The Transformative Role of Iwi Knowledge and Genealogy in Māori Student Success

Melinda Webber and Angus Macfarlane

Abstract

Iwi (tribal) knowledge systems can hold powerful narratives about the past, present, and future – prioritizing distinct languages, worldviews, teachings, and technologies developed and sustained by generations of iwi members. Narratives that emphasize the innovative deeds, qualities, and achievements of ancestors can be used in education to reinforce the notion that Māori students descend from a long lineage of scholars, scientists, philosophers, and the like – negating the powerful effect of stereotype threat (Steele 1997).

The recognition and reactivation of iwi knowledge in one iwi region of Aotearoa, New Zealand was an act of reclamation, remediation, and renaissance, whereby notions of *mana tangata* (student success – expressed as status accrued through one's leadership talents and respect from others) were reconceptualized by drawing on the richness of iwi genealogy, narratives, and worldview. The Ka Awatea (A new dawn) Project was an iwi case study that examined the qualities of "success" through a quintessentially iwi lens by grounding the research undertakings in iwi protocols and history and linking findings to historical iwi icons. By emphasizing the key qualities of ancestors, we can better understand what enabled them to make outstanding contributions to the society of their era, and their feats can continue to guide the pathways to success of Māori students in contemporary times. To effect educational transformation and reform, local high schools, in conjunction with iwi in the region, then made a conscious and unapologetic call to carve out time and space to affirm this iwi knowledge –

M. Webber (✉)
University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand
e-mail: m.webber@auckland.ac.nz

A. Macfarlane
University of Canterbury (UC), Christchurch, New Zealand
e-mail: angus.macfarlane@canterbury.ac.nz

legitimizing its dignity, identity, and integrity. Speaking to Māori student success from a distinctly iwi perspective has revitalized cultural pride among Te Arawa students connecting learning to their mana tangata – their proud histories, tenacious present, and promising futures.

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Introduction

The English-medium classroom does not speak the language of our children. It does not include their Māori ways of knowing in the curriculum, nor does it hold any of their ancestors up as role models of academic excellence. Yet, Māori know vis-à-vis whakapapa (genealogy), pūrākau (moral stories), and our distinguished history of whaikorero (oratory) that they descend from a long line of greatness. The discourses within Māori communities themselves do not focus on academic underachievement and deficit. Instead, the focus is on the strengths, wisdom, and skills our children have developed or need to develop, to flourish in their own community and family contexts as well as wider society. Māori families want their children to learn in schools that teach them that their ancestors were great philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, entrepreneurs, and researchers. Māori parents also want their children to stand tall in the knowledge that they have a rich and distinct heritage of scholarly endeavors; and for this to serve as a solid foundation for transformational learning, positive identity development, academic motivation, innovation, and intellectual and social development (Macfarlane et al. 2014). Our collective Māori futures rely upon it.

There is a strong relationship between Māori identity and the educational outcomes of Māori students (Bishop and Glynn 1999; Durie 2001; Macfarlane 2004; Webber 2008). The underpinning assertion is that a positive sense of Māori identity, experienced as cultural competence, cultural efficacy, and ethnic group pride, can improve the educational outcomes of Māori by ameliorating their negative experiences at school. So, what does a strong and positive Māori identity look like? Generally, positive Māori identity has been defined in terms of positive self-identification as Māori; an understanding of Māori language and culture; involvement in Māori social and cultural activities; and a close attachment to other Māori, for example, familial kinship groups, such as whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe), and iwi (tribe) (Houkamau and Sibley 2010, 2011; Stevenson 2004). The fundamental building block in early works on Māori identity was the notion of whakapapa and genealogical linkages (Makereti 1986; Hiroa 1949). These linkages clarify one's sense of place and belonging and an individual or personal identity is often considered secondary to the dominant social identity based upon a communal way of life. Walker (1989) has also suggested that Māori identity is a social concept based on descent but also suggests that developing mechanisms by which one may ascertain Māori-ness are problematic because many are too static and/or unable to account for the multiplicity of human behavior. It is clear that Māori identity is a dynamic phenomenon predicated on social belonging and connectedness and many of these factors necessarily manifest differently in different social contexts. Indeed, the need for *social belonging*, for seeing oneself as socially connected, is a basic human motivation (MacDonald and Leary 2005) and a sense of social connectedness predicts favorable outcomes (Stuart and Jose 2014; Webber et al. 2013). A positive sense of Māori identity plays an important role in healthy adjustment and school functioning and can have a significant influence on how Māori students deal with adverse circumstances (Webber 2012).

Māori Enjoying and Achieving Educational Success as Māori

Recent statistics demonstrate that despite improved overall academic results for Māori students, the achievement gap between Māori and non-Māori in English-medium education in New Zealand continues. In 2015, the total number of Māori students leaving secondary school with NCEA (The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is New Zealand's national qualification for senior secondary school students) level two or equivalent was 62.2%, while the top performing ethnic groups (Asian and European) had 90.6% and 83%, respectively (Education Review Office 2016). In addition, the Programme for International Student Assessment New Zealand Summary Report (OECD 2016) continues to highlight the fact that Māori students score below the average score for New Zealand, and the OECD, in all three subjects – literacy, numeracy, and science. (The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study that assesses and compares how well countries are educationally preparing their 15-year-old students to meet real-life opportunities and challenges) Although

New Zealand performs well overall on the PISA, the distribution of student performance in New Zealand shows that we have relatively low equality (equity) in learning outcomes, and there is a wider gap between the top 10% and bottom 10% of our students than in most other OECD countries (Education Review Office 2016).

The success of Māori students at school is a matter of national interest and a number of recent initiatives have been implemented in New Zealand secondary schools to address the educational disparities between Māori and non-Māori. Many of these initiatives have been premised on an influential Māori education strategy called Ka Hikitia (2009, 2013). The overall goal of the Ka Hikitia strategy is to enable Māori to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has described this as being when "Māori students have their identity, language, and culture valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success" and when they "know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to enjoy success" (Ministry of Education 2013, p. 13). The MOE further suggests that enabling Māori to succeed as Māori involves: (1) implementing teaching and learning approaches in schools that are engaging, effective, and enjoyable for all Māori students; (2) having appropriately high expectations for all Māori students; (3) tracking and monitoring what works to support excellent Māori educational outcomes, and; (4) developing productive partnerships with whānau, iwi, and community that are responsive and reciprocal – leading to collective action, outcomes, and solutions (Ministry of Education 2009, 2013). Yet, the Auditor General's report on Māori education (Controller and Auditor-General 2016) stated that many schools still lack an understanding of what constitutes Māori success. This report recommended that the Ministry of Education work with schools to establish a framework for collecting cultural information (e.g., a Māori student's ties with their iwi) and other information (e.g., a Māori student's goals and aspirations) to better understand what Māori enjoying educational success as Māori means for their communities.

A number of research and development initiatives have investigated how to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in the mainstream secondary school classrooms. Te Kotahitanga was a research and development project that promoted an education in which: (1) power was shared between self-determining individuals within nondominating relations of interdependence; (2) culture counts; (3) learning is interactive, dialogic, and spirals; and (4) participants are connected and committed to one another through the establishment of a common vision about what constitutes educational excellence (Bishop et al. 2014). From their student interviews, Bishop et al. (2009) learned that when Māori students have good relationships with their teachers, they are better able to engage with their learning. Meyer et al. (2010) identified that Māori students who were thriving in Te Kotahitanga schools were proud of their Māori culture and identities, could "be Māori" as learners, rather than having to leave their culture outside school in order to succeed.

The *He Kākano* initiative (University of Waikato and Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi 2010) was a strategic school-based professional development program with an explicit focus on improving culturally responsive leadership and

teacher practices to ensure Māori learners enjoy educational success as Māori. The premise behind this program was supporting school leaders to champion and enhance the social and cultural conditions necessary to bring about positive change for Māori students. School leaders in the study evaluation reported "enhanced understandings of their own relational positions, values and beliefs towards Māori students and their communities, increased awareness of Māori students and their current achievement levels, and shared responsibility for Māori students and their achievement" (Hynds et al. 2013, p. 29). This evaluation also concluded that despite a number of gains school leaders still needed more practical advice and direct guidance on how to implement evidence-based community partnership models that are highly effective in enabling Māori students to achieve educational success as Māori.

Another project of significance was The Starpath Project, which focused on equitable outcomes for New Zealand students who were underrepresented in tertiary education, particularly Māori and Pacific students from low-decile school contexts from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Yuan et al 2010). A school's decile rating indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socioeconomic communities. At a decile one school, most of the students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, while decile ten schools have the smallest numbers of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Ministry of Education 2013).) Starpath findings revealed a marked and persistent difference in the success rates between Māori and Pacific students, and Asian and Pākehā students. Starpath identified a number of structures and processes that limited student academic progress and replaced these with practices that could help them including enhanced data utilization, two- and three-way academic mentoring, target-setting, and ongoing tracking and monitoring of achievement outcomes and opportunities (Santamaría et al. 2014).

More recently, the *Kia Eke Panuku: Building on Success* initiative has aimed to, "give life to Ka Hikitia" (Ministry of Education 2015) by bringing together key findings from five previous programs of research and development: Te Kotahitanga, He Kākano, the Starpath Project for Tertiary Participation and Success, and the Secondary Literacy and Numeracy Projects. *Kia Eke Panuku* placed importance on staff working in their schools to use data and evidence to effect positive change in classroom and school-wide practices, systems, and structures (Ministry of Education 2015). The *Kia Eke Panuku* findings showed that in order to promote conditions for accelerating school reform, three critical factors must be present: deliberate professional acts applied with adaptive expertise; culturally responsive and relational pedagogy/leadership across the school; and powerful home, school, and community collaborations (Berryman and Eley 2017). Berryman and Eley (2017) argue that schools who focus on these dimensions as levers for accelerated school reform can close the gap between Māori and non-Māori participation and achievement. *Kia Eke Panuku* findings have suggested that schools and communities can support Māori students on their journey towards success as Māori by fostering and encouraging six expressions of Māori success: (1) living confidently – with affinity to whakapapa and at ease with a growing cultural competence in language, tikanga, and identity; (2) connected to and in harmony with the people, the environment, and systems

around about them; (3) articulate and confident in expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas; (4) skilled in building and navigating relational spaces; (5) thinking respectfully and critically about the world and ideas; and (6) achieving qualifications from school and wider life that lead to future options and choice (Berryman and Eley 2017).

Despite the rich information from these national research projects, we still know little about how success as Māori is defined by diverse groups of Māori themselves, across diverse contexts. It is also important to decipher what factors both within school, and outside of school encourage Māori to enjoy success because, what it looks like in one context could be very different from the next. Cockrell et al. (2007) have stated that, "definitions of success, and the criteria used to determine success are likely to be unique to each school, community, and/or culture" (p. 7). This means that a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate for all Māori in terms a singular definition of success. There is, however, some common consensus about broad indicators of Māori educational advancement, including Māori living as Māori, participating as citizens of the world, having good health, and a high standard of living (Durie 2001). Specific notions of "success" are necessarily context dependent in that "success 'as Māori' means different things for different people. . .some are strongly connected with their Māori heritage, others less strongly connected" (Averill et al. 2014, p. 36). Houkamau and Sibley (2015) have explained that there are many ways of being Māori, and that cultural identity for Māori is defined in different ways such as, whakapapa (genealogy), Māoritanga (Māori way of life), iwitanga (tribal links), hapūtanga (kinship links), and whanaungatanga (family relationships). Durie (2005) has also asserted that Māori experience diverse realities that take shape based on the context within which they are formed.

According to Rata (2012), a school's cultural environment can enhance, or constrain, Māori identities, which in turn can increase, or decrease, psychological wellbeing and engagement in learning. In mainstream settings, some of school factors which influence Māori identities in either positive or negative ways are, the teachers' expectations for Māori students, whether or not schools initiate Māori representation in decision making, and whether there is a school-based marae or not (Rata 2012). Rata's (2012) research implies that how well an institution understands and values te ao Māori (the world of Māori) is perhaps the most important factor determining whether Māori students will achieve success in the mainstream school setting or not. Similarly, Whitinui (2008) has long argued that kapa haka can provide a culturally responsive learning environment where students appear to participate, learn, and achieve more consistently as Māori. The research clearly indicates that schools need to be places where Māori students not only achieve academically but where they are happy and comfortable to be themselves; where they can feel at home, valued, and cherished; where they can realize their potential; and where they are able to be strong in their Māori identity. Schools which can promote this positive cultural environment are more likely to create atmospheres where students are empowered by their experiences and at school and, "develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically" (Cummins 1986, p. 23).

Stereotype Threat and Its Impact on Academic Efficacy

Māori wisdoms, distinct iwi knowledge, and local role models matter. Not only are they important to remedying the continuing failures of the mainstream classroom, but they can also be a positive approach to dealing with the threat of academic stereotypes, low academic efficacy, low self-esteem, and poor school engagement among the Māori student population. Māori identities, localized curriculum content, and transformative school cultures matter for Māori students because they influence their perceptions about the relevance of schooling to their lives. These concepts impact Māori students in that they influence their identification with the school context (or not) and subsequently their attendance, engagement, and achievement. In most English-medium schools, Māori identity, our worldview and knowledge, and our own role models are not used effectively to enhance teaching and learning. This is troubling because school culture significantly influences Māori students' social and academic identities and subsequently affects how they respond to opportunities to learn. Māori-centric cultural values, norms, customs, ways of being, ways of knowing, and traditions can provide Māori students with a framework for interpreting reality, making sense of school content and responding to academic challenges. Furthermore, in light of the current academic disparities between Māori students and their non-Māori peers, there is a need to further examine the role Māori identity and culture can have on the attitudes, behaviors, and learning orientations of Māori students.

To increase Māori participation and achievement in education, we must address the persistent negative stereotypes and media misrepresentations that suppress their achievement. Māori student achievement continues to be impacted by negative stereotypes that allege intellectual inferiority (Turner et al. 2015; Webber 2012; Webber et al. 2013) and state-mandated statistics that perpetually portray Māori educational performance as a problem inherent to Māori people themselves (Mahuika 2008; Walker 1985). Given the power of these stereotypes to shape Māori underparticipation and disengagement from education, the depth of Māori estrangement from the compulsory education sector should not be underestimated. The ongoing sense of injustice and the continued disempowerment of Māori people as they progress through English-medium schools remain deeply painful and continue to have a profound impact on the psyche, efficacy, and motivation of Māori students (Bishop et al. 2014).

Steele (1997) has called this phenomenon "stereotype threat" and has stated that these stereotypes impact the performance, motivation, and learning of students who have to contend with them. Steele's writings (1997, 2010) highlight the way in which being the target of a negative group stereotype (even when one does not believe the stereotype) can undermine student confidence, participation, and performance in academic tasks. Steele asserts that the students who are most vulnerable to stereotype threat are those who care the most and who are most deeply invested in high academic performance. This means that the Māori students most likely to disengage from schooling contexts where negative stereotypes about their academic potential remain unchallenged are those with the highest academic potential. In essence, our

highest achieving Māori students are more likely to be negatively impacted by stereotypes that reinforce the idea that "Māori students are not as smart as non-Māori students."

However, international literature suggests that developing a positive ethnic identity could play a protective role in Indigenous students' lives (Miller and Kaiser 2001). According to extant research, Indigenous students who identify strongly with their ethnic group are better able to negotiate potentially negative environments, deal with discrimination and prejudice, and have high self-esteem. Other evidence (Bowman and Howard 1985; Oyserman et al. 2007) has shown that positive ethnic socialization is associated with better school efficacy, higher educational aspirations, increased cultural knowledge, and a greater understanding of the racial prejudice (Quintana and Vera 1999). More recently, Altschul et al. (2006) examined three components of ethnic identity that act together to buffer the impact of stereotype threat and strengthen persistence at school. The components are: (1) a positive sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, (2) a high awareness of racism, and (3) a strong sense of embedded achievement. Embedded achievement is the belief that achievement is an in-group identifier, a part of being a good in-group member, and a belief that the achievement of some in-group members helps other in-group members succeed. Webber et al. (2013) examined the same components of ethnic identity with Māori students in the Aotearoa, New Zealand context and found that a strong and positive Māori identity does indeed help Māori students to buffer the potential impact of stereotypes, and subsequently engage, persist, and succeed at school.

Ka Awatea: An Iwi Case Study of Māori Student Success

Te Arawa people are a confederation of iwi that occupy the Rotorua Lakes district and part of the central Bay of Plenty coastline in Aotearoa, New Zealand. In the Ka Awatea project, a Te Arawa worldview was used to examine the connection between Māori identity and the perceived characteristics of success among a selection of nominated successful Māori high school students from Rotorua, New Zealand. In a time when "Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori" (Ministry of Education 2013, p. 5) was the catch phrase of New Zealand educational practice and policy, this study sought to understand the role that various academic, social, interpersonal, and cultural influences have on educational achievement as they foster and demand different understandings and identity enactments among Māori students. This iwi case study took a social-psychological perspective on questions of Māori student success in that it articulated indigenous student achievement as a concept always situated in, and mediated by, social contexts, cultural settings, and social group memberships (Macfarlane et al. 2015).

Using a Kaupapa Māori informed approach, the Ka Awatea project conducted interview/focus groups and a survey over 2 years to examine the conditions for success, and the perceptions of success, from successful senior Māori secondary students ($n = 132$) aged between 15 and 18, their whānau ($n = 58$), and their teachers and principals ($n = 93$). The successful students were nominated by their

school principals for a number of reasons: most notably, high achievement, leadership, and cultural expertise. All but one student could identify their iwi affiliations and 47% of the student participants identified as Te Arawa. All students in the Ka Awatea study attended schools in the Rotorua district. The Ka Awatea Project consequently uncovered the individual, family, school, and community conditions that enabled Māori students to mobilize various types of mana (pride and status) to achieve their educational, social, and cultural goals. It also identified eight personal, academic, and cultural qualities that exemplified successful Māori high school students from this iwi area. As such, the Ka Awatea project developed a measure, model, and definition of Māori success that was iwi specific (Macfarlane et al. 2014).

Mana: The Five Personal, Familial, School, and Community Conditions Required for Māori Student Success

One of the greatest challenges facing Māori participation in education concerns the restoration and experience of cultural pride and efficacy in the lives of Māori students. Māori scholar Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (2006) has argued that it is *mana* (honor, pride, and esteem) that lies at the heart of Indigenous self-worth and the degree to which we feel empowered and good about ourselves. Royal (2005, p. 68) has also explained that, "...mana is a person's knowledge and sense of knowing – knowing about what to do, what they ought to do and how to do what they should do." Royal (2005, p. 68) argued,

> The purpose of education is to facilitate the flow and experience of mana in the individual and in his/her community. The "fullness" of life was considered to be a function of the degree and quality of mana at play in a person's life. The outward expression of mana in the life of the individual is evidenced not only in their skills, attributes and talents – expertise and skill was widely celebrated – but finally in their "spiritual authority," their intuitive and wisdom filled knowledge and insight of knowing what, when, how and why to do something.

As such, the concept of mana is important for Indigenous student participation, engagement, and achievement at school because it relates to their sense of being, motivation, and personal and collective identity. Mana tangata, or secure sense of mana, can influence Indigenous students' thoughts and behavior, enabling them to act purposefully in the world to achieve their goals and aspirations. In this way, the development of mana is crucial because it is a profoundly powerful social–psychological construct that affirms and advances Indigenous student connectedness and belonging in the school context, undoing the impact of negative societal stereotypes, including "the master narrative" (Carretero and Van Alphen 2014) that speaks of the Indigenous problem in education (McCarty and Lee 2014) and/or the long brown tail of underachievement (Torrance et al. 2015).

Royal (2005) has also argued that the purpose of education is not so much the acquisition of knowledge but rather the growth of mana in the individual. He suggests the following attributes or qualities as essential for the development of

mana in the individual: that he/she does not boast about his/her own prowess or abilities; when faced with an issue or problem, they understand traditional lore and extended discussions as a process, a way of addressing an issue/problem in order to seek an answer, outcome, or direction; they are gentle and humble; they listen to what the spirit is telling him/her; is supported by his/her people; is quick thinker, an alert mind; they adhere to their thoughts and beliefs; they are industrious, knowledgeable, and have a repository of knowledge.

In the Ka Awatea study, five mātauranga (educational) themes concerning the personal, familial, school, and community conditions for success emerged. The five themes, described below, are: Mana Whānau, Mana Motuhake, Mana Tū, Mana Ūkaipo, and Mana Tangatarua. The first concept, Mana whānau, appeared to have no bounds – it appeared with incredible regularity throughout the course of the study rendering it the most important condition of Māori student success.

Mana Whānau: The Students Came from Child-Centric Family Environments

Successful Māori students occupy a central position of importance within their whānau – and this includes the school and community "whānau" as well. The Māori students in this study were nurtured into succeeding by their whānau, teachers, and peers; were consequently socially capable; and had a sense of belonging across a number of contexts. The Māori students knew that their families valued education, and that their school success was important to the whole whānau because it had the potential to be a driver of wider whānau success.

The successful Māori students were held in high regard by their whānau, their peers, teachers, and members of the wider school community. For the main part, most of these students were placed at the heart of the whānau and were nurtured, protected, and guided towards success from an early age. Whānau saw their role as integral to the formation of healthy lifelong attitudes and learning behaviors and viewed this as a serious undertaking if their children were to realize their potential as successful Māori students and emerging adults.

This "tamariki-centric" (child-centered) positioning of Māori students was evident from the comments made by both the students and their parents. Successful students were quick to praise their parents for providing them with a safe and loving environment where encouragement and support for all their endeavors never wavered. This consistent and constant presence of care and concern in their lives made them want to try hard at school and achieve educational success. Students saw educational success as a means of paying back their parents and making them proud for all their unwavering support and the sacrifices they had made. Parents on the other hand were forthcoming about placing their children's needs first and their own second. They recognized the vulnerability of transitioning from childhood to young adulthood and were committed to ensuring their children were advantaged by having their physical, emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs met. Parents saw this task as their primary responsibility and developed strategies to ensure that they were

equipped to support their children and that they were not disadvantaged by their own limitations. Students who were raised in tamariki-centric home contexts learnt to respond in kind and reciprocate behaviors that were highly valued by others such as respect, humility, thoughtfulness, and compassion. These skills were viewed as crucial in order to become a socially capable and identity secure individual across a range of circumstances and are essential in building towards a successful future (Tahau-Hodges 2010).

Mana Motuhake: A Positive Sense of Māori Identity

Mana motuhake (positive identity) was experienced by the students in this study via their developing sense of cultural efficacy, connection, and belonging. This included their ability and knowledge of how to engage meaningfully with Māori culture. Successful Māori students purported to have a keen sense of belonging and connectedness to others in their whānau, hapu, iwi, school, and community. All participants also agreed that knowledge of one's whakapapa (genealogy) was critical. Kāretu (1990) has described whakapapa as the glue that connects individuals to a certain place or marae, locating them within the broader network of kin relations. According to the participants in this study whakapapa is not simply about having "Māori blood" but knowing about that descent and having a meaningful relationship to it. Knowledge of whakapapa had a major part to play in the resilience of the Māori students and their ability to stay focused, as well as committed to achieving their aspirations at school for the collective benefit of their whānau, hapū, and iwi.

Whānau played the most important role in terms of socializing their children into the Māori world and helping them to develop cultural efficacy. Cultural efficacy is the extent to which an individual feels they have the personal resources to engage appropriately as Māori across a range of contexts (Houkamau and Sibley 2011). The findings of the Ka Awatea study show that the most important developmental asset a parent can imbue in their children is to ensure that they are aware of their collective belonging, cultural connectedness, and responsibilities to others. Many of the successful students in this study asserted that any decisions about themselves were made while recognizing their responsibilities to others – their whānau, hapū, and iwi. Therefore, healthy and supportive whānau are fundamental to positive Māori identity development and for promoting educational advancement.

The shaping of student attitudes towards Māori and more specifically iwi identity, and the associated languages, values, and cultural worldviews need to be a fundamental function of whānau. Constructive and supportive relationships between members of whānau including (importantly) extended whānau are important determinants of Māori student success, and lay the foundations for positive relationships in later life. Modeling whanaungatanga – that is the establishment and maintenance of supportive relationships – is also a critical whānau function that contributes to student success at school.

Moreover, iwi can also play a role in the positive Māori identity development of students. As a consequence of this study, Te Arawa developed a range of iwi-specific

resources and professional learning opportunities for teachers that promoted the inclusion of culturally rich learning opportunities, contributing to the wider goals of whānau, the schools, and the iwi. Many hapū within Te Arawa have also established wānanga where parents and other whānau members can participate in learning programs that will improve their opportunities to participate on marae and in other cultural arenas. For some whānau, these wānanga have strengthened their existing knowledge of language, marae kawa, whakapapa, and tikanga. For other whānau, these wānanga importantly offer a point of entry into te ao Māori and their connectedness to their iwi. Initiatives such as these wānanga contribute to whānau wellbeing and consequently they positively impact on Māori student success.

Mana Tū: A Sense of Courage and Resilience

Successful Māori students develop positive self-efficacy, positive self-concept, resilience, and an internal locus of control to thrive in the school context and, eventually, beyond it. They tended to be aspirational, have high expectations and enjoy overall physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Whānau need to ensure their children have a healthy home environment that supports this physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Whānau members need to model practical resilience strategies – for example, work ethic, perseverance, determination, and discipline – because students looked to whānau as their "first teachers" and ultimate "motivation for success."

Many Māori students today are being exposed to increasingly difficult home, neighborhood, and/or school environments that can significantly obstruct their path to academic success. However, successful Māori students thrive at school despite having to overcome adverse personal and contextual factors. Such students are often labeled as resilient. Resilience largely consists of two components: the presence of significant adversity and the achievement of a positive outcome despite the threat or risk (Masten and Coatsworth 1998). However, resilience can also be thought of as a continuous interaction between the individual and characteristics of his or her environment. In this sense, resilience is context dependent. Māori students who experience themselves as resilient, and are seen by their communities as resilient, are those who successfully navigate their way through adversity, each in his or her own way, and according to the strengths and resources available to the student as well as his or her whānau, community, and/or culture.

Māori students often experience some type of risk or adversity and some are still doing relatively well despite the risk(s). Māori students who were seen as successful in this study revealed a combination of personal and environmental characteristics that enabled them to stay focused in the face of educational adversity. Familial support, enhanced academic and cultural self-efficacy, and an internal locus of control helped the Māori students in this study to thrive in the school context. The concept of resilience was also closely linked to personal attributes such as determination, persistence, confidence, and focus. All of the Māori students who were interviewed demonstrated characteristics of resilience in order to overcome

adversity, and also employed a range of self-regulated learning behaviors in order to direct their own learning and achieve their goals.

Many of the students in this study stood out because of their desire to learn, their generally positive attitude towards school and their motivation to pursue a career that would improve the wellbeing of their whānau. More specifically, the majority of the students:

- Had positive self-concepts, positive academic self-efficacy, were intrinsically motivated, and did homework regularly
- Were described as being resolute and tenacious and said they were confident or were able to encourage or push themselves towards success
- Were goal-oriented and future-focused
- Saw a strong relationship between school and work and had chosen a possible career
- Had received consistent support and guidance from their whānau
- Appreciated extra academic support, both in the classroom and outside it, and valued teacher contact with their parents and teachers who took a personal interest in them as individuals
- Saw choosing "like-minded" friends as crucial to their ability to stay focused at school

The resilient Māori students in this study also had individual characteristics associated with academic success such as cognitive abilities, motivation, and self-efficacy. Although many students may possess these individual characteristics successful Māori students seem to rely on these capabilities to help them overcome adverse circumstances in their environment.

Various protective factors seemed to contribute towards the development of resilience in the Māori students in this study. The development of a strong self-belief was evident in most of the Māori students and was manifested in an understanding about who they were, what they wanted to achieve in life, and the direction they needed to take to realize their goals.

Common personal characteristics demonstrated by the Māori students, in addition to resilience, included tenacity, motivation and inner will, independence, realistic aspirations, and an appreciation of their cultural uniqueness. Protective factors also included support networks that existed within and outside of the school to develop their achievement, including peers, whānau, supportive teachers, and other encouraging adults. This support network is essential to the academic success of Māori students.

Māori students who expressed a strong connection with their Māori identity also tended to utilize their "Māoriness" as a support structure, calling on whānau and their cultural beliefs/traditions when facing adverse circumstances in the environment. Māori identity and the associated sense of connection and belonging served as a buffer to protect them from negative school and/or home difficulties.

This study also found a number of important protective factors contributed to academic engagement including whānau support, school responsiveness, and engagement in te ao Māori. In this study, the link between the school and the

Māori culture of the student, as well as strong whānau support, was shown to be two of the key components that contributed to educational resilience. Development of students' self-esteem and educational resilience is significantly linked to positive familial, cultural, and social supports.

Whānau socialization also played a vital role in empowering Māori students to function successfully in the milieu of the school culture while remaining grounded in their Māori identity and culture. This study showed that whānau need to ensure their child strengthens their resilience by providing a healthy home environment that supports the student's emotional, cultural, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Many of the participants in this study believed that a sense of accomplishment and interconnectedness led to a state of overall wellbeing.

In order to successfully navigate their worlds, Māori students need to acquire a range of skills and qualities, most importantly a resilient character. However, it is clear from this study that a Māori student's capacity to exhibit resilience depends on more than individual and/or innate ability. Māori students learn the skills and strategies of resilience from their whānau and/or other supportive adults in their immediate worlds.

Mana Ūkaipo: A Sense of Place and Belonging

Successful Māori students sought a synergy between their school-based learning and the unique Rotorua context. They also wanted to see iwi role models of success made visible and prominent in schools. Te Arawa students wanted iwi knowledge to have some resonance with their educational activities, and expected iwi knowledge and history to occupy a position of importance in the school curriculum. They perceived iwi knowledge to be a viable platform for their future aspirations and achievement.

All participants involved in the study were keen to see iwi knowledge underpin relevant educational and recreational activities. Te Arawa icons and special features of the area such as the many lakes, Mokoia Island, geothermal landmarks such as Whakarewarewa and Ohinemutu, and forests and mountains were considered by the majority of students and whānau members as crucial to anchoring a person to their homelands and genealogy.

Such an approach as described by Penetito (2009) is often termed Place Base Learning (PBL). Penetito (2009) argues that this educational model endeavors to provide students with the answers to two essential questions: what is this place and what is our relationship to it? It essentially draws on the strongest features, characteristics, history, and personalities of the land or place where students are born, raised, and educated; thereby creating a synergy between school-based learning and the unique context of the surrounding ecology. It teaches "through" rather than "about" culture and encompasses ecological studies, biodiversity, community education and community relations, local history, and sustainable development (Barnhardt 2005).

Whānau were especially keen to ensure that their children were steeped in iwi knowledge and were informed about their environment as well as the people who

have and continue to influence the changing natural and social landscape of the area. Being familiar with their ancestors and understanding the history over time helps anchor a person to the land, the water, and the sky and develops in them a sensitive awareness of those who they descend from and the potential they hold for the future. The development of a strong cultural identity and affiliation to a place where their ancestors stood was described as security against adversity.

Whānau strongly believed that being possessed of the knowledge of the land, the people, and te reo was a strong foundation upon which to acquire other knowledge, other language, and other ideologies. Advocates of PBL, such as Kawagley and Barnhardt (1999), Penetito (2009), and Kidman et al. (2011), believe such a framework can help alleviate the tension that currently exists between Western education pedagogies and holistic indigenous education models. These authors also assert that PBL can move the curriculum towards a new and exciting place where ownership by students over characteristics and features of classroom-based learning can be given heightened relevance. It should provide new meanings to enquiry and knowledge that draws upon local examples. All participants agreed that PBL was the key to strengthening the relationship between students and their local area. It was also seen as a fundamental tool by which the relationship between Māori and non-Māori people could be enhanced creating greater synergy between all who live in the Rotorua area and beyond.

Whānau who were particularly passionate about the need for their child to identify first as Te Arawa, and then secondly as a citizen of Aotearoa, New Zealand, saw PBL as an approach that enriched and supported their efforts and endeavors to raise a child who was confident, secure, and resilient no matter where they went or settled in the world. Many Māori teachers across a broad range of subjects reported using elements of mātauranga Māori and/or Te Arawatanga in almost all of their classroom activities and school-based curriculum. Students and whānau were supportive of this practice as it helped elevate Māori knowledge to a central position of consideration.

All participants in this study supported the view that iwi role models of success, either living or dead, should be used prominently in local schools as a strategy to promote aspiration, cultural pride, and achievement. Students with a strong identity and historical link to iconic features and people of the land are best placed to draw on this relationship and to emulate the successes of those icons. By isolating the characteristics as representative of success, students were more likely to value PBL, and to use this as emotional leverage towards developing resilience, strengthening their cultural distinctiveness, building upon shared learning, and ultimately achieving a collaborative story of success.

Mana Tangatarua: Navigating Success in Many Worlds

Academic success should not come at the expense of Māori identity – all Ka Awatea participants saw both identities as vital to overall success. However, students need the appropriate "navigational skills" and "role models" and a strong sense of

emotional and spiritual wellbeing to navigate the two (or more) worlds of Aotearoa successfully. Ka Awatea participants indicated that supportive and galvanic relationships were essential to success. Families were primarily responsible for "success as Māori" and often modeled what this should look like. Schools contributed largely to Māori students' "success in the non-Māori or 'generalist' world" because they offered students many opportunities to be innovative and creative, to try new things, to go new places, and to take risks (which many Māori families could not offer them). Therefore, schools were seen to offer students new experiences that "unleashed their potential" to bridge multiple worlds and increase their "range of opportunities" in terms of "possible futures" (Macfarlane et al. 2014, p. 175)

While academic achievement was considered a crucial measure for potential future success, it was considered to be only one feature of a Māori student's emerging distinctiveness and evolving suite of skills. According to all of the students in this study, their Māori identity lay at the heart of all things important and their educational attainment was considered complimentary to this. Together these two constructs, Māori identity and academic identity, were viewed as fundamental to their personal growth, transformation, and journey from one developmental stage to the next – and from one world to the other. Academic success and cultural fluency were viewed by all participants as requiring a nurturing whānau, a responsive school community and a learning environment which includes the provision of educational and cultural experiences beyond the classroom. As seemingly different as two (or more) worlds can be, the ability to successfully traverse them was dependent on the acquisition of navigational skills such as: the demonstration of determination and motivation, diligence and forbearance; a healthy self-esteem; resilience; and a strong moral compass.

Te Arawa Icons: Footprints of the Past to Inform the Present

How might Māori students be better equipped to thrive personally, culturally, and educationally in today's diverse world? When the Ka Awatea study looked to the past and recounted some of the deeds of historical Te Arawa icons and ancestors, we were able to see that they were exemplars for those of us who are engaged in the pursuit of success in today's world. It was evident that our iwi knowledge systems held powerful narratives about the past, present, and future – prioritizing distinct languages, worldviews, teachings, and technologies that have been developed and sustained by generations of iwi members. These narratives emphasized the innovative deeds, qualities, and achievements of ancestors and reinforced the notion that these Māori students descended from a long lineage of scholars, scientists, philosophers, and the like.

The Ka Awatea study used a widely known iwi metaphor "Ngā pumanawa e waru – the eight beating hearts of Te Arawa" and transposed the beating hearts metaphor into the qualities demonstrated by the same number of historical iwi leaders/icons. These icons were nominated as role models by participants in the study. Reflection on outstanding Te Arawa leaders and what underpinned their greatness led to an

analysis of the key values, qualities, and characteristics that shaped their leadership. These qualities were then examined in light of the Ka Awatea participant data to examine whether they persisted and endured in successful Māori students in today's world. The purpose of this task was not to reify traditional notions of success and leadership, but rather to better understand how these qualities might, or might not, manifest in contemporary times. Eight common central qualities were identified (and are listed below) and were linked with the same number of Te Arawa leaders selected from across varied eras of iwi history (there were, of course, other historical and contemporary iwi leaders too numerous to be included here). The researchers found that the application of the following eight key qualities enabled the Māori students in the Ka Awatea study to thrive in education and make outstanding contributions to the society of their era – much like their ancestors did. Recounting the past in this project showed us that personal, cultural, and educational success can be derived from a combination of enduring iwi qualities including: identity, tenacity, relationships, innovation, wellbeing, scholarship, humility, and core values (see Table 1).

By linking back to the past and recounting some of the deeds of Te Arawa icons and/or tūpuna (ancestors), we were able to see that by way of their respective and collective qualities, they offered guiding examples to those engaged in the pursuit of success in the modern world. They pointed not only to how these leading figures made outstanding contributions to the social fabric of their time, but also how they continue to guide Māori students who seek to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori today. The Ka Awatea study affirmed the importance of distinct iwi groups sustaining their unique worldviews and associated knowledge systems across millennia. This study illustrates that many core values, beliefs, and practices associated with those worldviews have "an adaptive integrity that is as valid today as in the past" (Kawagley and Barnhardt 1999, p. 1).

Iwi-Led Educational Transformation: Te Rangihakahaka and Matakōkiri

The school-community research suggests that when schools cultivate authentic connections with parents, community-based organizations, and other local partners, they can improve their ability to serve indigenous students (Austin 2005; Hall et al. 2015; Miller et al. 2013). In addition, it is increasingly viewed as "common sense" that schools involve their communities in some form of engagement (Anderson 1998, p. 572). The Ka Awatea research findings contribute to the research by emphasizing a different kind of engagement – one where the iwi itself led the charge for school collaboration and transformation.

Shortly after the findings of the Ka Awatea project were shared with the Te Arawa community via a series of presentations and hui (formal meetings), two distinct iwi-led initiatives were launched by a leading iwi educational provider in Rotorua – Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake – an iwi-led organization committed to strengthening and empowering whānau through leadership in education, health, identity, language, and culture. The two programs were called Te Rangihakahaka

Table 1 The eight qualities of successful Te Arawa students: Ngā Pūmanawa e Waru

Quality	Indigenous icon	Characteristics – successful Te Arawa students	Application to schoolwork
Identity	**Tamatekapua** – the commander of the Te Arawa waka, renowned scientist, and celestial navigator	Have a positive sense of Māori identity, a belief in and knowledge of self; strength of character, strength of personality; a strong will; boldness and a tendency to take risks	Positive self-concept Resilient to negative stereotypes Some language knowledge and cultural efficacy
Tenacity	**Reverend Frederick Bennett** – the first Māori bishop in New Zealand's history	Are diligent and have an internal locus of control, are patient, committed to learning, can overcome difficulties, and maintain a resolute confidence	Disciplined Self-motivated Attentive Focused
Relationship focused	**Te Ao Kapurangi** – a woman of mana, known for her cunning, fortitude, networks, and courage	Establishes, nurtures, and maintains strong peer, whānau, and teacher relationships premised on manaakitanga	Encouraging Willing to learn from mentor and others Aware of own strengths and weaknesses
Innovation	**Ihenga** – an intrepid explorer known for his extensive travels around Aotearoa	Are curious and innovative, have an enquiring mind, and an exploratory orientation that is exploited in social and academic activities	Creative Courageous Competitive Curious
Wellbeing	**Dorothy Huhana Mihinui** – a health and education advocate	Pays attention to their overall wellbeing – including physical, spiritual, and mental health needs	Fit Healthy Resourceful Balanced
Scholarship	**Makereti Papakura** – a scholar, the first Māori woman to attain a Master's degree from Oxford University	Is committed to advancing their own knowledge, has an aptitude for things scholarly and a commitment to excellence. Displays an intrinsic desire to learn and an innate curiosity	Can apply themselves Driven Purposeful Aspirational
Humility	**Te Hiko o te Rangi Hohepa** – a tohunga (high priest) and whakapapa specialist	Understands the important role of humility, service to others, and generosity of spirit	Puts others before self Accepts criticism Team player

Table 1 (continued)

Quality	Indigenous icon	Characteristics – successful Te Arawa students	Application to schoolwork
Core Māori values	**Wihapi Winiata** – a paramount chief of Te Arawa loved by many and multiply skilled	Understands the role and purpose of key Māori values portrayed by way of unbridled care, inclusion, a keen moral compass and sense of social justice, and spirituality	Honors others Displays mana Connected Respectful

(Aspiring to Lofty Heights) and Matakōkiri (Light up the Sky). The programs are named after well-known Te Arawa aphorisms and all of Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake's associated school materials cite the findings of the Ka Awatea project as critical to the development of their programs.

Te Rangihakahaka is an iwi-driven professional development initiative underpinned by the history and whakapapa of Ngāti Whakaue (one of eight Te Arawa iwi). The program is designed to ensure that all Rotorua schools, community, whānau, and students have a strong knowledge base of Ngāti Whakauetanga (Ngāti Whakaue's distinct worldview), that all learners understand what it means to be Ngāti Whakaue, and that teachers and leaders see Ngāti Whakauetanga as integral to all teaching and learning. To this end, Te Rangihakahaka has four core objectives:

1. To deepen teachers' knowledge of Ngāti Whakaue identity, language, and culture through engaging in korero (discussion) about whakapapa (genealogy), tikanga (protocols), and whenua (land)
2. To develop resources that best support teachers in the teaching and learning of Ngāti Whakauetanga
3. To identify strategies and approaches for involving whānau and the local community in education
4. To contribute to the development of a learning framework that reflects Ngāti Whakauetanga and aligns to the learning expectations of (all) Rotorua schools

Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake have stated that the Ka Awatea research forms part of the theoretical framework for the program – particularly the importance of successful Te Arawa students developing cultural flexibility, resilience and leadership, core Māori values, academic self-efficacy, and motivation. The documentation also cites Ka Awatea in that they aspire for Te Arawa students to be goal driven and self-managing (Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake 2017). The full program is delivered to teachers via three full-day wānanga (seminars). Over 3 years, Te Rangihakahaka has seen an increase in the numbers of teachers and other educators participating in the program; from 50 participants in 2014 to 342 participants in 2016. In total, 595 educators from Rotorua schools have participated in the Te Rangihakahaka program in the last 3.5 years. The iwi cites a number of positive outcomes from the Te Rangihakahaka program including: one school receiving a

new Māori name, one school renaming all of their house groups after the six Koromatua (chiefs) of Ngāti Whakaue, most schools implementing elements of Te Rangihakahaka into their arts, reading, writing, social studies and science programs, and many more invitations from schools for Ngāti Whakaue to either advise or be active participants in school curriculum design and teacher professional development.

The Matakōkiri program is a school holiday science program developed by the iwi for Māori students and their whānau. The program provides opportunities for the participants to experience science and innovation that is grounded in place-based learning and iwi knowledge. Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake have completed eleven science-focused week-long wānanga with attendance rates between 95% and 100%. They have implemented the program with a total of 492 Maori students, over 240 whānau members, and have collaborated with over 100 science and technology experts and professional organizations (Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake 2017). The Matakōkiri program has five key principles:

1. Each wānanga (program of learning) is based on Ngāti Whakaue narratives.
2. Each wānanga uses local iwi experts as well as local scientists.
3. It is compulsory for whānau to attend the program with their child.
4. The science is contextualized and relevant.
5. The science is hands-on.

The Te Rangihakahaka and Matakōkiri programs have prioritized an education that links Māori students learning to the physical and cultural environment in which students and schools are situated. These place-based educational practices and programs have integrated scientific, historical, and cultural knowledge associated with local environments as a critical ingredient for developing what Cajete (2000) terms an interdisciplinary pedagogy of place. The ways of constructing, organizing, using, and communicating knowledge that has been practiced by Te Arawa for centuries has come to be recognized as a form of science with its own integrity and validity. By giving emphasis to the integrity of iwi cultural knowledge and skills, Te Arawa have utilized the findings of the Ka Awatea project and engaged in an act of reclamation, remediation, and renaissance, whereby notions of *mana tangata* have been iwi determined.

Mana Tangata: Celebrating the Proud Histories, Tenacious Present, and Promising Futures of Māori Students

While the development of a strong Māori identity is largely dependent on an individual, whānau or iwi, it is crucial for schools, teachers, and other educators to recognize, acknowledge, and support the process. The acquisition of positive Māori identity is fundamental to a student's potential for success because it can act as a protective factor when Māori students are confronted with deficit messages about their academic potential (Webber 2008, 2012). The educative process must include

strategies that strengthen Māori students' ethnic identity, cultural connections, cultural competence, and iwi continuity and all members of their community can play a role in supporting, shaping, and preparing a student to this end.

Māori students must learn to accommodate and manage the tensions and conflict that arise from different worldviews (cultural and academic). They must also learn how to navigate successful pathways that enable them to remain firmly anchored to their cultural roots and belief systems, while at the same time experiencing the freedom to navigate the broader context of their expanding worlds. Many of the students in the Ka Awatea study identified strong role models, humility, and emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing as critical to their educational success.

Success was considered a collective responsibility in their families, rather than a singular pursuit, and students were encouraged to observe and draw upon the inspiration of others to support their own developing aspirations. Role models were considered by all participants in this study to be an extremely influential feature of students' school, home, and community lives. Exposure to local mentors, ancestral stories, and role models, who were known for and/or demonstrated particular characteristics of success, were considered by all of the participants to be immensely helpful to student motivation for learning. The Māori students themselves were highly influenced by people they interacted with in their daily lives – their immediate and extended family members, their teachers, and members of the wider community.

Effective role models were perceived to offer helpful advice including early career guidance and information about travel and cultural experiences outside of their local context. Seeing and/or hearing about the world and/or travel experiences were considered by the participants to be part of the necessary grounding or foundation upon which success is built. Access to these experiences was seen to prepare the Māori students for the development of global citizenship and future employment. According to Wyn (2007, 2009), indigenous students need these kinds of experiences in order to develop skills to navigate a way forward in an increasingly diverse world. It is also critical for them to manage the values and expectations of the competing cultures they find themselves in. To overcome adversity and the constant threat of negative academic stereotypes, Māori students need their home, school, and community contexts to actively engage in helping them to develop positive Māori identities and mana tangata.

As a concept mana tangata implies that the strength of a person or collective is drawn from the depth and breadth of their social relationships. According to Tomlins-Jahnke (2011, p. 1), the "philosophies that underpin the concept of mana tangata are long-standing and reinforced in customary traditions, socially founded values, ideals and norms." However, as stipulated by Roskruge (2011), the concept of mana tangata is not rooted solely in the past but also reflects our relationship to the current world and to new generations with quite different expectations. Roskruge states:

> These new generations live in various parts of the world, among many cultures and ideologies, and as such they seek ways of providing for those around them from a myriad of resources. . .To this new generation of young Māori, mana tangata will be an expression of personal identity and uniqueness. (p. 256)

In Ka Awatea, mana tangata was related to a Māori student's ability to engage meaningfully and successfully in the school context, as well as to make profound connections with Māori culture, peoples, and contexts. Māori students in the Ka Awatea study exhibited mana tangata as a developing sense of cultural connectedness, academic and social self-efficacy, and leadership. Overall, mana tangata was related to the contribution of an individual to the community and the wellbeing of the collective.

Conclusion

Commenting on the social conditions necessary for positive Māori identity development, Durie (2003) has noted that "Cultural identity depends not only on access to culture and heritage but also on the opportunity for cultural expression and cultural endorsement within society's institutions" (p. 68). The engagement of Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho Ake with schools across Rotorua illustrates the ways schools might work alongside iwi to ensure Māori students' cultural engagement and identities are enriched by their experiences at school. Māori student engagement and success needs to be an integrated, community-wide responsibility rather than the responsibility of one or two teachers who "go the extra mile." Durie (2001) has also emphasized the role of schools in affirming Māori students' identities by asserting that if formal education does little to help prepare Māori students to interact within their own communities, then no matter what has been learned their education would have been incomplete. Like Penetito (2010), the findings of Ka Awatea show that there are two main ways that schools can help Māori students to thrive: "firstly if it holds up a mirror to them and they can see themselves growing and developing in a way that is personally meaningful for them; and secondly, if it helps them to project themselves into the immediate world around them as well as into the world at large" (p. 35). The findings of the Ka Awatea project indicate that when whanau, iwi, and the wider community are invested in education, positive school behaviors and a Māori student commitment to school completion and success improves. Whānau play the most important role in terms of socializing their children into the Māori world and helping them to develop cultural efficacy and healthy and supportive whānau connections are fundamental to positive Māori identity development and for promoting educational advancement. The most important developmental asset a parent can imbue in their children is to ensure that they are aware of their mana tangata – their unique leadership potential, collective belonging, cultural connectedness, and responsibilities to others.

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