to parents supposed inexperience with educational and administrative matters. Mrs C. (parent from School B) reported that there were no channels of communication at the school for exchanging ideas with teachers about what their children were doing at home and at school. Principal C embodied what Ho described as communitarian ideology, where parents were considered co-owners of the school and enduring, trusting relationships between home and school were promoted. In this school, parents reported feeling empowered and mutual trust was fostered. Ho also found that the principals' perspective of PI affected teachers' views. It may be concluded from this research that the way in which a school principal approaches PI can play a fundamental role in either creating barriers in the home-school relationship or conversely, breaking them down, for both parents and staff.

Horvat, Curci and Partlow (2010) also examined the role of the principal in fostering PI over a thirty-year period in one school. This historical case study was conducted retrospectively at a K-8 school (students aged between four and fourteen years old) in the Northeast of the USA. Overall thirty-two interviews were conducted with former and current parents, former and current teachers, students and the three principals who occupied that role during the set time frame. In the research each time period was given a descriptive label. The years between 1974 and 1989 were labelled as *Discipline, desegregation, and parent-initiated partnership*. The principal from this time was quoted as saying, “[the parents] were really supportive. But the thing is, they wanted to run the school. And I made it clear to them that, ‘you’re not running the school. I’m in charge’” (Horvat et al., 2010, p. 714). This principal considered part of his role was limiting PI, instead of viewing parents as collaborators. The second time frame was between 1989 and 1993 and labelled, *Instructional leadership and collaborative vision of possibilities*. A parent recalled from this time that “[the

principal] made an effort to inquire of the parents what did we need to do to keep you here? And so that was when they introduced Spanish as a language...” (Horvat et al., 2010, p. 717). Another parent noted that this principal was a “little more sophisticated and not so controlling [as the previous]. I got very involved in the school under her leadership and became part of the team....[The principal was like], ‘let’s look at the skill set in our parents. And let’s welcome all these contributions in various ways’...There was a value on community...and a real sense that we can’t do it alone, that we need these partnerships. Partnerships with parents, with institutions...” (Horvat et al., 2010, p. 717).

The final time frame for Horvat et al.’s (2010) research went from 1993 to 2006 and was labelled *Sustaining change and managing partnership*. The authors described the principal from this time period as using his collaboration with parents as source of power for his leadership. One parent was quoted as saying, “ [he] would help us rally to get the parents together for things we didn’t like in the school district” (Horvat et al., 2010, p. 719), a reciprocal approach to PI. This retrospective case analysis reveals that a principal can strongly influence parent’s motivation for involvement. The authors conclude that parent and community engagement will be more effective if educational leaders acknowledge the power of parents and facilitate their contribution in the school setting.

**Teacher-parent relationship.** Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003) conducted a meta-analysis on a range of possible obstacles involved in the implementation of systematic and meaningful PI in schools. The analysis showed that barriers primarily related to teacher factors including teachers who did not value PI, teachers who had preconceived ideas about parent competencies and skills, and teachers that were not allocated time, support or training for parental engagement.



Additional obstacles cited referred to parental factors, such as parents who lack the desire and/or confidence to become involved, and the additional uncertainty about their role during high school. Other areas of concern were home and school scheduling conflicts, differing beliefs about how parents should be involved and subsequent opportunities for involvement.

The premise of a paper published by Griego Jones (2003) was that minority parents were an untapped source of knowledge that teachers should utilise. The author interviewed 34 parent leaders from a predominantly Mexican American school district. Questions were oriented in order to elicit information about what parents believed new teachers needed to know about their children and the families' current sociocultural context. Three main themes were identified: firstly that teachers need to learn and immerse themselves in the local culture and language. One parent commented, "...I find that over here, there's more culture. When you go to the other schools, its like, you're Mexican? So what? You forget that. Now you're in a different realm. I love it here" (Griego Jones, 2003, p. 83). The importance of teachers' understanding the child's language also emerged as an important objective. Parents from one bilingual school were very pleased with the school and noted that teachers who communicated with parents made them feel welcome and empowered. Another parent described the language unit and community, "We have a very close-knit bilingual unit here...and so people come back here" (Griego Jones, 2003, p. 83).

From the research by Griego Jones (2003), the second theme that emerged was that teachers must understand and value the children as individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses. One mother stated passionately, "...don't pre-judge these kids because they're from the south side...be aware that every child is unique and every child does have the potential" (Griego Jones, 2003, p. 84-85). The author noted

that for the parents interviewed it appeared that having teachers establish and maintain personal relationships was extremely important. The final theme related to how teachers treated minority children. The parents' perception was that teachers had low expectations of their children. One parent pointed out, "I have a son that is very intelligent in math. He had a teacher that never challenged him..." (Griego Jones, 2003, p. 86). This mother felt the teacher ignored her son and that his abilities were not fostered. From these interviews, Griego Jones recommended that teacher-training programmes include field experience regarding teaching diverse students and follow up discussions with parents about cultural and linguistic differences. Additionally the author suggested that teacher training programmes should have learning units on how to engage with parents in a concrete and meaningful way.

Shockley, Michalove and Allen (1995) detailed what they learnt about creating extended literacy communities between teachers and parents in Georgia, in the USA. They viewed reading and writing as tools to connect home and school. A range of strategies were employed that created a parallel process between home and school and also emphasised families as an invaluable resource and fund of knowledge. Some examples were oral and written family stories, home reading journals, and learning albums with parent, teacher and child reflections. The authors emphasised that programmes are implemented, but partnerships evolve. They identified several key aspects of this development process. These included a clear focus on relationships, in particular meaningful relationships, bidirectional dialogues, and mutual respect between parent and teacher, teacher and child, and child and parent. Home visits were also recommended as they provide "rich and invaluable experiences" (Shockley et al., 1995, p. 7). The authors concluded that there is no absolute way of developing a partnership, but that it is a constant negotiation. However, they cited the following

core values as necessities for any productive school-home partnership: respect, belief in family knowledge, caring, creating trust, shared goals, and genuine, regular dialogue.

Lawson (2003) investigated the perceptions of both parents and teachers regarding the meaning and function of PI. The author suggested that decreased levels of PI in low-income school communities could point to the complex sociocultural and political factors that exist for these families. Over a period of two years, semi-structured ethnographic interviews were conducted with twelve teachers and thirteen African-American parents of low SES, living in a Midwestern city in the USA. Five key themes were identified in the parents' narratives. Theme one was defined as *blocked pathways* where PI was actualized by parents as a desperate struggle for the children's lives and their futures. A candid and rather discouraging quote summarises the situation for one parent,

You know keeping the kids off of the street corner. That's our job, you know, taking care of business and making sure they have the opportunity to go to school each day. Cause with no clothes or if they wind up in trouble with the system, then school ain't a possibility for them. So, I'm not going to worry about the school when I got these other things, you know? (Lawson, 2003, p. 91-92)

The theme *changing times* was conceptualised through several parents' concerns about the community coming "apart at the seams" due to violence and drug use (Lawson, 2003, p. 92). One parent noted sadly, "Cause there's not enough love in the school, and a lot of time I think that the school think that there's not enough love in the children's lives" (Lawson, 2003, p. 96). Parents also believed that the changing community led teachers to treat their children as objects that needed to be controlled,

“Like how some of the teachers...talk to the children...all I hear is teachers screaming at the kids” (Lawson, 2003, p. 95). Subsequently the theme of home-school communication was also identified as essential. One parent suggested, “You know, if we could get parents and teachers together, on the same page, working together, that would help” (Lawson, 2003, p. 96). Another parent also stated that, “Schools need to be there. And to listen...parents here have got stories to tell, and experiences to share...they need to be heard, and schools need to listen” (Lawson, 2003, p. 97).

The fourth theme Lawson (2003) differentiated was the parents’ lack of trust in their children’s schooling. One parent remarked, “It all comes down to a parent teacher thing. Cos most parents that I know can’t get along with their child’s teacher” (Lawson, 2003, p. 100). Ultimately, many parents believed that the best possible means for eradicating the community’s destructive cycles of adversity was for parents and teachers to work together so that the school can become a community-serving institution. As one parent stated, “we have to bring the school and this community together if anything ever gonna [sic] change. Teachers have to go to the home. Parents have to go to the school. Teachers, parents, and children got to [sic] learn together” (Lawson, 2003, p. 103). The author recommends that further analysis and clarification is needed regarding what PI represents for both parents and teachers, especially for those in elementary schools (children aged five to twelve years) that are challenged by poverty and where parents are not engaging in school-centric activities.

Mapp (2003) also examined the factors that promote successful partnerships between home and school. Eighteen parents from an elementary school in Boston, Massachusetts were interviewed. The school population was culturally diverse with an estimated 90 percent parent involvement rate. Mapp posited that the strong family partnerships and urban, low socioeconomic setting offered a unique context for the

study due to the *hard to reach* label often being attached to these communities. The history of involvement began in 1989 when a family involvement committee was established. In 1990 a city policy allowed for a council system of governance to be set up. This school adopted the policy and subsequently seven parents and seven teachers, plus the principal, formed the council and met every month to deal with teaching and learning issues at the school. Due to extra allocation of funds, in 1991 a Family Outreach Team was also created with a focus on developing relationships with parents who rarely made contact, through starting home visitations. Additionally a Family Centre was opened as a space for families to meet informally and have a cup of tea within the school grounds.

In-depth interviews were conducted between 1996 and 1998 and five major themes were identified (Mapp, 2003). The first three themes focussed on why and how parents were involved: parents wanted their children to do well in school; parents understood that their involvement assisted in this; and parents were involved in both home and school in a multitude of ways. Of particular relevance for this current research were the final two themes. Theme four identified that social factors emanating from the parents' own experiences impacted on their participation. These included the parents' own experiences at school with one parent remarking, "I didn't have a very good attitude about [school]. I felt like, 'Get over and get out,' and that's what I did. I'm going to make things different for my kids" (Mapp, 2003, p. 50). External constraints also contributed to this theme. Work schedules, lack of transportation and childcare were all mentioned as barriers to involvement. One parent was clearly frustrated she could not be involved, "I used to go to the school when they had shows...I like to go, but have stopped because I am working...I was always going up to the school. Oh my, I miss it so much" (Mapp, 2003, p. 55).

The final outcome identified as having a significant impact on PI by Mapp (2003), was the development of trusting, caring relationships between home and school. These were differentiated into three areas: welcoming, honouring, and connecting. The process of welcoming purportedly created a sense of belonging. One parent commented on how the school PI practices built a sense of community and contributed to their desire to become involved,

When your child first starts the school, they have other parents call up and welcome you to the school. That's really nice. Then they have a new parent breakfast, which they have every year...That started the interest for me, to see how involved everyone was. (Mapp, 2003, p. 56)

The second sub-theme of honouring was demonstrated through schools respecting and recognising parents, identifying their strengths, and ultimately treating them as partners. A parent stated, "I chose [this school] because it was clearly the only public school available to me where parents got any respect and counted, and where teachers and parents and kids really worked together in a genuine way" (Mapp, 2003, p. 57). Connecting was the third sub-theme and was associated with parents feeling involved in their child's learning and observing that staff really cared for their child's welfare and had high expectations for them. The following two quotes provide excellent insight into the importance of this for parents, "I knew [the staff] were paying attention to my son, that they knew my son. That made me feel good. They knew what his strengths and weaknesses were" (Mapp, 2003, p. 58). "The closeness the teachers seem to have with my children makes me want to be more involved in their lives" (Mapp, 2003, p. 58). The author specified that the students at this school had shown an increase in academic attainment and the school was clearly determined to support parental involvement. This research provides further evidence

regarding the importance of fostering collaborative, trusting relationships between home and school and how this can be undertaken with much success.

**Opportunities provided for involvement.** Mawjee and Grieshop (2002) tested specific aspects of the aforementioned Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1997) in their participatory research involving a case study of one K-6 school (kindergarten to approximately twelve years old) situated in a rural city in California, USA. The aim of this study was to address the ambiguity regarding parents' decisions for involvement, their role construction, general opportunities for involvement, parents' preference for involvement, and the schools and teachers' explicit invitations for involvement. There were two PI interventions implemented. The first was a mobile parent newsletter box that contained a parent newsletter, monthly event fliers and comment forms in English and Spanish. This was an unsuccessful strategy with little interest shown by parents or staff. The authors hypothesised this may have been due to the information not fulfilling a unique function or that written communication was not the most effective method of engaging parents. The second intervention was a school-wide world map project. This involved sending a tri-lingual newsletter home in English, Spanish and Urdu that requested students and families to complete information about both the child and parent's birth city, state and country, and also where their ancestors had lived. This strategy was much more successful, possibly due to the cultural connectivity or accessibility due to the use of three languages.

Eleven parents were interviewed for the Mawjee and Grieshop (2002) research. Many of the parents commented that the after-school programme that was running was good, in particular one parent liked that university students helped out because it created role models. Regarding a bilingual programme, one parent mentioned they liked it because their child seemed to be competent in both Spanish and English.

Another parent was worried that when her child was put in an all-English programme, her Spanish proficiency would be weakened. The majority of the parents mentioned a recent cultural celebration that the school put on and seemed pleased with the school for reinforcing the importance of their culture. The authors state that “the family tends to be the most important mediating agency for all other educative institutions, including the schools” (Mawjee & Grieshop, 2002, p. 118), and conclude that parents can and will decide when to be involved and that invitations for involvement must be valuable and opportune. Consequently, they argued that for PI to be successful, schools must develop appropriate, collaborative participation strategies with parents, allowing for both cultural and language factors.

Delgado-Gaitan (1991) conducted a four-year study in southern California. The research consisted of utilising specific culturally responsive PI activities in order to encourage Spanish-speaking parents to contribute more fully in their child’s schooling. Two nonconventional activities were examined: the Bilingual Preschool Programme and the Migrant Programme; both had a PI component. The Migrant programme involved approximately 100 parents who had a face-to-face meeting with the director approximately every two months about upcoming activities. The meetings were then scheduled in the evening and typically involved lectures on child-related topics. The author identified that parent-teaching meetings were important for providing information about learning but they were unsuitable for educating parents on how the school operates or the skills they need to teach their child at home. This programme was not so well attended, possibly due to the lecture style of presentation. In comparison, the Preschool Programme was more successful and had additional participants. It emphasised mutual cooperation and Spanish was spoken. However, neither of these strategies truly met the needs of the Latino parents at this school.



Subsequently the parents organized COPLA (Comite de Padres Latinos/Committee for Latin Parents). The purpose of the group was to learn about the school system and the rights and responsibilities of parents, as well as provide a support network for each other. Through a process of collective critical reflection, the parents shared their own experiences and helped others. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) appropriately noted that,

Schools facilitate the exclusion of students and parents by (consciously or unconsciously) establishing activities that require specific majority culturally based knowledge and behaviours about the school as an institution...where sociocultural congruency exists between home and school settings, children have a greater chance of succeeding in school. (1991, p. 21)

The establishment of COPLA, a specific programme that validated the parents' social and cultural experiences, created a balance of knowledge and power. Consequently better cooperation between the home and school was developed and eventually, Latino parents gained access to school activities.

Williams and Sanchez (2011) investigated the barriers to involvement for parents as part of bigger study on the conceptualization of PI. The research was conducted in a large randomly selected urban high school in the Midwest, USA. Ninety-eight percent of this population were African-American and 92 percent were from low-income families. Twenty-five participants were interviewed, including parents, grandparents, and school personnel. After analysis, four themes emerged from the data. The first significant barrier identified by parents was time poverty with most referring to employment as the main obstacle to their involvement. A parent explained, "I know parents are working two and three jobs because the economy is so bad" (Williams & Sanchez, 2011, p. 62). The harsh realities of poverty, such as substance abuse problems were also referenced. Twenty parents cited a lack of access

to the school as a difficulty, this included the physical structure as well as the scheduling of school events and meetings. One parent noted, “When they have their teacher’s meeting...it’s always during the day. Well I work in the daytime so it’s not like I don’t want to partake. I just can’t miss work. I’m [my children’s] sole support” (Williams & Sanchez, 2011, p. 65). A lack of financial resources and awareness were also referenced as making some parents feel uninvited. “Well if I can’t afford to pay the fee for my child to come to school, am I going to be open to come and participate and be involved? No, because I’m gonna feel like I’m already at a disadvantage” (Williams & Sanchez, 2011, p. 64). The heavy reliance on using the students to communicate with parents was acknowledged as having a significant role to play in information not being relayed home.

Despite the considerable barriers to PI mentioned above, Williams and Sanchez (2011) suggested three themes with strategies for decreasing the barriers between the home and school. Nearly all participants felt strongly that providing parents with opportunities to participate was integral to fostering PI. Parents also thought school personnel needed to be considerate of the context of family life, including childcare options. “That is my main issue with the school, having flexibility with families...You didn’t ask us. You just told us. How did you know everyone was able to come that day?” (Williams & Sanchez, 2011, p. 66). Additionally effective and diverse communication was discussed so that involvement is easier, as one parent explained, “...sometimes I’m not able to drop, stop and run up to the school but if I could email...” (Williams & Sanchez, 2011, p. 67). This research substantiates the previous findings regarding the importance of home-school communication and an awareness of the family context. Furthermore it adds the body of literature regarding

the value of providing specific opportunities for parents to engage, therefore increasing the likelihood of their involvement.

**School policy.** *Beyond the Bake Sale* is considered an essential text that provides a range of resources for building strong collaborative home and school relationships. In it, Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies (2007) recommend that schools need to ask several questions when formulating a family involvement policy. These should include: in what ways teachers will be expected to communicate with families; how the school will build personal relationships; how will the school honour families' contributions and build on their strengths; how will the school help and support families to do what's expected? The authors go on to suggest that practices included in the policy should focus on being family-friendly through having staff that are warm, helpful and responsive to families from all backgrounds. Furthermore there should be a range of opportunities for involvement, a bridging of cultural differences through understanding families' home cultures, and identification of families' strengths and assets.

When working with families from different cultural backgrounds, Henderson et al. (2007) suggested a range of key concepts centred on developing a school's cultural competence. The authors emphasised working with other community groups as cultural brokers in order to further support families and to directly address any language barriers. In order to deal with possible cultural tensions several strategies were recommended: using the power of the school to promote open dialogue and positive relationships; taking discussions of culture into the classroom; and raising the expectations of both parents and teachers. Additionally, the authors recommend that schools respond to any unequal resources through offering after-school programmes

and work shops, reaching out and visiting the home, and offering transportation and childcare.

Henderson et al. (2007) reiterated that fostering PI in schools must be a priority. They suggest that the role of family involvement co-ordinator should be created in schools. This position should have a clear job description and they identify seven major tasks: assist the school in developing a family-friendly climate; design programs and activities that engage families; support staff in developing strong partnerships with families; create and implement effective family involvement strategies; be involved in opportunities for professional development; participate in district activities and other programmes for families; and help to recruit partners for a district family involvement programme. The authors identified that the skills required for this position are to understand cultural backgrounds of families; to think and act in ways that respect cultural diversity; to communicate successfully with staff, families, and students; to be experienced in collaborative leadership; to be an advocate of children and parents, and to have strong interpersonal and organisational skills. Through finding a person that can fulfil this position and developing a partnership school, namely one that builds relationship, links families with learning, addresses differences, supports parents, and shares power, Henderson et al. strongly believe that the benefits are remarkably far reaching.

Davis (2000) also published recommendations for schools regarding formulating a comprehensive policy for parents, family and community involvement. The author recommends that the first step is to assemble a team that is composed of parents who are representative of the school population, along with community members, the principal, teachers, other suitable staff and students (where appropriate). A key component of the partnership plan suggested in the document is to encourage

positive parenting skills. The potential issues posited by the author include parents who may be resistant, a lack of funding, reaching all parents, and acknowledging and embracing all cultures. Strategies recommended include surveying parents regarding what they think would be most helpful, consultation about communication modes, establishing home visiting programmes, and offering a space at the school. The second important component of the plan was to enhance home-school communication through providing frequent and positive communication, conveying that the school is a welcoming and caring place, and devoting funds to compensate for teachers' time spent making home visits. Further ideas for the policy included hiring a volunteer coordinator, inviting parents into the school for lunches, asking for parents input on assignments and through using community collaboration, improving outreach to families and continuing to evaluate progress and identify obstacles.

**Parental demographics.** Hill et al. (2004) conducted longitudinal research on a range of factors pertaining to PI, including the role of parental education. A pool of 463 families were part of a larger ongoing study conducted in Tennessee and Indiana. Interviews were conducted and three indicators of SES recorded: parent education, family income, and occupational status. To measure parent academic involvement, teachers completed the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire, adolescents answered eight items regarding PI and Mothers were asked two questions. At this time, students were in the seventh grade and also responded to two items about eleventh grade expectations and aspirations. Teachers reported on problem behaviours using the Child Behaviour Checklist, and information on academic achievement was obtained from school records. The results from the structural equation modelling demonstrated that the data fitted the hypothesised model for the full sample. Of particular relevance is that parent academic involvement when

students were in the seventh grade was negatively associated with eighth grade behaviour problems ( $\beta = -.29$ ) and positively related to eleventh grade aspirations ( $\beta = .37$ ). Regarding SES, a strong positive coefficient was found with grade six achievement ( $\beta = .61$ ), and grade seven PI ( $\beta = .74$ ). Of interest was that the results showed lower parent education increased adolescent aspirations and higher levels of education were associated with fewer problem behaviours in eighth grade.

Vera et al. (2012) completed research into the specific PI barriers for 239 parents living in a Midwestern metropolitan area in the USA. The parents represented 28 diverse cultural backgrounds and all children were English learners. Participants completed a 31-item survey adapted from the Family Involvement Questionnaire with additional questions that screened for potential barriers. For this sample the most often cited barrier was language. Parents' negative school experiences were also specified as an obstacle and several parents referred to feeling overwhelmed by their responsibilities. The authors further developed this area of enquiry through analysing which demographic factors, such as ethnic background, level of formal education, and occupational status significantly impacted on barriers, aspirations, and types of involvement. Correlation coefficients were calculated between the main predictors of involvement, the dependent variables and types of involvement. Of note was that perceptions of the school's climate towards PI were significantly associated with communication with teachers ( $r = .209, p < .01$ ) and parents' own negative experiences with the school ( $r = -.196, p < .05$ ). ANOVA was then conducted to ascertain how the demographic variables were related to scores on the questionnaire. The findings demonstrated that educational status was significantly related to reading with one's child ( $F(6, 221) = 3.23, p < .05$ ), and using community resources ( $F(6, 216) = 7.38, p < .001$ ). Work status was also found to interact significantly with talking to one's

child about school ( $F(1, 205) = 4.18, p < .01$ ). This study provides further information regarding the barriers that exist for families of diverse cultural background and how family demographics may contribute to engagement difficulties.

**Income/SES.** Hartas (2011) used data from the Millennium Cohort Study, a UK longitudinal birth cohort study. Three main topics guided this research: the differences between parents involved in home learning prior to their child's third birthday and after they start school at age five, as a function of SES; the effects of SES and frequency of home learning on later language and literacy; and the association between family income and maternal education on children's language skills and social-emotional competence. Face to face interviews were conducted and teachers rated student performance at the end of their first year at school, which contributed to the child's Foundation Stage Profile (FSP). ANOVA results showed main and interaction effects regarding the child's learning at age three and five years and SES factors on both the FSP of personal, social and emotional development (PSE) and communication, language and literacy (CLL). Significant SES main effects were found for both FSP CLL and PSE. Children living below the poverty line were rated significantly lower in CLL ( $d = .57$ ) and PSE ( $d = .45$ ) than their wealthier peers. Additionally children with higher educated mothers did significantly better than their peers on the CLL measure ( $d = 1.08$ ). The findings of this study indicate that SES can impact on a child's language and literacy outcomes. Mothers with limited education were also less likely to engage in their child's learning, particularly reading. Some of the researcher's recommendations include that PI interventions need to start focussing on family strengths and support mothers who had less access to learning opportunities.

Hill (2001) investigated the school readiness and socialization of African-American and Euro-American kindergarten children. The author specifically targeted the possible interaction effects of the moderating variables of family income and ethnicity. The focus of this study was to investigate whether various types of parental behaviour, expectations and PI practices were generalizable between the two ethnicities and family income. A total of 49 Euro-Americans and 54 African-Americans were interviewed. The Metropolitan Readiness Test Level two was utilised to measure the child's school readiness using two subscales: sound-letter correspondence and the quantitative concepts scale. Parenting practices were assessed using the Children's Report of Parenting Behaviours Inventory. Both mothers and teachers answered the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire and parental expectations were measured using three questions designed for this study. Results were presented visually and ethnic differences were clearly observable. Family income was also identified as moderating the interaction between some parenting behaviours and pre-reading abilities and the relationship was stronger for the lower income group. Therefore it may be suggested that PI can buffer the effect of some factors associated with low-income status.

**Culture and PI.** Hill and Taylor (2004) acknowledged that parent-school relationships occur in community and cultural contexts, not in isolation. Many of the previous studies also considered culture and ethnicity in their sample populations. However, as Banerjee et al. stated, "although there is literature suggesting that certain types of racial/ethnic socialization are related to some types of PI, more research is needed in this area" (2011, p. 596). The following studies examine not only the interaction of culture and language on PI, but also the importance of fostering cultural capital for those who are disenfranchised by the ethnic majority.



Jeynes (2003) re-emphasises the importance of PI as a mechanism for influencing the academic outcomes of youth from a range of ethnicities. This meta-analysis involved 21 studies and a total of 12,000 students. Six different racial groups were analysed: mostly/all African-American, mostly/all Asian-American, mostly/all Latino and Asian-Americans. The effect size for general PI was calculated for all ethnic groups and was significant: for mostly African-American ( $d = .44, p < .01$ ); all African-America ( $d = .48, p < .01$ ); all Latino and Asian ( $d = .48, p < .05$ ) and mostly Latino and Asian ( $d = .43, p < .05$ ). The strongest ES was ( $d = .62, p < .0001$ ) for the mostly African-American group on other measures. Jeynes also differentially analysed specific types of PI. Again the strongest result was for the African-American groups ( $d = .72, p < .0001$ ), for parental involvement in homework. The question that emerges from this research is why African-Americans appear to benefit the most from PI, whereas Asian-Americans benefitted the least? However, this analysis did not measure the actual amount of PI that took place, but the effect on children when it does. It is apparent from this meta-analysis that it is important to foster PI and that the role of PI may be approached differently for particular ethnicities.

Banerjee et al. (2011) conducted research into whether racial socialization (specifically cultural knowledge and ethnic pride), and PI impacted on children's cognitive outcomes. Between the ages of eight and eleven years, 92 African-American child-parent dyads completed surveys and other measures. This was part of a much larger National Institute for Child and Health and Human Development Study on Early Child Care and Youth Development. The authors employed hierarchical multiple regression to investigate the interactions between parents' report of ethnic socialization and PI on child's cognitive and academic ability in grade five. Of note

was that cultural exposure significantly predicted cognitive achievement in passage comprehension ( $B = 3.29$ ;  $SE = 1.04$ ,  $\beta = .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally a clear interaction was evident between PI, cultural exposure and a child's comprehension, with increased PI and higher cultural exposures having the best comprehension outcome. Cultural socialization was also positively related to academic outcomes. Therefore the authors concluded that their results support the hypothesis that different dimensions of ethnic socialization may positively interact with PI and improve a range of outcomes for learners.

Orozco (2008) published an interesting qualitative study that used archival radio material to examine the perceptions of low-income immigrant Latino parents regarding PI. Eighteen parents contributed to a live call-in show on the national Latino radio network. The author notes that unfortunately schools do not always value low-income Latino parents and often considers those parents as inexperienced on their children's education. Subsequently Latino culture or language is not incorporated into the school ethos. A parent talked of the importance of experiencing two languages and how fundamental it is to their culture, "It is important to us that our kids learn Spanish...it is very important that they not lose the language or our culture" (Orozco, 2008, p. 30). From this research, one of the key recommendations for educators is that they set aside preconceived ideas about parents not having anything to contribute to their child's education. The authors conclude that parents are knowledgeable and involvement is a two-way process; "regardless of class, ethnicity, gender, race... [all parents] have a rich culture – including history, language, and traditions – that deserves to be honoured, respected and cultivated" (Orozco, 2008, p. 34).

Finders and Lewis (1994) provide further edification into the conflicts between the views of Latino parents and teachers pertaining to PI. The researchers spoke to parents from two low-income neighbourhoods in the USA. They noted that educators don't often consider how a parent's own educational experience may impact on the school relationship. As one father truthfully admitted,

They expect me to go to school so they can tell me my kid is stupid or crazy.

They have been telling me that for three years...See I've been there. I know.

And it scares me. They called me a boy in trouble but I was a troubled boy...I

dropped out nine times. They wanted me gone. (Finders & Lewis, 1994, p. 51)

This father's negative educational experience has clearly created mistrust in the schooling system. The authors refer to many parents whose own personal experiences have resulted in obstacles to their involvement. Time constraints were also frequently mentioned as a primary barrier to engagement. One mother was unmistakably frustrated, "Teachers just don't understand that I can't come to school at just any old time...[and] we don't have a car right now" (Finders & Lewis, 1994, p. 51). Another major barrier cited was financial concerns with one mother angrily stating, "I do not understand why they assume that everybody has tons of money, and every time I turn around it's more money for this and more for that" (Finders & Lewis, 1994, p. 52).

The recommendations from these parents on how to engage parents included clarifying how parents can help, developing trust, building on the home experience, and using parental expertise. These suggestions require educators to re-examine their assumptions about PI for those from culturally diverse backgrounds. The authors emphasise the importance of cultural capital, where parents are identified as partners and contributors of skills and knowledge to their child's education.

Flett and Conderman (2001) also provided a collection of recommendations for school personnel concerning the improvement of parental engagement for those who have culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A clear emphasis in the document is on the acquisition of cultural knowledge, for example it was suggested that educators take the time to explore the parents' beliefs and values and to build a trusting relationship through learning about the families' culture. Respect and recognition were key terms cited as necessary for engagement. Practical suggestions included providing parents with multiple means of communication and making contact that is frequent and informal. Flexibility around scheduling formal parent-teacher meetings was also advocated. Regarding learning, linking the classroom curriculum with home-learning activities was put forward as a means of allowing parents to support their child, along with utilising parental expertise.

#### **Research on the Barriers and Enablers to Parent/Whānau Involvement in NZ.**

Findings from the previous international research and literature have clear parallels with the outcomes from NZ research. Both the literature review and the case studies in the aforementioned Bull et al. (2008) study reveal seven themes that were enablers to successful home-school partnership; firstly that the relationship between home and school should be collaborative and mutually respectful. Positive relationships were an essential initial step in establishing collaboration between home and school. Secondly, a range of strategies that were inclusive of the needs of the community were found to promote engagement. Embedding home-school partnerships in school policy and ensuring there are available resources were also important, along with making certain that the partnerships were goal oriented and focussed on learning. The researchers also identified that communication with the school must be timely and genuine. The final key point was that successful home-school partnerships take time

and commitment. The principal was also recognised by teachers, parents and often students as a fundamental figure in the development of these partnerships. Several other enablers were also briefly cited including: smaller schools, outreach workers (people with expertise or status in the community who act as intermediaries), younger aged students, and having a wide range of school-initiated communication. Bull et al. also investigated the specific barriers to PI in New Zealand. These included teachers' attitudes and older students.

In 2004, the Maxim Institute commissioned a report titled, *A Snapshot of what Parents Think of Schooling in New Zealand* (Henderson & Shamy, 2004). The research involved eight discussion groups with five to six parents and eight in-depth interviews. A range of groups was specified from low and high-decile primary schools to low and high-decile high schools. Three main areas were focussed on: decision factors for parents considering schooling for their children; areas of schooling, which concerns parents; and parents' reflections on how the education system is run. Of particular note regarding the decision factors was the school's customer service ethic, involving parents. Nicholas stated that when looking at schools, communication was key, "especially for communication between the parents and the school. If there is a problem and they are onto it quick we are happy with that, that is what we want" (Henderson & Shamy, 2004, p. 31).

The final section of the report was centred on the role parents think they should have in education and focuses on parental authority or lack of authority in schooling (Henderson & Shamy, 2004). Some parents considered the role of the principal as essential to the success of the school, "The principal is the one who should be setting the tone, you know" (Henderson & Shamy, 2004, p. 106). But most importantly parents noted that they felt they had an essential role to play in their child's education.

Jennifer stated succinctly, “It all starts at home” (Henderson & Shamy, 2004, p. 108). Leah also noted that “principals, teachers, with the parents’ input” would run her ideal school (Henderson & Shamy, 2004, p. 120). However, some parents felt they were discouraged to participate in the school, “I have the skills they could use, and they haven’t taken a thing. Too threatened, I think” commented one parent (Henderson & Shamy, 2004, p. 122). Deborah also observed that “there is less communication with parents at high school” (Henderson & Shamy, 2004, p. 123). In summary this report found that parents were committed to their child’s schooling but they had concerns over the alienation of their position in high school. As part of establishing their responsibilities and involvement, parents sought policies that acknowledged their essential role in their child’s education.

A significant report conducted by the Education Review Office (ERO), titled *Partners in Learning*, provides invaluable evidence and support for the improvement of PI in New Zealand. The researchers specified three key areas of interest, which were published as separate reports: School’s engagement with parents, whānau and communities (2008a), Good practice (2008b), and Parents’ Voices (2008c). Two hundred and thirty three NZ schools were used as evaluation sites, including both primary and secondary schools. The following four data gathering strategies were employed: meetings with school personnel, parents and students; in-class observations and analysis of school documentation; written questionnaires completed by 500 parents; and 34 discussion groups attended by 235 parents from Māori, Pasifika, special needs, refugee, migrant, remote, and transient families. Furthermore, 54 schools were used as case studies. Overall 4000 parents were involved through school-based meetings or individual face-to-face, phone or email interviews. Key findings indicated that, “Effective partnerships between parents, whānau and families,

communities and schools lead to improved educational, social and behavioral outcomes” (ERO 2008a, p. 5). However, nearly three quarters of the schools examined had ERO reports that included recommendations for improving PI.

Six themes were isolated that were considered crucial to effective engagement: leadership, relationships, school culture, partnerships, community networks, and communication (ERO 2008a). The researchers found that often principals had the greatest impact, especially when they worked in a collaborative and consultative manner. Schools labelled *successful* also invested time and energy in engaging with parents and the wider community in order to establish and promote partnerships that benefitted their students. A school culture that provided opportunities for cultural practices and demonstrated genuine openness to parents and the community also fostered students’ achievement. Finally a key component of a successful school was meaningful communication with a range of strategies. It was noted that some schools with the most diverse communities had some of the best successful practices for engaging families. The strategies they used built relationships, broke down barriers and gave parents confidence to become involved in their child’s learning (ERO, 2008a).

Parents’ Voices (ERO, 2008c) cited a range of factors that Māori parents reported hindered their engagement. Teachers who had negative or deficit views of their child were a particular issue for some parents. Additionally not having time at report interviews and subsequently not being informed about their child’s difficulties were also recorded as a parental concern. Another barrier to engagement was that school policies and procedures were unavailable, particularly around raising any issues, as demonstrated in this quote, “There is a terrible lack of communication between staff and parents at this school. I feel uncomfortable asking questions as I

am made to feel like I am just being awkward...” (Parent of year three student, ERO, 2008a, p. 48). Parents also reported frustration at schools that did not respond to issues either appropriately or in a timely manner and felt this essentially resulted in a break down in relationships. “I don’t feel informed at all! I drop my child at school and usually the teachers aren’t in the room, and if they are they are not welcoming” (Parent of year five student, ERO 2008a, p. 43). Māori parents’ own negative experiences at school were identified as a challenge and increased the difficulties for getting involved in their child’s learning. Additional barriers reported to ERO included work commitments, and not having time to go on school trips, as well as not having money to support activities such as camps. Most parents interviewed by ERO for the 2008 report were keen to be involved in their children’s schools, however the aforementioned barriers resulted in some reticence. Additional responses from Māori parents included a desire to have their culture and values recognised, and an appreciation of teachers who related well to their children, and respected and acknowledged their cultural identity.

Jefferies (1998) conducted important research into the barriers that prevent Māori student participation in Tertiary education. This investigation was undertaken in response to a request by Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry for Māori Development. Interviews were conducted with 66 Māori Tertiary respondents, 72 Māori second chance respondents, 38 secondary school teachers and 18 tertiary providers. Three successful community hui were also held. Barriers to academic success that were identified included poor relationships with teachers and teachers with low expectations and poor cultural recognition. “I think our teachers have to learn about multicultural stuff and value each kid. I think teachers are a key and they need some kind of training” (Jefferies, 1998, p. 136). A wide range of negative influences in the



home environment were also cited, including poverty and abuse, “...Your parents always telling you you’re dumb or something. Those could be looked at as a foundation. If there’s nothing working there, then how can you expect to overcome that?” (Jefferies, 1998, p. 137). A further obstruction to involvement recognised by participants were schools and institutions that were racist, intimidating, and culturally incompatible. “The institution. The Enrolments. I mean it’s horrific. I think its going outside what you know, that’s scary and for a lot of Māori I think that is scary. If they’ve been within their whānau group and always had that love and support...” (Jefferies, 1998, p. 132). Some of the strategies recommended for overcoming these barriers involved more investigation in to what is actually happening in schools and what constitutes best practice for Māori students. Improving parenting skills through the previously mentioned PAFT and fostering PI were also suggested. Inter-sectoral strategies were proposed in order to support the overall development of Māori children, including the involvement of iwi and other Māori groups.

### **Research on Māori Cultural Practices in NZ Schools**

Qualitative research by McMurchy-Pilkington (2013) examined the responses of 100 adult Māori learners from a range of tertiary foundation programmes. The focus was on what participants considered the optimal factors in their learning environment. A series of superordinate themes were identified in the transcripts centered on the physical, spiritual/emotional, cultural and academic environments. The following quotes highlight the importance placed on whanaugatanga. “She (the teacher) loves us like we’re her own kids. That’s how she treats us” (Traditional Provider student, McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013, p. 443). “We seemed to have built up a relationship between all of us...” (Iwi provider student, McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013, p. 443). Students also reference the importance of tikanga Māori practices. “One of the things

we do before we start our class is a mihi every day and I think that was one of the main things that helped us break down our speaking barriers” (Student, Traditional Provider, McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013, p. 444). Some of the aspects cited as hindering students’ academic success included lack of transport, family matters and financial difficulties. The author summarized that the optimal learning environment for Māori learners appears to be one that is holistic with a strong focus on cultural connectedness. The author also re-emphasises that connections between pedagogy and the home must be made and that difficulties arise when a discontinuity between the culture of the school and home exist.

Gilgen (2012) also found that tikanga Māori practices were important in improving classroom relationships and student behaviour, as well as increasing the overall engagement of Māori students. Gilgen was an insider researcher and together with the 24 students in her class, introduced a weekly hui in order to foster relationships and power share. The author then used retrospective accounts of student behaviour, employing both teacher and student evidence, and conducted interviews. Students described their behaviour at the beginning of the year; “Before we started our class hui it was worse, I was talking back and got stood down or I was sent up to the principal...” (P2, Gilgen, 2012, p. 26); “In the beginning, everyone didn’t really care about anything, they did stuff on the field and they hurt people” (P1, Gilgen, 2012, p. 26). Some participants also mentioned how it felt to be Māori, “Like getting mocked because of who we are...being called ‘hori’” (P2, Gilgen, 2012, p. 27). Gilgen introduced the students to the concept of hui as an opportunity to meet and talk regularly and work through problems collaboratively. An example of the hui minutes; “Two students were identified as ‘swearing too much’ in the classroom so a ‘swearing

jar' was organised to collect fines from any offenders..." (Committee Minutes, 01/04/2009, Gilgen, 2012, p. 29).

Gilgen (2012) held a final focus group four weeks after the end of the school year. Participants noted that the quality of the relationships in the classroom had been improved and their motivation to learn had also increased; "We actually got problems solved that had been problems. It actually brought us together knowing each other's problems, how we could solve them together" (P1, Gilgen, 2012, p. 30). Participants also identified a feeling of belonging, of *whānaugatanga*; "We didn't really want to put our class down..." (P1, Gilgen, 2012, p. 31). Also mentioned were performance-based arts such as *kapa haka*. "Kapa haka showed the other students what Māori are made of" (P4, Gilgen, 2012, p. 31). The author described the introduction of the weekly hui as a transformational process and concluded that a "lack of explicit connections between *te reo* and *tikanga* Māori has exposed cultural assumptions [she] had made as a classroom teacher during 2009...The implications of participants' insights have exposed [Gilgen] to a deeper level of understanding of how *culture counts*..." (Gilgen, 2012, p. 33).

Whitinui (2010) conducted research into the specific role that *kapa haka* has in promoting the social and cultural wellbeing of Māori students. The author views *kapa haka* as an educational imperative for improving Māori schooling success, actualized through increased engagement, better relationships, and improved behaviour, attendance and achievement. For this to happen, Whitinui recommends that *kapa haka* is included as an academic subject, not a cultural add-on, and that time and space is allocated for Māori students to be Māori. Twenty Māori students and 27 teachers were interviewed from four Central North Island secondary schools. Ten key benefits of *kapa haka* were identified through teacher responses including the following:

individual confidence, self-esteem and identity; work ethic and attitude; better attendance; and making better choices, being responsible, participating and contributing positively to life at school and in the community. Students also mentioned that the teaching and learning involved in kapa haka was different to other learning as the teachers, tutors, students and family members were all participating. Whitinui summarises that kapa haka ensures that “whānau are clearly visible in their children’s learning aspirations” (2010, p. 19).

In the educational environment, Bevan-Brown (2005) examined what cultural giftedness means for Māori. According to the author, for Māori, cultural giftedness manifests in many ways such as being excellent in Māori arts, music and traditions, knowledge of whakapapa and aptitude in te reo. Bevan-Brown also described how a culturally responsive school could influence the identification of gifted Māori students and support them. The author suggested a culturally responsive environment for Māori students has several necessary ingredients: teachers who value and support cultural diversity, programmes that incorporate cultural content such as cultural knowledge skills and practices and customs, valuing spirituality, and teaching and assessment that utilises culturally preferred ways of learning. Bevan-Brown stated, “once a particular talent is identified we look for someone within the whānau who can take the child under their wing and nurture that talent” (2005, p. 154).

Rubie, Townsend and Moore (2004) investigated how effective a culturally specific intervention was on a sample of Māori students in comparison to two other student groups. The intervention targeted the improvement of self-esteem and locus of control using culturally relevant ways of teaching. Academic results and motivation were the outcome variables. Participants were 71 children between the ages of seven and ten years and were divided into three groups. The Māori culture

group comprised of 24 children who attended the main school (a decile two Auckland school). Contrast group one had 23 children who were not members of the culture group but also went to the main school. Contrast group two contained 23 children from a different school who did not attend a culture group either. The Coopersmith self-esteem inventory and Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale for children were used to measure the relevant constructs. Progressive achievement tests in reading comprehension, mathematics, listening comprehension and a test of scholastic abilities were utilised to measure the outcome variables. Interviews with caregivers were also conducted.

The intervention in the study by Rubie et al. (2004) involved approximately 50 culturally significant activities being taught including kapa haka, *waiata* (songs), *poi* (twirling of balls on string), and *taiaha* (spears). The use of *karakia* (prayers and blessings), *pōwhiri* (welcome ceremony) and a co-operative learning structure, which embodied a Māori approach to teaching. Live-ins were also held approximately every three weeks over six months. Meals were provided with the assistance of whānau and friends. Administration of the tests took place at the beginning of the school year and approximately 12 months later. Post-intervention follow up was two months after completion.

Rubie et al. (2004) conducted multiple analysis of variance across groups with repeated measures for pre and post intervention. There was significant interaction effects for both self-esteem and locus of control. Self-esteem was notably higher post intervention for the Māori cultural group ( $M = 35.67$ ,  $SD = 6.32$ ) compared with both Contrast one ( $M = 31.79$ ,  $SD = 6.21$ ), and Contrast two ( $M = 33.39$ ,  $SD = 8.74$ ) groups. Externality was also lower for the Māori group ( $M = 16.08$ ,  $SD = 3.65$ ) when contrasted with Group one ( $M = 20.21$ ,  $SD = 4.62$ ), and Group two ( $M = 20.09$ ,  $SD =$

3.86). For academic achievement, again group by time multiple analysis was conducted with only the interaction for scholastic ability resulting in a significant effect. All other achievement tests appeared to show some improvement, with the Māori culture group approximately seven percentile points higher post intervention than pre, while Contrast groups one and two were approximately two to five points lower. From interview data, the opinion of both parents and teachers were positive for those in the cultural group with all 37 noting encouraging changes in the children. One-third cited increased confidence and others noticed improved responsibility, organisation, focus and self-discipline. The findings of this study suggest that an intervention using culturally appropriate practices and teaching can positively impact on children's self-esteem, locus of control and Māori identity. The authors hope that the observed improvements in emotional development may also generalize to academic achievement through increased self-efficacy and motivation.

A case study conducted by Ford (2012), examined how a principal of an urban primary school in NZ impacted on the achievement of Māori students at that school. A mixed-methods design was employed using both student achievement data and in-depth interviews with teachers and school management. Statistical data was not provided, however the author stated, "that in 2004, reading achievement data at [the] school indicated that large numbers of Māori students were underachieving...In 2009, 72 percent of Māori students were achieving at or above national expectations in reading" (Ford, 2012, p. 29-30). Three key strategies were identified by the principal as integral to culturally responsive leadership: prioritising the facilitation and the importance of face-to-face relationships; establishing systems and structures to support the development of relationships; and creating a culture of learning within the entire school community.

Ford (2012) reported that the principal worked hard to develop relationships with whānau, students and other community members and also saw her role as supporting the relationship amongst her staff, students and parents.

I do my best to build a relationship with them; to understand their needs, their wants, their aspirations, their dreams, and to be able to respond accordingly. So for me it's-well I guess the first is to build relationships with people to let them know where I'm from, where I'm coming from but also try and gain an understanding about themselves and what they bring and where they come and work through from there. (Ford, 2012, p. 32)

*Kawa* (cultural protocols) and *tikanga* including *pōwhiri*, *rumaki* (the school's immersion unit), and regular parental meetings were also held regularly over the period between 2004 and 2009. Through consultation with whānau, a personalized learning framework for each student was developed to further foster *akoranga* (reciprocal learning). Holding teachers to account also became part of the culture of the school. "If we've got a tail of non-achievers and they're mainly Māori students then there is something that we are not doing right here. If they're not achieving-it's not their fault, I say to myself and my staff, 'So what are we missing? What aren't we doing that we should be doing?'" (Ford, 2012, p. 33). The author summarises that in order to respond positively to educational disparities for Māori students, the notions of whānau, *kawa*, *tikanga* and *akoranga* were integral to the principal, the whole school and wider community. This research also reaffirms the previous research, that strong culturally responsive leadership can result in a noticeable positive shift in Māori achievement and overall school morale.

Within both a NZ context and internationally, the barriers and enablers to PI have been examined, as well as the cultural practices currently taking place in NZ

schools. However, despite this research, the acknowledged positive effect of increased PI, and the apparent disparity between Māori and non-Māori students' achievement in NZ education, there still appears to be limited engagement with whānau in schools' practice and in government policy. The aim of this research is to explore what whānau perceive as the barriers to their engagement in their child's education, and comparatively, the factors they believe enable their involvement.



## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Rationale**

A kaupapa Māori theoretical framework underpins the qualitative methodology of this current study. A homogenous sample was obtained, specifically whānau of year nine and ten students from two secondary schools. School A and School B were both state authority, co-educational schools located in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. School A was a decile two school with a roll of 746 pupils and School B was a decile eight school with a roll of 2521 students. Two representatives, with knowledge of the school whānau were asked to determine participant selection. Subsequently, two participants/whānau from School A and three participants/whānau from School B were recruited. In-depth interviews were conducted and all transcripts were returned to participants for consultation and validation. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the data was carried out and summaries of the findings were also sent to participants to ensure cultural guidelines were adhered to, and legitimization was assured.

### **Kaupapa Māori**

Kaupapa Māori (KM) is typically identified as a Māori philosophical perspective that challenges ingrained Western, particularly Pākehā concepts of knowledge and research (Eketone, 2008). Eketone contends that it is an approach to a sphere of practice or theory, that has contrasting theoretical justifications: a Critical Theory perspective posits that KM has evolved from Marxist or socialist traditions and that change occurs from a challenge to hegemony, inequality and subsequent oppressive structures; comparatively, a constructivist position assumes that what is known and validated evolves from a social construction of the world. Consequently, Eketone advocates for a Native Theory constructivist approach in which KM is centred on the

rights of Māori to define themselves, develop their own research aims, methodology and outcomes.

**Historical context.** Bishop (1996) states that “in the past research has misrepresented Māori understandings and ways of knowing by simplifying, conglomerating, and commodifying Māori knowledge for ‘consumption’ by the colonisers” (p. 145). Cram, Phillips, Tipene-Matua, Parsons and Taupo (2004) suggest that Māori people deserve far better recognition and representation from mainstream society. In an earlier work, Cram (2001) asserts that “in the past we have been mostly studied by outsiders (that is non- Māori) and through this process we have been objectified as the ‘other’” (p. 36). The emphasis within such research has often been ethnocentric and disempowering for Māori, and continued to perpetuate colonial values (Bishop, 1996). Jones, Crengle and McCreanor (2006) note that the development of KM research as a philosophical framework is partially due to the predominantly negative impact of traditional Western research on Māori.

**KM as a theory and methodology.** KM is therefore considered a proactive theory and methodology that has developed from within the wider revitalization of Māori communities, and is also partly due to the rapid urbanization of Māori in the 1950s and 1960s (Bishop, 2008). Within an educational setting, Bishop (2003) notes that there are several aspects that differentiate KM research from traditional research. He cites several principles that contribute to a KM praxis. A key principle is the operationalisation of *tino rangatiratanga* (self-determination) for Māori (expanded on below). This is a definitive shift away from the prior focus on Māori as inexperienced and powerless. KM research is also collectivist; it is intended to benefit all who participate and is legitimised by those who are involved (Bishop, 2008). Importantly, at an ideological level, Bishop (2003) hopes that KM can also positively influence the

home difficulties and low socio-economic status experienced by many Māori. Thus through actualizing the social capital of a culturally collectivist practice such as KM, negative socio-economic circumstances may be mediated.

Bishop (2008) explains that the practice of whanaugatanga is also integral; this involves the development of sincere connectedness between the researcher and whānau. Through this shift in relationship the role of researcher also changes, the researcher is acknowledged as part of the research and the outcomes are ultimately determined by whānau voice.

In summary, KM is an indigenous methodological strategy focussed on legitimizing Māori experience through participant empowerment, transparency and genuine engagement (Jones, Ingham, Davies, & Cram, 2010). It has been utilized in a range of New Zealand-based studies (Bishop, Berryman, & Richardson, 2001; Cram, Smith, & Johnston, 2003; Elder, 2008; Glynn, Berryman, Atvars, & Harawira, 1997; Jones, et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2010; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013; Williams, 2011). Smith (1990) posits that KM research can be culturally relevant and appropriate whilst still fulfilling the rigours of valid and reliable research.

**Guiding principles.** Cram (2001) cites Linda Mead's thesis in which the author proposes seven guiding principles for the process of conducting KM research. These are inherent within this present study:

- Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people): allowing people to define their own space and meet on their own terms.
- He kanohi kite (the seen face, present yourself face to face): the importance of meeting with people face to face.
- Titiro, whakarongo...korero (look, listen...speak): the importance of looking and listening so that you develop understanding and find a place to speak.

- Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous): a collaborative approach to research, research training and reciprocity.
- Kia tūpato (be cautious): be politically astute, culturally safe and reflective about the researcher's insider/outsider status.
- Kauai e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of the people): sound out ideas with people, about disseminating research findings, about community feedback that keeps people informed about the research process and findings.
- Kaua e mamaku (do not flaunt your knowledge): about sharing knowledge and using qualifications to benefit the Māori community. (p. 42-50)

**Important key concepts.** The practices situated within KM research are embedded in a Māori worldview and allows the research to be conducted in alliance with Māori cultural preferences (Gibbs, 2001). Gibbs goes on to reiterate the importance of respecting Māori culture; “when undertaking culturally appropriate collaborative research, the researcher must respect the social and cultural institutions of the research participants” (p. 678). The following concepts are integral to KM research praxis:

***Whānau and Whakawhanaungatanga.*** Whānau is considered one of several key principles of Māori values, philosophy, and practices and becomes a focal point in KM research (Smith, 2012). Smith (2012) goes on to say that, “in terms of research, the whānau is one of several Māori concepts that have become part of the methodology, a way of organizing a research group, a way of incorporating ethical procedures that report back to the community, a way of ‘giving voice’ to the different sections of Māori communities, and a way of debating ideas and issues that impact on the research project” (p. 189).

For Māori people, the process of whakawhanaungatanga recognises how identity comes from whakapapa and how whakapapa and the related raranga kōrero (stories) connect (Bishop, 1998). As Bishop clarifies “Whakawhanaungatanga is the process of establishing relationships, literally by means of identifying, through culturally appropriate means, your bodily linkage, your engagement, your connectedness and therefore (unspoken) commitment to other people” (p. 214).

**Collaboration.** As mentioned above, a KM approach must address the appropriate cultural guidelines, especially respect and whānau involvement. Intrinsic within these principles is collaboration and the sharing of processes and knowledge. (Smith, 2012). KM research is therefore a collectivistic undertaking and is focussed on benefiting all participants; it is necessary to collectively determine agendas, and define and acknowledge the participant’s objectives (Bishop, 1998). Most importantly, as Cram et al. (2004) maintain, the research must be done in collaboration *with* Māori, instead of *on* or *to* Māori.

**Tino Rangatiratanga.** Another key dimension of KM research is tino rangatiratanga. This again sets KM approaches apart from other traditional research as it empowers the participant and enquires as to who truly represents the locus of power in the research process; questions regarding who benefits, who the research represents, who is held accountable and who is involved in legitimizing the outcomes are essential to ensuring tino rangatiratanga (Bishop, 1998).

**Tikanga.** “For Māori, knowledge is *tapu* (sacred) and is only passed on in a cultural context” (Gibbs, 2001, p. 680). Therefore in KM research, tikanga or customs must be respected. Bishop refers to the tikanga of whānau, which is particularly relevant to this current research and must be considered at all times: “warm interpersonal interactions, group solidarity, shared responsibility for one

another, cheerful cooperation for group ends, corporate responsibility for group property, material or nonmaterial (e.g. knowledge) items and issues” (Bishop, 1998, p. 204).

**The role of the researcher.** The question that is frequently raised in KM research is ‘can a non-indigenous researcher be involved?’ The answer is typically quite complex. Gibbs (2001) writes on her experiences when conducting collaborative research and states that the “role of non-indigenous researchers must...be critically questioned in cross-cultural research. Smith (2012) reasons that by framing KM within the Treaty of Waitangi, space is left for the involvement of non-indigenous that has genuine fidelity with Māori. Bishop (1996) argues that some “would say that Māori research should be led and undertaken by Māori people only” (p. 17). However, Cram et al. (2004) posit that Māori and Pākehā can collaborate in order to undertake research that is of mainstream interest. Smith (2012) stated that perhaps “a non-indigenous, non-Māori person can be involved in KM research, but not on their own...” (p. 186). Subsequently through working alongside whānau and a cultural supervisor, and ensuring the above guidelines and principles are adhered to, this research may be considered as belonging within a KM framework.

**Validation and accountability.** As mentioned previously, validation and accountability are key processes in any research and in particular KM research. A significant phase is reporting back to the people involved, not only in terms of validation of data but also to demonstrate respect and abiding to the principles of tino rangatiratanga (Smith, 2000). During every stage of the current research, the cultural supervisor was involved and whānau were also consulted about the interview process during the first and last stages of the analysis and when results were finalised.

## **IBRLA**

Bishop's (1996) Initiation, Benefits, Representation, Legitimation, and Accountability (IBRLA) guidelines determine how power-sharing relationships with Māori can and should be established before any research is conducted. It sets out a series of key questions that provide topics for discussion regarding how to undertake research in a Māori context and within a KM framework. The following questions were considered in this current research:

*Initiation:* Who initiated the research and why? What were the goals of the project? Who set the goals? Who designed the work?

*Benefits:* What benefits will there be? Who gets the benefits? What assessment and evaluation procedures will be used to establish benefits? What difference will this study make for Māori? How does this study support Māori cultural and language aspirations? Who decided on the methods and procedure of assessment and evaluation?

*Representation:* What constituted an adequate depiction of social reality? Whose interests, needs and concerns does the text represent? How were the goals and major questions of the study established? How were the tasks allocated? What agency do individuals or groups have? Whose voice is heard? Who did the work?

*Legitimation:* What authority does the text have? Who is going to process the data? Who is going to consider the results of the processing? What happens to the results? Who defines what is accurate, true and complete in a text? Who theorises the findings?

*Accountability:* Who is the researcher accountable to? Who is to have accessibility to the research findings? Who has control over the distribution of the knowledge? (Bishop, 1996, p. 22)

### **Qualitative Methodology**

A qualitative approach applies inductive logic through a process of naturalistic exploratory enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This current study is concerned with the phenomenological interaction that whānau report regarding their educational involvement in their child's learning. The sharing and clarification of these experiences by whānau was a bidirectional and fluid progression. The qualitative process recognises the richness of iterative experience and prioritises this perspective. In-depth analysis of comprehensive descriptions and verbatim quotations are employed to capture these humanistic experiences with empathy, vividness and cultural recognition (Patton, 1987).

This approach aligns succinctly with the aforementioned KM research principles and as Jones et al. (2010) note, a KM framework is inclusive of a range of methods embodied in qualitative design. The researcher strived to avoid any form of manipulation or pre-determined expectation in the exploration of the target phenomena (Patton, 1987). The complex undertaking for the qualitative researcher is to provide an opportunity for openness and establishment of rapport. To do this requires demonstrating impartiality, as well as the ability to establish trust and respect, while acknowledging the researcher's influential role in this process. Walker (1985) states that the researcher must be "responsive to the needs of respondents and to the nature of the subject matter" (p. 3), and this calls for the researcher to fulfil multiples roles: researcher, evaluator and contributor. Patton observed that the task of



the researcher is to provide a framework within which participant responses, and in particular their point of view, are represented accurately and thoroughly.

**Data Collection.** When employing qualitative methodology, data collection focuses on the acquisition of a wealth of knowledge about the individual. The depth of this information is therefore not dependent on a large number of participants. In this current study the research population was limited by the availability of whānau and time. However, as Patton (1987) notes, a smaller number of participants can still produce a rich resource of detailed data. The understanding that is obtained is therefore based in “well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of interactions” from contexts that become identifiable as the exploration process evolves (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1). The basic source of raw data is the direct quotations from whānau. Additional to this analysis of verbatim quotations, the way in which the whānau represent their world: how they organize it, structure their thoughts, experiences and convey their basic perceptions contribute to the pool of data (Patton, 1987). For this research the interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher and additional notes were taken during the interview process.

**Participant selection.** In qualitative analysis there are no set guidelines for determining a valuable sample, however according to Morton-Williams (1985), the study design itself is typically purposive, for example participants all have a specific characteristic or quality relevant to the target phenomena. For the current research the homogenous sample are whānau of year nine and ten students. The two focus schools are both located in two different suburbs in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. School B provided a gatekeeper in the form of the school counsellor who initiated contact with whānau and sought their interest in contributing to the research. At school A, a small hui was held involving the school management, a gatekeeper, the

cultural supervisor and the researcher. Contact information was then provided to the researcher and initial emails were sent to potential contributors, who all responded positively.

**Setting.** Morton-Williams (1985) stresses that creating an informal atmosphere in comfortable surroundings is necessary for ensuring that participants are at ease. A stress-free environment provides the opportunity to establish rapport and subsequently influences the quality of the information shared. The locations of the interviews in this research were all specified by whānau: three were conducted in the home of the participant and two took place at the participant's workplace.

**Assessment procedure.** Phase one consisted of whānau in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted by the researcher and recorded. Data was transcribed and interpretive phenomenological analysis was carried out. The second phase was validation of phase one interviews through informal consultation with participants. All whānau/participants approved of the outcomes.

**Measures.** The measures employed in this current study were in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews do not require strict adherence to a questionnaire or a set structure. The interviewer is not bound by a list of questions in this format, but can provide opportunity for open dialogue which aims to encourage whānau to share their experiences in their own way (Jones, 1985a). Nevertheless, as Jones states there “is no such thing as a totally unstructured interview” (p. 47). Subsequently there was a framework to which the interviewer referred (see below); Morton-Williams (1985) proposes no more than four or five pages. Most importantly the interaction with whānau determined the direction of the conversation, an often times challenging balance for the interviewer to obtain. This framework increased the comprehensiveness of the data and allowed for a more systematic approach. However

interviewer flexibility was still a necessity (Patton, 1987). Patton also suggested that probes deepen responses and these were employed to demonstrate attention and further interviewer-respondent alliance.

**Conducting the interviews.** The questions from the framework below were used only as a guide for the interview structure and content. Due to the KM approach typically the participant's determined the direction of the conversation. The interviews ranged in length from 28 minutes to 1 hour 53 minutes with an average of 1 hour, 16 minutes for all five interviews. Participants' were given a small *koha* (gift) of a \$30.00 petrol voucher in thanks for their valuable contribution.

#### **Interview framework.**

Section one - Whānau involvement in general school activities:

- As whānau, in what ways do you like to involve yourself in your child's education? (i.e.: homework; fostering potential; extra-curricular activities)
- What cultural experiences (events, activities, practices) at the school are the most relevant and important to you, and how do they influence your involvement in the school community?
- As whānau, what is your preferred mode of communication with (and from) school? (i.e.: email; newsletter; phone-call; face-to-face...). Why is this?
- As whānau, how does the school enable and encourage your participation in general school activities and engage you?
- As whānau, what are some of the things that provide barriers to your involvement in general school activities?
- In what ways have your own experiences at school influenced how you feel about being involved?
- What more could the school do to foster your child's culture and identity? How

do you believe this would influence your involvement?

- How does the community influence your involvement in your child's education?

How is whānau voice heard?

Section two: Whānau involvement in learning:

- As whānau, what activities do you like to do at home to supplement your child's learning?
- In what ways (formal and informal) does the school develop, maintain and strengthen partnerships with whānau that are focussed on your child's learning?
- As whānau, what do you see as the benefits and value of your involvement in learning focussed partnerships with the school?
- What works well for whānau, your child and the school in fostering your child's learning?
- Do you have examples of meaningful, respectful partnerships that have positively contributed to your child's learning and achievement?
- What challenges have you faced as whānau in developing learning focussed partnerships with the school?

Section three - Whānau involvement in wellbeing focussed activities:

- In what ways (formal and informal) does the school develop, maintain and strengthen partnerships with whānau that are focussed on the wellbeing and pastoral care of your child?
- What works well for whānau, their children and the school in fostering your child's wellbeing?
- Do you have examples of meaningful and respectful partnerships that have positively contributed to your child's wellbeing?
- What are the challenges whānau have faced in developing wellbeing-focussed

partnerships with the school?

Section four - transition to secondary school:

- What were some of your thoughts and feelings about coming into the new secondary school for the first time?
- As whānau, how did you find your child's transition between primary/intermediate and secondary school?
- How do you see your role as whānau of a secondary school student, compared to your role as whānau of a primary school student?
- What differences/similarities have you noticed in your involvement as whānau, between primary and secondary school?
- If you were able to create the 'perfect' school in terms of cultural responsiveness, what would that look like?

**Documentation.** Morton-Williams (1985) states, “findings [should] be presented as impressions gained, as hypotheses, rather than conclusions, and be supported by verbatim quotations (p. 41). The following documentation was required:

- A framework for the interview with a brief outline of ideas
- Consent and confidentiality forms (Appendices A, B, C, & D)
- Memos taken during interviews
- Transcriptions of interviews
- Transcriptions using IPA

### **Data Analysis: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

“The analysis of qualitative data is a process of making sense, of finding and making a structure in the data and giving this meaning” (Jones, 1985b, p. 56). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has been utilised in previous KM research (Elder, 2008; Jones et al., 2010), and the two approaches are considered complementary

(Jones et al., 2010). IPA takes an integrative approach, while still remaining focussed on the individual's interpretation of an event or phenomena within a particular context. It also aims to provide new insight through the analytics process (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Smith et al. (2009) observed that IPA provides opportunity for the interpretation of the participant's narrative to evolve, although the analysis is grounded in the individual's experience, it may also go beyond this. IPA is a dynamic process and Smith et al. (2009) describe it as an iterative, layered approach that employs a number of various levels of analysis. It focuses on theme development and places emphasis on the context, namely the importance of school and cultural contexts. Subsequently IPA requires that the analysis process pay attention to these contexts (Smith et al., 2009). In alliance with KM research, IPA acknowledges the researcher's involvement in this analytical process, where the researcher continually attempts to clarify the participant's point of view (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith et al. (2009) recommends six steps (pp. 82-107): Step one is to be immersed in the original data through reading and rereading. Initially, listening to the interview and reading it with the transcript emphasises the participant's voice. This step also involves recording the most powerful impressions and gaining an overall impression. At this stage the researcher writes reflective notes in a large left-handed margin using a range of coloured pens to reference the different emotions expressed by participants.

Step two involves an initial level of exploratory analysis. Smith et al. (2009) suggests that the researcher maintain an open mind and takes notes on anything of interest. They recommend several approaches: descriptive comments that describe the context of what is said; linguistic comments which focus on the use of language;

and conceptual comments that acknowledge an underlying level of engagement. At this point the researcher summarises and paraphrases participants' key thoughts, words and ideas. The researcher used Microsoft Word and highlighted key passages and then wrote a corresponding summary in the right-hand margin in the same colour.

For Step three, Smith et al. (2009) suggests that the analyst begins to identify potential emergent themes. This requires a shift from working with the transcript to working with the combined notes from stage one and two.

The researcher used the Microsoft Word document from the previous stage and added a large right-hand margin. Similar ideas were identified and phrases were created that succinctly summarised the relevant contributing data. These were colour coded to assist with step four.

Using the colour coded list of themes a mapping of associations was then developed in step four using abstraction. This was a way of “identifying patterns between emergent themes and developing a sense of what can be called a ‘super-ordinate’ theme” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 96).

Step five involved moving to the next case and the above four steps were repeated for all transcripts. Smith et al. (2009) notes that it is important to allow new themes to emerge with subsequent cases.

The final stage was to look for patterns across the cases. This requires several questions to be asked: what connections can be made across the cases; can one theme help illuminate data in another case; and what themes are most compelling? At this stage two super-ordinate themes were combined and a graphic of the interconnecting themes visually produced.

**Validation strategies.** In phase 2, participants were asked to validate the transcriptions of the in-depth interviews and IPA outcomes. Each participant was

emailed their transcript and asked to provide any feedback, either concerns or changes they would like to make. Participants' were also emailed or visited with a final copy of the results to ensure that they could contribute to the final outcomes of the research. Participants made no alterations regarding the content of the transcripts or the summary of results. This resulted in all participants being actively involved in the final process of this research. As Smith (2000) states, "in KM research...there is a commitment to report back to the people concerned. It is partly a commitment to reciprocity and partly a process of accountability" (p. 243).



## Chapter Four: Results

The tāhuhu – how to enable whānau engagement, was inductively examined through the transcripts of the five participants. Four superordinate themes emerged from the data. They were:

- Rangatiratanga – advocacy, leadership and commitment
- Kotahitanga – working together with whānau
- Whanaungatanga – maintaining connections with whānau
- Manaakitanga – caring for Māori students' learning and potential

These themes will be explored in this section. To allow whānau voice to be heard, multiple quotations from participant interviews are presented. Pseudonyms are used for names of participants to protect anonymity. Additionally, where quotes support multiple themes, the adjunct theme is cited in parenthesis.

### Emerging Theme One:

#### **Rangatiratanga - advocacy, leadership and commitment**

*Rangatiratanga* was identified in the transcripts as a key factor for enabling whānau involvement. The structure of this theme has three substituent themes differentiated: the importance of the principal as an advocate for Māori students and their whānau; that te reo and tikanga Māori practices are prioritised, clearly evident and enmeshed within the wider school community through a range of strategies; and that Māori cultural activities are taking place with regularity, integrity and are supported, including financially.

**a) The principal actively advocates for things Māori.** Two participants acknowledged that there had been limited contact with the principal of their school and this suggests a significant barrier to engagement. Furthermore, participant one (Cara) stated that when there had been some form of interaction, it had not made a

positive impression; she referred to feeling judged and believed her daughter was negatively stereotyped,

*...and [the principal] waltzes over in her poncy outfit and said, “oh yes, and what kind of report did she get?” Now what I got from her, and of course I’d been [at work] so I had my trackies on and I probably looked like I don’t work and I sleep all day, whatever. So I am sitting there and I had paint on me and what I got from that was, ‘ok, so here’s another naughty, underachieving little Māori kid’.*

Participant three (Iwa) has had a long association with School A. Her children: aged 13, 14 and 17, and several nieces and nephews have been attending there for at least five years, yet she mentioned never meeting the principal,

*I haven’t had much interaction with [the principal].... actually I have never met the principal since my kids have been there.*

Several participants proposed that the principal’s role was to advocate for Māori within the school community and that this may further foster whānau involvement. Participants referred to this advocacy role as multifaceted; that it consisted of the principal ensuring the following: cultural activities were taking place, Māori activities were promoted with pride, the te reo teacher is supported, and the school *whare* (house) maintained.

The following participant noted that compared to the previous principal, the current principal was not promoting Māori activities such as whānau hui, “*And since the other principal left there has been no whānau hui*” (Cara). She also refers to a lack of pride in activities such as kapa haka, which in the following quote is clearly frustrating and disheartening. When discussing how supportive School A has historically been for Māori, Cara commented,

*P: Yeah, it was fantastic. And then [the old principal] left and [the new principal] came and I've also found that things like their advertisements for the school, they used to have a kapa haka kind of picture on the website. 'Oh' and I'm like what the hell is going on?*

*I: Do you feel there has been a phasing out of Māori focussed things?*

*P: Yeah, I totally agree with that. Totally agree with that and it really riles me on so many different levels.*

Comparatively, participant four (Shirley) recognised that a principal who is actively involved and feels strongly about Māori success (Theme 1b), can make a substantial difference,

*But I mean at [School B], this new principal, he is so passionate about Māori and to be honest since my older children went to the school, Greenwich has really embraced Māori. They are entering children into the Māori Awards, like through Polytech and which my kids have won. They have just been really full on, Māori Māori, Māori and they are just embracing it and doing whatever they can.*

**b) Te reo and tikanga Māori are prioritised, visible and integrated into the whole school community.** What appeared integral to the engagement of whānau was evidence of the school's commitment to te reo and tikanga Māori. Participants identified the importance of these practices taking place; that they must not occur in isolation but be integrated across the whole school. The following quote suggested Iwa perceived a disassociation between various aspects of the school and when asked about cultural voice, she responded,

*...you would want it to be spread out amongst the school, yeah. But it seems like with the school, they have their different factions, you know they have the*

*academic side, the cultural side and their sports. And it seems like they are not together as a whole.*

In contrast, Shirley recognised that when whānau have a constructive relationship with the school, this dialogue can result in te reo and tikanga holding a highly esteemed and visible position,

*...they recently just had a big unveiling because they actually put Waimairi-iri, the actual Māori name outside the front of the school, and that was one of the suggestions [from whānau].*

Responses within this substituent theme were further classified into four discernible factors: school staff are open to new learning, in particular using te reo within the classroom; bilingual classes are available; Māori student achievement is recognised (several participants referring to the cultural awards at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) as evidence of this); and value is given to the subject of te reo Māori through support of the teacher.

***i) School staff open to new learning and using te reo in the classroom.***

Shirley acknowledged that Māori was being increasingly integrated throughout the school and that te reo had been given visual prominence through teachers putting te reo words on classroom walls and also attempting to speak te reo,

*But they are doing more and more to incorporate Māori. They want to put Māori words over all the classrooms, give them Māori names, which is all just feedback from the parents.*

In comparison, when Iwa was asked if there were bilingual aspects within all the classes, for example Māori words on the wall, she replied “No,” the only opportunity to speak te reo was if students “choose to do Māori, they can do it.”

**ii) Bilingual classes.** The opportunity to enroll their *tamariki* (children) in bilingual classes was referenced several times by most participants. This provided insight into the significance whānau placed on having this option and how schools can further demonstrate their commitment to Māori. For most participants, having the choice regarding either a bilingual class or school would be the perfect situation; where their tamariki can immerse themselves in both the Pākehā and Māori language and culture. Cara:

*I mean the biggest things for me I think was knowing, well I know is that they, all their education was in this bilingual environment with their whānau, with their peers and that whole tuakana-teina is really important to me.*

Shirley:

*I: So, if Greenwich had a bilingual class, would that be your ideal?*

*P: Oh, yip, that would be fantastic.*

The dissatisfaction and frustration were apparent in participants' responses regarding the lack of availability of a bilingual class in Christchurch. Shirley:

*I think it is because in the North Island there are so many more bilingual schools and Kura Kaupapa.... And here, I don't know whether it is a mentality thing.... But it is quite sad, you know over the past four to five years, their Māori side of things. You know when they were at Kura we used to speak Māori at home all the time. I mean even now their te reo has sort of subsided and their English has taken over. They sort of lost a lot going into that mainstream school, but there are not really many bilingual schools in Christchurch for them to go to.*

In particular, School A is closing their bilingual unit and participants' reactions were those of disappointment and sadness. Cara:

*I was never given the option whether to keep my child at [School A], cos I was under the impression that the whānau class was going to stay. No one told me and I only found out by mistake.... I mean it is terrible.*

*Iwa: Well [the bilingual class] has been slowly phased out and it's quite sad. Like even though some of the seniors are leaving, for the younger ones it's really sad.*

*I: How does Christina feel about the bilingual class? P: Yeah, like she is gutted. She is really gutted.*

**iii) CPIT awards.** Along with participant two (Chris) and Shirley, Cara, also referred to her daughter receiving a CPIT award. Entering students for local awards was recognised as a further indication of the school's commitment to Māori student success and subsequent acknowledgment and pride. Shirley:

*Because every so often CPIT have these Māori awards for Māori and Pacific students and it's from tikanga, to sporting, to academic achievement and basically any school right throughout, from Kaikoura to Dunedin can nominate students. My daughter won it a couple of times. My sister's daughter has won it a few times and they get laptops, Ipods and they put on this big massive, really big dinner. Tangaroa has been nominated for it. And they do at these awards, you know the principal and teachers go along and they say how they embrace it.*

*Chris: Yeah, [the school] have been really good. Jeremy, he won the sports award for the Canterbury district and he goes to the Supreme awards next month, which is national.*

**iv) The teacher of te reo is knowledgeable, supported and valued.** Participants frequently discussed the school's teacher of te reo, an indication of the integral role

they can play as an intermediary between whānau and school. It appeared crucial that the school shows respect for the te reo teacher's skills and values their relationship with whānau. Cara made repeated references to how the te reo teacher was not supported at School A and had been further devalued by the removal of their title as Head of Department. Cara:

*...and [the school] got rid of [the te reo teacher's] title. I mean, not that title is everything but you know what I mean like say, we're not going to make Māori, we're going to shove it under something else. I think they put it under Arts because of Māori performance arts but it's like, 'hold on.' Māori is a language, is an everything [sic].*

Additionally both Cara and Iwa referred to the substantial workload of the te reo teacher and the requirements of teaching across a range of year levels and subjects.

Cara:

*And this is the thing, where is [the te reo teacher's] support?...I said, "how are you supposed to teach, Level one through to Scholarship and the ones in year nine and ten who just want to give it a go?"*

Iwa:

*And it's like [the te reo teacher] teaches Maths, English, Social Studies and Māori. And it's like there are too many roles for one teacher.*

Participants also mentioned that they valued and respected a knowledgeable teacher of te reo who has applicable language skills. Iwa:

*I: So having a te reo teacher that is really good is really important?*

*P: Yeah, definitely. Not someone who is just going to give you a book, "here you go."*

Shirley:

*I: So they have a few teachers there who are fluent in te reo?*

*P: Yeah one, and her Māori is very much from a book. I don't even know how she manages to be the [School B] Māori teacher, but oh well. She is Māori, but I don't know. The kids know more Māori than her, it is all kind of from a book.*

**c) Māori cultural activities are occurring regularly with integrity and supported by the school.** Shirley summarised the range of activities that School B provides and how impressed she is with this,

*...they have cultural days, they have tākaro, which my boys have been involved with.... They do full on BBQs and kapa haka, with breakfast before kapa haka in the morning. They have been amazing.*

Responses regarding the various cultural activities were classified into six areas: whānau classes, whānau hui, kapa haka, pōwhiri, noho marae visits, and whānau days. This is an indication of the breadth of Māori cultural activities taking place and evidence of the school's commitment through providing kais, financial support and/or staff.

**i) Whānau class.** Both School B participants mentioned the whānau class in positive terms, “*We had this whānau class, I loved it, it was fantastic (Cara),*” and “*they do have a really good whānau unit (Iwa).*” The structure of the whānau class at School B is somewhat different. Shirley:

*This is their first year, and it's just a whānau class where they basically meet every morning so you have your form class and they put things on.*

**ii) Whānau hui.** Multiple references were made to whānau hui as an extremely appropriate practice for involving whānau. It provides schools with a culturally safe and responsive strategy and demonstrates the school's commitment to engagement.



The following quote suggests that Cara saw the lack of whānau hui as an indication of the indifference the school feels towards Māori,

*Yeah cos I said to [the deputy principal], “you please tell me, when was the last hui for whānau?” “Oh, well we’re going to work on that next year.”... And I said, “And what good is it next year?” I said, “There hasn’t been one for two years.” I said, “I’d like to know what’s happening cos from what I can see, Māori is slowly but surely being phased out of School A.”*

*Iwa: I: Do they have many Huis? P: Um, I’m not too sure. I think they have, they have had a few. But I don’t think a lot of people are going to them.*

Comparatively, Shirley and participant five (Susan) had been provided opportunities to attend whānau hui and viewed it as a chance to be involved and create an open bidirectional dialogue with the school. Shirley:

*School B, they are pretty good, you go to whānau huis and stuff and make suggestions and.... they really take on board your suggestions and your feedback, and they do what they can to implement it, but of course it all takes time.*

**iii) Kapa haka.** Kapa haka was another key cultural activity referenced multiple times across all interviews. It not only resulted in whānau being actively involved but also created a sense of celebration. Chris and Susan, both referred to their tamariki being involved in kapa haka, and Iwa and Shirley mentioned the school getting experts from the wider community to teach kapa haka. Furthermore, Shirley stated “*they always put on Milos and muffins at 8 o’clock for the kids*”, a further indication of the school’s financial commitment to Māori culture. The strong sense of self-worth associated with kapa haka was apparent in the following quotes. Cara:

*We went to watch Kakarauri do haka.... I mean I was so proud of her doing haka, I had a wee cry.*

Shirley: *I: And do you see a change in the kids?*

P: *Oh, they love it. I mean Tangaroa constantly walks around doing kapa haka, it's every day.*

I: *So there is a sense of pride, to be part of that?*

P: *Oh, absolutely, absolutely.*

For Cara and her whānau, kapa haka was not occurring regularly and the school was not allocating time for practice, an indication of the depreciation of the role of Māori within the school,

*There's been no kapa haka. Now when Kakarauri started, so it's been four years ago. Oh it was very very random when they'd have kapa haka.*

Shirley perceived kapa haka as a clear turning point for the engagement of whānau,

*They sort of introduced the kapa haka and stuff about three or four years ago because there were more Māori students, they sort of embraced it. That is what the shift was, having that Māori input from the families going in.*

**iv) Pōwhiri.** Cara and Shirley have also had disparate experiences regarding their school's practice of pōwhiri. For Cara it was an extremely negative experience and an interaction she perceived as demeaning, in stark contrast to Shirley. However, both participants agreed that pōwhiri must be conducted with integrity and in consultation with whānau. Cara:

*Last year the girls came home and they're like, "Mum we have to go back to school at six o'clock." I said, "what for?".... "Oh because we've got some Japanese, whatever, coming to school and we're doing a pōwhiri." I tell you, I was, I said, "excuse me." I said, "you're not going." And they were like, "oh*

*but Mum we have to.” I said, “you are not going.” So I rang up the school... “I’m just ringing to let you know that my children will not be attending the pōwhiri for such and such.” “Oh but we need people.”....he tried to throw kanohi ki te kanohi in my face on the phone and I’m thinking, ‘mate you don’t even know what you’re talking about.’ And manaakitanga and all this and I’m like ‘oh my god.’ And I said to him, “my children will not be coming.” And he said, “oh, well can I ask why?” And I said, “you know what?” I said, “it actually grates me that kapa haka has not been done, practised, encouraged, anything for the whole year and then all of a sudden you’ve got people coming and you want...” And this is how I said it, I said, “you want my children to get up on stage and perform like little puppets, I don’t think so.”*

Shirley:

*I: And so with the unveiling, did they have a pōwhiri?*

*P: Absolutely, they had the whole shebang. The kids had to be down there at six in the morning and they put on a big breakfast for them, songs and stuff. And they did a full karakia before the sun came up. They really embraced it and the kids were so proud.*

*I: And so you feel like there is a lot of integrity?*

*P: Absolutely.*

**v) Noho marae.** Both Chris and Shirley mentioned noho marae visits as another cultural activity that their children were involved in. Shirley acknowledged that it was invaluable in framing the positive relationships between whānau and the school,

*They have a marae noho next weekend for kapa haka, at Rēhua Marae so I will go down and help make pancakes for the kids. I don’t know, it just creates a really good relationship between you and your child as well.... and it is just nice*

*to go down there and all the teachers are like, 'Hi Shirley,' in front of the other students and it is just a really good relationship.*

**vi) Whānau Day.** A final cultural practice that Shirley referenced as a possible means for involving whānau and positively promoting Māori culture was Whānau Day,

*I: And you mentioned they have Whānau Day?*

*P: Yeah, they just put on stuff for the kids at school.*

*I: And is that an Annual thing?*

*P: Yeah, I think it is becoming more and more, it may have been two or three days this year. Tangaroa is always coming back from Marae trips and he is always saying, "Mum, the school is doing this and Māori this and Māori that."*

## **Emerging Theme Two:**

### **Kotahitanga – working together with whānau**

Participants frequently referenced the importance of schools working *with* whānau, as opposed to *for* them or even worse, not engaging with them at all. The process of consultation, taking on whānau feedback, using whānau expertise and providing opportunities for discussion were identified as key to engagement.

**a) Whānau are consulted; the school ensures that whānau voice is sought and heard.** Clearly evident within four of the transcripts was an emphasis on consultation, especially around decisions that impact directly on whānau. As mentioned previously, one of the key resources valued by two participants was the bilingual class at School A. The participants did not feel that there was sufficient negotiation around the closure of the class. The frustration and anger Cara felt around the disestablishment of the whānau class is apparent. This was a decision she believed was made with no opportunity for whānau voice to be heard nor even a

suitable and timely announcement. Instead her child was removed and placed in another class without her knowledge. Iwa was also asked whether there had been consultation around the termination of the whānau class and she replied, “*not that I was aware of...*” Cara:

*...Um, the other big thing what they did was they actually disestablished this whānau class.... I never got told it was being disestablished... And I said, “whose class is she in?” Now to me, she has been ripped out of [the whānau] class, put into the kind of mainstream part of the school... and I was really angry about it.*

Chris also felt his concerns around his child’s attainment were not heard by his son’s primary school and this resulted in Steve having to work incredibly hard when he arrived at secondary school,

*His first tests were really bad so he spent the whole year, last year getting up to speed and catching up. And we had said to the primary school, “he is behind,” and they said, “no, no he is fine.” Anyway we batted he wasn’t and he spent all last year working his butt off to get up there. Now he is good.*

Comparatively, Iwa did feel that the school persisted with consultation regarding pastoral care concerns,

*Like with the pastoral care, um, it doesn’t matter what area it is, if there are any underlying issues they will get in contact with parents. Even if it takes, like I know one part it took them ages to get in touch with me cos I had changed my phone and um.... they persevere.*

Shirley also had extremely constructive interactions with the school through the process of whānau hui. This appeared to be a particularly appropriate mechanism for schools to confer with whānau,

*Whereas [School B], they are pretty good, you go to whānau hui and stuff and make suggestions.... They really take on board, [School B], they really take on board your suggestions and your feedback, and they do what they can to implement it, but of course it all takes time.*

**b) Whānau feedback and input is appreciated by the school.** The following participants had experienced recognition of whānau voice and their suggestions were implemented. This indicated a sincere commitment by the school to working together. Cara:

*...so you took her off site without my permission, what if you'd had a car crash, you know..." I rung the Ministry, I rung, and I'm like, "I'm really concerned about this, like what's going on?" The school has since changed its policy in that whānau do need to be involved.*

Iwa felt there had been a clear process of consultation around the school's timetable and that it had been changed in accordance with input from whānau,

*Like involving, and they have involved the community, like this three period thing they did do a census on that. Families wanted the three periods.*

Shirley again referred to whānau hui as a key process for gaining Māori feedback and that she makes the effort to go even after working long days. The following quote indicated that they are also an opportunity for the school to reinforce their strong working alliance and appreciation of whānau involvement,

*I really have to make an effort myself to go [to whānau hui] after working all day, and sports and stuff, it's a mission.... I was there and they were really appreciative cos it was pretty much just me.*

School B also sought input from Susan and her advice was acted upon to the benefit of her grandson,

*And the Science teacher rings me up and says, “Oh Susan, WT has been a pain in class. He is getting everything right and everything is finished, he is distracting the person next to him.”.... And I said, “separate them.”.... And she said, “ok, I’ll separate them.” And I said, “ok and ring me back in a couple of weeks to see how they are doing.” So she rings me back, “he is doing awesome, that was a good idea separating them.”*

However, there was also obvious frustration around the limited emphasis some schools have on building a robust working relationship and the lack of value placed on whānau insight, especially for Cara and Shirley. Cara:

*Cos I went to the Dean and I said, “Miriamā is finding it difficult in this class, the teacher doesn’t like Miriamā, Miriamā doesn’t like her.” I said, “why are you penalising both of them?” But now you’re saying, “no they both just have to deal with it.”*

Shirley: *P: I really don’t think that my opinion would matter in that situation. [School C] are so focussed on it, and it is all about Kotiritiri challenges and my little one voice, so that is why I really haven’t bothered saying anything.... And you know that might be part of the problem with parents, you know I feel like that about this particular thing, there is no point me saying anything, I’m just this one parent, you know. What does my feedback mean? It is not going to change anything so there is no point in saying anything at all sometimes over certain things.*

### **c) Whānau knowledge and expertise is being drawn upon by the school.**

Utilising Māori cultural wisdom and proficiencies were also an important component of working together. Cara noted that for many whānau, “*Māori is their first language.*” Instead of viewing this as a limitation for communication, schools could

view whānau knowledge of te reo as a valuable resource. Additionally utilising the specialist skills of whānau is another way in which schools can further build connections. For example, Chris is an experienced cyclist and coaches the school's cycling team,

*I: So you're actually doing his training?*

*P: Yip, I've been riding a bike since I was his age. I've got a couple of mates who are coaches so I feed off them but he is getting quite good now so it might be time to pass him over to a specialist coach, cos I know some stuff but it is getting the best out of him.*

Shirley has also been involved in a range of activities,

*I coached the netball team, when I could, go and help out with lunches when they were younger. But now that they are a bit older, I just pretty much get right involved in all their sporting stuff, whānau hui...*

In preparation for the kapa haka competition the whānau class at School A also utilised the cooking skills of Iwa's mother,

*...my mum did a lot for their wanangas, my mother did the cooking and that for them and take their lunches down for the group.*

Iwa and Shirley also mentioned that their children's knowledge of te reo has often been utilised by teachers in the school. Shirley saw this as a positive example of working together, however Iwa noted that her daughter was disappointed that her knowledge of te reo was used because the te reo teacher didn't have the expertise (Theme 1b). Iwa:

*Yeah, well my daughter was teaching their class when she was in year nine. My daughter was so excited when she started high school at School B, she was like, 'oh cool, I'm going to learn more Māori.' And she got back from school, her*



*first day, I was like “oh how was your first day baby” cos she was excited. “We learnt about apples and oranges.” And because she had gone from Kōhanga right through bilingual and to go back to Kōhanga again, she was so disappointed, she was really disappointed.*

*Shirley: ...they do utilise my wee girl for Māori words and they get her to help in the classroom and that makes her feel proud.*

For specialist cultural activities such as kapa haka, several participants acknowledged schools that were prepared to seek advice and expertise from the wider Māori community. Shirley:

*...they have Kowhai for example. She graduated School B last year and they have actually employed her ten hours a week to come back. She runs an afterschool programme just for Māori. There is this Māori afterschool network. .... I think it is mainly academic but they also do baking and kapa haka and make pois, so she comes back for ten hours a week and School B actually pay her.*

As indicated by Susan, the schools that acknowledged whānau as the experts on their tamariki were also practising kotahitanga and appears crucial to engagement,

*Yes, cos I say if anything happens in school or in class, ring me so I can come and help.*

**d) Whānau have opportunities to come together.** Providing whānau with a range of opportunities to join together regularly was also integral to demonstrating that the school is working with whānau. As mentioned previously, the whānau hui is an invaluable mechanism for engaging whānau in a culturally appropriate way, as summarised by Cara:

*You know if you had a hui with whānau, put it out there.” I said, “ok, you might only get half a dozen people.” ... I said, “because I know lots of those parents, and quite often we all [complain] about the same thing.” I said, “now some of us are obviously more outspoken than others, you know?” I said, “but I think they have to have the opportunity to do it in a safe environment, with other whānau and to realise that they are not the only ones sitting at home going ‘what the hell is going on?’” I said, “cos there is quite a few of us.”*

Kapa haka is another cultural activity previously referred to by several participants that allows for whānau to come together, as indicated by Iwa:

*Um, their main thing is kapa haka. With that the whole family got involved. My mum and the girl’s father came up and my partner. So everybody got involved with that.*

Shirley also suggested that kapa haka was a good opportunity for involvement and the noho marae allowed whānau to come together in their own environment,

*...my boy, he is really proud of the fact that I go down to the school and get involved, and with all his friends, I know the teachers.*

Susan also acknowledged that kapa haka resulted in a large whānau gathering in support of her grandson’s solo,

*...he is doing about three lines of solo in the kapa haka; cos we are going, about six of us which starts on Saturday.*

### **Emerging Theme Three:**

#### **Whanaungatanga – maintaining connections with whānau**

Participants also emphasised the importance of schools fostering and persisting in their relationships with whānau. Analysis indicated that five substituent factors contributed to this theme: the school was flexible and supportive when working with

whānau, the school is aware and considerate of whānau circumstances, the school reaches out to whānau and encourages whānau to come into the school, the school provides positive, constructive feedback to whānau, and relationships between the school and whānau are fostered.

**a) The school is flexible and supportive around working with whānau.**

Both the timing and the mode of communication contributed to this substituent theme. Whānau appeared to appreciate the schools that employed a range of communication methods in order to maintain contact but for some, this appreciation was dependent on whether the information provided was worthwhile.

**i) Timing.** Cara mentioned several unconstructive interactions she had experienced with School A and conveyed her annoyance with a school that appeared to have a lack of consideration for her time in the following quotes,

*I said, “it’s Monday, I was told you’d call me on Friday, I’d receive this phone call.” And he said, “oh, I’d like to meet with you, ah tomorrow at this time.” I said, “um, excuse me, I also have work commitments, and cannot just come in, it needs to be convenient for us both.”*

**ii) Communication mode.** Cara also expressed her irritation about the number of texts she received from the school and believed they were not always necessary,

*I’m so sick of getting texts from them.” Yeah and this is the thing, they text so quickly about absentees from class, like stupid things.*

In contrast, Chris referenced a range of information avenues the school provides for whānau to access, and how much he valued these,

*And the school is good as well, they email. One of the science teachers, I think it is Science, he emails you when homework is due.... Yeah, so when Jeremy has*

*a project in what he is doing and it is due whenever, so I think that is really good.*

*...they email or I will phone up Rob, he is the Dean. He is the person I speak to all the time as he is with the cycling team as well. He's good.... I think School B is pretty good, it is all there for you. There are emails and phone calls and the website is there as well. Moodle as well. So really there is no excuse.*

Iwa also mentioned a variety of communication modes the school employs, however she did note that the newsletters were unreliable due to her children's laxness about bringing them home. Iwa also accessed online information and received texts, *"If they are not even in a period, you know straight away.* When asked what way of contact she preferred, she answered,

*They usually ring me, they ring me quite often.*

Shirley appreciated the regular contact made by the school, though she mentioned that the Māori newsletter was only sent out intermittently,

*I also get emails for events like marae trips or anything to with things like that via email. Or they give me a call.... They do have this Māori newsletter but it is separate, it is just not very regular, maybe like every four to six months.*

Susan indicated there was good communication regarding school fees and flexibility with how this was arranged.

**b) The school remains aware and is considerate of whānau circumstances.**

What appeared integral to *whanaugatanga* is the school's awareness of the varying circumstances for whānau that can impact on their involvement. A range of issues emerged as contributing factors to this substituent theme. These included the school's awareness of whānau financial difficulties, work commitments, previous educational experiences, and potential instability or even volatility in the home environment.

Cara summarised a range of the aforementioned issues in the following quote and reinforced that schools need to be aware of all these factors as they can result in substantial difficulties for whānau engagement. Subsequently schools needed to support and maintain relationships with whānau and be responsive to their needs,

*But it's that's kind of thing, 'Mum hasn't got the \$5.' You know some people are living in shocking, shocking situations, especially post earthquake. And the stuff that's going on within relationships. The kid's don't want to mention to Mum and Dad that the school need this or, but then the school almost hounds parents, and I mean come on, not everyone is getting income.*

**i) Financial difficulties/poverty.** Financial difficulties also resulted in children missing out or feeling stigmatised. Although kapa haka emerged from the data as a valuable means of engaging whānau, it also has costs associated with it that some had difficulty paying. This is evidenced in the following quotes. Cara:

*Now he had come home to get this money for the t-shirt. I said, "why aren't you at the noho? It's kai time, you're supposed to be there." He said, "I haven't paid my \$5."*

*Iwa: P: Maybe it is expenses. Like for kapa haka, it's meant to be free but jeez, I had to buy um, they needed moko kits and they needed a whole uniform before they go on and after they've finished. Like the boys have to have dress pants and the girls have to have skirts and shoes and a top. Oh my gosh.*

Iwa then goes on to mention several other costs that increased stress on the financial resources of whānau,

*Yeah, school trips, exactly. And like it is good that they have funding for that to take the cost down but there is still a cost and it is expensive. Like in my case I have the four of them.... you can access some supports to make it cheaper, you*

*are still paying a certain amount.... cos you know how expensive blazers are, theirs is like \$80 for their blazers.*

It was apparent that Shirley also found it upsetting that she did not have the financial means to support her son through extra tuition,

*I don't have the funds to go get that additional tutoring. I just don't, I'd love too, but I can't afford it. End of story. It is so expensive and it would be nice if there was some type of fund, whether it be PTA that could supply these tutoring.*

Susan had experienced significant financial hardship in the past, however School B is incredibly supportive in seeking her additional monetary help and was also accommodating in her payment of fees,

*And the Dad wasn't working and he said, "oh we got no money," and I thought 'here we go again.' And I thought, 'gee how am I going to feed my children?*

*And Mr Simpson said, "hang on Susan, cos we can help you with the NCEA, we can fund NCEA too." "But I can still give some money." But I can also get my tribes support, Te Arawa in Rotorua.*

**ii) Work commitments.** In fostering whanaugatanga the school also needed to be aware of the employment commitments of whānau. Many of Cara's references to work revolved around the inflexibility of the school staff regarding the timing of meetings and expectations regarding her availability for coming into the school immediately,

*...[the school] rung and said "Miriam's wearing white socks." And I said, "and what would you like me to do about that?".... they said, "you need to come, pick her up, take her..." I said, "I am at work and I am not leaving for a pair of socks."*

*You know this is what I said to them, they ring you up and say, “you’ve got to come down now.” But I’ve got work commitments and I’ll say to them, “I finish at 4, I can come then.” And they’ll be like, “Oh no, I leave at 3.30”....but the school’s not very flexible. They’re like, “I’m available at this, this is when you need to come.”....I say, “I actually work full time, I am the only provider in our household, I cannot take a day off without pay, that impacts on us for like a month.”*

Chris recognised that work did result in a balancing act for whānau, “*Now most parents work.*” Iwa pointed out that in the part of town where she lives a lot of people are employed doing shift work, which subsequently impacts on their attendance at school activities,

*Work ethic is also different on this side of town. A lot over here work at nights cos it’s an industrial area and everything is on a shift basis.*

Shirley also noted that when school occasions were on after work hours it meant she was able to attend,

*I work full time so that is why all the things I get involved with has to be after work hours, like with the hui, and sports and stuff like that.*

**iii) Previous educational experiences.** It appeared essential that schools have some knowledge and understanding about the previous learning situations of whānau. For many Māori, education was an extremely negative experience and they may be ashamed to attend functions or parent interviews, as Cara suggested in the following quotations,

*...you know I had whānau come in here... they couldn’t read or write. And they were really embarrassed to say.... Some wanna [care] but they can’t cos they think they’re too thick...*

For many whānau, school may have been an incredibly distressing experience and Chris provided an example of this,

*I remember boys getting kicked off chairs, chalk thrown at you, dusters.*

*Teachers smoking in class and they'd blow smoke in your face.*

Susan also provides insight into how her ex-partner's limited education influenced his support of his own child's learning,

*I was teaching his son how to read and oh he just loved listening to reading and then he went to school and cos he was learning to read, the father was getting jealous, cos the father couldn't read.... He didn't want his son to read cos he couldn't.... Oh he had a bad background, he was brought up bad.... Didn't go to school. He had to get a job.*

**v) Impact of changes/earthquake.** Due to the Christchurch earthquakes, schools in Canterbury have experienced a time of upheaval. Cara raised the strain of the earthquakes but also other changes that have compounded the worries and anxiety for whānau,

*I mean, well obviously the earthquake would have been unsettling, you know, been really unsettling and all that kind of thing.... But see they've done so many changes, they've done the two-hour thing, they've removed the class... No consultation. I mean, even the uniform, and now they want to have another bloody uniform next year for the Year 13s and I'm like, 'are you joking?'*  
*There's such a focus on the uniform.*

Cara also mentioned the uncertainty whānau have felt around the restructuring of the schools in Christchurch,

*And [the teacher] said, "but there might not be a School A." You know because of all the restructuring.*



Both Cara and Iwa referred to changes in the education sector, which have caused additional stress. Cara:

*And I think with this new curriculum thing, you know they have to meet certain levels, even with primary school children. I think it is just terrible, the pressure...*

*Iwa: Yeah and also people dealing with changes in the education sector. I think people have just had enough.*

Iwa alluded to a certain resiliency that whānau have around the earthquakes, changes in curriculum and the introduction of year sevens and eights to the school,

*They have been through the washer anyway so I am sure they can toughen up to this too.*

**vi) Instability and volatility in the home environment.** Across most of the interviews, analysis suggested that it was necessary for schools to be cognisant of the instability that some whānau can experience and the oftentimes unfortunate and traumatic realities of their living situations. Both Cara and Susan mentioned that members of their whānau have been imprisoned. Cara:

*Miriama's father, he has um, been in jail her whole life. He has a new partner, I mean he is kind of one of these, will pick her up, take her shopping, and then bring her back, but it's kind of when it suits him.*

In the following quote, Susan also revealed that her whānau have had exposure to alcohol and drugs,

*They just turned to alcohol and drugs. And my children were the same too. They went on the wrong road.... And they ended up going to jail..."*

Iwa also had a disrupted childhood and subsequently did not have a strong educational foundation but came to learning later. She had also been a young mother,

*I was quite a young mum so I didn't really do much with education till later... I wasn't brought up by parents. I got into a lot of trouble when I was younger.*

Several participants were single parents, including Shirley, however this also motivated her to get involved. Shirley:

*I am a single now, my husband left four years ago after 17 years and you know it is just me; so I just want to make sure that I know what is going on.*

Both Cara and Susan referred to abusive home environments,

*Cara: And some of these kids, I hear some terrible things about what happens in their home life... I know it's hard, I've been there, I was raised somewhat similar but you can get out, you don't have to live in fear."*

*Susan: And then we got ourselves a state house in Shirley and then all of a sudden we meet the wrong crowd. Then they sort of went off line. And I had an ex-partner that I met in Shirley, oh he was abusive. We then moved from Shirley to Greenwich. He was verbally abusive...*

**c) The school reaches out to whānau and whānau are encouraged to come into the school.** For some participants, they particularly valued the opportunity to go in to the school with their whānau. As mentioned several times, whānau hui and kapa haka (*Theme 1c*) emerged as key activities for bringing whānau into the school, as summarised succinctly by Shirley: *"They do have kapa haka every week which is them trying to bring Māori in."* An 'open door' policy appeared to be especially appreciated by the following participants. Iwa:

*No, I like to know what is going on with my kids. It is really good that they let me know. I don't know how many times I have been in that school, this month alone.*

Susan: *Next minute, I go back to school and I said, "I've got to go back to the school again." He said, "Oh Mum, in Science I have finished all my work." And I said, "was it all right?" And he said, "yeah. Come to the school, they will tell you."*

Shirley mentioned her niece being offered the opportunity to go back into the school as a paid mentor and that she felt this ongoing relationship was encouraging for all whānau,

*P: That's why they have employed my niece back for ten hours a week.*

*I: So it is not like they are at school from year nine to thirteen and then you leave us, but instead that the relationship goes on.*

*P: Yeah, they want them to come back. They encourage them to come back.*

*I: That's probably a key thing, do you think? Fostering that?*

*P: Yeah, it is. And then the younger ones see them coming back.*

Cara also noted that for some whānau they might need that extra support to go into the school,

*Um but yeah some whānau just need that helping hand to go down and say something.*

The position of Māori liaison officer also had the potential to assist and support whānau with coming into school, alongside providing a culturally safe contact for Māori in the educational environment. Shirley was impressed by School B paying an ex-pupil to fulfil this role,

*...they have Kowhai for example.... She is like the Māori liaison and helps with any issues... she works with Canterbury Uni.*

However, for a position that had the potential to engage whānau, Cara referred to a particularly negative interaction with the Māori liaison officer at School A,

... “who is this person... who is Angela, who is pulling my daughter into the office? Is she a counsellor?” “Oh no, she is our Māori liaison officer.” And I said, “and do, ah, whānau know she’s there, cos I’ve never heard of her?” She goes, “oh no well it hasn’t really been put out there.” I said, “then how the hell can she be a Māori liaison officer?” I said, “not only for the whānau class but also other Māori that is in the school that is ridiculous.”

**d) The school provides constructive feedback to whānau.** One of the potential indicators of whanaugatanga for whānau was the type of interaction that they had with the school. Across all participants, there was unanimous gratitude for those staff members that maintained connections in a regular, positive and productive way.

Cara:

*I got this fantastic thing in the mail from the art teacher. ‘He was absolutely blown away by her work, she was a wonderful student.’ You know, I said, “this is great.” This is what I need.*

Both Chris and Shirley particularly appreciated the weekly reports they receive from School B. Chris:

*...they do reports every two weeks as well for all subjects. It’s quite easy really.... Like a wee report, out of five, five being excellent and one being bad. And it is a quick overview. So in English he has scored 4.5 this week. Or if he needs to work on something, you know what is going on.... a little paragraph but you know what is going on.... it’s every two weeks, I’m pretty sure it is. So it’s common.*

Shirley: *I get fortnightly reports via email of his progress, which is a standard thing and they get between one and five: one being poor, five being excellent. It’s a report that comes from each individual teacher; they give them a number.*

*So Tangaroa used to get a three, which is ok, but now he is up to like a four point five, which is excelling.*

Chris, Susan and Shirley also referred to contact they had with the school regarding their child's success and how the school's positive approach was incredibly beneficial. Chris:

*Yeah, they have been really good. Jeremy, he won the sports award.... And all this stuff goes on in the background and then they phoned us up one day and told us he had been nominated and we didn't even know about it.*

Susan: *I've even spoken to your Dean teacher, the counsellor and Mr Simpson. And we've been in the office." They said, "he was doing very well Susan...*

Shirley: *I know at the whānau hui, a couple of months ago, on a big screen they put up all these statistics about Māori students at Greenwich, where they are at compared to the National level. It was really really interesting. All the Māori students at Greenwich were so much way above in their NCEA compared to the rest of New Zealand. And they were really embracing that, it was like a 15 or 20 minute talk about it and they were just so proud...*

Both Iwa and Shirley emphasised how they valued being informed and that school communication was integral to their involvement. Iwa:

*And that's all I want, just to be kept in the loop. If there is something they need to do, just let me know.*

Shirley: *No, I just want to get involved, I want to know what my kid is doing at school. I want to know what the school is doing for my child.*

Cara referred to a range of situations with the school regarding communication and they were all antagonistic. This has resulted in her feeling both aggravated and discouraged,

*I wish the school would put more focus on children's education than on the uniform. I mean honestly, I was getting texts almost every day, 'your daughter's wearing the wrong shoes', 'your daughter's got the wrong socks', and I said, "ok, and how is my daughter doing in Science?" Do you know? They wouldn't have a clue...*

Cara was also not informed about what could have been an extremely positive situation,

*now I found out mid way through the year that apparently my child's gifted and talented, which no one bothered to tell me...*

**e) Relationships between the school and whānau are fostered; they are bidirectional and are conducted with respect.** Two key relationships were referenced by participants as influential in their motivation for sustaining an association with the school; these were relationships with staff and the wider community.

**i) With staff.** Cara commented in-depth on her relationships with the school. She referred to importance of having teachers as role models for students in order to foster whanaungatanga,

*And then you have a teacher who has purple hair and a tongue piercing and you're telling my children, they can't have tongue piercings or purple hair?" ....and you're saying [the students] can't do this, but you're standing in front of them doing it, I don't understand how you build good relationships with these kids."*

Cara perceived that a high staff turnover rate at School A significantly impeded the fostering of relationships with students,

*I said, “she has Science say Monday and Thursday, now on a Monday she will get Ms. Smith, on a Thursday she will get Mr. Brown... How is there supposed to be a relationship established here?” She doesn’t know the teachers, it’s shocking, it is shocking.*

Regarding whānau involvement, Cara also suggested that teachers play an important role in helping whānau feel at ease,

*I think people are intimidated and teachers don’t make it easy for some people, treat them, you know the way I used to get spoken to and I think for some people they are just too whakamā to even look the teachers in the face for a start or least of all say, “I just disagree with you.”*

Chris suggested that smaller classes might contribute to teacher-student bonding,

*I think maybe smaller classes. Then the teacher has more time to spend with each student. But that is money, especially these days.*

Iwa provided insight into her relationship with the school, as well as how School A responded to other whānau who might not be doing as well,

*I think because I have been there so long, they know me and they know how to talk to me. They are aware of each family’s needs and what each family is like but they know this family, ‘they’re good.’ But the other ones that aren’t doing so great they are like, ‘oh well.’*

Shirley placed a strong emphasis on her relationship with the staff,

*I: So you value that relationship?*

*P: Yip, gotta have it.*

Susan also believed that her ongoing relationship with the school was assisting her grandson’s achievement,

*I: So you feel like WT is doing well there now, and you have had that involvement with the school?*

*P: Yes, cos I say if anything happens in school or in class, ring me so I can come and help.*

**ii) With the wider community/iwi.** Support from the wider community and iwi was also highly regarded by whānau. Iwa has noticed a shift in community support since the earthquakes,

*I: Do you think the wider community within School A, that there is an involvement in the school?*

*P: No, not over these past few years.*

*I: Oh so that has changed?*

*P: It has, it has changed big time. And I think with so many changes happening within the schools, it has kind of dropped off, especially around this area.*

Shirley suggested in the following quotes that through promotion of all the positive things School B are doing for Māori students, wider iwi support and commitment for the school might be further fostered,

*And I think they could get it out to the wider community that Māori students at School B are actually excelling, which will encourage more kids to go there as well, but I don't know if it is a cost.*

*And I think they could do more, it's just getting it out there. You know I think if more parents in Christchurch knew that School B did fantastic things for Māori and that the Māori students were really excelling compared to the rest of New Zealand then they would get more and more students wanting to go there and more and more parents wanting to take their children there.*



## **Emerging Theme Four:**

### **Manaakitanga – caring for Māori students**

For participants, manaakitanga was evidenced in several ways. Subsequently, five substituent themes were discernible. These were that Māori students' potential are being nurtured and their individual strengths recognised and fostered, their learning is engaging and purposeful, teachers have high expectations of them, their specific learning needs are being met and extended, and they are being supported emotionally and are mentored.

**a) Their potential is being nurtured and their individual strengths recognised and fostered.** Participants referred to what they considered as a demonstration of manaakitanga, as well as what is not working well for their children. Along with not being informed that her daughter was gifted and talented (*Theme 2d*), Cara referred to several incidents where she felt that teaching staff were not supporting her children in obtaining their potential,

*...they're not the norm and I kind of had to push for my eldest daughter to actually be able to, well to be allowed to sit her levels above her age group. And they said, "well it doesn't fit in with the programme." And I said, "my daughters' are high achievers." ....and that's what the teachers say to me, 'she's bored'", and I said, "well then what are you going to do?" You know what I mean?*

When referring to the weekly reports that School B provided, Chris mentioned the feedback was "*a generic score, more on effort*" and when clarification was requested around the fact it was not just academic, he responded, "*Yeah, but yip really good.*" Iwa felt that perhaps the School A could focus more on students' strengths

and nurture these. She mentioned that her eldest daughter was a talented academic and subsequently the school expected the younger siblings to be the same,

*They have this expectation because Catherine was such a good student, they think she is going to be the same and she is not... like focus on their strong points rather than their weak points, which is what they seem to focus on. They pick at the weak points, like with my two youngest, they don't focus that she is really good at art.*

Comparatively, Shirley acknowledged that School B had been doing a significant amount around nurturing the leadership qualities of individual Māori students,

*They identify these Māori students who are leaders and they hold full days of leadership days, sessions and they get certificates in leadership. They are just trying to nurture those Māori students to sort of go on for the younger.*

*...and that is why they are embracing the likes of my niece and my son and the Māori students that are there, because they recognise these qualities and that these guys are leaders.*

Susan also referred to School B fostering individual talents and skills and making the extra effort to engage Māori students,

*Yes and the Science, he is going to Lake Ellesmere after Labour weekend to test the water. It is for year ten and he has told me all about it. Just nine of them or eight of them. Actually twelve of them from year ten were picked, cos he loves Science.*

**b) Their learning is engaging and purposeful.** Several participants mentioned that their children are bored at school and that the learning that was occurring was not capturing their interest,

Cara:

*Miriama, is bored, she's done this mahi. Because it was a combined year nine and ten class last year, she's done all the year ten work, now she's in year ten, she's bored out of her brains.*

Iwa:

*And some of them are good, some other interactions with the teachers, they are still old school. And our kids are not old school anymore. You know, and we haven't raised them old school. And it's like come down to their level once in awhile. And even Christina said some of them are so boring and it's cos they are old school.*

**c) Teachers have high expectations of them.** It appeared integral to the operationalization of a school's manaakitanga that the teachers had high expectations of Māori students. Iwa mentioned that she particularly valued how the teacher of te reo demanded the best of her Māori students,

*And Peata has been really good, especially with Christina. She is quite tough, but she has been a good role model. ....for all her Māori students she has high expectations for them. ...she wants her Māori students to do well and if she can, she will help them.*

Shirley's reference to the whānau hui where the school shared how well Māori students were achieving indicates that School B had a clear expectation that their Māori students will strive for excellence. This following quote highlighted how important this achievement was for the whole whānau, for instilling pride and hope in the future,

*Well it is to know that your child is there and the ones that are already there are excelling. ...we were just blown away and they were so proud.*

School B also recognised how well Susan's grandson was doing and therefore put him up a class, reaffirming their high expectations of him,

*Then I had to go see Mr Simpson and the Dean teacher and the counsellor in the office. And they said, "Oh Susan, we have to put your son up cos he is finishing his work..."*

**d) Their specific learning needs are being met and extended.** Whānau also appreciated schools that specifically targeted their child's learning needs and accommodated those requirements in their planning. Cara spoke of a teacher who wrote a separate programme for her daughter,

*...she set up a separate programme for Miriama to do.... [I] said, "you know, that teacher went over and above to support you."*

Chris mentioned how much he valued a certain teacher going out of their way to support his son's learning,

*...they offered extra classes for him. One teacher, Maths I think, offered him after school time.*

Shirley also referred to School B's buddy system for assisting students who needed help in particular subjects, however later mentioned that her son was reluctant to use it due to the stigma associated with it,

*You see School B will have the Buddy system, so if your child is struggling they might get a Year 13 to take some extra time. Like Tangaroa is really struggling with Maths at the moment, the school is aware of it, I'm aware of it.*

Susan inferred that it was with the specific learning support from the school and her engagement that resulted in her grandson moving up a stream,

*I: So they had noticed a change in him from that first year to that second year and your involvement?*

*P: Yeah, yeah. So all of a sudden he has gone up classes. He said, “Oh Mum, I have gone up classes.” “Oh, good boy!”*

**e) They are being supported emotionally and are mentored.** Whānau identified that intrinsic to the school’s fostering of manaakitanga was an emphasis on pastoral care and mentoring. Cara had a daughter with a diagnosis of social anxiety and she mentioned how the school had difficulty providing her with the appropriate support,

*...and her social anxiety, what they ended up saying to me was, “well if she needs a hand she just needs to go knock on the counsellor’s door.” And I said, “she will never, ever knock on the counsellor’s door.”*

However, Cara valued those teachers, who went out of their way to support her daughter and were aware of daughter’s emotional needs,

*...He’ll email me straight, say like if something happened today, he’ll email, he’ll ring me. He rung me one day and he’s like, “Look Cara, I hate to do this to you on a Friday but Miriama was in class, she was a bit off.” He goes, “I think something happened.” He goes, “I couldn’t really get through to her, she wouldn’t put her cell phone away.” He said, “I didn’t refer her, I kept her in the class.” He said, “but, I think you might wanna talk to her.” And I said, “I so appreciate that.” You know, and he is brilliant.*

Iwa suggested that the school was supportive of the students that wanted to achieve, but for those who dropped out there was no additional mentoring,

*...especially the ones that want their kids to do well and want them to achieve. But even those ones that aren’t interested, to keep them in school, cos they seem to drop off part way through and it’s sad.*

In the following quote, Shirley identified that a strong counselling team was really important for the student's emotional needs,

*...they have a really strong counselling team, with James. ...I'm pretty sure they have something specifically for Māori.*

Susan recognised that in the past, a mentor for her grandson has made a positive difference,

*Yeah cos when he was young, I did have a hard time and I used to be with Pillars. He had a buddy with Pillars and the buddy used to take him out and he was very helpful.*

### **The Perfect School**

One of the last questions asked by the researcher was for participants to describe their perfect school. The following quotes represented some of the responses. Shirley:

*...where both cultures and tikanga were embraced and practised and where the parents were fully involved, even with the teachings and hongi and life skills and tikanga and the old Māori ways and embracing all that sort of thing.*

*Iwa: Culturally...a lot more teachers being culturally sensitive. You know, not just the one teacher looking after the Māori students.*

*Chris: I think maybe smaller classes. Then the teacher has more time to spend with each student. ...it would be good to see School B being known for their strong Māori voice.*

### **Summary of Findings**

Figure five visually presents a summary the four interwoven superordinate themes and relevant substituent themes that were revealed through the analysis process described above. These fit within Macfarlane's (2004) educultural framework for building successful relationships between teachers and students.

What emerges from the IPA analysis is the theme of Rangatiratanga (advocacy, leadership and commitment) is that both te reo and tikanga Māori are visible and integrated within the school, as well as the wider community. The range of cultural activities accessible, and the regularity and integrity with which these take place, are the mechanisms through which whānau indicated that the school's commitment to Māori is demonstrated. Additionally participants made numerous references to the importance of Māori culture being respected and prioritised by teaching staff, and in particular the principal. This indicates that school leadership plays a significant role in engagement with whānau. Through the establishment of culturally focussed activities, implementation of te reo and tikanga across the school, and with both led by senior management, whānau feel supported and valued, and rangatiratanga is apparent.

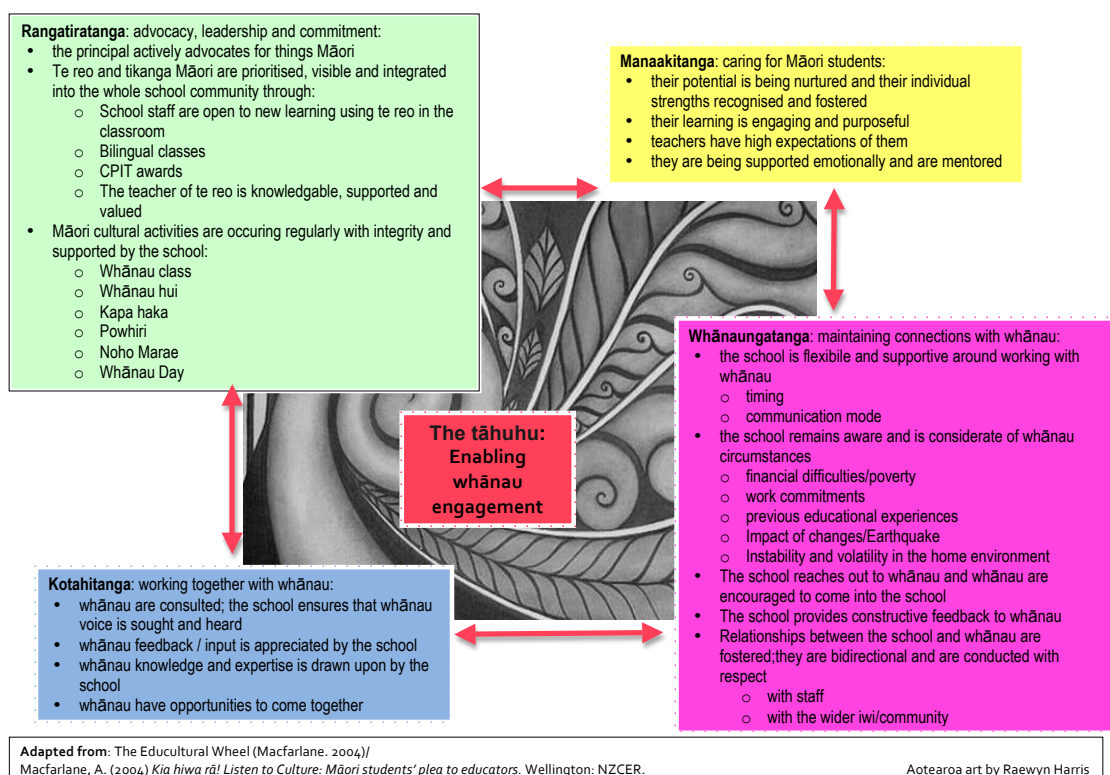


Figure 5: A summary of the findings: Enabling whānau engagement

The theme of kotahitanga (working together with whānau) was clearly discernible across all five interviews. Participants explanations regarding the operationalisation of this theme was divided into four substituent themes: whānau are consulted and the school ensures that whānau voice is sought and heard, whānau feedback and input is appreciated by the school, whānau knowledge and expertise is drawn upon by the school, and whānau are provided opportunities to come together. Participants conveyed the importance of schools that persistently reach out to whānau, seeking their input in decision making processes, and acting on the suggestions made by them. Utilising the considerable experience of Māori is a means through which schools can also actively involve whānau in a productive and affirming way. Additionally providing a range of situations on a regular basis for whānau to interact is essential in the process of kotahitanga.

Whanaugatanga (maintaining connections with whānau) was identified in the analysis as an important theme for enabling whānau engagement within all the transcripts. Schools that were flexible and considerate of whānau circumstances regarding the timing of meetings and extra-curricular activities were highly valued, as were schools that had a variety of communication methods. Participants also cited a wide range of situations that made engagement difficult. These included financial stress, work commitments, their own educational history, the impact of change, particularly the Christchurch earthquake, and instability and volatility within the home. Schools need to be aware and respectful of these differing circumstances that whānau may be experiencing. When a school reaches out in a constructive and positive way, and encourages whānau to be involved, this was appreciated by participants and broke down barriers. Fostering relationships, not only with the



school staff but also with the wider community, was also considered integral to maintaining connections.

The theme of manaakitanga (caring for Māori students) as a mechanism for engagement was apparent in all five transcripts. Whānau placed a strong emphasis on schools that demonstrated pastoral concern and individual learning support for Māori students. In particular, school staff that nurtured, along with those who emotionally fostered their child were highly regarded. Participants also respected teachers that focussed on their child's strengths, not their deficiencies. Importance was placed on teachers who set engaging work and went the extra mile for the child. Most notably, teachers who had high expectations and mentored students were greatly valued. These staff attributes were clear enablers for whānau involvement and support.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

### **Comparing the Findings to the Existing Literature**

The results of this current study support many of the findings related to parental involvement previously reported in the literature. These will be discussed below according to theme. Overall the findings align with international and national research concerning the barriers and enablers of PI. However, edification regarding specific factors for engaging Māori students and their whānau contributes to the scope of the existing literature.

#### **Theme one: Rangatiratanga (advocacy, leadership and commitment).**

*The principal actively advocates for things Māori.* Apparent barriers to involvement cited in this current research and pertaining to rangatiratanga involved limited contact with the principal, as well as frequent negative interactions. The findings of a number of international studies support the invaluable role of the principal in breaking down barriers to PI and consequently building relationships between home and school (Ho, 2009; Horvat et al., 2010). Shirley acknowledged that a principal who is involved and promotes Māori success could be extremely constructive in fostering PI. In comparison, Cara pointed out that a principal who is unsupportive of Māori students generates feelings of disempowerment. Several NZ studies emphasised the importance of a principal who works collaboratively and empowers all stakeholders (Bull et al., 2008; ERO, 2008a; Henderson & Shamy, 2004). Additionally, Cara reported that a principal's role was to promote Māori culture and practices. This is substantiated by the findings in Ford (2012) where a culturally responsive leader was one who not only facilitated relationships but also fostered cultural practices within the whole school.

***Te reo and tikanga Māori are prioritised, visible and integrated into the whole school community.*** Evidence in the transcripts supported the importance of integrating Māori culture into the whole school, particularly the use of te reo. Within an international context, research outcomes have shown that parents place significant emphasis on their culture being acknowledged, teachers immersing themselves in the local culture, and bilingual opportunities being provided (Griego Jones, 2003; Mawjee & Grieshop, 2002; Orozco, 2008). Shirley also spoke of the importance of bringing culture and te reo into each individual classroom. She saw this as essential if the school was to demonstrate their incorporation of Māori values and customs. This was corroborated in the literature findings, which indicate that educators need to explore parents' beliefs and value diverse cultures (Flett & Conderman, 2001; Henderson et al., 2007). Additionally, for cultural differences to be unified, schools must have an understanding of home cultures and bring discussions of culture into the classroom, subsequently linking school learning with home learning (Flett & Conderman, 2001; Henderson et al., 2007).

Several participants voiced frustration at the lack of te reo speaking options in Christchurch and felt it resulted in a loss of Māori culture. This was recognised in the literature when Durie (1998) stated that the exclusion of the Māori language in schools has negatively impacted on Māori cultural identity. The ideal situation identified by participants was to have a choice regarding bilingual classes and for the staff to be open to using te reo in the classroom. Research conducted by Bright et al. (2013) is currently investigating how to implement te reo in the classroom for future Māori students.

***Māori cultural activities are occurring regularly with integrity and supported by the school.*** Whānau appreciated schools that had a range of cultural activities in

place. They reflected that through these practices the school was demonstrating rangatiratanga and their commitment and respect for Māori traditions. Activities like kapa haka and pōwhiri purportedly instilled a sense of pride and joy in both the whānau and their children. The international literature showed that cultural socialization, specifically having cultural knowledge, ethnic pride and widespread recognition can improve academic achievement and impact positively on the home-school dynamic. (Banerjee et al., 2011; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Desimone, 1999; Mawjee & Grieshop, 2002).

For participants, a lack of cultural practices indicated the school's indifference to Māori culture and subsequently created barriers to their engagement. This is supported in the NZ literature, for example in Bishop et al, (2003) and the ERO report (2008c), whānau respondents noted that they wanted to have their culture and values recognised and their identity respected. This is reaffirmed by Jefferies (1998) who stated that barriers to involvement are schools and institutions that are racist, intimidating, and that are not culturally appropriate.

Whānau referred to a range of cultural activities that they felt had a variety of positive outcomes for their children, including increased confidence and self-respect, as well as fostering the home-school relationship. This finding was corroborated in a cultural intervention study implemented by Rubie et al. (2004), which involved a range of cultural practices that resulted in parents and teachers reporting positive and encouraging outcomes for their students, such as increased responsibility, focus and self-discipline.

Kapa haka was referenced multiple times across the transcripts as an activity that enabled PI and fostered a sense of whānau honour, along with improving students' self-esteem. Barriers were created when whānau thought kapa haka was not

prioritised; when it was either happening erratically or when the school was not allocating time or space for practice. This aligns with the research by Whitinui (2010) who emphasised that kapa haka must be included as an academic subject, not a cultural add-on, and time and space must be provided. In Macfarlane et al. (2007), Cavanagh highlighted the importance of kapa haka for a Māori student who found that the ‘lights came on’ during kapa haka. Kapa haka was also identified as a way of promoting social and cultural well-being, better relationships, increased confidence, improved attendance and achievement, and most noticeably, family involvement (Gilgen, 2012; Whitinui, 2010).

Multiple references were also made by participants to whānau hui as an integral mechanism for engagement and also as a culturally-safe avenue for whānau concerns to be heard. This is also recognised in the literature where cultural connectedness was fostered through performing mihi and having hui with far-reaching positive outcomes for Māori students and their whānau (Gilgen, 2012; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013).

**Theme two: Kotahitanga (working together with whānau).**

***Whānau are consulted; the school ensures that whānau voice is sought and heard.***

Consultation with whānau was emphasised by participants as key to kotahitanga and subsequent PI. However, Cara and Chris reported on their experiences regarding a lack of bidirectional communication and expressed both frustration and disappointment when their concerns were not listened to or actioned upon. For Cara, her anger resulted from not being consulted or even informed about the closure of the bilingual unit at School A. Evidence from the international literature reiterates the importance of providing parents with options and shows that schools must advocate for parent voice if PI is to be fostered (Turnball et al., 2011). In the recommendations proposed for school PI policy, Henderson et al. (2007) suggested that teachers need to

communicate with parents, and staff must be warm, helpful, and responsive to family needs if there is to be a strong home and school partnership.

***Whānau feedback/input is appreciated by the school.*** Participants clearly valued schools that sought their input and took on their suggestions. Working collaboratively was a focus in The Getting Ready intervention (Sheridan et al., 2011), and in a NZ context, Bull et al. (2008) advocated collaborative and mutually respectful relationships as integral to successful home-school partnerships. Cara voiced her concerns about her child being taken off site and subsequently the school changed their policy. The value of this act of taking on parental advice is reiterated in Epstein's six principles of PI (NZPTA, 2012), specifically that schools must ensure parents are full partners in decision making processes if PI is to be fostered. Shirley explained her annoyance at not being consulted regarding homework and also communicated a sense of hopelessness in her ability to change anything. Davis (2000) supported the input of parents regarding homework assignments as a further mechanism for facilitating involvement.

***Whānau knowledge and expertise is drawn upon by the school.*** The utilisation of parents' skills was a clear substituent theme identified in the transcripts. Whānau whose skills were acknowledged felt that it contributed to kotahitanga and a positive working relationship with the school. Numerous international studies focussed on recognising parents as untapped sources of knowledge. Harnessing parental strengths and promoting their skills was viewed as key to fostering relationships and enabling PI (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Griego Jones, 2003; Henderson et al., 2007; Hornby, 2011; Mapp, 2003; NZPTA, 2012; Orozco, 2008; Sheridan et al., 2011; Shockley et al., 1995). Recognising that parents were also experts on their own children was cited in the transcripts as further promoting involvement. Mapp

(2003) reaffirms this in the literature by clarifying that when parents feel involved in their child's learning and useful, they experience a connectedness with the school. Iwa reported feeling frustrated that whānau expertise was being devalued regarding speaking te reo. Henderson and Shamy (2004) corroborate this in their research by referring to parents who often felt discouraged by the school. Despite having the skills, the parents felt these were underutilised.

***Whānau have opportunities to come together.*** Providing whānau with specific opportunities for coming together on a regular basis was recognised as important for several participants. They identified activities such as whānau hui, kapa haka and noho marae as culturally appropriate strategies for promoting collegiality and a willingness to be involved. International research has also recognised the value of making available a range of involvement activities that are specifically targeted for families in order to break down barriers (Davis, 2000; Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003; Henderson et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hornby & Lafaele 2011). Participants also highlighted the appeal of offering activities to whānau in an environment that was familiar and so they felt safe when raising any concerns. In Mapp's (2003) study the school provided a specific room for parents to meet and interact informally, and this resulted in noticeably improved involvement. It was recommended in the research that opportunities for participation are provided and most importantly be ones valued by the parents (Mawjee & Greishop, 2002; Williams & Sanchez, 2011).

**Theme three: Whanaungatanga (maintaining connections with whānau).**

***The school is flexible and supportive around working with whānau.***

Participants identified that schools, which recognised and adapted to whānau needs were able to sustain communication and subsequent relationships with the home.

Cara and Shirley identified that the timing of both meetings and communication were important to maintaining connections. Shirley appreciated the regularity of school contact, however Cara voiced frustration about the negative text messages she received and felt School A was not considerate of her work situation. This is supported in the literature as schools that did not respond in a timely manner or created conflicts with schedules impacted negatively on PI (ERO, 2008a; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003; Williams and Sanchez, 2011).

Across the transcripts, participants appreciated a wide of range of communication modes being used with regularity and the accommodation of whānau requests. Schools that consulted with parents about the mode of communication and contacted them frequently but informally, were identified in the literature as facilitating PI (Bull et al., 2008; Davis, 2000; Flett & Conderman, 2001; Hornby, 2011; Mawjee & Greishop, 2002). Cara showed general annoyance with the content of the contact she had with School A; she believed it was often antagonistic and a barrier in her relationship with the school. ERO (2008a) described communication that was meaningful and positive as promoting involvement. Iwa noted that using her children as a means of transferring information to the home was unreliable. Williams and Sanchez (2011) also cited this issue in their research, finding that a heavy reliance on using students to communicate with parents provided a further hindrance to engagement.

***The school remains aware and is considerate of whānau circumstances.***

Participants referred to range of situations that impacted on their involvement and as a barrier to whanaungatanga with the school. These included financial difficulties and poverty; work commitments; their prior educational experiences; the impact of changes, in particular the earthquakes; and instability in the home environment.



Participants inferred that staff need to be aware of these circumstances and be supportive and provide different avenues for engagement. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) recognised that the current life experiences of the family can be an obstacle to PI and cited many of the above situations. Mapp (2003) also noted that social factors impacted on parents' willingness to be involved and again referred to similar situations to the participants. Williams and Sanchez (2011) also stated that schools must be considerate of the context of families. The after-school programme at School B was something that Shirley greatly valued. In response to unequal resources, Henderson et al. (2007) suggested that schools offer after-school programmes, and transportation and childcare.

Iwa, Shirley and Susan refer to their own financial difficulties that have resulted in additional stress. However, Susan mentioned how much she appreciated the extra support from School B. The impact of family income and SES on PI has been examined in a large number of studies, in particular the interaction of low-income on children's academic achievement (Devaney et al., 1997; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Garces et al., 2000; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hartas, 2011; Hill, 2001; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013; Wen et al., 2012). Iwa and Cara talked about their financial concerns, specifically the added costs for school trips and uniforms. Shirley also mentioned her frustration at not being able to provide her son with extra tuition. Findings in the ERO report (2008c) also described the parental worry of not having the money to pay for extra school costs. Some parents in Williams and Sanchez (2011) stated that their lack of financial resources made them feel uninvited at the school. Furthermore, Orozco (2008) noted that schools do not always value parents who are identified as low income.

Most participants cited the difficulties of balancing work commitments with involvement in their child's education. This often resulted in a compromise if schools' were not considerate of whānau circumstances. This view was supported in the literature with the ERO (2008c) report recounting the experiences of Māori parents who said that the requirement of taking time off work meant involvement was difficult. Parents also reported familial stress and work responsibilities as barriers to PI in McWayne et al. (2004).

For some participants their own schooling had been a particularly negative experience and this has resulted in embarrassment and reticence regarding their child's schooling. Finders and Lewis (1994) acknowledged that schools don't often consider parents' educational situation and how that may impact on their willingness to be involved. ERO (2008a) noted that Māori parents reported their own damaging schooling experiences made PI difficult. The interaction between the level of parental education obtained and PI has been a focus of several international studies, with lower parental education resulting in less engagement in the child's learning (Hartas, 2011; Hill et al., 2004).

Several participants disclosed difficult and often traumatic life events. This included whānau who had been imprisoned, exposure to drugs and alcohol and single parenthood. In the research, students reported that they experienced a wide of range of negative influences in the home, including poverty and abuse and this had impacted on their learning (Jefferies, 1998). Parents in another study acknowledged that life was just a struggle to keep their child off the streets and that they typically do not have the energy to worry about school (Lawson, 2003).

***The school reaches out to whānau and whānau are encouraged to come into the school.*** Participants particularly valued the opportunity for both themselves and

their whānau to go in to the school in an informal way and to feel welcomed. In the model regarding barriers to PI (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011), schools that were inflexible in the timing of meetings with parents and formal in their interactions were a barrier to engagement. However, schools that are considered welcoming are recognised as fostering engagement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; NZPTA, 2012). In the NZ literature, ERO (2008a) reported on parents' negative views: that the school was not welcoming and made them feel uncomfortable. Cara also described whānau that might feel intimidated about going in to the school and need extra support. This point is reiterated in Bishop et al. (2003), when Māori students reported that their parents and grandparents were often too scared to come into school.

Cara referred to a particularly negative experience regarding the school's Māori liaison officer, who despite their position did not take the opportunity to engage with whānau. As noted by Shirley, this is a role that actually has the potential to provide both encouragement and much needed support for whānau regarding coming into the school. A number of international studies have mentioned how the role of a family involvement co-ordinator or community outreach worker has the capacity to greatly enhance the relationship between home and school, particularly for those of different ethnicities (Bull et al., 2008; Davis, 2000; Henderson et al., 2007).

Home visits have also been identified in the literature as key to collaborative home-school practice and have been very successful in breaking down barriers for parents regarding coming into the school (Davis, 2000; Hornby, 2011; Mapp, 2003; Sheridan et al., 2011; Shockley et al., 1995), and for decreasing students' truancy (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Both PI policy (Henderson et al., 2007) and government initiatives (MSD, 2012a) have also emphasised the importance of home visitations.

This is alongside targeted funding and a space on the school grounds for parents to go and feel at home (Davis, 2000; Mapp, 2003).

***The school provides constructive feedback to whānau.*** All participants identified positive and regular bidirectional interactions with staff as integral to their involvement and subsequent whanaungatanga. Those who had received constructive information regarding their child's behaviour and achievement demonstrated both a sense of pride and a willingness to be involved. Implications from the literature clearly advocate for contact to be meaningful, timely and genuine (Bull et al., 2008; Davis, 2000; Henderson & Shamy, 2004; NZPTA, 2012). Communicating effectively was also found to have a strong positive association with students' increased attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002), and with intrinsic motivation (Fan et al., 2011). In contrast, decreased contact between home and school resulted in both externalizing and internalizing problem behaviour (McWayne et al., 2004). Cara noted that often her communication with the school was about negative things to do with her daughter and this made her feel irritated and disheartened. Izzo et al. (1999) also reported that increased contact was frequently associated with problem behaviour.

***Relationships between the school and whānau are fostered; they are bidirectional and are conducted with respect.*** Understanding and respectful relationships between home and school and the wider community were identified as vital to participants' involvement in education. This factor has been investigated in the literature, both internationally and within NZ. Shockley et al. (1995) stated that meaningful, bidirectional relationships build mutual respect between parent and teacher, teacher and child, and child and parent. Flett and Conderman (2001) cited that respect and recognition are also key to engagement. In NZ, the PMI project

(Gorinski, 2005) emphasised the strengthening of bidirectional relationships between home and school, and the wider community, with extremely positive responses from both teachers and parents. The next phase of Ka Hikitia, Me Korero also includes strategies for fostering relationships between schools, homes, iwi, and the community (MOE, 2014), as did Te Kauhua (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.a).

Several participants mentioned that they felt it was incredibly important to have a good relationship with staff. They felt an ongoing respectful dialogue results in positive outcomes for their children and promotes their own enjoyment of school involvement. International research demonstrates how parent-staff relationships that maintain personal connections, show mutual respect and honesty, and develop trust, have far reaching positive consequences (Griego Jones, 2003; Hornby, 2011; Lawson, 2003; Mapp, 2003; Sheridan et al., 2011; Shockley et al., 1995). These include improved academic achievement (Hughes & Kwok, 2007), and socioemotional adjustment (Izzo et al., 1999). Furthermore teacher perception of the quality of their relationship with parents was significantly associated with both home and school participation (Izzo et al., 1999).

In the model proposed by Turnbull et al. (2011), the facilitation of the school and home relationship was cited as integral to breaking down barriers. Several of the recommendations focussed on teacher communication with parents that was friendly and honest and that established trust. Findings in the NZ literature has also recognised the importance of whanaungatanga (McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013). Additionally Bishop et al. (2003) noted in their report on year nine and ten Māori students' experiences, that the home-school relationship was not being nurtured and this was impacting negatively on Māori student achievement.

Cara commented on several barriers in the development of constructive relationships with staff. These included teachers who were not positive role models, a high turnover of staff, and disrespectful, often oppositional dynamics with individual teachers. Additionally she noted that whānau might also feel intimidated when speaking with staff. These findings align with other studies regarding the barriers to PI, where the interaction between parents and teachers was viewed as having a determining influence (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003) found that teachers who do not value PI, have preconceived ideas about parent competencies and skills, and who are not allocated time, training or support, are significant obstacles to PI. In a NZ context, barriers identified by Māori parents (ERO, 2008c) and Māori students (Jefferies, 1998) were teachers who had deficit views of the child. Parents reported that they wanted teachers who related well to their children (ERO, 2008c).

Iwa mentioned how much she valued having the wider community's involvement in the school. Shirley also acknowledged the importance of iwi support and felt this was an area School B could develop. Building wider alliances within the community has also been recognised in the literature, specifically in Turnball et al.'s (2011) model of involvement enablers and in Epstein's six types of PI (NZPTA, 2012). Henderson et al. (2007) also emphasised that working with community groups as cultural brokers should be a key aspect of PI policy. Further studies have also posited that community collaboration is effective in promoting home and school partnerships (Bull et al., 2008; Davis, 2000, ERO, 2008a). Specifically regarding Māori students, involvement of iwi or other Māori groups was identified as a PI enabler in Jefferies (1998) research and in E tu whānau, the MSD strengths-based programme.

**Theme four: Manaakitanga (caring for Māori students' learning and potential)**

*Their potential is being nurtured and their individual strengths recognised and fostered.* Across the transcripts there was a clear focus on teachers who recognised students' strengths, for example their leadership skills or talents in subjects such as science. The PI model proposed by Turnball et al. (2011) stated that teachers' need to foster the strengths of their students and treat them with dignity if they are to foster parental engagement. Bevan-Brown (2005) suggests that teachers who value and promote cultural diversity can support gifted children. However, for both Cara and Iwa there was obvious frustration that the school was not encouraging their children or fostering their abilities, but rather focussing on their weaknesses. ERO (2008a) reported that schools with negative or deficit views of the child impede on whānau engagement. Students also reported in Bishop et al. (2003) on teachers who had low expectations of Māori students. The second theme that emerged in Griego Jones (2003) research was that teachers needed to value and understand each individual child's strengths and weaknesses.

*Their learning is engaging and purposeful.* Cara and Iwa referred to their children being bored, finding their learning either repetitive or not targeted at the correct level. The literature supports teaching that uses culturally relevant and appropriate content that targets students' abilities. Bevan-Brown (2005) recommended that teaching and assessment utilises culturally preferred ways of learning in order to support gifted Māori students. Furthermore, Rubie et al. (2004) employed culturally relevant co-operative learning strategies in their teaching and this resulted in a range of positive outcomes for students.

Participants valued teachers that expected excellence from their children. Jefferies (1998) reported that Māori students often felt that teachers had low expectations of them. The MOE report by Bishop et al (2003) supported this viewpoint, students referred to teachers not having high expectations, which impacted on their learning. Parents stated in the research by Griego Jones (2003) that they believed teachers had low expectations of minority students. However, results from Griego Jones (2003) research indicated that parents who felt teachers really cared for their child's welfare and had high expectations created a strong impetus for parental involvement. Raising the expectations of teachers was also recommended in the PI policy proposed by Henderson et al. (2007).

***They are being supported emotionally and are mentored.*** Intrinsic to manaakitanga for participants was evidence that teachers emotionally cared for, and provided for the pastoral needs of their child. Cara felt her eldest daughter's social anxiety was not appropriately acknowledged or supported, however her appreciation was evident when a teacher went beyond their job description to support her youngest daughter. This was affirmed in the literature with Turnball et al. (2011) positing that teachers need to be committed to supporting the emotional needs of their students, to ensure they are available and actually go beyond their job requirements.

### **Limitations of the Current Study**

This present study has some limitations that potentially impact on both the validity and reliability of the research. Due to the non-randomized recruitment of participants, the internal validity of this study may be weakened. Culturally appropriate school gatekeepers with knowledge of the whānau asked participants to register their interest. This process of self-selection could possibly have resulted in a pool of participants



with some biased viewpoints, which may threaten the authenticity of the research outcomes.

The sample was also limited by only involving five participants whose children attended two schools in suburban Christchurch, NZ. Recruiting a larger number of participants that live in a combination of rural and urban settings, both in the North and South Islands, and from a range of school deciles, would have been more representative. Additionally, a larger number of participants would have provided greater external validity due to the possibility of improving the generalizability and reliability of the findings.

The use of in-depth interviews also has some recognised limitations. One-to-one interviews provide no opportunity for feedback or input from others (Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A., 2011). However, it was the most appropriate methodology for this research and participants were consulted via email regarding the transcripts and outcomes. Preferably a one to one consultation regarding the results would also have added to the KM approach and further increased the validity of the study.

### **Strengths of the Present Study**

There are several particular strengths in this current study. The most significant outcome is that to this researcher's knowledge this is the first to interview whānau, conduct structured thematic analysis on the data, and produce a figure that may be used to inform school policy. The IPA also resulted in clearly identifiable superordinate and substituent themes that adhere closely to a Māori worldview (Ritchie, 1992), and the educultural wheel (Macfarlane, 2004).

A further strength of this study is that it was conducted within a KM theoretical framework. Due to the previously mentioned history of a Western-oriented deficit

approach to research with Māori, the use of KM methodology was intended to be an empowering and strengths-based process of consultation with participants. Bishop's (1996) IBRLA guidelines were also employed and provided questions to the researcher that established how the research should be carried out to ensure that it was culturally appropriate. Contributing to the legitimisation of the Māori experience was also the validation of both the transcripts and the results by participants. Additionally ongoing support and guidance from a cultural supervisor made certain the research was consistently supportive of a Māori worldview and concomitant with the KM approach. The findings also align with Tātaiako and the goals of Me Kōrero - Let's Talk.

### Implications for Future Educational Policy and Practice

The outcomes from this present study and the findings from the literature review have implications for both educational policy and school practice in NZ.

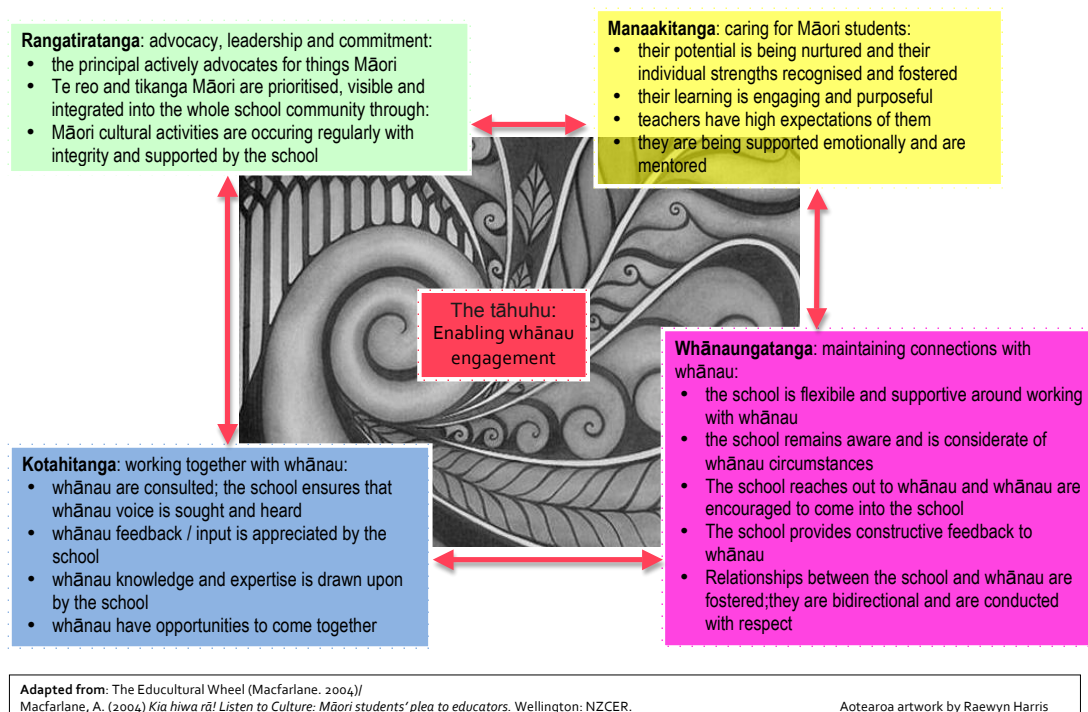


Figure 6: Possible school policy for whānau engagement

**Each school can have a specific PI policy for Māori students, one written in consultation with their whānau.** In order to foster PI, and the associated extensive range of positive outcomes for students identified in the rationale, the development of a visible school policy that enables whānau to engage with their child's education would be extremely constructive. This policy may be written in collaboration with whānau and the above tāhuhu provides a clear foundation and checklist on which NZ schools could build. Evidence from this research also supports the importance of PI policy for breaking down barriers (Davis, 2000; Henderson, et al., 2007; Hornby & Witte, 2010).

**Providing research-based evidence for educators and policy makers about the educational barriers/enablers whānau experience.** This phenomenological research provides understanding regarding participants' subjective experiences concerning their child's education. Through the structured analysis of themes it clearly conveys the barriers and enablers to whānau involvement. As mentioned previously many of the findings align with the literature, however several substituent themes contribute to the current knowledge through both specification and development of the evidence-base or through providing particular insight into the experiences for whānau within the NZ context.

***Theme one: Rangatiratanga (advocacy, leadership and commitment).*** Within theme one, significant emphasis was placed on speaking te reo and this provides some clear direction for schools regarding priorities for whānau. Evident within the transcripts was the frustration and disappointment participants felt with the limited bilingual options in Christchurch and the closure of the bilingual unit at School A. For whānau to feel engaged with their child's education, it appears necessary for the use of the Māori language to be prioritised, and schools and the MOE could do more

to integrate te reo into the classroom and the whole school community. Providing additional resources and ensuring the te reo teacher is proficient in the language was also a particular focus for whānau and further contributes to the avenue schools could pursue if they aim to engage successfully with their Māori students and whānau.

The literature referred to the importance of providing a range of activities to engage with families and promote PI (Banerjee et al., 2011; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Desimone, 1999; Mawjee & Grieshop, 2002). Kapa haka was also mentioned in the NZ literature (Gilgen, 2012; Whitinui, 2010). However, within the transcripts Participants repeatedly identified that conducting school and community hui was a key strategy for engaging whānau in a culturally appropriate and culturally safe way. This provides schools with a potential path for initiating engagement with whānau and a means of building relationships.

***Theme two: Kotahitanga (working together with whānau).*** A clear emphasis in the transcripts was placed on schools utilising the expertise of whānau and how this could further foster involvement. The international literature also supports this finding (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Griego Jones, 2003; Henderson et al., 2007; Mapp, 2003; NZPTA, 2012; Orozco, 2008; Sheridan et al., 2011; Shockley et al., 1995). However, examples provided by participants contribute to the specificity for implementation by NZ schools. There was a particular emphasis on employing the skills of whānau with knowledge of te reo and kapa haka, as well as recognising whānau as the experts on their own children.

***Theme three: Whanaungatanga (maintaining connections with whānau).*** Extensive research has been conducted into how parents' previous educational experiences influence their own involvement in their child's education (ERO, 2008a; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Hartas, 2011; Hill et al., 2004). However, within a NZ

context this is especially relevant and also evident within the transcripts. Māori have had a long history of educational disadvantage and subsequent failure, according to Pākehā standards. Educators and schools need to be aware of this history and appreciate how it may impact on Māori parents' willingness to be involved in another educational setting. Subsequently, if staff can ensure that interacting with the school is a positive and constructive process then this has the potential to enable whānau involvement. Fostering bidirectional relationships also appears integral to this process of whanaungatanga and if schools could allow time within the timetable and a space for teachers and whānau to interact, including conducting home visits and noho marae, this may be incredibly beneficial for all stakeholders.

***Theme four: Manaakitanga (caring for Māori students' learning and potential).*** Participants placed a strong emphasis on the schools demonstration of manaakitanga for fostering whānau engagement. This theme was not overly prevalent in the PI literature. A particular focus in the participants' interviews was the content of their child's learning; that it was engaging but also that their child was being extended. Individual care and attention from the teacher was prioritised and highly valued by participants with Chris referring to smaller classes being part of his ideal school. This suggests a clear recommendation for school policy. If teachers are endeavoring to support and nurture each child in their learning and development, then having fewer students in their classes would be a significant enabler.

**Providing educators and bureaucrats with knowledge regarding the efficacy of PI.** Teachers and policy makers could be encouraged to further foster PI if there was accessible research-based evidence on the far-reaching benefits of PI. Subsequently it may be more valued and prioritised in their practice. Although some initiatives for fostering PI in NZ have been put in place, several have been

discontinued. Currently PI policy seems to be an undervalued strategy for improving students' academic outcomes, especially for Māori students. Despite the widespread international research and the smaller amount conducted in NZ, the positive influence of fostering parental involvement appears to be widely unacknowledged.

**Providing educators with support to enable the facilitation of PI.** A further contribution to the previous recommendations is that schools, teaching training institutions and the MOE could potentially adopt PI as an important component of teacher knowledge and practice. NZ appears to be lagging in the implementation of PI practice and policy when compared to international exemplary practice (Hornby & Witte, 2010). Alongside the knowledge of PI efficacy is the opportunity to practise and develop the relevant skills, especially regarding culturally appropriate engagement with Māori. Schools and the MOE could allocate specific time for teachers in their day so they can contact parents in a positive and constructive manner or make home visits. The position of a Māori liaison officer with a clear job description that focuses on facilitating the relationship between home and school would also be invaluable. These initiatives would require additional funding; however as the evidence indicates they have the potential to greatly enhance the learning experiences of students in NZ and break down the barriers to PI for whānau.

### **Future Research Implications**

Due to the limited sample size there are several possible directions for future research. Increasing and diversifying the sample size outside of Christchurch would allow for further generalizability of the findings. A potential confounder is the difficulty delineating SES factors from the educational disparities identified between Māori and non-Māori, referred to in chapter one. Academic underachievement for Māori may be more adequately explained by whānau socio-economic disadvantage. This is beyond

the scope of the current research but must be considered as one of the most significant barriers to PI and to the improvement of Māori student educational outcomes. To counteract this requires change at a much broader macrosystem level: both a political and societal shift towards empowerment, remediation and equality for Māori. However, if future research is conducted across a larger sample of SES, school deciles and rural and urban settings, further illumination may be provided regarding this complex interaction. Replication would also increase the external validity of the study.

Another potential research direction is to implement the policy as a case study at a school that is agreeable. The policy and relevant practice that supports it could be put in place and analysis conducted as to whether whānau engagement does improve. Additionally, consulting with schools and gaining feedback about their perspective on whānau engagement and the suggested policy would provide further insight. Finally conducting a comparative study with NZ Pākehā participants and potentially developing a non-indigenous policy could further enhance the divergent validity of this study.

A final few insightful words from Shirley on her ideal school,

*Where both cultures and tikanga were embraced and practised and you would have the older students being role models for the younger students and have a mixture of both Māori and Pākehā or Pacific Island teachers...Yeah and where the parents were fully involved, even with the teachings and hungi and life skills and tikanga and the old Māori ways and embracing all that sort of thing... You know my ideal school would have a Marae on school but that all costs money.... You know I think if more parents in Christchurch knew that School B did*

*fantastic things for Māori and that the Māori students were really excelling compared to the rest of New Zealand then they would get more and more students wanting to go there and more and more parents wanting to take their children there.*



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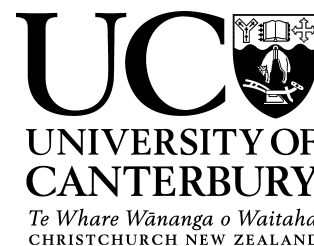
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## Appendix A: Information Letter for Participants

**School of Health Sciences**

**College of Education**

Nerese Hall (Masters student)  
School of Health Sciences, College of Education  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch 8140  
Tel: +64 22 0611072  
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4 April 2013

### THESIS ON WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

#### Information Letter for Participants

Tēnā koe

My name is Nerese Hall and I am a Masters student in the School of Health Sciences at the University of Canterbury. I am inviting you to participate in my Masters research on the ways in which whānau engagement happens in Christchurch schools. The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons why whānau engagement does, or does not occur; to identify the enablers (or otherwise) of whānau involvement in a way that is culturally appropriate and responsive to Māori.

I would like to interview you about your perspective and educational experiences as the whānau of a Year 9/10 student. Small group discussions will also be conducted which will involve combined whānau groups. This will be done to ensure that the consultation process is ongoing and that feedback is acknowledged and affirmed through the exchanging of ideas. Both the interview and group discussion will be arranged at the participant's convenience and at a time that minimises disruption of their daily routines and responsibilities. The interview and group discussion will last between an hour and an hour and a half and be conducted in a location that is chosen by the participant, e.g. (school, researcher's office, or other mutually acceptable venue).

I hope you will agree to take part in this research, as your contribution is important. Your views and experiences will be useful in developing knowledge regarding how to facilitate whānau involvement in education, which in turn will promote a range of positive outcomes for Māori learners in Aotearoa.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and with no adverse consequences. While we are talking, if you do not want to answer any particular question, you may refuse. During the interview process you may stop the interviewee at any time or ask for something to NOT be recorded. You may also ask for something to be 'off the record' or removed at any time.

The interview and small group discussions will be recorded and typed up. The typed version of the interview will be returned for comment, or if you wish to alter or correct anything. Small group discussions will also be conducted to ensure that there is transparency and consultation regarding the results. During these small group discussions, participants will be asked to treat what is shared in confidence. All typed-up interviews will be prepared using pseudonyms for people and places. This will ensure that your confidentiality is protected. All interview tapes/data and transcripts collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and be destroyed after five (5) years. Anything that

you say during the interview will be treated as confidential. I will also take care to ensure your anonymity in publications of the findings. Your real name will never be used, and every effort will be made to ensure that no identifying details are made available. The study is for research purposes only.

The interviews and analysis are integral to the completion of my thesis so that I may fulfil the requirements of a Masters of Science.

If you agree to take part in the research, please sign the consent form and return to me. Alternatively if you have any questions about this project, please contact me:

Neresa Hall Post-graduate student of Child and Family Psychology programme School of Health Sciences, College of Education University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800 Christchurch 8041 Email: <a href="mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz">neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz</a> Phone: 022 0611072
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If you have any complaints about the project, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering participating in this project.

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*Neresa Hall*  
*University of Canterbury, School of Health Sciences*

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

The Chair  
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee  
University of Canterbury  
Private bag 4800  
Christchurch  
[human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

## Appendix B: Information Letter for Principal

**School of Health Sciences**

**College of Education**

Nerese Hall (Masters student)  
School of Health Sciences, College of Education  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch 8140  
Tel: +64 22 0611072  
[neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



4 April 2013

### THESIS ON WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

#### Information Letter for School Principal

Tēnā koe

My name is Nerese Hall and I am a Masters student in the School of Health Sciences at the University of Canterbury. As the principal of \_\_\_\_\_, I am hoping you may assist and support me in finding participants for my Masters research on the ways in which whānau engagement happens in Christchurch schools. The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons why whānau engagement does, or does not occur; to identify the enablers (or otherwise) of whānau involvement in a way that is culturally appropriate and responsive to Māori.

I hope to interview whānau of at least two Year 9/10 students about their perspectives and educational experiences. Small group discussions will also be conducted which will involve combined whānau groups. All typed-up interviews will be prepared using pseudonyms for people and places, including the school. This will ensure that your confidentiality is protected. All interview tapes/data and transcripts collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and be destroyed after five (5) years.

I feel that the views and experiences of whānau will be useful in developing knowledge regarding how to facilitate whānau involvement in education, which in turn will promote a range of positive outcomes for Māori learners in Aotearoa.

The interviews are integral to the completion of my thesis so that I may fulfil the requirements of a Masters of Science and I hope you will agree to assist me in this research. If you do so please sign the consent form and return to me. Alternatively if you have any questions about this project, please contact me:

Nerese Hall  
Post-graduate student of Child and Family Psychology programme  
School of Health Sciences, College of Education  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch 8041  
Email: [neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)  
Phone: 022 0611072

If you have any complaints about the project, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering assisting me in this project.

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*Neressa Hall*  
*University of Canterbury, School of Health Sciences*

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

The Chair  
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee  
University of Canterbury  
Private bag 4800  
Christchurch  
[human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

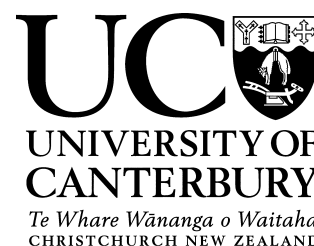
## Appendix C: Approval and Consent Form for Participants

School of Health Sciences

College of Education

Nerese Hall (Masters student)  
School of Health Sciences, College of Education  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch 8140  
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[neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)

4 April 2013



### THESIS ON WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

#### Approval and Consent Form

- I have read the information provided about this project. I understand this information and know that I can get further information if needed.
- I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that participants can withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and with no adverse consequences.
- I understand that any information or opinions participants provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify them.
- I understand to ensure accuracy, both interviews will be audio taped. I have read the information letter and understand all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and will be destroyed after five years.
- I understand that I am able to receive a report on the findings of the study. (This is indicated by ticking the appropriate box below and providing an email address where results will be sent).
- I understand that if I require more information about this project from the researcher and if I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Nerese Hall at any time: 022 0611072.
- I understand I may contact the Chair, University of Canterbury Educational research Human Ethics Committee, if I have any complaints.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please tick if you wish to receive a report on the findings of the study, and provide an email address in the space below.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope or email your approval to

[neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



If you have any complaints about the project, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee; see contact details below:

The Chair

Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

University of Canterbury

Private bag 4800

Christchurch

[human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

## Appendix D: Approval and Consent Form for the Principal

School of Health Sciences

College of Education

Neresa Hall (Masters student)  
School of Health Sciences, College of Education  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch 8140  
Tel: +64 22 0611072  
[neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)

4 April 2013



### THESIS ON WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

#### Approval and Consent Form for School Principal

- I have read the information provided about this project. I understand this information and know that I can get further information if needed.
- I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and with no adverse consequences.
- I understand that any information or opinions participants provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, including the school setting, and that any published or reported results will not identify them.
- I understand that if I require more information about this project from the researcher and if I have any questions about the research project, I may contact Neresa Hall at any time: 022 0611072.
- I understand I may contact the Chair, University of Canterbury Educational research Human Ethics Committee, if I have any complaints.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

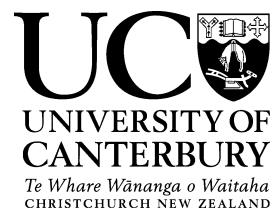
**Please return this form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope or email your consent to**

**[neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:neresa.hall@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)**

If you have any complaints about the project, you may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee; see contact details below:

The Chair  
Educational Research Human Ethics Committee  
University of Canterbury  
Private bag 4800  
Christchurch  
[human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

## Appendix E: Ethics Approval



### HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Ref: 2013/21/ERHEC

17 May 2013

Neresa Hall  
School of Health Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Neresa

Thank you for providing the revised documents in support of your application to the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee. I am very pleased to inform you that your research proposal “Whanau engagement in education” has been granted ethical approval.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 14 May 2013.

Should circumstances relevant to this current application change you are required to reapply for ethical approval.

If you have any questions regarding this approval, please let me know.

We wish you well for your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'N Surtees'.

Nicola Surtees  
*Chair*  
*Educational Research Human Ethics Committee*

*“Please note that Ethical Approval and/or Clearance relates only to the ethical elements of the relationship between the researcher, research participants and other stakeholders. The granting of approval or clearance by the Ethical Clearance Committee should not be interpreted as comment on the methodology, legality, value or any other matters relating to this research.”*