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The Voice of Whānau Māori in their Child's  
Success 'as Māori' in Mainstream  
Early Childhood Education

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master in Education, The University of Auckland, 2013.

## **Abstract**

This research examines success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education. As a pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry research, informed by Kaupapa Māori research methodology, this study draws on the voice of four whānau Māori whose child either attends or who has recently attended mainstream early childhood education.

The research found that each whānau desires for their child to succeed 'as Māori' is personal, for example, one whānau placed emphasis on the importance of their child's teacher knowing their child's name and not labelling them as just another Māori child who has limited abilities. At the same time, participants' also held common aspirations for whānau. This included their desire for mainstream early childhood education to deliver an authentic bicultural practice, where te reo me ona tikanga Māori is naturally enacted and embraced within all areas of the daily programme. A number of participants argued the need for mainstream early childhood education to genuinely commit to collaboration and co-construction with whānau Māori. Most importantly, whānau participants want their children to have a true sense of belonging, identity, security and pride in being Māori.

This pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry has provided a traditional way of narrating Māori stories through a Māori framework. Kaupapa Māori philosophy ensured whānau Māori were culturally safe when sharing their stories.

# He Mihi

*Ko Tainui te waka*

*Ko Moehau te maunga*

*Ko Waihou te awa*

*Ko Ngati Marutuahu te iwi*

*Ko Ngati Naunau te hapū*

*Ko Matai Whetū te marae*

*He mihi tēnei ki te whānau whānui*

I would firstly like to pay respect to our tupuna who guide us from the metaphysical world. I further acknowledge and pay respect to all our whānau who direct and guide us in the physical world.

To the whānau participants in this research, thank you. It is your pūrākau, stories, and narratives that give breath and life to this study. I am sincerely grateful for your generous spirit, your honesty and your voice of truth.

Dr Sandy Farquhar, I am extremely thankful for your supervision of this dissertation. I appreciate your academic expertise and your respect towards me as a novice Māori researcher. Dr Jenny Lee, thank you for your specialist guidance as a Māori mentor and an indigenous scholar. Thank you Dr Leonie Pihama for your support in what it means to 'be Māori.' Te Whānau o Te Puna Wānanga; thank you for your continuous support and encouragement. Te Whānau o Te Kōhanga Reo o Ritimana; thank you for always providing me with a sense of love and belonging.

Thank you to my dear friends, who have taken interest in this research. Finally to my whānau who I respect, honour and love, *Ko au te whānau, ko te whānau ko au.* Arohanui ki a koutou katoa.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

He kakano ahau i ruia i Rangiatea

I am a seed which was sewn in the heavens of Rangiatea

This dissertation focuses on the voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' within mainstream early childhood education. Kaupapa Māori and pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry is the methodological approach of this research. Whānau participants have shared their experiences, told their stories, and narrated their pūrākau. The research questions are centred on: Choosing mainstream early childhood education and what involvement each whānau Māori has had as a whānau Māori in mainstream early childhood education, what whānau Māori means for whānau participants and what success 'as Māori' means for their children in mainstream early childhood education.

### **Rationale for this research**

*Ka Hikitia Managing for Success, The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2008) was launched in 2008. It requires all teachers to ensure that Māori children are "enjoying success as Māori" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.11). As a Māori early childhood educator who is committed to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and bicultural practice, I find this statement somewhat perplexing, specifically because mainstream early childhood education in Aotearoa mostly comprises Pākehā teachers (Ministry of Education, 2010). Anne Milne (2009) the principal of Clover Park School in Otago argues that the wording 'as Māori' in *Ka Hikitia Managing for Success*, are the two words that should evoke most meaning. Milne elaborates and says these words will be completely ignored within a

schooling environment because non-Māori teachers have little or no understanding what 'as Māori' means.

Anne Milne's argument resonates with similar arguments expressed in early childhood education. Early childhood teachers are struggling with the implementation of the bicultural expectations (Burgess, 2006; Ritchie, 2008; Taniwha, 2005; Jenkins, 2009) of the early childhood curriculum *He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa/Early Childhood Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996) and in particular this curriculum as a *Tiriti* based curriculum (Jenkins, 2009). It is my belief that Māori children succeeding 'as Māori,' within mainstream early childhood education is at possible risk of being unnoticed or misunderstood unless whānau Māori are given the responsibility of leading any form of comprehension.

My reasons for undertaking this research are uncomplicated. There appears to be no research inquiring into the voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' within mainstream early childhood education. Furthermore, I also believe that Māori who are committed to Kaupapa Māori (L.T. Smith, 1999) must address issues that affect Māori. Māori cannot allow success 'as Māori' within mainstream early childhood education to be either ignored or misinterpreted by those who do not know what it is 'to be Māori.' This is my primary motivation for this research.

Despite there being no direct research around the voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori', I have been able to draw on work conducted by exemplary researchers Jenny Ritchie and Cheryl Rau. Ritchie and Rau (Ritchie & Rau 2004; Ritchie & Rau 2006; Ritchie, 2001a; 2001b; 2003a; 2008) have written extensively, individually and in partnership about the cultural, political, historical and social positioning of whānau Māori within mainstream early childhood education.

Moreover the work of Ritchie and Rau pays particular attention to bicultural practice, and challenges the unequal power sharing between whānau Māori and

mainstream early childhood education in Aotearoa. As a bicultural educator I “honour the rights of Māori and the Tiriti-based expectations of Te Whāriki” (Ritchie & Rau, 2006, p. 33) therefore the work of Ritchie and Rau has been invaluable in my research.

### **Whānau participants**

In following a Kaupapa Māori framework, I would like to introduce the whānau participants. Through my involvement in several Māori groups, I was able to network and ask for interested participants. Four whānau agreed to participate: one whānau had two whānau members interviewed together. The data for this research was gathered over a one month period. It involved four separate whānau semi-structured interviews.

I asked each of the participants where they would like me to conduct the interview. Three chose to come to my home and one chose their own home. All whānau participants reside in Tamaki Makaurau. One whānau had just moved to Tamaki Makaurau from a rural town. To protect the identity of the whānau, each whānau member has been given a pseudonym. I asked all participants if they would like to choose their own, only one did.

Celena is from Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Hine. She has two children. Celena is in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. Celena and her children attend a parent-led centre.

Rāwhiti is from Ngā Puhi. She has two boys: both attended a private mainstream early childhood centre. Rāwhiti works in the fitness industry and is currently in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a Bachelor of Health Science.

Whetū is from Ngāti Raukawa. She has three boys, two who went through Kōhanga Reo and one who has only recently started at a Kōhanga Reo. Prior to

this, her son attended a private mainstream early childhood centre. Whetū is a Kōhanga Reo kaiako and has a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education.

Manaaki and Puāwai are from Ngāti Kuri. Manaaki is the mother and Puāwai is the daughter. Puāwai is the mother of a daughter who is currently in a Kōhanga Reo. The whānau have recently moved to Auckland. Prior to this they lived in a rural town where their moko and daughter went to a private mainstream early childhood centre. Manaaki has a Bachelor of Education and is currently doing post graduate studies. Puāwai is in her first year of a degree.

### **Chapter outline**

This dissertation has seven chapters. Chapter one, introduces the research: *The voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education* and provides the context for this research.

Chapter two presents the literature review which comprises a succinct historical timeline of Māori in education, from the arrival of the British missionaries, through to Māori children in present day mainstream early childhood education. The literature reveals the direct impact that enforced assimilatory processes has had on the physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of Māori.

Chapter three discusses the methodology of this research. I have drawn on Kaupapa Māori as a foundational theory to support this pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry. Kaupapa Māori research advocates for Māori research participants to be in control of the research and to be treated as respected reciprocal partners. Pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry allows a space for whānau participants to tell their stories.

The following three chapters (chapters four to six) comprise findings and discussion consistent with a pūrākau narrative inquiry approach to research. In chapter four I begin by analysing the pūrākau of whānau Māori. This chapter focuses primarily on whānau choosing their prospective mainstream early childhood centres and what their involvement has been as whānau Māori. Out of the four whānau interviewed, only one whānau had a positive experience as whānau Māori.

Chapter five explores how each whānau interpreted the meaning of whānau. Whānau is part of an interconnected and extended network and does not work individually therefore it cannot be interpreted as being a family. The narratives revealed in this chapter emphasise the importance of seeing whānau as cultural informers and co-constructors in their child's education.

Chapter six is the last of the three narrative chapters. In this chapter, whānau give their meaning of success 'as Māori' for their children in mainstream early childhood education. Whānau responses were remarkably similar and when collated grouped into five primary aspirations.

Chapter seven concludes the dissertation. The primary fundamentals that support the aspirations of whānau Māori in their child succeeding 'as Māori' are disseminated.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua

We must revisit the past if we want to understand the present

To understand the positioning of Māori in education today, it is important to revisit the past. The well known whakatauki above, *kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua*-we must revisit the past if we want to understand the present, is a constant reminder to Māori, that physically we are in the present but always emotionally, spiritually and metaphysically connected to the past. The revisiting of the past is justified in this research as it can support current day mainstream early childhood teachers in understanding how colonial history has impacted on present day Māori. Avril Bell (2006) describes revisiting history as a place that “*can* fuel resentment and blame as well as understanding and reconciliation. But it is equally clear that understanding is impossible *without* attending to history [emphasis in original]” (Bell, 2006, p. 265).

This literature review presents an extremely brief overview of Māori in education, commencing from the first British missionary schools up until present day early childhood education. It is not intended to provide a thorough history but to paint a picture of significant events (historical, political, economic and social) that have influenced the positioning of Māori ‘as Māori’ in today’s society.

#### **Historical context**

Māori were first educated within a western education model by the British missionaries. The first missionary school started in 1816 in the far north.

Missionaries were very keen to learn te reo Māori; their intentions were two-fold. Learning the language would support them in their assignment to Europeanize Māori as well as Christianise them, as they perceived Māori as being uncivilised and uncultured (Stephenson, 2008).

During the establishments of the missionary schools in 1816, Māori continued to live 'as Māori' and had control of their lands, their people and their resources. However it wasn't long before Māori were starting to challenge the missionaries' intentions (Durie, 1998). Many Māori recognised that "While missionaries diverted their attention heavenward to seek salvation, their land was being taken from beneath their feet" (Durie, 1998, p. 298). In response to these impositions Māori took a politically active stance as they were fearful of assimilation. Māori were aware that their people were being assimilated into a culture that was far removed from their own and they needed to formulate a plan.

This political stance of Māori was reflected in the 1835 *Declaration of Independence*. This declaration is an assertion of great importance and meaning to Māori as it is here that iwi Māori conveyed to the world that they had overall autonomy of Aotearoa (Durie, 1998). Māori today still refer to this document as being the most significant document that assures their status as an autonomous people.

One of these people is Professor Patu Hohepa. In the course of this dissertation, I was guided by my tupuna to study at the Takapuna library. Here I came upon a hui facilitated by Professor Patu Hohepa. Professor Hohepa's lecture was titled *Mana Tiriti: Mana Tangata*. Professor Hohepa describes *The Declaration of Independence* as *He Whakaputanga*. Although his lecture covered many themes related to Māori and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, what interested me was Professor Hohepa vehemently advocating for the legitimacy of "He Whakaputanga [as] the formal proclamation of Māori sovereignty, written in Māori, and signed by Māori

rangatira in October 1835” (Hohepa, 2013, p. 5). Professor Hohepa believes it is this proclamation that gives Māori the right to autonomy.

After the writing of *He Whakaputanga* (Hohepa, 2013) the British noted that Māori were becoming a strong political force. This anxiety resulted in the formation of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. The signing of the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* in 1840 superseded *He Whakaputanga*. *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* is a formal document between the Māori chiefs and the British crown and was administered by Captain Hobson on behalf of the crown. There are two versions, one in English and te reo Māori (Durie, 1998).

Ritchie (2003) explains the fundamentals of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. Article one, allows for the British crown to govern Aotearoa while ensuring Māori have absolute authority over their lands. Article two gives Māori “full authority” that is their tino rangatiratanga over all their possessions, while Article three gives protection and equal rights to both Māori and the British citizens. Article four confirms that Māori beliefs and customs are equally accepted alongside the British beliefs in Christianity.

Protection of both cultures and their legal rights was at the basis of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. However many Māori academics point out that the Treaty (in particular the English version) has been used to protect and favour the British colonisers (O’Sullivan, 2007; G.H. Smith, 1997; L.T. Smith, 1999; Walker, 2004). These academics argue that Māori were coerced into a society which was governed by the cultural norms of the colonisers. The primary objective of the British was to assimilate Māori into their social order, in the hope of creating a homogenous grouping. O’Sullivan describes assimilation as defective, primarily because it is clouded in racism and used to strengthen systematic repression.

Adding to these changes was the introduction of the Education Ordinance in 1847. This ordinance introduced industrial boarding schools where the main objective was to educate Māori in the English language, to become either teachers or missionaries (Stephenson, 2008). Durie (1998) and others (Bishop. & Glynn 1999;

G.H. Smith 1997; L.T. Smith, 1999; Pihama, 2001) argue that these assimilationist policies, that can be traced to the start of the schooling system for Māori, are at the heart of negative performances by Māori children within current day education.

In addition further policies and legislations were introduced resulting in important acts becoming legislated in 1867 (Stephenson, 2008). These included the Native Schools Act, and the Māori Representative Act. The Education Act was passed in 1877. There were three layers to this act, the Central Department of Education, the Provincial Boards and Local School Committees. This official act was responsible for introducing free education, compulsory and secular education and the setting up of the National Secondary System and Teacher education.

The passing of these governmental policies further impacted on the process of assimilation. This became evident when one of the most distressing legislative acts was introduced into Aotearoa politics in 1880, by James Pope. James Pope the Inspector of Native Schools was responsible for writing the Native Schools Code in 1880 (Nairn, 1986, cited in Ritchie, 2003). It was during this period where Pope described the Māori language as an artefact with no positioning within New Zealand society and should only be used as a transitional tool (Ritchie, 2003).

Enforced directives from government departments contributed to the decline in Māori language speakers and therefore Māori language. In the year 1900, 90% of new entrants could speak te reo Māori. Sixty years later in 1960, Māori language speakers numbered 26% (Walker, 2004). A number of scholars have argued about the integral link between language, culture and identity (May, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2007; G.H. Smith, 1997; L.T. Smith, 1999; Walker, 2004). Māori language loss also resulted in the loss of Māori identity (Ritchie, 2003).

In the 1960s, reports focusing on young urbanised Māori who were struggling with this loss of identity and the impacts on their social and emotional wellbeing began to emerge. In 1961, the government appointed Mr J. K. Hunn as the Acting

Secretary for Māori Affairs, to review the role of the Māori Affairs Department (Hunn, 1961). While reviewing the administrative role of the MAD, Hunn also concluded in this report “the dire social consequences of industrialisation on and the rapid urbansiation of Māori” (Stephenson, 2008, p. 10). The findings in this report also established that the process of assimilation as a forced integrative process by the Crown had had a profoundly negative effect on Māori.

In response to these disturbing realities, Māori began to question and challenge their positioning within Aotearoa. Māori language was on such a decline that by 1979, it was thought to be dying. It was evident that, “the assimilationists, it seems, were winning, and language was losing its place in Māori ethnic identity” (Spolsky, 2003, p.559). Māori networks were formed where they collaborated, contested, and concluded that they had serious reservations around the role of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* within Aotearoa society (Walker, 2004).

Several Māori groups began advocating for more cultural equality between Māori and Pākehā (Walker, 2004). The 1970s was a period when young educated Māori were starting to question the horrific state of their people and most significantly, the validity of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. “Treaty of Waitangi was a fraud” (May, 2012, p. 286) became widespread language among these activists. *Nga Tamatoa* as the public face of these young educated Māori activists, were instrumental in ensuring the Māori language was to be acknowledged and introduced into schools.

Guided by Kaumatua and Kuia, the Māori Council and Nga Tamatoa were influential in having their submissions and protests regarding the welfare of Māori acknowledged. The government responded by introducing the *Treaty of Waitangi Act* 1975 and also established the Waitangi Tribunal (Walker, 2004). Responsibilities of the tribunal include listening to Māori grievances, examining *Tiriti* claims and informing Parliament about settlements. Māori were becoming

empowered and liberated while working through the process of decolonisation (L.T. Smith, 1999).

Māori were starting to adopt practical strategies and were beginning to show signs of proactive politics and not reactive politics (G.H. Smith, 2003). By the 1980s there were quite significant political changes in Aotearoa. Most notably was the introduction of major reforms in Aotearoa education system (Codd, 2008). Neoliberal ideology or right wing politics became a dominant force in Aotearoa politics. The prime focus behind this ideology was to increase Aotearoa economic growth, be part of the 'free market' and to open up our education system to privatisation and marketisation. At the same time Māori were vocalising their concerns about the loss of their language and culture and distrusted Pākehā policy makers. Adding to their anxieties was the continuing failure of Māori within the education system. While this period has had serious repercussions with the introduction of a neoliberal agenda in education and social policy generally, it is also a period that witnessed significant developments for Māori.

According to Smith (G.H. Smith, 2003) the period of the 1980s was the 'real revolution.' Māori were becoming strategic in their thinking. Instead of waiting to be instructed and directed, Māori became the leaders and directors of their aspirations. This process was particularly liberating as they were learning about "the freeing of the indigenous mind from the grip of dominant hegemony" (G. H. Smith, 2003, p. 3). The establishment of the Kōhanga Reo National Trust and the opening of the first Kōhanga Reo, total immersion Māori language nest in Wainuiomata on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1982 (Skerrett-White, 2001) validated the progress of Māori.

### **Te Whāriki, tikanga ā rua, bicultural in principle**

In the early childhood education sector, the introduction of biculturalism was initiated. *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) as the first bicultural curriculum

is now seen as a response to the needs of the Aotearoa community as a whole. There were noticeable disparities within certain community groupings and of particular concern was the plight of Māori within mainstream early childhood education (Te One, 2013). Jenny Ritchie (2008) describes ‘biculturalism’ as an effort by the colonisers to address the inequalities between Māori and Pākehā in an attempt to create an authentic *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partnership.

During this period the Kōhanga Reo movement was gaining momentum, not as an early childhood educational movement but for its standpoint on tino rangitiratanga and social justice (Te One, 2013). It was clear that the current educational system was not working for Māori in mainstream education. In an endeavour to support Māori children in early childhood education, the Minister of Education selected an advisory board to address Māori concerns. Tilly Reedy was a member of this board and together with her husband Tamati Reedy formed a partnership with Margaret Carr and Helen May in the writing of *Te Whāriki* (Te One, 2013). Extensive consultation was undertaken to include all voices from the early childhood sector and community.

*Te Tiriti o Waitangi* plays a fundamental role within *Te Whāriki*. It categorically states that “all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 9). This statement could be translated to mean: all children will be supported to expand their comprehension about the cultural contexts of both *Tiriti* partners which will require an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of Māori and Pākehā. As a consequence the expectation then must be for all early childhood teachers to be conversant with *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and acquainted with the historical, political, social and spiritual beliefs of both partners to this document.

The reality is that there is limited understanding to what role *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* plays in mainstream early childhood education. Research shows that most early childhood teachers are still developing their understanding of what biculturalism actually means (Burgess, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Ritchie, 2001b; 2003; Taniwha, 2005) therefore the capacity to deliver a *Tiriti* based curriculum is restricted. As a consequence children who attend mainstream early childhood education are unlikely to be developing their knowledge and understanding of both cultural partners in *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

Biculturalism as a scholarship in early childhood education is new and emerging. Seminal researcher Jenny Ritchie (2003b) conducted her doctoral thesis in bicultural development in early childhood education. Eighteen participants were recruited for this research, nine Māori and nine Pākehā. Ritchie's intent was to create a collaborative partnership with recently graduated early childhood teachers, colleagues and Ministry of Education bicultural professional development facilitators, to examine the development made by early childhood teachers embracing and implementing a bicultural curriculum (Ritchie, 2001). The findings from this research showed that interviewees were committed to a *Tiriti o Waitangi* based curriculum. Ritchie concluded that collaboration between both partners to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* is seen as the vehicle to drive future developments in biculturalism.

Other research has found, however, that there are a number of teachers who do not see *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* as playing a significant role in their teaching practices (Burgess, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Taniwha, 2005,). Chris Jenkins's (2009) doctoral thesis, *Bicultural Meanings: What Do Practitioners Say?* found that although there was an overall acknowledgement of the role of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* within early childhood education, there were still teachers that were not authentically committed to Māori as *Te Tiriti* partners. Burgess (2006) Jenkins (2009), Ritchie (2003b) and Taniwha (2005) further established that there is an overwhelming

need for professional development to support teachers in their bicultural development.

Rosina Taniwha (2005) master's thesis *Bicultural Myths and Realities* consisted of three individual face to face interviews, asking the participants for their interpretation of biculturalism, and how they were enacting bicultural practice. Her findings concluded that, *Te Whāriki* as a bicultural curriculum was lacking in prescription, therefore the teachers in her research were struggling to understand what was required of them in meeting their bicultural obligations. Taniwha also found that there was a discrepancy in the monitoring of practices, which sits in opposition to the expectations of *Te Whāriki* and namely its commitment to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. Taniwha argues that “[t]he basis to a bicultural pedagogy begins with beginning teacher education programmes in providing valid development of te reo Māori, tikanga and kaupapa Māori” (Taniwha, 2005, pp. 108 & 109).

Jill Burgess's (2006) master's thesis *Beliefs and Practice: Teacher response to the bicultural requirements in current New Zealand early childhood education discourse* involved interviewing nine early childhood teachers about their understanding and beliefs of biculturalism. Burgess found three broad responses: group one was “personally and politically committed to biculturalism, were seen to have adopted a wider extent of the tikanga Māori practices” (Burgess, 2006, p.75) Group two participants, were more interested in “cultural diversity [and] used practices that are compatible with the cultural heritage requirements of *Te Whāriki's* biculturalism” (p.76) and group three preferred “to be New Zealanders and who practise a limited form of biculturalism” (p.76). Burgess established that the participants in her research were influenced by their interpretation of culture and not by Ministry of Education policies.

Jenny Ritchie and Cheryl Rau introduced *Whakawhaungatanga Partnerships in Bicultural Development in Early Childhood Education* (Ritchie & Rau, 2006) as an educational resource to build on Jenny Ritchie's (2002) doctoral research This

research established that a collaborative partnership was the key strategy in forming a cultural responsive partnership with “whānau/hapū/iwi Māori within early childhood care and education settings” (Ritchie & Rau, 2006, p.1). According to Ritchie and Rau, the whanaungatanga approach requires genuine sharing of power, primarily focusing on ensuring whānau involvement in all areas of the day to day programme. Furthermore, Māori need to have a central role, therefore need to be consulted and included in all things Māori

This approach is emphasized in *Te Whāriki* which states that “Adults working with children should understand and be willing to discuss bicultural issues, actively see Māori contributions to decision making and ensure that Māori children develop a strong sense of self-worth” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 40). This requires mainstream early childhood education creating an inclusive environment where whānau Māori can feel safe to be Māori (Kathy Irwin, 1994).

It also requires early childhood teachers in Aotearoa, who are predominately Pākehā (Ministry of Education, 2010) to concede that they are not experts in Māori culture (Ritchie & Rau, 2006) and need to “to find ways to learn from Māori whānau what is important to them and respond accordingly” (p.33). Moreover Ritchie and Rau believe that Māori parents would participate more in their child’s education if tikanga me ona reo together with the whakawhanaungatanga approach was present. The wellbeing and belonging of Māori children and their whānau would therefore be nurtured.

Lesley Rameka (2003) a Māori academic and fellow researcher in Māori early childhood education, shares her experience of being a grandmother and what her expectations are for her mokopuna. Rameka emphasizes the fact that her mokopuna is Māori and not a middle class Pākehā and argues that this requires an acceptance of being Māori in order to gain a true sense of belonging. In her view, it is only then she argues that her mokopuna can confidently walk in all worlds. Rameka highlights the need for teachers to challenge their own beliefs and

genuinely develop respectful relationships with whānau Māori where whānau Māori can develop a sense of trust.

Rameka's (2003) concerns were highlighted by a pilot study conducted in 2008 by the Education Review Office, later published in a report titled *Success for Māori children in Early Childhood Services* (2010). The initial study involved 16 early childhood centres during their regular ERO review. The primary focus of this study was to observe how centres were ensuring Māori children were developing as competent and able learners and whether these centres were recognising the ideals and aspirations of whānau Māori.

The findings of this study revealed strong concerns for Māori children and their whānau in mainstream early childhood education. Results showed a lack of congruency between what centre's documentation was stating, to what the teachers actual practice showed. Furthermore there were no effective practices in place to inquire into whānau aspirations for their children. Many teachers advocated for all children to be treated the same and self-review processes were non-existent regarding the monitoring of how effective practices were for Māori children.

*Te Whāriki* the first bicultural curriculum in Aotearoa is seen by many as a genuine pathway to an equal partnership. The presence of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* within this curriculum has given hope to many *Tiriti* advocates. After years of forced assimilation, Māori have been lead to believe that an opportunity to participate in a genuine relationship with non-Māori was attainable. After 17 years, the intent of *Te Whāriki* as a bicultural curriculum, and one that would advocate for a power sharing relationship between the mainstream early childhood community and Māori, is still very much in its infancy. However *Te Whāriki* sits alongside other legislated documents and is not solely responsible for ensuring a partnership between Māori and early childhood education.

### ***Governing rules, regulations and legislations***

Governing rules, regulations and legislations provide a framework and the official expectation of how early childhood education as a sector should be responding to the needs and aspirations of Māori children and whānau Māori. In addition to *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (New Zealand Government, 2002) there is *The Teacher's Code of Ethics* (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2004), *The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008), *Ka Hikitia Managing for Success, The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2008) and the Education Review Office's report *Success for Māori children in Early Childhood Services* (2010).

*Te Whāriki* has specific aims identifiable in the goals and learning outcomes, that are derived from the four principles and five strands that are woven together to set the structure of *Te Whāriki*. The four principles are described to ensure te ao Māori is included within the daily teaching programming. Whakamana – Empowerment, discusses the need to be careful when implementing biculturalism. Kotahitanga – Holistic Development, states that in addressing issues pertaining to biculturalism, early childhood teachers require an understanding of “Māori views on child development and the role of the family” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 41). Whānau Tangata – Family and Community, focuses on the promotion of “te reo and ngā tikanga Māori, making them visible” (p. 42). The last principle Ngā Hononga – Relationships focuses on the inclusion of “Māori people, places, and artifacts” (p. 43). Emphasis is placed on using the Māori language within social settings and recognising the importance of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* also features prominently within this principle.

*Te Tiriti o Waitangi* plays a significant role in Aotearoa's Teacher's Code of Ethics (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2004). Teachers are bound ethically, morally, socially and legally to the Teacher's Code of Ethics. As agents of the Crown, teachers have a duty to ensure that they are committed to the contents of this contract. This 'Code of Ethics' reads, “Application of the Code of Ethics shall take

account of the requirements of the law as well as the obligation of teachers to honour the Treaty of Waitangi by paying particular attention to the rights and aspirations of Māori as tangata whenua.”

Not only does *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* support Māori in their positioning as equal partners within Aotearoa, Māori are also protected under the *United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008) as they are the tangata whenua/indigenous peoples of Aotearoa. There are 46 articles within this declaration which endorse the fundamental and justifiable rights of indigenous peoples throughout the world. Article 14 makes references to the rights of indigenous children. One point in particular declares that:

*States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.*

The expectations of the Māori education strategy *Ka Hikitia strategy* (Ministry of Education, 2008) are for teachers to realise the potential of Māori children. Apryll Parata, the Deputy Secretary - Māori Education, stated that “Success in 2012 is built on strong, respectful, culturally informed and responsive relationships” (MOE, 2008, p.9). *Ka Hikitia* places emphasis on the need to change the education system to an organisation that will “ensure Māori are enjoying educational success as Māori” (p. 11).

The question that needs to be asked is whether or not *Ka Hikitia* is the ‘tactical strategy’ so desperately needed to influence early childhood teachers to reflect on their role as bicultural partners. As an educational stratagem, there is no doubt that *Ka Hikitia* looks impressive. Strong statements like, “culturally informed and responsive relationships” (MOE, 2008, p.9) with Māori children and whānau, and to

“ensure Māori are enjoying educational success as Māori” (p.11) are no doubt impressive directives. However in order to adhere to these directions, sound knowledge of ‘what this all means and looks like’ is essential. Therefore this research: *The voice of whānau Māori in their child’s success ‘as Māori’ in mainstream early childhood education* is essential.

### **Summary**

The history of colonisation in Aotearoa has had a profound impact on Māori in education. With the arrival of the British missionaries, the first western schools opened in the far north. English became the enforced language of communication, resulting in a serious decline of Māori language speakers. It was during this period that the British formulated the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, a partnership between Māori and the British, supposedly giving both cultures equal status.

During the period of the 1960s, urbanised young Māori began to find themselves overrepresented in negative statistics. A government appointee by the name of J.K.Hunn reported on the Māori Affairs Department. This report established that assimilatory processes had had a profound effect on the overall health and wellbeing of Māori.

The 1970s was a time when young Māori university students, guided by Kaumatua and Kuia, began to challenge the deplorable positioning of Māori. Proactive politics resulted in the formal recognition of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. Education was to play a leading role in rectifying the disparities between Māori and Pākehā (Walker, 2004). The discourse of biculturalism was introduced resulting in the first bicultural early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* being released in Aotearoa in 1996. Although *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* features prominently in this document, early childhood teachers are still in the early stages of understanding their role as *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partners. As a consequence Māori children and their whānau are struggling to be recognised as authentic partners in their child’s education (Education Review Office, 2010). The directive by the Ministry of Education (2008), for all teachers to ensure Māori children are “enjoying success as Māori” (p.11) is laudable. However

for this to be achievable: *The voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education* must lead any potential understanding.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

Pai tū, pai hinga, na wai, na oti.

One may work properly, another may act,  
yet the sum total is the completion of the work.

*I had been thinking for sometime about moving from my employment in a Māori medium early childhood centre into a mainstream early childhood centre. As a bicultural educator I am very interested in bicultural practice and wanted to find out how it was being implemented in mainstream early childhood education. It was either by pure coincidence or a possible intervention from my tupuna because I received a phone call offering me part time work in a mainstream early childhood centre. I was really excited about this opportunity and as I was looking for a part time position, I decided it was one that I couldn't refuse.*

*Preceding my appointment, I spent quite some time looking through the website of my new employer. It is an amazing website which incorporates many significant educational statements and policies. What delighted me was seeing this organisation's written declaration and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and biculturalism. I assumed that the cultural beliefs and practices of Māori and Pākehā would be weaved throughout the daily programme of my new employment. I was really looking forward to experiencing a bicultural practice in action.*

*What captured my eye on my first day was an amazing wall display that greeted every person that arrived into the centre. Just about every family's ethnicity was acknowledged, either with a welcome sign in their language or a costume or an*

*artefact from their country. I saw this as a wonderful message of multicultural inclusion.*

*As much as my personal philosophy advocates for cultural inclusion, I couldn't help but feel saddened by seeing how Māori culture, the supposedly bicultural partner in this centre, was depicted. There was one small sign which said "Kia ora" with a putiputi harakeke next to it. There was no formal customary welcome in writing, no pictures, no Māori artefacts, and no cultural dress. I reflected back on this organisation's wonderful website and couldn't help but feel somewhat misled.*

*Just as I was pondering over my position, I noticed something glimmering. There it was, large in size, firmly attached to a window. I felt like someone was guiding me to this vision. No, it wasn't a visit from one of our Atua but it was something that our tupuna had played a critical role in. There to welcome all peoples to the centre was a copy of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Wow what an image. I was ecstatic, relieved and humbled. My emotions immediately changed from melancholy to excitement. No need to feel anxious I thought because our foundation document that seals the partnership between Māori and Pākehā was present in all its glory. Māori were authentic bicultural partners within this centre, we do have a place here.....or so I thought!*

This is my pūrākau, my story, my narrative and my lived experience. As a novice indigenous Māori researcher I have drawn on the work of Jenny Lee (2009) who states that returning to our own stories allows indigenous peoples a space to reflect on our own knowledge. Lee acknowledged that while pūrākau are "commonly used to refer to Māori myths and legends" (Lee, 2009, p. 1), pūrākau are still very much active and present and should not be identified as just an imaginary tales from the past. Pūrākau are Māori narratives, which incorporate values and beliefs that are essential to the distinctiveness of indigenous Māori. Traditionally, pūrākau were told orally. Nowadays pūrākau can be used as a modern contemporary method in research and can support Māori to document

both their personal experiences and those experiences of Māori in a research environment, in particular, to teach and learn.

Narrative inquiry has played a pivotal role in the introduction of pūrākau as a methodology in research (Lee, 2009). Māori and indigenous academics throughout the world have and continue to make a determined effort to look for methodologies beyond conservative research techniques. While working through the process of decolonisation, indigenous scholars are seeking to revisit their own narratives and distribute this information through their own cultural contexts. Pūrākau legitimises the way and means that stories are told through the voice of Māori. Furthermore, pūrākau gives Māori, a traditional way of narrating our stories within our own framework.

Kaupapa Māori plays an integral role within the construction of pūrākau. Lee concludes that “Pūrākau offer a Kaupapa Māori approach to qualitative narrative inquiry” (Lee, 2009 p.5). A pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry strategy, underpinned by Kaupapa Māori is the methodology that I have chosen for this research. In order to understand the fundamentals of these methodologies, the next section will provide an overview.

### **Kaupapa Māori**

Kaupapa Māori allows iwi to have an opportunity to embrace and unite as Māori. Kaupapa Māori is not a new phenomenon and is been in existence prior to the arrival of the colonisers (Pihama, Smith, Taki & Lee, 2004). Tuakana Nepe (1991), Ella Henry and Hone Pene (2001) describe Kaupapa Māori as being culturally unique to Māori and originates from Māori epistemology and cosmology. Knowledge and its validity sit in unison with the metaphysics which incorporate the connection between time and space. The ability to understand the concepts, the experiences and the nature of being, is at the foundation of Māori knowledge. According to Henry and Pene, philosophical beliefs and social practices are at the foundations of Kaupapa Māori and classified as Māori ontology or what Māori see

as real. Living according to the rules of tikanga is Māori epistemology or what is perceived as being tika or correct.

What is rather new to Kaupapa Māori is the academic language describing it. Pihama (2001) explains it as “the development of a framework as a means of informing our practice that has been articulated clearly in the struggles in the past twenty years” (pp. 77&78). Western ‘research methodology’ has been dominant in the field of research for hundreds of years. Indigenous researchers argue that this overriding superiority has had a profound impact on the social, political, economical, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of indigenous people throughout the world (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; L.T. Smith, 1999).

Māori have been the subjects of numerous research projects that have been conducted through a western lens. These studies have subjugated Māori to the position of helpless and dependent (L.T. Smith, 1999). In response to these prejudices, Māori communities became more politically aware and there was an overwhelming movement towards ensuring “the revitalisation of Māori cultural aspirations” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999 p. 61). Kaupapa Māori became a prominent philosophy and is responsible for challenging the unequal power sharing within Aotearoa.

### **Choosing the methodology**

As a first time researcher, choosing a combination of methodologies for this dissertation did not come without anxiety. I knew that I had to be extremely committed and grounded in my ontological beliefs and ways of being (Rhedding-Jones, 2007). Jeanette Rhedding-Jones (2007) advises beginning researchers to:

*[S]peak up if you are not of the majority, and defend your own positioning as a researcher and your own integrity because of your experience.....It is very easy to have your research shaped by methodological norms, or have it distorted by normalized discourses because you are afraid of the*

*consequences of doing research in “different” ways* (Rhedding-Jones, 2007, pp. 212 & 213).

I did not want this research distorted and coerced into a methodology that was primarily monocultural and not harmonious with biculturalism and being Māori. Therefore as this research is about the voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education, I am aware that the ultimate objective is to “retrieve space” (L.T. Smith, 1999, p. 183) for Māori to speak and be heard.

Kaupapa Māori theory has supported me through this methodological journey as it sets principles for teachers to draw on as a reference and a guide (Pihama, 2001). As Māori we must reflect, engage, collaborate and contribute to this evolving knowledge. Furthermore Kaupapa Māori theory allows us to express our realities through our truths and knowledge (Nepe 1991; Mahuika, 2008).

Russell Bishop and Ted Glynn (2003) explain it as “the reassertion of indigenous Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices ... termed kaupapa Māori theory and practice ... that historical and ongoing power imbalances will be addressed” (p.223). Kaupapa Māori theory is emancipatory as it advocates for self-transformation.

Graham Hingangaroa Smith's (1997) unpublished doctoral research titled *The Development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis*, draws on four key critical theorists. Frantz Fanon, Michael Apple, Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire, feature prominently in Smith's research and have influenced his development of a Kaupapa Māori theoretical praxis in Māori education. These international theorists have recognised both current and historical indigenous struggle and cultural oppression. Graham Smith employs the work of Paulo Friere's (1972) which emphasizes the link between “consicentisation, resistance and transformative praxis” (G.H. Smith, 1997, p. 34). Kaupapapa Māori embraces these critical notions and uses them as a decolonising tool. Furthermore Linda Smith (L.T.

Smith, 1999) describes Kaupapa Māori as a localized critical theory as it advocates for the empowerment of Māori.

Smith (G.H.Smith, 1997) argues that Kaupapa Māori is more than just doing things according to the 'Māori way.' At the forefront is the assurance that ethics and morals are adhered to in order for "Māori to assert greater cultural, political, social, emotional and spiritual control over their own lives" (G. H. Smith 1997, p. 456). Jenny Lee (2007) adds that, Kaupapa Māori creates a pathway where Māori concepts are drawn on to examine, review and intercede when trying to make sense of your surroundings. Kaupapa Māori theory requires one to be consciously aware, prepared for struggle and to utilise this theory for practical advantages for Māori.

The 'what and how this may look like' has been articulated by leading Kaupapa Māori theorists, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Graham Hingangaroa Smith (Pihama, 2001). Smith (G.H. Smith, 1997) shares three key themes that Kaupapa Māori paradigm encompasses. These include survival of te reo me ona tikanga, legitimacy of Māori as being the norm and the assurance that Māori have autonomy over their cultural wellbeing. Nepe (1991), Pihama (2001) and Smith (G.H. Smith, 1997) all support the notion that critical to practices and principles of Kaupapa Māori theory is the knowledge that te reo me ona tikanga Māori is an essential factor.

In addition Smith (G.H. Smith, 1997) offers six key intervention elements within Kaupapa Māori theory. These consists of, tino rangatiratanga (the 'self-determination' principle): taonga tuku iho (the 'cultural aspirations' principle): ako Māori (the 'culturally preferred pedagogy' principle), kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (the socio-economic' mediation principle), whānau (the extended family structure principle) and Kaupapa (the 'collective philosophy' principle). These elements give a foundation for Māori to draw on when working to improve the lives of Māori.

### **Qualitative research**

Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a field of inquiry which incorporates a variety of methods and approaches. These techniques include interview processes where participants have an opportunity to share their individual experiences and personal stories. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011), Kaupapa Māori can be merged with western research methodologies providing relationship building is paramount. Hence qualitative research emphasizes the close relationship required between the researcher and the researched.

I have drawn on qualitative narrative inquiry to support this Kaupapa Māori research. There are numerous interpretive projects positioned within qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) that have similar struggles to Māori. Feminist theory, race theory and queer theory are a small number of theories that have commonalities with critical and decolonising theory.

Jenny Ritchie and Cherly Rau (2006) are two researchers who have merged Kaupapa Māori and western research methodologies together. Ritchie & Rau describe their methodology used in the research project *Whakawhanaungatanga* as a “kaupapa Māori framework, whilst simultaneously informed by an eclectic and emergent paradigm drawing from Western collaborative and narrative early childhood research models, our research collaboration represents a convergence of methodological pathways”(Ritchie & Rau, 2006, p. 4). Additionally the notion of reciprocity is a valued component required for researchers working with both methodologies. This creates equal power sharing where all participants hold a position of authority.

Leslie Rameka (2009) also used qualitative and Kaupapa Māori research methodology when undertaking a project looking at Kaupapa Māori assessment in a bilingual/bicultural early childhood centre. Most of the kaiako and children, who worked at or attended this centre, were of Māori ancestry. A Kaupapa Māori

approach was adhered to when data gathering, collating of material and interviewing. Through open dialogue, respectful reciprocal relationships were formed. Rameka observed the transitions of some kaiako and adults of the centre. Initially, a number of adults were apprehensive to contribute and had trouble trying to make sense of 'being Māori' which Rameka says should have come naturally. This research supported Māori participants through the process of decolonisation (L.T.Smith, 1999) by feeling comfortable with 'being Māori' (G.H. Smith, 1997). In addition it has created a Kaupapa Māori assessment exemplar for Māori medium early childhood centres, titled *Te Whatu Pokeka* (Ministry of Education, 2009).

### ***Narrative inquiry***

I have experienced occasions as an early childhood teacher when a child would approach me with a personal story to share. Often these stories are either an imaginary tale or a true reflection of a past event. As an early childhood educator it is important to recognise the many different ways that a child communicates. This is emphasized in the early childhood curriculum where it states that through communication, children develop:

*[A]n ability to be creative and expressive through a variety of activities, such as pretend play, carpentry, story-telling, drama and music* (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 80).

Narrative inquiry or story-telling, like pūrākau, is not a new phenomenon. What is relatively new is the materialization of narrative as a methodology (Clandinin, 2006). Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) explain that "narrative inquiry is stories lived and told" (p. 20). Furthermore narrative inquiry methodology can support relationship building through the sharing of stories. Emphasis is placed on truthfulness when inquiring into a person's story. When interviewing whānau participants for this research, I was reliant on their own epistemologies (Henry & Pene, 2001) and their truth.

Thomas King (2003), a Native North American scholar writes about truth in his book, *Truth about Stories*. King reminds us:

*[O]nce a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world. So you have to be careful with the stories that you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told (King, 2003, p. 10).*

As a novice researcher, I was aware that the relationship formed with whānau participants was one which required both collaboration and socialisation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). At the basis of this relationship building, was respect. Smith explains:

*The term 'respect' is consistently used by Indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social order (L.T.Smith, 1999, p. 120).*

### **Method**

According to Davidson and Tolich “methodology is different from ‘methods’ precisely because it is about the logical and philosophical questions the particular methods assume” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003 p.25). Methodology from a western perspective outlines the rules, the values and the philosophy of a research. Kaupapa Māori qualitative narrative inquiry as a combined methodology drives this research and acts as an informant to and for the method.

In adopting Kaupapa Māori as the foundation for this research, it is a constant reminder that this investigation has been an “attempt to plan, organize, conduct, analyse and give back culturally responsive research primarily to, by, for and with Māori” (Smith, L.T, 1999, p. 183). Making sure that I was applying a method that was accessible to and for Māori was a constant priority throughout this research.

Through the process of semi-structured digital recorded interviews, transcribing these interviews, collating the data from these interviews and analysing this information thoroughly and carefully (Guthrie, 2010) a set of protocols were implemented.

### ***Ethics***

Approval for this research was granted by the Human Participants Ethics Committee of the University of Auckland; reference number 8898. All participants' involvement in this study was voluntary. A participation information sheet was given prior to conducting the interviews; informing the whānau participants about the study, data storage, privacy and confidentiality and participants right to withdraw. Before conducting the interviews, a consent form was completed by whānau participants, formalising their participation in the study. Although transcribing was completed by the researcher, a transcriber agreement form was also completed.

### **Interviews**

Seven cultural norms were applied when conducting the interviews with whānau participants. Ngahuia Te Awekotuku documented these set of cultural ideas when writing about research ethics in a Māori community. Linda Smith explains that these should be a natural way of interacting on a daily basis:

1. *Aroha kit e tangata (a respect for people)*
2. *Kanohi kitea (the seen face—that is, present yourself to people face to face)*
3. *Titiro, whakaronga...korero (look, listen ...speak)*
4. *Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous)*
5. *Kia tupato (be cautious)*
6. *Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of the people)*
7. *Kaua e mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)*

(Te Awekotuku, 1991, cited in L.T Smith, 2000, p. 242).

All whānau participants were given the opportunity to choose where they would like to conduct their interview. Three asked to have it at my home and one whānau chose to have it at their home. As the meeting place was at my home for three of the whānau, I knew what my role entailed. As I was the tangata whenua, the host, I wanted to make sure that I created a warm, open, welcoming home where kai was prepared and ready to have after the interview. A short mihi and karakia was offered before I conducted the “one-on-one interviews” (Guthrie, 2010). I also ensured that our home was free from distractions during the interview times. Building a rapport with the participants was established first. I also knew that not all experiences would be the same or delivered in the same way, therefore my interpersonal skills changed according to the disposition of the interviewee (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004).

When interviewing the fourth whānau at their residence, I took kai. I was very mindful that I was on their wahi and needed to follow their kawa. Before the interview took place with this whānau, the nanny and I exchanged eye contact and then she proceeded with a karakia and mihi. This is an example of Kaupapa Māori taking a natural position over the proceedings.

The semi-structured interviews allowed for a certain amount of flexibility. Often the conversation would lead on to another topic: nevertheless that topic had a meaningful role in each participant’s pūrākau. Although there were questions prepared that centered on the voice of whānau Māori in their child’s success ‘as Māori’, a couple of the participants had difficulty understanding parts of questions and sought reassurance that they were answering correctly. In this instance, I reminded the participants that there was no right or wrong answer and it is entirely how they see and feel in a particular situation. There were times when I guided participants to “restate their meanings, to revisit their meanings.....and to adapt their meanings” (Bishop, 1996, p. 33).

I was very aware that the whānau participants were telling private stories and shared some personal experiences. Although I had the option of choosing a university transcriber, I felt that it was important to transcribe myself. This process although lengthy was invaluable as I believe that I reconnected at a deeper level, to the whānau stories. After I had transcribed the interviews, whānau participants were given a copy and invited to edit or change any of their data. All participants were satisfied with their transcripts. When going through the transcripts, I realised that I hadn't asked one of the participants to clarify the meaning of whānau. I also required more clarification with two other participants on what it meant to 'be Māori.' I contacted them and asked them for further information. They obliged and emailed me their thoughts. This is described as probing with follow up questions, to get a construction of the absolute picture (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004).

Responsive and reciprocal relationships have been vital in this research. Giving back is part of tikanga. Despite being extremely aware of the ethical boundaries of this research, I am also aware that tikanga practice allows a space to enact being Māori. We can call it western ethical frameworks or tikanga. At the foreground of these sets of principles is respect and reciprocity. Kai was shared with whānau and a small kōha was given as a small token of appreciation. Although I know that the relationships that I have formed with the whānau in this research will be on-going, this is my attempt to give back. At the completion of this study, I have invited whānau participants to share in the findings. They have all indicated to me that they would like to have an evening at my house, as a whānau collective to whakawhaungatanga with the other whānau involved in this study. Naturally I will provide the same hospitality that I did when conducting the interviews.

### **Summary**

This chapter presents an overview of the methodologies and methods used to conduct this dissertation. Kaupapa Māori sets the foundations for this pūrākau qualitative narrative inquiry. Success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood

education, I believe can only be determined by listening attentively to the voices of whānau, interpreting their pūrākau in a honest and truthful manner and positioning myself as the receiver of information and not the controller.

Kaupapa Māori has given me space to respond to whānau in a cultural context that I am familiar with. However as a reflective educator, I am always reminded that being an insider researcher (L.T. Smith, 1999) can be problematic as the Māori community is very small. Although I am officially the researcher, I am aware that I too am being researched. This requires me to be respectful, sensitive and humble.

## Chapter 4

### Whānau Māori: Navigating the playground

E tipu e rea

Grow oh tender shoot

Chapter four, is the first of three chapters which discuss the findings of this research topic: *The voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education*. Each whānau were asked questions centred on what influenced their choice of mainstream early childhood education for their child, their involvement as whānau Māori in their child's centre and what success 'as Māori' meant for their child in mainstream early childhood education. Whānau responses lead to the formation of three themes: choosing a centre and what involvement each whānau had as whānau Māori in this centre, the meaning and significance of the terminology whānau in their child's education and what success 'as Māori' looks like for whānau Māori in mainstream early childhood education.

#### Choosing a centre

Early childhood education in Aotearoa is driven by various educational philosophies. During the Māori cultural renaissance period, one Māori early childhood educational philosophy emerged through Māori proactive political activism. Kuia and Kaumatua took on the mantle of canvassing the government to support the revitalisation of te reo Māori. According to Skerrett-White (2001) 1979 was a significant date for Māori because it was during this period the Department of Māori Affairs conducted hui specifically for Kaumatua to form strategic plans and policies around the formation of Te Kōhanga Reo (TKR). These hui were the catalyst behind the first TKR opening in Wainuiomata on the 13 April 1982. Te

Kōhanga Reo is a full time total immersion te reo Māori language nest where emphasis is placed on whānau involvement and tikanga Māori (Sharples, 1988, cited in May, 2012).

All whānau participants in this study considered sending their children to Kōhanga Reo before choosing mainstream early childhood education. Celena describes her predicament:

*I wanted them to go to Kōhanga reo but I was a full-time mother so putting them into a full-time Kōhanga didn't suit and then I was told about the centre and it was parent lead, so that's initially was what interested me.*

Whetū wanted her son to attend the Kōhanga reo where she teaches. However their centre license only caters for children over two years of age:

*One of the main reasons I sent him to this centre was so he was close to my job. I also noticed when I first visited the centre, staff were implementing a bit of [te reo]. One of the staff in the under two area had quite good knowledge of te reo me ona tikanga because she had previously worked in a Māori medium early childhood environment.*

Rāwhiti felt that her whānau involvement in Te Kōhanga Reo and their desire for her son to attend a Kōhanga Reo should have taken precedence over her decision to send him to mainstream early childhood education. The need at the time was for her son to gain appropriate social skills:

*It was more of a push from both his dad and my parents to get him into some sort of social situation with other children because he was getting to the point where I had friends coming over with their kids and he had no idea how to share.....but with my family involvement in Te Kōhanga reo, I know that my aunty was sort of in my ear whenever I saw her about me putting him into a Kōhanga. I wanted to but it never happened.*

Social skills and familiarisation of environments outside the whānau was the main priority for Manaaki and Puāwai's moko and daughter. Although a Kōhanga Reo was considered, they had to think about distance and transportation:

*There weren't any Kōhanga reo accessible to us at the time and with travel and where we were living, it just seemed to fit better that she would go [to the mainstream early childhood centre].*

### **Whānau involvement in their child's centre**

Many factors influenced whānau Māori when choosing their prospective early childhood centres for their children. Celena found it very encouraging knowing that the centre was parent lead, committed to bicultural practice and promoted inclusion:

*All whānau were welcome to participate and be involved in the child's learning environment and in the wider aspect of [the] centre as well as whānau days where we could invite grandparents and all that sort of thing. The [organisation] are committed to bicultural practices and work hard at trying to incorporate te reo and tikanga Māori. The fact that I could be there with my children was the biggest thing for me.*

Although Celena was guided by this centres message of biculturalism and inclusion, she found out early in her enrolment that being the only Māori whānau came with complications:

*Because they knew I was a Māori [and] once they found out I had a teaching background it was almost like they kind of saw me as an asset for the centre and they had the position for me to be their Māori [advisor]. I was happy to become that person within the centre for my personal development and also to be able to help others because I feel I have the knowledge and I will be able to contribute a lot in that respect. Although I wish that there was support and they would help follow through.*

Celena extends on this and expresses her frustrations at the lack of commitment by some parents in supporting the philosophy as promoted by this centre. She would like to see:

*More of a commitment from [the parents] to tautoko the process a little bit more instead of standing back and letting me do all the mahi. There are a few [parents] that obviously have the opinion that it is not that important and that's hard for me with those types of people because there is nobody really there to back me up. It makes me feel like a minority, I am standing alone, I'm fighting a battle. Sometimes I feel like I'm a little bit suppressed that I can't really be more open because I haven't got the tautoko there to help push me. I feel like I'm on a solo journey.*

Although Celena has voiced her feelings of isolation and frustration, she remains dedicated to her child's centre and committed to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. Celena has revealed her strength, perseverance and bravery. Whānau Māori do not always have the self-belief to challenge or question their child's centre.

Katerina, a co 'researcher in Ritchie and Rau's (2006) *Whakawhanungatanga* study found that Māori were reluctant to assert their tino rangatiratanga and offers an example when a mother was frightened at the thought of approaching a Pākehā head educator about a concern. Katerina reported, "Oh, she was terrified, she was afraid, and so for her to approach the head teacher was huge. It was really huge for her and I seriously admire her courage because she felt so strongly about [her concerns]" (Ritchie & Rau, 2006, p. 23).

Celena as a bicultural partner recognises the commitment that this centre's governing organisation's administrators have to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*:

*At the [organisation] level there are lots of changes being made to ensure that Māori children are succeeding as Māori but at a centre level it really has to come from the commitment of the parents that attend that centre.*

*Although we do have a Māori support group within the organisation, it is really a place when we catch up and be Māori as Māori.*

Parents guide the teaching in Celena's centre, therefore whānau Māori are reliant on parents to work in partnership. This should be a natural process, yet the truth prevails. Macro political expectations are not always congruent with what is happening at the micro level. Helen Hedges and Joyce Nuttall (2008) argue that teachers are generally governed by their political or individual views, not by legislation. Most disconcerting is Celena's reliance on her Māori support group to provide a space for her to be Māori as Māori. Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington and Tony Trinick (2008) assert that Māori should "be able to live as Māori and to participate fully as equal citizens and as Māori in NZ society" (McMurchy-Pilkington & Trinick, 2008, p. 142). An authentic partnership honored by the centre can create a sense of freedom for Celena where being Māori is the norm and not the exemption (G.H. Smith, 1997).

Rāwhiti's experience as a whānau Māori at her children's mainstream early childhood centre has been disheartening. When asked whether the centre acknowledged whānau Māori and included her as a partner in her children's education, she answered:

*Never! Māori [were] not high on their priority list at all.*

Rāwhiti shares her dissatisfaction at the rejection of te ao Māori in her son's centre and her frustration with the lack of acknowledgement or commitment from her son's centre in building positive relationships with whānau Māori:

*It did bother me and I did speak to one of the teachers about my concern that there was no te reo. She was a Rarotongan teacher and we weren't friends but we got on quite well. When I mentioned my concerns to her, she said that they had a set curriculum and they had to stick to it. I asked her whether they could slide some reo in because I wanted to get my son*

*speaking a little bit. The teacher did say they could possibly do some in the morning but they didn't really know anything so I wrote some things down, some basic things. However nothing was implemented because when my son would return home I would try and speak to him in Māori and he didn't know what I was saying. I thought if you guys were using that list I gave you, he would know at least some of these words. He should be at least familiar with them even if he doesn't know what they mean. Nothing at all was done so I came to the conclusion she ignored me basically and she stuck to that curriculum that they have.*

Rāwhiti's disappointment is absolutely justified and exposes the dominant practices within some mainstream early childhood centres. Ritchie (2008) argues that is imperative that educator's commit to:

*[B]uilding relationships with Māori families and communities, and engaging in critical dialogue are central factors for transcending the dominant early childhood discourses, bridging between envisioning and enactment of programmes where Māori aspirations are prioritised and thus renormalized (Ritchie, 2008, p.206).*

Furthermore, Ritchie and Rau (2011) argue that the marginalisation of te ao Māori within early childhood education undervalues Māori and emanates colonisation. Early childhood teachers are therefore required to be the change agents and recognise the significance of the "past, present, and future" (Reedy, 2013) in order to identify the factors that have impacted on Māori today. Reflecting on what went before can help us to understand current problems and create constructive objectives for the future.

Whetū's experience as a whānau Māori in mainstream included both positive and negative aspects. She expressed her contentment with the head teacher in her son's under two section and also felt very comfortable with a new teacher who had

commenced working in this area. Whetū explained that she was very relaxed with these two teachers and felt that their interactions were authentic. Whetū shares her story:

*The head teacher had worked in Māori medium early childhood centre so she was quite happy that my son was attending. I don't know what it was like before I arrived but when I was there I noticed that they were implementing te reo Māori, especially with my son. I think the head teacher provided my son with a sense of love and belonging. [Also] when I was introducing myself to [the new teacher] and I told her that I worked at a Kōhanga, she was really receptive and said that she wanted to learn more te reo Māori. I just knew she wasn't a fake and she really wanted to learn.*

Sincerity and authenticity feature high in Whetū's expectations of positive relationship building with whānau Māori. Although the experience in the under two section was positive for Whetū and her son, she had her reservations about the over two section:

*The over twos, it was different. It was more tokenistic Māori. I walked in one day and one of the teachers approached me knowing that I worked at a Kōhanga and asked if I could come and teach them Māori things because it was Māori week. I was quite blown away because I was thinking, well that's ok but that's your job. Just because I'm Māori, it doesn't mean that you don't need to learn it as well, so I didn't help but suggested things that she could do.*

Whetū continues and gives another example of a situation with a teacher that she felt was disingenuous:

*I was in a rush one day and she just comes up and asks me where she could get flax from as she wanted to do some weaving with the kids. I think it was just the way she had come up and approached me and asked me*

*about it. That sort of thing blew me away because if I was looking at my son staying on at that centre, that would have put me off.*

Whetū voiced her disappointment at the way she was approached. These two teacher's did not take the time to introduce themselves, did not form a respectful relationship first and appeared to make an assumption that Whetū would automatically take on the role as advisor. Whetū shared how these experiences made her feel:

*I just try and laugh things off so they don't affect me but I felt like I would have ended up doing her job. I felt like 'no' you need to learn this too so that's why I was sort of a bit standoffish. I felt she's not willing to put any research into what she wants to do so I'm not going to bend over backwards to help her.*

Forming a positive relationship with whānau Māori is guided by the principle of Ngā Hononga in *Te Whāriki*. This principle focuses on the learning acquired through “responsive and reciprocal relationships” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 43). It is evident that in Whetū's mind, these two centre teachers failed to establish any kind of respectful relationship with her.

Respect features extremely high in te ao Māori. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) emphasizes the absolute importance of respect when interacting with not just Māori people but indigenous peoples throughout the world. L. T. Smith describes it as:

*The term 'respect' is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct (L.T. Smith, 1999, p. 120).*

For this reason teachers are encouraged to “actively seek Māori contributions to decision making, and ensure that Māori children develop a strong sense of self-worth” (Ministry of education, 1996, p.40). While these two teachers were trying to seek Māori assistance, it appears that their attempts were regarded as tokenistic and therefore they failed to build positive respectful relationships with whānau Māori (Rau, 2010). Rau explains, active listening skills and a responsive connection with whānau are paramount when developing a reciprocal relationship.

In contrast to Celena, Rāwhiti and Whetū; Manaaki, and Puāwai and their whānau have had an extremely positive experience in mainstream early childhood education. Revisiting the past and its connection to the present has been acknowledged and incorporated into their pēpe’s centre. Manaaki talks about her first impressions of the centre:

*It was pretty obvious from the beginning that they were very Māori orientated. They definitely asked us if we wanted anything specific for her.*

Puāwai verbalized her appreciation when the staff approached her about te reo Māori:

*They even asked us if we wanted them to talk to her in Māori. We sort of said that she speaks both but we were happy with them encouraging te reo.*

Manaaki extends and shares the tikanga practices within the centre programme:

*They did have karakia for their kai and they did pepeha every day too. The centre had a structured programme where te reo was used but it was also used freely as well, just kōrero with the kids. The pepeha and karakia were directly related to the local marae so they would use the river, the mountain and the people of that area.*

Incorporation of tikanga practices and te reo Māori in the centre acknowledges the strand of mana reo, where it states that “an appreciation of te reo as a living and

relevant language” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.76) and mana whenua, “knowledge about the features of the area of physical and/or spiritual significance to the local community, such as the local river or mountain” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 56).The centre has shown their commitment to bicultural practice by ensuring that these strands are incorporated into planning.

As a whānau Māori, Manaaki and Puāwai valued the way their pēpe was cared for:

*They cared for her nicely and they even knew how difficult it was for me to leave her there so they allowed me to stay there for probably three days. If she became distressed they would pick her up and pretty much do what we would do and give her a big hug. They looked after her really good.*

Safety was a very big focus for this whānau and they felt the centre had provided a safe space for Māori, both physically and spiritually. Puāwai emphasizes this and acknowledges the centre:

*I really want to mention that it was important for us that she felt safe because it was a really big thing for us to give her over....give her over and leave. I didn't want her to feel abandoned. I wanted to make sure she was looked after and that they would ring us if there was anything wrong and they did ring us, to let us know that she was fine. This definitely confirmed that this was going to be a good place for her because they were communicating with us. They knew that we needed it. It is a big thing to trust your baby with someone else that you don't really know.*

Manaaki and Puāwai have given examples of this centre showing a commitment to their role as bicultural partners. *Te Whāriki* states the “Interdependence between children, their extended family, and the community should be supported, particularly for Māori” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.55) Noticing and embracing the notion of interdependence shows that the centre understands the interconnection and interrelationship of whānau Māori.

Manaaki and Puāwai conclude this chapter with their recognition of the centre's genuine acknowledgement and commitment to whānau Māori:

*I think that they were brilliant and it was cool that they were nice and not patronizing nice. They were just naturally nice. She was in a really awesome centre and had awesome care. They were real people. We couldn't really change anything about the centre as they did everything we wanted them to do. We wanted her to be safe, happy and comfortable. You definitely could feel that they genuinely loved her.*

Manaaki and Puāwai have had a positive experience as whānau Māori in mainstream early childhood education. It has been argued that building a culturally competent relationship with Māori can be time consuming (Mutch & Wong, 2008). However as Mutch and Wong explain, positive relationships can be achieved provided there is a genuine effort made by teachers. They argue that Māori are very quick at detecting teachers who are legitimate and those who are artificial. Whetū's description of an educator who was legitimate, "*I just knew she wasn't a fake and she really wanted to learn*" (see p. 40) supports Mutch and Wong's statement.

### **Summary**

This chapter has examined two areas: what influenced each whānau in choosing mainstream early childhood education for their child and what involvement each whānau has had as a whānau Māori in their child's early childhood environment. Findings show that three out of the four whānau have not been embraced as bicultural partners in their child's centre. These whānau have experienced mixed responses towards te ao Māori, ranging from a disinterest in te reo me ona tikanga, centre staff assuming that whānau Māori would automatically take on a singular role as Māori advisor and an overall lack of commitment from parents in a parent-led centre.

One whānau had a very positive experience in mainstream early childhood education. Constructive practices in their child's centre programme, promoted inclusion, strong reciprocal relationships with local iwi and a genuine partnership with whānau Māori. Results in this chapter reflect the findings in *Success for Māori children in Early Childhood Education* (Education Review Office, 2010). This report established that only a small percentage of early childhood centres had built successful cultural responsiveness partnerships with whānau Māori.

## Chapter 5

### Whānau; Interdependent and extended

Whakatupungia te pā harakeke, kia tupu whakaritorito

Nurture the essence of whānau, so that it may flourish

Chapter four provided an insight into why whānau Māori chose mainstream early childhood education for their child and whether or not they were involved as whānau Māori in their child's centre. Findings in chapter four established that only one whānau out of the four interviewed were embraced as authentic *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partners. Although there were many factors which contributed to this successful partnership, it was apparent from the beginning that the centre recognised the interdependent relationship between children and extended whānau (Ministry of Education, 1996). Furthermore a discourse of cultural responsiveness was evident from the beginning of this whānau's enrolment.

Cultural receptiveness with whānau Māori requires knowledge and an appreciation of what whānau Māori encompasses. This chapter examines whānau participants' interpretation of whānau, the role of whānau within te ao Māori and the significance of whānau as co-constructors in their child's education. Additionally the principle of 'relationships' in *Te Whāriki* highlights the need for children to "learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 14). This principle is at the basis of cultural responsiveness and should be utilised to promote positive relationship building with whānau Māori.

#### Whānau beyond family

Whānau is the foundation of whanaungatanga and part of a wider society that connects the physical to the metaphysical. The physical structure incorporates

whānau, whanaunga, hapū and iwi which are all linked together through whakapapa. Whānau voices in this chapter illustrate a picture of interconnectedness which incorporates traditional and contemporary understanding of whānau within Māori society.

*Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) pays particular attention to the role of whānau within the principle of Family and Community - Whānau Tangata. Terminology used states that adults working with children need to “demonstrate an understanding of ..... the meaning of whānau and wh[a]naungatanga” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.42). Comprehension of the meaning of whānau and whanaungatanga requires an immediate response, primarily because family is not whānau. One could be forgiven for assuming the two are the same especially when there are numerous documents where the forward slash symbol (/) or the hyphen symbol (-) is added between the word families and whānau creating family/whānau or family-whānau.

This homogeneous understanding presents itself in the English text of *Te Whāriki* (1996) where the principle of Family and Community has a hyphen next to it creating, “Family and Community – Whānau Tangata” (Ministry of Education, 1996. p. 42). Family is a colonised word, usually used to describe a Westernised nuclear family group, comprised of mother, father and their children. Whānau cannot be directly translated as family as it is extended, blended or mixed (Pihama, 2001). This whānau structure includes whanaunga, hapū, iwi, whakapapa, whāngai, gay and lesbian, friends and community groups.

Conflation of the words family and whānau is confusing and not just isolated to the field of education. Julia Taiapa (1995) an academic in Māori social sciences, describes the blending of the two as problematic because the term family is a Pākehā construct consisting of a nuclear family. This nuclear family includes parents and children who may live in a household environment where both relatives and non-relatives cohabit. Taiapa explains that Māori interpret family in

a different way to Pākehā because they analyse the meaning through their understanding of whānau. Whānau is extended which includes whanaunga, hapū, iwi and connections through whakapapa or support networks. Within this whānau structure there are sets of principles, values and responsibilities that go far and beyond the responsibilities of a nuclear family.

Joan Metge (1995) describes the word whānau as giving birth or a grouping made up of three to four generations, who would live and work together. Metge argues that British cultural traditions had a profound effect on the understanding of whānau as the British were primarily influenced by a “parent-child family” (Metge, 1995, p.16). Introduction of parliamentary laws also changed the traditional extended practices of whānau, such as Māori adoption known as whangai. Although legislation has influenced the breakdown of traditional whānau, Metge argues that Māori have resisted this assimilatory process and continued to apply traditional values to the meaning of whānau.

Rangimarie Mahuika (2008) explains that whānau is embedded within Māori society. Depending on iwi connections, whānau will have their own values and practices according to their tikanga. Whakapapa links the whānau to this wider network. Mason Durie (1997) describes the link as ‘common whakapapa’ to a shared ancestor. The whānau has certain responsibilities and obligations to their whakapapa.

## **Whakapapa**

Brenda Joyce, Bruce Mathers and Owen Ormsby (2008) explain that whakapapa originated from cosmological entities and connected Māori to Papatūānuku and Ranginui. Knowledge of whakapapa was kept very sacred, recorded mentally and passed on to descendents. An example of this is given later in this chapter when Manaaki and Puāwai recognised a staff members name and connected it to their whakapapa.

A description of whānau is given by Margie Hohepa (1999) where she explains that whānau has both established and developing meanings. Traditional whānau has whakapapa, in contrast a contemporary meaning of whānau unites groups with “common interest, or common kaupapa” (Hohepa, 1999, p. 48). Durie concurs by saying, there are ‘non-traditional’ instances where Māori who do not have whakapapa connections, may have familiar concerns, or areas of interest. Whānau is therefore not individual as it is part of a wider network.

The voice of whānau participants in this study shows more of receptiveness towards a contemporary understanding of the word whānau. Although two whānau talked about ancestral land, a marae base and a whānau urupa, the overall response showed that whānau can be interpreted outside whakapapa.

Celena shares what whānau means to and for her:

*Initially I thought whānau was family, now I see it as not just my immediate core whānau but the extended whānau as well. This includes other whānau that we are close to. For example my dad was in the forces and friends that he had in the forces are considered our close whānau. My cousins who are in their 20s have a group of friends. They are a core group of friends which I consider whānau as well. That’s my interpretation of what whānau is.*

Rāwhiti talked about being close to her extended whānau but not seeing them often enough. She often goes back to her papakāinga, her marae and the whānau urupa:

*There’s not a lot up there but I’ve got my first cousin. She lives next door to my Nan’s and now that she has passed away, that is like the whānau house. If I am having one of those days, I just jump in the car and go to Nan’s. I love it, we not only have those two houses, we’ve got so many whānau up there and they aren’t all related either. You are always welcome Sometimes I just and hang out at the urupa or the marae looking at photos. I*

*think whānau is wider for me, [it is] everyone I care about and I suppose when I say family I mean related by blood although that is whānau too. No whānau is everyone, anyone that I care about.*

In addition, Rāwhiti gives an example of whānau beyond the whakapapa connection. When her son participated in a Kapa Haka regional competition, she was overwhelmed with emotion as his performance was amazing:

*I was crying. I was in tears. He was just warming up in that first year then he started to feel like he belonged and I said it's a whānau, that's your whānau now and he went from there.*

Whetū also talks about whānau as being both blood related and friendships:

*Whānau for me is my family which includes: my mum, dad, sister, niece, my children, my extended cousin families, my children's father and his family, my aunties and uncles but also the people who I care about, close friends, work colleagues including my past colleagues. I guess it all comes down to: if you touch a place in my heart then I would class you as my whānau.*

Manaaki and Puāwai refer to their mokopuna and daughter as their pēpe and the teachers as caregivers. They both talked simultaneously about when their pēpe first started at the early childhood centre. Whānau was seen as connections through whakapapa and extended community contacts. These contacts included both Māori and non-Māori which gave them both a feeling of belonging as well as safety:

*That was another cool thing too because one of the teachers whose surname is also a whānau name in the marae that we go back to, so we had that kind of whanaungatanga knowing that we came from the same area. It was awesome and we kind of gravitated to each other.*

Recognition of a whānau name is a direct link to whakapapa. Manaaki and Puāwai found an immediate connection to the teacher with a whānau name. A relationship was formed instantly, as they identified with a name and marae. Joe Rito draws on the words of Ranginui Walker: "...the whakapapa of a tribe is a comprehensible paradigm of reality, capable of being stored in the human mind and transmitted orally from one generation to the next" (Walker, 1993, p.16, cited in Rito, 2007).

This sense of whanaungatanga extended outside whakapapa when Manaaki and Puāwai came across a neighbour who also worked at the centre:

*Then we got to have in a way that whanaungatanga with them. One of the caregivers was also our neighbour and we had that kind of safety that we knew her and so we knew she [mokopuna] would be fine. Even when we had finished up the caregiver dropped off some stuff we had left. It was a cast of my mokopuna's handprint and no one was at home and she knew us enough to come in and put everything on the bench.....we'd seen her about a week later and she asked us if we got the stuff and we were like, oh it was you.*

Manaaki and Puāwai continued to talk about what whanaunga means to them and how they think coming from a rural town helped to develop these whanaunga relationships:

*Whanaunga means that we already have links to people and to the centre and they had positive experiences that they could share with us. We already knew a lot of people and a lot of people knew us, so you were able to connect even talking about different schools in the area. I think it [is because it is] our home town. Yeah, yeah definitely [whānau was] everyone really, not just the Māori ones. Like a lot of the parents they went to school with me.*

Manaaki and Puāwai have moved to Auckland to attend University. Manaaki is undertaking post graduate studies and Puāwai has started her first year of a degree. They both talked about the instant feeling of whanaungatanga when they started their moko and daughter at a Kōhanga Reo:

*Oh well we've got whanungatanga again already as ..... is working there so I kinda feel safety but we checked it out and although it's different compared to the early childhood centre where we have come from, we're willing to see how it works out.*

Whānau plays a pivotal role within Kaupapa Māori and is securely positioned at the centre of te ao Māori (Pihama et al, 2004). Whanaungatanga is the correlation, connection and relationships that whānau has with the extended whānau community. Leslie Rameka (2012) describes whanaungatanga as being the close relationship that members of the whānau develop when working together. Whanaungatanga equates to the relationship responsibilities that each member of the whānau has to each other.

Furthermore whānau and the act of whakawhanaungatanga is an essential part of being Māori. Rose Pere's work *Te Wheke* (1991) describes whanaungatanga from a traditional view point. Pere presents whanaungatanga as "based on ancestral, historical, traditional and spiritual ties" (p. 26). What is apparent is the strong bond that controls the interactions between kinship groups. Knowledge of one's whakapapa and extended group is seen to bring a sense of belonging and protection. Pere also emphasizes aroha as being an essential concept in ensuring the power of whanaungatanga. She explains it as being the "pillar of life from Io Matua (the Godhead, the Divine Parent) (Pere, 1991, p. 6).

Ritchie and Rau, co-researchers in the early childhood education project *Whakawhanaungatanga*, (2006) argue that in order to guarantee whānau a sense of belonging and partnership with their child's mainstream early childhood centre,

centres need to embrace: inclusion of values from home to centre, and whānau Māori working confidently as co-constructors in their child's education. They argue that partnership in mainstream early childhood education must go beyond pleasantries and welcomes. A culturally responsive curriculum that meets the needs and aspirations of Māori children requires real partnerships and shared understanding where both teachers and whānau are responsive to the needs of Māori children.

Whakawhanaungatanga has also been endorsed within some schooling environments through the work of several Kaupapa Māori academics. Russell Bishop (1996) is one Kaupapa Māori theorist who uses the term whakawhanaungatanga as a “culturally constituted metaphor for conducting kaupapa Māori research” (p. 215). Bishop describes the interconnectedness between whānau, whānaunga and whakawhanaungatanga. The enactment of whakawhanaungatanga is the practice that establishes and maintains the relationships.

Mason Durie pays homage to the role of whānau relationships in the wellbeing of Māori:

*Whānau relationships are three dimensional insofar as different generations carry messages about the past, the present and the future. Whānau provide continuity with the past but must also grapple with the present and at the same time anticipate the future. And, importantly, through a series of extended relationships whānau are gateways to education, the economy, society, and Māori potential” (Durie, 2006, p. 20).*

Durie (2006) highlights the role of whānau Māori as being both contributors and co-constructors in Māori education. This requires whānau to pass on significant cultural knowledge within their whānau as well as continue their involvement in

their child's education. Involvement is reliant on mainstream early childhood education acknowledging whānau Māori strengths and willingness by teachers to include them as partners. The Kaupapa Māori assessment resource *Te Whatu Pōkeka* (2009) highlights the need for early childhood education to include the whānau when assessing Māori children where the 'teacher as expert' is positioned as one who is contributor in the child's education.

Despite many Māori and non-Māori emphasising the importance of whānau Māori in education, the Education Review Office's report on *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services* (2010) confirms that a high percentage of early childhood services were not creating a genuine partnership with whānau Māori. In response to these findings, the Education Review Office released the document *Partnerships with Whānau Māori in Early Childhood Services* (2012). The emphasis is on early childhood services moving past basic relationship building to implementing a practice that is culturally responsive to the needs of whānau Māori and their children.

Cultural responsiveness is at the forefront of a genuine power sharing relationship between the early childhood centre and whānau Māori and this requires managers and teachers to:

- *listen to whānau Māori and respond appropriately to their aspirations*
- *recognise and respect the diverse and unique perspectives of whānau Māori*
- *involve whānau Māori in all aspects of management, programme planning, implementation and evaluation*
- *recognise that Māori culture is an advantage for children and their whānau*
- *use the knowledge of Māori children and whānau to develop rich learning*
- *appreciate that New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki is a document based upon the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and partnership with whānau*

- *use the skills and expertise that whānau Māori bring to the service* (Education Review Office, 2012, p. 1).

Cultural responsiveness as an education pedagogy could be the magnetic force that invites early childhood services to form a stronger understanding of the need for authentic partnerships with whānau Māori. The directives outlined by the Education Review Office (2012) are also quite clearly documented in *Te Whāriki*. Admittedly the language used is different but the intent is the same. Seventeen years have passed since the release of *Te Whāriki*, it is therefore, important to re-invigorate our understanding of authentic partnerships and to act on ERO's report buoyed by the voices of other researchers and whānau who have spoken in this chapter. The quest remains: to ensure equal power sharing between whānau Māori and mainstream early childhood education: and to begin this by insisting upon genuine engagement with Māori in mainstream early childhood education.

Tilly Reedy's eloquent description of partnership encourages us to have such a discussion:

*It encourages the transmission of my cultural values, my language and tikanga, and your cultural values, your language and customs. It validates my belief systems and your belief systems. It is also "home grown."*

(Reedy, 2013, p.49).

### **Summary**

This chapter draws on the voice of whānau participants in establishing how they interpret the meaning of whānau. Although a contemporary understanding appears to be dominant in their understandings, traditional perspectives were also discussed. Interdependency, interconnectedness and extended were clearly defined as being customary practices which is in accordance with whānau lore. Furthermore the word whānau cannot be interpreted as family as they both have different meanings, representations and expectations.

Whānau comes with particular elements that connect the physical world with the metaphysical world. Whanaungatanga and the act of whakawhanaungatanga is derived from whānau and based on positive relationships. Relationships are essential in ensuring the discourse of cultural responsiveness is embraced as an authentic teaching pedagogy. However if this pedagogy is to become a reality, mainstream early childhood education need to reflect on their role as partner, recognise the strength in whānau Māori and embrace whānau as co-constructors in their child's education.

## Chapter 6

### Success ‘as Māori’ in mainstream early childhood education

E hara taku toa i te toa takahi ,  
ēngari he toa takitini,

My success is not mine alone but that of many.

Chapter four findings revealed that a majority of whānau Māori interviewed in this research have not been acknowledged as whānau Māori partners in their child’s mainstream early childhood education. Chapter five draws on the findings from chapter four and offers an insight into the meaning, significance and importance of whānau in both te ao Māori and advancing their child’s education. What has been established is whānau and teachers are both co-constructors and collaborators, therefore there is urgency for mainstream early childhood education to endorse cultural responsiveness and embrace whānau as authentic partners in their child’s education.

The well known whakatauki, *Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua*, used in the literature review of this dissertation pays reverence to the past and the present (Durie, 1998; 2006, Ministry of Education, 1996; Reedy, 2013). This dissertation has provided an overview of the **past** by focusing on the historical context of Māori in education. Whānau participants in this research have shared their **present** day experiences as whānau Māori in mainstream early childhood education. This chapter is centred on the views of whānau in determining what success ‘as Māori’ in mainstream early childhood education can look like in the **future**.

*Ka Hikitia Managing for Success, The Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2008) prompted me to undertake this study. In chapter one, I challenge some of the statements in *Ka Hikitia*, not because I do not support the contents, quite the opposite in fact. I encourage all teachers to realise the potential of Māori children. However my concern has been influenced by my experience working in mainstream early childhood education.

Like Anne Milne (2009) I argue, enjoying success ‘as Māori’ is at risk of being interpreted by those who do not understand what success ‘as Māori’ means. My own interpretation as a Māori educator of success ‘as Māori’ is different to that of my non-Māori colleagues in mainstream early childhood education. I also recognise that my understandings may be dissimilar to other Māori. As this dissertation is focused on the voice of whānau Māori, I do not want to digress from their pūrākau. However a research titled, *Teachers interpretations of success ‘as Māori’ in mainstream early childhood education* could possibly investigate the views of both Māori and non-Māori teachers.

### **Whānau perspectives of success ‘as Māori’**

Celena describes an early childhood environment where her children would be succeeding ‘as Māori’:

*There would be people speaking Māori and English, just drifting in and out of both te reo and English at equal levels. Not just words and not just a sentence. There would be discussions where you could just switch naturally and easily. There would be a feeling within the environment that everyone was committed to this. It would be enriching and their (teachers) contributions would be genuine. I would walk in there and see lots of reo on the walls and Māori artifacts. There would be karakia in the mornings and before kai. There would be lots of visits to the marae. It would be like the*

*rural school back home when you would go down to the moana and the children could look at different kai moana and learn about Tangaroa. They could listen to kōrero and pakiwaitara: learn about tekoteko, learn about tikanga, go horseback riding, go for bush walks, learn about rongōā and Tāne Mahuta, our connections with papatūānuku, all that sort of stuff.*

Celena's description is attuned to the discourse of biculturalism and echoes the intent of *Te Whāriki* where it states; "Activities, stories, and events that have connections with Māori children's lives are an essential and enriching part of the curriculum for all children in early childhood education settings" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.41).

Celena's description of 'as Māori' is consisted with literature presented in this dissertation describing te ao Māori as being connected to a cosmological realm (Joyce, Mathers & Ormsby, 2008; Nepe, 1991; Pere, 1991; Taki, 1996,). Celena shares her feelings:

*I can't really explain where the feeling comes from but it's who I am. It's like a strong feeling deep within me. It's everything that contributes to who I am and what I am. It's from a different level. It's not from a physical or conscious level. It's like something that is sort of quite deep and inbreded, sort of like the blood that runs through my veins type feeling.*

Whetū reflects on her own experience in mainstream education. Her desire for her boys succeeding 'as Māori,' follows:

*I reflect back on my schooling and it was just awful because I was in mainstream and I was always ignored by the teachers so I just want my kids to be known by their names not just another Māori kid who is not going to know anything. It's not about my children becoming a doctor: it's about them being happy within themselves, being good people. I want them to know where they come from, who they are, know their language, know their roots.*

*I want them to feel their sense of belonging and security and once I know that they have that, I feel it will be easier to work on the educational side of things. [As Māori is] about the language, the heritage, just knowing where you come from, your belonging, your sense of security. It is hard to put in words but for me it's just us, it is who we are.*

Russell Bishop and Mere Berryman (2006) interviewed Māori high school students in their research that was later published as *Culture Speaks*. Similarly to Whetū's experience, a student in Bishop and Berryman's research shared their thoughts about how teachers have different expectations according to your culture:

*Well, most of the teachers they tell Pākehā kids that their work is not to standard, and they'll need to see their parents if it doesn't improve. They don't say that to us! It's like they don't expect our whānau to get us going. Nah! It's not like that they just don't think Māori have the brains to do better (Bishop & Berryman, 2006, p. 72).*

Rāwhiti talks about success equating to; being happy, belonging, speaking te reo and maintaining whānau connections:

*I define success as being happy and not really wanting for a lot. You don't have to be rich, as long as you're not down and out and you are on track to where you want to be, then I define that as success. This is what I want for my boys, to be happy and know who they are and where they come from, on both sides and also speaking te reo which I already have with my older boy with him being in the Māori unit at the high school. Keeping the language alive, I would classify as being a success. It is also about keeping the bonds with whānau and having respectful relationships.*

Rāwhiti continues and gives her interpretation of what 'as Māori' means for her. She acknowledges the hardship our tupuna faced, the resilience of Māori,

significance of whānau in te ao Māori and her reasons for identifying and embracing her taha Māori:

*Every person is born into a family but when a Māori is born they are born into a whānau. Amongst many other things, whānau is a huge part of what being Māori means to me. Not only in the sense of the people in your life but the feeling of welcome and belonging that our people radiated. Being born into a culture of strong, talented and beautiful people with solid beliefs and traditions. Not solely speaking with regard to Māori as physical beings, but where our tupuna started and all they endured and sacrificed for today's generation to be where and who we are. We have an amazing history as a people and have overcome so much. To be able to associate myself with such a unique and magnificent peoples makes me proud beyond words. This is what I identify with and why I embrace the Māori culture as my own.*

Puāwai specifies that success for her daughter is encouraging her to be proud of being Māori:

*I would just want to encourage her to be proud of being Māori and expressing herself just how she wants to.*

Pride in being Māori was also voiced by a student in Paul Goren's (2009) research on *Ka Hikitia*:

*I feel proud and (am) not afraid of what people think. Māori have come a long way to where they are today. I am one of the only Māori students at my school and I am just as good as all the Pākehās at my school both school wise and sports wise (Student voice in Goren, 2009, p. 23).*

Manaaki and Puāwai's interpretation of success also incorporates whānau interconnectedness:

*I am doing post graduate studies and I would really like my daughters to continue on after their degrees. I want them to step up the ladder and be the role models for the rest of the whānau. We are planning a bigger picture, it's exciting and scary but we want more than the best.*

Puāwai continues on from her mother and talks about the bigger picture. Whānau play an integral positioning in this image:

*It will begin with whānau first but hopefully it can develop into a bigger picture for everyone, not just Māori but of course more Māori. I just naturally knew that I would be the role model and support my cousins and sister. I don't see it as a duty: it's just something I would do anyway. Just recently I helped my cousin with her homework. She has moved from a Kura Kaupapa Māori into a mainstream. She said her teacher was very impressed with her work and I thought woooo, I've done my job, not job, what I had planned to do. I also think that in order to ensure Māori are successful or our whānau are successful we have to change the stereotypes or the image of Māori that general New Zealand has. If you look at the media, which is a really bad thing to look at but everyone does, you see the negative portrayal of people like Tame Iti and Hone Harawira. It's never done in a positive way. They only show what they want to show. When Māori are portrayed negatively, we are connected and that is the same thing when we see someone from our iwi who is being portrayed positively, we are still connected.*

Similar to Celena's description, Maanaki describes 'as Māori' as having a deep connectedness beyond the human physical being. Papatūānuku plays a central role in Manaaki's sense of belonging:

*As Māori for me relates to being tangata whenua, people of the land and from the land. To give birth is to whānau. With that the after birth, whenua, is returned to the whenua. As Māori we have a special bond with*

*papatūānuku. Papatūānuku is our earth and she is also our mother. Our body form was created from her, and our body returns to her when we die. As Māori, we are the protectors of our land and our whānau. Ngati Kuri!*

Te Whāriki acknowledges the importance of papatūānuku in the strand mana whenua by stating that, “Liason with local tangata whenua and a respect for papatuanuku should be promoted” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.54).

Puāwai shares that knowledge of your origins; whānau positioning, responsibilities and roles are fundamental components in describing ‘as Māori.’

*As Māori’ to me means knowing who you are, knowing where you come from and being proud of both of those things. Also, you must be a staunch protector of your whānau. As Māori you are representative of all things Māori - physical, social, spiritual etc, so you have to show that every day, no matter where you are or who you're with, you show the world how great being a Māori is, even though at these times it might not seem that way.*

### **Success ‘as Māori’**

Whānau Māori participants have all given corresponding meaning to how they identify success ‘as Māori’ for their children and their whānau in mainstream early childhood education. According to whānau participants, success ‘as Māori’ comes with a set of characteristics and responsibilities.

From the voices of my participants, I have elicited the following aspirations:

**Table 1**  
**Whānau Aspirations**

Whānau aspirations	Whānau voice
A sense of belonging, security, identity and pride in being Māori	<i>I want them to feel their sense of belonging and security and once I know that they have that, I feel it will be easier to work on the educational side of things. [As Māori is] about the language, the heritage, just knowing where you come from (Whetū, see pp.60). I .just want to encourage her to be proud of being Māori.... As Māori' to me means knowing who you are, knowing where you come from and being proud of both of those things (Puāwai, see pp. 61 &amp; 63).</i>
Te reo me ona tikanga as a natural part of the centre's teaching programme	<i>There would be people speaking Māori and English, just drifting in and out of both te reo and English at equal levels. There would be discussions where you could just switch naturally and easily. It would be enriching and their (teachers) contributions would be genuine. There would be karakia in the mornings and before kai (Celena, see p.58). Keeping the language alive, I would classify as being a success (Rāwhiti, see p.60).</i>
Connection with papatūānuku	<i>As Māori we have a special bond with papatūānuku. Papatūānuku is our earth, and she is also our mother. Our body form was created from her, and our body returns to her when we die</i>

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	<i>(Manaaki, see pp.62&amp;63). They could learn about our .... connections with papatūānuku (Celena, see p.59).</i>
Recognition of the role of whānau	<i>Every person is born into a family but when a Māori is born they are born into a whānau. Amongst many other things, whānau is a huge part of what being Māori means to me (Rāwhiti, see p.61).</i>
Protector of all things Māori	<i>As Māori you are representative of all things Māori - physical, social, spiritual etc, so you have to show that every day, no matter where you are or who you're with, so that you show the world how great being a Māori is (Puāwai, see p.63).</i>

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These findings suggest that success ‘as Māori’ in mainstream early childhood education should not be interpreted as a new phenomenon as the five key whānau aspirations are clearly articulated throughout the principles, strands and statements of *Te Whāriki*. Furthermore *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* drives the bicultural intent of *Te Whāriki* and sets the foundation for the implementation of Kaupapa Māori in early childhood education. Rosina Taniwha (2005) argues that Kaupapa Māori is an integral part of early childhood education, namely because it can support teachers to grasp an understanding of what it means to be Māori.

It is my belief success ‘as Māori’ in mainstream early childhood education is achievable, provided teachers are in a position to recognise, acknowledge, engender and implement the bicultural philosophy and pedagogy of *Te Whāriki* and Kaupapa Māori. *Ka Hikitia*’s main objective is for teachers to realise Māori potential and states:

*Māori enjoying education success as Māori’ means having an education system that provides all Māori learners with the opportunity to get what they*

*require to realise their own unique potential and succeed in their lives as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 18).*

Although findings from Education Review Office's report on *Success for Māori Children in Early Childhood Services* (2010) were particularly damning, there were a small proportion of culturally responsive partnerships with whānau Māori. These centres were, as Goren (2009) describes, prepared to make a commitment to whānau Māori and were motivated to implement procedures. ERO (2010) established that cultural responsive centres asked for whānau Māori input and inquired into whānau aspirations for their children. All data collected, was later included in programme planning. Reflective practice was continuously enacted in these centres, to decipher what the best strategies were when working with whānau.

Mason Durie (2006) when speaking at the *Hui Taumata Matauranga Māori Education Summit* in Taupo, declared that all peoples working with Māori must realise Māori potential and success. Durie reminds us not to forget that success should become a normal process and one that is expected. This means that teachers are required to shift their thinking from deficit theorizing and stop assuming that Māori children and their whānau are the problem (Bishop 1996, 2003, 2006; Durie, 2006; Goren, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2008; Ritchie, 2012). Māori need to be recognised for their strengths and their innate abilities.

Ritchie (2012) argues that students, whānau, hapū and iwi are the drivers behind defining success, therefore they are required to collaborate with educational services and give their interpretation of success 'as Māori.' This collaborative partnership has been utilised in this study where the whānau participants in this research have contributed to developing some understanding of what success 'as Māori' looks like for their children in mainstream early childhood education.

To complete this chapter, I have drawn on the words of a student in Goren's (2009) research, who gives their description of their favourite teacher:

*The teacher I liked best wasn't Māori, but he could have been. He knew all our stuff. Like, he knew how to say my name. He never did dumb things like sitting on tables or patting you on the head [laughter]. He knew about fantails in a room. He knew about tangi. He never stepped over girls legs. All that sort of stuff. He never made us sit with people we didn't want to and he never made a fuss if the girls couldn't swim or do PE. He expected us to work and behave well. He always came and saw our whānau at home, more than once during the year. He invited the whānau into our room anytime. We went on picnics and class trips, and the whānau came along. We always planned our lessons together. He was choice. (Student's words, Goren, 2009 pp. 23 & 24).*

### **Summary**

This chapter focuses principally on defining success 'as Māori' from a whānau Māori voice. Whānau play a fundamental role in determining success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education. What has been clear from the whānau definitions is the desire for their children to hear te reo spoken freely and competently alongside English. Having a strong sense of belonging, identity and security 'as Māori' are all vital components to succeeding 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education.

These whānau aspirations are clearly documented in *Te Whāriki* and can be furthered supported by adhering to Kaupapa Māori. Acknowledgement of Māori as protectors of all things Māori and the role that papatūānuku has in te ao Māori are essential to ensuring Māori success.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions

Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi

*With your basket and my basket the people will live*

The *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* signed in 1840 confirms the partnership between the British and Māori; giving both parties equal rights (Ritchie, 2003). However recognition of *Te Tiriti* has not come without immense political struggle (Walker, 2004). Assimilation of Māori into British society was the primary objective by the colonising forces. As a consequence, Māori have been subjected to social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, environmental, and political deprivation.

*Te Tiriti o Waitangi* has only become a recognisable entity in Aotearoa society since the 1970s. Kuia and Kaumatua, young Māori university students and the Māori Council were responsible for challenging the government about the deplorable welfare of Māori in health, and education (Walker, 2004). Through the formation of proactive political activism, the 1975 Waitangi Tribunal was formed, affirming the positioning of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* within Aotearoa.

Acknowledgement of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* resulted in the introduction of biculturalism and the formation of the first bicultural early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* in 1996. *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* has a fundamental role within the early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki*. It states that “[A]ll children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.9).

This statement could lead one to conclude that early childhood teachers would naturally take on the role as authentic *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partners and as bicultural teachers would teach all children about the two partners to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. The reality is that this is highly unlikely as mainstream early childhood teachers have struggled with understanding what their role requires as a bicultural educator entails (Burgess, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Ritchie, 2001b, 2003; Taniwha, 2005).

Research has shown that early childhood teachers are divided in their commitment to supporting biculturalism (Burgess, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Taniwha, 2005). A recent ERO (2010) report conducted in 2008 and published in 2010 had similar findings to previous academic research, where only a small percentage of mainstream early childhood centres were dedicated to embracing a cultural responsive practice.

*Ka Hikitia's* strategy is for all teachers to realise Māori potential, that is, to ensure that Māori children are enjoying 'success as Māori' (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.11). While forward thinking, this strategy is also problematic: A large number of teachers in mainstream early childhood education are non-Māori and as Milne (2009) points out, have little or no understanding what 'as Māori' means. This has left the notion of 'success as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education also at risk of being confused, misinterpreted or ignored by teachers who have no understanding of what this means or even more disturbing, no interest in seeking clarification.

For this reason, my research *The voice of whānau Māori in their child's success 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education* has attempted to find out what success 'as Māori' translates into, for a small number of whānau Māori participants. The questions in this research were focused around three primary themes; whānau choosing a centre and what involvement each whānau had as whānau Māori in this centre, their understanding and interpretation of whānau

Māori, and what success 'as Māori' resembles for whānau Māori in mainstream early childhood education.

*Te Whāriki* makes particular reference to early childhood teachers forming relationships with whānau and seeking support in their bicultural understanding. Findings have shown that only one out of the four whānau in this research has been included and acknowledged as an authentic whānau partner. Cultural responsiveness was enacted from the time this whānau enrolled at their child and moko's centre. The other three whānau had mixed experiences. One whānau was completely ignored as a whānau Māori and an attempt by this whānau to form a bicultural partnership with their child's centre was rejected.

Another whānau had formed a positive relationship with two teachers at their child's centre. These teachers appeared genuinely interested in this whānau as whānau Māori. In contrast, two other teachers in the same centre approached this whānau requesting support with Māori week. They had never attempted to form a relationship or had never acknowledged this whānau prior to their request. As a consequence, their actions were seen as tokenistic and disingenuous.

The fourth whānau is committed to meeting their role as a *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partner in their child's parent-led centre. However there has been a lack of commitment from parents in meeting their role as a *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* partner. This has led to this whānau feeling isolated and frustrated.

The second focus for this research was establishing what whānau meant to each whānau participant. Traditional understandings were acknowledged, however a contemporary understanding appeared more prominent. These involved; friends, colleagues, extended friends of family members, school groups, people participants care about and neighbours, all being considered whānau.

In addition the notion of whānau could not be compared to family as there were two different meanings which included two different sets of understandings. Family

is a colonised word, generally comprised of mother, father and their children. Whereas whānau is derived from whakapapa and cosmology and is extended and blended.

What has become evident in this research is the importance of whānau in their child's education. Whānau have set responsibilities that include being responsible for intergenerational cultural knowledge as well as working in partnership with their child's mainstream early childhood centre as co-constructors and collaborators. Whanaungatanga and the act of whakawhanaungatanga can support this partnership and develop positive relationship building.

The third and final focus was whānau participants defining what success 'as Māori' looks like for their children in mainstream early childhood education. A set of five aspirations were elicited from the whānau pūrākau. These include a sense of belonging, security, identity and pride in being Māori; te reo me ona tikanga naturally enacted within the centre programme, interconnectedness with papatūānuku, recognition of the role of whānau and protector of all things Māori.

Succeeding 'as Māori' in mainstream early childhood education is achievable. The principles, strands and statements in *Te Whāriki* and Kaupapa Māori elements embody two working theoretical frameworks that can support whānau in their child to succeed 'as Māori.' Rosina Taniwha (2005) made it very clear in her research that all early childhood teachers need to grasp an understanding of Kaupapa Māori in order to understand what it is to be Māori. What we have are the underpinning philosophies: we now need await the practical application. Once applied, whānau Māori and their children can confidently attend any mainstream early childhood environment and be assured that it is authentically bicultural and as Tilly Reedy beautifully describes, "validates my belief systems and your belief systems" (Reedy, 2013, p. 49).

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