

**Leading learning for Māori students:  
The challenges of leadership for  
teaching principals in small rural  
primary schools**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Educational Leadership and Management  
Unitec Institute of Technology**



## Declaration

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This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project **entitled:** Leading learning for Māori students: The challenges of leadership for teaching principals in small rural primary schools.

Is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management

### Candidate's declaration

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

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Candidate Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Aroha O'leary', written in a cursive style.

Date: 12/2/16

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## Te pepeha ā Ngā Maihi

Te io o te matua koro te kore anake  
 Te oro ko hanga mai o te ao I te po te po ki te  
 Ao marama matariki ki runga nga whetu titiro iho nei ko  
 Rangi-nui ko Papatūānuku o taua atu o te Māori ko  
 Tangaroa, Tane-nui-a-rangi, Rangiroa, Taranga,  
 Maui tiki a Taranga te ira tangata  
 Tumatauenga – nga ira atua, nga ira tangata  
 Rua tanga nuku ki te whenua  
 Tonga rangi kia ta Tawhiri matea  
 Tahu ki Tuo nga huhua mate Kia Ta Tau Te iwi  
 Rongo maru whatu whakairoiro I te whenua hei orango mo te  
 Tangata kua tae mai nga ira tangata o nga waka ko  
 Whiti rangi mamao  
 Poutama Amaru nui a rangi  
 Ko Tutarakauika te waka  
 Ko Ruamano te taniwha  
 Ko Maihi te tangata  
 Ko te ao marara === Puhou Nga Potiki  
 Ka puta ko Pou te ani wani wa  
 Ko Tama uru Pa kua wehi tatau i konei

Te Rangimanoa  
 Romaikahu Tia  
 Tamawhenua  
 Rurehe  
 Hinekura  
 Hinetu  
 Kohineoha  
 Nga Taika eke  
 Koro Kaipapa

Mahiti  
 Tuteao  
 Rongomaiarua  
 Tupari  
 Uawera  
 Kainuku  
 Ngariritaua  
 Te Ao marama  
 Ta Papa

Whaka kato ki tohi  
 Hira iwi

Porotuna  
 Paeaka

Hao-ika  
 Ohopu  
 Te Whata

Hamiona TumuTana

Hawe a rangi

Tuhana iwi

Te Kahu Hawea  
 Puau  
 Whakaheke=Waikato  
 Nane  
 Tom  
 Te Whekaeha Ela Mei

Penetito

Terry Abraham

Ko Hazel ahau.

(Source: Koro Dennis Vercoe, Ngā Maihi, korero as written on the day, October 26, 2015)

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on examining teaching principals' perceptions of educational leadership practices that were perceived to transform Māori achievement in small rural primary schools. A kaupapa Māori framework was applied to this research. This involved meeting and interviewing eight teaching principals, in their schools throughout the greater Wairoa, Gisborne and Eastern Bay of Plenty education regions. A sizeable proportion of Māori students are located in isolated, small rural primary schools that are led by teaching principals. The literature suggests a myriad of leadership challenges exist for teaching principals in small rural primary schools. An assumption is made that these challenges have stemmed from the implementation of the self-managing model, *Tomorrows Schools* (Brooking, Collins, Court, & O'Neil, 2003; Springford, 2006). Findings were analysed qualitatively, generating themes grounded from within each participant's story. Mentoring and lifestyle choices were considered determinants that influenced people into taking up positions in small rural primary schools. The findings also indicated that there is an alarmingly increasing number of challenges that some teaching principals face alone and without appropriate support. Although twenty five years have gone by since the implementation of the self-managing model of *Tomorrow's Schools* teaching principals are continuing to spend a considerable amount of their time supporting and managing responsibilities that should be carried out by Boards of Trustees. A new finding of this research highlights the positive value of having iwi and external providers collaboratively working together with teaching principals to strengthen strategic management, particularly the shaping of the vision of education for the identified iwi primary schools. In these iwi primary schools, teaching principals have committed to implementing and fostering te reo Māori (language), school wide, as part of strengthening and adopting Māori culture, karakia and values through ruma rumaki and mainstream classes.

He mihi maioha tenei me toku iwi e Ngā Maihi, ki a koutou katoa ka nui oku aroha atu, e, me pehea atu he korero? Otira,

“E rere pepepe, e kitea anuhe”

Anei ra aku korero na koutou i tuku mai ki au, he roimata, he roimata, he roimata e kei aku kamo.

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**Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini**

*“My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, as it was not individual success but success of a collective”.*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ALL	Accelerating Learning Literacy
ALiM	Accelerating Learning in Mathematics
BES	Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration
EOTC	Education Outside the Classroom
ERO	Education Review Office
KMF	Kaupapa Māori Framework
NZSTA	New Zealand School Trustees Association
OECD	Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development
PD	Professional Development
PE	Physical Education
PTA	Parent and Teacher Association
WWCS	Wairoa West Cluster Schools

## GLOSSARY OF MĀORI WORDS

The intent of the glossary of terms is to give a basic translation only for ease of reader understanding rather than an in-depth description of Māori concepts.

Hapū	Sub tribe
Hauora	Well-being
Hui whakatika	A meeting that seeks to resolve issues and make amends
Iwi	Tribe, People
Kai	Food
Kamo-kamo	Type of marrow (food)
Karakia	Grace, prayer
Kaumātua	Elder
Kina	Sea egg
Koha	Offering, gift
Kotahitanga	Ethic of unity and bonding (Macfarlene, 2004, p. 97)
Kura	School
Mahi	Work
Mana	Dignity
Manaakitanga	Ethic of caring (Macfarlene, 2004, p. 97)
Māori	Indigenous person of New Zealand
Marae	Meeting house
Mātauranga	Knowledge
Pākehā	European
Pāua	Abalone (shell-fish)
Pumanawatanga	Morale, tone and pulse (Macfarlene, 2004, p 97).
Rangatiratanga	Teacher effectiveness (Macfarlene, 2004, p. 97)
Rūma rumaki	(Māori medium language class)
Taha wairua	Spiritual well-being
Tamariki	Children
Tangata whenua	People of the land (indigenous)
Tangi	Funeral
Taonga	Treasure, anything prized
Tikanga	Protocols
Tīpuna	Ancestors
Wahine	Woman
Whaea	Motherly elder
Whakapapa	Family genealogy
Whakawhanaungatanga	Connecting and relating with people
Whakataukī	Proverb
Whānau	Family
Whanaungatanga	Establishing relationships

# CHAPTER 1

## **Kā pū te rūha, ka hao te rangatahi**

‘The old net laid rested while the new net is cast’ (Sir Apirana Ngata).

Source: (Manning et al., 2011).

The reason for selecting this whakataukī for this chapter was the Māori metaphor (old net) best describes how the tool of education has assisted in my personal development and growth (the new net) to seek knowledge, and understanding to actively engage in New Zealand’s education system. This chapter begins with a synopsis of the researcher’s background which highlights the influence of family upbringing and the importance of love and support from whānau, hapū and iwi when working towards transforming oneself through education.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCHER**

Before I begin this chapter I take the opportunity to acknowledge my family who have helped to support me in my life. I am the eldest of four children. My mum, Te Whekaehe Ela Mei Waikato is Māori and she comes from Te Teko. My dad, Terry Abraham is Pākehā, he comes from Petone and Wellington and now calls Wairoa, home. Growing up as a young child in Wainuiomata and Wairoa offered me many rich life-changing experiences. Sometime after finishing university, dad told me that my first teacher at Pink Carrol School didn’t have much expectation of me as a five year old implicitly claiming that I was a troubled child. During the early 1980s I didn’t see a difference between Māori and Pākehā because to me everybody was the same. In Wainuiomata we would spend a lot of time with our Uncle Pat (one of my dad’s older brothers) and his family. We would also go out to the beach along the Wainui Coast, Breaker’s Bay, and Red’s Rock out past the Wellington Airport and attend rugby at Athletic Park in the city.

Holidays to Te Teko would often involve hanging out with our Texas cousins at Nanny Mei’s and Uncle Charlie’s homesteads. We always went fishing down at Thornton for herrings and as kids we watched our Aunties go white baiting. Heading out to Kawerau we would go to the family hot pools not far from Onepu. Mum’s brothers were all skilled bushmen, who worked the land. They were great at hunting and I remember them coming back to Nanny Peggy and Koro Pop’s in Kawerau with two gigantic wild boar. My dad is a trained meat inspector from Lincoln College (now Lincoln University) who has worked at Affco in Wairoa for over twenty five years. Quite humble in stature, he is an advocate for social justice issues at work. More

notoriously known by family as a gun with the boning knife, a master diver for crayfish and kina and a genuine down to earth person. My uncles (mums brothers) seemed to enjoy learning from him when it came to diving for kina, and slaughtering cows, pigs and mutton for tangi and family celebrations. We were quite privileged, in the sense that we never starved, there was always food around us like boil up, crayfish, paua, hangi, and fried bread. I watched mum and her sisters being great workers in the kitchen at our marae, Tuteao. So I learnt from them the importance of being committed to the mahi, to give selflessly and have a good work ethic. Although mum worked in the gardens this was not a life for me endlessly picking corn, watermelon and kamo-kamo, seven days a week, starting at 6am and finishing at 3pm. My mum didn't have the opportunities that I now see I had as a child at school. My mum's education was centred on the concept of whānau, learning to get on with family, no matter what and being there for each other. She never had much to say about her school days and this could be put down to the era where education was stigmatised by deficit theorising of Māori in New Zealand.

When we left Wainuiomata my education evolved for the better once I started school at Wairoa Primary. This is where I met my first teacher Mrs Mita and my last teacher, Mr Mole. They were two different and unique teachers who I respected and looked up to. Mrs Mita was a staunch, Māori nanny who taught me, as a primer J2, the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Mr Mole was my Standard 6 teacher who inspired my love for maths and sports. He was a very tall, strong-looking Pākehā man who always helped me with my learning and would take our class out all the time for sports. Both teachers instilled high expectations towards being your best and they valued Māori culture. Being at Wairoa Primary was a great period of my learning journey.

Living in the country as a family we spent a large amount of time at the beach in Mahia. Our days involved collecting pipi and cockles, and searching for paua and kina while our dad was diving. We would spend days and weekends at Mahia. Favourite places for family trips included going to the Crusher, Catcus, Kinikini, Taylors Bay and around by Portland Island. When in season we would go mushroom picking out on the farm, coming back with a boot load full of mushrooms. Our mum would show us how to clean and bag the mushrooms for the winter season. We also went out hay making with our dad at Awamate and helped out with cutting fire wood at Waihua. Other times we would also head out just near Pilots Hill in Wairoa where we would watch our dad row out in the dingy to set the net close by the bar. Kahawai was the main staple of our food and on most occasions we had beautiful snapper caught off the longline while out kontiki fishing. We also had our own vegetable garden at home in

Wairoa. Dad would show us how to grow tomatoes in the hot house and we had plenty of fruit trees to eat from like feijoas, apples, pears, oranges, mandarins, nectarines, and plums.

The nurturing, support and love of family during these early years made a significant difference to my future drive to go to university. I left home at fourteen from Wairoa to finish my secondary schooling at Otaki College in Otaki. Whaea Hine Wilson was an inspirational teacher who took time out to help me. As well, we both had a connection to Wairoa College and now to Otaki College. I loved being in the top class at Otaki College because the competitive camaraderie pushed me on to strive to be the best and with excellence. I had to work hard to keep up with my mates and we often spent a lot of time studying and attending weekend tuition classes before major exam periods. I put so much energy into my school work because I knew that if I wanted to go places I had to fully commit to learning. I always admired how my teachers at Otaki College willingly gave up their personal weekends to do extra tutoring during 1993 - 1995 to help us all get over the line for School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and Bursary (High School Certificate).

I was the first on my mum's side of the family to attend university. My dad was very supportive of me. He always sat down and helped us do our homework. He would discuss the importance of having a good education and the positive impact this can have on future opportunities in life. As a young empowered Māori woman I had the educational opportunities to attend Massey University in Palmerston North. During pre-service training time from 1996 - 1998 I attended Palmerston North Teacher's College, now Massey University College of Education. Here I was able to further grow and learn from many wise and outstanding lecturers such as Mary Jane and Kahu Stirling, Mason and Arohia Durie and Peter Lind. Despite many arduous life circumstances I accomplished one of many dreams of graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Education and a Diploma in Primary Teaching. This is basically how I began my formal pathway into teaching.

Many years later, I am now completing my Masters of Educational leadership and Management and am concerned about the barriers within our education system. There is a paucity of current research related to educational leadership in small rural primary schools in New Zealand regarding the challenges of leadership in isolated rural communities, and the various leadership and organisational dilemmas faced by teaching principals arising from within such contexts. These constraints add a layer of complexity for leadership and have ramifications towards transforming outcomes for Māori in small rural primary schools. Examples of such constraints involve contesting for funding in competition with other larger schools in the local community; navigating through the different agencies which contribute to

education as part of meeting the mandatory requirements espoused by the Ministry of Education; and addressing individual accountability and performance for raising student achievement from the three different system levels: the classroom, school and community.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH**

This research focused on identifying and examining the leadership practices used by teaching principals in small rural primary schools with a specific focus on the leadership practices that are perceived to transform Māori student achievement. Although this was a small scale qualitative research project, the data reflected a growing number of concerns held by teaching principals in small rural primary schools with regards to their leadership role. This chapter presents the rationale for this research, followed by an outline of the research aims and questions that guided the research process. The chapter concludes with an overview of how the thesis is structured.

The nature of educational leadership in underperforming schools has again come under the microscope by both the profession and by the Ministry of Education (Jones, 2015). These concerns are pertinent to small rural school leadership because, throughout the last two decades, the issues faced by teaching principals are considered to be increasingly problematic in nature (Brooking et al., 2003; Collins, 2004; Wylie, 1997, 2007, 2011). This suggests that it is now timely and relevant to review the effectiveness of the self-managing governance model for small rural primary schools (Brooking, 2005; Collins, 2004; Springford, 2006). Such professional concerns held by rural principals have been brought to the attention of the New Zealand Principals' Federation. The New Zealand Principals' Federation (2015) is a leadership organisation that is comprised of experienced principals from around New Zealand who have the mandate to act as servants representing the concerns of principals including leading imminent issues confronting education in New Zealand. This group has identified that rural schools need more professional support. This is further reiterated by O'Callaghan (2015) in an article which acknowledges the difficulties and challenges experienced by principals in a section of the South Island rural school community.

Many small rural primary schools in New Zealand are led by teaching principals (Brooking et al., 2003). The international literature concedes that there are significant challenges for teaching principals in small rural schools (Northfield, 2013; Starr & White, 2008; Wallin & Newton, 2013). Since the inception of the *Tomorrow's Schools* (Lange, 1988) reforms in the late 1980s, much of the stress for principals has arisen from the higher workload resulting from the dual role of trying to maintain quality in teaching while also meeting the administrative

demands stemming from the leadership role in the self-managing model (Collins, 2004; Wylie, 1997).

Furthermore, it is acknowledged by Wylie (2007) that the role and composition of Boards of Trustees was one of the most profound facets of the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms in 1989. This gave localised control to lay members of the community as Boards of Trustees' members through a governance structure. As Wylie (2007) states: "Few, if any, other national education systems have given the responsibility for the governance of each school to a largely parent-elected body on which parents of current students usually form the majority" (p. 1).

Since 1989, further research into the self-managing model has highlighted that some Boards of Trustees do not have the knowledge required to fulfil their responsibilities, one of which is to appoint a principal at their schools (Brooking, 2005), as well as completing strategic planning and scrutinising of student achievement (Robinson, Ward, & Timperley, 2003), and engaging in school-community consultation (Springford, 2006). For some small rural primary schools, governance has been a major issue and is highlighted within the projects of *The Wairoa West Cluster Schooling Strategy* (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007) and *Whaia te iti Kahurangi* (Wylie & Kemp, 2004).

The schools involved in *Whaia te iti Kahurangi* and *The Wairoa West Cluster Schooling Strategy* initiatives addressed the need to transform the way they lead to ensure that their children reached their full potential (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie & Kemp, 2004). Furthermore, these initiatives outlined various change management strategies used by communities to empower teachers, leaders and families to own the responsibility of educating their children as part of raising student achievement. The change management strategies employed in *Whaia te iti Kahurangi* (Wylie & Kemp, 2004) are recognised as having contributed to making a difference to student achievement, particularly in the areas of governance, quality teaching, educational leadership and community participation in learning.

In order to shift and transform student achievement it is necessary to acknowledge Māori frameworks of knowledge as part of the empowerment and emancipation process for Māori (Black, 2014; Smith, 2012). As part of this research I examined the challenges that teaching principal's face in small rural primary schools. Springford (2006) suggests that it is possibly time to evaluate the governance model used by primary schools. The expectation of the Ministry of Education (2015) reiterates that "Boards of Trustees are responsible for the running of schools and raising achievement in schools. A school's operation and success depend on the cooperation and interaction of parents, teachers, principal and board" (p. 13). However,

the literature reveals that some communities are experiencing difficulty in fully meeting the expectations presented to them, and more support is needed for transforming governance in such small rural primary schools. More discussion surrounding the impact of *Tomorrow's Schools* and the role of Boards of Trustees is included in the Literature Review of Chapter Two.

## **RESEARCH RATIONALE**

My interest in conducting this research has emerged from my own leadership practice as a first-time principal in a small rural primary school, and also from the anecdotal conversations I have had with other teaching principal colleagues in similar schools. Addressing the transformation of education for Māori is a concern in New Zealand, as the education system does not serve Māori groups well, particularly those from low socio-economic communities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007). The Education Review Office (2010) identified that many schools are not yet demonstrating sufficient commitment to progressing Māori student achievement.

## **RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS**

I envisage that this research may provide a platform for further discussion around the challenges of leadership for teaching principals in small rural primary schools, and specifically identifying which leadership practices contribute to transforming Māori student achievement in these schools. With this in mind, and in an effort to narrow the scope of the thesis, three aims and three questions were devised to guide this research:

### **RESEARCH AIMS**

1. To identify the effective styles and forms of educational leadership used by teaching principals in small rural primary schools;
2. To critically examine the challenges that rural primary teaching principals face in raising Māori student achievement; and
3. To critically examine the leadership practices that are perceived to contribute to raising Māori student achievement.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the effective styles and forms of educational leadership used by teaching principals in small rural primary schools?
2. What are the challenges that rural primary teaching principals face in raising Māori student achievement?

3. What leadership practices are perceived to contribute to raising Māori student achievement?

## **OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

The thesis is structured as follows:

**Chapter One** presents the positioning of the researcher, the study's rationale and justification for the research, including an overview of the thesis structure.

**Chapter Two** presents a review of literature relating to educational leadership in small rural primary schools in New Zealand. The chapter is organised in the following way: In the first instance a historical outline is given, including a description of the impacts of the educational reforms of *Tomorrow's Schools* on Māori and small rural primary schools. Secondly, the review presents an overview of the styles and forms of educational leadership, and the leadership practices that are perceived to transform Māori student achievement. A particular reference is made to Māori leadership in connection with educational leadership in small rural primary schools.

**Chapter Three** presents the methodology and methods used for this research. The chapter starts with a definition of both the methodology and methods. The research methodology is then discussed with a central focus on a Kaupapa Māori framework (KMF) and application within the qualitative research process.

**Chapter Four** presents the data analysis from the interviews with the eight teaching principal participants. The chapter uses data tables related to the interview questions. Key categories are identified and supporting examples are given from participants' responses. The chapter ends with a summary of the significant key themes from within the data.

**Chapter Five** presents the discussion of the findings based on the emerging themes. The key findings of the research are critically examined and linked to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

**Chapter Six** completes the thesis with a summary of the overall findings of the research project. A review of the strengths and limitations of this research is discussed. Then final recommendations are provided for future practice and suggestions for further research regarding conceptualising Māori frameworks for educational leadership in small rural primary schools.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

**E kimi ana I ngā kāwai i toro ki tawhiti.**

‘Seeking the shoots that stretch far out’. The shoots here are those of the gourd or other creeping plant. The saying is applied, therefore, to someone seeking to establish a distant relationship or seeking to rediscover his or her own roots (Colenso 1879:144; Grey 1857:4; Williams 1971:110).

Source: (Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 29).

The reason for selecting this whakataukī for this chapter is about explaining the identity of small rural primary schools and the role teaching principals have in such schools. This whakataukī suggests for me that from my perspective as a teaching principal you have to give more value to the people you serve than what is reciprocated back to you.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter will review the literature relevant to this study’s aims and research questions. The research aims and questions were designed to review the styles and forms of leadership used by teaching principals in small rural primary schools. The central focus of this study was to identify the leadership practices that were perceived to transform Māori student achievement in small rural primary schools. The themes that are examined in this chapter are: (i) educational leadership in small rural primary schools; (ii) leadership challenges for teaching principals; and (iii) leadership practices that contribute to Māori student achievement. Within this chapter, each theme is defined, its significance established, and links are made between the three key areas. Additionally, there will be discussion on two subthemes: the history of educational reforms on small rural primary schools; and Māori leadership.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Small rural primary schools originally formed the backbone of New Zealand’s schooling system during the colonial era (Barrington, 2008). The colonial period can be interpreted as a significant period in New Zealand’s education system that possibly ignited the beginning of the wave of deficit theorising regarding Māori students ability to succeed in life. The arrival of the missionaries, who were the first Pākehā teachers, signalled a clear intent that they were here to civilize and Christianise Māori (Stephenson, 2013). The establishment of ‘Mission Schools’ in 1814 and the ‘Native Schools’ in 1867 was the result of initiatives undertaken by the Crown (Barrington, 2008). The central purpose of these schools was the assimilation of

Māori into the Pākehā world (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006). Barrington (2008), Simon and Smith (2001) and Davies and Nicholl (1993) express similar views regarding the discourses implemented as a result of the educational reforms in New Zealand from 1860 to 1960. Additionally, Bishop (2003) suggests that the effects of European colonisation in the late eightieth century severely impacted on the educational and wider social experiences of the indigenous Māori. Marie, Fergusson, and Boden (2008) similarly state that, as a result of colonisation, the education system failed to acknowledge and cater for Māori, who had been educated in culturally-inappropriate learning environments.

Institutionalised disadvantage has existed for Māori students throughout the implementation of various educational reforms from the 1860s to the 1960s. One significant event which perpetuated such disadvantage is reflected in the extent to which Māori participated in the establishment of the 1867 Native Schools Act (Barrington, 2008). Furthermore, Barrington (2008) states that: “Māori had to request a school in writing, gift a piece of their land to the Crown for a school site, and provide a share of the teacher’s salary and the cost of the buildings” (p. 15). These native schools were in isolated rural Māori communities where Māori was the main language but all the teachers were Pākehā (Walker, 2015). Secondly, the Education Act of 1877 led to the setting up of the Department of Education. The idea was that students would transfer into the Board or public schools when they were sufficiently fluent in English (Simon & Smith, 2001). Additionally, regulations requiring Māori children to attend school were not introduced until 1894, which reflected the low expectations held by the Crown and teachers of this period (Barrington, 2008). By February 1969 all ‘Native Schools’ were transferred to the Department of Education, thus disestablishing the Native Schools system (Simon & Smith, 2001).

Deficit thinking in regard to Māori students was widespread amongst a majority of teachers, principals, policymakers and the Department of Education from the 1860s to the late 1990s (Barrington, 2008) and possibly still exists today in the current education system. Deficit thinking is defined as negative thoughts, stereotyping and generalisations about students’ abilities (Bishop, O’Sullivan, & Berryman, 2010; Macfarlane, 2004). In fact, Barrington (2008) states that “the 1930 Director of Education, Tom Strong, expectation for Māori was to lead the Māori boy to become a good farmer and the Māori girl to be a good farmer’s wife” (p. 299). This is just one example of many years of deficit theorising that has contributed to successive generations of Māori students being condemned to limited educational, occupational and life opportunities (Barrington, 2008). Additionally, two government reports, the *Hunn Report* of 1960 (Hunn, 1960) and the *Currie Commission Report* of 1962 (Commission on Education in New Zealand & Currie, 1962) acknowledged that there were many disadvantages and

inequality issues for Māori in education. Furthermore, Bishop et al. (2010) identified that much of this deficit discourse has been developed throughout New Zealand's history.

In 1989 the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms brought about radical changes to New Zealand school governance (Openshaw, 2009). The education reforms discharged all intermediate administrative and support structures such as the regional Education Boards, and introduced the concept of Boards of Trustees for state schools as the governance body, and designated the school's principal as the Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Trustees (Brooking et al., 2003). The idea of Boards of Trustees was to involve communities in a more meaningful role in schools and comprised mostly of community elected parent trustees (Wylie, 1997). Additionally, Boards of Trustees' governance roles included managing operational funds, having responsibility for overseeing curriculum implementation, policy direction, personnel, finance, property and health and safety (Brooking et al., 2003).

In accordance with the literature reviewed structural factors and organisational system levels are recognised to hold back the future viability of small rural primary schools. It is recognised that Boards of Trustees have a governance responsibility to support better student progress and to raise student achievement (Ministry of Education, 2010). Since the inception of *Tomorrow Schools* it is debateable whether this is the case for all small rural primary schools as indicated by Brooking (2007). Additionally, Brooking (2007) identified that some of these schools are experiencing a quick succession of first time principals which is having a destabilising effect on the future growth of the school. Furthermore, exacerbating this is the practice of having an acting principal or emergency staffing during the changeover period. Anecdotal evidence suggests that relationships with the community and Boards of Trustees played a significant part in many principals' decisions to leave (Brooking, 2007; Gorinski & Fraser, 2007). It is recognised that women are often teaching principals in the least desirable, poorer and most challenging rural primary schools (Brooking et al., 2003). Moreover, many first time principals of small rural primary schools are appointed into difficult situations such as unresolved personnel issues, financial problems and roll decline, without appropriate support (Brooking, 2007).

*Tomorrow's Schools* severely affected the staffing of small rural primary schools. This was highlighted as a concern by Wylie (1997) because it heavily impacted on the workload of teaching principals. Brooking et al. (2003) and Wylie (2011) confirm workloads of teaching principals increased because of the higher degree of complexity stemming from the small numbers of staff employed and the fewer opportunities to delegate work. Similarly, these types of concerns were identified by sole-charge and teaching principals in small rural primary

schools in Wairoa and the East Coast of New Zealand (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie & Kemp, 2004).

*Whaia te iti Kahurangi* (Wylie & Kemp, 2004) and *The Wairoa West Cluster Schools Success Strategy* report (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007) were research projects initiated to make a change towards improving the provision of education as part of lifting Māori student achievement in small rural primary schools. *The Wairoa West Cluster Schools* (WWCS) was established for isolated and remote schools as part of schooling improvement priorities refocusing on student achievement outcomes (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007). *The WWCS* shared a generalised history of student underachievement (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007). These schools were all situated inland from Wairoa, the most significant township, at distances ranging from eight to sixty two kilometres over unsealed and winding roads (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007).

*The Wairoa West Cluster Schools Success Strategy* report identified that many of these small rural primary schools were facing difficulties regarding poor school performance underpinned by ineffective educational leadership, poor quality teaching, and severe governance issues (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007). Similarly, an iwi (tribe) approach was taken by Ngāti Porou to address issues in education in East Coast schools and established a relationship with the Ministry of Education (Wylie & Kemp, 2004). Te Runanga o Ngāti Porou (Wylie & Kemp, 2004) became the first iwi-Ministry of Education partnership, and it contracted Gardiner Parata Ltd to provide a framework for change management in order to address the issues raised by the Education Review Office in 1997.

Drawing from the literature, Collins (2004) and Springford (2006) defined small rural primary schools as typically having student rolls of less than two hundred students, and smaller schools with student rolls of less than fifty students (Collins, 2004). Twelve years ago small rural primary schools made up 60 percent of New Zealand primary schools (Collins, 2003). Explanation for such a decrease in the percentage of small rural primary schools is suggested by Collins (2004) to be the result of closures due to schools not being able to provide quality education which resulted as a part of the area and network reviews; and the self-managing policies of *Tomorrow's Schools*.

Today a sizeable proportion of Māori students are located in small rural primary schools (Education Counts, 2015). Table 2.1 shows that the majority of Māori students are located in the Bay of Plenty, Rotorua and Taupo, Hawkes Bay and Gisborne, and Tai Tokerau education regions.

**Table 2.1: Summary of Māori students in small rural primary schools in New Zealand**

Education regions	Number of state integrated schools contributing and full primary	Total number of Māori students	Percentage of Māori students in the region %
Auckland	35	825	26.33
Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, Taupo	52	2175	62.25
Canterbury	61	653	13.1
Hawkes Bay, Gisborne	50	1334	53.87
Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast	40	389	15
Otago, Southland	82	673	13.69
Tai Tokerau	66	2669	63
Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu	83	1309	24.76
Waikato	90	1759	29.69
Wellington	26	387	20.58
<b>Totals</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>12, 173</b>	

(Source: Directory of Schools - as at 17AUG2015)

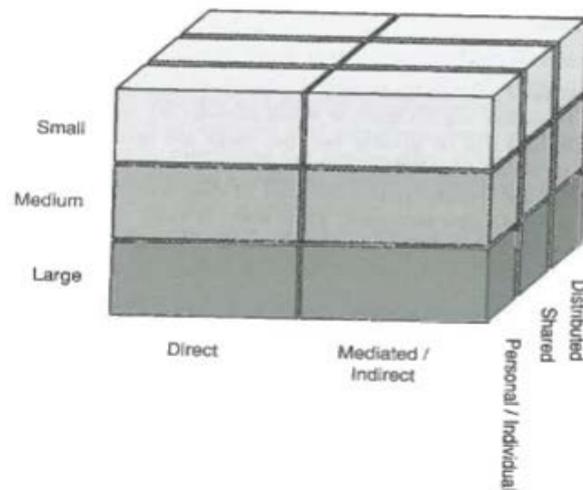
<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/data-services/directories/list-of-nz-schools>)

A further challenge that these teaching principals face include transforming educational outcomes for Māori. Some of these schools have had statutory interventions placed on them due to ongoing concerns related to student achievement, governance, leadership and the quality of teaching (Ministry of Education, 2014b). As the Education Review Office (2010) notes, New Zealand's education system has not served Māori groups well, especially those from low socio-economic communities.

## **FORMS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Elkin, Inkson, and Jackson (2008) suggest that there is no 'philosopher's stone' or 'recipe' to leadership. A critical issue facing teaching principals is how they influence what happens inside classrooms. According to Southworth (2004), the learning-centred leader is someone who is approachable, skilled at communicating and listening to staff, and highly capable of monitoring classrooms and tracking teaching and students' learning. Southworth (2004) explained how different contexts influence the nature and character of primary school leadership and how head teachers in different sized schools shape their leadership accordingly to influence the school's goals, expectations, pedagogic and curricular practices. Southworth's Cube Model 2004 shows the importance of three dimensions to leadership: school size; direct and mediated effects; and the density of leadership in schools through patterns of personal, shared and distributed forms. Furthermore, Southworth (2004) suggests

that leaders of small schools have a stronger direct influence, which is explained in his *Cube Model* of leadership.



**Figure 2.1 Primary school leadership cube: Initial model of differential leadership**  
 (Source: Southworth, 2004, p. 115).

Southworth's model (2004) for primary schools offers an insight into the effect of school size on practising direct, indirect and distributed forms of educational leadership that impact on student outcomes. The model implies that all principals should spend a majority of their leadership time focusing on students' learning and improving teachers' professional learning. He identifies three key methods that leaders use to exert influence within the classroom. These are: modelling; monitoring; and professional dialogue and discussion. Modelling is described as leaders demonstrating what they say to teachers in professional practice. Secondly, monitoring promotes the value and importance of knowing what is actually happening in the classrooms and steps up accountability for performance from staff. Lastly, professional dialogue and discussions are necessary between staff but, more importantly, with teachers because of their direct influence on student achievement (Southworth, 2004). This view is similarly expressed by Cardno (2012), who suggests that direct leadership is concerned with a leader's interaction and communication with teachers. Therefore, it is worth understanding how leadership style theories may assist teaching principals to become more effective in their leadership and influence followers.

What school leadership theorising doesn't clearly identify is which styles of leadership are most effective for teaching principals in small rural primary schools, particularly in enhancing student achievement for Māori. Bishop and Glynn (2000), Hohepa (2013) and Macfarlane (2004) provide invaluable research on how culturally responsive leadership can address Māori student achievement and outcomes. A key point raised by Bishop and Glynn (2000), Hohepa (2013) and Macfarlane (2004) is the relevance of creating culturally responsive contexts for

Māori students because it validates as a leader that you acknowledge and value who learners are as Māori. Macfarlane’s Model of *The Edu-Cultural Wheel* (Macfarlane, 2004) offers a plausible approach in addressing student achievement through creating culturally-safe schools for Māori students, as most small rural primary schools encourage a family environment.

The *Edu-Cultural Wheel* (Macfarlane, 2004, p. 97) consists of five interwoven cultural concepts that cover all aspects of the classroom. These are: whanaungatanga (establishing relationships); rangatiratanga (teacher effectiveness); manaakitanga (ethic to care); kotahitanga (ethic of unity and bonding); and pumanawatanga (morale, tone, pulse). As Macfarlane (2004) states, “infusing these five cultural concepts and strategies is likely to have a positive effect on students’ learning and on teachers’ teaching, because cultural referents and employing culturally relevant pedagogy will signal to Māori students that their culture matters” (p. 97). Furthermore, he suggests that if the learning and teaching connect with the cultures represented in the classroom then students would more likely be responsive.

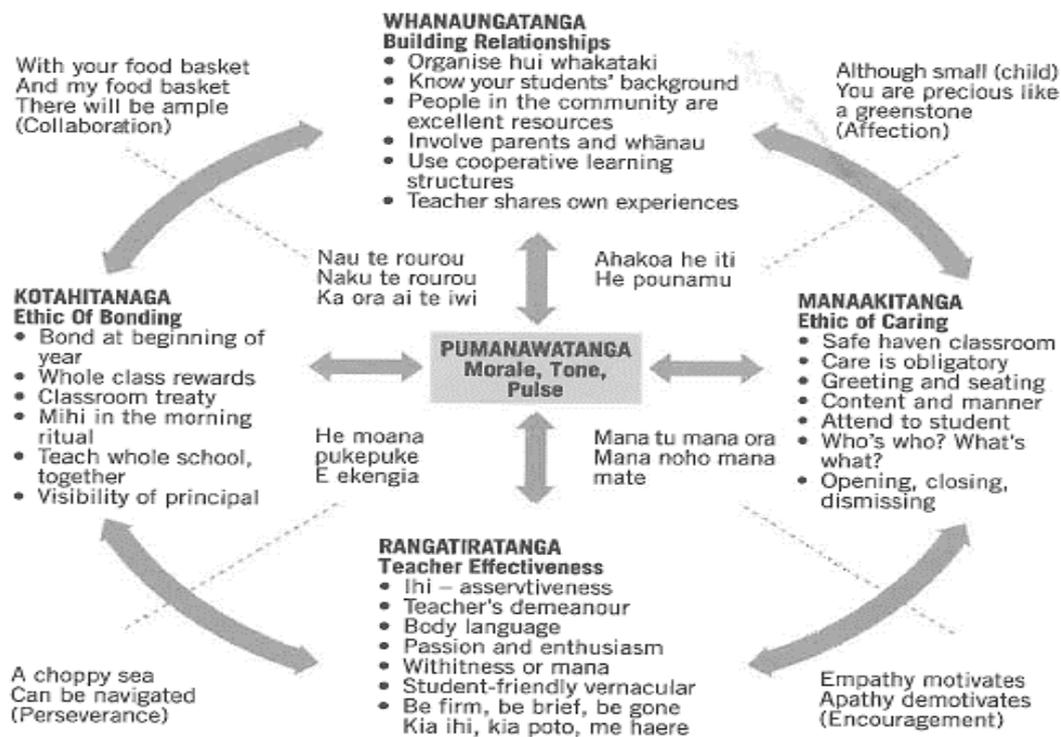


Figure 2.2 The Edu-Cultural Wheel (Source: Macfarlane 2004, p. 97).

## MĀORI LEADERSHIP

Better understanding and appreciation of Māori conceptualisations of leadership and construction of knowledge may pave the way forward in transforming outcomes for Māori students in small rural primary schools. Durie (2003) maintains that the object of Māori

leadership is to enable Māori to live and advance as Māori in their own country, to fully participate as global citizens, and to enjoy good health and a high standard of living. This is reiterated within the research of many indigenous Māori scholars and is summarised by Black (2014) who states that “Enhancing Mātauranga Māori and Indigenous Knowledge and the framework, Te Waka Mātauranga, will enable Māori and indigenous learners to connect and follow the celebrated journey of our distinctive knowledge systems” (p. 8). This acknowledges the importance of incorporating Mātauranga Māori frameworks in addressing outcomes for Māori. Similarly, this view is shared with Bateman, Macfarlane, Glynn, and Cavanagh (2007) who suggest that leaders of all schools should have a cultural understanding of the values of Māori, particularly whanaungatanga, which is a process for developing positive relationships with whānau and Māori students. Likewise, Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, and Teddy (2009) explain whanaungatanga as a process valued by Māori in developing relationships with people. It is recognised by Bishop et al. (2009) that embracing and valuing relationships for Māori is central to creating culturally appropriate and responsive learning contexts for Māori students.

Many principals in small schools in Māori communities are themselves Māori. Māori principals currently make up 13.7 percent of all school principals in New Zealand (Education Counts, 2015b). According to Hohepa (2013), Māori educational leaders are expected to lead and carry out Māori culturally preferred practices in social situations and to operate appropriately in Māori cultural contexts. Mead, Stevens, Third, Jackson, and Pfeifer (2006) identified eight key practices that Māori leaders should have when working with Māori: (i) having an ability to manage, mediate and settle disputes to uphold unity of whānau, hapū and iwi; (ii) taking care of their families by being a provider of food; (iii) being brave and having courage when upholding the rights of hapū and iwi in their struggles and challenges; (iv) lead the community forward to improving its economic base and mana; (v) have a wider vision and a high awareness of education, (vi) reflect the value of manaakitanga in the way they work with people and relate to others; (vii) lead the community to undertake and successfully complete big projects; and (viii) be well versed in Mātauranga Māori, know the traditions of their people, their culture, their language and proverbs and be aware of traditions of other iwi. These leadership practices are considered useful when developing relationships with whānau when addressing their children’s learning and behaviour in the classroom.

*Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2014c); and *Investing in Educational Success* (Ministry of Education, 2014) are two key Ministry of Education strategies that focus on lifting student achievement. *Investing in Educational Success* is a government initiative set up to help lift achievement. Its intention is to raise the quality of teaching by

enabling teachers to work together with clusters of schools, share expertise and knowledge of teachers and leaders (Ministry of Education, 2014). *Ka Hikitia* is a Māori education strategy designed to rapidly change how the education system performs so that all Māori students gain the required skills, knowledge and experiences to walk in life and achieve education success as Māori. Furthermore, this strategy advocates the urgency for parents, iwi, whānau, teachers and leaders and other stakeholders who have a role in education to support and raise educational expectations and outcomes for all students (Ministry of Education, 2014c).

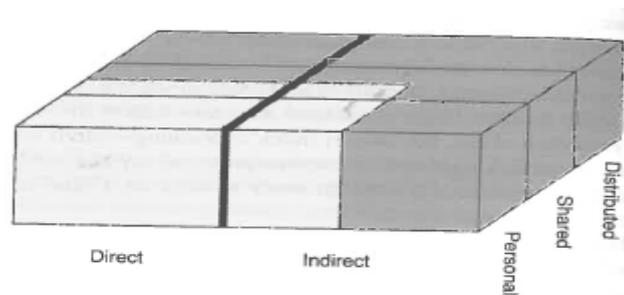
## **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SMALL RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Effective educational leadership is critical to quality teaching and learning in all schools, including small rural primary schools. Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009) highlight that leadership is central to improving student achievement, especially for Māori students and minority groups. A central element of educational leadership is that it is a process of influence (Bush, 2011). Likewise, Spillane and Coldren (2011) maintain that, regardless of the degree of consensus or conflict that might be involved, school leaders are key agents in improving teaching and learning. Additionally, Elmore (2004) states that an educational leader's primary purpose is the "guidance and direction of instructional improvement" (p. 13). Clearly, school leadership influences student achievement either directly or indirectly. Therefore, it is important to examine the notion of improving student outcomes in the context of small rural primary schools.

Educational leaders must spend a majority of their time focused on the core business of teaching and learning (Robinson et al., 2009). However, teaching principals have struggled with their dual role in small primary schools (Collins, 2003; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; Wallin & Newton, 2013). This argument is well supported by Wylie (2011), who states that "schools serving low income communities and those with very small rolls are over-represented among these struggling schools" (p. 656). Robinson (2007) expresses a similar view that educational leadership involves a "close involvement of leadership in establishing an academic mission, monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning and promoting the importance of professional development" (p. 55). However, there is a paucity of literature concerned with effective leadership practices to transform Māori student achievement in small rural primary schools. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to *Southworth's Cube Model* (Southworth, 2004), the *Edu-Cultural Framework* (Macfarlane, 2004) and the eight leadership dimensions, together with the associated knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified by Robinson et al. (2009), to frame educational leadership in small rural primary schools.

There is much to be learnt about the various forms that educational leadership can take. Southworth (2004) identified that creating opportunities for teachers to engage in dialogue about their teaching practices should be at the heart of educational leadership in small primary schools. Cardno (2012) expresses a similar view and acknowledges that in small primary schools, the leader's interactions with teachers must be focused, and underpinned by the importance of relationship building. In addition, Cardno (2012) states that it is necessary for leaders and teachers to engage in conversations that are difficult and which can often test these relationships, particularly when attempting to resolve an area of practice. Cardno (2012) further argues that addressing problems of practice is an imperative duty and responsibility of educational leaders, including leading and creating organisational conditions that build and test professional relationships. Therefore, a review of the contribution of literature on educational leadership research may provide some answers as to what mix of leadership forms and styles would bring about changes in student achievement in small rural primary schools, particularly by further investigating Māori approaches to leadership with emphasis on whanaungatanga.

Previously, Southworth's Cube Model 2004 was discussed earlier on in this section. In small schools, he discusses that leaders exercise a great deal of direct and a good proportion of indirect influence. Furthermore, leadership can be distributed but in most cases, however, Southworth (2004) suggests this is unlikely to be formally because the school's budget is unlikely to permit it. The arrangement is depicted in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.3 Learning-centred leadership in small rural primary schools**  
(Source: Southworth, 2004, p. 116).

*School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why. Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* identified eight leadership dimensions, related to influencing student outcomes and achievement (Robinson et al., 2009). Of all the dimensions derived from the meta-analysis, 'Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development' had the largest estimated effect size. (Robinson et al., 2009). Furthermore, it was recognised that leaders in high performing schools promoted and participated in teacher learning and development (Robinson et al., 2009). Additionally, for new leaders having specific professional

development and mentoring can help in the transitioning process from teacher to leader and support major changes in people's lives and work (Schechter & Firu, 2015).

## **CHALLENGES FOR TEACHING PRINCIPALS**

Before *Tomorrow's Schools* (Wylie, 1997), rural service was recognised as a compulsory component of a teacher's service, where they were bonded or secured to a country school. It was also seen as a fundamental stepping stone in the career of New Zealand primary teachers (Nash, 1980, as cited in Collins, 2003, p.2). Brooking et al. (2003) confirms that national conditions of service provided recruitment incentives for otherwise 'hard-to-staff' schools including giving generous removal entitlements for teacher mobility. Additionally, this approach required all teachers to complete two years of 'country service' before they could access the top steps of the salary scale. However, this changed with the implementation of *Tomorrow's Schools* as highlighted by Brooking et al. (2003) where career pathways to principalship no longer required teachers to do country service in rural schools in order to become a principal.

The reforms of *Tomorrow's Schools* severely affected small rural primary schools financially, because the change to a roll-driven staffing formula meant small schools' operational budgets became dependent on student numbers (Brooking et al., 2003). Wylie (1997) had earlier reported that many principals found the inadequacy of government funding for their school caused huge challenges. This view is also supported by the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) who expressed a similar concern regarding the level of government funding that schools received (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007).

Recruitment of quality teaching staff is a serious challenge for teaching principals. This view is shared by Wylie (1997) who identified that teaching principals were concerned about the lack of suitable teachers available to schools. Furthermore, Collins (2004) reiterates the same sentiment, that attracting and retaining high calibre teachers in rural schools is a problematic issue. As a result of the self-managing environment, the advisory service for rural schools was disestablished and so was rural teacher service (Brooking et al., 2003; Collins, 2003). Additionally, Collins (2003) explains that the rural advisory service was seen as an important supporting mechanism for principals in rural, remote and small primary schools. However, since the inception of *Tomorrow's Schools* many aspiring leaders who are less experienced are going to principals' roles in some of the most challenging small rural primary schools, that have faced consecutive sustainability reviews, and are confronting significant challenges alone without adequate professional support (Collins, 2003; Wylie, 2011).

Small rural primary schools have a high degree of complexity, stemming from the small numbers of staff they employ and the fewer opportunities teaching principals have to delegate their work. A major challenge for teaching principals is prioritising and managing their time to address the high demands and needs of their students and school communities. In Australia, Starr and White (2008) discuss that a significant difference between principals of small rural schools and their metropolitan counterparts is that they spend a larger percentage of their time teaching cross-age, multi-grade groups of students. The situation in Australia concurs with the situation for teaching principals in New Zealand. In addition, other researchers (Brooking, 2007; Brooking et al., 2003; Collins, 2003) have identified compelling concerns around the nature of challenges experienced by teaching principals. According to Ewington, Mulford, Kendall, Edmunds, and Silins (2008), the workload pressure arising from the dual role of the teaching principal is exacerbated because of reduced administration time for meeting administrative tasks and the minimal administrative support available in small schools.

Teaching principals have huge workloads and experience stressful situations when leading small rural primary schools. A synthesis of the literature reveals significant challenges for teaching principals such as: high workload; additional administrative duties; dealing with governance matters; coping with personal and professional isolation; improving student achievement within multi-level classrooms; recruiting and retaining high calibre staff to isolated schools; improving the quality of teaching in the school; decline in rural population, and supporting diverse communities affected by socioeconomic factors (Brooking et al., 2003; Brooking, 2007; Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie, 2007 & 2011).

Most small rural primary schools serve a central role in their communities and have many additional responsibilities for their leaders and staff (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007). A majority of small rural primary schools are located in rural settlements which are far removed from townships and public amenities (Lock, Budgen, & Lunay, 2012; Preston et al., 2013). Unfortunately for many teaching principals, a significant amount of time involves dealing with challenges in the area of management and the micro-politics of small communities (Ewington et al., 2008). Some examples provided by Ewington et al. (2008) involve tensions stemming from the community, in relation to the school's reputation, between in and out of school demands on teaching principal's time, and negative relationships with the community. There is evidence that the preparation of leaders for small schools does not target contextual factors or skills that are required to work in these environments. As Brooking (2007) states, "New Zealand does have problems with the recruitment and retention of school principals, particularly in small rural, low-decile, full primary schools where the principal is a teaching principal" (p. 5).

## **LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MĀORI STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

When there is a focused learning culture, teachers, school leaders and Boards of Trustees who work effectively together share common beliefs and values. In particular, effective school leaders spend time observing the way people operate and devise a plan to create an environment based on mutual trust and integrity. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) state “a collaborative school culture provides the ideal setting for student learning. It’s also a setting in which teachers learn from each other” (p. 80). These ideas propose that leadership practices of teaching principals could focus on driving sustainable changes in small rural primary schools. Ashton and Duncan (2012) state that “principals play a significant role in shaping the school culture and organizing the day-to-day running of the school” (p. 20). Comparatively, Macfarlane (2004) offers an indigenous perspective which suggests that culture must be considered in schools where there is a high proportion of Māori students because it reaffirms to Māori students and their families that they are valued. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of small rural primary schools are located in Māori communities. Leaders of these types of schools must adopt teaching strategies and leadership practices that are more inclusive and collaborative, and which can allow for reciprocal teaching and learning (Macfarlane, 2004).

Developing organisational conditions within schools is fundamental to transforming student learning. Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (1998) emphasise that a key function of a leader is to create organisational conditions which contribute to enhancing student learning. Cardno (2012) states that “effective educational leaders create conditions that make it possible to improve teaching and learning” (p. 37). Likewise, the leadership dimensions conceptualised by Robinson et al. (2009) focus on how leadership practices support the conditions needed for quality teaching. Bishop et al. (2010) argues that leaders are the driving agents whose leadership practices influence the organisational and structural changes for creating conditions that improve classroom learning for students.

Organisational learning is critical to the success of any small rural primary school. Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (1998) define organisational learning as a process where a group of people are pursuing common purposes with a collective commitment and modifying actions for better improvements as part of change. Senge (2000) points out that principals are the fulcrum points in schools who act as the stewards of learning. Mulford, Silins, and Leithwood (2004) similarly state that “leadership contributes to organisational learning which in turn influences what happens in the core business of school” (p. 9). Critical to developing learning at the school level, teaching principals need to focus time on developing professional

communities. Imants (2003) confirms that teachers' professional communities must focus on effective student learning and teacher professional development. However, Senge (2000) suggests that in order to foster schools that learn, change can only make a difference if all three systems the classroom, the school and the community are on board together. This suggests that teaching principals play an influential part in the process of creating conditions for learning in their school but also in transforming the Boards' and community's perspective on the value of learning.

Teaching principals need skills to effectively assume a leadership position. The Wallace Foundation (2012) summarised five key practices that effective principals use in creating a positive school culture that is conducive to learning. These functions are: shaping a vision for academic success for all students; creating a climate that is hospitable to education; cultivating leadership in others; improving instructions; and managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. Such features are indicative of improving the conditions for student learning. Bishop et al. (2010) makes reference to the fact that leaders need to know how using instructional practices and professional communities can support teachers to become more effective in the classroom. Likewise, leaders must consider the literature regarding conditions that transform learning for Māori students and encourage school community partnerships. Berryman and Bateman (2008) highlight that hui whakatika (a meeting that seeks to resolve issues and make amends) represents an alternative model of leadership when dealing with serious school issues. Furthermore, they explain that using hui whakatika upholds the Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership, protection and participation and is a model that can lead to more effective participation and learning for Māori students whilst maintaining protocols for respectful relationships with the groups involved, including whānau.

Building stronger school community partnerships is a key leadership practice of a teaching principal. The Ministry of Education (2010b) advocate that developing strong whānau and kura (school) relationships is essential in achieving shared goals and valuing what Māori students bring with them as part of producing better outcomes. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that involving whānau (family) is critical to raising Māori student achievement (Education Review Office, 2010). One of the key ways to develop successful relationships is to provide opportunities for Māori to participate in the school. The literature reveals that Māori students in mainstream school settings would benefit if leaders incorporated kaupapa Māori ways of thinking and leading into their leadership practices because of the beneficial impacts this has to empower Māori students and their whānau (Bateman et al., 2007; Bishop, 2011; Bishop & Glynn, 2000; Durie, 2006).

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature in the areas of educational leadership, small rural primary schools, challenges of teaching principals, forms and styles of educational leadership and the conditions that are perceived to contribute to transforming Māori student achievement.

The literature review has ignited the development of the research questions below:

1. What are the effective styles and forms of educational leadership used by teaching principals in small rural primary schools?
2. What are the challenges that rural primary teaching principals face in raising Māori student achievement?
3. What leadership practices are perceived to contribute to raising Māori student achievement?

The next chapter outlines the methodology and methods which guided this research and explains why a Kaupapa Māori framework was used.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

**Whāia e koe ki te iti kahurangi, kia tāpapa koe, he maunga tiketike.**

'Follow your treasured aspirations, if you falter, let it be because of insurmountable difficulties'. The pēpeha is very popular and is directed at pursuing dreams and aspirations (Kāretu 1974:61; Shortland 1974:38; Smith 1893:446).

Source: (Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 422).

The reason for selecting this whakataukī for this chapter is I am wanting to highlight that it is important to never give up on your goals and aspirations as an individual. The growth that I have experienced in striving for my goals has made me more resilient when confronting adversity, which has strengthened my self-determination to succeed and further pursue excellence in life.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an examination of the Kaupapa Māori framework (KMF) and the principles which guided this thesis. It is followed by a brief discussion of qualitative research and in particular the use of interviews as a research method. The semi-structured interview method is also reviewed including discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of interviews. The chapter continues with a description of the participant selection process with a focus on purposeful sampling. A description is given of the sampling processes used for the current research followed by an explanation of the interview schedule and the questions used for the interviews. Data analysis will then be reviewed followed by the ethical considerations taken for the research.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: KAUPAPA MĀORI FRAMEWORK

A Kaupapa Māori Framework (KMF) has been used as the methodology for this thesis. It involved investigating the leadership practices of teaching principals that were perceived to transform educational outcomes for Māori students. It is necessary to understand the concept of kaupapa Māori and the recognised Māori values and culture that contributed to this methodology. Kaupapa Māori as a theory of transformative praxis evolved as a result of the struggles for self-determination by Māori (Smith, 2012). This is further affirmed by Henry and Pene (2001) who state that "Māori intellectuals, in resistance to the colonial heritage and hegemony of New Zealand's colonial past, are at the forefront of developing the kaupapa

Māori paradigm” (p. 234). Herein, Smith (2012) explains that the Indigenous Research Agenda was primarily focused on the goal of self-determination of indigenous peoples and provided the processes of transformation for decolonisation, healing and of mobilisation as a people. Hence, a KMF was considered a relevant and inclusive research methodology for this thesis given its focus for researching with and on Māori (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013).

There are many reasons that Māori have defined and argued for KMF for being relevant and culturally appropriate when researching on Māori. Henry and Pene (2001) acknowledge that kaupapa Māori “literally means the Māori way or agenda, a term used to describe traditional Māori ways of doing, being and thinking, encapsulated in a Māori world view” (p. 235). Similar views are expressed by Smith and Reid (2000) who claim that kaupapa Māori is a pathway to connect with people on cultural levels - spiritual, emotional, physical and social. Likewise, Tolich (2001) states “Kaupapa Māori is an attempt to retrieve space for Māori voices and perspectives” (p. 40). This is supported by Powick (2003) who affirms that a KMF is culturally safe, involves mentorship from elders and is culturally relevant and appropriate when conducting research on Māori. Moreover, Bishop (2003) affirms that kaupapa Māori is seen as an educational intervention system initiated by Māori to address Māori educational crises. Additionally, Powick (2003) summarises that research within a Māori context needs to consider the ethical safety of all participants including Māori. In summary, the different kaupapa Māori perspectives acknowledge that research conducted with Māori should be about empowering Māori and facilitating the production of new knowledge.

In this research, kaupapa Māori principles and practices were adhered to as part of the process of following Māori tikanga. Rangahau (n.d.) highlights these as:

- **Tino rangatiratanga (The principle of self-determination)**  
Allowing Māori to control their own culture, aspirations and destiny;
- **Taonga tuku iho (The principle of cultural aspiration)**  
Asserts the centrality and legitimacy of Te Reo Māori, Tikanga and Mātauranga Māori;
- **Ako Māori (The principle of culturally preferred pedagogy)**  
Acknowledges teaching and learning practices that are inherent and unique to Māori
- **Kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (The principle of socio-economic mediation)**  
Asserts the need to mediate and assist in the alleviation of negative pressures and disadvantages experienced by Māori communities and research should be a positive benefit to Māori;

- **Whānau (The principle of extended family structure)**  
Whānau sits at the core of kaupapa Māori. It acknowledges the relationships that Māori have to one another and to the world around them. Whānau, and the process of whakawhanaungatanga are key elements of Māori society and culture;
- **Kaupapa (The principle of collective philosophy)**  
Refers to the collective vision, aspiration and purpose of Māori communities;
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi)**  
Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) is a crucial document which explains the relationship between Māori and the Crown in New Zealand. It upholds both the tangata whenua status of whānau, hapū and iwi in New Zealand, and their rights of citizenship. The Treaty therefore provides a basis through which Māori may critically analyse relationships, challenge the status-quo, and affirm the Māori rights; and
- **Āta (The principle of growing respectful relationships)**  
The principle of āta relates specifically to the building and nurturing of relationships. It acts as a guide to the understanding of relationships and wellbeing when engaging with Māori.

In research terms, kaupapa Māori places the focus on Māori ways of knowing, learning and understanding in an effort to put Māori at the centre of the research where there is a positive outcome for Māori (Bishop & Glynn, 2000). In order to do this as a Māori researcher, it is necessary to understand the cultural practices that protect all involved in the research process. Kaupapa Māori embraces traditional beliefs and ethics, and culturally-specific ideas which are referred to as 'kaupapa Māori practices'. Smith (2012) recognises that, from an indigenous perspective, ethical codes of conduct serve as the protocols which govern relationships amongst people and with the environment. These practices Cram (2001, pp. 42 - 48) affirms as necessary components of kaupapa Māori research are:

- **Aroha ki te tangata (A respect for people)**  
Allowing people to define their own space and to meet on their own terms;
- **He kanohi kitea (Meeting people face to face)**  
Fronting up to the community where the research is being conducted;
- **Titiro, whakarongo, korero (Look, listen, speak)**  
About the importance of looking and listening so that you develop understandings and find a place from which to speak;
- **Manaaki ki te tangata (Care for people)**

About collaborative approach to research, research training and reciprocity;

- **Kia tupato (Being cautious, staying safe by collaborating with kaumātua)**

About being politically astute, culturally safe and reflective about our insider and outsider status;

- **Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (Do not trample the mana of the people)**

Work in partnership through the process of negotiation, testing and trust-building as well as sharing of knowledge; and

- **Kia mahaki (Be humble when sharing knowledge)**

This includes leaving communities in an empowering state when the research ends.

Consideration was given to follow those principles of practices of kaupapa Māori as part of this research. In the context of this thesis these tikanga were integrated using the following practices:

- ***It is by Māori, created with people who care for Māori, intended for Māori***

The research was conducted by a Māori researcher with Māori academic supervisors;

- ***It places Māori at the centre of this research***

Māori were at the centre of this research with Māori appropriate framing and analysis; and

- ***It focuses on generating positive outcomes for Māori***

This research was focussed on positive outcomes specific to Māori in small rural primary schools and communities. This aligns with the priority placed on Māori being able to live as Māori, participate globally as Māori and enjoy good health and a high standard of living.

## **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this study was to examine and identify the perceived educational leadership practices that transform outcomes for Māori achievement and the challenges faced by teaching principals of small rural primary schools. This required me to collect the perceptions of teaching principals in small rural primary schools; therefore, I adopted a subjectivist epistemological position. I chose this epistemological position as the research questions required me to collect and analyse principals' perceptions of educational leadership and challenges in their schools. The subjectivist approach proposes that people, in this case teaching principals, perceive the world in different ways, and construct their own social reality. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) explain that the subjectivist position is characterised by a concern for the individual as part of understanding the world human experience.

Additionally, taking a subjectivist epistemological position led me to adopt an interpretive paradigm. The interpretative paradigm is described as “the systematic analysis of social meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 26). Consideration was also given to the work of Cohen et al. (2007) with regards to how an interpretive approach was suited for this research project as outlined below:

- It considered participants’ worlds of reality;
- It attempted to interpret why people have different attitudes, beliefs and perspectives of their reality; and
- It was a small scale research study.

The interpretive approach adopted is closely connected to the ontological position of constructivism. Bryman (2012) describes constructivism as an ontological position which asserts that the social meanings of members within a culture of an organisation are socially constructed and are in a constant state of revision. As a Māori researcher, my ontology also includes a view to challenge assumptions within Western societies as a Māori living in these societies, yet holding a foundation as a Pākehā person. Therefore, for this research I have heavily relied on the participants’ views. The questions asked during the semi-structured interviews were broad in nature and open ended (See Appendix A). Using semi-structured interviews allowed me in my role as the researcher to discuss with each participant their views and perspectives, and together co-construct new understandings for transforming outcomes for Māori students and the challenges of leadership faced in small rural primary schools. This approach aligns well with a KMF because it validates the self-determination of participants and validates a place to create new knowledge in transforming outcomes for Māori (Bishop, 2005).

Therefore, taking a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this research because it provided a means of exploring the perceptions of the participants as part of gaining insight into the reality of their worlds. Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). A similar view is expressed by Denscombe (2003) who suggests that qualitative research is concerned with meanings and the way people understand things, along with a concern with patterns of behaviour. Likewise, qualitative research sits within an interpretive paradigm. This is pertinent to this research project as I examined the challenges perceived by teaching principals in leading learning for Māori students and also identified the

leadership practices that are perceived to contribute to transforming Māori student achievement.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This section outlines the key method used for collecting the data in this research. It is structured under the main heading, semi-structured interviews. In this section explanation will be provided for the data collection methodology. The analysis that occurred will be also discussed.

## **TIKANGA RELATED TO KAUPAPA MĀORI FRAMEWORK**

The following tikanga illustrated core te ao Māori values that were enacted through the design and process for this research.

- Karakia to commence and closed this research study as part of collaborating with kaumātua. Karakia was used in this research to provide spiritual guidance and protection (Wairuatanga). This was seen as an important component of the design process because it is interwoven within Māori cultural practice. Collaborating with kaumātua in this research was for guidance and support in keeping with the correct protocols (Kaumatuatanga);
- Kai offered to participants as part of building whakawhanaungatanga. This was necessary because sharing kai provided the opportunity to acknowledge and say thank you for the time that participants gave up, and also to show manaaki for their contribution to this research; and
- Upon completion of this research study a koha of my unpublished thesis will be gifted as a taonga to each participant. This is necessary because the participants' contributions have further added to the new literature on how we can transform Māori student achievement and outcomes (Mana and manaakitanga).

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

This research used the semi-structured interview method because I wanted to gain an informed picture of the teaching principals' perspectives of the issues and challenges in leading small rural primary schools, and their perceptions about which leadership practices they considered contributed towards transforming Māori student achievement. Fontana and Frey (2005) discuss how the interview is one of the most common and powerful ways to gather information to understand peoples' perceptions of subjects. Hinds (2000) suggests that using a semi-structured approach allows flexibility for the interviewer to ask new questions to expand on information that has been introduced by the participant. Using the semi-structured interview

approach allowed me to focus and further explore participants' views that were not anticipated in response to the interview questions. Denscombe (2003) acknowledges that the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to be flexible in terms of the order of which topics are considered and, perhaps more significantly, allows the participants to develop ideas and elaborate on points of interest raised by the researcher. In addition, the processes of facilitating and participating in semi-structured interviews are aligned with Māori values and communication style preferences and thus with the values and principles of KMF (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003).

There were several components that I needed to consider before engaging in semi-structured interviews with participants. Hinds (2000) acknowledges that trialling of the interview questions before interviewing participants is a useful strategy to check their validity and relevance. Prior to doing the interviews I trialled the questions on a group of colleagues who held leadership positions in international tertiary organisations, and who had experience as deputy principals and principals in primary schools. From this trial I was able to refine the interview schedule and re-order questions for better flow and suitability. Another component to consider was allowing sufficient time to transcribe the interviews and to check with participants for accuracy. Tracy (2013) explains that transcribing is time consuming but is a key part of the data analysis process.

One advantage of doing interviews is the depth of information that can be gathered from probing participants' responses through asking additional and/or clarifying questions (Denscombe, 2003). Another advantage of interviews is that they provide the opportunity to create rapport with participants and to collect both verbal and non-verbal data (Tracy, 2013). One factor I was well aware of was the cost and time factor of travelling to the destinations of each participant's school. These factors have been identified as limitations by Bell and Waters (2014) in that interviews can be time consuming; analysing responses can present problems, and being objective can be difficult if the researcher has strong views on the topic. Cohen et al. (2007) recognise that bias can encroach on the accuracy of the transcripts. To avoid this situation I consulted and gained feedback from participants to make any necessary changes to their individual interview transcripts before using these for analysis.

## **SAMPLING FRAMEWORK: SELECTION OF SCHOOLS**

A purposive sampling approach was used to select schools and participants for this research. Kumar (1996) explains that:

the primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. The

researcher only goes to those people who in his/her opinion are likely to have the required information and be willing to share it (p. 162).

For the purpose of this research eight teaching principals were selected from within the Eastern Bay of Plenty and/or Wairoa regions. I selected these areas because they have a high Māori population, and they are areas to which I whakapapa through family and teaching associations. This is in keeping with a kaupapa Māori approach to research that supports researchers to engage in their community. The criteria for participating in the research were: participants needed to be in the role of teaching principal; have at least a thirty percent Māori student roll; and a school roll of less than two hundred students. The semi-structured interviews were allocated between sixty minutes to 1½ hours. Table 3.1 lists the profiles of each participating school. Pseudonyms are used to protect the schools' identities.

**Table 3.1: Profiles of participating schools**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Leadership structure</b>	<b>School Size</b>
Aran School	Teaching Principal	U1
Brussels School (iwi)	Teaching Principal	U1
Cork School	Teaching Principal	U1
Dubai School (iwi)	Teaching Principal	U2
Ennis School (iwi)	Teaching Principal	U3
Forthworth School (iwi)	Teaching Principal	U1
Galway School	Teaching Principal	U1
Howth School (iwi)	Teaching Principal	U2

### **DATA COLLECTION - TIMEFRAME OF RESEARCH**

The interviews were scheduled before the end of term two and during the middle of term three. Data collection was collected in the period June through to September 2015. Informed consent was gained prior to the interview including full disclosure and explanation of the intentions of the research, and permission for the audio recording and transcribing of the interview by myself. The audio recording was uploaded onto a computer for ease of transcription, including the journal notes that were taken during the interview. Transcripts of the interview were emailed confidentially to each participant to provide them with an opportunity to verify the content for use as part of the research findings and data analysis. I followed up with either phone calls and/or emails to each participant to check for feedback to this process. For example, I accommodated participants' requests by summarising key points they had made to protect their identity.

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedule was organised to gain perspectives from teaching principals and provide an understanding of what is happening in educational leadership in small rural primary schools as part of focusing on transforming outcomes for Māori students. The interview schedule questions were grouped into four areas: question one sought to find out participant information; questions two to six covered educational leadership in small rural primary schools; question seven covered the challenges for teaching principals; and questions eight to eleven covered perceptions of leadership practices that contribute to improving Māori student achievement (See Appendix A).

## DATA ANALYSIS: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

There were two key decisions in determining the approach to analysing the data. The first decision was how to approach the analysis of data, while the second was how to organise the presenting of the generated data from the interviews for presentation in Chapter Four. Figure 3.1 highlights the framework that I designed to use in the data analysis process of this research.

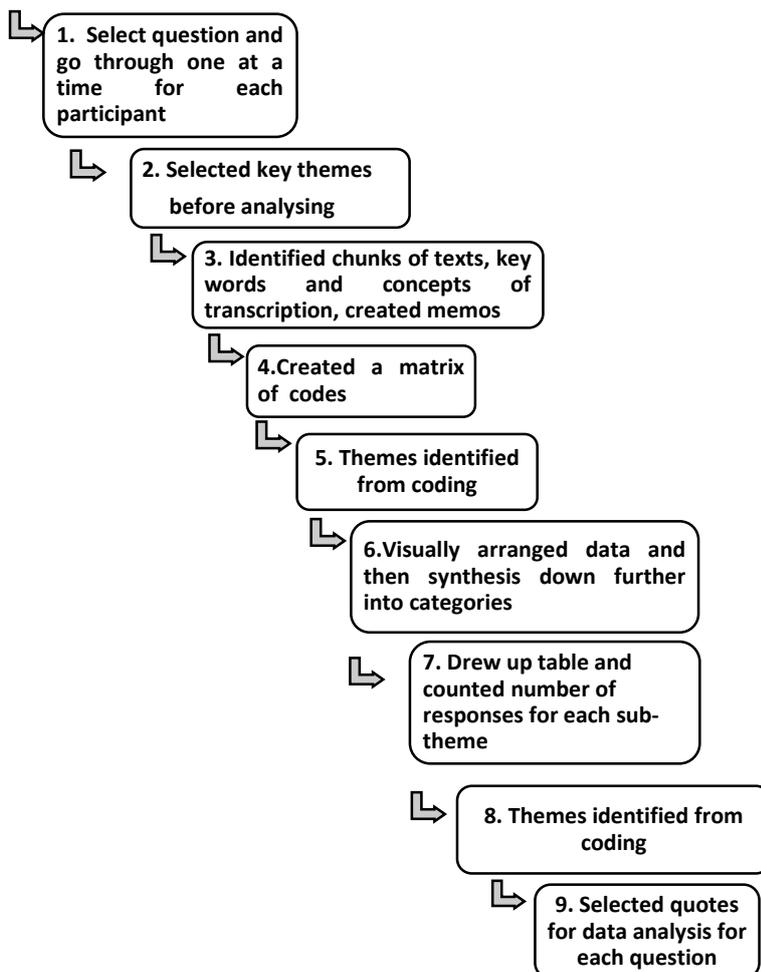


Figure 3.1 Summary of framework for data analysis

Prior to starting the first stage of analysis (Steps 1 to 3) I adopted a process to identify the arising themes as shown above in Figure 3.1. In this research I used coding and memos from anecdotal observations of the participants in their respective schools. Bell and Waters (2014) describe coding as a process to cluster key issues from your data and take steps towards drawing conclusions. This view is also expressed by Creswell (2009), who explains that coding involves aggregating the text into small categories of information and then labelling a code to the data. Furthermore, as part of the data analysis I used initial and focused coding. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland (2006) explain that initial coding begins by inspecting your interview transcripts line by line and acknowledges that often many codes can be generated. I found it was necessary to organise the newly generated data into a manageable system.

In Step four of the analysis I created a matrix to organise the coded data into categories. Bryman (2012) explained that codes can be built up out of the groups of codes to form an index of central themes and sub-themes. Similarly, Johnson and Christensen (2008) discuss that as new codes are developed during coding, these must be added to a master list that contains all the categories of sub-themes which can be used to further identify the data-themes.

Step five of the analysis involved me sorting through the participants' responses by highlighting the data into categories as part of completing the initial coding. This is also considered by Tracy (2013) as the first level of coding, the initial process of reading over and allocating a code to the transcript text. During the coding stage, I referred to my memos taken from the interviews. For example, I noted down that I needed to understand more on programmes that help to create culturally safe schools and reminders of various codes and their interrelatedness. Lofland et al. (2006) suggests that memoing is an essential process of data analysis, particularly during the completion of the initial and focused coding stages. In this data analysis, two different processes were used (these being coding and memoing) as part of making an informed decision about the research problem.

Step six of the analysis involved colour coding all of the data from the eight participants and grouped them into categories under the main themes. For example, I graphically organised the different responses of each participant for all questions to check for similarities and differences. Although time-consuming in nature, this process made it visually easy to see what each participant said and to record responses in a table form. As explained by Tracy (2013) second level codes serve to describe, theorise and synthesise data and act as a bridge to analysis and prepare for writing.

Step seven involved presenting the data in a table for each question. A noticeable feature of displaying the data was it revealed the diversity of perceptions that participants had on certain questions and topics regarding educational leadership, challenges and Māori student achievement. In Chapter Four, quotes are presented after each table to highlight a variety of participants' views in support of the identified categories (these are shown in Table 4.1 - Table 4.12, pp. 38 - 59).

Step eight was the last stage of the data analysis. This involved capturing the key themes coming through from the data (Lofland et al., 2006). Additionally, Lofland et al. (2006) points out that it is common to devise several hundred codes a part of capturing and organising into categories. Bryman (2012) explains that researchers should keep coding in perspective and not worry too much about the generation of codes because it acts as a mechanism for thinking about the data. Denscombe (2010) affirms that developing a hierarchy of codes and categories is essential to subsume some of the lower level codes under the other broader codes (high level) as part of the iterative process. In summary, as Bryman (2012) suggests, researchers should ask questions about what codes have in common so they can be combined into higher order and more abstract codes. For example this final stage of data analysis involved further categorising as part of identifying the emerging key themes from the interviews (this is shown in Table 4.12, p. 59).

## **VALIDITY**

Validity refers to the accuracy and precision of the data (Denscombe, 2010). The concept of validity has been considered as part of building robustness in this research. Creswell (2009) suggests that researchers must ensure they employ accepted strategies to document the accuracy of their findings. As part of validating my findings in this research I used the same process for conducting the interviews with all participants and in analysing the data. Creswell (2009) explains that the researcher must be consistent in the way they carry out their research. This was an important factor to consider as part of ensuring that my processes were trustworthy and that I was making credible conclusions.

As part of the interview process I checked for accuracy by emailing participants and/or speaking to them to confirm that what was recorded on the transcript was a true reflection of the interview. Denscombe (2003) says that the researcher should make direct contact prior to and after the interview with participants to check for accuracy and relevance of the data. In addition, Denscombe (2003) argues that researchers should have a range of strategies to strengthen validity, some of these could be: leaving space to write notes on the page during semi-structured interviews; having a special serial number for each set of raw data as part of

the referencing system; and making a back-up copy of all original materials. These strategies were all used as part of building credibility and robustness into the research.

## **TRIANGULATION**

Informant triangulation is described by Denscombe (2010) as comparing data from different informants. This form of triangulation was used in my research. The validity of findings was checked by comparing the data from the eight participants. Creswell (2009) outlines several key steps for multi-levels of analysis which were considered in this research. The initial steps involved organising and preparing data for transcribing. Step three was gaining a general sense of what was being said. Step three involved developing a coding process for organising the data by categorising into possible themes. Step four began to look across each participant in determining trends and patterns. Step five was presenting the data into forms of visual displays such as tables for this research. Lastly, step six was making an interpretation of the data and linking this to the literature review in Chapter Two. In this final step Creswell (2009) points out that new questions may be asked by the researcher. However, it must be noted that the views of the eight teaching principals should not be considered as the generalised views of all teaching principals in small rural primary schools but a reflection of what occurs in their specific context.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES**

Being ethical throughout the entire research was paramount in this project. Procedures were put in place to protect the rights of all participants. The research project was approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC 2015 - 1033). In this research project I considered kaupapa Māori ethical principles alongside other ethical aspects of practice. This involved having guidance and karakia from kaumātua as part of this research. The importance of karakia was to maintain cultural safety in keeping with the principle of “Taonga tuku iho” and “Ata” particularly in maintaining the Taha Wairua (spiritual life force) of an individual (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Additional ethical aspects to this research included: informed consent; minimisation of harm; and confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent is described by Bryman (2012) as the process whereby researchers fully inform participants about their research and obtain consent in writing. Wilkinson (2001) explains that “if you want to do research on people, you should ask their permission first” (p. 16) and that consent must be voluntary with participants understanding all the relevant information about the research.

The ethics application for the current study included an organisational information sheet, a consent form, and participant information sheet (See Appendices B-D). Participant information sheets were sent out at least one week before the intended interview date and as the researcher I confirmed attendance with the participant. The information sheet advised the participant that they could withdraw from the process at any time up to fifteen days after receipt of the transcript (no participant withdrew). At the start of the interview, I asked if there were any questions before starting. The participants were asked if they had read the information sheet and then the consent form was given to the participant to sign. Denscombe (2003) suggests that researchers have a duty to consider in advance any consequences of participation and to take measures to safeguard the interests of those participating in the interviews. As part of this responsibility I checked with participants if they were comfortable with me interviewing them in their office and on some occasions changed the location to meet their needs. Reasons for using other venues was the classroom was warmer as the fire was on, and the office was too small to host two people in it because it was used as a resource room and shared reception space.

Safeguarding confidentiality and anonymity of participants was also paramount in this research. Bryman (2012) highlights that data collection, storage, security and dissemination of the research findings is an important facet of being ethical. Denscombe (2003) highlights that research data must be kept secure. For this research I electronically stored data online and, in keeping with protocols described by Denscombe (2003), took extreme care not to publish names and disclose identities of individuals who had contributed to the research. Pseudonyms were used in the interview transcriptions and in writing the thesis.

Māori research protocols and ethical guidelines were an important aspect of this research and in working with participants. Powick (2003) states “for Māori, ethics is about tikanga” (p. 23). Furthermore, the author explains “tikanga reflects Māori values, beliefs and the way they view the world and kawa is the process by which Māori promote, protect and develop tikanga” (p. 23). Such Māori processes have guided knowledge acquisition in this research in several ways and are highlighted by the following examples. Firstly, I consulted with a tikanga advisory group to guide me in discussing protocols when engaging with participants in their different schools. I sought advice during the writing stages to ensure that the analysis and findings promoted the positive stories of the participants. In keeping with Māori tikanga, before and after the interviews a process of whakawhanaungatanga (connecting and relating with people) occurred with all participants which also involved the process of manaaki tangata (there to support and care for). This involved honouring friendships (hoatanga) by sharing our stories about who we were. Before and/or after the interview I was offered a cup of tea, and invited

to walk around the school grounds with participants. Although there was a specified time allowed for the interview some of the participants needed to attend to school and family matters during the interview. For example if participants needed to attend to school matters with staff or whanau and answer phone calls I affirmed to participants that this was fine to do.

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have discussed the reasoning for adopting KMF as part of transforming Māori educational outcomes. I have provided a rationale for taking a subjectivist epistemological position within an interpretive paradigm which utilised a qualitative approach. Discussion has been provided about the purpose of using semi-structured interviews. This includes explaining why using semi-structured interviews aligns well with Kaupapa Māori principles and tikanga practices in this research. Finally, I have described the data analysis approach to the research, explained how I examined ethical issues relating to the study and what I did to ensure the validity of data. The next chapter outlines the presentation of the data gained from the interviews.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

### E iti noa ana, nā te aroha

‘Although it is small, it is given with love’. It is giving that counts and not the size of the gift (Grey 1857:4; Colenso 1879:143; Brougham 1975:68).

Source: (Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 27).

The reason for selecting this whakataukī for this chapter is reflective of the gift of co-constructing new knowledge with the participants of this research project. The participants of this research are recognised for their manaakitanga and sincerity to make a difference in transforming outcomes for all students, particularly Māori.

### INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. Explanation is provided about the research participants and the structure of the data presentation. Additionally, the interview questions are included in Appendix A.

### STRUCTURE OF DATA PRESENTATION

1. The data are presented in a table form for the eleven interview questions;
2. Under each question the data are organised into key categories which includes examples of sub-themes from the data;
3. A discussion is presented with supporting commentary from the eight participants for each question; and
4. This chapter ends with reorganising the categories into key themes that are presented in Table 4.12. These themes are further discussed in Chapter 5.

### THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

For the purpose of this thesis, pseudonyms are used in order to protect the identity of the participants and their schools. These are: Teaching Principal Anne, Aran School; Teaching Principal Ben, Brussels School; Teaching Principal Claire, Cork School; Teaching Principal Dee, Dubai School; Teaching Principal E, Ennis School; Teaching Principal Faith, Forthworth School; Teaching Principal Gina, Galway School; and Teaching Principal Hanna, Howth School.

## PRESENTATION OF DATA

Question one asked: “What has your career pathway/journey to becoming a teaching principal involved”?

The first part of the interview acted as an introductory to the background of each participant. Question one asked the participants for their perceptions of their career pathway. Three key categories arose from the data: progression, teaching experience, and mentoring.

**Table 4.1 Participants’ career pathways**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of Responses to categories</b>									
<b>Transitional progression from teacher to leader</b> Prior Tomorrow’s Schools (Bonded) Moving teacher to principal Moving senior management to principal	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	<b>13</b>
<b>Teaching experience</b> Rural schools Urban International	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	<b>13</b>
<b>Influence of mentoring and support networks</b>	2			1		1		1	<b>5</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>

\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category

Overall, the participants had varied pathways which had led them to becoming principals. Seven of the participants did not aspire to become principals and most of them were influenced by their mentors to step up to the role. Secondly, some of the participants progressed into the role after spending many years as a classroom teacher. The following responses are examples of how mentors influence participants’ decision-making process:

*“Kuia said I want you to apply for that job and so that’s how I ended up being a principal here was because the kuia told me to get back to that school and that so I came here in the end” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

*“I’ve had mentors, very good mentors that also said it’s time to step up. I thought I would apply for it” (Teaching Principal Faith).*

Surprisingly, only one participant had aspired to becoming a principal. This indicates that not all participants in this research consciously set out to become a principal. This response below illustrates one participant’s strong self-efficacy and determination to become a principal.

*“So I did feel like I could do it but it was really that belief for me that if you are visionary and if you believe that what you see then you believe in that potential for kids then you should be out there doing it. You should never limit yourself by thinking oh well I’m not able to do that because I’m not experience enough or what-ever it’s about being visionary and that’s kind of my passion is that I see that every single child can and should succeed and I will stop and I’m kind of relentless on that so I think that that is what has really driven me to being principal” (Teaching Principal Anne).*

**Question Two asked: “Tell me about your school. What makes it special, what are your school values and how are these values brought to life”?**

Question two asked the participants for their views about what was special about their school, the school values they hold, and the leadership practices they used to bring their school values alive. Five key categories arose from the data: the school’s promotion of Māori values, knowledge and language; leadership focused on learning; productive dimensions of school culture; strong community ownership of children’s learning; and a clear school identity.

All of the participants acknowledged that school identity was an important feature of their school culture because they valued the connection children had to their own environment and also treasured being close to marae. All participants spoke clearly and passionately about their school’s identity. Examples of this is illustrated below:

*“Our school is a beautiful school we have children who are affiliated quite strongly with iwi x, we have children knowing who they are and come from. We have strong links with the local marae and with the kaumātua” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

*“We are in the heart of our land surrounded by the native lands, our marae near us” (Teaching Principal Faith).*

**Table 4.2 Perceptions of school’s special values and qualities**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of Responses to categories</b>									
<b>School’s promotion of Māori values, knowledge and language</b>	2	1	1	6	6	6	3	6	<b>31</b>
<b>Leadership focused on learning</b>	4	3	2	4	5	3	3	4	<b>28</b>
<b>Productive dimensions of school culture</b>	3	3	2	4	5	4	4	3	<b>28</b>
<b>Strong community ownership of children’s learning</b>	1	2	1	3	3	3	1	3	<b>17</b>
<b>Clear school Identity</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>112</b>

\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category

Overall, the participants noted that promoting Māori values, knowledge and language; leadership focused on learning; and productive dimensions of school culture were important components of educational leadership. However, there was significant variance between each of the participants’ understandings of educational leadership practices and how they were applied within each of their school settings. Several strategies were used by Teaching Principal Dee and Faith to bring the school values alive such as whanaungatanga. Getting to know families well, inviting people to share their talents and sharing the stories of the childrens’ tipuna are examples of how they considered Māori world views in their leadership:

*“We know our children from the womb. We have we’ve got a very talented community out there these adults and that we use them to bring that to life for the kids in programmes” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

*“Kids are knowing where they come from, knowing where they are going, understanding they come from descendants, knowing their tipuna and what happen to them” (Teaching Principal Faith).*

**Question Three asked: “What are the things you do in a typical week as a teaching principal”?**

Question three asked the participants for their views about what they do in a typical week. Six key categories arose from the data: developing teams, strengthening governance; managing dilemmas; additional responsibilities; disruptions on the job; and managing the dual role. It was clear that all participants experienced disruptions to the job.

**Table 4.3 Perceptions of tasks done in a typical week**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Developing teams</b>	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	<b>20</b>
<b>Strengthening governance</b>	3	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	<b>18</b>
<b>Managing dilemmas</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	<b>16</b>
<b>Additional responsibilities</b>	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	1	<b>16</b>
<b>Disruptions on the job</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Managing dual role</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>86</b>

**\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category**

In summary the data highlighted that supporting people in small schools was a key leadership practice for teaching principals but how this was done varied across each school. The data identified that underpinning factors such as strengthening governance, managing dilemmas, and additional responsibilities had impacted on all of the participants’ workloads. The data also revealed that the participants cherished their principal release time because it enabled them to complete administrative duties but, for most of the participants, sometimes this was not possible due to unforeseen disruptions to school operations. For example, they had to relieve for staff who were absent from work due to either being sick, taking personal leave, and/or attending professional development meetings. This is best illustrated by Teaching Principal Dee who states:

*“I teach the class, do that the best I can. Principal release day I suppose is to be a day where you actually manage to get into the office and catch up with all your paper work and all that. That does not happen, that’s the day when everyone wants to see you because you’re not in the classroom. So that’s when the public health nurse might want*

*to come, the RTLB and you know all those other people that need to see you. That principal release is the day that you get your paperwork done in the office but it doesn't really happen".*

All participants explained that the dual role of the teaching principal involved leading, teaching and managing. An example best describing this is highlighted below:

*"A typical teaching principal teaches a class, plans, prepares, work with class, writes assessments, writes achievement reports, manages the whole class every day of the week. I do have some release but I choose not too. I choose to use that as a management component in the office so that I'm free for teaching and thinking. I work in tandem with 7 or 8 trustees steering and shaping the school ship, keeping it moving ahead, managing the daily life of the school and helping plan the overview of the curriculum and school life" (Teaching Principal Eric).*

**Question Four asked: How do you manage the teaching and principal administrative duties in your role over the term?**

All participants believed being organised and having excellent time management time skills were necessary to manage their role over the term. The participants also agreed that managing the workload over a term required systems. Furthermore, a majority of the participants felt it was necessary to allocate time in their schedule to protect their Hauora (health and well-being) because it was deemed essential for recharging energy levels to carry out the role.

Adopting systems was an important leadership practice which the participants perceived as helping them with managing their workloads over the term. An example of this is highlighted below by Teaching Principal Gina:

*"The number one rule, do your mail every day, mark everyday with the children, make sure your work is prepared every day, I never ever come to school without the work done".*

**Table 4.4 Managing teaching and principal administrative duties**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Adopting Systems</b>	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	<b>12</b>
<b>Investing in resourcing</b>	2		2		2	2	2	2	<b>12</b>
<b>Work ethic</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Being organised</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Taking care of Hauora</b>	1	1		1		1		1	<b>5</b>
<b>Strict boundaries of time</b>	1			1		1		1	<b>4</b>
<b>Distributed leadership</b>			1		1				<b>2</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>51</b>

\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category

The majority of the participants identified that extra support was required in order to be able to better manage individual workloads. An example of this indicated below by Teaching Principal Dee:

*“I’m always chasing my tail”.*

Furthermore, time management and having strict boundaries were considered valuable strategies for managing the teaching and principal administrative duties within a term. Teaching Principals Anne’s and Dee’s responses below identified this:

*“It’s all time management. I have really strict boundaries. I have my weekend as my sacred time and its with my family and I think that actually makes me a better principal because I come back to work on a Monday feeling ah revived, and you have to just stop and say okay what’s the most important and prioritise” (Teaching Principal Anne).*

*“I might just think just blow it this can wait and I’ve learnt to say no. You know when people are asking to do this and that I’ve learnt to say no. It took me years” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

The data acknowledged that it was not always possible for participants to distribute leadership because of the sheer size of each school. Teaching Principal Eric’s staffing entitlement allowed him to employ more staff which enabled him to distribute leadership and further develop teachers in their practice. An example of this is below:

*“I manage the curriculum development with my staff but I’ve got staff who are charge of different curriculum contracts who are the key teacher. I’m not always the key teacher I put other people into those departments”.*

Also of interest is the finding that many of the female participants relied on spouses to support them in their roles as teaching principals. An example of adopting support from a spouse is identified by Teaching Principal Faith:

*“When I get home my husband is the one that I have I talk to and my daughters would come down here and say mum you don’t need to do that so it was that reflecting on that’s not work. So a lot of reflecting with my husband”.*

**Question Five asked: What are your beliefs and practices you value as a leader in terms of improving Māori student achievement and outcomes?**

The data revealed that eight participants had varying beliefs and values in regards to lifting Māori student achievement. The most significant leadership practice participants felt contributed to transforming Māori achievement was developing people.

Māori world views and Māori frameworks were discussed by some participants as being critical for transforming outcomes for Māori achievement. These participants spoke passionately about having strong connections with iwi and Boards of Trustees, and identified the importance of encapsulating Māori culture within the school’s learning environment. Examples are given below by Teaching Principal Ben and Eric.

*“Māori it’s really getting a sense of identity back to their sense of a where the iwi is supporting them and also from feeling that they are a part of the school not just visitors to a system that really doesn’t support them so you know we are in constant communication with iwi X” (Teaching Principal Ben).*

*“I encompass the ideals in Ka Hikitia. I endorse the underlying beliefs in Ka Hikitia, Māori should succeed being Māori, doing things Māori and succeeding in Māori” (Teaching Principal Eric).*

**Table 4.5 Transforming Māori achievement and outcomes**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Developing people</b>	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	<b>20</b>
<b>Promote and celebrate Māori culture</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Respecting tamariki (student) voice</b>	1		1	1	1	1		1	<b>6</b>
<b>Building Māori identity (know who you are where you come from)</b>		1	1	1	1	1		1	<b>6</b>
<b>Clear vision for Māori students learning and success</b>	1			1	1	1		1	<b>5</b>
<b>Strong connections with iwi boards</b>		1		1	1	1		1	<b>5</b>
<b>Strong culture of learning and pastoral support</b>	1			1	1	1		1	<b>5</b>
<b>Teachers have excellent pedagogy</b>	1		1	1	1		1		<b>5</b>
<b>Have an active school culture</b>	1			1	1	1		1	<b>5</b>
<b>Strong assessment culture</b>	1		1		1		1		<b>4</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>69</b>

**\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category**

Developing people was carried out in a myriad of ways by the different participants. Monitoring staff performance, having professional dialogue about student achievement data, regularly expressing high expectations for learning and having strong values were identified as leadership practices that transform student outcomes. The responses below illustrated this:

*“The other thing that has helped everybody is come on board when we look at the data. The data tells it all, do we need to do something here, do we need to look do we need to refresh” (Teaching Principal Eric).*

*“Have high expectations of kids. It’s as simple as that” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

*“What are my beliefs I actually believe everyone can do it. Everyone can learn, everyone has something to contribute, everyone can learn off each other, everyone has really good skills that they can share that’s what I believe and I practice that in the classroom and even with the staff. There are somethings that I may not know about this area that the teacher next door knows so I believe in Ako. I actually believe in whanaungatanga and I really believe in manaakitanga so I practise all those” (Teaching Principal Hanna).*

An unexpected finding from the data was the contrasting views participants held and the uncertainty in some participants’ understandings of the rationale for the emphasis on transforming Māori student achievement. This is reflected in the response below:

*“Say that again because I have an issue about the emphasis on Māori students because to me everyone is the same. To me they are children who want to learn, who need to be taught” (Teaching Principal Gina).*

**Question Six asked: How do you engage staff, students and the school community to buy into the values of the school?**

Four key categories emerged from the data these being: encouraging community engagement; fostering school communication; leading by example; and having active kaumātua and iwi in the school.

**Table 4.6 Engaging stakeholders to live the school values**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Encouraging community engagement</b>	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	<b>21</b>
<b>Fostering school communication</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Leading by example</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Having an active kaumātua/ iwi in the school</b>				1	1	1		1	<b>4</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>41</b>

**\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category**

Kaumātua involvement was considered a crucial form of support for some participants. This was particularly so in developing relationships within the school community and engaging Māori whanau in shaping the direction, values and vision of the school. Examples of this is given in Teaching Principal Faith’s responses below:

*“I had all my kaumātua and the tangata whenua come with me to this interview it was because it was a celebration that one of their own was applying for this job and so it’s quite hard for me to talk about or that kind of stuff but any way it was more on bringing our old people’s way”.*

*“So it was bringing in our peoples learning their teachings having the hapū/iwi tanga into the kura by being in this position. I’m able to do that now, you’ve noticed cause the system wasn’t working, it wasn’t working for our kids and in the end all you know the national standards all the requirements all those were not working for our Māori students here at Forthworth School”.*

Engaging different stakeholders in the school community through school events was seen as an important leadership practice by all of the participants. The weekly school newsletter was the most valuable tool to share news about the school. Examples of school events were: parent teaching programmes like ‘Reading Together’; assemblies; sports days; and student-involved conferences (report evenings) which were aimed at involving parents and whānau in their children’s learning at school. Below are the responses of how participants engaged parents and whānau:

*“We hold a celebration assembly twice a term and that is an event for the community to come and see our children obtain badges which they get ironed on and the badges are related to leadership and they’re all related to our key values” (Teaching Principal Anne - Assemblies).*

*“It’s about the newsletter being available as an email. It’s all about having an active school with stuff in so that parents know there’s a lot of going on and they got to be up with the ball game. So yeah it’s about PR if you’re not going to talk about the good things happening at school people won’t know about what you espoused they won’t know what your ethos is” (Teaching Principal Eric – Newsletters).*

*“We also try to involve the parents in what we call reading together. We had a programme called Reading Together and parents came along” (Teaching Principal Eric – Parent teaching programmes).*

*“We have active school parents, available to help. Where you got people contributing with food. We gauge a lot of our support through them”. “We have community coaches who come along when they are available to train the kids like the rippa rugby team” (Teaching Principal Eric – School fundraising and coaching).*

**Question seven asked: What do you perceive are the challenges for leading a small rural primary school?**

The data revealed that all participants had varying challenges and situations that affected them in their role as teaching principals. The five categories identified from the data were: high pressure situations, constraints of systems, managing relationships and micro-politics, attracting and recruiting teaching staff; and detrimental impact of challenges on teaching principal's hauora (well-being).

**Table 4.7 Challenges for leading a small rural primary school**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>High pressure situations</b>	6	3	6	3	5	8	7	8	<b>46</b>
<b>Constraints of systems</b>	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	<b>28</b>
<b>Managing relationships &amp; micro-politics</b>	4	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	<b>14</b>
<b>Attracting and recruiting teaching staff</b>	3	1	2	1		2	1	1	<b>11</b>
<b>Detrimental impact of challenges on teaching principal's hauora (Well-being)</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category*

Difficulty attracting quality teachers was a major challenge identified by seven of the participants. However, this was not the case for Teaching Principal Eric because Ennis School was deemed bigger and all the teaching staff had remained stable for many years. The difficulties of attracting staff is illustrated below by Teaching Principal Faith:

*“It’s hard to attract people that have the reo. The lack of attracting staff here because of housing and being related in a small area you have to fall on your own that would have the skills and then there’s a challenge in that people will see it another way so I like had to deal with that”.*

High pressure situations were constantly experienced by all participants. Examples of such situations were: walking into unfamiliar and isolated communities; dealing with declining rolls; developing Boards of Trustees in their roles and responsibilities; and trying to establish

connections with iwi/kaumātua. The following responses below reflect the varied challenges of participants:

*“I think that the challenges is isolation and you really don’t know what you’re getting, you really don’t know the truth of it until you’ve been here for a while and you have to stumble and make mistakes and you have to walk into the fire sometimes which is quite scary because you walk in and you go, oh I really want to get out of here now. I spend a lot of time on governance because we are really trying to strengthen that so I’d say that the learning and the achievement and the governance would be the two things at the moment are a huge priority” (Teaching Principal Anne).*

*“Oh biggest challenge is keeping them open I mean the fair call is they are a dying breed, rural schools are getting smaller and smaller that’s over the last six years. All the local schools have dropped at least 30% in their rolls so keeping them open, keeping them very much a part of the education system is huge” (Teaching Principal Ben).*

*“I’ve asked a few times now. I want to join up with somebody like a kaumātua or a marae but again there’s been a difficulty in the community so it’s about who do you ask we don’t have a marae close enough” (Teaching Principal Claire).*

Managing relationships and micro-politics was identified by all of the participants as another set of challenges that impeded their roles as teaching principals to transform Māori achievement. Teaching Principal Dee’s comment summarises below the difficulties of dealing with complex issues:

*“Challenges for Principals in rural school communities, we can become the red herrings for unrelated personal issues happening within whānau”.*

An example of managing relationships is the tension that is created when Boards of Trustees are not fulfilling their employer responsibilities. Principal Hanna’s response highlights the impact of continual reliance by Boards of Trustees and the tensions that exist during varying times in the relationship.

*“I’ve got the Board of Trustees on my brain at the moment so I’m not going to use them I’ve had enough of the Board of Trustees at this moment” (Teaching Principal Hanna).*

Constraints of systems were identified by all of the participants as having an impact on school operations, governance and Māori achievement. Teaching Principal Claire expressed concern around teachers’ attitudes and preparedness to change practice and, likewise Teaching

Principal Eric vehemently affirmed that funding is a major issue. Both participants' responses below illustrate their concerns:

*“Having a staff member that’s been here for a very long time and has not been exposed to or maybe has been exposed to new ideas but sits within their comfort zone, so is not confident enough to make changes and finds it quite challenging to change you know to embrace changes and it’s not always it’s not always challenging because they don’t want too it’s just the fact they possibly get sick of people coming in with different ideas and so they would rather just stick with what they prefer” (Teaching Principal Claire).*

*“It’s the constraints around your budget. I got to be putting money aside. It’s huge, huge the continuity of services. Yes it’s a bloody challenge aye right to fund your school so that you can develop an identity that gives you an edge that gives you a real identity for your kids to be part of” (Teaching Principal Eric).*

The principal release allocation funding time derived from student rolls hugely impacted on all participants' workloads. The data revealed there were quite important differences between participants' provision of principal release time and the support gained from Boards of Trustees to fund additional staffing in order to relieve some of the pressure off individual workloads. Teaching Principal Gina describes her frustrations in the comment below:

*“The challenges that if I don’t have principal release it’s really hard. I could do with more release”.*

**Question eight asked: What support tools and mechanisms have supported you in your role and why you found them valuable as a teaching principal?**

Five key categories arose from the data: support systems; collaboration through networking; leadership experience; and supportive and quality staff. All participants perceived good support systems were needed in order to shift student achievement, develop staff and maintain self-efficacy when dealing with difficult situations in the school.

Having specific support systems helped all participants to survive in their roles. The data revealed that most of the participants sought support from family members, spouses and mentors. An interesting point of the data was that three of the participants had experience working with Rural Advisors prior to *Tomorrow’s Schools*. They considered Rural Advisors were a great support purely because they understood the dynamics of being a teaching principal and had specialist skills and knowledge related to working in rural communities.

**Table 4.8 Support tools and mechanisms found valuable for the role**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Support systems</b>	1	1	3	3	5	4	1	4	<b>22</b>
<b>Collaboration through networking</b>	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	<b>12</b>
<b>Leadership experience</b>		1	1	1	1		1	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Supportive and quality staff</b>	1		1				1	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>

**\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category**

Networking with other colleagues was considered valuable because it allowed participants to share concerns and discuss educational matters. Teaching Principal Ben’s response highlights the considerable stressors associated with the role of being a first time principal:

*“A first time principal is enormously stressful. What with the ministry requirements around reporting, charters, board meetings, things like that it’s something that takes at least three years to get your head around and then you are sole-charge teacher and you got multi-level age groups to teach”.*

All participants acknowledged that the benefits of collaborating and networking help to alleviate some of the demanding pressures associated with the role of being a teaching principal. The following responses illustrate this:

*“Well to be honest when I first became a teaching principal you either swam or sank. You didn’t have support now, like the First Time Principals have all this wonderful support. I learnt on my feet, simple as that. As colleagues we all learnt on our feet together. I’ve found the best support is actually from colleagues, working with colleagues. When I first started there was someone who was called the rural school advisor and they came around. That was actually when I did my first charter with her. I think we should still have rural advisors that’s my personal opinion. I think that we should because you know we have a senior advisor in the Ministry but you know we don’t see them really” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

*“My mentor from Te Toi Tupu fantastic, very supportive it was through the First Time Principals once you sign up with that programme you appointed a principal and a first time mentor and she was fantastic she wouldn’t come in here and this is what you*

*need to do, it was here I'll show you how to do it, it was more of show us how and is this what you need or is this the kind of stuff" (Teaching Principal Faith).*

The data indicated that there were only a few opportunities for teaching principals to distribute leadership due to small numbers of staff in their schools. Some of the participants paid for outside agencies to undertake some of the financial and property management aspects of operating a school. This is highlighted by Teaching Principal Claire:

*"School support are amazing they're really good. We send all of our pretty much all of our invoices to them. They do a lot of accounting stuff for us".*

**Question nine asked: Tell me your views of professional development and learning and what professional development and learning you have been involved in to assist in your role as a teaching principal/teacher?**

All participants perceived that professional development was a vital component for improving the quality of teaching and for improving school systems. Four key categories arose from the data: free professional development; principals' perspectives of the benefits and limitations of professional development; collaboration; and paid professional development.

Being involved in teachers' professional development was identified as an important leadership practice for transforming Māori achievement. This is highlighted by Teaching Principal Eric's response:

*"You know what, I like to get involved. I like to pass this onto my teachers and what I like to do is get them to come on board with my ideas. There's no point in me saying hey I want you to do this if I'm not doing this. The principal has got to be on board".*

The participants heavily relied on free professional development to support teachers' learning and development as part of lifting the quality of teaching in schools. The range of professional development courses undertaken by the eight participating schools was rather spread and varied. Three of the participants participated in Kia Ata Mai (Māori Medium Supplementary Support Professional Learning and Development) because the course was free. Going to free courses and having in-house workshops was the only way that most participants could ensure that their teaching staff were getting professionally developed as there was often no budget allocated. Teaching Principal Faith's comment below explains why she found the course invaluable:

*"Kia Ata Mai it was around the reo around understanding the documents that's a resource".*

**Table 4.9 Perceptions of the most valued types of professional development**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Free Professional development</b>	3	1	3	2	2	4	1	4	<b>20</b>
<b>Principal's perspective of the benefits &amp; limitations of professional development</b>	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	<b>9</b>
<b>Collaboration</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Paid professional development courses</b>	1	1		1	2		1		<b>6</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	6	4	5	6	6	6	4	6	43

**\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category**

The data also indicated the differences amongst some of the small schools in gaining access to free Ministry professional development courses and who encouraged them to apply for it. This difference is illustrated between Dubai School and Forthworth School.

*“Forthworth School we put in ten we got all ten but it was actually breaking it down to the needs and the needs were leaders, leadership and assessment part way through my first time principal stuff, but it’s all the agencies coming to us and asking what are we wanting, what’s our needs” (Teaching Principal Faith).*

*“I was demanding, I was asking for PD for Maths, whole school development PD for maths and for three years was declined every time. Don’t our results show that we need some support? The Ministry said no, there’s other schools worse off than you. I said, I’m not happy about that because we’re asking for support and you’re not able to provide it for us and then so they responded later with a flexi response” (Teaching Principal Dee).*

Another valuable form of support was attending Sole-Charge and Rural Principals conferences. The data identified that these types of conferences were excellent professional development and learning opportunities for participants because of the relevance of the programme’s contents which covered a specific mixture of leadership and practical elements of teaching in rural schools. Teaching Principal Gina response identifies the benefits of attending a Rural Principals’ conference:

*“I always enjoyed going to the Rural Principals’ Conferences because over two, three days they do cover a lot of things that cover reading, they cover a bit of writing, not only is the professional development hands on, you’re getting a lot of feedback from your colleagues as well. I find it really worthwhile to go to because I think it relieves a lot of pressure from Principals knowing that they’re not alone”.*

Boards of Trustees’ professional development was generally ad-hoc in nature and varied between participating schools. *Hautu: Māori Cultural Responsiveness Self-Review Tool* for Boards, was described as being a very useful tool by two of the participants in developing trustees’ capabilities and understandings about their governance responsibilities. Teaching Principal Anne shares her thoughts on Hautu and the relevance it can also have for teachers:

*“I just attended Hautu which is Māori, The Cultural Responsive Self-Review Tool for Boards. This was the best training that I have had from the Ministry about our priority learners and I was thinking you know every teacher needs to have this”.*

**Question ten asked: What leadership practices do you perceive to contribute to raising Māori student achievement?**

The data revealed that all the eight participants had varying leadership practices. Five categories were identified: leading learning; promotion of Māori knowledge and language; monitoring and tracking systems for learning; productive dimensions of school culture; and developing connections with early childhood.

Having a clear school vision and self-review processes were fundamental to improving Māori achievement. This is best highlighted by the following responses:

*“I came into a school that didn’t really have a good Charter so we have been developing that alongside with the curriculum. Actually helping the Board of Trustees (BOT) they’re relatively young and new BOT” (Teaching Principal Hanna).*

Strategic management skills such as designing a personal graduate profile was needed for leading learning and transforming Māori achievement. This is reflected in the response by Teaching Principal Eric:

*“As a leader I also talked about that our students must be well prepared. We want them to land on their feet when they go to the college and they move away from the school. They’re going to encompass that graduate profile, we want them to land on their feet and not on their face”.*

**Table 4.10 Leadership practices contributing to raising Māori achievement**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
<b>Number of responses to categories</b>									
<b>Leading learning</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	<b>16</b>
<b>Promotion of Māori knowledge and language</b>	1	1		2	2	2	1	2	<b>11</b>
<b>Monitoring and tracking systems for learning</b>	1				2	2	1	1	<b>7</b>
<b>Productive dimensions of school culture</b>	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	<b>8</b>
<b>Developing connections with early childhood groups</b>		1		1	2	1	2	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>50</b>

\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category

Building connections with early childhood centres by some participants was perceived to be a key leadership practice that contributed towards transforming outcomes for younger siblings of students who attended the different schools of this research. Teaching Principal Gina’s response below illustrates the benefits of having connections with early childhood education groups as part of preparing and transitioning children into primary school:

*“A lot of the mothers who are coming to school from now on, I’m getting three children a year now from and they all take their children to kindy and they have a play group here and the bigger four year olds all go to kindergarten in town”.*

Furthermore, monitoring and tracking student learning and student achievement were considered key leadership practices that contributed towards transforming Māori achievement in some participants’ schools. Teaching Principal Faith explains the importance of having a strong assessment schedule as part of the monitoring and tracking process for student learning:

*“I think too that the breakdown on the assessment tools, all the testing’s that we have here the requirement you know, one test for reading, one test for maths, one test not a variety so we’ve changed”.*

However, there were variances in participants’ interpretations and understandings of what leadership practices they perceived to have contributed to transforming Māori student achievement. The responses below highlight some of the misconceptions that exist within our education system:

**Teaching Principal Gina says:** “Oh don’t get me wrong I want to make sure all our Māori students want to achieve but I don’t segregate them different I think it might be that the term what do you do for Māori students and I always have this perception that it is oh why only Māori students and I but I’m proud of our Māori students doing better”.

**Teaching Principal Claire says:** “I struggle with is the focus I know that there’s you know this little this tail but I do struggle with the focus on Māori and Pasifika in respect that it draws attention to the children for the wrong reasons”.

**Question 11 asked: Do you have any further comments?**

The following question sought to give words of advice for preparing aspiring principals who may consider the rural pathway to becoming a principal and areas for review regarding educational leadership in small rural primary schools.

**Table 4.11 Future recommendations for supporting aspiring and current teaching principals in small rural primary schools**

	Anne	Ben	Claire	Dee	Eric	Faith	Gina	Hanna	Total
Number of responses to categories									
Specific professional development and support contextualised to small rural primary school leadership	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
Further leadership development in Treaty of Waitangi & Emotional intelligence	1		1		1	1		1	5
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>

\*The number indicates the number of responses made by participant to each category

Taking care of one’s hauora (health and well-being) and building emotional intelligence was perceived to help participants deal with the demands of being a teaching principal. The important message of looking after health was identified by Teaching Principal Faith:

*“Just separate your work with home life yeah separate your mahi. Have talks with other principals who were first time principals, it can’t be achieved in a day, it take steps, prioritise what’s more important”.*

Additionally, a review to have rural specialists dedicated to small rural primary schools is being called for by Teaching Principal Hanna as previously stated by Teaching Principal Dee (Q8, p. 51)

*“Small rural schools have a lot to offer they just need a bit more support. So you know having people having specialists that are dedicated to rural schools will be really good”.*

Suggestions for future professional development and review of training programmes were: managing multi-level classroom programmes of learning; workshops around the application of the Treaty of Waitangi to education; and small rural primary school sabbaticals for teaching principals. The following participant responses illustrated their perceptions of what is of value for future professional development courses:

*“I didn’t find useful was First Time Principals Course, there was a whole lot of wasting time. I needed to learn how to teach multi-level classrooms, how to teach five year olds when they first come in. I mean I can teach year 8’s that sort of thing that’s not a problem but the thing is having to do it all in one class all in one day” (Teaching Principal Ben: Multi-level classrooms).*

*“I think that there needs to be a big shift in teachers’ understanding, professionals in education understanding of what it means to be culturally responsive. I think there is a lack of understanding around the Treaty of Waitangi. I think there is a oh god we’ve done all the blimmin settlements we’ve done all this we’ve done all that why and like I mean I’ve heard it from coming from colleague’s mouths, colleagues that I respect saying why are Māori learners priority learners and I mean that’s not fair so there’s not this understanding about equity and I think there is some huge professional development that needs to happen for our profession and for our governors about actually about what’s behind it. I don’t want to say that the whole profession has got it wrong but I think there’s some limited mind sets out there” (Teaching Principal Anne-Culturally responsive workshops/Treaty of Waitangi).*

*“What would be beneficial is actually getting principals to go to other small principal’s school on sabbaticals, like two weeks visiting another school. The most valuable thing is getting out of your school and going to another small principal’s school” (Teaching Principal Ben).*

## **SUMMARY**

In all, 49 categories were identified from the interviews after all the data analysis had been completed. From the data emerged three key themes:

- i) The influence of prior experience on principalship;
- ii) The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement; and
- iii) The impact on student learning of the challenges faced by teaching principals.

A summary of the data is displayed in Table 4.12 in the order that the questions were asked. The table is divided into three columns. These columns identify the interview question number, the categories and the key themes. The next chapter will explore the three themes that emerged from the data in more detail and link them to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

**Table 4.12 Question categories and their related key themes**

<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Key Themes</b>
1	Transitional progression from teacher to leader Teaching experience Influence of mentoring and support networks	<b>Theme 1:</b> The influence of prior experience on principalship
2	Promotion Māori values, knowledge and language Productive dimensions of school culture Leadership focused on learning Strong community ownership of children's learning Clear school identity	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
3	Developing teams Strengthening Governance Managing dilemmas Additional responsibilities Disruptions on the job Managing dual role	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement <b>Theme 3:</b> The impact on student learning of the challenges faced by teaching principals
4	Adopting systems Investing in resourcing Work ethic Taking care of Hauora (Well-being) Distributed leadership	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
5	Developing people Promotion and celebrating Māori culture Strong connections with iwi boards Strong culture of learning and pastoral support	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
6	Encourage community engagement Fostering school communication Active kaumātua/iwi in school Leading by example	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
7	High pressure situations Constraints of systems Managing relationships & micro-politics Attracting and recruitment of quality teaching staff Teaching Principal Hauora (well-being)	<b>Theme 3:</b> The impact on student learning of the challenges faced by teaching principals
8	Collaboration through networking Support systems Leadership experience Quality staff	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
9	Free professional development Paid professional development courses Benefits and limitations of professional development Collaboration Quality staff	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
10	Leading learning Promote Māori knowledge and language Monitoring and tracking systems for learning Dimensions of School Culture	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement
11	Principal future recommendations  Developing emotional intelligence	<b>Theme 2:</b> The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Whaowhia te kete mātauranga (Biggs 1970:1)

'Fill the Basket of knowledge'.  
This is a proverb to emphasise the importance of learning.  
Source: (Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 424).

The reason for selecting this whakataukī for this chapter is that the new learning gained from this research will support in my endeavours to become a more informed educator and provide a space as a Māori wahine to voice what is needed to transform education for Māori students.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion of the main findings of this study. This includes reference to the application of kaupapa Māori principles and is related to the discussion of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

### THE INFLUENCES OF PRIOR EXPERIENCE ON PRINCIPALSHIP

The findings in this research concur with the literature in that there are varying steps of progressions in becoming a principal. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2007) report identified three possible pathways to becoming a principal: i) upward mobility from teacher to deputy principal to principal; ii) horizontal movement from teacher to teaching principal of a small school through to principalship of larger schools; and iii) a combination of the first two. The research findings also highlighted that not all participants had aspired to become principals. This has significant implications for preparing the next generation of leaders who come into small rural primary schools. Prior to *'Tomorrow's Schools,'* Collins (2003) suggests that country service was seen as a compulsory component in an individual's career pathway to becoming a principal. However, it is now evident that removing this compulsory mechanism has created less interest from possible urban teachers and narrowed the pool of possible candidates considering a career as a teaching principal. This is supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2007): "Rural schools are now seen by some principals as more of a career stop than a career step" (p. 60).

This research study found that some of the participants perceived that the removal of provisions such as rural advisors to rural schools had affected teaching principals' access to specialised professional support, particularly in hard-to-staff rural schools. This view is shared

by Wylie (2011) who argues that the impact of *Tomorrow's Schools* has increased the complexity of leading in small rural primary schools. Again, this has future implications for the effectiveness of professional development programmes to target the contextual needs within small rural primary schools, particularly in schools where there are multi-level years and ages in one or two classrooms. Although the findings indicated that teaching principals found professional development courses to be invaluable, it is necessary to review how professional development can be more differentiated towards small rural primary school contexts as the current professional development is more focused at one age group and larger schools. An example of this is designing professional development courses that support teachers' practice in a multi-level and multi-year classroom, across key learning areas of the curriculum.

**Tino rangatiratanga: The principle of self-determination**

In the various interviews the above principle highlighted the stance that principals took to voicing their thoughts on which leadership practices transformed outcomes for Māori. This is reflected in the literature review, and the presentation of findings.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMING MĀORI STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

The findings of the research indicated that the participants had different perceptions of which leadership practices contributed to transforming Māori student achievement. Although there were differences in how leadership was implemented, participants were quite clear that developing the organisational conditions within their schools was fundamental to lifting student achievement. This is supported by Mulford et al. (2004) who state that leadership contributes to organisational learning which in turn influences what happens in schools. Again this notion is widely reflected in the literature by Leithwood and Seashore-Louis (1998), Robinson et al. (2009), Cardno (2012) and the The Wallace Foundation (2012) who all note that effective leaders focus on improving the quality of teaching and the conditions for student learning.

**Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi**

The participants firmly acknowledge that developing the organisational conditions within their schools was fundamental to lifting student achievement. This principle clearly acknowledges that it is a responsibility of all educational leaders to provide effective learning environments which fosters success for all students, particularly Māori.

The next section reviews the findings under the following headings: Promoting and celebrating Māori culture, Language and values; Leadership development and creating learning

organisations; Adopting systems and investing in people; Leading with kaumātua to support Māori students' education; Whānau engagement in learning; and Strengthening governance.

## **PROMOTING AND CELEBRATING MĀORI CULTURE**

Ensuring the school's culture and environment fostered Māori culture and achievement was a key leadership practice that some of the participants identified as the most significant in transforming outcomes for Māori. Creating a culturally safe environment was deemed by some of the teaching principals to be about promoting Māori values, knowledge and language. However, there was a concern that not all schools are able to provide the environment required for supporting Māori student achievement. Some of the participants did not understand the history surrounding the effects of colonisation on Māori, the relevance and partnership of Māori and the crown within the Treaty of Waitangi and the impact of deficit theorising in marginalised Māori students within schools. Although the teaching participants were very dedicated teachers, it was apparent there were gaps in pedagogical knowledge and understanding of why all schools needed to provide culturally responsive education for Māori. This is reflected in the literature by Bishop et al. (2010) who claims that, by addressing the educational disparities for Māori, there must be change at the classroom level, school and system level. This could be done by a scaling-up reform where all those involved with students need to deepen their understanding of their practices in response to changing circumstances within their schools. Furthermore, Bishop et al. (2010) state:

Successful scale up of educational reforms requires of active participants that they not only change core instructional practices from those currently dominant in the schools, but also provide infrastructural and organisational support at a variety of levels – within the system itself (p. 14 - 15).

The findings revealed that most of the participants' leadership practices incorporated Māori values which were conducive for establishing a positive learning environment. Many of the participants invited me into their schools and their first action was to make me feel comfortable by offering food and drink. This is highly indicative of the research that the value of caring or knowing as manaakitanga is seen as a core value within Māori culture (Macfarlane, 2004). As participants took me through their schools I got to see, hear and feel how Māori culture, language and values was brought to life. There was evidence of students relating well to each other (showing manaakitanga by playing together at school), there was a rich presence of Māori art and symbols located in various key areas of the schools (such as the front of the school, water and garden features) and the use of integral proverbs, karakia and waiata incorporated into students' learning at these participants schools.

**Ako Māori: The principle of culturally preferred pedagogy**

The participants of this research identified key teaching and learning practices that were inherent and unique to Māori. It is evident that those participants who affirm Māori methods of teaching and world-views were reflecting aspects of the Edu-Cultural Wheel (Macfarlane, 2004) as a way to transform outcomes for Māori.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND CREATING LEARNING ORGANISATIONS**

Allocating time on reflecting on practice and self-reviewing the effectiveness of their school is a leadership practice that is deemed to positively influence outcomes for Māori. The findings revealed that only a few participants scheduled time for reflection as part of their personal development as leaders. This is not reflective of the literature as the Ministry of Education (2008) suggests principals need opportunities to reflect and learn and have access to quality information about all aspects of school leadership. This implies that a certain proportion of time should be allocated for individual leaders' own professional development. Much of the literature suggests that this may not be possible because small rural primary schools have a higher degree of complexity stemming from the small numbers of staff that they employ. The findings revealed that the majority of participants perceived that their main responsibilities were to develop teams of people which meant they spent less time on their own leadership development. Most of the participants' time was scheduled with leading professional development for teachers. This is very indicative of the research of Southworth (2004) who identified that small rural primary school leaders should spend a considerable amount of time in improving teacher's professional development. This also resonates with the research of Robinson et al. (2009) who identified that a key aspect of leadership is for leaders to take an active role in the professional development of staff as part of developing a learning organisation.

**Ata: The principle of growing respectful relationships**

The participants of this research identified developing teams was a critical component to lifting expectations regarding the quality of teaching. An important leadership practice was building and nurturing relationships with teachers as a way to transform their practice and engage with Māori students.

**ADOPTING SYSTEMS AND INVESTING IN PEOPLE**

Prioritising time, being well organised and having good time management strategies were key attributes that the participants of this research felt that leaders needed to possess in small rural primary schools. Many of the participating schools were at varying stages of the self-

review processes and each had different ways to reflect on student achievement. The findings confirmed that all the participants had their own systems with managing the dual role as teaching principal. All participants had high expectations for learning, believed they needed to foster relationships and cultivate a climate hospitable to learning. This is identified by Robinson et al. (2009) and The Wallace Foundation (2012) to be critical to influencing the conditions for improving learning. The findings did highlight that positive relationships between students, teachers and home were critical to making a difference. As Senge (2000) suggests, in order for schools to foster learning, change can only make a difference if all three systems, the classroom, the school and the community, are on board together. The findings did show that a majority of the participants had experienced dysfunctional situations with either one group or a combination of all three groups, which made it quite difficult for participants to stay focused on effective student learning. A key leadership practice identified in the findings was selecting productive dimensions of school culture which focused on learning and cultural identity. Many of the participants felt it was necessary to encourage community engagement through a variety of school events. This was communicated mostly via the school newsletter. This suggests that in order to change outcomes for Māori students, effective schools consistently self-review and monitor progress of students and adopt systems that support change at all system levels.

**Kaupapa: The principle of collective philosophy**

A key leadership practice identified is encouraging community engagement in their children's learning. In order to transform outcomes for Māori, inclusive and collaborative schools work together at all three levels as part of meeting the aspirations of Māori communities.

**LEADING WITH KAUMĀTUA TO SUPPORT MĀORI STUDENTS EDUCATION**

Kaumātua in schools do make a positive difference in supporting leaders to connect and culturally relate to Māori communities. However, not all schools in this research were able to access iwi or kaumātua help to develop relationships between the school and the community. This has major implications for transforming community perceptions and involvement in their children's learning. It is a requirement for all leaders is to be able to put education policy into practice. However, it is not clear that participants were able to successfully implement *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2014c) into their schools. This strategy is deemed to be a vital mechanism in lifting outcomes for Māori. Those schools who had access to kaumātua and iwi support experienced greater engagement from their Māori

community. This is also reflected in the literature that states strong whānau and kura relationships are essential to raising Māori achievement (Education Review Office, 2010). The findings reveal that only four of the participants were highly knowledgeable in creating culturally responsive contexts and using Māori pedagogies to improve the learning of Māori students. These participants worked closely with kaumātua and iwi organisations to frame an education that reflected Māori world views and promoted the revitalisation of Māori language and values. The findings are reflective of the literature where Hemara (2000) speaks of the value of kaumātua in building relationships with iwi and nurturing Māori students' identity by sharing knowledge of genealogy, stories of their area, tikanga (customs) and expertise in oratory and of the Māori language. This also aligns with Black (2014) who argues that education for Māori should include Māori world views and incorporate Māori frameworks as part of addressing the inequities of the past. Much of this is discussed by Durie (2006) in regard to how Māori could come together as one to reclaim back some of the positioning by being involved within education at various levels.

**Taonga tuku iho: The principle of cultural aspiration**

Those participants who worked closely with kaumātua and iwi organisations to frame an education that reflected Māori world views are upholding the above principle. This leadership practice supports transforming outcomes for Māori students.

**SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATING IN PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS**

Supportive communities and school Boards of Trustees can make a difference in addressing the disparities for Māori that exist within their schools. As the literature suggests creating a climate hospitable to education is an important process for fostering school improvement (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). It was clear from the findings that participants needed more professional support to manage the complexities of leading small rural primary schools that are geographically isolated from major towns and urban centres. Not all of the participants had access to the required professional development for curriculum and staff development and their own leadership development, either because they could not afford it as the budget had been spent the previous month or year; or because of the difficulty of getting a quality reliever in to cover and the additional cost of travel. Therefore, not having access to professional development can have a detrimental impact on the provision of quality teaching in a school.

Addressing underperformance is deemed an important practice of a teaching principal. The findings indicated that most of the participants had their own support groups and various networks to off-load to about the challenges they faced. Support is considered essential to the

development of any principal (Ministry of Education, 2008). The participants found that they were able to share similar experiences with their networks, collaborate together to problem solve and for personal inspiration. This aligns with the intentions outlined in the *'Investing in Education Success Model'* (Ministry of Education, 2014). Four of the participants had previous senior management experience which they believed had helped them with solving and mediating through the rift of challenges. Three of the participants identified as First Time Principals. They sought advice and support from a network of people these being: i) First Time Principal mentors; ii) former principals; iii) family and spouses; iv) principal cluster groups; v) external professional development facilitators; and vi) the chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Again, this correlates with the various literature about the positive value of being involved in professional dialogue with other professionals and as a cluster group of educational leaders, because it encourages the sharing of best practice that is focused on improving student achievement (Cardno, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2014; Southworth, 2004).

**Ata: The principle of growing respectful relationships**

An important leadership practice was building and nurturing relationships with other leaders as a way to transform individual participant's teaching and leadership practice as part of engaging with Māori students and their families.

## **WHĀNAU ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

Engaging whānau in students' learning is deemed a critical leadership practice in transforming outcomes for Māori. The findings indicated that four out of the eight schools were able to effectively involve the Māori community in the school by providing opportunities for whānau to participate in parent learning programmes and by having a well-structured Māori language programme throughout the school. This confers with much of the research conducted by Education Review Office (2010) and the Ministry of Education (2010b) in that whānau involvement is critical to raising Māori student achievement. From a Māori world view, Durie (2006) identified that a primary whānau role is the transferring of culture, knowledge, values and skills. Although the findings indicated that leaders placed emphasis on strong behavioural and values programmes, this alone is not enough to transform outcomes for Māori. As Durie (2006) explains, the expectation is that whānau are the primary carriers of culture, whānau knowledge, human values and life skills, and this is what makes them important teachers in their children's' life's. Therefore, there is a sense of urgency to identify communities that are deemed at risk and work together with iwi to empower families so that they can support their children's learning, and also raise the economic and social potential of the community.

**Kia piki ake I nga raruraru o te kainga: The principle of socio-economic mediation**

Some participants of this research provided support to Māori communities by being actively involved in community events and showing manaakitanga to families who required assistance due to barriers such as poverty and personal issues. This is regarded as being an effective leadership practice to transforming outcomes for Māori.

**STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE**

Strengthening governance in small rural primary schools should be considered a priority in education in New Zealand. The findings indicated that not all Boards of Trustees are truly working to their full potential. Those Boards of Trustees who are fully committed to their individual and collective professional development as a team seemed to be more confident and competent in their roles and were better able to support their teaching principal. There were also some Boards of Trustees who dismissed organised professional development and training because other responsibilities took them away. Obviously this is an area of concern for teaching principals because participants indicated that “getting traction” is often a slow and dogmatic process. The literature reveals much of the concern about the viability of the self-managing model for some primary schools and the impact of leadership in positively influencing student achievement (Brooking, 2007; Springford, 2006; Wylie, 2011). Change at a governance level in small rural primary schools could possibly make a difference to influencing outcomes for Māori achievement. The findings revealed that most of the participants confirmed that a significant portion of their time involved developing Boards of Trustees in their roles to strengthen student achievement. However, most of the professional development and training was facilitated by the participants. This suggests there is a need to review what professional development is provided to Boards of Trustees and how to shift those trustees whose attitudes and capabilities are not congruent with transforming outcomes for improving school performance.

**Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi**

This principle acknowledges that there is a need to challenge the status quo regarding how Boards of Trustees are professionally developed and monitored in schools that are experiencing difficulty where there is a significant proportion of Māori students on the school roll. This is because when teachers, the school, and the community are all working together they are able to begin to transform outcomes for Māori students.

## **CHALLENGES OF TEACHING PRINCIPALS ARE IMPACTING ON STUDENT LEARNING**

This study found that the double demand of the teaching principal position has major implications on learning in small rural primary schools and transforming outcomes for Māori students. The literature noted that it was more of a concern in schools that are identified to have issues with community, roll decline, provision of quality education and governance matters (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie & Kemp, 2004). These problematic and reoccurring organisational dilemmas must be addressed by leadership with key stakeholders of the education system, the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand School Trustees Association and Māori leadership in terms of making change for positively addressing the educational disparities that exist for some children in small rural primary schools.

A major factor that seems to impede progress as identified by participants' in this research and within the literature, is the degree of autonomy and authority that Boards of Trustees have in schools. The findings showed there were varying levels of engagement by Boards in professional development. The literature identifies that this has shown to impact on student achievement (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie & Kemp, 2004). It is clearly indicated by Brooking (2005) that constant training of new boards is imperative for efficient running of schools and capacity building (Robinson et al., 2003). This is further reaffirmed by Wylie (2007) who argues that government agencies need to be more involved in leadership and supporting schools to see real gains in students' learning. As Wylie (2007) indicates, there are difficulties in providing timely support and advice from outside schools where Boards cannot or will not carry out key aspects of their legal role (p. 2). This further affirms that the self-management model has perpetuated some of the discourses that exist within small rural primary schools. Further attention must be given to reviewing how relevant this model is in its current form as, for some schools, the literature has shown that Māori students' needs are not being met and such schools have had statutory interventions (Ministry of Education, 2014b).

The self-managing model perhaps restricts leaders' practices in providing quality education in small rural primary schools. The findings revealed that not all Boards of Trustees in the research were working effectively to their full potential in addressing student achievement and supporting their teaching principals. A synthesis of the literature conceded that one of the most common challenges that teaching principals have is dealing with governance issues (Brooking, 2005; Robinson et al., 2003; Springford, 2006; Wylie, 2007). A majority of the participants acknowledged that Boards of Trustees required a lot of support and training to be able to do their jobs. Most of these participants spent many hours supporting trustees by either

explaining or organising professional development, transporting and accompanying trustees to their training which was typically between one to two hours away from the school, and completing the agenda and minutes of Board of Trustees' meetings. These issues align closely to what was being reported by Robinson et al. (2003) who questioned whether lay Boards of Trustees could govern effectively as part of fulfilling their responsibilities to the government and their communities and, on the other side whether the government could monitor, support and regulate Boards of Trustees' activities in schools.

The challenges that many of the participants faced are acknowledged to have occurred since the implementation of *Tomorrow's Schools*. Springford (2006) questioned the relevance of having the same governance structure for small schools in remote rural localities with student rolls under 12, as for the largest schools of over 1,000 students, despite widely varying needs and pools of potential trustees. This also aligns closely with Collins (2003) concerns about the state and future sustainability of small rural primary schools. The findings show that many of the participants' experiences are reflective of the literature and a serious concern is the future appointment and retention of teaching principals at these schools which have serious issues related to finance, property, personnel, poor quality of teaching and governance (Brooking, 2007; Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie & Kemp, 2004). Additionally, the findings indicated that the funding and staffing entitlements gained under the self-managing model are not enough to support student learning as a majority of the participants have actively got involved in fundraising for modern learning tools such as iPads, Chrome Books, computers and for educational trips outside the classroom. This is further reinforced by Teaching Principal Eric comments on the difficulties of sourcing external funding:

*“What is another real hard one for a teaching principal in a small rural school is winning funding because the funding gates have shut, the parameters of trying to win funding have declined, it's so damn hard to win outside money to fund your dreams”.*

#### **Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi**

There is room to further investigate the need to challenge the status quo regarding the constraints of the education system because of the additional complexities that teaching principals have in small rural primary schools as part of transforming outcomes for Māori.

**Table 5.1 Summary of key principles and leadership practices that transform Māori outcomes**

	Research findings	Māori principles	Related leadership practices
1	The influences of prior experience on principalship	Tino rangatiratanga: The principle of self-determination	The findings highlighted principals voicing their thoughts on which leadership practices transformed outcomes for Māori.
2	The importance of effective educational leadership for transforming Māori student achievement	Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi	The findings highlighted that principals create organisational conditions within their schools was fundamental to lifting student achievement. A key responsibility of all educational leaders is to provide effective learning environments which fosters success for all students, particularly Māori.
3	Promoting and celebrating Māori culture	Ako Māori: The principle of culturally preferred pedagogy	The findings identified key teaching and learning practices unique to Māori. It is evident that those participants who affirm Māori methods of teaching and world-views were reflecting aspects of the Edu-Cultural Wheel (Macfarlane, 2004) as a way to transform outcomes for Māori.
4	Leadership development and creating learning organisations	Ata: The principle of growing respectful relationships	The findings identified that developing teams was a critical component to lifting expectations regarding the quality of teaching. An important leadership practice was building and nurturing relationships with teachers as a way to transform their practice and engage with Māori students.
5	Adopting systems and investing in people	Kaupapa: The principle of collective philosophy	A key leadership practice identified is encouraging community engagement in their children's learning. In order to transform outcomes for Māori, inclusive and collaborative schools work together at all three levels as part of meeting the aspirations of Māori communities.
6	Leading with kaumātua to support Māori students education	Taonga tuku iho: The principle of cultural aspiration	Those participants who worked closely with kaumātua and iwi organisations to frame an education that reflected Māori world views are upholding the identified principle which supports transforming outcomes for Māori students.
7	Support systems and participating in professional networks	Ata: The principle of growing respectful relationships	An important leadership practice was building and nurturing relationships with other leaders as a way to transform individual participant's teaching and leadership practice as part of engaging with Māori students and their families.
8	Whānau engagement in learning	Kia piki ake I nga raruraru o te kainga: The principle of socio-economic mediation	Some participants of this research provided support to Māori communities by being actively involved in community events and showing manaakitanga to families who required assistance due to barriers such as poverty and personal issues. This is regarded as being an effective leadership practice to transforming outcomes for Māori.
9	Strengthening governance	Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi	This principle acknowledges that there is a need to challenge the status quo regarding how Boards of Trustees are professionally developed and monitored in schools that are experiencing difficulty where there is a significant proportion of Māori students on the school roll. This is because when teachers, the school, and the community are all working together they are able to begin to transform outcomes for Māori students.
10	Challenges of teaching principals are impacting on student learning	Te Tiriti o Waitangi: The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi	There is room to further investigate the need to challenge the status quo regarding the constraints of the education system because of the additional complexities that teaching principals have in small rural primary schools as part of transforming outcomes for Māori.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter has explored the connections between the key themes from the findings of the study and from the literature. The findings revealed that some teaching principals used a combination of some of the best practices and dimensions of educational leadership as defined by key researchers and educators (Robinson et al., 2009; Southworth, 2004; The Wallace Foundation, 2012). The findings identified that a number of leadership practices were perceived to transform Māori student achievement and outcomes. What is clear about the findings is that more support is required for teaching principals. The findings show that there are huge complexities in leading small rural primary schools and much of this has been highlighted by various research over the past 25 years. Participants acknowledge that without enough money, quality teaching staff, and a supportive and knowledgeable Board of Trustees, it is difficult to provide a quality education to students. The literature suggests that educational leadership is critical to improving student achievement but doesn't differentiate how this could be successfully done in small rural primary schools. Furthermore, the findings highlight that transforming Māori student achievement requires an educational leader to have a high degree of understanding and application of relevant educational leadership theory, which includes understanding the role that Māori world views and values can contribute to this process. The next chapter will discuss the recommendations, conclusions and limitations of this research. This will include suggestions for future research.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Ko te manu e kai ana te miro, nōna te ngahere; ko te manu e kai ana te mātauranga,  
nōna te ao**

'The bird that eats from the miro tree owns the forest; the bird that feasts from the tree of knowledge will gain the world' (Kātene, 2015).

This final whakataukī represents the journey that has been taking to empower myself as a Māori educator and emerging researcher to seek knowledge to be able to actively engage and contribute towards the communities of my own, whanau, hapū and iwi within New Zealand and the world.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations arising from this research project, a discussion on its limitations, the consequences of the findings for changing practice in leading small rural primary schools, and the implications of changing leadership practice at different organisational system levels to support Māori students' educational outcomes and achievement. The chapter finishes with suggestions for future research.

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

The overall aims of this research study were to investigate the leadership practices and conditions that were perceived to transform outcomes for Māori students, including identifying the impact of challenges faced by teaching principals in transforming outcomes for Māori. Five key conclusions are presented here which are related to the three research questions that have guided this research project.

### CONCLUSIONS: RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

**Research Question 1:** What are the effective styles and forms of educational leadership used by teaching principals in small rural primary schools?

**Conclusion 1:** Iwi leadership combined with educational leadership is beneficial for transforming student learning in small rural primary schools.

This research highlights the value of having iwi and external providers collaboratively working together with teaching principals to strengthen strategic management, and the shaping of the vision for their schools. In order to transform Māori achievement and outcomes in small rural primary schools, changes need to happen at all levels - Boards of Trustees, teaching principals, teachers and the community. In four of the schools it is evident that change has had a positive impact on outcomes for Māori. This research and the literature highlights that sustainable leadership and expertise in change management are key practices that contribute to transforming education in rural communities as identified in the two projects (Gorinski & Fraser, 2007; Wylie & Kemp, 2004).

**Conclusion 2: The embedding of Māori world views, values, language and culture should be achieved in all schools.**

The findings revealed that iwi were actively involved in the two different education regions and provided guidance and support in regard to strategic management and self-review. The participating schools: Brussels; Dubai; Ennis; Forthworth; and Howth placed value on the promotion of the Māori language by developing localised curriculum that utilises the resource of community marae and people. Key findings showed that some of the schools had committed to a fully timetabled curriculum for the Māori language so their students were being developed in their taha Māori. This is well documented within the literature honouring the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and the three key principles of protection, partnership and participation as a start to addressing the inadequacies of an education system that has not served Māori well (Berryman & Bateman, 2008).

## **CONCLUSIONS: RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

**Research Question 2:** What are the challenges that rural primary teaching principals' face in raising Māori student achievement?

**Conclusion 3: The current self-managing model does not operate effectively for all small primary schools in isolated rural communities.**

This research concluded that many of the varied challenges experienced by teaching principals are impacting on their personal well-being and workload. There is sufficient evidence to argue that the triple burden of management, governance and teaching responsibilities is closely associated with the 'one-size-fits all' self-managing model (Brooking, 2005, 2007; Brooking et al., 2003). The complexity of leading within the model is forcing leaders to spend more time in dealing with the micro-politics of small communities and thus

committing less time to their central purpose of leading learning. As I have mentioned in earlier chapters, one can argue that the unregulated monitoring of Boards of Trustees is an area of concern, particularly if there has been a long history of governance incidences that have impacted on a school's operation. Brooking (2005) acknowledges that the self-managing model works well in most urban schools, but not so well in some lower socioeconomic communities. Furthermore, Brooking (2005) points out that the schools needing more support are typically those with low student rolls, those located in rural areas, and those who struggle to attract stable and experienced teaching staff. All the participating schools in this research are deserving of more support and resourcing.

### **CONCLUSIONS: RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

**Research Question 3:** What leadership practices are perceived to contribute to raising Māori student achievement?

**Conclusion 4: Effective educational leadership is needed to transform outcomes for Māori students learning.**

This research concluded that effective educational leadership practices can transform Māori student achievement. Culturally responsive leadership and learning centred leadership is necessary for transforming Māori outcomes. This research also highlights that major challenges faced by teaching principals in small rural primary schools is being able to create culturally safe contexts for Māori students and being able to effectively spend time focused on teaching and learning. The first challenge for leaders is how to address and confront the cultures and attitudes that exist in their schools and communities which have an impact on student learning. As Berryman and Bateman (2008) suggest, leaders of all schools should have a cultural understanding of the values of Māori and, as Robinson et al. (2009) state, be highly involved in promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.

In order to build momentum in raising performance in small rural primary schools, teaching principals' educational leadership practices must change, governance needs to be more effective, and the issues regarding equity need to be addressed in terms of allocation of funding and teacher recruitment under the current self-managing model.

**Conclusion 5: Organisational learning is critical to transforming school culture**

This research concluded that effective educational leaders who promoted and participated in professional development made a significant difference to lifting the quality of teaching. This study found that although all the participants used 'best practice' in a variety of ways, only a

few participants were able to incorporate kaupapa Māori ways of thinking into their leadership practices, and thereby empower Māori students and their whānau (Berryman & Bateman, 2008; Bishop, 2011; Bishop & Glynn, 2000).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study have led to the development of seven recommendations. These recommendations are relevant for aspiring teaching principals, current teaching principals in small rural primary schools and interested stakeholders in New Zealand's education system. Although this was a small scale study, readers of this thesis may choose to explore how these might apply to their own setting. Further research and investigation into systems and barriers permeating within the infrastructure of our education system is warranted as such challenges impact on educational leadership and outcomes for Māori in small rural primary schools.

## **RESOURCING AND FUNDING**

1. That professional development programmes cover pedagogical content related to rural schooling, the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori pedagogies, and the ability to develop learning programmes across all curriculum areas for multi-level and year groups in a single classroom.
2. That teacher education providers consider strengthening aspects of their learning programmes with regards to the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi to New Zealand and the impact of deficit theorising.
3. That there are dedicated Rural Advisors available to teaching principals. These advisors would be specialists in multi-level teaching and sole-charge classrooms, experienced in working with diverse population groups, and have expertise in educational leadership areas such as strategic management, change management, organisational learning, team development and curriculum development, that are inclusive of Māori world views and values.

## **ACHIEVEMENT FOR MĀORI AS MĀORI**

1. That school leaders adopt a proactive approach to learning the Māori language; as a whole staff to better value the importance of the revitalisation of the language and Māori culture.

2. That key iwi leaders and kaumātua work in partnership to support those schools with high Māori student rolls, to build connections in their community with the school and to strengthen the advancement of Māori in isolated regions.

## **GOVERNANCE**

1. That teaching principals are allocated sufficient management release time and have equitable access to resources required to effectively function in a small rural primary school. This includes having increased staffing entitlement that is not student roll driven and a different formula for operational funding and property provision. This also has implications for the Ministry of Education. It needs to increase the funding and resource allocation to small rural primary schools so teaching principals can focus more time on students' learning and less on managerial and administrative tasks.
2. That the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the relevant sector groups (primary, New Zealand Educational Institute, New Zealand School Trustees Association and Māori leadership), review the effectiveness and relevance of the self-managing model in small rural primary schools and consider looking at a different leadership and governance model for these schools.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It is recognised that this study may not be an accurate representation of the perceptions and experiences of all teaching principals in small rural primary schools. However, small scale qualitative studies can be generalised and applied to other settings if readers see clear contextual links. This means that it is up to the readers of this research to evaluate the extent to which the findings and conclusions can be applied to their own settings (Cohen et al., 2007).

There is also a limited amount of research regarding educational leadership in small rural primary schools, including what are perceived leadership practices that contribute to transforming outcomes for Māori students in such schools in New Zealand. The experiences that I have had as a first time teacher principal may not be truly reflective of all teaching principals but can be considered as an insight into the realities of what happens in such schools located in isolated regions. The micro-politics of small communities can severely impact on the progress of transforming outcomes for Māori. As mentioned not all teaching principals may have challenges with micro-politics but acknowledging this as a barrier should be seen as reclaiming the right to voice concerns in an attempt to create a space for honest dialogue about such occurrences within our education system.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This journey has empowered me to transform as a Māori educator. It has enabled me to have a voice, by creating a space to legitimise the knowledge and experiences I bring to transforming outcomes for Māori students in small rural primary schools. There certainly is a space to have Māori views considered alongside western world views when determining action that affects Māori.

In order to maximise spaces that legitimise Māori frameworks of knowledge and values, future research should potentially look at identifying the processes which are required to build strong and collaborative partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi as part of moving towards a shared understanding of what education could look like in small rural primary schools, and as part of empowering and nurturing Māori children to reach their full potential.

To be able to create such spaces there is a need to look at reviewing the knowledge and skills that current and future principals in small rural primary schools are required to have in effectively leading sustainable change. Key areas of such research could possibly involve looking at change management and strategic management in small rural primary schools and in isolated rural communities.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to conduct a similar study into the impact of governance on student achievement in isolated small rural primary schools across different education regions utilising a larger sample size. The literature stresses the need to evaluate the self-managing model (Springford, 2006; Wylie, 2011). It is also clear that there remains limited research regarding the development of Boards of Trustees' potential in small rural primary schools, controlled and undertaken by Māori. This future research is urgent if the Crown is going to uphold its responsibilities and the principles identified in accordance with the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi (Berryman & Bateman, 2008; Manning et al., 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence that reviewing the past is a step to moving forward in addressing transforming outcomes for Māori (Black, 2014).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This research project identifies that Māori frameworks and worldviews are necessary for uplifting and advancing the social and educational outcomes of Māori students and the communities they come from. As well, this research provided a space for the voices of a selected sample of teaching principals to describe the challenges they encountered in leading learning in small rural primary schools and which leadership practices they perceived as

contributing to transforming Māori achievement. This research further adds to the literature on educational leadership in small rural primary schools in New Zealand. This research proposes adopting a ‘think tank’ approach to discuss what is going on in small rural primary schools, as part of providing better professional support for school leaders and Boards of Trustees so that they are well prepared to meet the objectives acknowledged in *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2014c); and *Investing in Educational Success* (Ministry of Education, 2014).

The cyclical nature of educational leadership issues raised in this research will continue to occur in small rural primary schools if we do not stand up and speak out. As educators and leaders we all have a responsibility to step up and create better education opportunities for all of our children. The overleaf below proposes how educational leadership in small rural schools could be differentiated to ensure education is transforming students and not deterring Māori students from reaching their full potential.

### **Small rural primary school leadership framework**

This framework reflects a new perspective on how educational leadership and governance could build students and people within small rural primary schools and the communities they belong too. It is necessary to have all the various dimensions because of the complexity that is involved in leading small rural primary schools as highlighted within this research project and from the literature reviewed. The framework encapsulates five dimensions and these will be explained one by one:

- Kaupapa Māori principles and practices (Refer to Chapter 3 Methodology p. 23-26);
- Principles of Action – focus on empowerment, relevance and strengthen identity;
- Community of leadership and Governance support;
- Roles of the teaching principal; and
- Roles of stakeholders of the school community.

The first dimension identifies Kaupapa Māori principles and practices as the foundation blocks of the ‘Small rural primary school leadership framework’. The purpose of having these principles and practices here is to guide the process in how collaboration amongst people should be culturally responsive and safe. It acknowledges the importance of Māori frameworks of knowledge as being an important component in transforming outcomes for Māori.

The second dimension is the Principles of Action. These principles underpin how support and building leadership for the different stakeholders of the school community should be about empowering people, have relevance and a sense of purpose in strengthening identity.

The third dimension is Community of Leadership and Governance support. Within this dimension it highlights the importance that each key leadership group have to contribute to empowering the stakeholders of the school community:

- Māori leadership has an important part to play in looking after and mobilizing Māori in isolated communities to reach their potential and also in working with the Crown to ensure that Māori voice is recognised and valued as part of transforming outcomes for Māori;
- The Ministry of Education has a leading role to ensure all small rural primary schools have equitable provision of staffing, resourcing, and management release time for teaching principals. As well as providing strategic leadership for supporting effective governance and meeting Māori aspirations, and facilitating a working partnership with Māori leadership, Local and National Principals Associations and the New Zealand School Board of Trustees Association;
- The New Zealand School Board of Trustees Association play an important role in the shaping, facilitating and implementation of professional development for School Boards. Their role is to assure that all Boards are educated and empowered to fully support their teaching principals and their communities; and
- Local and National Principals Associations have a greater role to be proactive in supporting colleagues of smaller schools, and the sharing of expertise to strengthen teachers and leaders potential to provide quality education.

The fourth dimension identifies the roles teaching principals have and the value that educational leadership has to transforming outcomes for Māori students:

- School culture is deemed an important component of a teaching principal's leadership practice in creating an environment that is conducive to learning for all stakeholders of the school community. Underpinning this is that all stakeholders of the school community have to be engaged in organisational learning and be prepared to change and transform in attitude and practice;
- Pedagogical knowledge as a leader of learning is critical to shaping the direction of the learning that is required for teachers to be effective in their roles and to transform the quality of teaching in the school; and

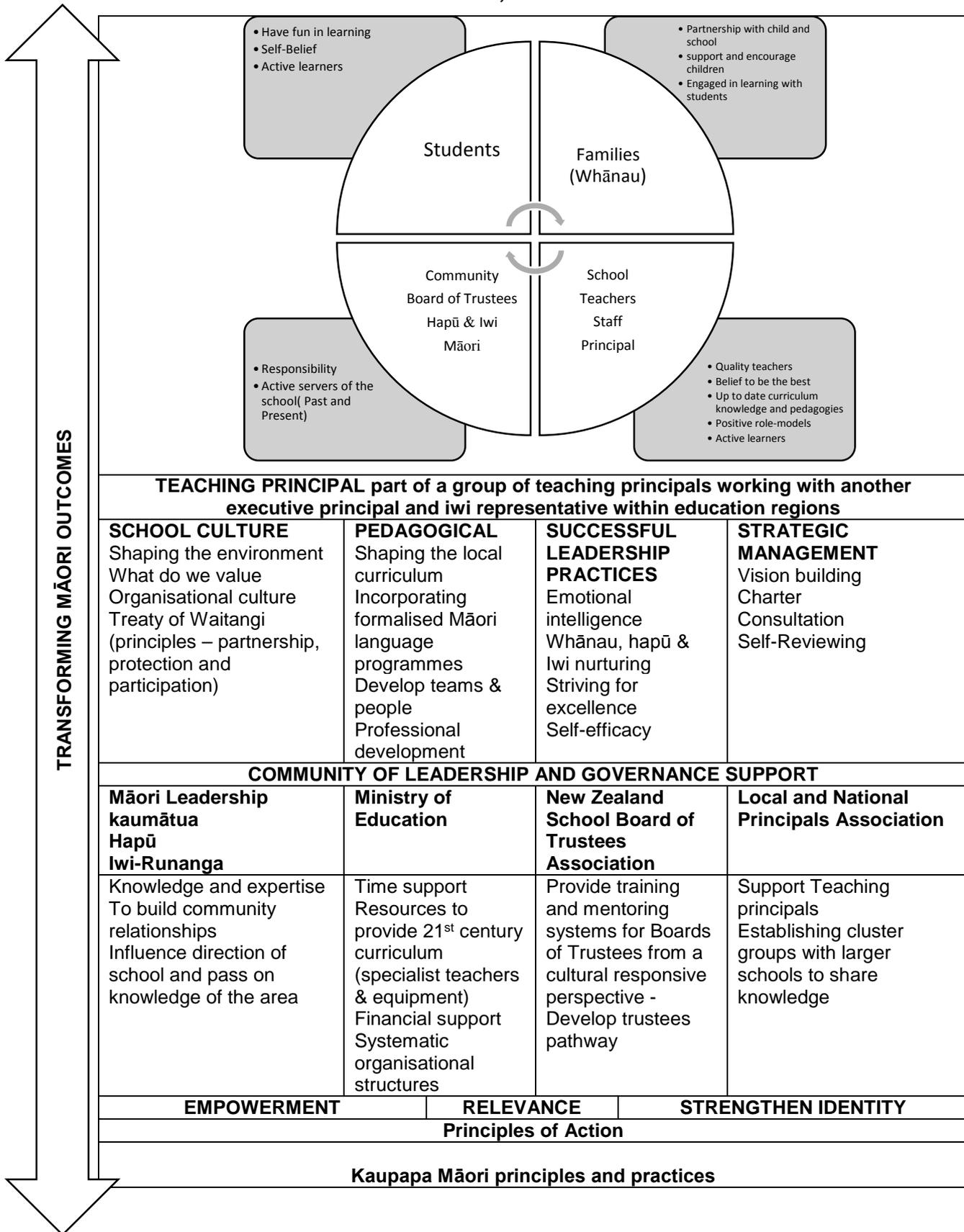
- Successful leadership practices of teaching principals identify how they need to be resilient in nurturing stakeholders of the school community but also in maintaining individual hauora (well-being) in a very demanding role of transforming outcomes for students.

There is an added role of having another principal oversee some of the administrative and managerial tasks that teaching principals have to make the role more manageable. The inclusion of an iwi representative to help in facilitating engagement with Māori whānau and will supporting in the development of localised curriculum and history of Māori in the community/region.

The last dimension highlights the roles that all stakeholders have as part of their role within the school community and their responsibility to positively contribute to learning, engage and participate in the life of the small rural primary school.

# SMALL RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

## BUILDING CHILDREN, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY



**Karakia – Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki**

He putānga tapu nga maiui tangata katoa

Ko te rangi tōku toronga

Ko te whenua tōku tūrangawaewae

Kia mau tata ki te whakapono

Ko te ariki, ko maungārongo

Hei manaaki i te ao i te whenua

ia tātau te tangata

Kia tuturu awhi te whaka mauā

Kia tīna, tīna. Hui e, taiki e!

There's always conflict in anyone's life at anytime

The day is my throne and my land is my salvation

We must all abide by the truth and let the truth be a parent advisor

Let there be peace and understanding

Let peace in its superiority for mankind

To look after the world, the land, the earth and the people

Blessing to all

Source: (Koro Dennis Vercoe, Nga Maihi, personal communication, October 26, 2015)

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## APPENDIX A: TEACHING PRINCIPALS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



### RESEARCH EVENT: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR TEACHING PRINCIPALS

#### **Life story and career questions:**

1. What has your career pathway/journey to becoming a teaching principal involved?
2. Tell me about your school. What makes it special, what are your school values and how are these values brought to life?

#### **Educational leadership questions:**

3. What are the things you do in a typical week as a teaching principal?
4. How do you manage the teaching and principal administrative duties in your role over the term?
5. What are your beliefs and practices you value as a leader in terms of improving Māori student achievement and outcomes?
6. How do you engage staff, students and the school community to buy into the values of the school?

#### **Challenges for teaching principals questions:**

7. What do you perceive are the challenges for leading a small rural primary school?

#### **Leadership practices which contribute to Māori student achievement questions:**

8. What support tools and mechanisms have supported you in your role and why you found them valuable as a teaching principal?
9. Tell me your views of professional development and learning and what professional development and learning you have been involved in to assist in your role as a teaching principal/teacher?
10. What leadership practices do you perceive to contribute to raising Māori student achievement?

#### **Concluding questions:**

11. Do you have any further comments

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHING PRINCIPALS

DATE: 19.6.15

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: Hazel Abraham

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

**THESIS TITLE:** Leading learning for Māori students: The challenges of leadership for teaching principals in small rural primary schools.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that the information I provide in my interview will only be used for the purpose of the project and will not be shared with any other participants. I will be provided with a transcript of my interview for checking before data analysis is started. I am aware that I can withdraw from this project within 14 days after receipt of interview transcript for final analysis.

**I agree to take part in this project:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please clearly print first and last name)

**Position held:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1033)**

This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from 18 June 2015 to 18 June 2016. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

## APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHING PRINCIPALS



### **INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHING PRINCIPALS**

**THESIS TITLE:** Leading learning for Māori students: The challenges of leadership for teaching principals in small rural primary schools.

My name is Hazel Abraham. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology, and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to identify the leadership practices and challenges of teaching principals' in small rural primary schools in regard to successfully improving Māori student achievement.

I request your participation in the following way:

I will be collecting data through a series of interviews with teaching principals and would appreciate being able to interview you at a time that is suitable. I will also be asking you to sign a consent form regarding this event immediately prior to the interview. Interviews will be conducted in privacy and will be no longer than one to one and half hours.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the thesis. I will be digitally recording your contribution and will be undertaking the interview transcriptions. I will also provide a transcript for you to check for accuracy before data analysis is undertaken. Please note the information of the research data may be used for publications and/or conference presentations. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor contracted from AUT University. You may withdraw from this project within 14 days after receipt of interview transcript for final analysis.

My supervisor is Alison Smith (AUT University)  
Phone: (09) 921 9999 ext 7363      Email: alison.smith@aut.ac.nz

Nga mihi nui

Hazel Abraham  
MEdLM student; Unitec Institute of Technology.

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1033)**

**This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from 18 June 2015 to 18 June 2016. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.**

## APPENDIX D: ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION SHEET



19 June 2015

**Kia Ora - Principal and Board of Trustees**

**RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management**

**THESIS TITLE:** Leading learning for Māori students: The challenges of leadership for teaching principals in small rural primary schools.

My name is Hazel Abraham. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology, and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to examine the leadership practices and challenges of teaching principals' in small rural primary schools in regards to successfully improving Māori student achievement. My research will be conducted in eight small rural primary schools in Wairoa and/or Eastern Bay of Plenty areas. I request your participation in the following way:

I will be collecting data using an interview schedule and would appreciate being able to interview your principal. Interviews will not take place until mid-Term Two, at a time that is suitable to your school. Interviews will be conducted in privacy and will be no longer than one and half hours. Interviewees will be required to sign a consent form prior to the interview.

Your school and your principal will not be identified in the thesis and all information related to my research at your school will be kept secure and confidential. I will be digitally recording the interview and doing the transcript of the interview which will be provided for your principal to check before data analysis is undertaken. I will also be happy to provide a printed summary of findings to the Board of Trustees and your principal once the study and thesis are completed. Please note the information of the research data may be used for publications and/or conference presentations.

As the central focus of this study is leadership and improved outcomes for Māori students, I am happy to meet with your kaumātua to discuss the aims and intentions of the research and would also be willing to attend a Board of Trustees meeting to provide the same information. On completion of my thesis, if you would like me to personally present and discuss the findings with, your Board of Trustees and/or Māori community, then I would be pleased to organise a time that is mutually suitable.

If you have any queries about the research, you may contact my supervisor contracted from AUT University.

Alison Smith: Department of Education, AUT University

Phone: (09) 921 9999 ext 7363

Email: [alison.smith@aut.ac.nz](mailto:alison.smith@aut.ac.nz)

This research has approval from the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and further information on how you can make contact with the UREC Secretary, should you have any concerns, can be found at the bottom of this letter. I would appreciate an email response at your earliest convenience to indicate your interest in participating in my study.

Should you accept, I will gain consent by the principal at the time of the interview. I look forward to working on this project with you.

Nga mihi nui

Hazel Abraham

MEdLM student; Unitec Institute of Technology.

**UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1033)**

**This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (18 June 2015) to (18 June 2016). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.**